



Supporting Leaders in Training: Local Commissioners

Introduction

One important job you do as a local Commissioner is to welcome and work with Leaders in Training in your area.

First impressions are vitally important for the introduction and retention of Leaders. It is crucial that a Leader in Training feels part of a supportive and friendly local team and has a positive experience. A Leader in Training who feels valued and supported will enjoy guiding, get a chance to develop her skills and want to stay involved.

You can capture the enthusiasm of Leaders in Training by helping them to get started on the Leadership Qualification (LQ) as soon as possible.

This document includes:

- your role in the LQ process
- your responsibilities in the LQ process
- frequently asked questions
- useful resources.

Your role in the Leadership Qualification process

- Within the local area, welcome the Leader in Training to guiding. Help your Leader in Training to feel included in the local area and introduce her to people.
- Include her in your emails so she hears about local meetings, trainings and events. This will happen automatically using the Go! report. Often, a personal invitation to a meeting may give extra encouragement for a new Leader in Training to attend.
- Keep an eye on the progress of volunteers moving through the LQ in your area using the 'Leadership Qualification Contact and Status Report' on Go!, and take an active interest by asking how things are going.
- Support any qualified Leaders who wish to change sections or to undertake Module 4 of the Leadership Qualification to register for and complete *Modules for Qualified Leaders* (see 'Useful Resources' on page 7 for more information).
- Encourage Leaders to support Young Leaders in their unit to take up the challenge of the Young Leader Qualification, and from 16 to start the LQ.
- Liaise with the LQ Coordinator and Mentors in your area as necessary in order to ensure that suitable opportunities are provided to complete modules in the LQ.
- Encourage Unit Leaders to support the Leader in Training's progress and offer suitable opportunities to complete the LQ.
- Ensure time is given at local meetings (District/Division) to discuss current LQ and keep the process 'live'.
- Support good communication between the Leader in Training, Unit Team and Mentor.
- Provide guidance and support where necessary.
- Where possible, offer opportunities for the Leader in Training to get involved in organising and planning local events. This will help her sign off some elements of the LQ and will also help her get to know people in the area.

Your responsibilities in the Leadership Qualification process

Registration

- Meet potential volunteers to assess suitability before ensuring that they are appropriately placed in a unit and recruitment checks undertaken. Review the booklet *Building and Developing your Team* in the *Commissioner Resource Pack* for guidance on recruitment and procedures.
- Once the recruitment checks have been completed, the volunteer's information from the Join Us system will be electronically updated onto Go! NB: The LQ process can begin before recruitment checks have been completed.
- To help make a fast match with a Mentor, you might also like to email the LQ Coordinator directly or use an agreed local process to notify her of the new Leader in Training.

Students and Transfers

If volunteers are planning to leave your area to study or live elsewhere, help them sign off their achievements on their LQ before they leave, so they have a head start when they move to their new area. Ensure they know their unique Go! membership number so they can pass this onto their new unit.

Make sure that students and other volunteers who have recently moved into your area are welcomed and offered a volunteering opportunity that suits them. Some may have already begun their LQ so make sure that support is available to enable them to complete their LQ. This can be a great boost for local units both in terms of providing extra adult help and fresh ideas, and in the longer term will hopefully encourage volunteers to stay in guiding - whether in your local area or elsewhere.

Qualification

Once the Mentor has signed off the LQ, the Leader in Training is qualified and you or your representative is responsible for updating her role on Go! to 'Leader' or 'Assistant Leader' based on the modules she has completed. The LQ or agreed local contact will request a certificate and a badge, which will usually be sent to you for presentation to help mark the occasion. Her module 'qualified' dates will also be updated on Go! as she completes each module.

Sources of support

Each Leader in Training is assigned a Mentor as one-to-one support throughout her LQ. However, everyone in the local team also has a part to play in helping the Leader in Training feel welcome.

Many of these people can also help the Leader in Training or Young Leader on the LQ by signing off clauses where relevant.

