



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Guidance notes for leaders

Running a Girlguiding unit

December 2019



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Guidance notes for leaders

Running a Girlguiding unit

December 2019

Introduction

These guidance notes are designed to help you to enable girls and young women to get the most that they can from Girlguiding. This resource is for anybody in, or embarking on, a unit leadership role in guiding. Whether you're a helper or running the group, it will help you to understand a little more about delivering a great guiding experience for girls.

This is just one of several resources which will help you to run your unit meetings - see ['key resources'](#) on page 19 for more information.

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| The foundations of Girlguiding | 4 |
| The Promise | 4 |
| The Law..... | 4 |
| The Five Essentials | 4 |
| Doing Our Best | 5 |
| Our Policies | 5 |
| Volunteer Code of Conduct | 5 |
| Staying updated | 5 |
| Programme | 6 |
| Skills builders | 6 |
| Unit meeting activities | 7 |
| Interest badges..... | 7 |
| Theme awards..... | 7 |
| Top section awards | 7 |
| Other opportunities | 8 |
| Understanding the different ages | 9 |
| Rainbows | 9 |
| Brownies | 9 |
| Guides..... | 10 |
| Rangers | 10 |
| Running your meetings | 11 |
| Guiding for all | 11 |
| Adapting activities | 11 |
| Communicating and decision making | 12 |
| Getting out and about | 13 |
| Trips and adventures | 13 |
| Girlguiding’s Outdoor and Adventure qualifications | 14 |
| A young member’s journey through guiding | 15 |
| The unit team | 17 |
| Leader names | 17 |
| What the unit team does..... | 17 |
| Other support available | 17 |
| Key resources | 18 |
| For leaders | 18 |
| For Rainbows | 18 |
| For Brownies..... | 18 |
| For Guides..... | 19 |
| For Rangers | 19 |
| Useful terminology | 20 |
| Appendix: Encouraging leadership - qualities and responsibilities of group leaders | 21 |

The foundations of Girlguiding

The Promise

Our Promise is a shared commitment that all girls and women in Girlguiding are invited to make. It links us not only to one another, but to 10 million people involved in guiding around the world!

When a member makes her Promise, she is promising:

- to be an active citizen of her community and the wider world
- to help others - from a kind word to a neighbour, to huge international campaigns
- to develop her spiritual side, exploring whatever she believes or cares about, and to respect the beliefs of others

All Girlguiding members are invited to make the same Promise when they are ready, although some girls may choose not to. The Promise is optional for volunteers; but to complete your Leadership qualification, you will need to make the Promise. Most girls make their Promise after being in the unit for around one school term, by this point, they will have experienced a range of activities and should feel settled. The Promise is part of the section Gold award criteria, meaning anyone who wishes to achieve their section Gold award must make their Promise (see page 7).

This is the Promise that Brownies, Guides, Rangers and leaders make, with a small addition for Brownies:

I promise that I will do my best, to be true to myself and develop my beliefs, to serve the Queen and my community, to help other people and to keep the (Brownie) Guide Law.

Rainbows have a shorter version of the Promise:

I promise that I will do my best to think about my beliefs and to be kind and helpful.

The Law

The Law is a set of affirmations and expectations of girls involved in guiding. It helps members to live by a moral code, and is an important part of building the Girlguiding community. There is a standard Law for Guides, Rangers and leaders, whilst Brownies have a shorter version that is easier to understand. Rainbows do not have a Law as it would be difficult for them to comprehend.

The Guide Law (for Guides, Rangers, and leaders):

- 1 A Guide is honest, reliable and can be trusted.
- 2 A Guide is helpful and uses her time and abilities wisely.
- 3 A Guide faces challenge and learns from her experiences.
- 4 A Guide is a good friend and a sister to all Guides.
- 5 A Guide is polite and considerate.
- 6 A Guide respects all living things and takes care of the world around her.

Fun fact!

The Girlguiding salute is three fingers held together on your right hand. The three fingers symbolise the three different parts of the Promise (see above). This sign can be made while making the Promise.

The Brownie Law

A Brownie Guide thinks of others before herself and does a good turn every day.

Did you know?

Promise celebrations don't have to be formal - although they can be! Wherever a girl/leader makes her promise, it should be a special occasion for her to celebrate her commitment to guiding. Girls and leaders can choose where they want to make their Promise, from the beach to their first camp, or in the meeting place!

The Five Essentials

We use five principles that provide a foundation for good quality guiding - we call these the Five Essentials. You should keep these in mind when deciding how your unit meetings and wider activities will work.

