

Foreword

Managing a Girls' Brigade Company A manual for Churches



The leadership of Girls' Brigade NI is delighted that so many Churches across Northern Ireland have chosen GB to be part of their youth ministry. On behalf of the GBNI Executive Committee, I wish to thank you for running a Company in your Church and extend our thanks to Chaplains for all the time and energy devoted to encouraging and guiding officers and girls. It is in an effort to assist you in that supportive role that this manual has been prepared.

Youth ministry presents an ever increasing challenge to Churches and, in Girls' Brigade, we are passionate about working in partnership with local Churches to present the good news of Jesus Christ to girls and young women in modern, relevant ways. Our mission to challenge girls in their Christian faith and enable them to grow in Christ has remained constant over the years and yet, like all organisations, we have had to adapt our approach to remain relevant and to operate within a complex legislative framework.

This manual provides guidance for Church leaders on managing an effective Girls' Brigade Company that is a vibrant part of the overall youth ministry of the Church. It includes an overview of how Girls' Brigade works and guidance on the key issues involved in managing a GB Company. I hope that you will find the information useful so that you can enjoy maximum benefit from this ministry and provide optimum support to the leaders in your Company.

Girls' Brigade is pleased to work with your Church in this ministry and I pray that the partnership will continue for many years, under God's leading, as we work together to offer young people a place to have fun, find faith and develop friendships.

*Rev James Simms
Girls' Brigade NI Chairperson (2005-2008)
Chaplain of 176th NI Rasharkin Presbyterian Girls' Brigade Company*



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www.gbni.co.uk

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About us

Aim

The aim of the Girls' Brigade, being a Christian organisation, international and inter-denominational, shall be:

To help girls to become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and through self-control, reverence and a sense of responsibility, to find true enrichment of life.

Vision

Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland will be recognised as a dynamic, relevant, Christ-centred organisation effectively reaching out to all girls to value, nurture and equip them for life.

Motto

'Seek, Serve and Follow Christ'

Girls' Brigade is a Christian ministry among girls and young women with members all around the world. We work alongside Churches in providing activities for girls aged 3-18 years.

Principles

- The Brigade acknowledges Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord according to the Scriptures and seeks to fulfil its aim to the glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The Brigade witnesses to the standard set by Jesus Christ and gives positive teaching on the Christian attitude to life.
- The Brigade promotes a just society where all people are equally valued.

Statement of Belief

1. The Holy Scriptures, being the Word of God, contain all things necessary to salvation and are accepted as the final authority.
2. The Trinity - the unity and co-equality of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - (a) We believe in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth.
 - (b) We believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. We believe in Jesus crucified, dead and buried, risen and ascended, who shall come to judge the living and the dead.
 - (c) We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Eternal Life.



Girls' Brigade Logos

The GB Badge

All over the world, Girls' Brigade members wear the same badge. There are *four* important features in the badge that have special significance for us as Christians.

- In the centre a **Cross**, the symbol of Christ and His Church.
- Below it a **Lamp**, that our light may shine out upon the world.
- Above it a **Crown**, that we may own Christ as our King.
- And behind all a **Torch**, the flame of Christ's living Spirit and our devotion to Him.

The Girls' Brigade badge (also known as the Crest) is the sole emblem of the organisation and its design and colour may not be altered.



GBNI Logo

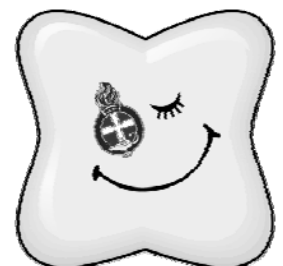
Girls' Brigade NI has its own logo, incorporating the Badge, as part of our identity and we are happy for GB Companies to use it with certain restrictions. See below.



This logo can be adapted to include the name of your Company. Contact the Marketing Officer at HQ for details.

Guidance on the use of GB logos/badges

- Logos can be downloaded from www.gbni.co.uk (plus every Captain was given logos on CD) and can be used by any GBNI registered Company for internal Company use only e.g. on printed programmes, orders of service, projects, PowerPoint presentations for Church etc.
- Both the GB Crest and the GB smiley logo are registered trademarks. Unauthorised use for any purpose other than that stated above is not permitted and an infringement of copyright law.
- Care should be taken when sizing the logo to retain correct proportions.
- Churches/Companies planning to use the logo for a special project should contact the Marketing Officer at HQ for guidance.
- Permission is not granted for printing on any merchandising including clothing, or any other public promotional material. For uses of this nature please contact the Marketing Officer at GBHQ. Better quality, higher resolution files may be supplied for this purpose if permission is granted.
- Please note all other unauthorised use of these logos is not permitted.





Girls' Brigade
NORTHERN IRELAND

How GBNI works

Girls' Brigade NI is a company limited by guarantee, which exists to promote, extend and maintain the ministry of GB, to the glory of God.

There are 3 tiers to our structure: Company, District and NI level. The functions and responsibilities of the groups within our structure are summarised below. Full details of our structure can be found in GBNI constitution documents available from HQ or from our website www.gbni.co.uk.

The Company

Every GB Company is attached to a Church or Mission. The Company is very much part of the local Church and should be managed as such. Companies meet once each week for at least 26 weeks during the school year. Girls' are divided into different sections by age and each has its own programme with age appropriate activities.

Company Members

Chaplain

Captain

Officers

Sub-Officers

Helpers

Girls aged 3-18 years

Did u know..?

Districts arrange a Church Service each year & can decide whether to include a parade. Got an opinion on this? Talk to your District Chairperson or Commissioner.

The District

Companies are grouped together in local areas to form Districts. Officers from local Companies are appointed to run the District, providing activities and events for girls and leaders e.g. training; praise services; fun days.

