



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Local commissioner

WELCOME  
book

# Hello

Thank you for volunteering to be a district or division commissioner for your area. You are helping to make guiding happen for thousands of girls!

This welcome book gives you all the information you need to get started in your new and exciting role. We suggest you read it and then discuss it with whoever is supporting your induction - for example your mentor, or county commissioner. Inside you'll find all sorts of useful information and tools to help you, including an induction checklist and a personal development plan for you to complete.

Let's get started!

## What's inside

### Welcome and role overview

- 4 Welcome from the chief guide
- 5 Our values
- 6 Girlguiding's Strategy
- 7 Your induction
- 7 Your role
- 12 Trusteeship
- 13 Key Girlguiding policies
- 14 What skills does a commissioner need?
- 14 Support and guidance
- 15 Keeping in touch

### Your personal induction plan

- 17 Induction checklist
- 21 Your local network
- 22 Who will you be leading?
- 23 Personal development plan
- 25 SWOT template

### Appendix

- 27 The guiding family
- 28 Doing Our Best standards
- 28 Volunteer code of conduct
- 28 Safeguarding
- 29 Essential duties of a trustee
- 29 Using GO: our membership system



# Welcome and role overview

# Welcome from the chief guide

Congratulations on your new role! You are now part of a team of inspirational women, all sharing their skills and passions to inspire and encourage girls.

As a local commissioner you will help volunteers give girls and young women in your district or division the very best guiding experiences.

You will get lots of support along the way. This welcome book is the first step to understanding your role more fully. Inside you will find lots of helpful information, including where to go to get more support, and ideas for personal development. You will also get support from people locally.

Thank you so much for volunteering with us and making a difference to girls and leaders in your area. Good luck with the new role - you will be fantastic!

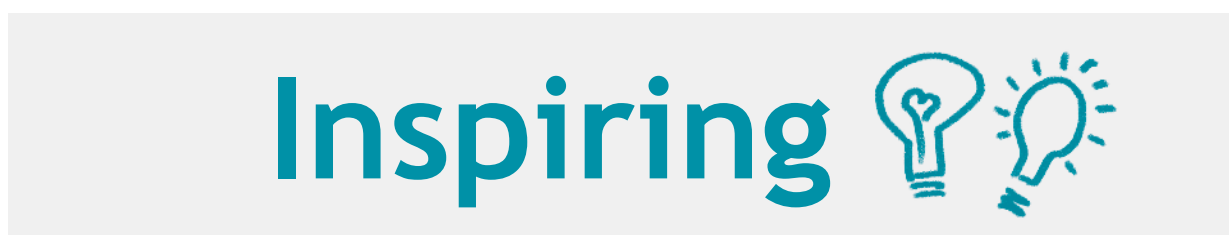


Tracy Foster

Tracy Foster, Chief Guide, UK

# Our values

The Girlguiding values are for you as well as for the volunteers and girls you are supporting. Your role should be challenging, empowering and fun!



# Girlguiding's Strategy - today, tomorrow, together

Girlguiding exists to help girls and young women find their voice and build skills and confidence - inspiring them to discover the best in themselves and empowering them to make a positive difference in their community. You can read more about our strategy on the [Girlguiding website](#) (search for 'strategy').

## Our goals:

- Let's create exceptional experiences for girls
- Let's create a rewarding volunteer experience
- Let's be more inclusive and make a bigger impact



## Exceptional experiences for girls

Local commissioners have the important job of helping Girlguiding to reach these goals. By supporting the volunteers who work with them, you will help to ensure girls and young women in your district and division achieve their maximum potential.



## Rewarding volunteer experience

As part of your role you should take time to reflect on Girlguiding's strategy and, with your team, think how your local area can work to achieve it.



## Inclusive and impactful

# Your induction

Your induction period is a time for you to learn more about your role and to start considering your vision and strategy for your district or division. Your induction begins as soon as you have been appointed and can last for up to six months.

The person supporting your induction might be your county commissioner, a mentor and, if helpful, the outgoing district or division commissioner. This is an essential time to ask questions and seek support to ensure that you feel confident in your role and clear about your responsibilities.