The Five Essentials are:



Working together in small groups



Encouraging self-government and decision making



A balanced and varied programme which is girl-led



Caring for the individual



Sharing a commitment to a common standard



Doing Our Best

The Doing Our Best standards are a set of three checklists to help leaders know they're providing good quality unit guiding. The checklists cover:

- The Five Essentials
- Safety and safeguarding
- Making guiding happen

The Doing Our Best standards are there to support you to run an amazing unit. Use the checklists to help you and your unit members reflect and celebrate your achievements, plan for the future and decide how you'll support each other.

You can find Doing Our Best checklists on the [Girlguiding website](#) - take a look to see how they can help you.

Our policies

Our policies and procedures help ensure guiding is a safe space for everyone. They set universal standards for all members and volunteers to follow, covering areas such as equality and diversity, safeguarding, learning and development, social media, complaints and managing information. It's essential that all volunteers observe Girlguiding policies and the guidance that supports them. Our policies and additional resources are reviewed regularly and published on the [Girlguiding website](#).

Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a leader, you have a responsibility to help girls and young women reach their full potential through great guiding experiences. Our Code of Conduct clearly maps out what is expected of you and how you should behave at all times to help give girls the best possible experience. You can find the Code of Conduct on the [Girlguiding website](#).

Staying updated

During your time in guiding, we'll keep you updated on new developments and changes to policies and procedures. Here's what you can expect:

- **Make Guiding Happen** - a monthly newsletter to all volunteers with essential information
- **Discover, Grow** - an opt-in fortnightly newsletter with further updates
- **guiding magazine** - a printed magazine posted out termly with in-depth articles on guiding

Make sure you opt in to all our communications to benefit from the latest news.

You will also receive information and updates that are local to you.

Programme

The Girlguiding programme is the suite of core resources, activities and badges on offer centrally which girls and leaders use to plan activities in and out of the unit meeting space. All programme resources have been designed to benefit the girl and enhance her guiding experience. They have been designed to challenge, inspire and empower our girls and young women. Each girl's experience of the programme is unique. It is shaped by her, her peer group and her unit leadership team. By understanding the girls you're working with, you'll be able to help them get the most out of guiding.

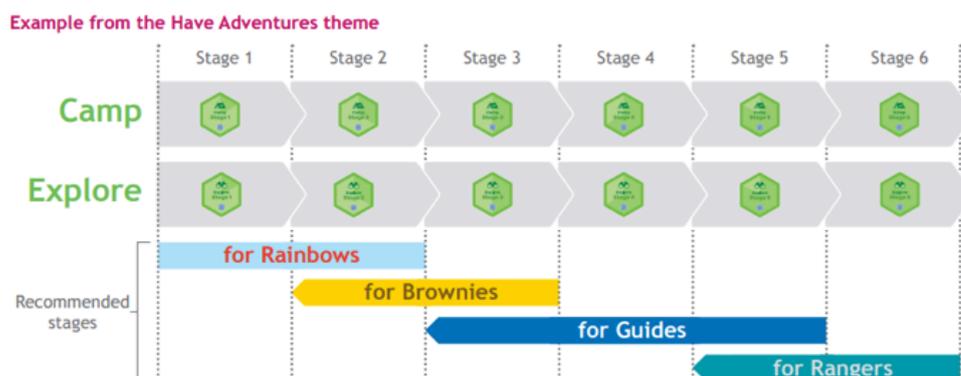
The programme is based around six core themes, seen in the diagram below, which run through all sections. As well as providing consistency, this gives girls a path on which they can gradually build their learning as they journey between sections in guiding, while making it easier for those leaders who volunteer with more than one section and helping leaders with their planning. Below, you can find a summary of the programme and the core elements. You can also read more about the programme structure, and complete programme training, on our [website](#).



Skills builders

Skills builders are staged badges that help girls develop core skills as they journey through guiding. These are designed to stretch and challenge girls of all abilities. Skills builders are structured as follows:

- Two skills builder topics per theme
- Six stages in each skills builder, as illustrated in the diagram below
- Five activities in each stage
- Designed to be done in small groups in the unit meeting space
- Supplied as A4 laminated cards, available from the [Girlguiding shop](#)



- This structure applies to all themes and all skills builders.
- For each stage, there are five activities which are purchased together in a skills builder pack. Girls need to complete all five activities in the pack.

Unit meeting activities

Unit meeting activities (UMAs) are designed to be ‘pick up and go’ - which means the card contains all the information a leader needs to organise the activity successfully within the unit. Unit meeting activities are supplied as A4 activity cards, available in packs of 12 from the [Girlguiding shop](#). Each pack contains section-specific activities covering a wide range of topics. New packs of activity cards are released each term.

Interest badges

Interest badges should be completed by girls away from the meeting place to help develop their independence. They offer girls a range of individual choices for activities which are fun, active and challenging alongside the experiences girls have in their unit. Interest badges are structured as follows:

- Three compulsory challenges in each badge
- The challenges require a minimal amount of support and resources to complete

Note: Interest badges aren’t compulsory, and not every girl will want to complete them. As a leader, you shouldn’t force girls to choose badges but support, encourage and inspire them.

