

Guiding Conversations Doing Our Best

Briefing sheet for volunteers working with adults

NOTE: The information on this sheet is background to help you facilitate the Guiding Conversation. It is not part of the structure for discussion with unit volunteers, which starts on p.2.

Thank you for using this Guiding conversation resource in your area.

As commissioners, trainers, advisers, mentors and other volunteers who support adults in guiding we know you work hard to make sure every unit team has the skills and support they need to provide great experiences for girls. Doing Our Best is our framework for this.

About Doing Our Best

The Doing Our Best standards replace our previous tool, *Good guiding is*. You can use the standards with on unit visits, at local meetings and events, and in training to encourage leaders and unit teams to evaluate, celebrate and improve what they offer girls and young women. They can help you to get to know units in your area and support them in putting our programme, policies and procedures into practice.

For most units Doing Our Best will be business as usual. Nothing in the standards is a new requirement. We've just brought our current programme, policies and procedures together in one place, to make things clearer and simpler for leaders and their teams. The role of commissioners and trainers working with units will be to encourage reflection, build confidence, celebrate and share good ideas and examples, offer support and signpost to further learning and development opportunities.

Occasionally as commissioners you might use the standards to help you have difficult conversations and challenge poor practice in a structured, objective way, and to identify what further support is needed. If there is still no improvement despite the extra support and guidance you put in place, the [managing concerns about adult volunteers policy](#) is there to help you address this.

About this Guiding Conversation

This resource is designed to help you to introduce Doing Our Best to unit volunteers in your area. We hope that having worked through it you and your teams will feel **reassured** that this is nothing new, **inspired** and **empowered** by the ideas and examples you have shared, and **ready to start** using the standards. There's an [action planning template](#) at the back of the resource which can be completed individually, or as a district, division or county team, to capture what you're going to do next.

Girlguiding worked closely with girls and volunteers to develop Doing Our Best and make the standards as easy to use as possible. It's really important we continue to hear your views, so we can keep improving and provide more support. Please get in touch at any time to tell us about how you're using Doing Our Best by emailing quality.mailbox@girlguiding.org.uk.

Guiding conversations Doing Our Best

Discussion with unit leaders and other volunteers working with girls

Introduction

We all want every girl and young woman, wherever they are, to have a great experience in Girlguiding.

The Doing Our Best standards pull our guidance for good quality guiding together into a set of handy checklists which replace our previous tool, *Good guiding is*. They cover the Five Essentials - principles that run through the Girlguiding programme - as well as our current policies and procedures.

The standards are summarised in a colourful and easy to read format on the [Doing Our Best poster](#), which lends itself to group discussion with girls and volunteers. There are also [online and printable checklists](#) where you can find more detail about each standard, with links to relevant guidance and support.

TIP: When having this Guiding Conversation it's a good idea to have some copies of the poster to hand. All volunteers should have received a copy with the November 2018 edition of guiding magazine, but you can also order more copies free of charge from the [online shop](#) (code: 6952) or there's a [printable version](#) on the website.

Girlguiding worked closely with girls and volunteers to develop Doing Our Best, and whatever your role you can use it to help make guiding the best it can be. For unit teams the checklists are a tool for evaluation, celebrating successes and planning ahead.

Icebreaker

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being unfamiliar, 5 being very familiar), ask each person to rate their level of familiarity with Doing Our Best. The aim of this activity is to get a picture of what the team already know about the resource, and how everyone feels about it.

Here are some examples of the types of comments you might hear, but remember there is no right or wrong answer, and if people aren't familiar with Doing Our Best, this Guiding Conversation is the perfect way for them to get started.

- 1: "I've never heard of it until now"
- 2: "I've heard of it but I'm not sure what it is"
- 3: "I'm familiar with parts of it"
- 4: "I'm familiar with most of it"
- 5: "I've already started using it in my unit"

Activity: what is good guiding?

Ask people to split into pairs or threes and spend a couple of minutes discussing what they think are characteristics of good quality unit guiding.

Discuss: once each pair or small group has a few items on their list, ask them to open the Doing Our Best poster and compare it to their list. Do they cover the same kind of things? Are there any surprises?

Nothing in Doing Our Best is a new requirement for units: we've just brought existing requirements into one place, so it should all feel quite familiar to most volunteers.

Activity: self-evaluation of your unit

You will need: two copies of the Doing Our Best poster, two different colours of post-it notes

Ask each person to pick at least one standard which they feel their unit does really well (they could choose more than this) and one where they'd like to try something new or get a bit more advice or support over the coming months.

While people are reflecting individually, put the two sides of the poster flat on the table or up on the wall. Once people have chosen their standards ask them to stick one colour of sticky note onto the standard(s) they feel confident about in one colour and the other colour onto the standard(s) they'd like to develop.

Discuss: Once all of the sticky notes have been put down, invite people to talk about why they chose these standards, and to share ideas and examples. Which standards do you feel most confident with as a group? Are there standards with both colours of sticky note on them - could you share ideas and skills between units? Are there any standards that lots of people are finding more difficult? How could you get support with these?

Activity: gathering feedback and ideas, and working together

You've just done your own quick self-evaluation, but it's important to get feedback and ideas from other members of your unit, including girls and young women.

Discuss: In pairs or threes share examples of activities you've already done to find out what the girls in your unit enjoy, what they like less, and what they want to do in future.

As a whole group talk about how you might use Doing Our Best as a tool for planning and evaluating with young members?

Discuss: Could you also use the standards to show members of your unit team, parents or other prospective volunteers what goes into running a unit and how they could help?

Action planning

On the final page of this Guiding Conversation is a template you can use to bring it all together and plan how to put Doing Our Best into action.

The template is designed to be flexible so it can be completed for an individual unit or as a district, division or county. When completing the template, it might be useful to think about the different types of actions below:

- Things you do really well and how you plan to celebrate or share them
- Things you'd like to change or improve and how you will do this
- Things you're going to do to get feedback from other Girlguiding members
- New ideas that you'd like to try out and when you're going to do this

Action plan template

This plan is for:		It was made on:		It was made by:
What we'll do	When we'll do it	Who is involved	What support we need	How we'll know if we've succeeded