

Some would say that the best part of this job is having a part in providing life changing experiences for young people – that and the opportunity it gives to communicate with a great many people all over the world.

It is now down to you to raise the profile of Youth Exchange across your district, inspiring, supporting and encouraging Club YEOs (an endangered species) and making sure that any young person who shows the slightest interest in an exchange is dealt with effectively.

Ensure that the Club YEO has access to the Manual and can find what s/he needs.

How you begin is much to do with what you have inherited including history, ease of communications and the personalities of yourself and your predecessor. S/he may stand back to give you space but Youth Exchange needs continuity not the chance to re-invent the wheel so do seek her/his help as well as that of RIBIDYEA. You are now responsible for any live exchanges which are going on in your district. You need to be up to speed with who is going – or may have gone - where during the summer and be preparing a date in September to welcome them back to report. There may be Long Term students soon to arrive, for whom last minute preparations may be needed and the District may be running an Inbound Camp. Also returning (REBOUND) Long Term students will need orientation to forestall reverse culture shock

It should be your priority to ensure that all arrangements are in place for these students.

Make sure that you meet all the Rotarians involved in these exchanges and call on them for their support in future.

The Website youthexchange.org.uk

The website is now visited all the year round. However, each programme has a cut off time for accepting ROIs for the coming summer (see table below). This does not stop communications, though, and as soon as we re-open the registrations on 1 July we are usually very busy so you may find yourself having to deal with potential applicants from the moment you come into office. You can increase the volume of interest by spreading the web address by whatever means to the young people in your district – newspapers/ local website /local radio.

Looking ahead - be proactive

Start doing presentations to schools and clubs as early as possible. The more presentations you can make the more familiar you will be with the programmes and the better you will sell them. Spread across the district and you will find that the dots will gradually join up.

If you have not already got dates to visit schools you have less than two weeks in July in which to book a slot for September.

Make dates to speak at Rotary Clubs, starting in August. Clubs often will not focus on Youth Exchange until they receive a Registration of Interest – and then they can take interminable lengths of time deciding whether or not to take it on. If they can be persuaded to be open to the idea of supporting youth exchange ahead of an actual application it will save you time later.

You may find yourself repeating that the vast majority of Exchanges costs club no more than a few meals. They all still think only of the expensive Long Term exchanges which currently are very uncommon.

However, If you do receive an LTEP registration long term application in your first year of office you can count on the support from the Multidistrict, not just with the mechanics but also with the art of winning over a club. Do not lose time by struggling on alone.

Advice on Contacting Anyone for Youth Exchange

'Cold call' emails very often lay unattended in the Trash. Don't be surprised when no one replies.

Phone to make initial contact – if necessary leave a voicemail and try again later.

Say why you are contacting them and that you will email with all the details. Do this as soon as possible afterwards and hopefully they will look out for the email and reply. Give your phone numbers – don't leave them to look them up somewhere. Say that you will be phoning again in a couple of days and ask when would be convenient, then do it. Time is of the essence with youth exchange. Delay and you will risk losing the exchange.

Contact with Rotarians

Get the Assistant Governor onside and offer to do presentations at AG area meetings. Point out the random nature of website enquiries and enlist AG's support in getting clubs to agree in principle to take part in Youth Exchange ahead of an applicant appearing. Encourage clubs to cluster for mutual support for the LTEP. The Assistant Governor will know who are the most/least approachable clubs.

It is vital that you establish yourself in your new role in the eyes of the clubs and there is no substitute for visiting them and conveying your enthusiasm for Youth Exchange, particularly if your district has had only a small programme in the past. If you want to make a difference you will need to inject a change of pace.

Contact with Schools

If you have not had contact with schools recently you may find the following to be a useful guide:

Acquaint yourself with term and half term dates.

Do not bother to approach a school for the very first time in the first two weeks of September, the week before any half term or in December. Also try to avoid exam times.

Students in Years 10 and 12 break up from mid July onwards so miss out on some Camps. Students in Year 11(GCSE year) in state schools could easily manage a six week exchange (3+3 week STEP) - Year 12 might have only five weeks holiday. Short Term exchange students are usually welcome in school in other countries for a few days at the end of term and our Outbounds usually enjoy this.

If you get no response to an email sent to a teacher don't be judgemental. Try again. Your message has been temporarily submerged. Teachers do not have their own desks or work space and they work in a highly pressured environment.

Become aware of how different schools operate, locate the gate keepers and get them on your side. Your Youth Service colleagues may have helpful knowledge and contacts to share.

Whatever your chosen approach, by December you hope to be busy dealing with students and visiting clubs who suddenly have an applicant. See [D7: The Youth Exchange Cycle](#) for guidance about timings of the different programme.

Contact with YEOs from Abroad

You may be surprised to discover how many new friends you suddenly have on all parts of the world, all wanting to do exchanges with your district. Our islands are very popular Exchange destinations, made even more so because our programme is small and not many students are able to come here.

See [D6. Dealing with Requests from Abroad](#) for advice as to how to keep control of the situation.