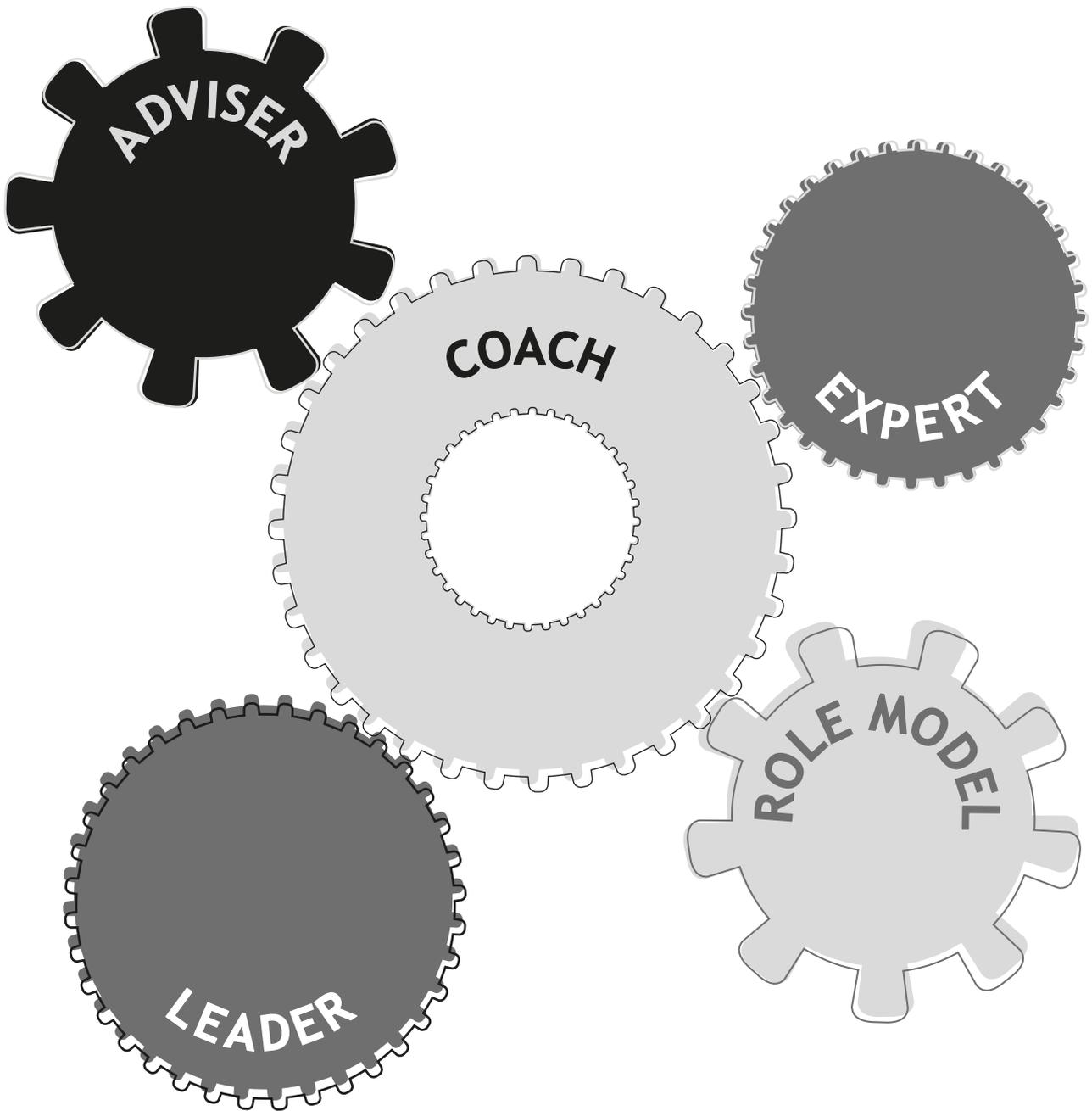




WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding



# Mentoring

## Handbook

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# Foreword

**Mentors like you matter to us, our girls and the next generation of leaders.**

Thank you so much for volunteering to take the role of Leadership Qualification Mentor.

It's because of brilliant people like you that we can keep developing new leaders to take more girls on their guiding adventures.

