

Creating inclusive volunteer adverts

A guide for volunteers
2025



Contents

- Introduction
- Being clear about the role you're trying to fill
- Essential information to include in any advert
- Making adverts accessible and appealing visually
- The language we use
- Where you could advertise your role
- Examples of inclusive and accessible volunteer adverts
- Further resources and sources of support

Introduction

Why have we created this guide?

We know that adverts are an important tool in recruiting new volunteers. They can reach those who already know they'd like to get involved, as well as those who might never have thought of volunteering with Girlguiding!

Making volunteering adverts **inclusive** lets potential volunteers know that they will have a place in Girlguiding.

Making volunteering adverts **accessible** encourages people to enquire and makes it easier for them to do so by giving them all the information they need to make an informed decision.

Volunteers told us they wanted more support with creating inclusive and accessible recruitment adverts. This guide aims to help you get started if you want to create your own adverts.

This isn't something you have to do alone though. The volunteer recruitment project team can also create tailored recruitment adverts for you. Contact them at growth@girlguiding-scot.org.uk.

There are also ready-made leaflets, posters and postcards available for free from the Girlguiding Scotland shop.

**Being clear about
the role you're
trying to fill**

Good practice

What is the volunteer opportunity?

Before you start creating your advert, think about what roles you need to fill, and whether they can be done differently.

What role(s) do you need to fill?

- How would you describe it to someone new to guiding? (for example 'youth group helper' instead of unit helper)
- Could this be a non-unit facing role?

Who can do this role?

- What skills are essential?
- Are there any restrictions? (for example: age, gender)

Think about the tasks this role would help with

- Could tasks be broken into smaller chunks?
- Do these tasks need to be done by the same person?
- Could you have a pool of people to split these tasks between?

How much time do these tasks take?

- Are they one-off tasks or recurring?
- How often do these tasks need to be done?

Essential
information to
include in any
advert

Good practice

Content

Being clear and open about what a role involves can help someone overcome any nervousness they may have about applying to volunteer with us.

Here are some ways you could make your recruitment advert more inclusive:

- Provide as much information as possible about the role; what is the role? Is it for a specific section? When will volunteering likely happen? Where will it happen?
- Be clear about the level of commitment that you need. Is this role flexible with time, or do you need someone to come along every week? Is it a long-term commitment, or would they be able to volunteer for a short while?
- What skills are you looking for? This can help someone understand if they feel capable to take this role on
- What benefits will the role offer? What do you get out of being a volunteer with Girlguiding? Highlight training, volunteer benefits, personal satisfaction, and CV skills!
- Make the advert volunteer-focused. You might want to add a quote from a current volunteer
- Highlight support available and that every volunteer is part of a team
- Provide a clear point of contact if relevant, or explain the initial process and when they should hear back from someone (our recruitment procedures say a local volunteer should contact enquirers within 7 days)

Things that might prevent someone from volunteering

Below are some of the reasons why someone might not feel able to volunteer.

By keeping these in mind when creating your adverts, you can help challenge assumptions and show how inclusive volunteering can be.

Economic

- Time
- Travel expenses
- Equipment costs
- Childcare costs
- Benefits and right to work
- Food and drink

Social

- Discrimination
- Confidence
- Attitudes and assumptions

Physical

- Parking areas
- Kerbs and uneven pavement
- Steps
- Doors
- Toilets and washing facilities
- Lighting and ventilation
- Lifts and escalators

Addressing potential barriers

Making information clear to potential volunteers

If someone has access requirements or might need extra support to take on a volunteer role, information like this can be helpful.

By including it, we let potential volunteers know what to expect and that we have considered how these things might affect them.

Where possible, you should:

- Highlight any access restrictions like stairs or narrow doors.
- Give information on if the location has accessible parking and accessible toilets.
- Highlight public transport links or nearby parking
- Explain that reasonable expenses can be claimed. Volunteering with Girlguiding Scotland shouldn't cost you anything.
- Offer taster sessions so that volunteers can decide which section they might like to join and if the role is right for them
- Highlight the support that's available for the joining process, and as a volunteer. It doesn't have to be you that helps, and you can signpost to Girlguiding Scotland's staff team who can talk prospective volunteers through the enquiry form.

Making adverts accessible and appealing visually

Why use images?

Visuals

Catching someone's eye with your advert is the first step to success. Adverts containing images are more likely to stand out than those with just text.

Images draw people in and show the wide range of volunteers we have, and the activities we do.

Seeing someone like you in a volunteer advert shows that there's a place for you in the organisation.

Good representation can help people to feel more confident applying for roles.



Visual

Using images

Images should be clear and relevant to the role you're advertising and the people you're trying to reach.