You should work together to complete the 'Your personal induction plan' section of this welcome book. In it you will find an induction checklist, a personal development plan and space to note who is in your

support network and your team. Remember, it doesn't all need to be covered in one day!

If you have a mentor, when you first meet them it is important to agree how you will work together, your responsibilities and how often you will be in touch with each other. The aim of mentoring is to ensure you have someone to show you the ropes and help you develop the skills to lead your local area. A mentor can be really useful if you want to bounce ideas off someone or seek guidance and feedback.

# Your role

Like the Girlguiding values, the role of a local commissioner is inspiring, empowering, fun and challenging! You will be leading and managing a team of dedicated and skilled volunteers who deliver guiding in your district or division. Communication, teamwork and organisational skills will be key.

While your role will be challenging, you should not be overwhelmed by it. Work together with the volunteers you are managing to make the most of the skills and time you are all able to give. You should delegate and share responsibility for tasks where appropriate. No two districts or divisions are the same and you will need to discover what works locally for you and your team.

**The role of a district or division commissioner is interesting and varied. You will be:**

- Leading and managing your district's or division's volunteer team
- Ensuring your district and/or division is working towards the Doing Our Best standards and Girlguiding's Strategy
- Managing the smooth administration and finances of your local area
- Promoting Girlguiding's communications
- Growing guiding
- Part of your local guiding area
- Part of the larger guiding family

In the next few pages, you will find more details of some of the tasks you will do in each of these areas, together with some of the skills and guiding policies that you will need to help you.

Take time to discuss the tasks with the person supporting your induction. Together, consider which tasks could be delegated or shared, which are priorities for your local area and where you might need extra skills or development support.

Make a note of these and add them to your development plan in the 'Your personal induction' section. Remember you're not alone in your role, and you can always ask for extra help and support.

## Leading and managing the division/district's volunteer team

*Skills: communication, team management, teamwork, organisation. Relevant guiding policies: Learning and Development policy, Code of Conduct, Equality and Diversity policy.*

- Lead, support and manage a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure high quality guiding is happening in your area.
- Build good relationships with the volunteers in your area and make sure volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure local guiding business is conducted efficiently and effectively via team meetings.
- Devise an area strategy and action plan to implement and review and update it regularly.
- Organise and effectively communicate area meetings (schedule dates, circulate an agenda ahead of time, take notes, send out minutes etc).
- Manage any problems or concerns that arise within your division/district.

Delegate  
Priority

### Development needs

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## Ensuring the district/division is working towards the Doing Our Best standards

*Skills: communication, organisation, initiative. Relevant guiding policies: Code of Conduct, Learning and Development policy, Safeguarding policy, Health, Safety and Welfare policy, Risk Assessment policy.*

- Ensure the volunteers in your district/division are familiar with the Doing Our Best checklist and standards and help everyone to work towards them.
- Visit units to ensure good quality guiding is happening.
- Celebrate and share great ideas between units.
- Be an encourager! Present qualifications and awards (or other forms of thanks and recognition) to celebrate girls and volunteers. Recognise the commitment of all adults within the area, giving informal thanks and, where appropriate, nominating individuals for awards.



Delegate  
Priority

- Ensure that volunteers have completed mandatory training.
- Provide support/mentoring to leaders in training and new leaders.
- Identify volunteer training needs and raise requirements at the appropriate level.
- Recognise when support is needed by members of the team and respond appropriately.

Development needs

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(See the [Girlguiding website](#) for more information on the standards -search for 'doing our best'.)

## Administration

*Skills: organisation, time management, prioritisation, computer literacy, teamwork. Relevant guiding policies: Managing Information policy, Safeguarding policy, Health, Safety and Welfare policy, Employer's Liability certificate, Public Liability certificate, Personal Accident and Medical Expenses certificate.*

- Ensure that all administrative resources for the area run effectively and GO is kept up to date with member roles and qualifications.
- Check all member roles in the area are compliant with A Safe Space.
- Submit and update training and events dates on the area calendar or equivalent.
- Deal effectively and in a timely manner with concerns and complaints in the area.
- Ensure ongoing good practice and legal compliance in all health and safety matters.
- Sign off award nominations for other levels of guiding where relevant.
- Manage residential event notification forms (REN forms) - check details (eg ratios, qualifications), risk assessment form and approve/sign them off.
- Approve/sign off unit grant applications.
- Give approval for activities away from the unit meeting place and review risk assessments.
- Follow processes when agreeing to units being set up or closed and support volunteers, girls and parents when a unit needs to close.
- Coordinate events for members in the area.
- Be the main contact for the area on GO.
- Arrange DBS and reference checks for volunteers.

