

Safer Guiding FAQs

General

What is safer guiding?

Safer guiding is a mandatory learning programme for Girlguiding volunteers. It covers 4 topics (health and safety, inclusion, data protection and safeguarding). It can be completed either as an e-learning or a trainer-led session. There is a shorter course called safer guiding basics for those volunteer roles without regular contact with girls.

How is safer guiding different to a safe space?

The main difference is that volunteers will only need to complete 1 course, safer guiding or safer guiding basics depending on their role. This means that everyone will only have 1 renewal date making it easier. Because the course is based on the volunteer role, there will no longer be a unit compliance requirement.

Why are you changing a safe space?

When it launched in 2017, we've received a lot of feedback from volunteers. They found it confusing what course they needed to do and when they needed to renew. A safe space levels 1, 2 and 3 will become 1 course called safer guiding. This will make it easier for everyone and give you one renewal date.

Will all leaders need safer guiding?

Yes, they will, as it will be mandatory for their role.

Why is safer guiding mandatory for volunteers?

Safety is at the heart of everything we do, because we know that when girls feel safe, they feel brave enough to do things they never thought they could. The training will help you to understand your role in keeping everyone in Girlguiding safe, recognise potential safeguarding issues and understand our key policies and procedures.

Will unit helpers have to do safer guiding?

Yes. Any role with regular contact with girls will have to do safer guiding.

Do I need to complete safer guiding or safer guiding basics?

This depends on your role. Most roles are required to complete safer guiding. You can find out what you need to complete on your GO record.

I'm in a role that doesn't work with girls, do I need to do this?

If you don't regularly work with girls, then you'll need to do safer guiding basics. This is an e-learning which will take around 45 minutes. When we launch, you'll be able to see a full list of roles on the website so you can check what e-learning you need to do.

I have safer guiding and am moving to a role that requires safer guiding basics?

You don't need to do the basics course while your safer guiding course is in date. The information from the basics course is covered in the full safer guiding course.

I have safer guiding basics and will be moving to a role that requires safer guiding?

You'll need to complete the full safer guiding course, either through e-learning or a trainer led session within 40 days of starting in your new role.

I have done safer guiding, do I need to do the basic course?

No, you need to complete either safer guiding OR safer guiding basics depending on your role

How long will the e-learning take to complete?

Safer guiding will take about 3 hours. Because it's an e-learning the time to complete will vary. It's divided into small content blocks, so you'll be able to dip in and out of the course and save your progress along the way. We recommend you give yourself plenty of time to complete it before your deadline. Safer guiding basics takes approximately 45 minutes.

How long is the trainer-led version of safer guiding?

The trainer led version of safer guiding is 4 hours. This is up to countries, regions and counties to deliver what they feel is best. We'd recommend 2 x 2 hour sessions if it's a webinar. If completing different sessions then volunteers will need

to sign up for both parts of the session together, it's not possible to complete sessions as individual blocks. If someone misses the second session for reasons outside of their control then they must find an alternative option within 3 months, otherwise they need to complete both sections again.

How are safer guiding trainer-led sessions advertised?

Dates for country and region ran trainer led safer guiding sessions will be found on the learning platform. Your local area may also put on trainer-led sessions which will be advertised through your local communication channels.

Can volunteers complete safer guiding partially online and partially with a trainer?

It's not possible to complete safer guiding as separate modules, if a volunteer gets part way through the e-learning and decides to attend a trainer-led session then they will need to attend the full session. This is because we're not tracking individual module completion, so it needs to be completed all at once.

Is there a shorter renewal course after expiry, or will I have to complete the whole of safer guiding?

If you have not yet completed safer guiding, you will need to do so once your highest level of a safe space has expired. In the future, there will be an option to complete a renewal course for safer guiding rather than redoing the entire training.

I've done safeguarding training for my work, will there be a recognised prior learning process so I don't need to do safer guiding?

No. The safer guiding training is specific to Girlguiding policy and procedures and covers a variety of topics, not just safeguarding.

