



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

**Girlguiding**

# Emergency planning guidance for international trips

This best practice guidance is intended to support leaders taking groups abroad with Girlguiding

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**Note:** The information in this document is intended to support the requirements of Girlguiding's policies, procedures and guidance published on the Girlguiding website: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/policies/> It does not replace it and in case of discrepancy the website guidance should take precedence.

## Introduction

Although this rarely happens, an emergency or critical incident may occur whilst travelling to or within a destination country; there may also be an emergency at home that affects a participant.

An emergency whilst on the trip or travelling to or from the trip may be:

- An event which seriously prejudices the health, safety and/or wellbeing of group member(s).
- An incident which leads to the hospitalisation of a participant.
- An incident which may create media coverage, and which may lead to concerns at home.
- An event which threatens or increases risk to the proposed on-going viability of the trip
- A fatality within the group

An emergency at home may be:

- A fatality within the immediate family circle of a participant, of which she needs to be advised whilst away.
- The deterioration in the health or wellbeing of an immediate family member.
- An event which may feature media coverage and cause risk, concern or threat to the wellbeing of group member(s).

This document explains how to manage situations: advising on effective communication, actions and support to be adopted in the event of an emergency or critical incident. It is intended to support trip leaders to meet the requirements of Girlguiding's policies, procedures and guidance, published on the Girlguiding website: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/policies/>

**Note:** When overseas, Girlguiding groups refer to themselves as belonging to Girlguiding UK so that others can identify them more easily.

### **Risk assessment for an international trip**

The trip leader is responsible for completing a risk assessment, ensuring that it outlines procedures for dealing with emergencies and critical incidents. This should be communicated at an initial briefing and available to all leaders within the group. The risk assessment should be reviewed and updated as plans progress and changes communicated to the leadership team.

The risk assessment should be submitted with the [part two REN form](#). However, this is not the end of the process and the risk assessment should be kept under review for the duration of the trip.

There is a risk assessment template on the [Girlguiding website](#) and a recommended format is provided in appendix A.

## Section 1 - Home contact and next of kin

### Home contact role summary

Trip leaders are responsible for creating and organising a home contact system for their group. You may wish to nominate two or three people to take on these responsibilities as it may not be possible for one person to be available 24 hours a day throughout the trip taking into account different time zones.

The home contact is responsible for passing information both to and from the group and keeping others within Girlguiding informed. They may also need to contact emergency services, the Girlguiding safeguarding team, PR and communications team, their travel insurance provider and parents/carers.

Volunteers taking on this role must ensure they are familiar with this reporting procedure and structure and understand what is expected of them. They will be asked to sign the [home contact agreement](#) to confirm that they have read and understood the role.

### Who can be a home contact?

The home contact is an essential part in supporting the international trip and helping to ensure everyone is kept safe and healthy and that appropriate safeguarding measures can be put and remain in place, in the event of an accident or incident. They will hold sensitive personal information about participants whilst performing this role.

To comply with data protection rules and Girlguiding's safeguarding policy it's essential that home contacts are only those who are within Girlguiding because you are sharing confidential and personal information for which you have consent for Girlguiding to hold, not a third party.

It is therefore essential that the home contact is:

- An active member or recognised volunteer with Girlguiding.
  - That means that they are on GO and have been through recruitment checks required for the role they hold on GO. They cannot only be a Trefoil member or Scout member.
- Not related to or has a close personal relationship to anyone in the group.
- Someone who can deal with an emergency in a calm and effective manner.
- Someone who has completed *Safe Space level 1* training.

A suitable person could be another leader in the area, a commissioner, county residential or international adviser.

You can arrange for more than one person to be home contact during the time you're away so that one person does not need to be available all the time. If you do this, make sure you agree a schedule, so you and they know who's responsible on what dates.

Being a home contact shouldn't mean the contact can't go about their usual business. It means that the person is agreeing to be available for the period of the trip (or certain times and dates if sharing with another) to deal with an emergency.

**The trip leader must inform the parents/carers of participants how to contact the home contact(s).**

Before the international trip, you need to make sure your home contact has:

- Complete details of the trip (including locations, travel arrangements, routes, schedules, activities, expected return time and details of any third-party provider being used for any aspect of the trip).
- The names and membership numbers of all participants and leaders with at least two emergency contact telephone numbers during the trip for each one. If both parents are emergency contacts living at the same address, an additional emergency contact should be nominated. These details are required for girls, young women and volunteers. If any family members are accompanying volunteers, details are needed for them too.
  - Sharing participants details with the home contact is part of Girlguiding's procedures for keeping its members safe and is therefore a requirement for taking part in activities that are residential or off site.
- Details of your local Commissioner (or her nominee) and international adviser. They will have signed your REN form so you can get these details from GO.
- A copy of the travel insurance certificate for the trip.
- Next of kin details for all participants.
- All information that is held or shared must be in line with our [data protection procedures](#).

You should not share health information and consent forms with the home contact.

### **Next of Kin**

Usually a participant will nominate their next of kin as one of their emergency contacts.

