

# Guiding Conversations



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

## Making Reasonable Adjustments - including members with additional needs

### Introduction

In Girlguiding, as in other organisations, we have a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all young members and volunteers have access to the same great guiding experience. Making reasonable adjustments means taking small steps to ensure that people with additional needs have the same access to opportunities as those without.

### How to use this Guiding Conversation

This conversation is designed to be used in a flexible way and includes a number of different scenarios/topics for discussion at District or Division meetings. If you need help to get the conversation flowing you may wish to use the talking points provided.

Before starting this Guiding Conversation it might be useful to print some of our guidance for helping members with additional needs in order to support discussions about adapting games and activities, adapting qualifications and facilitating inclusive communication. Go to the Members' Area at [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk) and search for 'additional needs' for lots of guidance in this area, including our RECIPES.

Some participants may be sensitive to the issues raised in the discussion points, so be considerate during your discussion. Make the group aware that if anyone is in need of further support they should speak with their local Commissioner. Commissioners, please see page 3 for further help.

In guiding we use the term additional needs when referring to disability. This includes:

- sensory impairments, for example conditions affecting hearing and sight;
- learning disabilities which may affect memory, concentration, learning and physical coordination;
- mobility conditions - including wheelchair users;
- and mental health.

Our inclusive language guidance has more information, see page 3 for details.

### What are reasonable adjustments?

It may seem that the way to be fair is to treat everybody exactly the same and make sure that everybody follows

the same rules. This approach works if every person involved has the same strengths and skills. For example, you could have a rule that Brownies who sit completely still and quietly can choose the game for the week. For the majority of the Brownies this is a fair rule, and one that they understand, it will encourage them to try to be the first Brownie sitting still so that they can choose the game. However, if you have a Brownie with additional needs that mean she is not capable of sitting still then that Brownie will never be allowed to choose the game.

You may have a rule that all Leaders, in order to achieve their Leadership Qualification, need to produce handwritten evidence, as that is the best way for the Verifier to check that they have done the work needed. However, if a volunteer has an additional need such as dyspraxia, then she may not feel confident with written communication meaning that she may never gain her Leadership Qualification.

We make reasonable adjustments to ensure that everybody has the same opportunity to join in and gain skills and qualifications.

For the Brownies choosing games you could make the rule that a Brownie who has tried her hardest gets to choose, or a Brownie who has done a good turn today chooses.

For the Leader completing her Leadership Qualification you can change the way that evidence is given, she could provide pictures, video evidence or have a conversation with the Verifier.

These are both examples of making reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments are a legal requirement. They were brought in as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and are now a key part of the Equality Act 2010. They're also central to Girlguiding's approach and commitment to caring for the individual. You'll make adjustments every meeting without realising, for example if a girl becomes upset during an activity you'll find a quiet place for her to sit until she feels better.

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### Making reasonable adjustments

Making a reasonable adjustment does not mean putting the needs of one member above all of the others. For example, if girls in your unit enjoy active games but one girl has mobility difficulties you don't have to ban all active games. This wouldn't be fair to any of the girls, including the girl with additional needs. You can instead look at adapting the games, for example you could consider other ways that girls could move so that everybody can be involved. For more information look at our RECIPES guidance on the Girlguiding website.

Reasonable adjustments don't just apply to people with physical disabilities, they're also required for people with learning difficulties, sensory disabilities and people with mental health problems.

For example, you may have a girl who struggles to understand instructions due to a learning disability. A reasonable adjustment would be to explain what the girls are supposed to do in stages, rather than all at once. Or a girl may not be ready to move up to the next section; she could be worried about the change or her parents may feel that the current programme suits her needs better. In this case a reasonable adjustment would be, in discussion with her parents, to allow her to stay in the current section longer and slowly introduce the idea of moving up.

A member who has a mental illness may struggle to attend regular meetings. If she is a Leader then a reasonable adjustment would be to ensure that the Leadership Team is big enough for meetings to go ahead when she is unable to attend. For a young member who struggles to attend meetings each week, consider how she can complete badges or challenges and still feel part of the unit. For more information on supporting young members with mental health problems see our MindEd learning pathway (see page 3 for details).

### Including members in the conversation

Remember, the member or her parent should always be included in any conversation about reasonable adjustments being made on her behalf. This ensures that she is happy with the adjustments and that they suit her needs. The girls or her parents will also be able to suggest adjustments that have worked in the past.

