

# Base 1. Leading and managing the division/district's volunteer team.

**Skills:** communication, team management, teamwork, organisation.

**Relevant guiding policies:** Learning and development policy, code of conduct, equality and diversity policy.

## **Key aspects of the role:**

- Lead, support and manage a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure high quality guiding is happening in your area.
- Build good relationships with the volunteers in your area and make sure volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure local guiding business is conducted efficiently and effectively via team meetings.
- Devise an area strategy and action plan to implement and review and update it regularly.
- Organise and effectively communicate area meetings (schedule dates, circulate an agenda ahead of time, take notes, send out minutes etc).
- Manage any problems or concerns that arise within your division/district.

SOAR stands for Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results.

S = What are the strengths in your volunteer team?

O = What opportunities are available in your volunteer team?

A = What are your aspirations with the volunteers? What are their aspirations? How do you know?

R = What accomplishments are you proud of? What do you want to achieve? In a month, this term, next term, next year, by the end of your role?

# **Base 2. Ensuring the district/division is working towards the doing our best standards.**

**Skills:** communication, organisation, initiative.

**Relevant guiding policies:** Code of conduct, learning and development policy, safeguarding policy, health, safety and welfare policy, risk assessment policy.

**Key aspects of the role:**

- Ensure the volunteers in your district/division are familiar with the doing our best checklist and standards and help everyone to work towards them.
- Visit units to ensure good quality guiding is happening.
- Celebrate and share great ideas between units.
- Be an encourager! Present qualifications and awards (or other forms of thanks and recognition) to celebrate girls and volunteers. Recognise the commitment of all adults within the area, giving informal thanks and, where appropriate, nominating individuals for awards.
- Ensure that volunteers have completed mandatory training.
- Provide support/mentoring to leaders in training and new leaders.
- Identify volunteer training needs and raise requirements at the appropriate level.
- Recognise when support is needed by members of the team and respond appropriately.

With a partner, either discuss at least one of the scenarios and answer the questions.

OR

Review how you use the doing our best checklists in your area.

# Doing our best commissioner supporting units scenario 1.

You are a commissioner. You have asked unit leaders to come prepared to share how they provide a 'balanced and varied programme which is girl led' at the next district meeting. At the meeting there are representatives from four units and they share the following:

Unit A: My girls really like to bake and craft, so I ensure that we plan these girl-led activities for each week.

Unit B: I've brought in my year plan for my unit. It ensures that everyone gets a chance to do an appropriate skills builder and covers all six programme themes, which makes it balanced and varied. There's not much time for anything else.

Unit C: We love doing all the extra activities that Girlguiding has to offer, and also a few trips out of our own. The girls are always asking to do more. This makes our programme really varied and girl-led.

Unit D: We ask the girls each term for their ideas but they generally ask to repeat something we've done before – never anything new. The leaders generally end up creating a varied programme based on time of year and guiding initiatives and we try to follow the programme. We are struggling a bit with getting the balance right between using skills builders, UMAs and what the girls want to repeat.

Using the doing our best 5 essentials standard, consider the following questions:

1. What can you see as a good example of quality guiding in each of the four units? How can this be celebrated?
2. What else could you ask each of these units?
3. Where could these units not be meeting the standards?
4. How might you use the checklist to help you have a conversation with these units?

# Doing our best commissioner supporting units scenario 2

One of your unit leaders has come to you overwhelmed – there are too many Girlguiding policies to follow, she can't possibly keep up with all the safeguarding, risk assessments etc., and provide a balanced and varied programme. It's all too much!

Please consider the following questions:

1. Using the doing our best standards as a guide, what questions could you ask the leader to find out more about her unit and what is overwhelming her?
2. How might the doing our best standards be used by the unit leader after your discussion?
3. What can you suggest to her to make everything more manageable?
4. What additional support can you provide?