Mentor

- Supports Leader in Training through the LQ.
- Identifies existing skills and experience.
- Visits unit, or delegates this.
- Helps identify areas for development.
- Helps access relevant training and other learning opportunities.
- Signs off modules when completed and notifies LQ Coordinator.
- Signs off completed LQ and sends to Verifier.

- Notifies local Commissioner when LQ is complete.

Leadership Qualification Coordinator

- Regularly reviews Go! reports to monitor progress and new starters.
- Matches Leaders in Training with Mentors.
- Often issues LQ pack to Mentor.
- Monitors timescales using Go! reports.
- Supports Mentors.
- Supports if there are issues to be addressed.

Local Commissioner

- Completes Join Us process and recruitment checks.
- Welcomes new Leader to local guiding and to meetings.
- Offers support if there are issues and answers questions/concerns.
- Keeps in touch.
- Keeps an eye on timescales and the 'valid to' dates of roles.
- Helps access resources/trainings.
- Can sign off parts of modules.
- Updates new Leader's role on Go! when the LQ is completed. NB: this is only done once the individual turns 18.

Verifier

- Checks completed LQ to verify work of Mentor.
- Gives constructive feedback to Mentor.

Unit Leader/s

- Welcomes Leader in Training to team.
- Involves her in the unit and in planning and running the programme.
- Gives opportunities to cover requirements of the LQ.
- Gives guidance where needed.
- Can sign off parts of modules.
- Flags up any concerns to Mentor/LQ Coordinator/local Commissioner.
- Helps access resources/trainings.

Go! Coordinator

- Updates information on County Go! as requested by LQ Coordinator, or delegates this to another County Go! User.
- Provides the LQ Coordinator with relevant reports and information from County Go! to monitor progress of Leaders in Training in addition to reports the LQ Coordinator can run on Go!

Girls and parents

- Can sign off parts of modules where appropriate.

Local area team

- Supports and welcomes Leader in Training.
- Can sign off parts of the modules.

Top tips for supporting a Leader in Training

- Translate any jargon you use - Leaders in Training will need some help to get used to the guiding terminology that others may take for granted.
- Remember, every Leader in Training is different and will have different levels of enthusiasm and commitment, as well as a range of other pressures on their time.
- Keep a flexible approach. For more support on flexible guiding see the members' area of Girlguiding's website, particularly 'Flexible Guiding, Have You Thought Of...?' www.girlguiding.org.uk > Members' area & Go! > Resource library > Growing guiding resources > Flexible guiding.
- Give the Leader in Training opportunities to raise any questions or concerns. Be prepared to step in where necessary to help her feel supported.
- Check in with the Leader in Training early on in the qualification to see whether she is happy and comfortable with her Mentor and her unit.
- Help the Unit Team to support the Leader in Training. Forward them a copy of *Support for Leaders in Training: Unit Leaders*, www.girlguiding.org.uk > Members' area > Resource library > Girlguiding publications > Supporting leaders in training You might like to talk this through with the Unit Team and give them the chance to ask any questions.
- If the Leader in Training needs to read any publications which her unit does not hold, help her to access these.

Leaders in Training with special needs

Leaders in Training with special needs should be offered the support they need to complete the LQ within their skills and capabilities.

If you are concerned that a Leader in Training's special needs affect her role in the unit, discuss these concerns with your County Commissioner, Mentor and LQ Coordinator. You may need to undertake a risk assessment. In certain circumstances it is possible for the County Commissioner to place a restriction on a role; for example, that when qualified, the new Leader must always work with another Leader in a unit setting.

Ensure any decisions are communicated to the Mentor, LQ Coordinator and also to the Leader in Training, so she knows what you are doing and is aware of the reasons for it.

Handling concerns

Where you have concerns about the suitability of the Leader in Training for her role, ensure these are discussed and managed promptly.

If the relationship between the Mentor and the Leader in Training is not working, you may ask the LQ Coordinator to assign an alternative Mentor. If you have any questions about the LQ, please speak to the Leadership Coordinator in your area or your County Commissioner.

Supporting a newly qualified Leader

You will be informed once a Leader in Training in your area has completed the Leadership Qualification and you can then update her record on Go! Remember to celebrate when she completes the LQ. A certificate and a badge (available through

County channels) should be presented at an appropriate occasion. You may already have local or County processes in place to celebrate newly qualified Leaders.