Be careful to avoid:

- Copyrighted images
- Pixelated or blurry images
- Out of date images
- Repeated images on all your adverts

When using images, it's important to use image descriptions where possible to make adverts accessible for blind and partially sighted people. (This is discussed more on slide 19)



Visuals

Brand guidelines for accessibility

This is the look, feel and tone of Girlguiding. It's how we create the right impressions and connect with the people who can make us stronger: our volunteers, partners, supporters and other organisations.

These guidelines help us stay consistent and keep the right tone in all communications. They have been created with accessibility in mind.

[Follow this link to read Girlguiding's brand guidelines](#)

Fonts

- Poppins is the primary typeface because it's clear and easy to read even at small sizes.
- If Poppins isn't available, you can substitute it for Century Gothic or Zilla Slab

Colours

- Our colours mean communications are easily identified as Girlguiding
- Choosing colours with good contrast and visibility is important for accessibility and makes it easy to read

Logos

- Our logos make sure communications are easily identified as Girlguiding
- Use the primary logo when you can and keep logos to the minimum size

The language we use

Accessible language

Format

Girlguiding is a place where everyone's welcome. So, we use simple language and a clear structure to make our communications accessible.

Accessible language makes sure everyone can understand what we're saying and supports those using screen readers.

Structure

Split text into paragraphs and use clear headings.
Align text to the left.

Abbreviations

Try not to use abbreviations and acronyms. If you have to use an acronym, spell it out the first time with the abbreviation in brackets for example:
Girlguiding Scotland (GGS)

Reading age

We aim for a reading age of 9, which is the reported UK average.

Apps like Hemingway can help you check the reading age of your writing based on things like sentence length, vocabulary choice and passive voice.

Jargon

Use clear language, and words that people outside of Girlguiding can understand.

Using titles like 'youth group leader' rather than 'unit leader' makes sure everyone can understand the role more easily, if they've been in Girlguiding before or not.

Good practice

Inclusive language

We want everyone to feel welcome at Girlguiding. So, we avoid language that excludes or makes assumptions about anyone. While accessible language makes sure everyone can understand our adverts, inclusive language makes sure everyone feels welcome.

Here are some ways you can use inclusive language in recruitment adverts:

- Because we've been around for a long time, people sometimes think that we're outdated or are linked to a specific religion. It's important to highlight that we're an inclusive organisation and that we're girl-led
- Saying something simple like 'Girlguiding welcomes volunteers from all backgrounds and with all types of experience' can be an important addition to your advert.
- Be clear about the support you can offer people during the joining process
- You only need to mention protected characteristics if they are relevant, for example adult volunteers (18+) or young volunteers (10+)
- Where roles can only be held by women, make this clear and explain what other roles are open to everyone.

Example

What's wrong with this advert?

- Image is blurry and low quality (is it relevant to the advert?)
- The logo is the old branding
- The background and heading are not branding colours
- The text and background contrast isn't suitable for accessibility
- The text isn't aligned to the left
- There aren't clear paragraphs
- There's lots of jargon like GGS, Unit, Brownies, Programme and GO without an explanation
- It doesn't mention a specific geographical area
- There's no mention of support to achieve leadership, or that you'll be part of a team
- No point of contact, or clear sign that the link is in the caption of the post



Example

What's better about this one?

- The image is clear and relevant to the advert
- Girlguiding logo is up to date, and includes a district name to help show where the role is advertised from
- All colours are branding colours
- The contrast between the text and background is suitable for accessible reading
- The text is aligned to the left and split into paragraphs
- Highlighting that volunteers are part of a team
- 'Group meetings' instead of unit meetings
- Brief description of the section age range
- Welcoming people from all backgrounds and with no experience. Clear that support will be given
- A clear point of contact is given



 **Girlguiding**
Example District

Volunteer with us today

Girlguiding Scotland is the leading charity for girls and young women in Scotland. We help girls discover their full potential by having fun and enjoying new adventures.

We need volunteers to join our team and help run our regular group meetings in Anytown for Guides, aged 10-14, on weekday evenings. You could help with crafts, running games, or going on trips.

We welcome people from all backgrounds, no previous experience needed! You'll be supported to learn and develop your skills and confidence in any role.

Join today as a group helper and help girls know they can do anything!

For more information, or to chat our opportunities through, email example@example.co.uk

RNIB Social Media Guidance

The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) have put together a helpful guide to making social media and communications accessible for blind and partially sighted people.

This means nobody misses important information, and that everyone has the same chance to get involved!

[How to make your social media accessible | RNIB](#)

Image descriptions

- Image descriptions make images accessible for blind and partially sighted people, also known as alt text. This is simply a written description of an image. For adverts, this is most likely to be used on social media
- Image descriptions should be added to all images, memes and GIFs and should include all text included in the image.

Hashtags

Did you know you need to format hashtags so they're accessible?