How Districts Work

Each District is governed by an Executive that is responsible to the Executive Committee of GBNI for the general running of the District within the Constitution and Rules of Girls' Brigade NI. A representative from each Company can take a place on the District Executive. In addition 2 Chaplains and 2 Youth Reps are elected to serve on the District Executive at the District Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The District Executive then elects people from among its members to fill a number of roles including District Commissioner, Assistant District Commissioner, Secretary, Chairperson, Treasurer, Prayer Co-ordinator and representatives for various teams.

District Annual General Meeting

Each District holds an AGM that all Officers within the District, including Chaplains, are eligible to attend. Meetings are usually held during May and the relevant information is sent to Captains, in advance, to distribute to all other officers in the Company, including the Chaplain.

At their AGM, each District makes plans for the next session, discusses current issues and elects representatives to serve on various decision-making teams within the wider organisation.

NI Level

Executive Committee

GBNI is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors known as the *Executive Committee* that exists to provide leadership for the organisation. Executive Committee members have legal responsibility for the organisation and are ultimately accountable for the activities of GBNI.

Collectively Executive members make decisions about the overall purpose and direction of the organisation; ensure that money and property are properly used and managed to meet our aims and objectives; ensure that we operate within the law; abide by the organisation's governing document; and ensure that staff and volunteers best carry out the organisation's services.

The role of the Executive Committee is therefore a vital one within the organisation. If you wish to address the Executive you can do so through the Director at the GB office.

Further info...

Full details of our constitution & rules are available from the members section of our website, www.gbni.co.uk, or contact HQ for a copy.

Brigade Council

This is a representative body of GBNI. The Council meets periodically each year for fellowship, training, discussion and decision-making regarding the ministry and strategic direction of GBNI. Brigade Council entrusts the vision and policy formation and the management of GBNI to the Executive Committee.

Each District appoints representatives to Brigade Council to provide a vital link between District and Council. The Council offers support and guidance to the Executive Team and appoints members to the Executive and key positions.

Youth Participation

GBNI is committed to listening to the voice of our young members and including their views in decision-making. Youth representatives take up 2 places on the Executive Committee and along with girls from each District they actively seek out the opinions of young people on issues within GB.

Young people also have an opportunity to make comments on various issues through a blog on our website (www.gbni.co.uk/blog).

Headquarters

The day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to staff at headquarters, under the leadership of a Director. Headquarters operates from premises in Antrim providing modern training, resource and administration facilities for our members. An online shopping service is also managed from HQ supplying uniform, gifts, resources and equipment to members and leaders.

Staff at HQ carry out a range of functions to support and service our members including:

- production of programme books & other resources for leaders including Bible teaching resources;
- design and implementation of the GB leadership programme;
- provision of in-service training events;
- management of the GB website;
- management of the online shop;
- marketing and PR services for the organisation;
- co-ordination of events, sporting competitions and award schemes such as the GB Queen's Award and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; *and*
- administration work such as insurance provision and policy development, implementation and review.



Girls' Brigade shop
NORTHERN IRELAND
www.gbnishop.co.uk

Shop with us for:
uniform, display gifts,
books, bibles, resources,
equipment, etc.

www.gbnishop.co.uk

Further info...

Website addresses

www.gbni.co.uk
www.gbnishop.co.uk
www.gbic.org
(GB International)

GB around the world

Girls' Brigade operates in countries and islands around the world. Although each country is responsible for its own affairs, Girls' Brigade International (GBI) exists to co-ordinate the work.

The international organisation is divided into 5 'Fellowships' and GBNI is part of GB Europe. The other Fellowships are:

- Africa;
- Asia;
- Caribbean & Americas; and
- Pacific.

From time-to-time GB Europe runs initiatives that leaders and young people in GBNI can take part in. An international conference is held every 4 years.



GB & your Church

How GB fits into your Church

The GB Company is very much an integral part of the local Church. The Company should play a part in the overall youth work and outreach programme of your Church. With a huge number of girls now coming from families with no Church connection, GB offers a wonderful opportunity for outreach.

The Church leadership has ultimate responsibility for the operation of the GB in your Church and you should manage it in the same way as you manage any of your other youth groups.

Did u know..?

The Company 'belongs' to your Church and should be managed in the same way as your other youth ministries.

Support and resources available to the Company:

- Prayer support through our network of prayer co-ordinators;
- Training and support for GB Officers and helpers;
- Network of support from volunteers within 15 regional Districts;
- Tailor made scripture resources:
 - new material annually;
 - relevant & meaningful Christian teaching for girls; and
 - non-exam resources for assessing understanding and application e.g. table quizzes, board games, personal journals;
- Programme resources that are age-appropriate for each Section within the Company;
- Access to information and resources via the Girls' Brigade NI website;
- Supplies & resources from our online shop;
- Inter-Company and inter-District events and activities, including competitive and non-competitive events;
- Policies and guidance (e.g. anti-bullying, child protection, alcohol and other drug education); and
- Marketing and communication support:
 - regular newsletters and E-news;
 - GBNI website;
 - PR in local and regional press & Church journals; and
 - publicity material.

Church responsibilities

GB works in partnership with Churches and Missions to help girls discover God. We are here to help you in your ministry among young people. You could look on Girls' Brigade as a resource that can be customised to suit your Church and local community. The leadership of your Church has ultimate responsibility for the operation of its GB Company.

“ GB works in partnership with Churches and Missions to help girls discover God. ”

Local Churches have direct responsibility for their GB Company in these main areas:

- **Leadership and overall management** - ensuring that the Company is operating in a manner that complies with Church and GB aims and vision; ensuring legal responsibilities are met; Company finances; selection of suitable leaders; managing the leadership team.
- **Pastoral support** - for the leadership team, children and young people; prayer support; encouraging and motivating leaders; dealing with sensitive issues; nurturing the spiritual health of the Company.
- **Premises** - suitable for the number of children/young people taking part and the activities they will engage in.
- **Health and Safety** - risk assessment of the premises where the Company meets and for the health and safety of those attending the Company.
- **Insurance** - adequate insurance cover in addition to that provided by GBNI. For more information on GBNI insurance please see page 21.