# Doing our best commissioner supporting units scenario 3

You have a unit in your district which has a good reputation. The girls are enjoying getting stuck into the new programme. There are always new members wanting to join and the volunteers seem to be enjoying running the unit.

However, you have noticed that their GO records aren't up to date. You have concerns about whether all the required policies and procedures are being followed.

Please consider the following questions:

1. How would you go about speaking with this unit?
2. How might doing our best standards be helpful in a conversation with the unit?
3. What advice would you give the unit?
4. What could you do to celebrate and share the great practice they are clearly doing in so many areas?

# Doing our best commissioner supporting units scenario 4

You have just returned from visiting a local unit. The girls were clearly having a great time and taking part in lots of different activities. The leaders all reported that they felt very well supported and were enjoying their roles.

However, when you asked a couple of the more recent volunteers and the parent helpers if there had been any safeguarding concerns they didn't seem to understand the question properly.

When you asked who at the meeting was the qualified first aider there was some confusion among the team as to who held the relevant qualifications.

You are now concerned that the unit may not be meeting the safety and safeguarding standards. There wasn't an appropriate time to talk with the unit volunteers about these issues in the visit and you're now worrying about how to approach it.

Please consider the following questions:

1. What could the commissioner celebrate with the unit?
2. Look at the safety and safeguarding standards and checklist. Where do you think the unit might not be meeting those standards?
3. How would you suggest discussing this with the unit? How could the checklist help?
4. Where could you refer the unit volunteers for further support?

# Doing our best commissioner supporting commissioners scenario 1

One of your commissioners has come to you overwhelmed – there are too many Girlguiding policies to follow, she can't possibly keep up with all the safeguarding, risk assessments etc. It's all too much!

Please consider the following questions:

1. Using the doing our best standards as a guide, what questions could you ask the commissioner to find out more about her and what is overwhelming her?
2. How might the doing our best standards be used by the commissioner after your discussion?
3. What can you suggest to her to make everything more manageable?
4. What additional support can you provide?

# Doing our best commissioner supporting commissioners scenario 2

You have some units in your division which have a good reputation. The girls are enjoying getting stuck into the new programme, there are always new members wanting to join and the volunteers seem to be enjoying running the unit.

However, you have noticed that their GO records aren't up to date, and you have concerns about whether all the required policies and procedures are being followed.

You want to discuss this with your team but know they will not be keen to discuss.

Please consider the following questions:

1. How would you go about discussing this at your division meeting?
2. How might doing our best standards be helpful in a conversation with your team?
3. What advice would you give the commissioners?
4. What could you do to celebrate and share the great practice they are clearly doing in so many areas?

# Doing our best commissioner

## supporting commissioners scenario 3

One of the commissioners has just returned from visiting a local unit and rings you to seek some advice.

During the visit the girls were clearly having a great time and taking part in lots of different activities. The leaders all reported that they felt very well supported and were enjoying their roles.

However, when the commissioner asked a couple of the more recent volunteers and the parent helpers if there had been any safeguarding concerns they didn't seem to understand the question properly.

When the commissioner asked who at the meeting was the qualified first aider there was some confusion among the team as to who held the relevant qualifications. The commissioner is now concerned that the unit may not be meeting the safety and safeguarding standards.

The commissioner did not feel able to talk with the unit volunteers about these issues at the visit and has rung you to seek help as she is now worrying about how to approach it.

Please consider the following questions:

1. What method of communication would you advise eg email/telephone/face to face?
2. Look at the safety and safeguarding standards and checklist. Where do you think the unit might not be meeting those standards?
3. How would you suggest the commissioner begins discussing this with the unit? How could the checklist help?
4. Where could the commissioner refer the unit volunteers for further support?

## Base 3. Administration.

**Skills:** organisation, time management, prioritisation, computer literacy, teamwork.

**Relevant guiding policies:** managing information policy, safeguarding policy, health, safety and welfare policy, employer's liability certificate, public liability certificate, personal accident and medical expenses certificate.

