Girlguiding impact report 2023

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Thank you

Introduction

CEO Angela Salt

Every day, I have the privilege of seeing the impact that Girlguiding has on girls and volunteers across the UK. I watch with pride when girls speak out on the issues that matter to them for the first time. I celebrate with them as they have their first adventures with their friends, challenging themselves to try something new. And I see remarkable volunteers building lifelong friendships with each other and learn new skills as they work for girls.

Today I am proud to share our new impact report. This research demonstrates, in no uncertain terms, the extraordinary impact that Girlguiding has on people's lives. More than 21,000 girls and volunteers took part in this research. They showed us that Girlguiding helps build girls' confidence. That Girlguiding volunteers are more satisfied with their lives than people who also volunteer regularly, and people who don't volunteer at all. In short, they showed us that Girlguiding makes a big difference.

Our landmark **Girl's Attitudes Survey**, released in September 2023, revealed that girls' happiness is at a 15-year low. That's why the findings of this impact report have never been more critical and evidence that Girlguiding provides a vital space for girls to explore, have fun and belong, all whilst navigating the pressures that come with being a girl in 2023. Girlguiding's work has never been more needed.

At Girlguiding, we help all girls know that they can do anything. This impact report illustrates how – by building their confidence giving them a safe space to have fun and try new adventures, and supporting the volunteers who help them thrive. I am grateful to each and every volunteer who helps make this work possible. We want every girl in the UK to have the opportunity to be a part of Girlguiding, so that they can enjoy a safe space where they can laugh, learn, adventure and try new things. I know that together, we will continue to strive to make that a reality. It's all about the girls.

Angela Salt

Who we are

We're the UK's largest youth organisation dedicated completely to girls. Our vision is for an equal world where all girls can make a positive difference, be happy, safe and fulfil their potential.

Everything you're about to read is based on surveys and focus groups carried out with girls, their parents and carers and volunteers. The results we share from Girlguiding are compared to non-Girlguiding girls, boys and adults in the UK. And they factor in demographics like ethnicity and disability.

All girls have a home at Girlguiding, whoever they are and wherever they are from. Above all, we show them that whether they're 4, 18, or somewhere in between, girls can do anything.

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Summary of our findings

This study shows that **Girlguiding girls are up to 23% more confident than the UK average**. And the influence of Girlguiding on girls' confidence more than doubles between early and mid-adolescence. These are positive findings for us to build on as we work towards closing the confidence gap even further.

To understand our impact, this report brings together detailed evidence gathered over the course of 3 years. But before you dig deeper, here is a short summary of our impact on 4 key areas.

Our impact on the lives of Girlguiding girls

There's no denying that UK girls face a confidence challenge, reporting lower confidence than UK boys. What's more, this confidence gap increases as girls enter adolescence. But what we can clearly demonstrate is that Girlguiding helps empower girls and boost their confidence at a time when they need it most.

Our impact on girls through volunteers

Girlguiding girls trust and value volunteers. Building good relationships with trusted adults helps girls do their best and feel their best. Girlguiding volunteers report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction than other UK volunteers and adults. They're motivated to help others, learn new skills and build lasting friendships. Without our volunteers our impact wouldn't be possible, which is why we continue to work to make sure volunteers are fulfilled and happy in their roles.

Our impact on equity, diversity and inclusion

Girlguiding isn't representative of the UK yet, and we have more work to do to become a diverse and equitable organisation for girls and volunteers. We've found that girls from underrepresented communities report positive experiences with Girlguiding. This is a step in the right direction that we can build on in the future.

Our impact on communities

Girlguiding girls make a big contribution to their communities and have a positive impact in a variety of ways. This supports Girlguiding's vision of creating an equal world where all girls can make a difference, be happy, safe and fulfil their potential.

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Girlguiding impact report

Measuring our impact

To get closer to achieving our vision, it's crucial that we can show and communicate the difference we make to the lives of girls, volunteers and wider society. This report is the product of more than 3 years of work to evaluate our impact following our 2020+ strategy launch.

