



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Midlands

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Unit management

Effectively managed units and districts are essential to retention as they not only ensure that girls have a clear journey through their guiding experience, but also that volunteers join forces to share the workload.

Key Search Terms:

- **Membership Systems**
- **Transfer** • **Waiting List**

Information online: Membership administration, Mapping toolkit, Handling personal data, Using GO - our membership system.

Data

How often do leaders in your district check that their unit's GO data is correct? Print out copies of each unit's data to:

- o Take to district meetings so that leaders can understand the importance of keeping records up-to-date.
- o Provide you with the bigger picture of which units have capacity for more girls and who needs more adult support.

A secure way to carry out an update to the girl's data is to annually issue parents with a paper copy of their GO record for completion and return.

Put these in a sealed envelope and hand them directly to parents where possible so that there's no risk of current information falling into the wrong hands. It can also be another opportunity to remind parents about Gift Aid and volunteering.

Remember to destroy any forms and information once you have finished using it and delete any downloaded files from your computer.



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Anniversary badges

Continuous membership is essential for achieving anniversary badges, so make sure a girl's membership doesn't get interrupted, for example when she moves to the next section, or around the time of annual subscriptions.

Here's an interesting fact:

If a girl was removed from GO each summer during her journey from Rainbow to Ranger, she would lose one year of her total time in guiding.

Consider adopting a district approach to transferring girls between sections so that all girls have the same opportunity to gain anniversary badges.

Encourage units to think about choosing an annual date on which to give out anniversary badges, for example on World Thinking Day or on the penultimate week of the summer term, to make managing anniversaries easier.



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Transfers

What happens when a girl moves unit? Consider a district method of handling transfers so that records can be found easily and moved to the correct unit. This may also involve working with local districts.

Moving girls on GO becomes much simpler if you know their membership number, so make sure parents or girls have a record of it.



Support

GO can be overwhelming for some, so consider introducing local teams to support the management of GO. For example, could leaders ask a unit administrator to input programme information?

Or could you, as commissioner, delegate the management of volunteer enquiries to one member of the district team, while another analyses retention data?

For more ideas about supporting volunteers, have a look at the Value your volunteer section.

If you have any specific GO queries, or for guidance on a topic not covered here, try searching 'Membership system' on the Girlguiding website or 'phone the Membership Systems helpline on 0800 999 2016.



Know your neighbours

Make sure leaders know which local units their girls can move up to, where and when they meet, and who their main contact is.

Make it as easy as possible for girls to stay in Girlguiding when they move by providing parents with a list or flyer (paper or electronic) of all the unit options so they can choose the unit that's right for their daughter. Parents will then need to tell their daughter's leader which unit they want to join so that the leader can record their choice on GO. Take care regarding GDPR and the information you include in the list.

If there are long waiting lists in your area, you may want to decide on a district or division approach to getting names on waiting lists for moving between sections and for signposting enquiries within your own section (see the Retention section). Use the 'Total unit capacity' feature of GO to help you see which units have available spaces.

At a district level, mapping local units, their meeting times and capacity using online tools such as Google Maps may help with placing new enquiries to the most suitable unit according to their postcode, as well as quickly seeing alternative options if their preferred unit is already full.

Many districts share borders or even towns, so also think about cross-district collaboration when moving girls on to the next unit, trying to manage a long waiting list, or dealing with new enquiries.



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Member journey

As a district, track a typical journey through sections to spot possible gaps in membership. For example, if there are 3 Brownie units but only 1 Guide unit, this may limit the number of girls that can move to the next section. Although not all Brownies will become Guides, it is important to plan ahead for retention and growth opportunities taking unit capacities into consideration.

It's worth looking at this pre-emptively so that leadership teams can be found and units opened in readiness for the increasing numbers.

Be aware of local planning developments as these are often fantastic opportunities to open units and grow guiding in a new area. Other areas may no longer need a unit, where the population has aged for example, so you could consider moving units away.

Changes in meeting place, day or time are radical but sometimes necessary to attract more girls and support transition to the next section. Perhaps another well-attended club takes place on the same day, or a meeting place poses inclusivity issues.



Waiting lists

Encourage transition by putting girls on the next section's waiting list in advance so they don't have to wait for a place. Leaders should ask girls' parents for permission to add them to the next section's waiting list around a term after they join the unit.

If a girl leaves she will be invited to join the next section when she becomes eligible, hopefully bringing her back into guiding (see the Retention section).

Make sure that leaders are regularly maintaining, updating and using their waiting lists when inviting new members to join.

Although this sounds like common sense, it's surprising how many waiting lists across the region contain girls that are now too old to join simply because they haven't been contacted or moved on.