Other structures of the Brigade exist both locally and at NI level to support Churches in this role, as explained in the previous section.



Company Life

Children and Young People

Young members of the Company are divided into four age groups:

- Explorers: 3 - 7 years
- Juniors: 8 - 10 years
- Seniors: 11 - 13 years
- Brigaders: 14 - 18 years
- Associates: 19+ years



Girls are placed into sections based on their age as at 1st July each year*.

**Minimum starting age ~ local Companies may decide whether to accept girls on their 3rd birthday (at any stage during the year) or accept only those who are 3 on or before 1st July. A consistent policy must be applied within the Company.*

“*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.*”
 Luke 2:52

Programme in brief

About the programme

Luke 2:52 *And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.* This verse forms the basis for The Girls' Brigade programme, which seeks to promote the development of the individual spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially.

Children have opportunities throughout the Session to take part in activities for each theme and a badge system is available to reward children who participate. Formal testing or assessment of children is not required. Awards are also available to reward faithful attenders.

A programme should be planned that will help girls discover God, deepen their faith, have fun and develop their potential. The programme should be arranged to make best use of resources available (leaders, facilities etc), to offer a good balance of activities, and to suit the needs of the children in the Company. The Captain, Officers and girls can all be involved in the planning process using ideas from resources available for each age group. The guidelines in Programme Books can easily be adapted to suit the needs of the local Company and its members.

Did u know..?

Members are encouraged to attend Church or Sunday school. Don't miss out on an opportunity to invite girls & parents to your services.

More about the programme

Scripture teaching forms a vital part of Company life and attending GB Bible Class enables a girl to grow in her knowledge of God. Each year resources are prepared by our Spiritual Team that can be used with all age groups to teach what the Bible has to say on a range of relevant topics. It is not necessary for Companies to use these resources every year, but it is recommended that the course is offered to girls at least once every 3 years.

Worship is an important part of the Company meeting, when Officers and girls gather together to worship God. Worship can take many different forms and girls and Officers should be encouraged to take part.

Did u know..?

Our scripture courses are written specially by GB members for GB members.

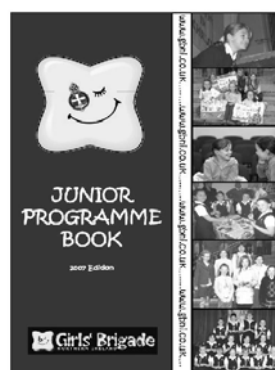
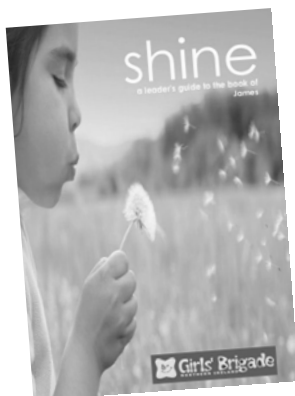
New resources are prepared annually.

Sample resources

Further info...

See programme books for more details of the programme for each Section:

- *Explorer Programme Book;*
- *Junior Programme Book; and*
- *P.S.A.L.T Files (Practical & Spiritual Applications for Living Today) for Seniors & Brigaders).*



Prayer

Leaders should take time to pray for the weekly programme and for individual girls. Times of prayer and shared fellowship will help to strengthen relationships between leaders as well as focusing on the spiritual needs of the girls.

Chaplains should encourage leaders to share issues for prayer for the Company within the Church e.g. feeding issues into prayer meetings or through prayer chains etc. Perhaps prayer partners could be identified to pray for particular leaders or groups of girls.

Each District has a Prayer Co-ordinator who is responsible for raising prayer awareness within the District, encouraging prayer triplets between Companies and collecting Company prayer requests so that they can be prayed for by the GBNI Spiritual Team and the wider chain of prayer co-ordinators. Prayer requests can also be sent via a link on the GBNI website.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award



Girls' Brigade NI is an approved operating authority for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Over 100 GB Companies take part in the scheme. The Award is open to young people between 14-25 and the activities fit well with the Brigader programme. If you would like to know more about the Award or how it is run in GB, visit the GB website.

Expedition Work

Leaders must be qualified to train and supervise groups for expedition work, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award activity. Training is available through the BB/GB Expedition & Outdoor Leadership Award. Details are available on our website.

Officers' Meetings

The smooth running of the Company is greatly assisted by regular Officers' meetings, to which the Chaplain should be invited. The entire running of the Company may therefore be kept under review and the work apportioned to each Officer and helper.

Meetings should be held as often as required by the Captain/Chaplain and a full planning meeting should be held in the summer to plan for the session ahead. Regular meetings will give leaders an opportunity to pray for the girls and for each other; to plan activities and build relationships between leaders.

Camps and Outings

Taking time out from the routine Company activities can be very beneficial to building relationships within the Company and keeping the interest of the girls. Camps provide a fantastic opportunity for Christian teaching with a captive audience for a whole weekend. Of course the fun of camp needs to be balanced with efforts to make it as safe as possible. GB has full guidelines relating to camps including a requirement for leaders to attend camp training.

Further info...

Camp guidelines: see "*Taking Care in GB*" file or go to www.gbni.co.uk

Duke of Edinburgh's Award: visit www.gbni.co.uk or www.theaward.org

Administration

An up-to-date record of the names, addresses and dates of birth of all the girls should be kept in each Company. Parental consent must be sought each year for every girl under 18 years wishing to attend the Company. Consent forms must be stored securely by the Company. Most of the forms useful for Company administration are available to download from our website.