Theme awards

There’s an award for each programme theme in every section, which means that a girl who starts in Rainbows and goes right through to Rangers could end up with 24 Theme awards!

To achieve her Theme award, a girl needs to complete the following combination of activities within the same theme for that section:

- One interest badge
- One skills builder stage
- A set number of hours of unit meeting activities (UMAs): three hours for Rainbows, four hours for Brownies and five hours for Guides and Rangers

Top section awards

Girls can achieve a section Bronze award once they have completed any two Theme awards in their section, and their section Silver award, when they have earned any four Theme awards.

When a girl has achieved all six Theme awards in her section, she can decide to take on the section Gold award challenge to achieve the relevant award for her section. The challenge changes depending on a girl’s section and her interests.

It’s a great achievement and a big commitment, so it must be the girl’s decision as to whether she chooses to complete a section Gold award.

Take a look at the [programme guidance notes for leaders](#), on the Girlguiding website, for more detail on how to support the girls in gaining these awards.



Other opportunities

A girl's journey in Girlguiding should include a variety of experiences, and it's important that girls have the opportunity to experience all parts of the programme. Although UMAs, skills builders and interest badges are the foundation of a girl's experience in guiding, there is still lots of room for girls to choose the other activities they love, too!

Other activities can be anything appropriate to the unit, and may involve adventurous outdoor activities, games and visits. The 'activity finder' on the Girlguiding website has lots of great ideas to help you think of things to do with your group. You can read more about running outdoor activities in 'Getting out and about' on page 13 of this resource.

Remember!

For safety reasons, there are a few activities you can't do as part of guiding, so it's important that you check the '[Prohibited activities](#)' page on the Girlguiding website

There are also a number of other opportunities available to girls when they reach different ages, and you should make sure that your unit members are aware of what they can get up to.

Guides:

- [Guide camp permit](#) - girls from the age of 12 can lead a camping trip with other Guides.
- [The Commonwealth award](#) - a great opportunity for girls aged 13+ to learn about other countries' history and culture!
- [Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#) - There are three levels of the award: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Guides aged 13, who are in the school year in which they turn 14, can begin a Bronze DofE programme.

Rangers:

- [Peer education](#) - girls aged 14+ can help Brownies, Guides and Rangers explore topics such as wellbeing and healthy relationships.
- [Lead Away permit](#) - girls aged 14+ can plan and lead indoor and outdoor residential for one night, for four to eight Guides or Rangers.
- [Queen's Guide award](#) - this is the highest award in guiding. Young women challenge themselves and develop their skills, while contributing to guiding and their local community. It is open to members aged 16 to 25.
- [Duke of Edinburgh's Award](#) - this is open to anyone aged 14 to 24 (or aged 13 and in the school year that they turn 14). There are three levels of the award - Bronze, Silver and Gold - that vary in length and commitment, but each level should be treated as a personal challenge to the girl undertaking it.
- [Girlguiding advocate](#) - the advocate panel is a national group of 18 Girlguiding members aged 14-25, who lead the direction of Girlguiding's advocacy and research. The panel gives girls a platform to use their voices and seek change at the highest levels.
- [British Youth Council](#) - we have a British Youth Council delegation of 10 members aged 14 to 25, from across the UK. Delegates learn how power and politics work and how they can use their voices and connect their views with other young people to create positive change.
- [International opportunities](#) - we're part of a global movement, so there are lots of opportunities for international adventures in Girlguiding. Look at the Girlguiding website, or have a chat with your county or country/region international adviser for more information.

You can find out more about these in the handbook for your section, available to purchase from Girlguiding shops.

Understanding the different ages

It is helpful to understand the influences on girls at different stages of their life, so we have touched on these below. However, every girl is different and will develop at different speeds, so make sure you take the time to get to know your girls as individuals as well as considering the external factors below.



Rainbows are the youngest section in guiding, aged five to seven (from four in Northern Ireland). Children of this age will have only recently started school, but they are often inquisitive about everything and love the opportunity to learn.

At this age, most children are still developing their basic vocabulary so repetitive songs and rhymes can be very valuable to help them adopt new words. Girlguiding has the 'Rainbow Song', which can be sung by Rainbows on any occasion.

The 'Rainbow Song'

*Look at the world around.
Learn everything you can.
Laugh as you go along.
Love this world of ours.*

*Look, Learn, Laugh, Love.
Rainbows have begun.
We're all here now.
Come and join the fun.*

(To say goodbye, the end of the song changes)

*Look, Learn, Laugh, Love.
We've had lots of fun.
Bye bye Rainbows.
Sleep well everyone.*

Top tip:

You might like to sing the 'Rainbow song' at a Promise ceremony or Pot of Gold party (when Rainbows move up to Brownies), at the start or end of a session, or when meeting with other Rainbows.