Camel Case is when you capitalise the first letter of each word in hashtags, #LikeThis. It means that they'll be read out correctly by screen readers and it also makes them easier to read for everyone.

Emojis

If someone's using a screen reader, they have to listen to the full name of every single emoji being read out loud.

- Use one emoji per post, two at most
- Don't use emojis one after another
- Don't put them between every single word
- Avoid using them as bullet points. If you must use emoji bullet points, use the same one each time
- Make sure the emoji name gives the message you want. Check [EmojiPedia](#) for the meanings.

Where to advertise

Advertising your opportunity

Now you've created a volunteering opportunity, it's time to advertise it!

Advertising can be as simple as a poster in your unit meeting place, or a Facebook post.

It's important to take your advert to the people you want to reach.

To do this, think about:

Who you want to reach

- Do you want to ask parents/carers?
- Who might have the time to give or the skills to support the programme? For example: students or retired people

Where you can advertise

- What ways of advertising do you have access to already?
- Have you seen another organisation advertise in a different place?

Who can help you to advertise

- Would someone else in your area be able to help?
- Could another organisation help to advertise?

Advertising

Voluntary sector support

Every local authority in Scotland has an organisation, or group of organisations, who support, develop, and advocate for the voluntary sector. This is known as the Third Sector Interface, abbreviated to TSI.

Some of these organisations or groups in your local area will be called a TSI, and some will be called something different, for example: a volunteer centre or 'Voluntary Action (Place name)'

These organisations can be a great place to start because they know the local area and will have good connections to other organisations, as well as people who want to volunteer.

All TSIs or volunteer centres will be able to help you to advertise roles on their website, social media, or even in an electronic newsletter or bulletin.

Lots of them will also run training and networking events that can support you and existing volunteers in your area.

Find your local supporting organisation here: [Find Support Locally – Volunteer Scotland](#)

Advertising

Websites/ online platforms

There are lots of online platforms that you can advertise volunteer opportunities through. These let potential volunteers 'shop' for roles that interest them and can let you give more information about the role

[GoVo](#) is a new platform recently launched by the Royal Voluntary Service. Any area can advertise on it, and potential volunteers can search by postcode

[Rest-less](#) is a platform for over 50s, providing opportunities for volunteering, travel and events. Potential volunteers can search by postcode and things they'd like to do

Advertising

Social Media

Social media can be a useful tool to advertise with. By using Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn, you can reach lots of people, even if they aren't already looking for a volunteer role. This helps to raise awareness about Girlguiding in your area and makes it easy for people to find out more.

Events like recruitment fairs or local gala days are often posted on social media. These might also give you a good opportunity to advertise and raise awareness in-person.

It's important to make sure your advert suits the different types of social media you use:

- Facebook is a more relaxed platform with an informal tone. You can join local community groups to help spread the word about what you do, as well as any volunteering opportunities you have.
- Instagram uses images and videos to share messages, and you can use this to really show the work you do, the volunteers you have, and the difference you make. On Instagram, using clear images and text will help your advert be eye-catching. You can add image descriptions to images and posts, and captions to videos.
- LinkedIn is a professional social media. This can help you to reach people with specific skills, or who want to add volunteering to their CV. You can use images, text and videos to advertise.

Good practice

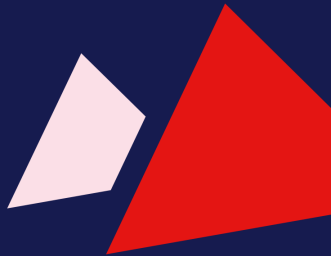
Advertising

Using physical advertising as well as (or instead of) social media can make sure the people we want to reach see our adverts.

Here are a few ways you could advertise roles using printed recruitment materials:

- Place posters, leaflets or postcards in local businesses, supermarkets, or community spaces like libraries or sport centres
- Contact your local newspaper or community magazine to discuss how they could help raise awareness of volunteering opportunities
- Approach local schools.
 - If you're trying to reach younger volunteers, you could join in with careers events
 - If you want to reach teachers, ask if they could put a poster up in the staff room
 - If you want to reach parents, could might be able to have a display at a parents' evening or send leaflets home in book bags

Useful resources



Helpful resources

Girlguiding resources

- [Brand Guidelines document](#)
- [Our brand and how to use it | Girlguiding](#)
- [Girlguiding's social media guide](#)
- Create recruitment resources on the [Girlguiding Online Design Centre](#)
- [Contact Girlguiding's EDI team](#)
- [Recruitment marketing materials](#)
- [Ways of volunteering](#)
- [Students volunteering on a flexible basis](#)

External resources

- [How to make your social media accessible | RNIB](#)
- [Find a volunteer centre or TSI for your area](#)

Contact Girlguiding Scotland's volunteer recruitment project team: growth@girlguiding-scot.org.uk