### Development needs

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## Finance

*Skills: organisation, computer literacy, prioritisation, time management. Relevant guiding policies: Finance policy, Fundraising policy, Managing Information policy.*

- Understand your role as a trustee and ensure financial matters are monitored and policies adhered to.
- Check that unit accounts are accurate and independently verified.
- Understand the Gift Aid process and encourage its use.
- Ensure units pay subscriptions on time.
- Keep area accounts and ensure they are independently verified and submitted to the next level.
- Set a budget for the area and check that accounts are accurate and up to date.
- Manage property owned by local guiding units or areas.

Delegate  
Priority

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### Development needs

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## Promoting Girlguiding and communication

*Skills: communication, dealing with difficult situations, computer literacy. Relevant guiding policies: Complaints policy, Marketing, Communications and Media policy, Managing Information policy, Equality and Diversity policy.*

- Familiarise yourself with Girlguiding's key messages and promote these in any communications with the public.
- Be an ambassador for the values of Girlguiding.
- Keep any websites or social media presence for the area up to date.
- Represent the division or district at external events, promoting a positive image of Girlguiding.
- Implement and develop external partnerships eg with local voluntary groups, Trefoil Guild, local authority.
- Respond to general enquiries from volunteers, parents and members of the public.

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### Development needs

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## Being part of your local guiding area

*Skills: communication, decision making, prioritisation, teamwork. Relevant guiding policies: Marketing, Communications and Media Policy, Learning and Development policy.*

- Promote local, national and international opportunities available within guiding, and encourage young members and volunteers to take part.
- Promote opportunities for training, activities and fundraising.
- Maintain good communications with other commissioners in your area.
- Keep up to date with new resources and programme initiatives, and use them as appropriate.

Delegate  
Priority

### Development needs

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## Being part of the larger guiding family

*Skills: communication, teamwork, organisation, initiative. Relevant guiding policies: Learning and Development policy, Code of Conduct.*

- Attend meetings at other levels of guiding and report back to volunteers in your area.
- Be committed to undertaking relevant training.
- Learn about the structure of Girlguiding and how your responsibilities and position fit within it.
- Be willing to learn about Girlguiding's national and local strategic aims and how these are delivered locally.
- Learn about Girlguiding's policies and code of conduct.
- Develop links with different level commissioners.

### Development needs

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## Growing guiding

*Skills: organisation, initiative, teamwork, communication, team management. Relevant guiding policies: Membership policy, Vetting and Recruitment policy, Marketing, Communications and Media policy, Equality and Diversity policy, Learning and Development policy.*

- Be aware of change within membership. Consider local demographics and external developments.
- Lead on strategies for recruiting more girls and volunteers for your area.
- Contact prospective volunteers and match them to possible roles.
- With support from the local team, welcome and induct new volunteers to the area.
- Support work around girls' transitions between sections and transfers within the area.
- Promote inclusion and provide support to units in your area to include all girls and adult volunteers.
- Support volunteers who want to open a new unit.
- Make sure waiting lists for girls are well managed by units.

Delegate  
Priority



### Development needs

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# Trusteeship

As a local commissioner you are a charitable trustee for your local area. This means that you hold responsibility for the correct management and administration of the finance and property (if any) in your local area.

Please read the government's document ['The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do'](#), and have a look at the appendix (page 29) where you will find a summary of your duties as a trustee.

Discuss your trusteeship with the person supporting your induction and make sure that you fully understand how to undertake the relevant tasks for your local area.