As Rainbows are constantly looking to learn about the world around them, you may find that they are more energetic than other sections and are unable to concentrate for long periods of time. Short activities often work best for Rainbows, to keep them engaged.



As our second youngest group in guiding, Brownies are aged between 7 and 10 years old.

A Brownie unit is divided into small groups called Sixes (although you don't need to have six in a group!). Each Six is led by a sixer and a second, and the unit can agree how these individuals are selected. Often, girls are chosen by age so that those who are oldest are empowered to take responsibility, but ultimately the role should be given to someone who you feel would be suitable for the role in line with the expectations on page 21. Getting to know your girls' personalities will help you to make this decision.

You could also introduce 'Brownie elections' and ask girls to put themselves forward for the unit to vote for.

Younger Brownies (seven- and eight-year-olds) can be very imaginative and value the space to play and be creative, whereas older Brownies (nine- and ten-year-olds) are likely to be facing more pressures in their education. They might have SATS or other exams, which means that they can be energetic and are likely to use Brownies to 'let off steam'.

Brownie-aged children are still developing their self-confidence and will sometimes be sensitive to what others think about them. As a result, recognition from adults is very important, and can come in many forms, including praise and enabling girls to take the lead in running activities.

Give it a go!

Not all Brownies will have the opportunity to become a sixer or second, so try to provide the experience in a different way - for example being a sixer at a residential event.



A girl can join Guides any time after her tenth birthday, and most move on shortly after their fourteenth birthday. Guides can be organised into Patrols, which are small groups

of four to eight girls, working together with the support of their Patrol leader and Patrol second. Girls can be elected as Patrol leaders and seconds based on their leadership qualities, and these individuals can then represent their Patrol at planning meetings (sometimes called [Patrol Leaders' Council](#)).

Friendships tend to play a large part in the life of girls at this age, and self-esteem is closely linked to how others see them. Peer pressure can be tougher as girls head towards their teens. Lots of social media platforms have an age restriction to prevent 13-year-olds from registering, although many girls will have accounts on these websites much earlier.

For some girls, being at Guides may give them an opportunity to discuss these pressures, and your girls should feel comfortable doing this if they need to. Peer educators can be hugely valuable for Guides, as they will deliver age-appropriate sessions based on issues that are relevant to girls. You can book a session through the [Girlguiding website](#).

Did you know?

As a Guide, girls can become a Rainbow or Brownie helper. This means helping leaders to plan and run meetings. Read more about this on [our website](#).



A girl can become a Ranger from the age of 14 to 18. This stage in a girl's life can be particularly challenging, as 14- to 16-year-olds face

GCSEs before typically starting college or sixth form. Leaving school age depends on where you live, which means that the paths members of your unit take could vary considerably from girl to girl; while some may be planning to move to university, others could be looking at getting a new job.

Rangers can be vulnerable to social influences such as their friends, celebrities and online networks. These external pressures can increase the need for Rangers to have their own space and develop new skills in a fun and varied way.

Did you know?

Girls aged 14 can also become peer educators. Peer educators deliver training sessions on topics that are important to girls, such as body confidence and mental wellbeing. Find out more on [our website](#).

Running your meetings

Guiding for all

At Girlguiding we pride ourselves on providing a modern and inclusive environment for all of our members - no matter their identity or background.

Every girl is different and it's important to keep this in mind when you meet any new member of your unit. Our [starting forms](#) allow parents to give you most of the important information about their child, but nothing is more valuable than getting to know them and their parent/carer - so make sure you do both. Some young people may need reasonable adjustments, such as extra support, to ensure that they can enjoy the same great guiding experience as their peers. Make yourself familiar with the Girlguiding [health care and personal care plans](#) and the [Including all](#) pages on the Girlguiding website, so that you're prepared to have those conversations if needed.

As part of a movement with such a strong history, many units like to channel some of our guiding traditions, but it's important that you remember how this may change the inclusivity of your group. For example, Girlguiding does not have any affiliation to a specific religion or faith, so it is important to let people know that we are open to all girls and we have members from many different faith groups as well as those who hold non-religious beliefs.

Adapting activities

There may be times when you'll need to adapt your programme so that all girls can take part. You can adapt a programme activity from the UMA or skills builder cards to make it more accessible to your group, so long as the aim and objectives remain the same. For instance, if you are doing a cooking activity, but your unit space doesn't have a kitchen, you might adapt the activity to cook over a fire or disposable barbecue, or tweak the recipe to include foods that don't need cooking over heat and can be eaten by all the girls in the unit.