### Steps to take to make reasonable adjustments

- Consider the activity and what might be challenging to a member with an additional need.
- Discuss these challenges with the member or parents, if this is during a unit meeting remember to be discreet. Focus on how they can be involved fully, and what has worked in the past.
- If needed, include any adjustments on the risk assessment for an activity. This isn't needed for games and activities in the unit meeting place or adjustments that are made in response to an immediate need, for example if an activity is in progress. See our guidance about inclusive risk assessments (see page 3 for details).

### Discussion points

For all of the discussion points below remember that no reasonable adjustment should be made without having had a conversation with the member and their parent/carer, if appropriate.

- You have a girl in your unit who uses crutches to help her move. All the girls, including the one with mobility problems, enjoy active games. How would you adapt a game so that all girls can join in?  
*Look at the RECIPES guidance on the Girlguiding website for hints and tips on adapting games and activities.*
- How would you ensure that a Leader who sometimes has to miss meetings due to anxiety can still be involved and supported in her unit?  
*Consider how many Leaders there are in the team and how to keep the Leader involved in the conversation about meetings.*
- How can you deliver the programme so that a member with communication difficulties can understand instructions?  
*Look at the guidance on inclusive communication for more information. See page 3 for details.*
- You are organising a residential event. One of your Leadership Team is a wheelchair user. How can you ensure that she can fully attend the residential? *See our guidance on inclusive risk assessment to make sure that risk assessments don't prevent Leaders taking part (see page 3 for details).*
- During a parents' meeting for a residential a parent wishes to discuss how their daughter's diabetes and her need to take insulin during the weekend will be

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managed. How can you ensure that she can still attend and have the same experience as the other girls?

*Check out our guidance for inclusive risk assessments and health care plans for more support.*

- You are taking your unit on a walk alongside a canal. One of the girls in your unit has a learning disability which means that she is not aware of potential dangers. How can you ensure that she stays safe during the walk while still getting a similar experience to the other girls attending?

*Look at our inclusive risk assessment guidance for tips.*

### Help for local Commissioners

If you require extra support in having this conversation, please speak to your County Commissioner or email [commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk).

During the course of this conversation a question may be asked, or an issue raised that you are unsure how to tackle. In anticipation of this, you may like to provide a 'question box' for participants to use at the end of the meeting. This will allow you time to respond accurately and appropriately to any queries by using the suggested resources or emailing [commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:commissionersupport@girlguiding.org.uk). It could also be used to help you identify any training needs for members of your District/Division team.

### Further information

Girlguiding's website has lots of useful information on the issues discussed here. Go to [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk).

- To find information about the Equality Act 2010, search for 'equality act'.
- For RECIPES for adapting games and activities to help make meetings accessible to all girls, search for 'members with additional needs'.
- For information on adapting qualifications, including guidance to support all members to work towards Girlguiding qualifications, search for 'members with additional needs'.
- For information on inclusive communication, including guidance to help support members with communication difficulties to be fully involved in guiding, search for 'members with additional needs'.

- To find Girlguiding's health and personal care plans which can be used to facilitate a conversation with parents about any additional needs or requirements, and how adjustments can be made, search for 'health care plan'.
- For guidance on inclusive risk assessments which can be used to ensure that all members can take part fully in Girlguiding and challenge themselves while staying safe.
- For guidance on inclusive language which provides hints and tips to ensure that the language you use is appropriate and includes all members, search for 'members with additional needs'.
- Information on Girlguiding and MindEd's joint pathway for our members, go to [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk). It covers topics around mental health and young people. When you register, make sure you select Girlguiding as your user group to access the modules.

### Government policy

Equality Act 2010 ([www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance)) - guidance from the Government Equalities Office and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

### Resources

For games for all children from the disability charity Scope go to [www.scope.org.uk/support/families/play/games/index](http://www.scope.org.uk/support/families/play/games/index).

For guidance on how to support people with mental health problems from the mental health charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness go to [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk).

For guidance on communicating with people with autism from the National Autistic Society go to [www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/communicating.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/communicating.aspx).

For top tips for communicating with people with learning disabilities from Mencap go to [www.mencap.org.uk/about-learning-disability/information-professionals/communication/communicating-people-learning-disability/top](http://www.mencap.org.uk/about-learning-disability/information-professionals/communication/communicating-people-learning-disability/top).