



It is a leader's responsibility to manage unit funds and accounts

This is because all Girlguiding units operate as individual charities - regardless of whether they are registered with the Charity Commission. This means that Leaders are effectively the unit's trustees - and it is their responsibility to manage unit funds.

You don't need to keep the accounts yourself, you can ask another person with the right experience and knowledge to do this - such as a member of your team, a parent or affiliate member.

When handling unit funds more generally, it's important that you:

- bank any money received as soon as possible
- keep the unit funds completely separate from your own money
- minimise the amount of personal money you use to cover guiding costs - and always claim your expenses
- keep cash in a safe place, preferably under lock and key - unit funds will probably not be covered by your household insurance policy
- keep your records up to date
- keep records secure, remembering to password protect them if you store financial records electronically.

And never:

- borrow or lend money from unit funds
- keep more cash in hand than you are likely to need for immediate payments
- spend more money than you have.

Using a unit bank account

Unit funds must be kept in a bank or building society account, here are some things to remember when managing your account:

- All accounts must be in the name of the unit, for example, 1st Brownsea Guide Unit.
- Cheques and withdrawals must have two signatures from people who are not family members. It is usually more convenient to have three or more signatories, so two are always available. Some examples of who may be a signatory include the Unit Leader, a member of the Leadership Team, District Commissioner, Treasurer or parent.
- It may be possible for your banking provider to set up online access to your accounts; allowing you to view your bank statement and also make payments online. Please ensure that when online access is set up that there is a dual authorisation facility included in order to make payments online.
- The use of unit Debit or Credit Cards is not permitted as there is no dual authorisation procedure in place at the point that the funds are withdrawn from the bank.

Creating and maintaining accounting records

Maintaining proper accounting records is a legal obligation of all those who handle charity money. Girlguiding has created a colour-coded spreadsheet that you can use to keep track of your accounts. This resource contains the minimum standard of record-keeping for all units. If you have more experience you might prefer to use a more advanced form of book-keeping.

If you are having problems using the package, please make sure that you have looked at "Accounts Pack Instruction". If you are still struggling then please contact the HQ Finance team for guidance on finance@girlguiding.org.uk or contact your District Commissioner who will be able to put you in touch with someone who can help / advise you.

All paperwork connected with managing the unit's funds needs to be kept for seven years following the financial year-end.

Please note that for full functionality, the Unit Accounts Pack is only supported by Microsoft Office.

Taxation

Each individual unit or area of Girlguiding is a separate, independent charitable body. As such, your local group may reclaim tax on Gift Aid or tax deducted from investment income.

Interest on building society and bank deposit accounts is now paid as a gross amount; however in some cases the bank may deduct tax. In these cases it is usually because the bank is unaware of your taxable status. You will need to inform your bank of your charitable status in order for them to stop deducting tax - to do this, the bank will require a certificate of charitable status, which can be requested by email from certcharitablestatus@girlguiding.org.uk.

Reviewing your accounts

At the end of each year, units need to produce an annual accounts statement, a statement of assets and liabilities and have their accounts reviewed.

Producing an annual accounts statement

An annual accounts statement shows information of your income and expenditure. This can be based on the unit accounts pack.

Producing a statement of assets and liabilities

Your assets and liabilities include:

- **cash and bank balances** - these are the final annual balances in your bank account(s) and petty cash
- **equipment and other assets** - land or buildings, investments and any valuable equipment
- **any other amounts** - which are owed either to the unit or by the unit, at the year-end.

Conducting an end of year review or examination

All levels must prepare accounts & make them available to view on request. It is also a Girlguiding requirement that the accounts are annually reviewed. The kind of review you need to carry out depends on how much income your unit has received that year.

- If your unit's income is below £25,000 a year, an independent review of a unit's accounts is required by Girlguiding.
- If your income is above £25,000, it is a legal obligation to obtain a more in-depth examination of the accounts and in some cases you may need to file your accounts with the Charity Commission.

What needs to be reviewed or examined?

A log of your receipts and payments - usually in a form of a unit accounts pack - should be made available to your independent reviewer or examiner. You should also provide:

- cash account pages
- bank statements
- paying-in slips
- cheque book stubs
- invoices
- receipts
- attendance registers
- subscription records.

Plus any other financial documents that are required by the reviewer.

Who is responsible for organising a review or examination?

The Unit Leader is responsible for having the unit accounts independently reviewed annually. However, it is the role of the District Commissioner to ensure this is done.

Who can review the accounts?

Any responsible person may review accounts but they must not be:

- related to anyone within the unit
- a member of the unit's Leadership Team.

It is not necessary for this person to be a registered or qualified auditor.