It is also worth noting that the skills builders are staged, with a few recommended stages for each age group. This means that girls can start on a lower stage due to their skill or confidence level in the topic of the skills builder, if needed.

For more information about adapting activities, take a look at 'RECIPES' for successful adaptation, on the [Girlguiding website](#).

Remember!

If your girls are working towards their Theme or top section awards, they must complete the required number of programme activities from the core programme resources; other activities or experiences are not recognised to meet these criteria.

Communicating and decision making

Each section has its own way of communicating and taking the lead on decision making. This is a fundamental part of guiding, and as a leader this is something that you should encourage with your group. The formal discussion-making forums are outlined below:

- **Rainbow chat** - some units will hold a Rainbow chat weekly, whereas others are less frequent. This is an opportunity for your unit to make key decisions about the programme, or share what they've been up to during the week. Normally the group will sit in a circle to do this.
- **Brownie pow wow** - These can take place whenever there is something important to discuss, decide or share, and should involve everyone in the unit including volunteers. A pow wow should be seen as a safe place for the group to raise their thoughts in a non-judgemental environment, so everybody's opinions and ideas should be respected.
- **Guide Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC)** - This is an informal space for the Patrol leaders, leaders and young leaders to come together and make decisions about matters that concern more than one Patrol. It's an advisory space where the group can discuss what happens during Patrol time. Decisions about camps, local events and spending funds can all take place here.
- **Rangers** - by the time a girl is in Rangers, the space for making decisions may be less structured as you should find the girls delivering more of the programme themselves. They may need your help facilitating this, and you should still ensure that all girls have the opportunity to input. If you have a large unit, it may be helpful to introduce a group like Patrol Leaders' Council that can represent the girls at planning meetings.

Group chats aren't the only way to encourage input from your group. The [unit meeting activity cards](#) and [skills builders](#) are a fantastic way to foster girl-led guiding and decision making, as they are written to be suitable for girls to read and facilitate!

For top tips and ideas for decision making in your unit, see '[Participation on a plate](#)' on the Girlguiding website.

Getting out and about

Trips and adventures

As soon as the girls are involved in planning your unit's programme of activities, you'll discover that adventure means different things to different people. For some this could be as simple as taking a walk to a local park; for others this could be going for a day hike or visiting an activity centre.

There are lots of different ways to have adventures inside and outside the meeting place, but often young people spend a lot of their time indoors, so we would encourage you to explore the outdoors as much as possible. Lots of our skills builders and unit meeting activities can be adapted to be carried out in an outdoors environment, or to include a trip. Take a look at some of our unit meeting activity tasters to get you started: [Secrets of survival \(Rainbows\)](#), [First aid in the field \(Brownies\)](#), [Help \(Guides\)](#), [Can cooker \(Rangers\)](#).

It's easy to organise trips and adventures away from your normal venue, and there are a few things you need to know to make sure you're providing safe and supported activities for your unit:

- **Ratios** - these adult-to-child ratios are recommended when you're in your normal meeting place, but become mandatory when you're not (Rainbows 1:5, Brownies 1:8, Guides 1:12). Some activities may have specific ratios, so it's worth checking the '[activity finder](#)' on the Girlguiding website to be sure.
- **Risk assessments** - all activities should be risk assessed, but you may need to think about different risks if you're outside your meeting place. For example, make sure that the girls are wearing clothing appropriate for the weather - and do they need sun cream?
- **Home contact** - you'll need a home contact who has agreed to act as a first point of contact if plans change, or if an accident or emergency occurs. Forms are available on the Girlguiding website; search '[Home contact](#)'.
- **Commissioner** - your commissioner should be made aware if you'll be away from your meeting place, or meeting at a different time to normal.
- **First aid** - make sure you have your first aid kit available, and at least one of the adults attending has a first aid qualification recognised by Girlguiding.
- **Parental permission** - whenever you're doing a meeting somewhere different with members under the age of 18, you should gain permission from parents or carers by using the 'Information and Consent for Event/Activity form'. Search '[gaining permission](#)' on the Girlguiding website.

For more information about planning activities safely, search '[Risk management for activities and events](#)' on the Girlguiding website.

Remember!

Exploring doesn't have to be costly, and many activities can be adapted no matter the age of the girls in your unit. How about planning a scavenger hunt, a nature trail, or star gazing? You could explore the world through activities like pond dipping or museum visits. Or why not contact your local fire, police or ambulance station? They often have a liaison officer who works with young people.

Girlguiding's Outdoor and Adventure qualifications

When you've been leading for a little while, or if you have a passion for the outdoors and adventure, you might like to look at our own bespoke Girlguiding qualifications. By completing a qualification, you can take your girls further afield on adventures, get to know the girls better, encourage their independence and have lots of fun - all while developing your leadership skills too! Have a chat with your commissioner or local outdoor activity adviser to find out more.