Company record sheets and Membership Cards for girls and Officers are available from our online shop.

Uniform

Girls' Brigade believes that wearing a common uniform encourages a sense of belonging and encourages equality among members. Our uniform is available through our online shop at www.gbshop.co.uk.

Church Services & events

Enrolment Service

It is usual practice for the Church to hold a Service of Enrolment and Dedication each Autumn. The Service provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the Company with the congregation and to ask for their support during the year, for example, with prayer, finances or practical assistance.

The Service can take whatever form you feel is appropriate. Here are some ideas of what you could include:

- Worship, prayer and praise;
- Time for leaders to renew their promises to serve God in the Company;
- Input by the girls eg readings, songs, prayers or drama;
- Ask an officer to share their experience of this ministry;
- Display pictures or show videos of the Company in action;
- Give out certificates to leaders newly trained;
- Specific prayer points so that the congregation can pray effectively;
- Ask the leaders to stand or come to the front of the Church so they can be presented to the congregation.

Arrangements are usually made by the Company Chaplain and Captain. The service can be held during the Church's usual morning or evening service or at a separate afternoon service as appropriate.

Where other youth organisations exist (eg BB), this Service can be adapted to include all. There are no hard and fast rules and the Chaplain can plan a Service as appropriate. An Enrolment Service should be held annually before 15th December. It is usual for the Chaplain to enrol the Company.

Parents are usually keen to attend to see their daughters take part in the Service and, for some of them, this could be one of the few times in the year that they attend Church. So the outreach potential is obvious.

New Companies must be affiliated prior to enrolment and have met at least 10 weeks prior to holding an Enrolment Service. An existing Company should meet at least a month before being enrolled.

Did u know..?

Parading to Church Services is NOT compulsory.

Further info...

For suggested order of service please refer to Appendix 1 or go to www.gbni.co.uk/chaplains.php

Company Display/Parents' night

An event to mark the end of the Session is a great opportunity to invite parents along to meet the leaders and find out more about the Company. The Company Display is the traditional way to end the Girls' Brigade year when girls put on a programme of items to reflect Company activities or skills acquired during the year.

The Chaplain should encourage the Captain to plan a suitable end of session event that will promote the aim of Girls' Brigade as well as being enjoyable for the girls and their parents. Companies can choose whatever format is considered the most appropriate. Care should be taken in the planning to ensure balanced content and a reasonable finishing time.



With so much activity on display night supervision is important to ensure the safety of each child. Children and young people need to be supervised

whilst changing without compromising their privacy. Any costumes being used should be suitable for the activities and appropriate for use in front of a crowd (keeping in mind child protection issues and taking care not to compromise the dignity of any child.)

In recent years, some Companies have opted for alternatives to the traditional display including praise services, concerts, musicals, sports days or parents nights. Regardless of the format selected, this kind of event can be a great fun and an ideal outreach opportunity when the gospel can be presented to parents and friends who may have no other Church connection.

District Service

Most Districts arrange a Church praise service each year with or without an associated parade to Church. Local Districts can decide whether to hold a parade and/or a praise service.

Many Companies have their own colours symbolising their identity. Subject to agreement of the Church, Companies may bring their colour into Church at the start of a parade service and retrieve it at the end.

It must be emphasised that arrangements are flexible and must suit local needs and sensitivities.

Guidance for Chaplains on colours & saluting

If your Company or District choose to march with colours, here are some guidelines.

- Colours are usually carried by an Officer with an escort of older girls.
- Colours are normally paraded into the Church, received by the Minister and placed at the front of the Church.
- Colours are returned during the singing of the last hymn, followed by the National Anthem and Benediction. The Colours are then paraded out of Church. The congregation usually remains standing until Company members leave the Church.
- The Queen's Colour should always be taken last and returned first.
- There should be no saluting in Church.

Further info...

See "Guidelines on photographs and video" in the Taking Care in GB folder and also available from www.gbni.co.uk
See Drill Manual for guidance on parades and colours (available from www.gbnishop.co.uk)



Managing Leaders

The key to the success of any organisation is its people and Girls' Brigade is no exception. It is vital that the leadership of each Company is managed well to ensure its continued survival. New leaders need to be identified and nurtured to develop their gifts and abilities to their full potential. Leaders in Girls' Brigade have a vital role in achieving the aim of the organisation and can have a great influence on the spiritual development of children and young people. Therefore, the selection of leaders should be approached with prayer and careful consideration.

Appointing new leaders

The responsibility for selecting suitable adults to work in the Company rests firmly with the local Church and should be conducted in accordance with the recruitment and selection procedures of the Church. That procedure must include: application form, interview/chat with applicant, references and an enhanced disclosure check through AccessNI. A 'clear' disclosure certificate is required before a new appointment is confirmed. Training is offered by Girls' Brigade for leaders selected by the Church.

Did u know..?

It is good practice to establish a clear policy on what your Church is looking for in a youth leader.

Guidelines for selecting leaders

- Bearing in mind the aim and vision of Girls' Brigade you should select leaders who will uphold the Christian ethos of the organisation and set a good example to the young people whom they will serve.
- New leaders should be identified through consultation between the Captain and Chaplain.
- To treat everyone fairly and to avoid disputes, it is useful to have clear guidelines on the 'recruitment' process and criteria for the kind of people you need in leadership roles.
- Church child protection procedures must be followed for appointment of all new GB leaders.
- Once the appointment has been made, leaders who meet the course entry requirements can be directed to Girls' Brigade for leadership training.
- The Church should provide training for any 'casual' helpers who are not planning to complete Girls' Brigade training.