- This is usually, but not always, the same person as one of the emergency contacts. If the next of kin will be away for some, or all, of the duration of the trip they must leave full details of how they can be contacted in an emergency with the participant's emergency contact OR nominate another family member or close friend to act on their behalf in case of an

emergency.

- If the next of kin is due to be away for any part of the trip, they must leave full details with the participant's emergency contacts about how they can be contacted in an emergency OR nominate another family member or close friend to deal with an emergency on their behalf.

**Note:** The home contact must shred all personal data after the international trip has finished.

You can find more information about home contacts on the Girlguiding website:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/safeguarding-and-risk/managing-risk/setting-up-a-home-contact-system/>

## Section 2 - Steps to take when planning your international trip

- Complete a thorough [risk assessment](#), considering the full range of scenarios that may occur during travel. A template, including key advice, is on the Girlguiding website and a suggested format is provided in appendix A.
- Consider what access you'll have to money in an emergency and how you'll manage this within the leadership team.
- Research how to use phones/emails in the country you're visiting before you go, including whether the places you're visiting have signal to make calls or use the internet. Consider whether you can use your mobile phone abroad or whether you should buy a local sim card. You should also consider how often you'll be able to charge your phone and whether you'll need to bring a power pack with you.
- It is important that you are aware of any emergencies or critical incidents whilst abroad. These could include a natural or man-made disaster or civil disturbance. You can find this out from the [Foreign and Commonwealth office](#) or [local British embassy/ consulate](#) and in order to get up to date information it is recommended that you:
  - Subscribe to a free service by the Foreign and Commonwealth office that sends email alerts where this is available. It may be necessary to register to receive updates. During a crisis any advice to British Nationals will be published through the [FCO travel advice website](#) and updated regularly.
  - Follow travel updates using Twitter @fcotravel or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/fcotravel> . The local British Embassy or High Commission of the destination country will also have its own social media feeds and it is recommended that you subscribe to these.
- At least one leader in the leadership team should have a smartphone in order to receive these alerts by email, Facebook or twitter.
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has advice for British nationals affected by crises abroad, including terrorist attacks, natural disasters and major political unrest, and information on what help the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) can provide:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-deal-with-a-crisis-overseas>

### Section 3 - Essential emergency contact details (to have to hand)

#### HQ / country and region emergency contact (both in and out of office hours)

Ensure you have contact details for people who would be able to offer you support in an emergency. For example, your country/ region or county international adviser and local commissioner. Consider recording these details in the table below so you have them on hand throughout your trip.

<b>Home contact(s)</b> Name: Address:  Postcode:	Tel: Mobile: email:
<b>Home contact(s)</b> Name: Address:  Postcode:	Tel: Mobile: email:
<b>Home contact(s)</b> Name: Address:  Postcode:	Tel: Mobile: Email:
<b>Girlguiding HQ</b> Office hours: 09:00 - 17:00 GMT Mon-Fri  17-19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PT	Tel: +44 (0)20 7834 6242  Email: <a href="mailto:info@girlguiding.org.uk">info@girlguiding.org.uk</a>
<b>Girlguiding HQ press office (PR):</b> Office hours: 09:00 - 17:00 GMT Mon-Fri  17-19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PT	Tel: +44 (0)20 7592 1733  Out of hours tel: +44 (0)7990 553940 (06:00 - 09:00 and 17:00 - 22:00 GMT)  Email: <a href="mailto:pressoffice@girlguiding.org.uk">pressoffice@girlguiding.org.uk</a>
<b>Girlguiding HQ safeguarding team</b> Office hours: 09:00 - 17:00 GMT Mon-Fri  17-19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 0PT	Tel: +44 (0)20 7834 6242 ext.3037  Out of hours emergency phone: +44 (0)7508 032997 17:00 - 22:00 GMT (Monday to Friday) 09:00 - 22:00 GMT (Weekends and Bank Holidays)  Email: <a href="mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk">safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk</a>

<b>Country or Region office</b> Office hours: 09:00 - 17:00 GMT Mon - Fri Address:	Tel: +44
<b>Commissioners (as needed)</b> District: Division: County: Country/Region:	Tel: Tel: Tel: Tel:
<b>International advisers</b> County: Country/Region:	Tel: Tel:
<b>Insurance details:</b> Address:   Policy number:	Tel: Tel: email:
<b>Member Organisation in the country you are visiting</b> If the incident is likely to make the national press, consider contacting the local Guiding or Scouting association so that they are also prepared for media interest. Details of the Member Organisation on the WAGGGS website - <a href="https://www.waggs.org/en/our-world/">https://www.waggs.org/en/our-world/</a>	Tel: Email:  Address:
<b>Other important numbers, for example:</b> Local event organiser Travel agents Local hospital Local doctor Credit/debit card emergency contact Consulate/embassy	Tel: Tel: Tel: Tel: Tel: Tel:

## Section 4 - Advice for dealing with emergency situations

### Important points for leaders if an emergency arises

Never admit liability of any sort. In all cases keep a careful written record of all:

FACTS - who, where, when, why, what, take photos if appropriate.

EVENTS - include timing, date and place.

DECISIONS - made by and in consultation with whom.