In any case, make it a special occasion when her certificate and badge are presented and you might like to send an email or card to say well done and thank you. Beyond the LQ, all Leaders will continue to benefit from and enjoy further opportunities to learn in guiding. The booklet *Building and Developing your Team* in the *Commissioner Resource Pack* has a range of helpful and fun ideas on helping your team to develop their skills.

Remember to signpost new Leaders to local training opportunities, and national opportunities listed on Girlguiding's website, according to their interests and needs. See www.girlguiding.org.uk > Members' area > Learning and development.

Recruiting Mentors

Keep an eye out for Leaders in your area who might make good Mentors. Both experienced Leaders and those who have recently qualified (with the qualification fresh in their minds) could be suitable. Mentoring is a good way to develop skills and is a rewarding role. Suggest to the person concerned that they consider mentoring, and with their permission, inform the LQ Coordinator of their interest. Direct them to Girlguiding's online module on mentoring skills to develop their skills and find out more about being a Mentor: www.girlguiding.org.uk/elearning. Remember to add them as a Division Mentor or County Mentor as appropriate on Go! so that they can be linked with a Leader in Training and be included in any mentor communications.

Frequently asked questions

Can the Leader in Training make a start while waiting for a Mentor?

During the time while she is waiting for a Mentor, you can forward her the link to *Getting Started on the Leadership Qualification* to help her get going. A short list of suitable activities from the LQ which she can cover while she waits may be helpful; for example, she might like to find out more about the Five Essentials and her section programme, attend a section training and/or get involved with planning and running unit activities.

How long should the LQ take?

While individual timescales may vary, keep in mind that the suggested timescale for achieving the LQ is six months (two terms). If you have a Leader in Training who is taking significantly longer, it may be worth asking the Mentor and Leader in Training how things are going.

What happens if a unit needs extra help?

While the LQ is based on what happens in an effective guiding unit, sometimes a Unit Leader will need additional support to adapt to the needs of the LQ and to include the Leader in Training appropriately. This may be a good opportunity to support the existing Unit Team in developing their guiding skills and teamwork. Tools such as *Good guiding is...* which is included in *The Guiding Handbook*, are a useful starting point for discussion. You might like to consider discussing and explaining the LQ at your local meeting so that everyone knows what is needed. This may involve extra visits to the unit, spending some time with the Leader in Training on a one-to-one basis or ensuring that the Unit Leader is clear about her role in the LQ process.

Useful resources

- *Developing New Potential: Helping new Leaders to flourish* - a leaflet with lots of good tips on supporting and encouraging Leaders in Training and Young Leaders. Available from Trading Service, order code 6894, free but postage and packing charges apply.
- An overview and checklist of the LQ may be found at: www.girlguiding.org.uk > Members' area and Go! > Guiding roles > Mentors.
- Other *Supporting Leaders in Training* resources may be useful: for LQ Mentors, LQ Coordinators and Unit Leaders, www.girlguiding.org.uk> [Members' area](#)> [Resource library](#)> [Girlguiding publications](#)> [Supporting leaders in training](#)
- A downloadable chart showing which areas of the LQ are covered by the Young Leader Qualification may be found at www.girlguiding.org.uk> [Members' area](#)> [Learning and development](#)> [Becoming a Leader](#)> [Young Leader Qualification](#), or on The Senior Section CD.
- *Modules for Qualified Leaders* - more information and a downloadable copy of these modules may be found at www.girlguiding.org.uk> [Members' area](#)> [Learning and development](#)> [Becoming a Leader](#)> [Modules for Qualified Leaders](#)
- *Guiding Conversations* - Newly qualified Leaders, as well as experienced Leaders, will want to continue to learn and develop in their role. As well as directing them to training opportunities you could use your local District/Division meetings as an opportunity to share good practice and learn from each other by having a guiding conversation www.girlguiding.org.uk> [Members' area](#)> [Guiding roles](#)> [Commissioners](#)