### Key aspects of the role:

- Ensure that all administrative resources for the area run effectively and GO is kept up to date with member roles and qualifications.
- Check all member roles in the area are compliant with A Safe Space.
- Submit and update training and events dates on the area calendar or equivalent.
- Deal effectively and in a timely manner with concerns and complaints in the area.
- Ensure ongoing good practice and legal compliance in all health and safety matters.
- Sign off award nominations for other levels of guiding where relevant.
- Manage residential event notification forms (REN forms) – check details (eg ratios, qualifications), risk assessment form and approve/sign them off.
- Approve/sign off unit grant applications.
- Give approval for activities away from the unit meeting place and review risk assessments.
- Follow processes when agreeing to units being set up or closed and support volunteers, girls and parents when a unit needs to close.
- Coordinate events for members in the area.
- Be the main contact for the area on GO.
- Arrange DBS and reference checks for volunteers.

Review the A-Z of risk assessment. What would you add to it for your area?

What are your top tips for arranging DBS and reference checks?

A-Z of events – what can you add to the list that you have organised for your area?

# Base 4. Being a Trustee including financial stewardship.

**Skills:** organisation, computer literacy, prioritisation, time management.

**Relevant guiding policies:** finance policy, fundraising policy, managing information policy.

## **Key aspects of the role:**

- Understand your role as a trustee and ensure financial matters are monitored and policies adhered to.
  - Check that unit accounts are accurate and independently verified.
  - Understand the Gift Aid process and encourage its use.
  - Ensure units pay subscriptions on time.
  - Keep area accounts and ensure they are independently verified and submitted to the next level.
  - Set a budget for the area and check that accounts are accurate and up to date.
  - Manage property owned by local guiding units or areas.
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- Review the 6 roles of the Trustee using the Jigsaw.
  - Identify what aspects you do well and what you could do better? The checklist could help you with this.
  - Identify how you could improve your skills.
  - Share how your District/division adhere to the Girlguiding finance policy.
  - What advice would you give to a new commissioner with regards to being a Trustee?

# Base 5. Promoting Girlguiding and communication.

**Skills:** communication, dealing with difficult situations, computer literacy.

**Relevant guiding policies:** complaints policy, marketing, communications and media policy, managing information policy, equality and diversity policy.

## **Key aspects of the role:**

- Familiarise yourself with Girlguiding's key messages and promote these in any communications with the public.
- Be an ambassador for the values of Girlguiding.
- Keep any websites or social media presence for the area up to date.
- Represent the division or district at external events, promoting a positive image of Girlguiding.
- Implement and develop external partnerships eg with local voluntary groups, Trefoil Guild, local authority.
- Respond to general enquiries from volunteers, parents and members of the public.

## Questions to consider for your strategy

1. What external partnerships do you have/want? for example, with local voluntary groups, Trefoil Guild, local authority.
2. What websites or social media presence do you want/need for your area?
3. How do you promote Girlguiding's key messages?

# Base 6. Being part of your local guiding area.

**Skills:** communication, decision making, prioritisation, teamwork.

**Relevant guiding policies:** marketing, communications and media policy, learning and development policy.

## **Key aspects of the role:**

- Promote local, national and international opportunities available within guiding, and encourage young members and volunteers to take part.
- Promote opportunities for training, activities and fundraising.
- Maintain good communications with other commissioners in your area.
- Keep up to date with new resources and programme initiatives, and use them as appropriate.

1. What are your top tips to ensure that volunteers have completed mandatory training?
2. How do you use local meetings?
  - Do you meet face to face or on zoom?
  - What's the purpose – social or share info or planning or...?
  - Who comes – all the team, unit leaders? What about YL or unit helpers?
  - Who should come?
  - How do you evaluate its effectiveness?
3. How do you ensure you and your volunteers keep up to date with programme and policy/procedures?

