



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Volunteer Role Descriptions

Guidance notes

Why do we need volunteer role descriptions?

A volunteer role description is a document that outlines the purpose of a Girlguiding volunteer role, the tasks a volunteer in that role will be expected to do, and what skills and attributes they will need. Role descriptions form part of a bigger picture of volunteer induction and support within Girlguiding, and can help the volunteer journey at every stage.

Having a role description does not change your current role in Girlguiding; their aim is to create tools to show what volunteers are already doing within Girlguiding. We can use these to set out a clear vision of what we do in order to retain and recruit the right volunteers for our roles.

Benefits to Girlguiding

Having role descriptions:

- strengthens teams and helps Girlguiding to value current volunteers
- helps us to think about the kind of volunteers we want and need
- supports those recruiting new volunteers to feel confident about recruiting the right person for the role
- saves time and work by giving you a ready-made document to use when you need to fill a specific volunteer role
- helps to explain our structure externally
- helps set expectations on both sides
- gives a consistent, positive impression of Girlguiding.

Role descriptions:

- set out our priorities publicly
- are available on our website for anyone to access
- help us demonstrate the broad range of our volunteer roles
- allow us to evaluate our volunteer structure and identify any gaps.

Benefits to volunteers

Having role descriptions:

- sets clear expectations of what a volunteer will be doing in a role
- enables you to demonstrate what you already do, or what you did, as a volunteer
- helps you understand how you fit into the bigger picture and gives you a clear place in the structure of Girlguiding
- provides information about other roles that are available to move on to in the future
- helps to identify and manage existing volunteer development needs.

How can I use the role descriptions?

As someone who supports other volunteers, whether as a Unit Leader or as a Commissioner, you can use the role descriptions in various ways.

To retain members and strengthen teams

Recognising the great work already being done by volunteers at Girlguiding will help volunteers in your teams feel valued. The role descriptions can be used to point out all the things we're doing without even knowing it, and let people know about how they fit into the team. Volunteers can use the content to demonstrate the skills and experience they have gained through guiding, either when explaining to others what their role involves or when updating a CV.

To support recruitment

Use role descriptions to match potential volunteers' skills and interests with the right role for them. By clearly outlining all the responsibilities and skills required you're more likely to attract someone who really understands the role - maybe someone who didn't know Girlguiding was for them and is excited by the challenge.

Think about your specific recruitment audience: what are they going to be looking for? What are their skills? What will they want to gain from volunteering?

Role descriptions can help you answer recruitment queries: you could send or give them to interested volunteers, have them available at recruitment events and taster nights, or upload them to volunteer recruitment websites. Having a set document can be especially useful when advertising through a volunteer agency or third party. It saves you time and could potentially save disappointment later on, by making expectations clear from the beginning.

Role descriptions can be used alongside other resources like flyers, posters and adverts, to make the role come to life. Use accompanying materials to talk about the specifics of your unit or area and what is great about volunteering for Girlguiding. Let the role description set out exactly what a new volunteer will actually be signing up to.

To support and welcome new volunteers

Making volunteers feel welcome once they have agreed to give their time to Girlguiding is essential. Role descriptions can be used as part of a volunteer's induction pack, setting you off on the right foot from the start.

They can also be used to structure formal support sessions, to identify areas where the volunteer might need help and to recognise how they are fulfilling the requirements of the role. Use descriptions of other roles to show what further opportunities are available. This may encourage volunteers to take up new positions by setting out the skills they have and showing how a particular role could suit them.

To assess suitability for a role

It is inevitable that, from time to time, a volunteer may not have the skills or knowledge to fulfil their role as well as might have been expected. Having a standard document that sets out the expectations of a volunteer can help when you need to have those difficult conversations about a volunteer's suitability. Use the role description as a support and reference tool when explaining how and where a volunteer may not have fulfilled the role's requirements. However, role descriptions should also be used to identify areas for development. Where a volunteer is able to develop the skills required for their current role, they should be encouraged to do so.

Does every Girlguiding role have a role description?

There are a huge number of volunteer roles available in Girlguiding at different levels and with different specialisms. We have not produced a separate role description for every role, but there should be a role description document that can be adapted to cover each specific role if necessary.