Going Away With scheme - The Going Away With scheme allows you to run your own residential with your unit. These could be indoors or outdoors, on a boat, at an activity centre, close by or far from home. Going away with your unit is a great adventure for you and the girls and is often a highlight of their time with Girlguiding.

Walking scheme - The Walking scheme is designed to give you the skills, knowledge, safety and experience to take girls and young women walking in a variety of locations and terrains. Going walking provides an opportunity to discover the natural world, exercise and spend time together and is a great adventure for our members. There are three levels to Girlguiding's Walking scheme, and which one you take depends on your existing skills and experience. Each level trains you so that you can walk in new, more challenging locations.

Narrowboating scheme - The Narrowboating scheme covers all the theory, knowledge and practical skills you need to take girls and young women on a narrowboat. Whether for a day or a residential trip, narrowboating provides a great opportunity to experience something new, challenging and fun. Some Girlguiding countries, regions and counties either own narrowboats or have access to community boats that Girlguiding groups can use.

Climbing scheme - The Climbing scheme is our own climbing qualification which allows you to instruct and supervise up to 12 Girlguiding members while they're climbing and abseiling. The scheme consists of two levels: Level 1 is for purpose-built climbing walls and abseiling towers and Level 2 is for climbing in the natural environment on simple and safe crags.

Did you know?

All sections can go on residential events, but Rainbows can't be away from home for more than 24 hours. Some Rainbow units run back-to-back residentials, so half the group can stay over for one night and the other half can stay for the second night!

Remember!

You don't need to be a specialist in the outdoors and adventure to include these activities in your planning - using an external provider is also a great way to do this. The Girlguiding '[activity finder](#)' gives you all the information you need to know about the type of provider you can use, or ask your local outdoor activity adviser for advice.

A young member's journey through guiding

Whichever section you volunteer with, a girl should have the same positive experiences throughout her time in guiding.

1. A warm welcome

From a girl's first contact to her last, Girlguiding should be seen as a safe and welcoming place for girls and young women to be. Parents should sign girls up through the Girlguiding website but, even if they don't, remember that first impressions count!

- Reach out and contact: whether it's at the start of your normal meeting, or over the phone or email, it's important to make time to meet with a new girl's parent. Put their minds at ease, and encourage them to share any information that you need about their daughter.
- Give parents the following information, and anything else specific to your unit:
 - a copy of the '[Starting \[Rainbows/Brownies/Guides/Rangers\]...](#)' form (with your details and the unit details filled in)
 - a copy of the relevant [care plan form](#), if the young person needs any adjustments in order to attend and take part easily (this shouldn't be rushed, so make time to sit down with their parent and discuss this)
 - a brief outline of how Girlguiding works and our policies (check out the [Girlguiding website](#) for some tips)
 - details of the ratio of adults to children
 - details of how unit meetings, events and resources are financed (in addition to subscription fees, some units charge a 'joining fee' which covers the cost of a badge book and handbook)
 - an easy way to contact you, for example popping in at the start or end of unit meetings, by telephone, by email and so on
 - your expectations of them as the parents of a young member
 - Girlguiding's website address ([girlguiding.org.uk](#))
 - details of how to obtain uniform and other resources from your Girlguiding volunteer shop, by mail order or online from [girlguidingshop.co.uk](#) (highlight how buying from Girlguiding supports guiding locally)
- Make sure your new member is registered on GO. For more information on how to do this, take a look at '[Using GO - our membership system](#)' on the website.
- Pair your new young member up with a 'buddy' from your unit, who can help her settle in. This may be a girl who has been in the unit for a while, and can introduce her to everybody properly.
- Make sure she has a copy of the handbook and badge/record book for her section, and help her to understand Girlguiding. If there are several new girls starting at the same time, you may find it valuable to form a small group and support them all together.

2. Getting stuck in

As she starts her guiding journey in your unit, she'll be exposed to a range of exciting new opportunities.

- Introduce the [Girlguiding programme](#), and encourage her to work on interest badges at home.
- Once she's been coming for a few weeks, your new young member may wish to make her Promise. Discuss this with her and work out what she would like to do as her [Promise](#) celebration.
- During her time at your unit, try to offer opportunities to meet girls from other units and sections. This could be in the form of trips or joint meetings, or even district events!

3. Moving on up

Before you know it, it'll be time for your 'new' young member to move up to the next section. Take a look at our guidance, *Moving up a section - support document for leaders*, for advice on providing the best experience for a girl who is moving to the next stage in guiding.

