

## A Good Practice Guide to taking over a PGL Centre

### Introduction

This document has been written to help Counties who are considering organising a complete take-over of a PGL centre. It may not be conclusive but hopefully a good starting point.

I have consulted with several Leaders who have previously done this .Some Counties have left the organisation to PGL and other Counties have done much of the planning themselves. I have tried to give the views of all and leave it to the reader to use the most appropriate way for their own County.

### Administration- dealing with PGL

PGL will allocate someone to deal with your booking at their head office in Ross on Wye. Try where possible to only speak to this person, as you may get conflicting advice or information. Keep notes of your conversations, agreements etc. you may need to refer back to this.

Arrange to visit the centre you are going to and establish who you should deal with there. Dealing directly with the centre means you can negotiate things to suit your group including activities, menu and evening activities.

### Administration at County level

#### **Finance**

Negotiate over price - we are offering to fill a whole centre - will they give you a set price if you reach a certain number rather than a per head amount. Please be aware that if you don't get your minimum number then the price reverts back to normal advertised amounts.

Ensure you appoint a good finance person - to deal with payment collection from participants and also to check the invoices sent by PGL. Invoices can be quite confusing as VAT is charged on some services and not others.

Ensure all financial agreements are recorded clearly in writing and double check anything that could be interpreted in two ways.

Negotiate with PGL over payment dates - they ask for deposit, interim and final balance. The deposit has to be paid soon after booking, but interim and final balance dates need to be considered when setting payment dates from your participants.

Ensure all payments from participants are non-refundable after a certain date.

#### **Administrator**

It is helpful to have someone who has experience of organising large scale events involved in the planning of your event.



Guiding manual should be checked to ensure you have the correct ratio of adults to girls and the correct amount of licence holders. If you have a mixed Brownie / Guide event then our adult ratios must reflect the breakdown.

Be aware that some adults see this as a nice social event, so your application information needs to be clear that this is a girl event and the applications from each Unit should reflect this i.e. 1 adult to 10 girls for Guides. It is easier to ask for additional adults to attend than persuade them to drop out.

Residential notification forms need to be completed early, especially if the required signatories are attending your event (Guiding Manual should be followed regarding the process or contact made with the Region OAA or Residential Adviser).

The administrator checks that all adults attending are registered on GO! and have DBS checks in place (this may need to be delegated to someone with access to GO!).

## Transport

### **Organised by PGL**

As part of your package PGL will organise coaches on your behalf. The prices quoted may not be the most competitive, there may be coaches from more than one company and you may be restricted to only one collection point. Communication with the coach company is usually done through PGL.

### **Organised by the County**

This gives the organiser the opportunity to shop around for the best price and for coach sizes appropriate to your group. With a complete take-over you could be looking at 10+ coaches and girls attending from all parts of your County. Forming a good working relationship with the coach company is important and ensuring only one or two people are authorised to speak to them can also prove to be valuable.

### **Information for coach companies**

- Contact details for the main event organiser
- Contact details for your nominated coach monitor for that coach
- The identification label for that coach i.e. Coach A
- The pick-up point (include a map) and time for your departure
- The destination (include a map)
- Emergency contact number for your PGL centre in case mobile phones do not work

### **Coach monitors**

Having a nominated leader on each coach who is able to manage a group confidently and deal with situations that might arise is recommended.

Prior to departure the coach monitor will be provided with:

- Contact details for the main event organiser and the venue
- Contact details for her coach driver
- Contact details of main home contact
- A duplicate identification label for her coach
- Details of the units boarding that coach and the numbers anticipated - if a girl does not appear then this information will be forwarded to the event organiser on arrival
- Provides a sick bucket, baby wipes, cups, water and rubbish bag
- A small First Aid kit
- Instructions about how long to wait for late arrivals etc.

## Accommodation

### **Organised by PGL**

If accommodation is left to PGL to organise they will often place the Brownies in one accommodation area and the Guides in another. A problem can occur with this if a Unit Leader has come with two groups and wishes to be near both. Also coaches are likely to pick up girls from the same area and it is easier on arrival to direct them to the same accommodation (within reason).