It is recommended that the Church's policy on leaders is well known and understood - notably by the Captain and Officers in charge of each section who will normally be on the lookout for suitable additional help. Knowledge of the policy can avoid difficulties that sometimes may result from an initial approach to someone who subsequently is found to fall outside the local requirements.

Protection of Children

When appointing new leaders to positions within a Girls' Brigade Company a robust recruitment and selection procedure is to be followed, including disclosure checks with AccessNI. Roles that require checks will include Chaplain, Captain, Officers, Helpers, Bible class teacher and any other person in a role that has leadership responsibility. The procedure of the local Church is to be followed (subject to approval of policy by GBNI).

In the case of junior helpers (or young adults with learning disabilities) who are given elements of responsibility for their personal development (e.g. Brigaders helping out with Explorers) checks are not required.



Leadership role guidelines

Guidelines for volunteer roles in GB are provided in the file "Taking Care in GB" or can be viewed online at www.gbni.co.uk. This includes a list of generic requirements that apply to all roles followed by guidance on specific roles.

It is recommended that you use our role descriptions as a guide and add points to suit your Company/Church. Please do not alter what is already on the role guidelines but you may add to the list of responsibilities to suit your local situation. This ensures a level of consistency among our Companies and provides for volunteers who wish to widen their roles to include work for District or GBNI.

Details of the Chaplain's role are given in this section with a summary of the other leadership roles.

Chaplain's Role

The Chaplain is an Officer in the Company and he/she should attend Officers' meetings and be fully involved in the decision-making process of the leadership team.

In practice, you may not be able to participate fully in Company life but the relationship between the Chaplain, Captain and Officers must be such that you have every confidence in the work of the Company. Regular visits by the Chaplain to the Company are appreciated by members and it's great for the children to get to know you. If you join them in an activity or lead them in an activity the girls will get to know you more as a person and not just "the minister"!

Further info...

Our policy & full role guidelines can be found in the Taking Care in GB file (every Company should have 2 copies); and online at www.gbni.co.uk

Chaplain's Role Guidelines

The Chaplain may be an ordained minister, deaconess or other person appointed by the oversight of the Church/Mission. He/she is responsible to the leadership body of the Church. The Chaplain is responsible for the overall spiritual and pastoral leadership of the Company affiliated to his/her Church/Mission. The Chaplain is the highest ranked Officer in the Company.

Chaplain's Responsibilities include:

- To appoint new leaders in consultation with the Church leadership and Company Captain;
- To visit Company meetings when possible to support, encourage and to get to know the members;
- To provide a link between the Church and the Company;
- Offer advice on the worship and Christian education material used;
- Advise GB leaders on Church policies and procedures regarding Child Protection, Health & Safety etc and ensure that all leaders are complying with those procedures;
- Ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place; and
- Ensure that the Company is operating within financial limits and that property is adequately maintained.

Did u know..?

The Chaplain is the highest ranked Officer in the Company.

The Chaplain can be any suitable person appointed by the Church and doesn't have to be the Minister.

Summary of other roles

Captain

The Captain is a Commissioned Officer and a committed Christian appointed by the Church and trained by Girls' Brigade. She is responsible to the Company Chaplain and is responsible for all members in the Company. The Captain's main role is to co-ordinate, plan and lead the work of the Company.



Officer

A Commissioned Officer is a committed Christian of at least 18 years of age, appointed by the Church and trained by Girls' Brigade. She is responsible to the Captain and responsible for members appointed to her care by the Captain. An Officer's main role is to assist and support the Captain in the running of the Company.

Helper

A Company Helper is at least 18 years old, appointed and trained by the Church. Helpers are responsible to the Captain and their role is to support Officers in practical aspects of Company life.

Sub-Officers

A Sub-Officer is a young leader of at least 16 years of age, appointed by the Church and trained by Girls' Brigade. She is responsible to the Captain and her role is to provide practical help with the younger girls in the Company and to act as a link between girls and Officers. A newly trained Sub-Officer needs to serve her Company for at least 2 sessions before going on to complete Officer training.

Junior helpers under 18 years of age do not need to be checked through AccessNI but they must be advised as to the limitations and boundaries of their role e.g. no unsupervised activities.



Appointment/Resignation of a Captain

The Church to which the Company is affiliated is responsible for appointing a new Captain and informing Headquarters of the change. On receipt of written notification of a change in the Captaincy, a form is issued from Headquarters to be completed by the Captain, signed by the Chaplain and returned to Headquarters. This form is also available to download from www.gbni.co.uk (go to members area and company administration section).

Captains resigning from Companies must send written resignation to the Church and Headquarters. Officers should send written resignation to the Church only. Captains and Officers who resign from Company work, but still wish to be involved in Brigade activities, may be placed on the Reserve of Officers List. Contact HQ for a registration form.

Officers Transferring between Companies

It is possible for GB leaders to move between Companies, however, their commission is not portable. It is up to the local Church to decide whether to accept/decline a transferring Officer and the full recruitment procedure must be applied as for any leader that's new to your Company.

Officers returning to GB after a break

An Officer returning to Girls' Brigade after an absence of less than 5 years may do so without further training. An Officer returning to Girls' Brigade after an absence of 5 years or more is required to attend Officer training.

Retirement

A Commissioned Officer shall retire from active service within The Girls' Brigade on reaching the age of 65. The Church may apply for an extension of service of an Officer, for a maximum period of up to 2 years in the first instance, to the Executive Committee who shall have absolute discretion. Those keen to maintain links with Brigade may wish to join the Past Members Association or assist in a more informal capacity.

Training for leaders

GBNI offers basic training for new leaders as well as a wide range of in-service training opportunities that all leaders are encouraged to take advantage of.

Officer & Sub-Officer training

- Training courses are offered annually in venues across Northern Ireland.
- Officer and Sub-Officer courses combine practical experience with direct training.
- There are basic entry requirements for Officer and Sub-Officer training and the parent Church may add to these as necessary to help select the most suitable people to put forward for training.
- Courses are planned by a GBNI Training Team, administered by staff at GB HQ and delivered locally by Districts.