Transition and launch

Will we have to do safer guiding as soon as it launches?

No, you don't. You'll only need to complete it when your highest level of a safe space expires up to level 3. For example, if you have a safe space level 3 and it expires in March 2027, you won't need to do safer guiding until then. At launch, the

deadlines for the lower level or levels of a safe space will be removed from your record, leaving just the one deadline.

Will leaders in training need to complete safer guiding?

Yes. Leaders in training will need to complete the new safer guiding training before having the leader role added. This is a manual check commissioners will need to make before adding the leader role. They'll need to do the training even if they've recently completed a safe space level 3, as the new training covers topics that they may not have completed as part of the leader development programme.

If a safe space level 2 expires but level 1 is in date what happens?

You'll need to do safer guiding as level 2 is the highest level of a safe space that you've done. Once you've completed safer guiding you won't need to worry about it until three years time.

Can I do safer guiding as soon as it launches?

Yes, you can. You don't need to wait until your a safe space expires.

How do I know who has completed level 3 or Safer guiding?

A volunteers compliance record will show if they are individually compliant, however during the transition it won't show which course they have previously completed (for example, for unit compliance rules). You can check this on a volunteers course list. For example, a unit helper will show as compliant under safer guiding, however if they have only completed A Safe Space level 2, they couldn't be counted for unit compliance.

How are units compliant when safer guiding launches?

All leaders and unit helpers will be required to complete the new safer guiding course when their current highest level of a safe space expires. During the transition each unit meeting and activity will need to have a leader present (or unit helper or assistant leader) with a safe space level 3 or safer guiding. At the end of the 3-year transition, compliance will be role based rather than unit based.

Assessment

How is safer guiding assessed? What happens if someone fails the quiz?

There are 4 short quizzes (1 per topic) for volunteers to complete safer guiding. They need to pass all 4 to complete the course and have 3 attempts to pass. If they fail 1 quiz, then the course is locked, and they're advised to speak to a commissioner. A commissioner should put them in touch with a trainer to go over the quiz questions for that topic and check understanding. This can then be added via GO as a local training. If they fail 2 or more quizzes, then the volunteer will need to attend a trainer-led session which can be booked via the learning platform.

What about people who would like to do the safer guiding e-learning but might struggle with an online assessment. How can I help them?

We'd recommend the volunteer completing the e-learning as normal and then waiting to complete the online quizzes with someone to support with them, for example a trainer or commissioner who can read through the questions alongside them. Each quiz has 3 attempts to pass.

Accessibility

What about volunteers who may struggle with e-learning or prefer a trainer-led session?

Safer guiding can be completed either as an e-learning or trainer-led learning (webinar or inperson). This gives volunteers flexibility to complete the course in the way that works best for them. Trainer-led sessions will be arranged by the country or region office or by county training teams.

There are no trainer-led sessions for the basics course. If a volunteer is unable to complete this online, a trainer or commissioner should sit with the person and complete the e-learning alongside them. This should be done through their own learning platform account. If the volunteer doesn't have an email address and no platform account, then a trainer or commissioner can use their own account to complete the basics course, and this be added to the volunteers record on GO. They should then contact the learning team to have this reset on the platform.

I have a volunteer with additional needs and wouldn't be able to understand the content of safer guiding. What are the options for her?

We are aware that there are some adult volunteers with significant support needs and to help we have the role of supported volunteer, alongside an individual volunteer supporter role. Supported volunteers don't have any safeguarding responsibilities and are exempt from completing safer guiding. You should contact inclusion@girlguiding.org.uk to discuss this.

How is the training accessible for volunteers with additional needs?

We aim to make our training as accessible as possible. E-learning has been fully tested to work with screen readers and to meet standard web accessibility guidelines. Sometimes depending on the volunteer's needs this means making adjustments, so we can make the learning more accessible and inclusive for an individual. To find out what adjustments would be helpful for a volunteer, we advise that the local commissioner or trainer has an initial discussion with the volunteer. Together with the volunteer, the group can then identify adjustments and the best way to make these. Some examples of support might include:

- a trainer or leader meeting face-to-face with a volunteer whilst they do the e-learning so they can read out the questions or to enable the volunteer to seek clarification on the questions.
- the volunteer attending a smaller or one-to-one face-to-face training, in person or virtually.