# Base 7. Being part of the larger guiding family.

**Skills:** communication, teamwork, organisation, initiative.

**Relevant guiding policies:** learning and development policy, code of conduct.

## **Key aspects of the role:**

- Attend meetings at other levels of guiding and report back to volunteers in your area.
- Be committed to undertaking relevant training.
- Learn about the structure of Girlguiding and how your responsibilities and position fit within it.
- Be willing to learn about Girlguiding's national and local strategic aims and how these are delivered locally.
- Learn about Girlguiding's policies and code of conduct.
- Develop links with different level commissioners

Review the strategy information and ask yourself:

1. How do you use the code of conduct in your role?
2. What aspects of the strategy are you doing well? What could be better?
3. How does the national strategy fit with the region strategy?  
How do they fit with your strategy?
4. What is in your county strategy? How does it fit with your strategy?
5. What might you add to your strategy/vision now that you have considered the larger guiding family?

# Base 8. Growing guiding.

**Skills:** organisation, initiative, teamwork, communication, team management.

**Relevant guiding policies:** Membership policy, Vetting and Recruitment policy, Marketing, Communications and Media policy, Equality and Diversity policy, Learning and Development policy.

## **Key aspects of the role:**

- Be aware of change within membership. Consider local demographics and external developments.
- Lead on strategies for recruiting more girls and volunteers for your area.
- Contact prospective volunteers and match them to possible roles.
- With support from the local team, welcome and induct new volunteers to the area.
- Support work around girls' transitions between sections and transfers within the area.
- Promote inclusion and provide support to units in your area to include all girls and adult volunteers.
- Support volunteers who want to open a new unit.
- Make sure waiting lists for girls are well managed by units.

## **Consider:**

1. What local opportunities are available within Guiding? For example, do all units have guide helpers, young leaders?
2. Could you have some 13-17 external volunteers?
3. What does your area need? Use the [Office for National Statistics website](#) to gather information about the ages and spread of the population around you. Find out the location/time/day/cost of other activities eg Scouts, dancing, music, language lessons as well as youth organisations, schools, places of worship and culturally specific retail outlets to give you an idea of any competition and identify gaps that might need filling
4. How flexible is your offer? for example, guiding offered every night of week, what about weekends or holiday guiding?
5. Are your units representative of all the geographical area both with girls and with volunteers?
6. Review the LSW Together challenge. How could you use this in your area?

## Base 9. Your voice reflection.

This is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts, ideas and feedback about guiding in your area. Take time to think about how it could progress. At the end of the activity, you will have collected important data that can feed into your development plan.

Give your thoughts for each of the different sections:

- **Keep doing**- What do we do well, that can be maintained and built on?
- **Stop doing**- What is not working that needs to be changed or stopped?
- **Start doing**- New ideas
- **Less of**- What works well, but is over utilised?
- **More of**- What works well, but is underutilised?

## Base 10. Strategic risk management.

We are familiar with the Girlguiding risk assessment forms for activities and events. A strategic risk management plan is a broader document (sometimes referred to as a risk register) that looks at the main risks affecting your district/division. Generally, isn't event specific. Often, it's worth thinking of broad categories as a starting point to focus discussions, such as:

- Financial risk
- Buildings and property
- Membership numbers
- Volunteer recruitment
- Safeguarding practices (do you have enough safe space trainings, 1<sup>st</sup> response courses)

Once you have a topic you should think about the **Likelihood** (the chance of the hazard occurring) and the **Impact** (how severe will the effects be if the hazard occurs?)

Likelihood	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negligible (less than once every 10 years)</li> <li>• Rare (once every 10 years)</li> <li>• Unlikely (once every 5 years)</li> <li>• Possible (at least once every 2 years)</li> <li>• Probable (at least once a year)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insignificant (&lt;1 day; &lt;£100)</li> <li>• Minor (&lt;5 days; &lt;£500)</li> <li>• Moderate (&lt;14 days; &lt;£1,000)</li> <li>• Significant (&lt;28 days; &lt;£10,000)</li> <li>• Catastrophic (&gt;28 days; &gt;£10,000)</li> </ul>

For example

Issue	Likelihood	Impact
A unit closing with unpaid bills	possible	moderate (e.g. unpaid venue fees or trip deposits)

As Trustees, you should then look at what mitigation/control measures you can put in place to reduce the risk; and what contingency arrangements you need to have in place to manage the situation should it occur.