# Key Girlguiding policies

Girlguiding's policies and best practice guides ensure that guiding is a safe space for everyone. It is very important that you familiarise yourself with them and ask any questions that you have. Details of Girlguiding's policies can be found on the [Girlguiding website](#) (search for 'policies').

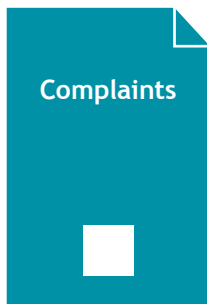
## Health, safety and welfare



## Best practice guides



## Behaviour



## Administration



# What skills does a commissioner need?

No one expects you to be able to do everything at once. That's why you have a team around you to support you. You should consider your team's strengths and weaknesses (without assumptions or judgment) and work together to build the skills you need through training, advice and encouragement.

Below are some of the skills that will be helpful when fulfilling your role:

- Excellent communication skills.
- Ability to manage time and prioritise tasks.
- Good decision-making skills.
- Ability to motivate and inspire adult volunteers.
- Computer literacy and being comfortable with using databases and email.
- High level of organisation, and ability to work on your own initiative.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Ability to manage a team effectively.
- Ability to deal with difficult situations.
- Ability to ask for help and support when needed.

## Support and guidance

We hope that this welcome book answers some of your initial questions about your role. If you would like further support and guidance, or have any questions that have not been covered in this book, you can:

- Search for 'new commissioner' on the Girlguiding website.
- Get a copy of the Commissioner Handbook.
- Speak to your mentor or county commissioner and local support networks.
- Complete the '[Being a commissioner](#)' e-learning (search the website for '*being a commissioner*').
- Attend country/region training opportunities.
- Make the most of the skills, experience and knowledge of your team.
- Use the search function on the website for specific queries.

Contact Girlguiding HQ:

**020 7834 6242**

Contact Commissioner Support via email:

**commissionersupport  
@girlguiding.org.uk**



The person supporting your induction should be able to direct you to relevant local training and the support available. Make a note of the opportunities in your personal development plan on page 24.

The dedicated **Volunteer Learning and Development team** are also available to support you (**020 7834 6242 ext. 3012**), and you can find many training resources on their webpages (search for '*learning and development*').

# Keeping in touch

There's always so much going on in guiding. That's why we like to keep you in the loop and up to speed, online and in print.



## Discover, grow

Landing in your inbox every two weeks is *Discover, grow*, our e-newsletter that will round up all the most recent goings-on in guiding.

## Guiding magazine

Dropping into your letterbox or inbox each term is guiding magazine. You'll find it packed full of activity ideas, great guiding conversations and insightful interviews.

## [girlguiding.org.uk](http://girlguiding.org.uk)

Got a question about guiding? Chances are the answer will be on our website. What events are coming up? Easy. What training can you get? Sorted. If it doesn't have the answer you're looking for, the website will tell you where you can find it.

## [facebook.com/girlguidinguk](https://facebook.com/girlguidinguk)

### @Girlguiding

Keeping in touch works both ways. Share your photos, views and stories with us on Facebook and Twitter (where you can also get all the latest news and updates from us too).



# Your personal induction plan



# Induction checklist

Use this induction checklist with the person supporting you in your new role. Ensure you understand and have discussed all the tasks together during the first six months in your new role.

## Getting to know your team

- I have had an induction meeting with the county commissioner or other relevant next level commissioner.
- A mentor has been allocated to me.
- I know who my peers are and who is in my support network.
- I have familiarised myself with the district or division units under my leadership.
- I have visited and/or spoken with the local volunteers who are under my leadership.

Complete

### Notes

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## Learning about the role

- I have reviewed the local commissioner [role description](#) (search the website for 'role description').
- I have identified areas where I can delegate.
- I have received a handover from the outgoing local commissioner.
- I know who to ask if I have any questions as I begin my role.

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## Learning about Girlguiding

- I have read and discussed the Girlguiding [Code of Conduct](#) (search the website for 'code of conduct').
- I have checked I am registered on GO to receive the relevant national and local Girlguiding mailings.

- I am familiar with the Doing Our Best standards (see appendix, page 29).
- I have read and understood Girlguiding’s policies including the Complaints policy and the Safeguarding policy.