Compliance

If someone's level 1 or 2 is about to expire before 4 December - do they have to renew it now or does the situation re the highest level expiry apply?

If any of their safe space levels 1-3 expire before the safer guiding launch, they must renew it. The current rules for renewing levels 1-3 are still in place until the changeover on 4 December, after which they will not need to complete safer guiding until their highest level of safe space needs renewing.

What happens if I'm unable to complete the training?

If you have difficulty in accessing the training (e-learning and trainer-led versions) you must tell your commissioner as soon as possible so they can help you. If there are other reasons you can't complete the training, such as personal circumstances or accessibility needs, email the compliance team to let them

know compliance@girlguiding.org.uk. If there are mitigating circumstances, this can be taken into account, and they'll be able to offer you an extension.

What happens if I don't complete the training or disclosure check?

If you don't complete this training or disclosure check within the timeframe, this could result in your membership being withdrawn, and you won't be able to re-join for 3 years. But, because we want to avoid that happening, we regularly remind volunteers to complete their training and offer help throughout the process.

I haven't completed my safer guiding training or disclosure check: am I allowed to go to unit meetings?

If you go past your deadline date, you must no longer volunteer as you are no longer compliant with Girlguiding's policy, and your membership will be withdrawn. You'll receive an email from HQ to confirm this once your membership has been withdrawn.

What happens if my membership has been withdrawn but I still want to volunteer with Girlguiding?

If your Girlguiding membership has been withdrawn for non-compliance of safer guiding or disclosure check and you have new information that has not already been considered, you can appeal this decision. To do this you'll need to contact the compliance team within 28 days of your membership being withdrawn.

Will I still receive a letter to warn me that I need to complete training or a disclosure check?

No. There are a number of reasons for this, it's costly, delivery is slow, we get a large number of letters returned when an individual has moved but not updated their address on GO. So, we'll be sending all compliance notifications via email - please remind your volunteers to update their email addresses on GO.

Why are you sending out less notifications?

You don't need us to keep nagging you! You can log in to your GO record at any time, where you'll be able to see when your training and disclosure check need to be completed next.

Why are you giving me less time to complete the training / disclosure check?

We're not giving you less time. Once you've done safer guiding, you'll be asked to complete training and disclosure checks we're just not reminding you as early. We regularly receive feedback from volunteers who say that they do not need multiple reminders as still asking you to complete training and disclosure checks for a period of every 3 years.

What about volunteers who don't use technology or have an email address?

Whilst it's part of Girlguiding's adult membership policy that they should have an email address registered on GO, we do understand that not everybody uses tech or has an email address. The HQ compliance team will reach out to commissioners when they have volunteers that do not have email addresses registered and will ask commissioners to support them.

Will volunteers without email addresses receive a letter?

No. Their commissioner will be sent a GO communication asking them to support the volunteer so will need to contact the volunteer directly to let them know.

Is compliance based on active roles only?

Currently yes, only active roles are counted and therefore if someone is only active pending, they're not included in the figures and their unit will show as non-compliant.

What if a volunteer has a disclosure check that's been stuck at LPF for more than 40 days, are they compliant?

Don't worry, the volunteer won't be in the compliance process any longer as their status will have changed to 'in progress'. You can get in touch with the local ID verifier who can monitor progress of cases, and they can escalate any concerns to the disclosures team in HQ.

Commissioner support

What is happening to a safe space level 4?

Commissioners will still need to complete level 4, however it will no longer need to be renewed. Instead, it'll become a pre-requisite of the role and will need to be completed during the commissioners' designate period.

My level 4 is about to expire, what do I do?