- Involve parents in the discussion and make sure they know what's available to their child. Remember - the unit that your girls normally go to might not necessarily be the most convenient, so be sure to let them know about all the options.
- Celebrate! When a girl is due to move on, it's nice to mark this with a special meeting (perhaps a party) to celebrate her time in your unit. Some units give girls a small gift when they leave. If your unit funds allow, you might like to buy them a handbook or badge/record book for the next section - be sure to discuss this with their new leader, though, so that you don't both get one!
- If the girl has any reasonable adjustments or support needs in place, make sure you hand these over to the next unit leader.

The unit team

Whichever role you take within a team, remember the key word - team. All of the volunteers in a unit have an important role in delivering a quality programme to girls and, by planning responsibilities between you, it means that nobody is left to take on too much. Your unit team could include:

- Adult leaders
- Young leaders
- Unit helpers
- Rainbow/Brownie helpers (Guides who help - only for the two youngest sections)
- Other adults who provide regular support

Everyone should be encouraged to take a full and active part in both planning the unit's programme and supporting girls to lead activities.

Leader names

When you start a unit, the girls should help decide what the leaders should be called. Rainbows, in particular, often like to choose special names for each leader. There can be a common theme, or a complete mix of names chosen to suit each individual. Let them be creative (although bear in mind you may end up being called the name in public!).

What the unit team does

The leaders are responsible for ensuring that guiding works safely and effectively in their unit. A team works best when members trust and respect each other and when individuals feel needed and valued. The unit team should:

- Plan and run meetings together - each leader takes responsibility for part of the meeting and all team members are encouraged to contribute their ideas
- Share responsibilities - tasks like organising activity equipment, record keeping, accounts and writing letters can be shared to spread the workload, and occasionally to stretch an individual
- Combine their skills - each team member shares her talents and encourages others to learn new skills
- Evaluate together - there should be an opportunity for discussion after a meeting or event. What went well? What didn't? Could it be improved next time?

Take a look at 'Building a strong unit team', our checklist for supporting teams to deliver great guiding, available on the [Girlguiding website](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk).

Other support available

It's always recommended to look outside your unit team for other support and advice on running your unit. Here are some ideas:

- Speak to other leaders in the same section
- Chat at a district or division meeting
- Talk to your commissioner
- Contact your section adviser
- Read guiding magazine
- Check Girlguiding's website ([girlguiding.org.uk](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk))
- Attend a training event

Want to grow your unit team?

Take a look at the [Girlguiding website](https://www.girlguiding.org.uk) for tips for recruiting new volunteers.

Key resources

For leaders

- girlguiding.org.uk - the Girlguiding website is full of information and resources, so use the search box if you are looking for something in particular
- [guiding magazine](#) - termly membership magazine with lots of activity ideas
- [Girlguiding policies](#) - our policies set a universal standard for great guiding
- Volunteer [Code of Conduct](#) - this outlines expectations of how volunteers work with others in Girlguiding
- [Programme guidance notes for leaders](#) - this resource will help you get your unit started on the new programme
- [Participation on a plate](#) - use these activities to encourage girls to share their opinions - about big and small things, in groups and individually
- [Moving up a section](#) - support document for leaders - find out how to support girls to move up to the next section
- [Unit forms](#) - there are several forms to help you make sure you're providing safe guiding for everyone in your unit. Download the latest forms, including starting forms, consent forms and a risk assessment template, from our website
- [Events and travel documents](#) - our forms for events and residentials will help you plan your next adventure
- [Doing Our Best](#) - our checklists for good unit guiding
- [Learning and development](#) - our learning webpages will help give you the skills and knowledge you need to give girls the best guiding experiences - including training on the programme

For Rainbows

Any resources for Rainbows mentioned below are available to buy from Girlguiding shops, volunteer shops and girlguidingshop.co.uk

- Ready for Rainbows - Rainbow handbook (order code: 6220)
- My badge book - Rainbows (order code: 6221)
- Rainbows welcome bag (order code: 2545)
- Promise certificate (order code: 6158)
- Promise badge (order code: 1560)

For Brownies

Any resources for Brownies mentioned below are available to buy from Girlguiding shops, volunteer shops, and girlguidingshop.co.uk

- Bring on the Brownies - Brownie handbook (order code: 6240)
- My badge book - Brownies (order code: 6241)
- Brownies mesh sling bag (order code: 8265)
- Promise certificate (order code: 6811)
- Promise badge (order code: 1561)

For Guides

Any resources for Guides mentioned below are available to buy from Girlguiding shops, volunteer shops, and girlguidingshop.co.uk

- Go Guide - handbook (order code: 6260)
- My Badge Book - Guides (order code: 6261)
- Promise certificate (order code: 6641)
- Promise badge (order code: 1562)

For Rangers

Any resources for Rangers mentioned below are available to buy from Girlguiding shops, volunteer shops, and girlguidingshop.co.uk

- You can achieve anything - handbook (order code: 6280)
- Record book - Rangers (order code: 6281)
- Promise certificate (order code: 6282)
- Promise badge (order code: 1563)

Useful terminology

There are a few guiding terms that come up often and are very useful to know as you get started.