I've been lucky enough to have some incredible mentors who've helped me and I think this supportive role is one of the most important in guiding. We need to inspire and nurture all volunteers.

## **Making a difference to girls' lives**

As a mentor you have the unique chance to give something back. Perhaps you remember what it meant to be a Rainbow, Brownie or Guide. Or maybe you've joined Girlguiding more recently, believe in what we do and want to make a difference.

Mentoring can give you perspective on your own experiences too. You will need to be patient and understanding and you will reap rewards from encouraging someone else into the joy of being a leader in guiding.

## **About our handbook**

This has been designed to help you, whether you're new to the role or have been a mentor for a while.

You'll be working with all kinds of different leaders. The handbook will support you to have the right conversations to help them from the moment they start their Leadership Qualification, and beyond.

I'm confident you'll enjoy your new role, thanks again for all you do for Girlguiding.



Amanda Medler Chief Guide, UK

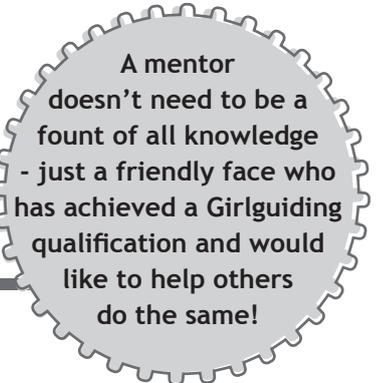


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## What is a mentor in Girlguiding?

'Mentoring' can be used to describe lots of different arrangements where a more skilled or experienced person (a mentor) is paired with a less skilled or less experienced person (a mentee). A mentor-mentee relationship can be formally arranged, when an organisation matches a mentor to an individual, or it can develop naturally. Mentoring relationships are an important part of many personal and professional settings.

Within Girlguiding, mentoring is a specific role that is in place to support volunteers to complete qualifications. Having a good mentor makes a huge difference to the speed at which new leaders manage to settle into their role and complete their Leadership qualification.



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## Qualities of a mentor

Mentors will draw on many of their personal qualities and skills when supporting a leader in training.

**These include:**

- Listening - taking the time to be quiet and really listen to what is being said as well as identifying how the leader in training may be feeling.
- Communication - sharing expertise in a way that the leader in training can relate to, and asking great questions to encourage leaders in training to think for themselves.
- Honesty - giving feedback in a considerate way and being honest about personal experiences.

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## Responsibilities of a mentor

The main responsibility of a mentor in Girlguiding is to support a leader in training to gain her Leadership qualification (LQ). The LQ is mainly self-directed: leaders in training complete the LQ workbook, learning on the job as they volunteer as part of a unit leadership team. This hands-on experience is invaluable, and a leader in training is also likely to get assistance from her unit leaders which will help her to complete most sections of the workbook independently.

However, it's also important for the leader in training to have broader support, so her Leadership qualification coordinator will assign a mentor. As a mentor you'll have a valuable role to play in advising and encouraging the leader in training, and making sure she stays on track with her LQ requirements.

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## Key responsibilities



Maintain contact and visit your assigned leader in training when possible.



*Guide a leader in training through the Leadership qualification.*



Stay in touch with the leader in training's local commissioner and relevant advisers/coordinators, or her unit leader, to keep them up to date on her progress.



*Assess and evaluate your leader in training's progress against the Leadership qualification requirements.*



Signpost the leader in training to relevant local training opportunities and help her to register for these.

**Remember!** As a mentor, you are not line managing the leader in training but are there as a supportive and friendly face.

If a situation arises which you're not confident in dealing with, please inform the leader in training's local commissioner.

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## Approaches to mentoring

As you'll only have limited time with your leader in training it's worth considering how you can get the most out of your time together. You'll play different roles with your leader in training, depending on what she needs most at any time.