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## Personal development

- I have discussed and identified areas of personal development.
- I have completed a personal development plan.
- I know where to go to find out about training opportunities and further support.
- I have completed GDPR training.
- I have completed A Safe Space training levels 1 to 4.

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## Understanding local guiding

- I am aware of other local organisations that are available to support Girlguiding.
- I am aware of any local commitments/events eg remembrance service, local carnival, activity days etc and the actions to be taken.
- I have asked about any outstanding complaints, compliance, and safeguarding concerns in my area and identified who is carrying out any ongoing actions.
- I know where leaders can find dates of upcoming training opportunities in my county.

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## Managing local finances

Complete

- I have met with the treasurer (where relevant) and checked the signatories on the district or division bank account are correct.
- I have developed and set a budget together with my team and next level commissioner.
- I have read the [subscriptions information](#) on the website and understand my role in it, including setting a local levy (search for 'subscriptions').
- I know what guiding properties there are in my area and who the trustees are.
- I know when all unit and district or division accounts are next due to be checked.
- The unit accounts have been reviewed within the last 12 months.

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## Making it flow

- I have made a calendar with actions that need to take place regularly, eg reviewing the unit accounts, unit waiting lists.
- I have reviewed the current guiding waiting lists for my district or division.
- I have reviewed the status of mandatory training and checks eg DBS, 1st Response and A Safe Space checks.

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## Local administration

- I have reviewed the area constitution and considered if it needs updating.
- I understand about [managing risk](#) and have reviewed and updated the area risk log/register (search for 'managing risk').
- I understand the REN process and form, and how to check and authorise it, and am aware of any planned residential events and international trips.

- I know when the [Information and Consent form](#) should be used and have read and understood the home contact process (search for 'consent form' and 'home contact').
- I have considered and noted dates for the local meetings and communication that need to take place on a regular basis to enable all volunteers to be supported.

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## Local development

- I have begun work with my local members to identify the strengths and weaknesses of guiding in my area (see SWOT template on page 25).
- I have viewed the data on GO relating to my district or division including the numbers of girls and volunteers in each unit.
- I have set a goal/vision for the future of Girlguiding in my area

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# Your local network

As a local commissioner you are now part of an enthusiastic team and community. This community will be fun to work with, a caring source of support and will challenge and empower you.

Use the space below to note who is in your local support network with the help of the person supporting your induction. We've left some space for you to add other supportive roles, such as your peer network and specialist advisers.

There are a lot of different volunteer roles in Girlguiding. There is more information on these roles

and how your role fits into the wider Girlguiding family in the appendix (page 27).

At times your role might be challenging, but remember you are never working alone and you should call on the other volunteers in your local area to help where necessary.

Role	Name	Contact information	How can they support me?
Country/ region office.			<i>Eg contact region office about region opportunities, events and training</i>
Country/region commissioner(s).			<i>Eg advice on dealing with difficult situations</i>
Mentor/buddy.			<i>Eg for peer support on how to do my role</i>

# Who will you be leading?

Work with the person supporting your induction to write down who you will be leading and their roles.

In the table below are some of the common volunteer roles that you might be supporting and space to include more. Focus together on how you can best support the volunteers. Find a time to speak with each of them, to

introduce yourself, find out their skills and ask them what support they'd like from you. Don't forget to think how they can support you too! Teamwork is an important skill as a commissioner.

Role	Name	Skills they have	How we can support each other
Unit leader			
Unit helper			
Assistant leader			
Young leader			
Administrator			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
District assistant			

# Personal development plan

Use this space to identify your development needs, prepare a learning log, set realistic timescales and update your progress to keep you on track. The aim is to encourage your ongoing development in Girlguiding and give you the opportunity to develop skills that are helpful to your new role.

Look at the role description and skills list on pages 7 and 14. Together with the person supporting your induction, consider what you feel confident doing and where you would like to develop your skills.