Examples

- The unit role descriptions (Unit Leader, Assistant Leader etc) can be adapted for volunteers in any section by adding the section details.
- Girlguiding offers volunteer roles at many different levels (unit, District, Division, County or Country/Region). There is generally one role description template available for each role that exists at more than one level - for example, the Treasurer role description applies to District, Division and County Treasurers.
- Certain role descriptions can be tailored to meet local requirements: for example, a Walking Adviser (a role which is covered by the Outdoor Activities Adviser role description) in a mountainous County may need different skills and experience to one who lives in a low-lying area.

The role description documents fall into the following categories.

- Unit Leadership roles.
- Support roles.
- Advisers and Coordinators.
- Commissioners.

Unit Leadership roles

Unit Leadership role templates are the most fixed and require little adapting, apart from adding your specific unit's section and location.

Support roles

Role templates are available for all the supporting roles; these can be adapted to be more specific or to add in location or level details. These are the roles that provide day-to-day support to volunteers working directly with girls and young women, or to Girlguiding as a charity. They include Administrators, Treasurers, Ambassadors, Tutors and Trainers.

Advisers

There is one Adviser role template containing all the core competencies that an Adviser needs. Advisers are specialists in a particular area of the guiding programme, and advise their local team on issues related to their specialism. Other responsibilities can be added to the template, depending on the specialism.

Some Adviser roles, such as Communications and PR Adviser, have specific role descriptions.

Coordinators

There is one Coordinator role template containing all the core competencies that a Coordinator needs. A Coordinator is a designated point of contact for a particular area of the guiding programme. Other responsibilities can be added to the template depending on the specialism.

Some Coordinator roles, such as Trainer Coordinator, also have specific role descriptions with specialisms available to add in.

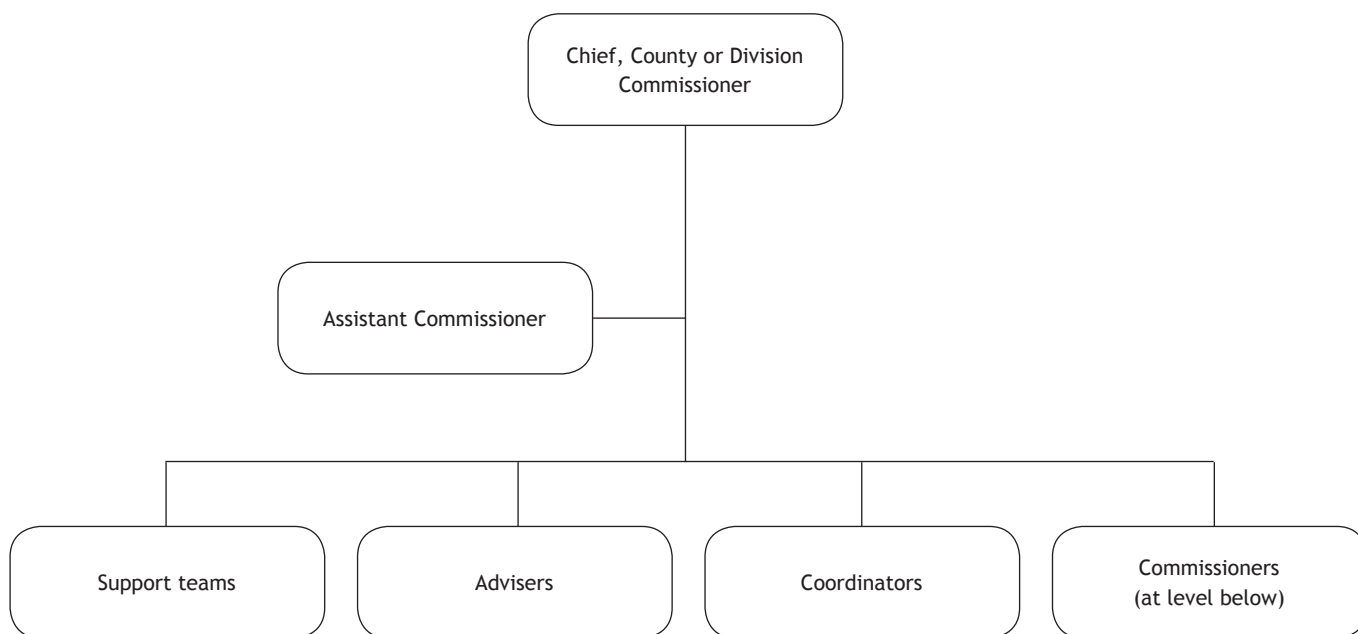
Commissioners

There is one role description for Commissioners at District, Division and County level. This contains all the basic competencies and responsibilities held by someone in a Commissioner post, though these may vary depending on the level.