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- The role you will most commonly play is an 'assessor', where you will support your new leader by ensuring that her evidence and workbook meet the quality standards for the LQ.
  - You will probably be required to sign off your leader in training's workbook each time you meet.
  - Give yourself time to read through the answers written, refer to the guidance available, and try your best to be as consistent as possible.
- 



- Coaching is a powerful way to encourage someone to think for themselves rather than telling them the answer.
  - There may be times when your leader in training asks you for advice and you feel that she knows the answer already; perhaps she's just lacking the confidence or perspective to see it.
  - Sometimes it's better to resist the urge to simply tell her what to do and ask an open question. **How about:**
    - 'What could you do?'
    - 'What are you trying to achieve?'
    - 'What options do you have?'
- 



- There will be times when you are truly acting as a mentor, using your experience and learning to guide your leader in training. Consider how to share your experiences most effectively.
- You might provide information or signpost your leader in training to the Girlguiding website and resources. You don't need to have all the answers - you can always ask other leaders or your commissioner if you're not sure.
- Telling your own stories and sharing any mistakes you've made is a really powerful way of capturing someone's imagination and making sure they know that they are not alone in being 'new'. You were once new as well and can remember how that felt.
- Some of the elements of the LQ are best completed by being put into practice - why not work together on completing a fire risk assessment and walking round the unit meeting place together? If you jointly complete any exercises, always encourage the leader in training to take the notes!
- You could also consider inviting your leader in training to your meeting place so she can see how another unit runs. She may pick up some hints and tips that allow her to complete sections and return to her own unit with new ideas.

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## Leader in training/mentor agreement

The relationship between a leader in training and her mentor is an important way of helping volunteers to feel confident and committed to carry out their roles. This contract should ensure that the leader in training, and the mentor understand what is expected from the relationship, and how it will proceed. **The mentor and the leader in training should both keep a signed copy of this agreement, which can be referred to if anyone is ever unsure about the relationship that they share.**

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## Mentoring agreement

By signing this agreement, the mentor and leader in training recognise that we are both voluntarily entering into a partnership to ensure a supportive environment in which to complete the Leadership qualification. Through regular communication and meetings, we will focus on the leader in training's learning and development needs.

### We agree that:

- 1 The mentoring relationship will last for two years or until the leader in training has completed her qualification, whichever comes first.
  - 2 We will meet at least once every three months, with contact via other methods (such as email or phone) between meetings.
  - 3 If for any reason either of us cannot make a meeting we will inform the other person at least 24 hours in advance and arrange an alternative date.
  - 4 We will follow Girlguiding's Code of Conduct and notify our local commissioner if we feel this has been breached.
  - 5 We agree that the mentor's role is to:
    - Start and end the relationship as appropriate.
    - Keep a meeting log of our relationship to ensure progress is tracked effectively.
    - Support the leader in training in identifying areas of learning development.
    - Maintain confidentiality with the leader in training, but inform the commissioner if she discusses anything which seems to be a breach of
- 6 We agree that the leader in training's role is to:
    - Girlguiding's Code of Conduct.
    - Give the leader in training responsibility for her own learning.
    - Complete a reflection process with the leader in training once she has submitted her portfolio.
    - Create a safe learning environment.
    - Facilitate the development of the relationship.
    - Provide feedback to the leader in training which is specific, timely, genuine, objective and forward-looking.
    - Contribute to the monitoring and evaluation process.

We agree to the above statements.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader in training: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Meeting your leader in training: Session guidance

So you've met your leader in training, and signed the agreement, but how do you know what to discuss? We have designed some 'grab and go' conversation starters to get you on your way, which can be downloaded [here](#).

- First meeting - introductions, 'getting to know you' exercise, assessing prior learning, introducing the LQ.
- Content meeting - to support the leader in training with the relevant knowledge for a particular topic.
- Observation meeting - attend a unit meeting and, using an observation template, provide the new leader with feedback on how she ran the meeting.
- 'Reinvigoration' meeting - for leaders in training who have lost their way! Coaching questions from the mentor to understand what's getting in the way, hints and tips, an exercise to get back to 'why they started' as a leader in training.

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## Completing and signing off a Leadership qualification

One of your roles as a mentor in Girlguiding will be acting as an assessor. You're the person who checks that the leader in training has provided evidence to show they have completed the qualification.

We often think of qualifications as evidence based, but it might not always be physically 'written' evidence. Leaders in training just need to be able to show that they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to apply their learning to a unit.

Evidence does not have to be formally presented, typed or neatly written up. In fact, a lot of the qualification can be signed off through conversations with an appropriate person and some discussion notes. Anyone who has worked with her, observed her, or discussed something relevant with her can sign to say a leader in training has completed a clause.

