

Best Practice

New Leaders

Try not to underestimate how well brand-new-to-Guiding leaders can do with little experience. They come in freshly trained, having read the up to date website and handbook, and follow the rules. They have fresh eyes as to how things can be done, and don't feel bound by traditions, bad habits, or doing things 'because that's the way it's always been done'. By all means let them visit other units, but don't make it a condition that they cannot be leaders without doing shadowing. They don't. Some of our best new leaders have been those who read what they needed to, and worked with an experienced leader on their first term's programme, and are running very successful, girl-led units with varied activities.

New Units with new leaders

For each new unit, you need someone who has their First Response/appropriately transferred First Aid training. You also need a leader with a Girlguiding DBS, and for leaders to have at minimum completed the online Safeguarding trainings.

It is easier if, for at least the first term, you have an experienced leader/commissioner running GO and banking, so the new leader can concentrate on introducing new girls to Guiding and finding their way together in the programme.

A rota of experienced leaders can do this to prevent extra pressure, however it is easier to have one leader overseeing the unit without controlling it, such as a buddy for the new leader.

Commissioners need to ensure new leaders are attending mentoring regularly, so that we can be sure they are keeping to Girlguiding format and principles.

Providing a box of essentials really helps new leaders when they start out with nothing.

This could include enough pens and pencils for all, coloured pens/pencils/crayons, papers, scissors, glue, some activities (such as a parachute, skipping ropes, balls) and if your new unit budget stretches to it, some badge resources. Here in Hampshire East, our new leaders had either Rustle, Bustle and Squeak or SWEbots resource and enough badges for their girls. This also helps with activity planning on the first term, as girls can (age-appropriately) pick what they want to do from the resource, and leaders don't have to worry about ordering in the badges as soon as they start.

Check out the 'Being Our Best' resources on the Girlguiding website for more ways to help new leaders and new units be the best they can be

- <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/how-were-being-our-best/being-our-best/>