Everything you're about to read is based on surveys and focus groups carried out with girls, their parents and carers and volunteers. The results we share from Girlguiding are compared to non-Girlguiding girls, boys and adults in the UK. And they factor in demographics like ethnicity and disability.

The findings are compelling, credible and consistent. And we're excited to share them with you now!

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Our approach

So far, we've engaged with over 21,000 girls and volunteers (nearly 5% of the Girlguiding UK movement) through 3 surveys.

In 2023, we also carried out 12 focus groups with 16 girls, 20 volunteers and 6 parents and carers.

We have worked hard to make sure our samples are representative of our reach across countries and regions.

All findings in this report are statistically significant (to a confidence level of 95% or more). When a finding is significant, it simply means you can feel confident that it's real, not that you just got lucky (or unlucky) in choosing the sample.

In producing any report, we aim to achieve the highest possible standard of evidence, and we're happy to be totally transparent about our methodology.

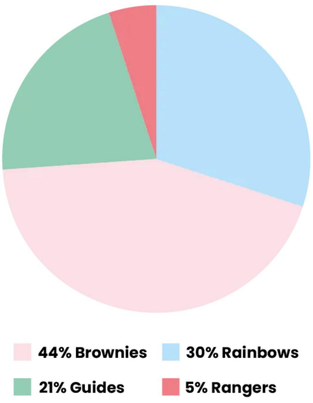
Here's a breakdown of who we've heard from since 2021:

13350
girls aged 4-18-years-old and their parents or carers

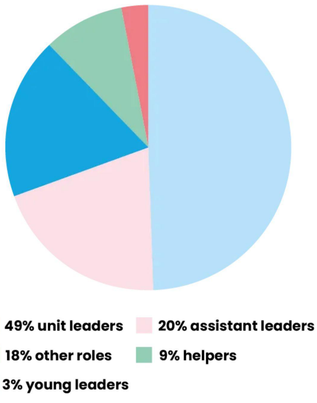
7700
volunteers including young leaders aged 14-18-years-old

(Note – figures above rounded to nearest 10)

Of the girls who responded to our surveys:



Of the volunteers who responded to our surveys:



*Percentages may not add to 100% as numbers have been rounded up

Ethnicity	Girlguiding girls %	Girlguiding volunteers %
Arab or Middle Eastern	<1	<1
Asian or Asian British	3	<1
Black or Black British	2	<1
Mixed or multi-ethnic	5	1
White	90	99
Any other ethnic group	<1	<1

Religion	Girlguiding girls %	Girlguiding volunteers %
Buddhist	<1	<1
Christian	52	70
Hindu	1	<1
Jewish	<1	<1
Muslim	1	<1
No religion or belief	44	28
Other religion or belief	1	1
Sikh	<1	<1

Girls

non-disabled
89%

disabled
11%

from least deprived communities
37%

from most deprived communities
16%

Volunteers

from least deprived communities
39%

from most deprived communities
12%

non-disabled
76%

disabled
24%

We're committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in Girlguiding – and know we still have a way to go before we're fully representative of UK society.

Our approach has been shaped by our **theory of change**. To understand more about our approach and methodology, including its limitations, please read our **technical report**.

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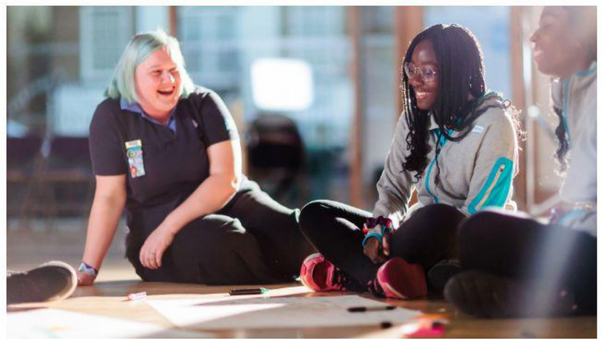
Our findings in depth

