



Retention

Try these ideas for retaining the girls and young women in your area and helping them through the difficult time of transitioning. Often transition in guiding can happen at the same time as changes in school, so providing stability and continuity is particularly important. Hanging on to our volunteers and all their experience is vital too.

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Key Search Terms:

- Checklists
- Transition • Retention

Information online: Doing our best checklists for The Five Essentials, Safety and Safeguarding, and Making Guiding Happen.

Visit Girlguiding South West region's website for information about their transition event resource *My Next Step*.

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Retention

The guiding family

Have a district diary of events held by the commissioner that everyone can add to. It allows leaders to coordinate locally to:

- o Arrange for a leader to take another unit to an event when a leader isn't available to take them herself. The favour can be repaid later.
- o Share the costs of transport, or the costs of the event itself if more units attend.
- o Spread awareness of local events.

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Collaborate locally to ensure the quality and consistency of the programme across units. The aim of the programme is personal development and progression.

- o Learning and developing is much more fun done together. Have local trainings or 'airing and sharing' evenings.
- o Visit other units to see how they do things and manage their unit.
- o Think about unit teams and the skills they could share.
- o Bring young leaders together at intervals to share ideas and feel part of a wider group.

Make use of the checklists online for:
The Five Essentials, Safety and Safeguarding, and Making Guiding Happen (see the tips box for key search terms).

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Transition

Invite girls along to an event or meeting taking place in the section they will move to next. Perhaps this could be a Promise ceremony or a special evening that's been organised. Girlguiding South West region have created a transition event resource called *My Next Step*. Contact them through their region website.

Invite the Guides to run a meeting for the Brownies to give them a taste of what it might be like in Guides. Remind the Guides that activities need to be age appropriate if they're involving the whole Brownie unit and that they can use skills builder activities or UMAs for inspiration. They can also tell the younger girls about all the exciting opportunities they have access to at Guides.

Most girls leave Guides around the age of 12 ½ so encourage leaders to talk to their girls this age about the opportunities to join Rangers in your area. They can then ask parents to give them permission to add their daughter's name to the Ranger waiting list on GO. If they're on GO, leaders can contact girls when they reach 14 years of age, even if they have already left Guides. It gives us the chance to move them on or bring them back in, either as Rangers or young leaders.

Leaders can work together to put girls' names on GO waiting lists for the next section with parents' permission. This can be between all sections. Once a girl has settled into Rainbows (around a term), unit leaders should ask for parents' permission to add the Rainbow to the Brownie waiting list and so on. Providing the details have been added to GO for the purpose of the girl joining the next section, we can contact them at transition time to offer a place. It gives us several opportunities to move girls on or bring them back into Girlguiding.

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Encourage leaders to visit local units of the section below where possible to show girls that Girlguiding is bigger than just their section and to give them a familiar face if they move up to that unit. It also helps leaders build a supportive local network and maintains links for girls later becoming Rainbow or Brownie Helpers.

As they visit their connected sections/units, leaders can share information about what girls have achieved in the Skills Builders sets. Knowing this will help girls settle quickly into the next stage of their development journey.

Encourage girls to achieve their Gold Award and celebrate it in a special way. It will give them opportunities to discover more about their next section and you could involve their next leader in the celebration.

Communication is key to successful transition across all sections: communication between leaders, between both leaders and parents, and of course between leaders and the girl preparing to move. Although the Skills Builders give them consistency in what they will do along the way, they still need to be carefully prepared for the changes they will experience.

Talk to them about what it will be like being a Brownie or Guide. Ask the next section for a Buddy to take care of their recruit when she starts, and introduce them when they attend a meeting or event. Take the opportunity to talk about new concepts and terms: Brownie sixes becoming Guide patrols, sixers becoming patrol leaders, and so on.

As with retention, be prepared to share your ideas in your district and create a consistent approach to provide the best possible end and start for every girl moving on.

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Training

It's vital for volunteers to get all the right messages and information when they join us, so training and development opportunities are essential.

Make sure volunteers know they're not alone in Girlguiding. We have training available to provide the required skills, e.g. First Response, Safeguarding, GDPR, as well as lots of programme support to guide them through their meetings.

Walking into a room alone can be daunting, especially when everyone there seems to know someone, so encourage new volunteers to attend trainings with their unit team, another district member or take them with you. You could also consider informal meetings or gatherings to welcome new volunteers and help them to build a network.

Organise an 'airing and sharing' event in your district for everyone to join in, new and experienced. This kind of informal environment makes it easy to share ideas and best practice and to ask lots of questions. You could invite a local leader to run a session on GO, or on the programme for a small group, or one-to-one. It's also a great opportunity for new volunteers to meet fellow leaders and make new friends.

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Resources

Girlguiding has many great text-based resources available online and in local shops. They cover the programme, qualifications, policy and more. County and region websites are also a great source of information, as too are our fellow leaders!

In addition, leaders in the area may have equipment, materials and other resources they would be happy to share.

- o Create (or find out if someone already has) a list of resources available to borrow in your district, division, or county. Make a note of whether these need to be booked in advance. Share the list with leaders in your area.
- o Take new volunteers through some examples of resources available and show them where to look for more.

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