Mitigation	Contingency
What can you do to reduce the risk?	How can you manage the situation if it was to occur?

There are 6 scenarios. Choose the most useful/relevant to your group – or identify your own.

- Discuss the situation, what are the risks?
- Agree on your likelihood and impact
- What can you do to mitigate the risk and what contingencies can you put in place?

## **scenarios**

1. District/division property requires major, uninsured repairs  
(think about the financial implications of the repairs, but also the ongoing costs such as business rates and service charges, or additional costs such as renting alternative facilities if the property can't be used)

2. District/division event supplier goes into liquidation having received a significant payment for services that haven't yet been delivered

(think about the potential impact to the event in terms of the importance of the supplier and whether other suppliers are available; and also how long it may take to recover some/all of the money, even if the event is insured)

3. Significant shortage of (affordable) unit meeting places  
(think about the impact which could be significant in reducing the number of active units/members which has financial and reputational impacts)

4. Volunteers are reluctant to complete their compliance training

(lack of volunteers means units closing which brings in a financial risk, but there is also a reputational risk; plus risk to remaining volunteers to cover shortfall ...)

5. Volunteers are reluctant to take on additional roles such as Commissioner or Adviser

(can you continue to operate without key volunteers in place?)

6. A number of units fail to pay annual subscriptions

(directly impacts the amount of money received by District/division as well as costing the county to make up the shortfalls to region and UK. Reduced funds affect the operational budget and what can be achieved. Reputational impacts. Failure to pay annual subscription is a failure to comply with the Girlguiding Volunteer Code of Conduct ....)

## Cost of living risk management

### The hazard:

- High inflation is resulting in costs for everyday items increasing
- 40% of UK households have little or no discretionary income
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation study found 7 million families have gone without things like heating, toiletries or showers this year
- Interest rates have increased – affecting mortgages and other loan repayments
- Wage growth is slower in lower-paid occupations

**Likelihood:** 100%

### Impact: What other impacts can you think of?

- Volunteers unable to afford to volunteer any more – could be due to direct costs i.e. travel costs to get to meetings; or knock on impacts i.e. having to take additional paid work to make ends meet or not being able to afford childcare
- Units struggling to budget as prices increasing after unit fees have been set for the term/year
- Unit meeting places shutting down for the winter as energy costs rise
- Planned events now running at a loss due to increased prices
- Parents unable to pay unit fees
- Girls/volunteers not able to afford uniform

Mitigation thoughts	Contingency thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance for events – even smaller ones!</li> <li>• Encourage Commissioners to hold one-to-one chats with their unit leadership teams to understand how resilient they are and what issues might be surfacing</li> <li>• Share examples of good practice/ideas i.e. Consider fortnightly/monthly meetings during the winter – perhaps combined with Zoom to reduce impact of venue cost rises (which are often driven by increased heating costs); or joint unit meetings</li> <li>• Highlight that volunteers can claim their costs from the unit; and share top tips such as how dependent children can be accommodated at unit meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Release additional District/division/county funds into support grants for units/individuals; or pay for volunteer costs at a County level if necessary</li> <li>• Pre-loved uniform shops/exchanges</li> <li>• Submit district/division grant applications for support funds that can then be flowed out to units</li> <li>• Create template letters for units to use when dealing with requests for higher payments for hall hire etc</li> <li>• Ensure there is a budget line for 2024 to cover non-payment of annual subscriptions for a % of units (maybe discuss what is reasonable – 15% of membership, lower/higher?)</li> </ul>

What else would you do? Add it to the list.