Buddy:

Most often a role in Brownies, a buddy is another girl who supports a new young member by showing them around, encourages them to take part in the unit's activities, and generally helps her to settle into the unit. The individual in this role shouldn't be a sixer or second, and the role should last until the new girl has settled in.

Commissioner:

An adult volunteer who supports and leads other volunteers within the local guiding area. The commissioner for your specific area will be the person who supports you most to set up your unit and will check that you have done everything you need to do. She is on hand to help answer all your questions!

Doing Our Best:

The Doing Our Best checklists are a set of standards which were written with the help of volunteers, to give leaders and their teams clarity and confidence around what makes good unit guiding. The full checklists can be downloaded from the website.

Leader:

A general term for an adult member who has made her Promise and has completed the Girlguiding Leadership qualification. Every unit must have at least one leader within their leadership team, which can include volunteers who haven't done their Leadership qualification.

Member:

A girl or adult who has joined Girlguiding, pays a membership subscription and agrees to abide by the organisation's policies and values.

Occasional helper:

Adults who help in a unit on a temporary or rota basis.

Peer educator:

A girl or young woman aged 14-25 who is trained to deliver specific topics to young members (Brownies, Guides, Rangers).

Programme:

The activities and resources offered to young members, based around six themes, including unit meeting activities (UMAs), skills builders and interest badges.

Promise:

Adults and young members work towards making the Promise, which although optional, is a commitment to upholding the values of Girlguiding. The wording is amended slightly for Brownies, and Rainbows have their own Promise with simpler wording.

Section:

The term we use to describe the different age groups in guiding: Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers.

Unit:

A group of young members (Rainbows, Brownies, Guides or Rangers) and an adult leadership team.

WAGGGS:

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Appendix: Encouraging leadership - qualities and responsibilities of group leaders

Brownies: The sixer

| Responsibilities of a sixer may include: | Skills and qualities that a potential sixer displays or will develop include: |
|--|---|
| • Encouraging the Six to play and work together | • Leadership |
| • Helping all members to settle in and become part of a team | • Encouraging others |
| • Some responsibility for the members within her Six | • Helping out |
| • Making sure the Six is ready to start games and activities at a certain time | • Thinking ahead |
| • Helping plan a special adventure with other Sixers | • Being prepared to have a go |
| • Helping to plan a Promise Celebration for a new Brownie in the Six | • Attending regularly |
| • Telling leaders if anyone in the Six needs extra help | • Caring |
| • Holding a Six pow wow (as necessary) and helping the Six reach a decision | • Sensitivity to the needs of others |
| • Helping prepare Brownies for their first residential event (if she has the experience) | • Being a good listener |
| • Willingly sharing her skills and knowledge with the Six | • Organisation |
| • Keeping a Six record of who comes to Brownies each week | • Being a good communicator |
| | • Friendliness |

Brownies: The second

| Responsibilities of a second may include: | Skills and qualities that a potential second displays or will develop include: |
|---|--|
| • Helping her sixer set up an activity | • Leadership |
| • Helping a Brownie who is finding an activity hard | • Encouraging others |
| • Helping her Six get ready for a game | • Helping out |
| • Standing in for her sixer if she is busy doing something else | • Thinking ahead |
| | • Being prepared to have a go |
| | • Attending regularly |
| | • Caring |
| | • Sensitivity to the needs of others |
| | • Being a good listener |
| | • Organisation |
| | • Being a good communicator |
| • Friendliness | |

Guides: Patrol leaders

| Responsibilities of a Patrol leader may include: | Skills and qualities that a potential Patrol leader displays or will develop include: |
|--|---|
| • Helping all members to settle in and become part of a team | • Leadership |
| • Encouraging teamwork within the group | • Encouraging others |
| • Some responsibility for the members within her Patrol | • Helping out |
| • Making sure the Patrol is ready to start games and activities at the set time | • Thinking ahead |
| • Telling leaders if anyone in the Patrol needs extra help | • Being prepared to have a go |
| • Helping to plan the termly programme | • Attending regularly |
| • Representing her group's views and ideas at Patrol Leaders' Council | • Caring |
| • Willingly sharing her skills and knowledge with the Patrol | • Sensitivity to the needs of others |
| • Helping prepare Guides for their first residential event (if she has the experience) | • Being a good listener |
| • Keeping a Patrol record of who comes to Guides each week | • Organisation |
| | • Being a good communicator |
| | • Friendliness |