Girlguiding helps girls unleash their potential

Click here

Girlguiding empowers girls and boosts their confidence

Click here



Girls really trust and value volunteers

Click here

Girlguiding is a space where girls can be themselves

Click here

Girlguiding girls give back to communities

Click here

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Girlguiding impact report

Girlguiding helps girls unleash their potential

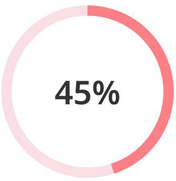
91% of young members said they **have fun** at Girlguiding.

"At the start I feel happy and excited, and I feel happy with what I've done after."

Brownie

In 2023, the Girls' Attitudes Survey revealed that UK girls would like more opportunities to be outdoors and in nature, have adventures and try new things. At Girlguiding, we go the extra mile to make sure girls can do these things and more. We empower girls to embrace adventure and new experiences. Our 300,000 girls aged 4-18-years-old are given the chance to:

Go on adventures



45% of young members have taken part in an adventurous activity outdoors in the last 12 months.

Almost 20% have experienced the adventure of staying away from home.

38%

of young members have mixed with other guiding units in the last 12 months.

"When you go on camp with other units it's like you're just part of one community."

Ranger

Gain skills, awards and badges

Our range of awards inspires girls and celebrates their achievements. Since 2021, girls have achieved 102,000 Section awards and 271,000 Theme awards. They have also completed an incredible 403,000 interest badges and 507,000 skills builder activities on topics ranging from first aid and coding to self care and space.

"At school I don't really learn life skills... so Girlguiding allows me to learn life skills and what I need to survive."

Ranger

Experience the wider world

Girls can trek, join social action projects, or represent girls as part of Girlguiding and the global guiding federation WAGGGS.

"I'm going to volunteer in Mexico this year and I'd never have been able to do that if I wasn't in guiding."

Young leader

Advocate and campaign

At Girlguiding, girls are encouraged and supported to take action and help shape a more equal world. Our advocates are girls and young women aged 14-25-years-old and they speak out on issues like girls' rights, sexual harassment, online safety, period poverty and mental health.

"I have had some very cool opportunities, for example writing for national newspapers and blogs, speaking live on radio, and creating collaborative campaigns."

Advocate panel 2022

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Girlguiding empowers girls and boosts their confidence

This study shows that **Girlguiding girls are up to 23% more confident than the UK average**. And the influence of Girlguiding on girls' confidence more than doubles between early and mid-adolescence. These are positive findings for us to build on as we work towards closing the confidence gap even further.

UK girls are facing a confidence challenge

We know that girls are a powerful force for change in their own lives. But we also know, across all walks of life and communities, girls face challenges to their confidence. UK girls report consistently lower confidence and self-worth than UK boys.

In fact, in the UK, girls are between 3% and 12% less likely to report high confidence than boys – and the gap widens to as much as 24% by age 15.[1]

Girlguiding empowers girls and boosts their confidence

Our analysis shows that girls supported by Girlguiding are more likely to report higher confidence than UK girls.

> "I think the thing that I've learnt is learning to use my voice confidently."
>
> Young leader

We know demographic characteristics have an impact on how girls feel. So where possible, we have taken this into account with our analysis by 'controlling' for the influence of key demographics. It means the differences you see in our results when comparing Girlguiding girls and UK girls cannot be explained by differences in ethnicity, disability and, for most of the findings, socioeconomic deprivation.

Compared to UK girls, Girlguiding girls (of all ages) are:

12%
more likely to say they aren't nervous in new situations

8%
more likely to say they're as able as others

4%
more likely to say they have a number of good qualities

> "It's helped me to do stuff that I never really knew I could do."
>
> Brownie

Girlguiding impacts girls' confidence when they need it most

In the UK, girls' confidence falls from early adolescence onwards. We're here to offer vital support to older girls as they face these challenges.

