

# The Girls' Brigade in Scotland – Succession Planning Policy

## The policy

This policy is for all Companies so that they are not faced with succession planning issues in future years. To address the issues of forward planning, age and capability issues the Girls' Brigade in Scotland (GBS) Executive has agreed the following:

- No leader to be commissioned after their 60<sup>th</sup> birthday but they may undertake training and take on the role of a Trainee Leader/Leader by completing Induction level training.
- Captains/Leaders-in-Charge will step down from their role in the GBS session in the year which they have their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- All those born in 1955 or after will now retire in the year of their 70<sup>th</sup> birthday from full time active service within their company.
- This policy will be adhered to in the same way as any other Girls' Brigade Scotland policy.

## Other information you need to know

This section provides answers to some of the questions asked by Commissioners and is designed to assist the understanding of leaders and what it means for them.

- **So, I have to leave Girls' Brigade when I'm 70?**  
No, there will still be a place for leaders to take on Divisional roles, attend Division meetings and, if they choose, to help support their company from a non-uniformed perspective. Some Divisions also have groups which offer fellowship and social activities to those no longer active in companies.
- **I'm fit and active so why does this apply to me?**  
It is good that you are in this position but, sadly, that does not apply to all leaders and GBS does not have the time or resources to review the situation on an individual basis. This was discussed in-depth with Commissioners who agreed that they would prefer a policy approach as they accepted that it would not be right for them or the Executive to undertake individual reviews even if it were viable.
- **My Church appointed me as a leader in Girls' Brigade so how can the Executive do this to me without consulting Chaplains?**  
Churches appoint and recommend leaders to be trained and commissioned within GBS. All leaders are subject to the policies, procedures and regulations of GBS and this is simply a policy designed to keep the organisation moving forward for the reasons previously noted. GBS is not withdrawing the commission of any leader with the implementation of this policy as they are still members of the organisation unless they choose to leave. A number of Chaplains approached GBS to ask the organisation to deal with age or capability related situations and as such it was decided that a policy was the best approach to deal with this.
- **Girlguiding UK had a similar policy in place but they have changed it, so why are we doing this?**  
GBS cannot comment definitively on the policy laid down by other organisations as each organisation has very different needs but it is likely that the policy laid down by Girlguiding UK has achieved the desired outcomes for them. Currently, Girlguiding UK has lengthy waiting lists for members but are struggling to find adult leaders so this may have contributed to a change in policy for them. However,

GBS is not Girlguiding UK and, as a membership organisation, is allowed to set its own policies.

- **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. The Act protects people from discrimination on specified grounds (called 'protected characteristics') in employment and when using goods and services. However, volunteers don't fall into either of these categories. They are not included in the definition of "employment " in the Equality Act 2010.

However, although the Equality Act 2010 does not cover volunteers, we have considered how this policy could be justified in accordance with the Act. We believe that this policy ensures the health and safety of members and volunteers, which is of paramount importance at all times. The policy allows GBS to ensure there is adequate insurance cover. The policy also ensures that there is a progression path for younger leaders to take on the role of Captain or Commissioner with a view to securing long term viability of the organisation."

- **Membership is already declining. Will this not make it worse?**

The Executive is taking action now to try and stop the worrying trend of companies closing when leaders become unable to run the company. All too often there has been no attempt at succession planning and there is no-one willing or able to take on the role. Companies should adopt this policy as a matter of course to avoid such issues. The Executive has been particularly saddened to see so many companies close in the past as it is the girls who miss out on a GBS experience and the legacy of all the hard work done by leaders over many years is lost.

If you have any further questions in respect of this please contact Caroline Goodfellow on [caroline.goodfellow@girls-brigade-scotland.org.uk](mailto:caroline.goodfellow@girls-brigade-scotland.org.uk)

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