### **Organised by County**

Ask for a copy of the PGL rooming list, which will show beds available, disabled rooms and rooms with linked access.

When all your applications are in - the event organiser plays a juggling game of where to put which Unit. As adults may need to share rooms I have found it best to arrange accommodation in District / Division groups.

I send out to each individual unit the rooms I have allocated, how many beds are in that room and identify rooms where girls may need to share with girls from another Unit (I endeavour to keep Brownies sharing with Brownies). The Unit Leader then returns this sheet with the girls' names on and it is entered on the master plan. Similarly with the adult rooms.

If I have young Leaders attending they are notified in advance that they will be allocated accommodation together and may be a block or two away from their Unit.

Prior to departure the master plan is sent to PGL for their fire lists.

### **Bedding**

Bedding can be hired from PGL at a cost. Each county needs to think about this carefully and whether you really want 400+ sleeping bags being dragged from coaches to accommodation.

Bedding is provided free of charge for all adult rooms.

## Activities

In discussion with PGL the programme can be arranged, with a complete take-over not all girls will do the same activities. One way of helping this is to arrange a programme for Brownies that does not include some of the very highrope activities - many of them do not

have the strength to achieve this anyway and then arrange a programme for the Guides and Senior Section members. Activity groups consist of 12 participants (excluding leaders).

### **Organised by PGL**

The activity groups can be very mixed and girls may not be with their friends.

### **Organised by County**

I send out a list to each individual Unit of how I would like them to split their unit.

i.e. one group of 12, one group of 6 and one group of 8. Names are sent back to me along with the leader who will work with that group, I inform Leaders in advance that activities cannot be changed. Leaders are also advised that their role is to ensure the girls arrive on time, are suitably dressed for the activity and listen. The main role as a Leader is to offer the encouragement for every girl to take an active part and do her best.

### **Groupies**

Each activity group is allocated a groupie - who will meet your group and escort them to meals and to activities throughout the day.

Shortly after arrival Groupies will show the girls where to meet for their activities and go through a briefing which includes safety etc.

It is the practice of Groupies at the end of each activity to return their group to either the meeting point or accommodation where they will be handed over to our Leaders (if they have not accompanied them during the previous activity).

### **Evening activities**

This again can be discussed in advance. Each centre offers slightly different evening programmes. I tend to go for Wacky Races and Disco with half attending each night.

One county brought a band in on Saturday evening (provided their own technicians for this and offered a DVD as an alternative). PGL provided the screen/laptop. The DVD was really popular with all ages who were tired after an active day. Girls had to make their minds up beforehand which they wanted to do and weren't allowed to swap during the evening. We asked leaders to ensure their girls were supervised, in a rota basis if necessary.

## **Concessions**

### **Tuck Shop**

No event will be complete without a Tuck Shop - I have found the best way of managing this is to allow the girls to go when they are at the disco, some have to wait. When looking at Tuck Shop allocate several adults to deal with crowd control and lining up - PGL only seem to provide people for the tills.

An alternative is to arrange a timetabled slot for each group during the weekend.



### **Vending machines**

PGL have a separate contract with a sports drinks company and their machines are placed around the centres along with other vending machines. You can ask that the machines are placed as unavailable and also ask Groupies to discourage their use.

### **Catering**

In advance of the event PGL require details of all those on special diets or with food allergies.

Over the last year they have introduced a different coloured tray for those participants in this category and also display a list at each meal of what they are offering and potential allergens.

Activity groups are taken to meals by their Groupie so it may not always be possible for Units to sit together to eat unless you are allocated the same time.

The food is good, child friendly with a salad bar and jugs of squash available. Girls are encouraged to clear their own trays.

There is a long time between meals and the girls are on the go all the time. It is advisable for girls to take drinks bottles with them and have a snack mid-morning and afternoon.

I have found it to be fairer to provide each activity group with biscuits for these times. We decided that some units could afford nice wrapped chocolate biscuits whereas others would only buy value.