Our analysis shows that the influence of Girlguiding on girls' confidence almost triples between early and mid-adolescence.[2]

At age 11, compared to UK girls, **Girlguiding girls are 8%** more likely to say they're not nervous in new situations

At age 15, compared to UK girls, **Girlguiding girls are 23%** more likely to say they're not nervous in new situations

Girlguiding girls also report higher confidence than UK girls and UK boys

Compared to UK boys and girls, Girlguiding girls (of all ages) are:

6%
more likely to say they aren't nervous in new situations

7%
more likely to say they're as able as others

3%
more likely to say they have a number of good qualities[3]

> "I think just the confidence that it gives you because of the things that you've done is quite empowering."
>
> Ranger

At age 11, compared to uk girls and UK boys, **Girlguiding girls are 9%** more likely to say they're not nervous in new situations

At age 15, compared to UK girls and UK boys, **Girlguiding girls are 23%** more likely to say they're not nervous in new situations

> "It definitely makes you feel good and makes you feel empowered to do things. I can definitely feel my confidence growing as I've got older, undoubtedly because of Girlguiding."
>
> Young leader

The evidence shows that, by empowering girls to lead the way, Girlguiding girls develop all round higher confidence. But we want our impact to go even further. It's troubling that UK girls' wellbeing is on the decline and has been since 2009, with fewer girls saying they feel very happy[4]. We'll continue working hard to reverse this trend, and always welcome new partnerships to help tackle these urgent issues.

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[1] Understanding Society (Waves 10-12, 2020-2022), sample size: 6269

[2] Girlguiding (Waves 2-3, 2022) data compared to data from Understanding Society (Waves 10-12, 2020-20222), sample size: 6269

[3] Girlguiding data compared to data from Understanding Society (Waves 10-12, 2020-2022), sample size: 6269

[4] Girls' Attitudes Survey (2023), sample size: 2,614

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Girlguiding girls really trust and value volunteers

Girlguiding girls really trust and value volunteers. **95% of Girlguiding girls agreed 'I respect my leaders and my helpers'.**

"It's a lot of fun for the girls, but it's also a lot of fun for me."

Volunteer

The impact we have on the lives of girls is only possible thanks to 70,000 volunteers sharing their time, enthusiasm and support. Girlguiding volunteers are amazing, and the girls they support agree.

When we asked Girlguiding girls to what extent they agreed with the following statements, the results were clear:

83%

agreed 'I can talk to my unit leaders and helpers if I need help'

89%

agreed 'My unit leaders and helpers make me feel like I matter'

93%

agreed 'My unit leaders and helpers treat me with respect'

95%

agreed 'I respect my leaders and my helpers'

"If I ever had any problems or anything I'd definitely feel comfortable talking to my leaders about it."

Ranger

And the feeling is mutual. Out of the volunteers we heard from:

89%

agreed with the statement 'I feel valued by the parents in my unit'

94%

agreed with the statement 'I feel welcomed in Girlguiding'

97%

agreed with the statement 'I feel valued by the girls in my unit'

"I once had a child say to me about their school residential, 'I just wish you were coming because when I go away with you I feel safe'. And that really touched me."

Volunteer

Girlguiding volunteers are passionate about what they do

Many of our volunteers sign up because they are asked to help, but stay because they enjoyed giving back and working with girls. They are motivated to help others, learn new skills and build lasting friendships.

"I was given such amazing opportunities as a child that I found it important to be able to give that to the girls I now lead."

Volunteer

What motivates Girlguiding volunteers

Compared to volunteers at other UK youth organisations, Girlguiding volunteers are **5 times more likely to say they joined to learn new skills**.

They are **6 times more likely than other youth volunteers** to say they joined because they'd been helped by Girlguiding in the past.

