

Girlguiding Scotland begin media literacy campaign today

The leading charity for girls and young women, Girlguiding Scotland, launches a new campaign today to support their members to deal with sexism and negative gender stereotypes in the media.

This issue has been identified as a key contributor to unhappiness and poor mental health among girls. Within the charity there is a group of young women aged 15-23 called the Speak Out champions who are taking on the challenge of tackling this issue.

There is an activity pack designed to help girls develop media literacy skills developed with support from University of Strathclyde and Gender Equal Media (GEM) Scotland, and of course being the Guides, there is a badge to be earned too. This is the Media Mindful badge.



The campaign also asks traditional media and social media to commit to a gender sensitive approach when writing any articles or creating social media content. The ask is that all media should promote a more diverse range of women, and spend more time concentrating on what women and girls can do rather than what they look like.

Social media platforms are also encouraged to address the ways in which users reinforce appearance pressures and empower girls and young women to raise and report concerns where they see them.

Speak Out champion, Leah Bartlett, age 17, said: "As a group we realised that from a young age a lot of what we see in the media is unrealistic and this is having a negative impact on girls' happiness and mental health. We decided that we needed

to take action. That's why we've developed the Media Mindful campaign to support girls and young women across Scotland to develop their resilience and think critically about the media they consume."

Professor Karen Boyle, director of Gender Studies at Strathclyde University said: "We're so pleased to team up with Girlguiding Scotland to create this new activity pack all about supporting girls and young women to challenge how women and girls are portrayed and represented in the media. Each activity focuses on developing media literacy skills, encouraging girls, and young women to think about the kinds of stories about gender that are told, the way these stories are told, and who gets to tell them. Equipping girls and young women with tools to critically engage with the media means we can help the next generation to navigate the pressures they face by what they read, watch and hear."

Minister for Older People and Equalities, Christina McKelvie, said: "I welcome this campaign which will help girls and young women challenge negative stereotypes in the media. Women and girls are still subject to sexist comments in their life and see this reflected in the media when it comes to women in the public eye. Whether online, in newspapers or in magazines, too often the focus is on our appearance and not on our skills or achievements. The Scottish Government is fully committed to creating a gender equal future and I'm proud to stand with Girlguiding Scotland and I commend them on this programme which will empower young women and girls to call for an end to sexism on our screens and on our pages."

Speak Out is Girlguiding Scotland youth voice, established in 2018 as part of the Year of Young People. Speak Out is girl-led and provides a platform for members to use their voices and seek change at the highest levels. The champions are asking everyone to join them from 23 – 29 November 2020 for their Media Mindful week of action to take part in the #ChangeTheHeadline challenge to correct sexist news

headlines.

More information about the campaign and the challenge pack can be found on Girlguiding Scotland's website at girlguidingscotland.org.uk/media-mindful.

Girlguiding Scotland offers girls and young women aged 5 to 25 a wide range of opportunities to try new experiences, learn new skills and grow in confidence.

For over 100 years guiding has made many positive differences in communities right across Scotland. As guiding groups adapt to host meetings online or begin to meet face to face again, the charity's volunteers are committed to deliver guiding in new and innovative ways so that they can continue to keep connected and empower girls and young women.

Bringing the benefits of guiding to more girls and adults across Scotland is central to Girlguiding Scotland's strategy for 2019-2021.

Could you volunteer to support girls and young women in Scotland? Visit www.girlguidingscotland.org.uk/get-involved/