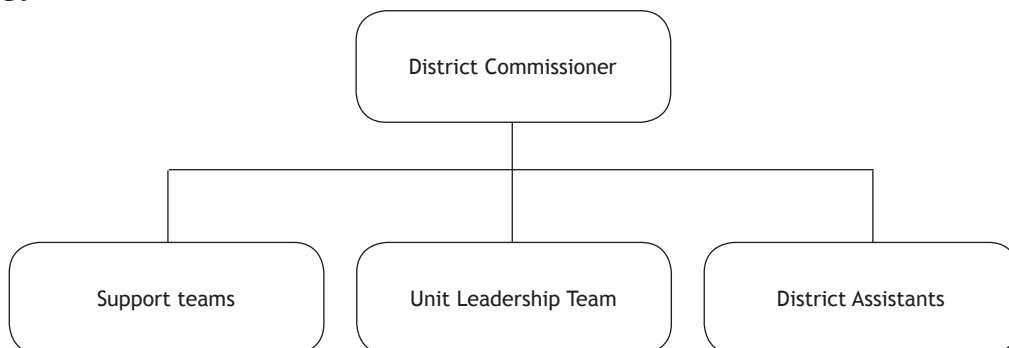
Girlguiding structures

While some areas have local variations, guiding roles generally fit into the following structure.

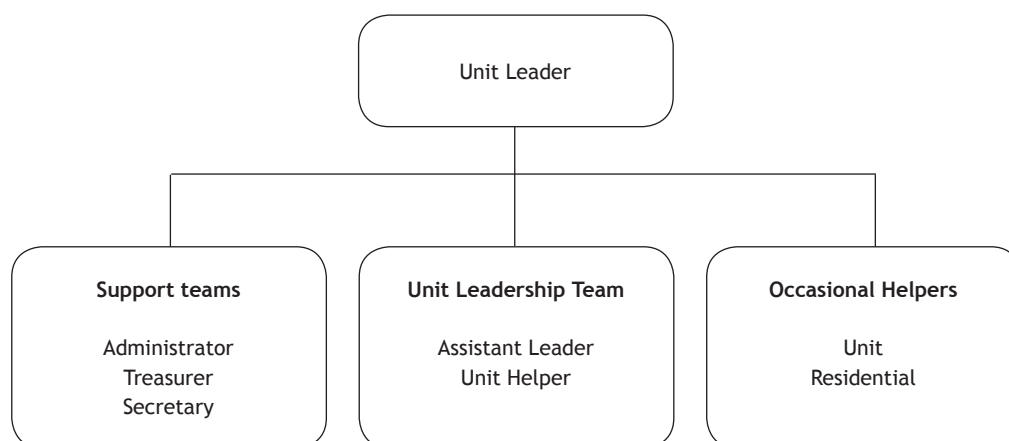
Country/Region, County and Division level



District level



Unit level



What is included in a role description?

Every role description follows the same template. This makes them easy to use, to understand and to adapt to your own needs while sticking to a standard layout and look. Each role description has some set sections, and some that will need to be adapted.

Items marked with * will need to be customised for each role.

Front page

An introduction to Girlguiding; who we are, what we do and what we stand for. This page can act as an advert for the role and the experience of volunteering with Girlguiding. There is space at the bottom of the page for you to enter local information about your Girlguiding area.

Role title/Alternative title

The title of the role being offered. This should be a standard title; please use one that already exists. If an alternative title has been used on GO, you are able to enter this here if required.

Specialism*

Most roles have at least one specialism, such as the section that they will be working in. For example:

Unit Leader

Specialism: Brownies

Administrator

Specialism: Queen's Guide Award

Outdoor Activities Adviser

Specialism: Climbing

Supported by*

Who will supervise and support the person doing the role? This will usually be the Unit Leader or a level-specific Commissioner, but this field is left open for local variations.

Suggested time commitment*

How much time is the role-holder is expected to give? This will vary, and if it isn't possible to give an exact length of time, make a realistic estimate. It's important for potential volunteers to have realistic expectations of how much time they will need to spend doing a role, but it also doesn't need to be exact - for example, *2 to 4 hours a week (variable)*. For some roles an editable suggestion will be included in the template.