You will not need to renew your level 4 as renewals are no longer necessary after launch on 4 December. Compliance reminders can be ignored as they will still be going out automatically until launch. There is no need to contact the Compliance team if your level 4 expires before the launch date, unless your GO access has been affected (which it shouldn't).

Will there still be a fortnightly compliance list from HQ?

No, as a commissioner you'll be able to view reports on GO to see which of your volunteers are in the at risk stage of the compliance process, we're updating the GO helpfile to show you how to access this.

Under 18s

What is happening with the 14-17 and 10-13 a safe spaces?

These will remain the same for the time being although we'll be reviewing them in 2025.

Whose responsibility is it to make sure a young person does their a safe space?

Any leader with a young leader in their unit should encourage them to complete their a safe space. Young leader coordinators can also support with their young leaders to do this by putting on sessions with e-learnings and talking them through the content.

Can young volunteers do the safer guiding training on the learning platform?

Young people under 14 can't access the learning platform. If a young person is age 14+ but is still a Guide, they also can't access the learning platform. If a young external volunteer is aged 13, they should be directed to complete the a safe space for 10-13 year olds. Young people who need to complete the 14-17 e-learning on the learning platform are only able to access content for their age group. These users cannot see adult-facing training on the learning platform.

How will the young member know when they have to renew their a safe space training?

The 14-17 a safe space will not need to be renewed. On their 18th birthday they'll be asked to complete safer guiding, or safer guiding basic depending on what adult role they are given. They will also enter the 'inform' stage of the compliance process.

How long does someone have to complete safer guiding after they turn 18?

They'll have 40 days to complete safer guiding. If it's not completed within this time they'll move to the 'at risk' stage where they'll have another 40 days to complete it (but during this stage, they should not be volunteering unsupervised). If the training is not completed after 80 days, then they'll be at risk of having their membership withdrawn. If they are unable to complete the training within this timeframe, they can request an extension for mitigating circumstances by contacting compliance@girlguiding.org.uk.

If my child, a young leader has significant support needs (such as special educational needs), are they still able to complete a safe space for girls aged 14-17?

We're keen to ensure that all members are able to access learning in a fair and equitable way. We recommend having an open and honest conversation with the individual (and a parent or carer if necessary) about any barriers they might face and any adjustments or changes that would help them complete the training. Depending on what the barriers are, this will determine whether it is appropriate for them to complete this training and have it reflected on their record. There could be a range of different reasons why this training may not be suitable for everyone. If a young person is unable to complete the course due to access needs, please contact volunteer support and they will be able to help. There are no compliance measures for under 18s, so no young leaders *have* to complete the course, though we recommend it. If a young person has significant support needs, it might be more appropriate for them to complete the *creating safer spaces together* course, which is aimed at 10-13 year olds, depending on how significant their needs are.

LDP

What is happening with Risky business?

After December, Risky business is no longer required to complete the LDP. C/Rs may still want to put on the occasional webinar as volunteers may still want to complete it, but it is no longer mandatory for LiTs. These sessions should not be put on in relation to the LDP.

GO reporting

How do I know who has completed a safe space level 3 or safer guiding?

During the transition period, you'll need to look at the volunteers course list, not only the safe practice summary on GO. This will show if they are individually compliant, and the course list will show you who has completed a safe space level 3 or safer guiding. For example, a unit helper may show on the safe practice tab that they have safer guiding, but the course list will tell you whether they've completed the safer guiding course or only a safe space level 3. If they only have a safe space level 2, they can't be counted for unit compliance. The compliance team will be monitoring unit compliance rates and will contact a county commissioner if they have units that are not compliant.

Trefoil Guild

Do members of Trefoil Guild have to complete the training?

The Trefoil Guild is a separate organisation to Girlguiding but if a member also holds a Girlguiding role they would need to do the relevant safer guiding training for that role. This could be a county Trefoil Guild chair or county treasurer. If a Trefoil Guild member helps regularly at any units or events they must also hold a Girlguiding membership attached to the unit/district/division/county. If they are only visiting a unit or event as a one off, they must be treated as an external visitor and follow the standard visitor procedures.