And they are **4 times more likely to say things in their life are worthwhile** than those who volunteer at least once per year elsewhere, and those who never volunteer.[5]

"Some of my closest friends have been made through guiding."

Volunteer

Girlguiding volunteers also stay in Girlguiding **twice as long as the average UK volunteer**. On average, our volunteers stay for **13.5 years compared to the UK average of 6 years**, and they give around **12 hours each month compared to the UK average of 8 hours.**[6]

Girlguiding volunteers are happier

Girlguiding volunteers report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction than the average UK adult who does no volunteering, as well as those who volunteer less frequently with other organisations.[7]

Girlguiding volunteers' happiness is 5 times higher than those who volunteer at least once per month elsewhere, and 4 times higher than those who volunteer at least once per year elsewhere.

They also report higher levels of life satisfaction. For Girlguiding volunteers, it is 4 times higher than those who volunteer at least once per month elsewhere, and 4 times higher than those who never volunteer.

Continually improving our volunteers' experience

Without our volunteers our impact wouldn't be possible, which is why we're always working to make sure volunteers are fulfilled and happy in their roles. Our volunteers told us they want to spend more time with their girls doing the things they love, and less time on admin. So we're trying to make volunteering as easy as possible by streamlining processes and offering flexible volunteering opportunities. We also want to do more to celebrate our amazing volunteers and make sure they feel listened to and appreciated for all that they do. And of course, we need to attract more volunteers to join us so we can keep providing great experiences for girls.

"It just makes you feel happy that you're helping out your community."

Volunteer

[5] Girlguiding volunteer data (sample size 7701) compared to data from DCMS Community Life Survey 2020/21 (2021), sample size: 10,917

[6] Girlguiding volunteer data (sample size 7701) compared to data from NCVO Time Well Spent Survey (2019), sample size: 10,103

[7] Girlguiding volunteer data (sample size 7701) compared to data from DCMS Community Life Survey 2020/21 (2021), sample size: 10,917

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Girlguiding is a space where girls can be themselves

Our analysis shows that **Girlguiding provides a positive experience for girls from under-represented communities**.

"It's fun to be able to just be yourself without any worry about what other people are going to say"

Ranger

Girlguiding is working towards becoming more diverse

At Girlguiding, we know our membership isn't representative of the UK yet - and that's something we're determined to change. We want to be a place where everyone is welcome and has an equal sense of belonging.

To drive this change, we have an equity, diversity and inclusion strategic plan. This plan lays out our aim to be more accessible to girls and volunteers of colour, and from the most socioeconomically deprived areas and to become a more diverse organisation for all girls and volunteers in the UK.

With the added pressure of the cost-of-living crisis in the UK, it's more important than ever that Girlguiding is accessible for all girls. Especially when 75% of UK girls said they are worried about the increased cost of living in the latest Girls' Attitudes Survey (2023).

In November 2022, we surveyed our girls on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and found that girls from the most deprived backgrounds were more likely to use food banks and to cut spending on essential items like period products.

Ethnicity	Girlguiding %	UK population % (girls age 4-18)[8]
Arab or Middle Eastern	<1	1
Asian or Asian British	3	12
Black or Black British	2	5
Mixed or multi-ethnic	5	6
White	90	74
Any other ethnic group	<1	2

Religion	Girlguiding %	UK population (girls aged 4-18) %
Buddhist	<1	<1
Christian	52	27
Hindu	1	1
Jewish	<1	<1
Muslim	1	8
No religion or belief	44	63
Other religion or belief	1	<1
Sikh	<1	<1

Least deprived areas:

37% Girlguiding

25% UK

Most deprived areas:

16% Girlguiding

25% UK

Disabled:

11% Girlguiding

8% UK

Non-disabled:

89% Girlguiding

92% UK

"In our units it's nice for girls to see **someone else who is a person of colour in a leadership position**, it helps them be themselves I think."