Length of time in role*

How long is the term? For most roles it will be ongoing, but other roles have a set length of term, such as *12 months' minimum commitment*. Consider why a minimum commitment might be important to a role: because of the training involved, a commitment to working with the girls, or to build relationships within the unit.

Location*

Where will this role be based? At home, or in a specific location? Will the volunteer be expected to travel? Putting the general area is sufficient here.

If you are interested in this role*

If you are using the front page as an advert, include local contact details or instructions on what an applicant should do next. If you are not using the documents for specific recruitment, this does not need to be completed.

Who can do this role?

This outlines the basic requirements of the person holding the post: what age the role holder needs to be, if the role is for female members only or if Girlguiding membership is required.

Do I need a qualification?

Is there a specific qualification that this role holder needs to have or work towards? For most roles within Girlguiding, no qualification will be required.

What is the purpose of the role?

This section explains why this role is needed within Girlguiding, and the objectives of the role.

What will I do in the role?

This section sets out the responsibilities of the role. These are all the general, practical things that the role-holder will have to do, including tasks that they may need to delegate to other members of the team. For some roles there is space to include further, more specific, responsibilities as appropriate.

Being part of your local guiding area

All roles require working with other volunteers in local teams, and building good working relationships with other members. These points cover the responsibilities that are required to maintain good communication with relevant people and how the post holder should take an active part in their Girlguiding community.

Being part of Girlguiding

Volunteers also have a responsibility to acknowledge that they're part of the wider charity and this section covers what they will need to learn and understand about Girlguiding in terms of structure, strategy and values.

Promoting Girlguiding

Representing Girlguiding, both within teams and to external audiences, is essential to being a volunteer. This will vary depending on whether a role is externally facing (such as being part of the Unit Leadership Team) or not.

What will Girlguiding do for me?

Volunteers are asked to make a commitment to take on the role, so Girlguiding should also set out its commitment to the volunteer in return. This section outlines how Girlguiding will support the volunteer in their role and provide the things they need to make the most of the role.

Am I right for the role?

Personal qualities

The values and qualities looked for in a Girlguiding volunteer. These should be essential for the person looking to fulfil the role described.

Skills and abilities

These are the skills required to successfully fulfil the responsibilities; however, as stated on the document, these are not essential when starting a role, but can be developed. Extra skills can be added as required, for example if a particular specialism has further specific skills.

Inclusion

The last part of the role description includes a statement on inclusion and flexibility. Girlguiding is open to volunteers from all backgrounds, and anyone who wants to get involved with Girlguiding should be able to do so.

Criminal record checks

If a criminal record check is required (DBS in England and Wales, PVG in Scotland or AccessNI in Ulster), it is stated, to make this absolutely clear to volunteers before application.

Legal definitions

It is good practice to include a statement to clarify that this role description is for a volunteer role and is not a legally binding document.

FAQs

Do I need to use the role descriptions?

Although using these documents is not mandatory, they have been developed to help and support the work of volunteers and staff. Using role descriptions is best practice across the sector, and can help to make volunteer inductions and changes to roles go smoothly.

Why isn't there a role description for my role?

There are a large number of different roles within Girlguiding, including many local variations of similar positions. The role descriptions use the recommended role titles and terminology and cover all roles listed on GO. If you perform a role under a different title, there will be a document that describes your role using different wording. These documents aim to standardise and clarify variations across the charity, but are adaptable enough for localisation.

For example, only the most common Adviser and Coordinator roles have specific role descriptions, but the generic Adviser and Coordinator role templates can be adapted to suit different specialisms.

Will these documents affect my current role?

The primary purpose is to get the right people in the right roles from the beginning, so skills and interests can be matched - not to stop people from volunteering, but to make sure every member can get the most out of their experience of volunteering with Girlguiding. They may be used by Commissioners to support conversations about a volunteer's suitability for a role, with the view to help volunteers find a role that suits them and give them opportunities to effectively support Girlguiding. They may also be used to identify development needs, such as training and skill sharing, to help members fulfil their current role to the best of their ability.

How can I give feedback on role descriptions to the Membership Development team?

If you have any specific feedback or concerns regarding the roles descriptions, please email membershipdevelopment@girlguiding.org.uk. Please bear in mind that not all local variations can be accommodated and the documents are designed to give a general overview of a role rather than detailed role guidance.