CIRCUMSTANCES - As they occur - in emergencies restrict access to telephone until the trip leader has made contact with:

- The travel/medical insurer.
- Girlguiding HQ and/or the country/region office as appropriate.
- The home contact.

Leaders must take all necessary forms and documents with them overseas including:

- Full flight details and travel details.
- Emergency contact details for all participants.
- Copies of all passports (showing expiry dates).
- Lists of all participants' ages and dates of birth.
- List of all participants' dietary and other additional requirements.
- British embassy/consulate contact details for country of visit.
- Full itinerary.
- Telephone number of home contact(s), country/ region office and Girlguiding HQ press office and safeguarding team.
- Insurance forms and policy number.
- Health forms (all clearly signed and fully completed).
- Copies of EHIC card if country to be visited has reciprocal health arrangements. The NHS website has up-to-date information.
  - <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/healthcare-when-travellingabroad/>

### What to do in the case of a medical emergency

The following guidance refers to the management of an emergency situation and must be included in the risk assessment with roles allocated to leadership team members (appendix A).

#### Checklist:

- Get help as required.
- Contact your travel insurance using their emergency number.

- Phone the home contact.
- The home contact will phone the emergency contacts.
- The home contact will also contact Girlguiding HQ and/or the country/region office as appropriate.
- Restrict group access to telephones until the trip leader has contacted the home contact and travel insurance provider, and the home contact has advised the emergency contacts for affected participants.

### **Medical emergencies overseas:**

Arranging medical and health insurance is the responsibility of the leadership team. It is the responsibility of each individual participant, or their parent/carer, to ensure that their specific requirements are covered. The leadership team should ensure before departure that they are familiar with the group insurance policy and know what to do in the event of a medical emergency.

Some insurance providers don't provide cover to pre-existing mental health conditions, you may need to do some research to ensure that everyone in your group can be covered. Mind have put together a list of specialist providers who may be able provide specialist cover for people with pre-existing mental health conditions: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/insurance-cover-and-mental-health/specialist-insurers-for-pre-existing-conditions/>

Details which will be needed by the insurance provider when contacted:

- The name, address and telephone number of the caller and of someone who can speak on their behalf.
- The group insurance policy number.
- Location and contact details for that location.
- The type of assistance required.
- Confirm that the group are members of Girlguiding.

In the event of a medical emergency an insurance adviser may be allocated to co-ordinate and assist. Note their telephone number below:

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ (+44 from abroad)

**Ask the insurance adviser to ensure (where necessary) that:**

- Hospitals will be contacted, and any necessary fees guaranteed.
- Multi-lingual assistance co-ordinators are able to converse with doctors and hospitals abroad in their own language.
- Medical advisers are consulted at the outset regarding repatriation and the likely method for transportation required. Specially equipped air ambulances are

available for critical cases; in less serious circumstances scheduled air services will be used.

- Whenever necessary the patient will be escorted by a medical attendant.
- Upon arrival in the United Kingdom assistance will be provided where medically necessary.

You will need to follow the guidance given by the insurance company for the cover to be valid.

Keep the insurance policy to hand for reference and to show to the hospital/clinic or doctor, together with the [health information for international travel form](#) of the Girlguiding member.

## **In case of a serious /critical incident / accident, death, arrest, detention by police**

### **General points:**

- Try not to panic, keep calm.
- Ensure you, the participants and the leadership team are safe.
- Carry out any necessary first aid.
- Call the emergency services, if appropriate.
- Inform the British embassy or consulate.
- Advise your home contact.
- Do not admit liability.
- Listen as impartially as possible to all parties concerned in the incident.
- Keep careful notes about the incident and subsequent developments as they happen, including: dates, times, locations and names.
- Keep copies of any written information.
- Get witness names, addresses and contact details.
- If an accident results in an injury which needs medical/hospital treatment, or if any serious illness occurs during the trip, you must report the details as soon as possible to the insurance team at Girlguiding HQ by completing a [notification of accident or incident form](#)
- Report the incident as soon as possible on your return to your commissioner; brief her fully on the situation.
- Girlguiding would like to offer you support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.
  - Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
  - Username: volunteers
  - Password: girlguiding

## **Serious incident scenarios**

With all the following scenarios, notes should be made and kept on any incidents. No one should talk to the press. Media should be advised to contact the Press Office at Girlguiding HQ. Ensure that the Girlguiding HQ Press Office and your country/region office are kept informed of the situation - this could be direct or via the home contact.

### **1. You miss your flight**

- You should contact the airline at the airport at the earliest opportunity and ask for help.
- If you have no success, you should contact your travel agent.
- Contact the home contact with details of the situation and keep them informed of developments.
- If your group is late through their own negligence, you'll be liable for additional costs incurred.
- If you miss your flight through circumstances beyond your control, you'll need as much written evidence as you can get to claim via your travel insurance on your return to the UK.

### **2. Someone has their possessions stolen at the airport**

- Report theft to police and obtain a police report for any insurance claim.
- Get on the plane.

### **3. Someone has their possessions stolen overseas**

- Report the theft to the camp or event organiser (if relevant).
- Report to police (keep the written report).
- Proceed with insurance claim upon return.