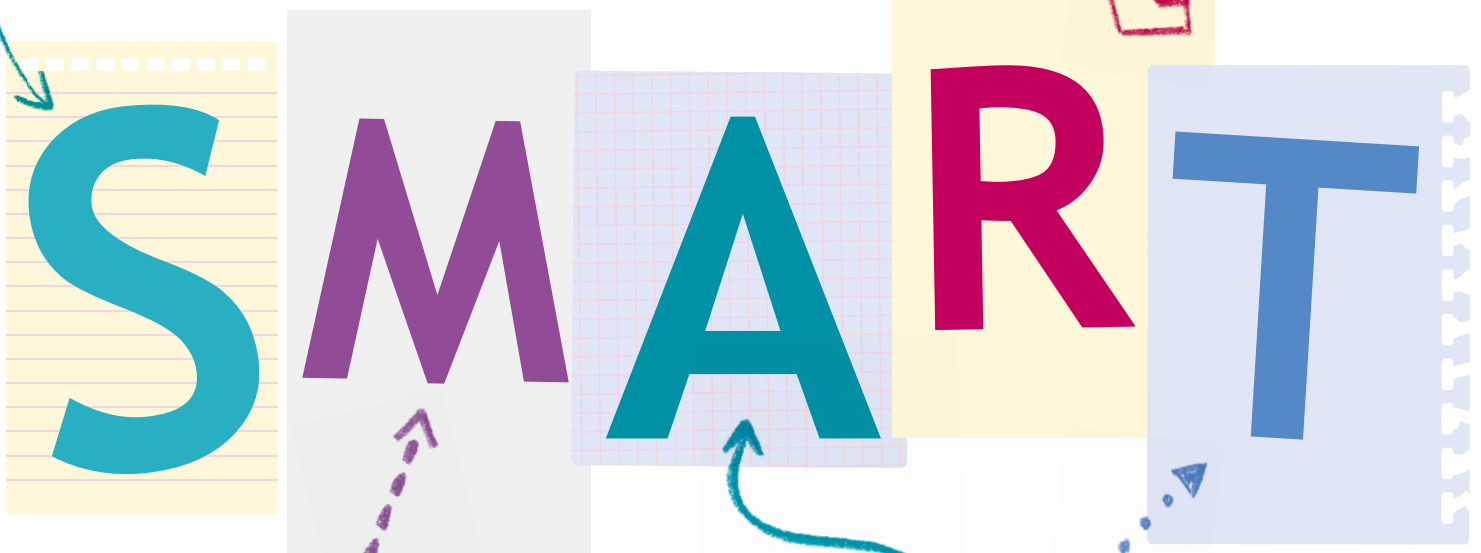
Remember to keep your learning goals...

## SPECIFIC:

Are the details clear and focused on your learning goal?

## REALISTIC:

Is it realistically achievable?



## MEASURABLE:

Will it be useful? How will it be measured?

## ACHIEVABLE:

Do you have everything you need to complete the task?

## TIME-BOUND:

Does the action have an achievable target date? Has a review date been set?





# SWOT template

When developing a strategy for your local area, you may find it helpful to work through this SWOT template with your team. It will help you to analyse the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats to guiding in your area. You may wish to use it to look at guiding as a whole in your local area, or with individual local units to plan for the future.

## Strengths

- What does guiding do really well in our local area? Don't forget to celebrate these!
- Where are we promoting the themes of the current Girlguiding strategy?

## Weaknesses

- Where is there room for improvement?
- Do we follow all the Girlguiding policies?
- Do our volunteers have all the skills we need?

## Opportunities

- What opportunities are there for local guiding in our area? Good PR opportunities, upcoming training opportunities, opportunities to grow Girlguiding, recruit more volunteers, opportunities to further Girlguiding's strategy etc.

## Threats

- What are the potential threats to guiding in my area? Eg girls affording subs, volunteers over-stretched etc.

# THREE

## Appendix

In this appendix we have included additional information and tools you may find helpful in your role.

# The guiding family

Your role means that you are now part of the wider guiding family. It's a very large family and it can be helpful to understand where your role fits into the wider volunteer structure of Girlguiding.

## Countries and regions

At the highest level, the UK is split into ten countries and regions. Scotland, North West England and Cymru are some examples.