Each unit is encouraged to bring squash. Water fountains are situated around each site.

There is an adult coffee lounge at each site which adults can visit while their girls are on activities. A thermos mug is a nice safe option so you can have refreshments on the go. There is an opportunity to set up a County admin base in the Leaders' coffee lounge and man it throughout the day by one or more of the team. A lot of Leaders appreciate being able to come in and chat. It is a good opportunity to promote further activities or trainings occurring in your County.

Hot drinks at mealtimes for the girls can be arranged in discussion with your PGL centre. I took hot chocolate etc. and advised large groups to bring spare kettles, Leaders rooms have kettles, but they are often small ones.

### **Health and First Aid**

The subject of health forms always causes us a problem. We hope that Unit leaders will collect them as we request but then get to an event and find a girl without one.

We now ask for a health form when the balance of money is paid. This health form is sent to our event administrator who can take off all the relevant details required by PGL and also ensures we have a master copy at the event.

The Unit Leader then collects two health forms prior to departure. One health form has a photo attached which is carried by the girl in a waterproof bag throughout the event, the other carried by the Leader for the girls' activity group.



Each unit Leader is asked to:

- Bring a small First Aid kit
- A spare sleeping bag
- Sick bucket and wipes etc.
- Written explanation of records that should be kept when dispensing medication, treating minor ailments (this is primarily for Leaders attending their first residential event)

As an organiser we provide:

- A central stock of medication as outlined on the health form
- Accident / Incident forms
- Sanitary Protection
- Spare toothbrushes / paste etc.

I do find the more experienced Leaders who attend residential events take their own medications.

Each Leader is informed of how to contact the event First Aider if required and what to do if an emergency arises.

PGL will not provide transport to or from hospitals / doctors. You need to either have contact details of local taxi companies or have a vehicle and nominated driver on site.

PGL will provide mini fridges for Leaders' rooms for storage of medication. Alcohol is not a medication and in this instance you have to pay a deposit.

### Home Contacts

Each unit should establish their own home contact as outlined in Guiding Manual.

These home contacts are then collated by your event home contact.

### Security and Risk Assessments

PGL has 24 hour security - and in the event of an emergency at night will meet with ambulances and show them the way to your accommodation block.

PGL has a risk assessment in place for all the adventurous activities it provides.

The event organiser should ensure a risk log is established for all other aspects of the event including:

- Financial risk
- Event viability
- Transport
- Health

### Kit

We ask each participant to travel to and from the event in “guide wear” and for adults to wear “guide wear” throughout the event. We encourage Guides to wear blue / black for activities and Brownies to wear brown / black/ yellow.

It should be highlighted how cold the girls can get and that layers are



important. Also what a waterproof coat really is - it is not an event cape!

I also write about magazines and asking parents to ensure the content is suitable for all.

### Other Bits

#### **Alcohol**

Each of the centres has an adult lounge where alcohol is served. From experience a policy on alcohol should be circulated.

On the Saturday evening the centre hosts a Cheese and Wine evening for all Leaders.

#### **Behaviour**

In my letter to parents I do include a paragraph about behaviour and the expectations we have and what will happen if they are broken.

#### **Late arrivals / early leavers**

I provide PGL reception with a list of who I expect to arrive late or depart early - it is helpful if you can provide a bedroom number and activity group numbers as this helps locate girls easier.

#### **Radio**

As an event organiser PGL usually provide me with a radio while on site.

### PR and Media

One County took the opportunity of inviting the High Sheriff and their County team for the afternoon - but acknowledge that you need some members on a central team who have no other responsibilities to facilitate this.

Another County offered a training session for its leaders during the event.

I led Brownie Take Over events during the Centenary and this was offered but Leaders found it very difficult to leave their girls with the Groupie.

### Finally

PGL is a great experience, although it does take some Leaders time to adapt to not being in control of what happens next. The hard work is done by the event organiser but the rewards are immeasurable and hopefully it will give leaders the confidence to take girls to similar events in the future.

I hope you have found this document helpful. If I can help in any way please get in touch

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