### **4. Someone loses their luggage**

- Report to airline with description of bag, contents, flight and the ticket number assigned to the bag at check-in.
- Have forwarding destination address available, airlines will often deliver missing luggage direct.
- The airline is obliged to make a payment to a passenger if there is a 24-hour delay
- If any purchases have to be made for essentials as a consequence of the missing luggage keep the receipts.
- Make a note of the contact number at the airport.

### **5. Someone loses/ has their debit/credit card stolen**

- Contact emergency credit card number/ card protection plan.
- Report loss/ theft to the camp or event organiser (if relevant).

- Report any theft to police.
- Have a contingency plan for access to money.

#### **6. Someone goes missing**

- Assess the reality of the situation - are they really missing?
- Contact the camp or event organiser (if relevant).
- Contact the home contact.
- Contact the police.
- Contact British embassy or consulate.
- Record the situation.

#### **7. Someone loses their passport before leaving UK**

- Contact airline.
- Contact travel agent.
- Contact passport agency for replacement passport.
- Contact the home contact if you're on the way to airport as the participant will have to stay in UK and will need collecting if they cannot travel.

#### **8. Someone loses their passport overseas**

- The trip leader should carry a copy of each participant and leader's passport (this must be destroyed or returned at the end of the trip).
- Contact the British embassy or consulate for replacement.

#### **9. Someone becomes seriously injured**

- Assess the situation and, if possible, remove the person from danger.
- Get help - involve ambulance, police or medical services.
- Contact British embassy/ consulate.
- Contact the event organisers.
- Contact the home contact - the embassy and police will usually contact the British police and next of kin to advise but the home contact should be made aware to act as link with Girlguiding HQ and the country/ region office.
- Record events.
- On return to the UK complete a [\*notification of accident or incident form\*](#) and send it to the Girlguiding HQ insurance team.

#### **10. Someone is hospitalised**

- Assess the level of seriousness.

##### ***If not serious or requiring admission to hospital:***

- The person is returned to the event, no immediate emergency contact is required.
- Make a note of any advice received or treatment given.

- Contact the insurance company for advice. Check what documentation they will require for the claim and make sure to get copies from the hospital or medical provider. Take the name of the insurance adviser.
- The home contact should be advised so that the next of kin can be informed.
- Keep camp or event organisers informed (if relevant).
- On return to the UK complete a [notification of accident or incident form](#) and send it to the Girlguiding HQ insurance team.

***If admitted to hospital:***

- Make a note of any advice received or treatment given.
- Contact the insurance company for advice. Check what documentation they will require for the claim and make sure to get copies from the hospital or medical provider. Take the name of the insurance adviser.
- The home contact should be advised so that the next of kin can be informed.
- Keep camp or event organisers informed (if relevant).
- Contact British embassy/ consulate to advise of situation.
- On return to the UK complete a [notification of accident or incident form](#) and send it to the Girlguiding HQ insurance team.
- Girlguiding would like to offer you support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.
  - Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
  - Username: volunteers
  - Password: girlguiding

**11. Someone dies (natural causes)**

- Inform the police, note time and date, and ask for the contact details of the officer taking the call.
- Contact British embassy/ consulate and confirm that they will contact the family.
- Contact the insurance company.
- Inform the camp or event organisers (if relevant).
- Phone the home contact who will contact Girlguiding HQ and country/region office, the country/region international adviser or country/region chief commissioner to advise them of the situation and the advice received from British embassy/consulate.
- Inform other leaders and trip participants.
- On return to the UK complete a [notification of accident or incident form](#) and send it to the Girlguiding HQ insurance team.
- Girlguiding would like to offer you support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.

- Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
- Username: volunteers
- Password: Girlguiding

## 12. Someone is killed

- Call the police, note time and date, and ask for contact details of the officer taking the call. Or case/crime number details if available.
- Contact British embassy/ consulate and confirm that they will contact the family.
- Contact insurance company.
- Inform the camp or event organisers (if relevant).
- Phone the home contact who will contact Girlguiding HQ and country/region office, the country/region international adviser or country/region chief commissioner to advise them of the situation and the advice received from British embassy/consulate.
- Inform other leaders and trip participants.
- On return to the UK complete a [notification of accident or incident form](#) and send it to the Girlguiding HQ insurance team.
- Girlguiding would like to offer you support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.
  - Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
  - Username: volunteers
  - Password: girlguiding

**Note:** In the event of the death of a British national overseas, it is likely that the embassy/consulate will manage the notification of the next of kin through government channels and the UK police. You should assure yourself that you know, from the authorities, how this is to be done.

## 13. Someone is arrested

- Contact the British embassy/consulate and confirm that they will contact the family as necessary.
- Get information from police, note time and date, and ask for the contact details of the officer working on the case. Or case/crime number details if available.
- Inform the camp or event organisers (if relevant).
- Phone the home contact who will contact Girlguiding HQ and country/region office, the country/region international adviser or country/region chief commissioner to advise them of the situation and the advice received from British embassy/consulate.
- Girlguiding would like to offer you support from Health Assured, they are a

confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.

- Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
- Username: volunteers
- Password: girlguiding

**14. Someone receives news of a serious incident back home and wants to return home.**

- Phone the insurance company - have travel documents to hand and be ready to negotiate for them to return home and when this may be achieved.
- Keep in touch with home contact.