Volunteer

Girlguiding is a space where girls can be themselves

Our analysis shows that Girlguiding provides a positive experience for girls from under-represented communities, including girls from the most socioeconomically deprived communities and girls of colour. We have further to go on our journey to becoming a more equitable organisation, but we're proud to offer girls a space where they're free to be themselves.

"When I go to Rangers it's a chance to be totally myself, it's the hour and a half in the week I can let my hair down and not really care about what other people think."

Ranger

We asked Girlguiding girls how included and accepted they felt with us:

85%

strongly agreed or agreed that:

'Girlguiding embraces difference and diversity'

Compared to:

89% girls from the most socioeconomically deprived communities

86% girls of colour

86% disabled girls

85%

strongly agreed or agreed that:

'Girlguiding is inclusive'

Compared to:

86% girls from the most socioeconomically deprived communities

88% girls of colour

84% disabled girls

88%

strongly agreed or agreed that:

'Girlguiding is a place where I can be myself'

Compared to:

92% girls from the most socioeconomically deprived communities

88% girls of colour

87% disabled girls

[8] Office for National Statistics - Census 2021 for ethnicity, disability and religion data only and Office for National Statistics, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Scottish Government and Welsh Government - Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2017-2020)

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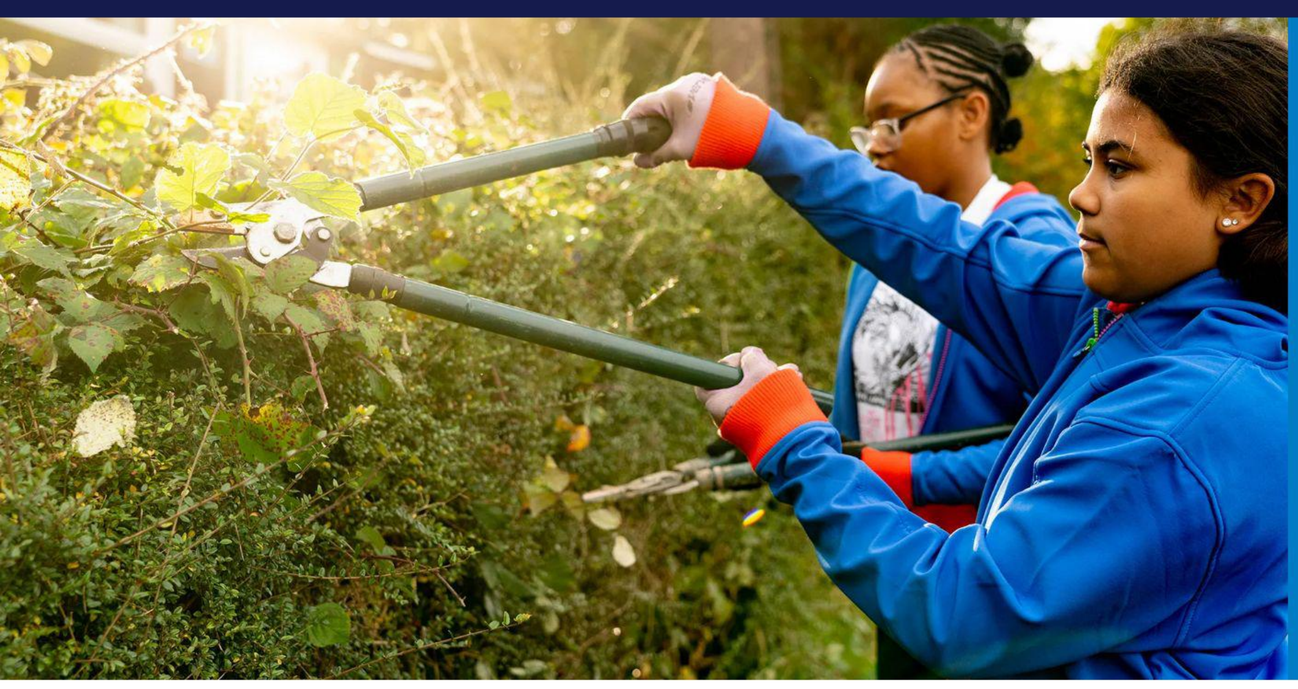
Girlguiding girls give back to communities



10% of Girlguiding girls give back to their community once a week or more.
That's the equivalent of a massive **149 months** or **12.4 years of community work** in 2021/2022!

