



Giving girls a voice

What you'll find out:

- Why girl-led guiding is important.
- Ways to bring girls' views into your unit.
- Different ways to encourage girls' ideas and feedback.
- How to turn ideas into plans.

In Girlguiding, we want to put girls in the driver's seat. In your leadership team, girls need their voice to be part of decisions you make about what you do and when. And part of your role is to make that happen.

Why listen to girls?

There are loads of reasons! Firstly, making decisions encourages girls to learn by doing. It lets them have a say in their unit activities and experiences at Girlguiding, and supports them to develop skills like negotiating, influencing and listening.

Listening to girls can also make everyone feel involved. Nothing beats the imaginations of Rainbows or Brownies who feel inspired and listened to. And there's nothing more powerful than Guides' and Rangers' passion for change. When you listen to girls, it's a win-win – guiding gets better for you and them!



Girls' Attitudes Survey

Every year the [Girls' Attitudes Survey](#) asks over 2,000 girls and young women to tell us how they feel about their everyday lives. It's a great place to start if you want to find out what's important to girls, and it can give you ideas for activities girls might want to do.



Listening to girls

We know listening to girls is important, but how do we make sure we do it right? Try following these 3 steps.

Make sure you give them the information they need to decide – whether that's what something will cost or what they need to get their next badge.

Step 1: Ask the right questions.

If you want to find out what girls want you could try one of these options:

- A simple hands up vote.
- Asking the group to draw what they want to do.
- An elevator pitch of ideas where each girl gets 30 seconds to share their idea with the group.
- A questionnaire.
- An ideas lottery where everyone writes an idea on a slip of paper – then they pull one out and see if they can make it happen.
- Choosing from programme activity cards.
- Or just a straightforward chat. After all, listening to girls doesn't have to be complicated.

Step 2: Listen to what they say!

Try not to add your own thoughts here, step back and let their imagination run free!

Step 3: Reflect on everything.

How can you bring their ideas to life? You might be out of your comfort zone but with a little creativity you can achieve a lot. For example, you can't bring a dragon to a unit, but you might be able to make one together from recycling. Make sure you let the girls know what's achievable and explain why. You could even get them to help work out what they can do within the unit's budget.

Remember, girls are always growing and developing, and so are we. By making sure we keep listening, we stay up to date with our girls and what their needs and interests are.

Check out the [participation on a plate](#) resource for quick and fun activities to help you gather ideas and feedback.

**Your unit, your feedback**

Think about and note down all the times when girls in your unit make decisions about what activities they want to do, and how they're going to complete them. Then think of some other ways you could hear from them about what they're interested in.

**Making ideas happen**

Now that you've gathered ideas from the girls, how do you make them happen?

Haaniah, a young leader for Brownies, worked with her unit's leadership team to bring girls' ideas into the next term's plans.

'We held a Brownie chat to discuss what the Brownies wanted to do over the next term. They suggested ideas such as a litter pick, cinema trip and sports day. We explained which ideas would and wouldn't be possible and why, and incorporated the ideas we could use into the next term's plans.'

Alys is a young leader whose Rainbows suggested: starshine, powerfulness, mermaids, friends, slime and mud. They also voted to complete first aid stage 1.

This is how these ideas became a term plan:

Week	Idea	Activity to run
Week 1	Friends	Welcome session with games and Rainbow chat about what they'd like to do. UMA: where are the bananas? (this is friends themed - activity about including everyone).
Week 2	Starshine	Walk to local park to do UMA: stars in your eyes.
Week 3	First aid stage 1	Get into 2 groups who swap and complete a bite sized adventure and colour my mood.
Week 4	First aid stage 1	Complete get the right kit as a unit.
Week 5	Mermaids	UMA: the princess problem - adapt to make mermaid themed.
Half term		
Week 6	Mermaids	Trip to the local swimming pool.
Week 7	First aid stage 1	Kill the germs - can use skills at messy night next week!
Week 8	Slime and mud	Messy night. Make slime using corn flour, water and food colouring. Make own mud smoothies using fruit and vegetables.
Week 9	First aid stage 1	Complete mend a friend as a unit. Rainbow chat to get ideas for next term.
Week 10	Powerfulness	End of term party for promises and pot of gold. UMA: a Rainbow odyssey. Powerfulness - greek gods and goddesses.



Bringing ideas to life

Think about your unit. Imagine you've gathered the ideas below for the autumn term. How could you work with your unit's leadership team to realistically make these ideas happen?

- Playing football
- Colouring
- Going to the water park
- Building things
- Princesses and royal fashion
- Wildlife and nature
- Reading books
- Park trip
- Going to see the same play that we saw last term



Saying no

Some ideas are more realistic than others. As much as you might want to try dragon-flying, lion-taming or filming a Hollywood blockbuster, sometimes you have to say 'no'. But how do we turn a 'no' into a positive and come to a shared decision? Well, it's **EASY**.

E = Explain why – if it's dangerous, or you don't have enough time, money, resources or volunteers to run an activity, think about how you can communicate that to girls.

A = Answer questions – allow time for girls to ask questions about the final decision, but don't get into an argument. Show that you understand their feelings and their viewpoints.

S = Suggest a compromise – come up with alternatives or open up a conversation about compromise that allows girls to share different suggestions and ideas. But remember, compromise isn't simply meeting in the middle. Combining two different options together without proper thought can leave everyone feeling underwhelmed.

Y = Yes! – always end on a positive note. Focus on the fun things that you will be able to do.



Thank you for always listening to girls!

It's what makes guiding great, and you're a huge part of that. You've explored how to make girl-led guiding happen in your unit – now have fun putting it into action!