You should simply make sure that the leader in training has organised her portfolio of evidence so that it's easy to follow and maps across to the workbook. As a mentor, only you can sign off the completion of a module and the qualification.

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## Leadership qualification sign-off process

Generally, once you have signed off all the modules that the leader in training is working towards, you should send the workbook to your LQ coordinator who will forward it to the county verifier. It is worth noting that this process sometimes varies in different counties, so if this doesn't sound quite right, do check in with your commissioner to see how it's done in your area.

The role of the verifier is to make sure mentors are working to a consistent standard, and that the workbook has been signed off fairly. If the verifier has any comments or concerns about the mentoring process, she will raise these directly with the mentor. In some counties feedback is given through the LQ coordinator.

It is the verifier's responsibility to send the workbook back to the newly qualified leader.

# Sources of support for leaders in training

## Leadership qualification coordinator

- Reviews GO reports to monitor progress and new LQ starters.
- Matches leaders in training with mentors.
- Key contact for mentors to ask questions.
- Helps if there are issues to be addressed.

## Local commissioner

- Completes Join Us and recruitment checks.
- Welcomes the new leader to local guiding and to meetings.
- Offers support if there are issues, and answers questions/concerns.
- Keeps in touch.
- Keeps an eye on timescales and the 'valid to' dates of roles.
- Helps to access resources/trainings.
- Can sign off parts of modules.
- Updates the new leader's role on GO when the LQ is completed.

## Verifier

- Checks completed LQ to verify the work of the mentor.
- Gives constructive feedback to the mentor.

## Unit leader

- Welcomes the leader in training to the team.
- Involves her in the unit and in planning and running the programme.
- Gives opportunities to cover requirements of the LQ.
- Gives guidance where needed.
- Can sign off parts of modules.
- Flags up any concerns to the mentor/Leadership qualification coordinator/local commissioner.
- Helps to access resources/trainings.

## GO coordinator

- Regularly provides the Leadership qualification coordinator with relevant reports from GO to monitor progress of leaders in training (or the Leadership qualification coordinator can run them herself on GO).
- Updates information on GO as requested by Leadership qualification coordinator.

## Girls and parents

- Can sign off parts of modules where appropriate.

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## Support for mentors

As a mentor, you shouldn't be working in a silo. As well as the other roles involved in supporting a leader in training (page 8), support is available for you, from a range of sources. Remember, you don't need to have all the answers, just know where to ask!

*The LQ workbook itself contains useful information, such as safety checklists and a grid to record how the Five Essentials have been covered over a term. Each section contains some supporting notes to make sure the leader in training understands what is expected from her.*

**Local guiding members, such as your commissioner, advisers, other leaders and mentors, can all help you and your leader in training.**

Girlguiding has a range of publications that can support you, and there is a list of helpful reference materials in the LQ workbook. Many are available free from the Girlguiding website, and others can be bought at your local volunteer shop.

Trainings/adult support sessions are run differently everywhere but can be valuable for your role. Ask your county if they are running a mentor training session to help you network with others in your role!

It is also useful to make sure you're up to date with the programmes for each section, so do aim to attend a programme training every few years to keep your knowledge fresh - especially if you are mentoring beyond your section.

**Many counties also have their own information sources, such as calendars, websites or newsletters.**

You may need to claim expenses from time to time in your role as mentor. Check with your LQ coordinator about expenses and how to claim.

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## Dealing with issues

The leader in training/mentor agreement has been designed to prevent issues, as you will be able to refer to this throughout your relationship. However, sometimes you may still come across challenges in your role. Most frequently these arise because of communication breakdowns or an unsure relationship between the leader in training and the mentor.

Where possible, it is important to help identify any issues early on, for the sake of both the leader in training and yourself. There's a whole Girlguiding team behind you, so don't feel alone. If you have concerns about your leader in training's progress, please talk to her local commissioner and/or the LQ coordinator - they are there to support you.

The task of mentoring a leader in training through the LQ is a voluntary, two-way partnership. If for any reason your mentoring relationship is not working out, contact your LQ coordinator who will be able to guide you on the appropriate action to take.