**15. If a major incident occurs overseas**

- If possible, inform the home contact to confirm whether the group is affected or not so that they can reassure and inform the next of kin and Girlguiding HQ.

**Note:** this may not always be possible.

- Follow directions of local police and authorities.
- Be aware that should a natural disaster occur communication networks may be affected.
- Girlguiding would like to offer you support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.
  - Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
  - Username: volunteers
  - Password: girlguiding

If a major incident occurs in the country you are visiting, but does not directly affect the group, such as a military coup, please seek advice from the British embassy or consulate who will advise on procedures. For the most up to date information about British embassies or consulates please check the website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> which gives country-specific advice. Where appropriate, make contact with your home contact.

## **Inappropriate behaviour of a serious nature**

A participant's behaviour may lead to a decision that she must return home early. Sending a participant home because of inappropriate behaviour is the most serious action you can take. This action is extremely rare. With effective planning, risk assessment and preparation for all participants, such situations can be avoided.

The trip leader and assistant leaders may decide that a member of the group is

causing challenges by being involved in serious inappropriate behaviour, for example crime, harm, theft or drugs.

This behaviour may affect themselves, the rest of the group, cause harassment, alarm or distress for the host member association or bring the reputation of Girlguiding into disrepute.

### **Sending a participant home**

If you have reasonable grounds to believe the behaviour of a participant is of a serious nature, you may consider it necessary to send the participant home. This decision needs to be considered, measured and articulated as the correct one for all involved.

Discuss the facts, risks and considerations with the leadership team. Ensure that you are clear and concise as to why the action is being taken and that it is necessary and proportionate, within Girlguiding's code of conduct and/or appropriate behaviour contract. The trip leader is responsible and accountable for the decision made, although you may be asked to make this decision by a host Guiding or Scouting association.

### **What to do**

- Understand the facts, actions and circumstance that have led you and your leadership team to arrive at the decision to send the participant home.
- Discuss the problem/allegation/concern/disclosure with the participant.
  - They may, with guidance and a plan, be able to adjust and change their behaviour.
  - However, if they have no intention of changing, or are unable to adjust, their behaviour then it is fair to state that you will be in contact with the country/region office, chief commissioner or international adviser and action might be taken to address the concerns. Which may result in a decision to send them home.
  - The participant must be made aware that their actions are unacceptable and cannot be managed fairly in the circumstances.
- Contact the country/region office, chief commissioner or international adviser to advise of the problem fully and agree on the action(s) to be taken.
  - Telephone should be your first choice if possible, as it aids clearer discussion although needs to be followed up in an email for clarity and audit trail.

### **Where it is agreed to send the participant home:**

- Inform the participant.
- Document all discussions and actions in detail as this record will be needed

when writing the report. Ask for a written statement from the camp or event organisers if they requested the participant's removal.

- Inform the home contact, who will then inform the next of kin.
- Travel arrangements will be made by the trip leaders who will liaise with the country/region office, chief commissioner or international adviser and the home contact.

**Note:** for a participant under 14, written permission from a parent/carer is required to organise an unaccompanied flight for them.

- Inform the country/region office, chief commissioner or international adviser of travel arrangements for the participant returning home.
- The home contact should be advised of the decision and should work with the commissioner to support the safe return of the participant.
- The country/ region chief commissioner will then discuss with the home contact, the county commissioner and international adviser (or their deputies) to decide who will represent Girlguiding and meet the participant on arrival back in the UK.
- They will also decide who will ensure the participant is reunited with their parent/ carer.
  - It is likely that their parent/ carer will also meet the participant at the airport or station.
- The chief commissioner or her representative should be prepared to have contact with the parent/ carer when meeting the participant and should advise that a detailed debrief meeting will be arranged.
- The trip leader must write a prompt and very clear report to the chief commissioner and international adviser when the group returns to the UK. Statements of support will be required from the rest of the leadership team.
- The responsibility for any further actions will be the responsibility of the country/region chief commissioner.
- The chief commissioner will advise the Girlguiding international commissioner and Girlguiding HQ of any participant sent home from an international event.
- Consider if anyone involved may need emotional support. Girlguiding is able to offer support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed 24 hours a day.
  - Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
  - Username: volunteers
  - Password: girlguiding

### **Escorted Flights**

In the event that a young member needs to travel separately from the rest of the group on an overseas trip, the following is advised:

- It is always recommended that anyone under 14 years old should be

accompanied on flights.

- If the situation makes it impossible for a leader, parent or carer to accompany a girl on a flight, parental permission must be received for her to travel alone. She should be registered as an 'unaccompanied minor' when booking the flight, with assistance requested from airline personnel. Please note that some airlines consider the age of 14 as an adult and therefore will not provide assisted travel unless specifically requested. Be aware that most airlines add additional charges for escorted flights.
- If booking an escorted flight for a girl, leaders will be required to provide details of the person taking the girl to the airport of departure and the person collecting the child from the destination airport. Photographic identification will be required.