## Counties

The countries and regions are then divided into counties. These include, for example, Cheshire Border and Cardiff & East Glamorgan,

## Divisions and districts

Most counties have several divisions, for example Stevenage division or Tamworth division. Some smaller counties don't have divisions and are broken down into districts instead.

Divisions (and some counties) are broken into districts. Lanark district and Taunton West district are examples of districts.

## Units

Districts have a number of units which are the groups that girls in different sections attend. Some examples are 2nd Bangor Brownies or 1st Luton Guides.

Within each of the countries and regions there are many different volunteer roles. There are roles working with girls, working with volunteers, training and mentoring roles, admin support roles, recruitment roles etc. If you are interested in finding out more about all these different roles, visit our [website](#) for more information (search for 'volunteer roles in guiding').

To learn about different volunteer role administration requirements for each level, visit the [Girlguiding website](#) (search for 'access levels').

At a national level, we're overseen by our [board of trustees](#) which is chaired by the chair of trustees. The chief guide and deputy chief guide are also on the board of trustees. They use their mixture of skills and experiences to lead Girlguiding and shape our future. You can read more about our trustees on the [Girlguiding website](#) (search for 'trustees').

In addition to the above volunteer structure, Girlguiding has a national staff team headed by our [chief executive](#) who is responsible for ensuring that work undertaken by staff follows the direction agreed by the trustees.

# Doing Our Best standards

The Doing Our Best standards are checklists for good quality unit guiding. You should ensure you have read and understood them.

The checklists are a useful tool to help you discuss the standards with your team and ensure that you are

working towards meeting the standard, and to celebrate achievement and share good practice.

You can access [checklists and a poster for these standards](#) to help you to do this on the Girlguiding website (search for 'doing our best').

# Volunteer Code of Conduct

Our volunteer [Code of Conduct](#) maps out what is expected of you at all times (search the website for 'code of conduct'). It's Girlguiding's expectation of how you work with others in Girlguiding (including volunteers, staff and girls) and members of the public (including parents and partner organisations).

By following it you will be able to check that you are always doing the right thing and behaving in the right way. As a local commissioner you should make sure that you have read and understood it.

# Safeguarding

Safety is paramount in guiding. You should make sure that you have completed all relevant [A Safe Space](#) training (search the website for 'a safe space'). An important part of your role as a local commissioner will be to ensure that all volunteers in your local area have completed the relevant A Safe Space training.

To report a concern about a girl or volunteer, contact your local commissioner or the Safeguarding team at **Girlguiding HQ** on **020 7834 6242** or [safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk). For out of hours emergencies call **07508 032997**.

Contact Girlguiding HQ:

**020 7834 6242**

Safeguarding team via email:

**[safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk)**

Out of hours emergencies:

**07508 032997**



# Essential duties of a trustee

Here is the governments guidance on the six main duties of a trustee. This document, [‘The essential trustee: 6 main duties’](#), can be found on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk)

- 1 Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit.
- 2 Comply with your charity’s governing document and the law.
- 3 Act in your charity’s best interests.
- 4 Ensure your charity is accountable.
- 5 Manage your charity’s resources responsibly.
- 6 Act with reasonable care and skill.



## Using GO - our membership system

GO is our online membership system that allows you to manage membership records for volunteers in your area. As a local commissioner you can:

- Update information about volunteers in your area.
- Update some awards and qualifications.
- Check and run reports on mandatory qualifications such as DBS/PVG checks, A Safe Space and 1st Response.
- Contact your volunteer team.
- See new volunteer enquiries for your area and ensure they are updated as they progress through the recruitment process.
- View young member information.
- Respond to emails that are sent through GO.

Before you log in you need to activate your account. If you haven't been sent this by email you should contact our membership systems team on [membershipsistemas@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:membershipsistemas@girlguiding.org.uk).

All information on how to use GO is available once logged in. For more information on GO, visit the [Girlguiding website](#) (search for 'access levels').



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

**Girlguiding**

This welcome book is designed to support you in your role of county commissioner and includes what to expect from your induction, where to find the information you'll need, how to access additional support and how to continue learning and developing in your role.

**020 7834 6242**  
**infoteam@girlguiding.org.uk**  
**girlguiding.org.uk**

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