



new volunteers to their roles

We all know how important it is to give new volunteers a warm welcome. If our volunteers feel supported from the very start they'll be more enthusiastic, committed and engaged and more likely to stay with guiding.

When it comes to welcoming new volunteers, we want to make sure you have all the support you need. So we've put together this short guide which has top tips, and ideas so you can act quickly when someone gets in touch about becoming a part of Girlguiding Anglia.



Introducing new volunteers to Girlguiding

When you have a new volunteer there are lots of ways to ensure they experience guiding at its best!



Finding the right role

Have a chat with your volunteers about their interests, skills and availability. Go into this with an open mind. Not everyone wants to be a leader and starting with a lower commitment role will give them a chance to find out more about guiding. Giving them this space will increase the chances of them continuing to volunteer with guiding in the long term.



Remember...

Knowing what to expect

Tell your volunteers what to expect, help them understand what's expected of them and answer any questions they have. Taking the time to chat about these things will make them more likely to get involved.

Jargon and structure

When welcoming your new volunteers it's worth remembering that it takes a while to become accustomed to Girlguiding's structure, terminology and how everything works. Talking them through this will help new volunteers to gain a better understanding of guiding and feel more confident.

Action planning

New volunteers will want to know what is expected of them in the short, medium and long term. By agreeing goals you'll be helping your volunteers to focus on the most important tasks so their effects can have a positive and significant impact.



Top tips

Some of the best ways of ensuring that new volunteers feel welcome and happy are some of the simplest.

Organise a social event in the district or division. Giving something back to volunteers helps to show how appreciated they are.

Invite new volunteers to a district meeting and introduce them to other members of guiding in the area.

Say 'thank you' often and don't forget to smile!

Review volunteers needs regularly and talk through any opportunities that may be beneficial to them.

Include new volunteers in discussions and decision making and ask their opinion.



Who is responsible for a new volunteer?

Everyone is responsible for welcoming new volunteers and ensuring that they feel comfortable, confident and happy in their role. So don't put everything on yourself, use the support structures that are already in place.

Buddies

Why not try and appoint a buddy in the local area who can help to make sure that a new volunteer feels welcomed and supported?

A buddy is an existing volunteer who helps a new volunteer to have a positive experience of guiding. A buddy should offer guidance and support as well as listen to and share experiences.

Extra support

If your new volunteer decides to take the leadership qualification, it's a good idea that the mentor and buddy are 2 different people. This ensures that they get the level of support they need and the roles don't get confused. Also make them aware of other volunteers who are there to support them.



Ongoing support for new volunteers

Supporting new volunteers is essential to helping them settle in and bringing out the best that they can offer. Settling into guiding can take a while and after the initial support phase people still respond well to follow up calls and meetings to ensure things are going well and that they are happy.

It is a good idea to introduce new volunteers to others involved in guiding locally and perhaps for them to visit other units. Let them know about online communities and forums as well. The friendship network within guiding is a great strength and one of the positive points that will help you to recruit and retain new volunteers. Remember that people's circumstances for volunteering change and these need to be considered.

Make sure you find out whether volunteers have any particular support needs including language requirements, additional needs or financial support needs to allow them to get involved in all aspects of guiding.



Recognising and using new skills

When a new volunteer joins your unit, have a chat with them and find out what their skills, interests and hobbies are – chances are you'll find that they have something amazing to share.

It can take a while for some people to recognise a skill that can be useful in guiding and benefit the girls and young women. Using and sharing new skills is a great way to help everyone involved in guiding to grow, learn and develop their potential.

Welcoming new perspectives

New volunteers often bring new views and perspectives to guiding. Be careful not to dismiss these just because they may differ from what you're used to doing. It is important to make guiding relevant and to keep everyone involved.

There's lots of ways to welcome new volunteers to guiding and you may find that yours work just as well as the ideas here. Every individual is different and requires a different level of support so the best way to welcome new volunteers is to talk to them individually and provide what they need.

**Good
guiding
starts
with a
warm
welcome!**

