

Staying involved when you move away – FAQs for young people



Q. Is it worth staying involved in guiding when I move away?

A. In short, YES! There are loads of great things about being a member of Girlguiding. Many people get a real buzz and sense of achievement from volunteering and there's no need to lose this just because you're relocating!

Because moving to a new area can be daunting, guiding can give you a ready-made social group, with people who share your interests and sense of fun. It's a great way to meet new people and make friends in your new home.

On a professional level, guiding makes you stand out from the crowd, showing future employers that you have important skills. It looks great on your CV, providing evidence of team work, leadership skills, reliability and commitment, to name just a few. Guiding also helps you continue your personal development through training courses and taking part in new and challenging experiences.

Q. Can I be a member at more than one unit?

A. Of course! You can help out at more than one unit in the same area or at units in totally different places, for example if you're away at university in term time but back home for the holidays. The good news is you have to pay your annual membership subscription only in one place!

Q. How can I still be involved with my home unit?

A. Let your unit know that although you can't be there every week you would still like to help out when you can. If you sort out a rota at the start of each term, you can give the unit Leader your term dates and work out when you will be available to help.

While you're away, you could always ask to be copied in to any emails or letters sent out, so that you can stay in touch and know what's going on. There may even be ways you could help from a distance, for example organising a rota by email or writing to the parents of girls in your home unit.

Q. So how can I keep up my links with guiding when I move?

A. The first thing to do is to talk to your unit Leader or local Commissioner. They can advise you about the transfer process and may be able to put you in touch with Leaders in the area you're moving to. Does the County you're moving to have a website? If so, you may be able to get in touch with its Student or Young Leader Coordinator if it has one, or the local Commissioner. If they can't put you in touch with someone in your new area, then Join Us can! Call us on **0800 1 69 59 01** or email join.us@girlguiding.org.uk.

If you're going to university, it might have a Student Scout and Guides Organisation (SSAGO). It often has contacts for local guiding, as well as being a great social group to join! You can visit its website at www.ssago.org.uk. If the university doesn't have a SSAGO, try contacting the university volunteering service, which may have contact details for guiding in the County. Keep an eye out at your Freshers' Fair!



Q. I'm not sure how much spare time I'll have in my new area and don't want to commit too much. What should I do?

A. As with all volunteering, it's entirely up to you how much time you want to give. It's worth having a chat with your new unit Leader when you start to let her know that you might not be available every week, particularly during busy times such as exams.

Of course, if you want to be a unit Leader, you can! But if you're looking for a smaller role you could volunteer as a unit Helper or become a member of a Senior Section group and join in with the programme, without doing any kind of leading. You may be able to assist in some other way which doesn't mean being at a meeting every week; could you do the accounts or admin? Could you help organise and run a specific activity or an outing, such as a camp?

Q. I've heard that some Leaders don't like student volunteers because they're away so much. What should I do?

A. Leaders can be wary of students because they are not available to help locally throughout the year, but most will really appreciate having new volunteers in their area! Plus, many units meet only in term time, so

chances are you would probably be around for most of the meetings. And if much of your unit communication is by email, it will be easy to stay in touch when you go back home for the holidays.

As mentioned above, it's also a good idea to have a chat with your unit Leader when you first meet her to let her know your availability. Try to give her warning of busy work times when you have lots of essays or exams, so that she can find alternative help for meetings you can't attend. It's much better for Leaders to know in advance than be left with a last-minute panic, so don't feel bad if you mention times when you think you might have too much on.

You can also point your new Leader towards *Advice on how to support young women who are relocating*, downloadable from The Senior Section website.

Q. How can I let other people know about my experiences?

A. Let us know your experience by emailing us at growingguiding@girlguiding.org.uk – your knowledge may be helpful to other young people leaving home.

