



Tracey – age 24

17TH GREENOCK GUIDES

Going Above and Beyond

I joined guiding as a volunteer when I was 18. I was caring for my Gran at the time, and working in a local coffee shop. I hadn't had any experience of guiding myself, but two colleagues at work were involved and they encouraged me to come along.

Since I joined Girlguiding as a volunteer, I've gradually got more confident to speak out and I've definitely developed my leadership and decision-making skills. Two years on, I take responsibility for planning and leading sessions, and taking the girls away on residential. I've even helped to fundraise for and set up a brand new Guide unit. As volunteers, we have lots of choice in the jobs we take on. We're able to follow our interests and we can adapt the badges so that it's fun for us, as well as the Guides and the Rainbows. I think it's important that the younger girls see us having fun – it helps them connect with us.

As a volunteer, I've built my confidence to develop new skills through observing others and then giving things a go myself. The fact that the other leaders know how I like to learn really helps. I got more confident in my volunteering role over time because the more experienced leaders showed confidence in me. I always got this feeling from them, like it's OK to mess up a wee bit – that's how you learn. I know that I can go to them if I have any worries or if I need anything. The leaders are so compassionate. They really go above and beyond for me, and I have learned to trust that they will always follow through on any support they offer.

I've had access to proper training – in practical things like first aid, as well as leadership development. I've definitely learned skills that cross over into my paid work with a local charity that aims to support people into employment – and I now bring skills from work into my volunteering role too. In Guides it's such a community vibe – it's more than just a volunteering role. We have such a bond together. I know that the people here have my back – I really trust them. I think they would say the same about me.