

Press release: Brownies reach for the stars with new Space badge

Girlguiding, the UK Space Agency and the Royal Astronomical Society have teamed up to give girls and young women in the UK unique and exciting opportunities to engage with astronomy beyond the classroom.

As part of the partnership the UK Space Agency and the Royal Astronomical Society, through its RAS 200: Sky & Earth programme, are sponsoring and have provided expertise to help develop the new Space badge for Brownies.

The Space interest badge aims to spark girls' curiosity to explore the universe around them by providing opportunities to develop the skills and confidence to engage in astronomy, planetary and space science. Badge activities include stargazing with the challenge of identifying constellations on a clear night, creating a sunspot viewer and plotting a sunspot map, and designing an astronaut training programme.

The new Space badge for Brownies. Credit: Girlguiding

The new badge, which is available to 200,000 girls aged 7 to 10, features among the 800 newly launched Girlguiding activities and badge challenges designed to equip over 400,000 girls and young women in guiding with the skills and experiences they will need to thrive, succeed, make change and be happy in the modern world.

The five-year partnership will also see girls and young women aged 5 to 25 be able to engage in the many fun space activities taking place at Girlguiding's national events throughout their time in guiding – from stargazing to getting up close to a real life space suit.

The partnership comes after Girlguiding's Girls' Attitudes Survey 20161 found:

- Becoming a scientist was named as being a dream job amongst 7-10 year old girls
- Becoming an astronaut was named as being a dream job amongst 11-16 year old girls
- 15% of 7-10 year old girls believe STEM subjects have the image of being more for boys, compared to over half (52%) of 11-21 year old girls

Alice Bunn, International Director at the UK Space Agency, said:

The UK space sector is booming and it's vital that we inspire the next generation of scientists and engineers to work in this fantastic industry.

The UK Space Agency is delighted to be working with Girlguiding on this exciting new badge which will introduce young girls to the

wonders of space.

Helen Sharman, the first British astronaut, said:

It's important that future generations continue to be inspired and have the opportunities to explore the fascinating Universe around us. Introduction to space, astronomy and planetary science will help to spark that initial curiosity, which could lead to potential careers in science and other exciting STEM subjects.

Professor Mike Cruise, the President of the Royal Astronomical Society, said:

Astronomy and space science are some of the most exciting areas in which to work, but they still tend to be dominated by men. This partnership with Girlguiding will help to redress the balance by introducing girls to stars, planets and space travel from a young age. We want to inspire girls and young women to consider careers in these subjects, demonstrating that science is for everyone.

Jess Bond, Lead Volunteer for Girlguiding's Programme Renewal, said:

This is a hugely exciting time for Girlguiding – it's revolutionary. We've really listened to what girls have told us they'd like to see and incorporated their suggestions, creating new badges and activities and updating others so they're relevant now and in the future. It's also been fantastic to have the expertise and input from so many partners.

Our ambition is to give girls the opportunity to discover and develop their interests, skills and confidence, take on new challenges and have fun and adventure with their friends. We want girls to feel equipped to take on the world.

Liddy Buswell, a member of Girlguiding's Advocate Panel, said:

This is such an exciting time to be part of Girlguiding. Where else would girls have the opportunity to be introduced to such a wide range of topics from tech and STEM, aviation and archaeology to voting or surviving in the wild? Girlguiding is all about providing a supportive space where girls are encouraged to give activities a go so they discover what it is they want to pursue and don't worry about failing or being judged. It could even lead them to their future career.

Girlguiding's new programme of activities is divided into interest badges,

skills builders, group activities and awards, all developed around six themes: Skills for my Future, Have Adventures, Be Well, Know Myself, Express Myself and Take Action.

The new programme is being phased in over the next twelve months and will be fully rolled out by September 2019. For more information on the new Space badge, programme of badges and activities visit the [Girlguiding website](#).