## **Section 5 - Media and PR**

Members of Girlguiding dealing, or proposing to deal, with the national media of the country being visited or UK media organisations, especially in an emergency, critical incident or crisis, must contact the Girlguiding HQ Press Office. No comments should be made by the leadership team without advice from the Girlguiding HQ Press Office.

The home contact, country/region office or international adviser should have the Girlguiding HQ Press Office contact details and should call them immediately in the event of an emergency or crisis.

**In the event of an emergency or crisis, any media statements must only be written and issued by the Girlguiding HQ Press Office.**

During office hours (09:00 - 17:00 GMT) the Girlguiding HQ Press Office can be contacted on +44 (0) 20 7592 1733 and the out of hours number (06:00 - 09:00 and 17:00 - 22:00 GMT) is +44 (0) 7990 553 940 - please note that this is a standard mobile phone and as such may be out of range for short periods. In this instance, please leave a message and a member of the team will call you back as soon as possible.

## **Section 6 - Emergency procedure for families who need to contact a participant whilst overseas due to an emergency at home**

Family members should be advised to contact the home contact if an emergency arises that a participant needs to be made aware of while away. The home contact will contact the trip leader.

- The home contact should discuss with the family member and the trip leader whether it is essential for the participant to be advised of the news while she is away from home.
- It may be better to await her arrival home where someone can speak to her face to face and give her all the details. The feelings of the people at home should be considered too.
- If it is decided to tell the participant while on the trip, you should decide which member of the leadership team is best placed to convey the news to the participant. Consider how best to manage this to give the minimal distress to the member and the rest of the group.
- Girlguiding is able to offer support from Health Assured, they are a confidential service that can offer someone to talk to, help and support and counselling sessions if needed.
  - Health Assured portal <https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/>
  - Username: volunteers
  - Password: girlguiding
- If the participants of the trip have their mobile phones with them, the family member may contact the girl directly. You should be aware of this possibility so that you can offer support.

### **Exam results**

If there is essential action to be taken on receipt of exam results, the trip leader should ensure that there is an action plan in place to cover this. Remember that relaying exam results can be very distressing to members and other group members who may also be awaiting results. If possible save these for their return.

### **Digital devices and internet connectivity**

The ready availability of the internet, Wi-Fi and possession of smartphones and mobile devices will impact plans prepared for management of emergency situations. If there is disruption of utilities and local services at the location of an event it may be difficult to get information home whereas in other situations the leadership team will want to manage contact and information shared with home.

Before leaving for the international trip the leadership team should plan for all eventualities and discuss these with the girls. Decisions made by the group should then be included in the group code of conduct for the trip. For example, the group

code of conduct should include whether phones may be taken on the trip. If allowed, then include times at which these can be used.

Participants should agree on situations in which mobiles and devices can/ should be used and when not. They should also be made aware of the importance of sensitivity and accuracy when sending emergency messages using the home contact route.

If phones are permitted it is recommended that participants check their device's roaming charges policy to avoid running up large bills accidentally. It is the participant, or their parent/ carers, responsibility to ensure that they have checked this and that the girls are aware of the costs of using their phones abroad.

**Note:** smart phones will connect automatically to the internet without the user necessarily being aware if the internet roaming function is switched on. It is recommended that participants turn this function off before travel and then turn it on once arrived if it appropriate to do so.

## Section 7 - Developing a risk assessment

The template risk assessment shown below (appendix A) is an example and other formats can be used. The template below gives some examples of risks that may occur and actions that may need to be taken. This template is not comprehensive, and you must consider your own trip and add, amend and delete items accordingly.

You may find it helpful to divide the risk assessments into the stages of the trip. For example, risks before the trip starts, like passports out of date or lost or participants or leaders withdrawing. As well as risks for the journey, for the venue and accommodation, risks associated with activities and risks for the return journey. This reduces what can be a daunting task to a more manageable activity as it is easier to think about risk assessment in sections rather than a single, large document.

### **Participants with pre-existing medical conditions or other additional needs**

It will be necessary to have a person specific risk assessment and care plan for a participant who has either a pre-existing medical condition or other additional needs. The level of risk and care needed will vary and both the personal risk assessment and care plan should be prepared by the leadership team working with the individual member, her parent/carer and taking account of medical advice. The risk assessment should include any adaptations required.

When travelling, a medical summary of a person's condition may be required. Along with details of medications prescribed and a letter from their GP confirming these. This should include the contact details of the physician to be contacted in an emergency. It is also worth checking whether the country that they're travelling to has any drug restrictions in advance.

You can find more information and support on the Girlguiding website:

- Writing a risk assessment <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/policies/girlguiding-policies/safety-and-safeguarding-policy/risk-assessment-policy/>.
- Creating a health or personal care plan <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/safeguarding-and-risk/health-and-additional-needs/>
- Writing inclusive risk assessments <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/including-all/including-members-with-additional-needs/inclusive-risk-assessments/>
- Supporting members with their mental health <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/including-all/including-members-with-additional-needs/mental-health->

[and-guiding/](#)

- How to make reasonable adjustments  
<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/including-all/including-members-with-additional-needs/making-reasonable-adjustments/>

Leaders who have completed international trips may also be available to help you complete your risk assessment. Your international adviser will also be able to help. It is important to remember that the risk assessment should be reviewed and shared with the whole leadership team regularly throughout the planning phase and the implementation of the trip.