Our 2023 Girls' Attitudes Survey revealed that UK girls and young women are more active in their communities today than they were a decade ago, and they're speaking out on issues they care about. Our findings show this is even more true for girls and young women in Girlguiding. They stand up for their beliefs and have a strong sense of community and helping others.

Compared to other young people, Girlguiding girls are:

46%

more likely to have supported others (not including friends or relatives)

36%

more likely to have helped improve their local area or the environment

31%

more likely to have given time to charity[9]

What's more, an incredible 96% of Girlguiding girls have done something to help their communities outside of Girlguiding in the 12 months before being surveyed.

Most popular activities include:

86%

Donating money or goods

62%

Fundraising or sponsorship events

55%

Helping to improve their local area or environment

> "I just love it, there's so much history and tradition. And I feel empowered as a woman to do it as well which is so cool, and I'm part of something bigger which is great."
>
> Young leader

[9] Girlguiding data compared to data from DCMS National Youth Social Action Survey (2019), sample size: 3358

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Girlguiding has ambitious plans for the future

Girlguiding is for all girls and young women, and everyone who wants to see women thrive in the world. We'll continue to explore the experiences and impact Girlguiding has on the lives of girls and volunteers, and use this work to strengthen and improve what we offer. We'll continue nurturing the confidence of UK girls and helping them overcome any challenges they face. Together, we'll keep tackling gender inequality to create a more equal world. To achieve this, our focus will be on reaching more girls than ever who can benefit from what Girlguiding can provide.

We'll also speak out on the biggest issues facing girls and use our voice to influence decision makers with the power to change and improve girls' lives. Crucially, we'll always make sure girls' views and needs are at the heart of everything we do.

However, we can't do it all alone - we need more resources, more funding and more partnerships with organisations who share our vision. That's why working with others will always be vital, and we encourage anyone who wants to help us achieve our vision to come and work with us!

If you'd like to get in touch about our findings: **insight@girlguiding.org.uk**

Or about partner opportunities and to support us: **supporters@girlguiding.org.uk**

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Our methodology

This is one of our most ambitious evaluations ever, and we've taken a rigorous approach.

Between 2019 and 2022 we developed key tools as part of our strategy to help us explain the difference we make. These tools included our theory of change and impact framework.

Surveys and focus groups

Between November 2021 and December 2022, we delivered 3 surveys based on our **theory of change** with a representative sample of over 21,000 or 5% of the Girlguiding UK movement. Each survey asked about their experiences and the impact Girlguiding has on their lives.

Between February and April 2023, we also held 12 focus groups with girls, parents and carers, and volunteers, to hear more about their Girlguiding experiences.

To better understand the impact of Girlguiding on girls and volunteers with different lived experiences, we've used advanced statistical analysis.

Our methodology aligns with HM Treasury's 2021 Green Book guidance on measuring wellbeing. Details on our methodology can be found in the **technical report**.

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A big thank you

To every girl, parent, carer and volunteer who took part in the surveys and focus groups that made this report possible.

To each and every member of the amplify youth steering group for their feedback on our theory of change.

To all the amazing volunteers who deliver fantastic experiences for girls across the UK each week.

And to all our funders, supporters and partners for always getting behind Girlguiding's work.

To players of People's Postcode Lottery for supporting us on our impact and insight journey over the years.

Supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery

Awarded funds from Postcode Children Trust

To the #iWill fund for their generous funding and support for our insight team.

Proudly supporting youth social action #iwill

Department for Culture, Media & Sport

Community Fund

Pears Foundation

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