In-Service Training Courses

A range of courses is offered each year. Most courses are open to both Officers and Helpers. Courses include :

- New Captains Seminar (open to officers only);
- Camp training;
- Expedition & Outdoor Leadership; and
- various 'skill' workshops such as drug education, crafts or sports.

Further info...

Training course leaflets are available from: www.gbni.co.uk.



"Seek · Serve · Follow" discipleship course

'Seek. Serve. Follow' is an easy to use discovery course designed especially for GB leaders. Based in the gospel of Luke, 'Seek. Serve. Follow' is an 8 session faith discovery course packed full of encouragement and challenge for all of us who spend time leading girls and young women to seek, serve and follow Christ!

Designed for you to use with your Girls' Brigade leadership team, the SSF resource is presented in an easy to use format, and includes:

- A DVD of individual teaching sessions for you to watch together;
- Personal stories of GB leaders, sharing insights into their own faith journey;
- An easy to use guide to help facilitate you through the course; and

- A creative, personal journal for each group member to stimulate personal reflection, thinking and discussion.

This course has been produced by GB England and Wales and GB Northern Ireland is pleased to support & promote it among our members. The work that GB does in local areas is important to the lives of so many girls and the lives of our leaders matter. For further information visit the GB England and Wales website or contact the Director at GBNI.

Further info...

Seek, Serve, Follow information is available from the GB England and Wales website: www.girlsbrigadeew.org.uk



Managing Finances

Company Finance

GBNI is a voluntary youth organisation and is responsible for raising its own finances. Grants are available from public funds but are such that the greater part of the finances must be raised from other sources including membership fees and a Supplies department. Main areas of expenditure include running Northern Ireland Headquarters, providing affordable training for leaders, programme materials and resources, events and activities for members and the work of GB internationally. A fee is set by the GBNI Executive and Companies are notified in

advance so that they can plan for payment. Payment is required by February each year. The membership figures supplied by Companies are used to calculate the annual assessment.

Finance is a vital part of every GB Company and your approach will determine whether or not it is a problem or simply another facet of Company life. Each Company is responsible for its own finances, under the management of the Church leadership. The keeping of simple, but accurate accounts is essential. All accounts must be

audited.

It is possible that Companies can gain financial assistance for travel, programme, equipment, heat and light by registering with their local Education and Library Board.

Did u know..?

GB Companies are eligible to register with local Education and Library Boards to receive some financial assistance.

Raising Company funds

Each Company needs a certain amount of funds each year to cover operating costs and the Chaplain/Captain/Officers can work out which is the most appropriate method. *Possible sources of Company funds:*

- **Church support** – the Church may be able to contribute financially to the Company perhaps through a budgeted amount each year; offerings from Enrolment or other special services could be donated to the Company.
- **Subscriptions ('Subs')** – a weekly amount that girls bring each week. This should be set at a realistic figure and officers should explain to the girls why this money is needed.
- **Joining fees** – an amount per child or per family could be set at the discretion of the Company and paid at the start of the year.
- **GB Week**– In February of each year GB Week is held and cards are obtained from Headquarters. This is an opportunity for girls and Officers to ask parents and friends for a donation to help the work of the Company. [Note: girls must not collect 'door to door'.]
- **Fundraising** – e.g. jumble sales, car boot sales, coffee mornings, sponsored events, bag packing at supermarkets, sale of Christmas cards. Fund raising events should never be held without the approval of the Chaplain.

Centenary Trust Fund - Small grants programme

This fund is available to provide assistance to new Companies, assist Companies in financial difficulty and to aid those who may be representing The Girls' Brigade Northern Ireland at events outside Northern Ireland.

Companies experiencing financial hardship may apply for a grant from the Fund. Information is available upon request from the Director at the GB Office.

Company Property

Property of the GB Company belongs to the parent Church. In the event of a Company closing, its property and funds remain with the parent Church or for their disposal. Surplus items of uniform or equipment could be donated to another Company either locally or further afield.

Company Insurance

Girls' Brigade NI has a comprehensive insurance policy which covers members (that includes girls, Officers and helpers) for all regular GB activities. An insurance premium is included in the Company's annual membership fees. This policy provides cover for any claim that may arise as a result of an action or policy of The Girls' Brigade, but this is separate from a Church insurance policy that must also be in place.

GBNI has public liability cover for GBNI property and centralised events but this cover does not include the Church premises where Companies meet.

Therefore, Churches must have insurance cover in addition to that provided by GBNI. The two complement each other but both are essential.

“ Each Company is responsible for its own finances, under the management of the Church leadership. ”

Did u know..?

If leaders want to try out more adventurous activities with their members, the insurance company can be contacted directly to check out cover.

Further info...

Contact details for our insurance company and copies of the insurance certificate are available, on request, from the GB Office.



Policies

Child Protection

Girls' Brigade NI is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so that they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

In local Companies, we recommend that the Church policy is followed, subject to approval. We accept the following policies at a central level: *Taking Care* (Presbyterian and Methodist Churches) and *Safeguarding Trust* (Church of Ireland). All other policies need to be individually approved by GBNI.

In addition to the Church policy, GBNI has guidelines that are specific to Girls' Brigade that we expect GB Companies to comply with:

- a standard GB parental consent;
- camp guidelines;
- video/photo guidelines; and
- anti-bullying guidelines.

For full details of our policy refer to the *Taking Care in GB* folder.

Child Protection Training

Training in child protection issues is available for all Girls' Brigade leaders through the 'Keeping Safe in Girls' Brigade' programme. All new Officers and Sub-Officers complete child protection awareness training during leadership training. Child Protection trainers are available to provide training at Company or District level.