### **Supporting trans participants**

Some countries have laws which discriminate against or persecute lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people. And even if the law respects and protects trans people, the attitudes and behaviours of others may not.

Be aware of the local culture when travelling abroad and find out in advance what the laws and attitudes are towards members of the LGBT community. [The Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) provide advice for LGBT people on travelling abroad, and what to do if you encounter problems overseas.

In some countries being LGBT is illegal. If you have any LGBT young members, and you can decide on the destination, you should choose a country that everyone can access safely. It wouldn't be appropriate and could be discriminatory, to take a group abroad but to state that LGBT members can't go because it isn't safe.

If you're worried about negative attitudes or behaviours you might encounter overseas, you should have a frank and honest conversation with the member about their own personal safety. There may be some situations where the risks of taking part are too high.

Things to be taken into consideration and discussed in advance with the member include:

- Laws of the country being visited and risk to safety and security
- The approach someone wants to take to keeping their trans identity private, and the practicalities of that
- Whether it's safe to talk openly about their gender identity
- Possible issues at borders or when entering the country if their gender marker in their ID or passport doesn't match their gender expression - they could possibly be denied entry
- If they need to access healthcare - a medical telephone service with LGBT training may be a safe option
- Whether anyone else in the travelling group needs to know about their status for their safety and wellbeing
- Make a personal safety plan with them to mitigate the above risks, and ensure they're fully involved in the decision-making. Try not to make

assumptions. Depending on those decisions you might need to make sure that other young members and volunteers are aware of their behaviour and language while travelling to avoid 'outing' the trans member.

Trans people may not have passports that reflect their gender identity. This might make taking a trip abroad more stressful for them. For example, they might feel the need to change their passport in advance, or they may have concerns about going through passport control. [The Passport Office](#) provides more information for trans people on applying for a passport. Young people can only change the gender marker on their passport with consent from their parents/ carers.

You can find more information about how to support trans members on our website: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/running-your-unit/including-all/supporting-trans-members/supporting-trans-young-members/>

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

### Template risk assessment for international trip

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

1. Each risk must be thought about and qualified for the likelihood of the risk occurring and the severity of any injury or illness that could result (called impact). The numeric assessments are then multiplied to achieve a risk rating for each of the hazards identified.
2. Likelihood of Impact: Unlikely = 1; May happen = 2; Likely = 3; Very Likely = 4; Certain = 5
3. Impact: First Aid injury or illness = 1; Minor injury or illness = 2; injury or illness needing medical treatment = 3; Major injury or illness needing to stay in hospital = 4; Fatality, disabling injury, etc. = 5
4. Each risk with a multiplied score of 1-4, must have a counter measure in place
5. Each risk with a multiplied score of 5-10 must have a counter measure and an action to take if the risk occurs.
6. Each risk with a multiplied score of 12-25 must have a counter measure and an action to take if the risk occurs. You should also note any controls that can be implemented to reduce this risk.
7. Each risk should have a named owner. That is the principal person responsible for reducing the risk prior to something happening and/or the person that will be responsible to any action to take should the risk occur.

#### Risk Rating Matrix

Likelihood of impact	Certain	5	5	10	15	20	25
	Very Likely	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Likely	3	3	6	9	12	15
	May Happen	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4	5
			1	2	3	4	5
			First Aid Injury or Illness	Minor injury or Illness	Injury or illness needing medical treatment	Major Injury or Illness needing to stay in hospital	Fatality, disabling injury, etc.
<b>Impact</b> (although this shows medical impacts, some risks do not have a medical impact, but will have levels of implications to plans and individuals)							

#### Risk Rating Table

Score	Priority	Action
1-4	LOW	This represents a low risk
5-10	MEDIUM	Action will be required to control the risks. Interim measures may be necessary in the short term.
12-25	HIGH	Action will be urgently required to control the risks. Further resources and/or expertise may be needed

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

Risk assessment for [name of group] trip to [destination] [dates of trip]							
Description of risk	Impact	Likelihood	Risk rating	Counter measures	Action to take if risk occurs	Owner	Notes
Passports out of date or not valid for the required length of time after return to the UK				All passports to be checked and copies given to leaders in advance of the trip	New passport to be applied for by individual	Leader	Check to be made at least 6 months prior to the trip to give time for a successful passport application
Injury/sickness of a trip leader just before trip							
Injury/sickness to group member before trip							
Member of the team / team leader does not arrive at the airport on time							
Transport problems to get to airport for one/more of team							
Forgotten passport							
Missed/cancelled flight or connecting flight					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the airline at the airport at the earliest opportunity and ask for help.</li> <li>• If you have no success you should contact your travel agent.</li> <li>• Contact your home contact with details of the situation and keep them informed of developments</li> <li>• Keep written evidence as you can get to</li> </ul>		

