



Supporting inclusive spaces

What you'll find out:

- Why inclusion is important, both inside and outside of Girlguiding.
- Practical ways to help your unit be more inclusive.
- How to spot discrimination and deal with it in your role as a young leader.

We want Girlguiding to be a place where everyone is welcome, free to be themselves, and has an equal sense of belonging – whoever they are and wherever they're from. That's why it's important that we all take the time to learn about being inclusive and how to challenge discrimination if we come across it.

Inclusion 101: what is it and why is it important?

Inclusion in guiding is about giving all girls the same chance – to be safe and get support to grow and thrive. Inclusion is one of our values.

We all have a part to play in making sure that Girlguiding is inclusive and welcoming. At the heart of Girlguiding is the [promise](#), and in it, we promise to help other people. One way to keep this promise is to care about all our girls and volunteers, and the communities they live in or belong to.

Listening to others

Our experience of being part of guiding is not going to be the same as everyone else's. Some people might face barriers and not feel welcome or valued by guiding, which can make them feel excluded. To keep our promise, we need to listen to people who say they've been excluded and then work alongside them to make things better.

Barriers are things that can stop someone from feeling welcomed and wanted. If these barriers are to do with a part of their identity (like their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation), we need to work out how to remove those barriers.

Listening means:

- Giving yourself (and them) time and space to have these conversations.
- Being prepared to see that your experience isn't the same as other people's.
- Using active listening techniques like nodding, reflecting back what you've heard, and withholding judgement (discover more about this in the finding solutions module).
- Not letting your own feelings interrupt what someone else has to say. If someone is helping you understand something difficult for them, it's important that they know you'll listen.





Listen to others

Choose 2 of the stories below from Girlguiding members. Think about their experiences of guiding, and how this might be different from yours. Is there anything you can learn from their experiences?

Chloë ([celebrating neurodiversity](#)),

Kate ([adventures for everyone](#)),

Tash ([deaf awareness](#)),

Beth ([mental health inclusion](#)).



Making inclusive units

There are so many things you can do to make your unit a supportive and inclusive space. Even small actions can have a big impact.

Watch these videos to find out how some leaders have made their unit more inclusive and welcoming:

- [Making your unit welcoming and inclusive](#)

- [Top tips for making your unit welcoming and inclusive](#)

Planning and adapting activities

Sometimes you need to re-think your activities so everyone can join in. All activities can be adapted, you just need to think about how to remove the barriers that could stop some girls taking part. Take a look at [adjusting activities](#) for some top tips on how to do this.

You can also check out our [inclusion webpages](#) for more on how to make Girlguiding a place where everyone feels welcome.

Welcome, bienvenue, välkommen, selamat datang



Here are some top tips to welcome new girls and volunteers so they feel safe and included:

- Say hi to someone new when they arrive and give them a tour of the unit.
- Make sure to explain Girlguiding words you use and any traditions you have.
- Ask them what you can do to help them feel comfortable.

Sometimes, your leader might complete an [adjustment plan](#) with new girls and their parents or carers. They might do this if a new girl has a disability for example. An adjustment plan helps flag up any potential barriers and highlight what changes (adjustments) are needed to support them.

Inclusive meeting spaces

Your meeting space should be inclusive for everyone. By doing this, you'll make sure everyone feels welcome when they visit.



An inclusive space

Look at the picture and spot the ways this unit has adapted their space to make it more inclusive.



The picture shows:

- Lights that don't flicker and aren't too bright or too dim.
- Noticeboard that can be read at any height.
- A way for people to use second hand uniform.
- Clear routes through the room.
- A quiet corner for anyone who needs it.
- Signs to show which bathrooms are accessible.

Check out the noticeboard. Did you spot the following?:

- Important information in different languages.
- Posters on dealing with bullying.
- Images representing a wide range of people.
- A driving rota to make transport easier and safer.
- Easy to read writing that stands out from the background.



Inclusive communication

Sophie is a young leader for Guides. Her leaders have asked her to write a note they will give out to the girls about what they'll be doing next week. She'd like to be more inclusive. Can you spot where she could make some changes?

'Hi girls, next week we're going to be helping throw a party for OAPs living in the local care home. We need all hands on deck so please could you ask your mums and dads if they would like to help too? The plan is to meet at 3pm in the car park, and then all walk in together.'



Here are some tips for how Sophie could make the language more inclusive:

- Use language like partners and parents or carers to recognise all families are different – instead of mums and dads.
- Include people with different mobilities by saying 'make our way inside' – instead of 'walk in together'.
- Keep word choices respectful by saying 'older people' – instead of OAPs.
- Use simple language so it's easier for everyone to understand – try not to use sayings like 'all hands on deck'. You could say 'we need as much help as possible' instead.

Sometimes our words or actions can unintentionally upset people. And while it can feel uncomfortable, it's important not to brush off a concern, get defensive or make it about you. Instead, listen, apologise and learn from your mistake.



Ideas and top tips from other young leaders about making inclusive spaces in their units:



- Go through the [better together unit meeting activities](#), and choose a few to do with your unit.
- Make sure you talk to every person in the unit, and really listen to what they have to say.
- Look up a wide variety of [awareness days and holidays to celebrate](#). Suggest ways to celebrate these when planning the term.
- Learn simple words and phrases in the languages spoken in your unit, such as [British sign language](#).

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is when people are treated differently because of their identity, or a particular quality or feature they have. Discrimination can take many forms.

Most of us know about **direct discrimination**. It's when someone is treated unfairly because of their identity (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation). People who have one or more of these characteristics might be considered to be from a **marginalised community**.

Indirect discrimination is when you make a decision, or have a policy or rule, that applies to everyone but affects some people worse than others. For example, holding your lead away permit camp on Yom Kippur, a Jewish

holy day, may make it difficult for Jewish girls to go, so this could be indirect discrimination.

Is this image direct or indirect discrimination?



This is indirect discrimination: everyone has a box, but using boxes like this has left someone worse off than others.

Discrimination can also happen because of bias. **Bias** is how we think about a group of people, even if our view is based on an incorrect assumption. Sometimes, we have certain ideas about people or things, and this can mean not everyone is given a fair chance.

We often don't even realise we have our own biases. When this happens, it's called an **unconscious bias**. It's important to spot when we might be making assumptions and do our best to not let it affect our behaviour or decisions, because this could lead to discrimination. For example, if you assume a Rainbow helper can't run an activity because their age suggests they don't have as much experience.

A **microaggression** is a subtle but harmful comment or action directed at someone from a marginalised community. People from marginalised communities often don't have the same advantages, or equal opportunities as other people in society.

Microaggressions can sometimes be a joke, innocent question or casual remark. They aren't always obvious, and they're often unintentionally offensive. Check out [Melanie's story](#) to learn more.

You can use one of the 5 Ds below if you see discrimination happening.

Safety first: Only step in if you feel comfortable and safe doing it. If not, document and tell your leader, or young leader coordinator.

Reporting discrimination

At Girlguiding, even 1 member experiencing discrimination is 1 too many. If you see any discrimination, [bullying or harassment](#) you should report it to your leader or young leader coordinator.

Direct

Step in and challenge what's happening.

Distract

Change the subject, stop and speak to the person being affected.

Delay

If you don't feel comfortable getting involved in the moment, check in with the person afterwards to make sure they're OK.

Delegate

Ask other people for help or advice, like another leader.

Document

Make a note of important details (who was involved, what you saw, who else might have seen it) in case you need to report the incident.



Nice work!

You've discovered why inclusion is important and how we can make Girlguiding a safe and welcoming space for all.