Did u know..?

You can book a GB child protection trainer to run a training session for leaders in your Company on request.

Disability Policy

One of the basic principles of the Girls' Brigade is that people are equally valued. We want everyone to feel welcome in Girls' Brigade and appreciate leaders doing their best to accommodate members with disabilities. Our programme is flexible enough for girls of varying abilities to take part. Leaders should be fully aware of each girl's condition, her treatment, diet and any other essential details. This information can usually be obtained from the girl's parent/carer. Leaders should implement the disability policy of the local Church.

Further info...

For further information on our child protection policy refer to the document "Taking Care in GB" (issued to all Companies in 2006) or visit www.gbni.co.uk

See website for help sheets for leaders on working with children with a range of special needs.

Health and Safety

Leaders are expected to implement the health and safety policy of the local Church. Girls' Brigade recommends the Methodist/Presbyterian policy, "Taking Care", which includes information on safety including the points listed below.

Safety is of prime importance during any activity. That is not only the responsibility of the leader in charge but of every leader/helper. They should be aware of the following guidelines.

1. There should be adequate supervision by a leader/helper of certain equipment e.g. table tennis tables, snooker tables etc.
2. When using special equipment for your programme e.g. for 'one-off' activities such as trampolining, bouncy castle etc, ensure there is adequate supervision by trained leaders/helpers. You may also require special insurance to cover these higher risk activities. Be aware of the physical environment and remove/avoid items which may cause injury.

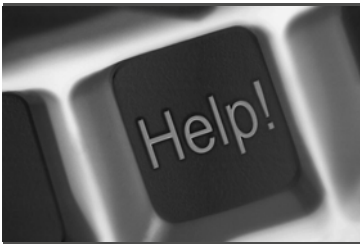
If the organisation is undertaking what is deemed to be high risk activities, the leaders/helpers must seek written permission from parents/guardians in advance.
3. If at all possible aim to have a trained first aider present. Where possible, leaders/helpers should be aware of any medication children are currently taking but this should not be given without written consent from parents or doctors. Leaders/helpers should also seek to obtain information concerning allergies and reaction to foods e.g. peanuts. Medication should be clearly marked, out of reach of children and securely locked away.
4. Be aware of the location of fire exits and ensure that they are 'unblocked'. Know where the nearest fire extinguishers are located. These must be checked regularly by a qualified person. Occasionally fire drills should be conducted to ensure that all young people know what evacuation procedure to follow in the event of a real fire. It is helpful to have a record of these.
5. During games or "ice-breakers", be aware of the risks of physical injury and guard against these.
6. Young people must be supervised at all times by a leader/helper while in the kitchen area.
7. Areas where maintenance work is taking place should never be used and where possible should be screened off. The Church's governing body should keep organisation leaders informed about maintenance work.
8. A telephone should, where possible, be installed on the premises for safety purposes.
9. Each organisation should have an Accident/ Incident Report Book in which to record details of accidents/injuries/witnesses/date.

Drug Education Policy

The Girls' Brigade recognises the prevalence of drug use and the demands this problem places on its members as they grow up in a drug-oriented society. The organisation also realises that it is in a prime position to provide drugs awareness and education in a safe, secure and spiritual environment.

The policy of the Girls' Brigade is to provide positive alternative experiences to drug use and to discourage any behaviour which is in any way anti-social or detrimental to society. The Girls' Brigade seeks to demonstrate the benefits of a disciplined lifestyle in a Christian environment and context.

For full details of our policy, see leaflet 'Drugs Awareness and Education Policy', issued October 1999 and updated 2002.



When things go wrong

Dealing with general complaints

We hope that everyone involved in your Company will enjoy being part of the organisation but we also realise that things can go wrong. Therefore, we have some guidelines for dealing with general complaints.

If a young person or parent/carer has a general complaint about the running of a Company, such complaints should be directed through the Company Captain to the Chaplain. The

complainant should be assured that the matter will be dealt with in a prompt and appropriate manner. They should be informed as soon as possible of the decision and the action, if any, that will be taken.

Anyone wishing to appeal a decision made regarding a complaint or grievance should address their complaints to the local Church leadership.

Volunteer problem-solving

Girls' Brigade values all of our voluntary leaders and we hope and pray that their experience of GB will be a rewarding one. However, things can go wrong sometimes and, in case problems arise, we have put together some guidelines that you might be able to use to help deal with issues fairly and consistently. Our suggested procedure is outlined on the next page. Where Church procedures already exist those may be followed instead.

Whilst GBNI cannot offer solutions, staff at HQ may be able to assist with advice or information that could help with problem solving. If required, one of the Chaplains from Executive or Brigade Council may be willing to meet with you and/or the volunteer(s) in an attempt to mediate in a difficult situation.

For the purposes of this section we refer to any volunteer leader - Captain, Officer, Sub-Officer, casual or regular helper - as a 'volunteer'.

Did u know..?

One of our Chaplains may be able to offer support or mediation in a difficult situation.

Further info...

For further information please refer to the Girls' Brigade volunteer problem-solving procedure available from www.gbni.co.uk or contact the office for a copy.

If a volunteer has a complaint

Stage 1: Verbal complaint

The complainant should discuss their complaint with the Company Captain. If the complaint is about the Captain, then the matter should be discussed with the Chaplain. If this does not resolve the issue, the complaint must be made in writing.

Stage 2: In writing

The volunteer should make their complaint in writing to the Chaplain within 14 days and should receive an initial reply within 14 days.

Stage 3 - Right to appeal

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome, then they can appeal to the leadership body of the Church (e.g. Session). The leadership body must respond within 14 days*, and their decision is final.