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

					claim via your travel insurance on your return to the UK		
Someone has their possessions stolen at the airport					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report theft to police and obtain a police report for any insurance claim</li> <li>• Get on plane</li> </ul>		
Someone has their possessions stolen overseas					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report the theft to the camp or event organiser</li> <li>• Report to police (keep the written report)</li> <li>• Proceed with insurance claim upon return</li> </ul>		
Someone loses their luggage					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to airline with description of bag, contents, flight and the ticket number assigned to the bag at check-in.</li> <li>• Have forwarding destination address available, airlines will often deliver missing luggage direct.</li> <li>• Airline is obliged to make payment to them if there is a 24 hour delay</li> <li>• If any purchases have to be made for essentials as a consequence of the missing luggage keep the receipts</li> <li>• Make a note of contact number at the airport</li> </ul>		
Someone loses / has stolen their debit/credit card					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact emergency credit card number/ card protection plan</li> <li>• Report loss / theft to event organisers</li> <li>• Report any theft to police</li> <li>• Have a contingency plan of how you will manage access to money for the trip</li> </ul>		
Someone goes missing					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the reality of the situation - Are they really missing?</li> <li>• Contact local event organiser</li> <li>• Contact the home contact</li> <li>• Contact the police</li> <li>• Contact British Embassy/British Consulate</li> </ul>		

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record the situation</li> </ul>		
Someone loses their passport overseas				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The trip leader should carry a copy of each participant and leader's passport (this must be destroyed or returned at the end of the trip).</li> <li>Contact the British Embassy / British Consulate for replacement</li> </ul>		
Someone loses their passport before leaving UK				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact airline.</li> <li>Contact travel agent.</li> <li>Contact passport agency for replacement passport.</li> <li>Contact the home contact if you're on the way to airport as the participant will have to stay in UK and will need collecting if they cannot travel.</li> </ul>		
Someone becomes seriously injured				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the situation and, if possible, remove the person from danger.</li> <li>Get help - involve ambulance, police or medical services.</li> <li>Contact British embassy/ consulate.</li> <li>Contact the event organisers.</li> <li>Contact the home contact - the embassy and police will usually contact the British police and next of kin to advise but the home contact should be made aware to act as link with Girlguiding HQ and the country or region.</li> <li>Record events.</li> </ul>		
Someone is hospitalised and it does not require admission to hospital				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The person is returned to the event, no immediate emergency contact is required.</li> <li>Make a note of any advice received or treatment given.</li> <li>Contact the insurance company for advice. Check what documentation they</li> </ul>		

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

				<p>will require for the claim and make sure to get copies from the hospital or medical provider. Take the name of the insurance adviser.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The home contact should be advised so that the next of kin can be informed.</li> <li>• Keep event organisers informed.</li> </ul>		
Someone is hospitalised and is admitted to hospital				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a note of any advice received or treatment given.</li> <li>• Contact the insurance company for advice. Check what documentation they will require for the claim and make sure to get copies from the hospital or medical provider. Take the name of the insurance adviser.</li> <li>• The home contact should be advised so that the next of kin can be informed.</li> <li>• Keep event organisers informed.</li> <li>• Contact British embassy/ consulate to advise of situation.</li> </ul>		
Someone dies (natural causes)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the police, note time and date, and ask for the contact details of the officer taking the call.</li> <li>• Contact British embassy/ consulate and confirm that they will contact the family.</li> <li>• Contact the insurance company.</li> <li>• Inform the event organisers.</li> <li>• Phone the home contact who will contact Girlguiding HQ and country/region office, the country/region international adviser or country/region chief commissioner to advise of situation and the advice received from British embassy/consulate.</li> <li>• Inform other leaders and trip participants.</li> </ul>		

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

Someone is killed				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the police, note time and date, and ask for contact details of the officer taking the call. Or case/crime number details if available.</li> <li>• Contact British embassy/ consulate and confirm that they will contact the family.</li> <li>• Contact insurance company.</li> <li>• Inform the event organisers.</li> <li>• Phone the home contact who will contact Girlguiding HQ and country/region office, the country/region international adviser or country/region chief commissioner to advise of situation and the advice received from British embassy/consulate.</li> <li>• Inform other leaders and trip participants.</li> <li>• On return to the UK complete a notification of accident or incident form and send it to the Girlguiding HQ insurance team.</li> </ul>		
Someone is arrested				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact the British embassy/consulate and confirm that they will contact the family as necessary.</li> <li>• Get information from police, note time and date, and ask for the contact details of the officer working on the case. Or case/crime number details if available.</li> <li>• Inform the event organisers.</li> <li>• Phone the home contact who will contact Girlguiding HQ and country/region office, the country/region international adviser or country/region chief commissioner to advise of situation and the advice</li> </ul>		

## Appendix A - Template risk assessment for international

					received from British embassy/consulate.		
Someone receives news of a serious incident back home and wants to return home					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone the insurance company - have travel documents to hand and be ready to negotiate for them to return home and when this may be achieved.</li> <li>• Keep in touch with home contact.</li> </ul>		
If a major incident occurs overseas					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If possible, inform the home contact to confirm whether the group is affected or not so that they can reassure and inform the next of kin and Girlguiding HQ. <b>Note:</b> this may not always be possible.</li> <li>• Follow directions of local police and authorities.</li> <li>• Be aware that should a natural disaster occur communication networks may be affected.</li> </ul>		

