

# Lone volunteering policy

As a Girlguiding volunteer you may need to perform your role as a volunteer alone, as a necessary part of fulfilling an activity, meeting or event. Girlguiding is committed to the health, safety and welfare of our volunteers, and we have responsibilities for you in these circumstances. We take these responsibilities very seriously.

Lone volunteering is not in itself unsafe, but it has the potential to increase risks. So, if you or someone in your team is lone volunteering you must follow this policy and its procedures.

## Statement of purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Raise your awareness and ensure you think about your personal safety
- Support you to be mindful of risks and how you can keep yourself safe
- Provide clear expectations about lone volunteering in a Girlguiding capacity

The policy applies where a volunteer carries out responsibilities for Girlguiding on their own whether this happens regularly, occasionally or as a one-off.

The policy applies to all Girlguiding roles in the UK, Crown dependencies and British Guiding Overseas (BGO) of which Branches is a part.

## Definitions

**Volunteer** - anyone who gives their time to Girlguiding without being paid. This covers all volunteering roles within Girlguiding - including volunteers who: have a leadership role, who work directly with girls or who are supporting members with no direct contact with girls. They may be a young volunteer (under 18) or an adult (over 18).

**Safety** - being protected from and not causing danger, risk, injury, illness, loss or harm (for example a feeling, a physical object or place, an action).

**Health** - a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

**Welfare** - promotion and proactive steps for health, happiness and wellbeing of a person. Factors include security, safety, comfort and positive choices.

**Risk** - exposure to the possibility of danger, loss, injury or other adverse or unwelcome circumstances.

**Risk management** - identification, evaluation and prioritisation of risk and making changes to circumstances to reduce the level of danger, loss or injury.

**Lone volunteering** - is when a volunteer carries out volunteering responsibilities on behalf of Girlguiding on their own and away from other Girlguiding volunteers or staff. This includes whether it happens on an occasional or regular basis. Examples of lone

volunteering situations at Girlguiding include (but are not limited to) when a volunteer does the following *on their own*:

- Volunteering at a Girlguiding site or a venue which is used for Girlguiding activities (for example a hired unit meeting place)
- Volunteering on the same site as, but away from, other volunteers or staff
- Volunteering outside of usual hours of activity (like responding to an emergency)
- Home visits or meetings at other venues (like a cafe or community hall)
- Activities with the public or people who are unfamiliar to them (examples include managing an information stand, ID verifying or training)
- Travel (domestic and international)
- Overnight stays
- Delivering paperwork and equipment
- Caretaking responsibilities including opening and closing facilities, collecting or dropping off keys

As a volunteer you must be mindful of occasions where you may be lone volunteering. You are responsible for your own safety and you must follow the procedures laid out in the lone volunteering procedures. These will give you a practical and sensible approach to managing risks, depending on the situation.

If you have concerns about lone volunteering or need support, you must speak to your commissioner.

**As a Girlguiding commissioner** you must review the practice of lone volunteering and agree protocols with region, county, division, district or unit regularly, using the lone volunteering procedures.

## These are the principles that you must adhere to:

- Do not remain in a situation where you feel unsafe.
- Consider alternatives to lone volunteering wherever possible.
- Never take unnecessary risks. Always take reasonable steps to avoid risks.
- When volunteering alone, you must follow the control measures identified during the planning stage. If this is not practically possible, you must advise your commissioner or unit leader as soon as possible. A risk assessment may be used during the planning stages.
- Report concerns. All incidents or near misses (e.g. an incident occurred but did not result in injury or damage) in connection with lone volunteering must be reported to your commissioner as soon as possible. Then any risk assessment must be reviewed and amended in the light of an incident or near miss.
- Consider if you need to take out any additional insurance or notify your current insurers about volunteering

**If you can't adequately reduce a risk and/or manage it,  
lone volunteering must not take place.**

There are circumstances where we recommend that you have a written risk assessment as part of your planning. This would include cases where there may be many hazards or risks, such as travelling to or through unknown or remote areas.

Everyone has a responsibility for reducing and managing risks in relation to lone volunteering. Risk management must be reasonable and practicable. It must take into account foreseeable situations.

In general, you shouldn't carry out home visits alone. Wherever possible arrange to meet in a public place, not alone. You should always inform another member of Girlguiding or a home contact where you are.

If there is an emergency you must follow the agreed emergency plan.

You should also read the Health Safety and Welfare Policy.

### **You can find more information here:**

- Lone volunteering procedures
- Health, safety & welfare policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Digital safeguarding policy
- Managing concerns about adult volunteers policy
- [www.suzy.lamplugh.org](http://www.suzy.lamplugh.org)