** if an investigation is required the response may take longer than 14 days and this must be explained to the complainant.*

If someone complains about a volunteer

Stage 1 - Verbal complaint

The first step is to discuss the complaint with the volunteer. There could be external factors influencing their ability to carry out tasks, their behaviour or their attitude. Discuss a way forward and set a deadline for reviewing the situation.

If there is insufficient improvement, then you may need to adopt a more formal approach, such as issuing a written warning.

Stage 2 - written warning

The Captain can issue the volunteer with a written warning outlining the reason for the complaint. The volunteer has the right to state their case, which could be to the Captain or Chaplain, and be accompanied by a person of their choice. Further goals could be set, and help offered to the volunteer. However, if you decide to dismiss the volunteer, then the volunteer has the right to appeal. *The decision to dismiss a volunteer should be a last resort.*

Stage 3 - Right to appeal

If a volunteer has been dismissed then they can appeal in writing to the leadership body of the Church (e.g. Kirk Session). The leadership body of the Church must respond within 14 days, and their decision is final. The volunteer can have a nominated person present at the appeal meeting.

Exceptions

There are some occasions on which volunteers can be suspended immediately while an investigation is carried out. These include, but are not limited to, acts that constitute **gross misconduct**, e.g. theft, assault, act of violence or abuse, malicious damage, deliberate falsification of documents, harassment or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The decision to suspend a volunteer must be confirmed to the volunteer in writing.

Always aim to find the best solution for the volunteer.



Support & info

Further information and support are available from:

- Staff at HQ (see contact details below)
- Regularly updated website: www.gbni.co.uk
- Prayer network
- District network (see annual members' directory for contact details of local personnel)

Useful publications

- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Handbook
- Explorer Programme Book
- GB Officers Handbook
- GB News/e-news (regular newsletter - sign up for E-news through website)
- Junior Programme Book
- P.S.A.L.T Files - *Practical & Spiritual Applications for Living Today* (programme for Seniors & Brigaders, available online and on CD)
- Resources for Under 5s
- Taking Care in GB folder and quick reference guide

All of the above are available from the GB Shop: www.gbnishop.co.uk

Contact Details for HQ

Address	Girls' Brigade NI HQ C2 Kilbegs Business Park Antrim BT41 4NN
Tel	028 9454 8054
Fax	028 9454 8055
Web	www.gbni.co.uk
Shop	www.gbnishop.co.uk
Email	info@gbni.co.uk

“ Girls' Brigade...
a place for girls to
find faith, make
friends and have
fun. ”

Appendix 1

Guidance for Company Enrolment Service

(This is intended as a suggestion. Chaplains may include wording they feel is appropriate.)

CHAPLAIN: The great Commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church was to go into all the world making disciples of all people. The Girls' Brigade endeavours to carry out this work among girls and young women, challenging them in their Christian faith and helping them to grow in Christ.

We are delighted to have members of the <<Name of Company>> with us in Church today for their annual service of enrolment and dedication. We have girls of all ages and leaders who together make up this Company.

(Ask the leaders to stand or come to the front—Captain, Officers and Helpers)

Volunteering as a GB Officer is not just about keeping the Company running, it's about service, obedience, putting faith into action and growing as a Christian. The leaders standing before us today are using their gifts and talents as they try to share God's love with our young people and encourage them to seek, serve and follow Christ themselves.

<<Captain's Name >>, as Captain of this Company we know that you will devote many hours to this ministry with all its rewards and challenges. As a Church we affirm you in this work and appreciate all you do for our young people and in leading your team of officers and helpers.

<<Captain's Name >> realising the responsibility of the duties involved as Captain, do you promise by word and example to serve God in The Girls' Brigade for the extension of His Kingdom and for the promotion of the GB aim?

CAPTAIN: With God's help, I do.

CHAPLAIN: I now enrol you as Captain of this Company and, on behalf of this Church, promise to support you practically and with our prayers so that the aims of The Girls' Brigade may be achieved, to the glory of God.

(Chaplain shakes hands with Captain. Now address officers)

CHAPLAIN: Your support and help to the Captain are crucial as you work together as a team. You have the great privilege and responsibility of presenting the truths and promises of Jesus Christ to the girls. The task is challenging but God will help you to lead girls to Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.

<<Names of Officers >> realising the responsibility of leadership, do you promise by word and example to serve God in The Girls' Brigade for the extension of His Kingdom and the promotion of the GB aim?

OFFICERS: With God's help, I do.

CHAPLAIN: I now enrol you as Officers of this Company and may God grant you grace to be faithful and fruitful as you serve Him in Girls' Brigade.

(Chaplain shakes hands with Officers who then return to their seats. Sub-Officers come forward).

CHAPLAIN: <<*Names of Sub-Officers*>> you have been given this position of responsibility. Do you promise to support your Captain and Officers and to set a good example to the girls as you work with them in the Company, striving at all times to be faithful to Jesus Christ and the aims of The Girls' Brigade?

SUB-OFFICERS: With God's help, I do.

CHAPLAIN: I now enrol you as Sub-Officers of this Company.

Note to Chaplain: If there are Helpers (ie untrained leaders) in your Company you could include something appropriate for them here.

(Chaplain shakes hands with Sub-Officers who then return to their seats. Chaplain asks Explorers, Juniors, Seniors, Brigaders and Associates to stand.)

CHAPLAIN: Girls, do you promise, with God's help, to be loyal to your Company; to be honest, kind and helpful to each other?

COMPANY: I do.

CHAPLAIN: I now enrol you as members of the Girls' Brigade. We hope you will have great fun at GB this year and pray that God will help you in everything you do.

CHAPLAIN: The Captain and Officers (and Helpers) of our GB Company are all appointed by the Church, and as a congregation we have the responsibility to support them and the girls they work with by our prayers, encouragement and practical help. To indicate your acceptance of this commitment please stand.

Prayer of Dedication