

This is an operational overview of Youth Exchange for the benefit of the District Youth Exchange Officer. [Operational Reference](#) provides considerably more detail and in particular documents in the *D - District Youth Exchange Officer* section defines not only the role of the DYEO but also the timing that is needed to generate the programme.

Some manual references are given here, but with no expectation that DYEOs will work through them all at this stage. In fact, it is recommended that you ignore the references on first reading and but keep the document in mind to use as a guide when you need to look something up later.

### Rotary Youth Exchange in Great Britain & Ireland

The body which manages Youth Exchange in GB & Ireland is the RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association (DYEA) whose members are the districts in RIBI represented by their respective District Youth Exchange Officer (DYEO) or in a few cases, by default, by the District Youth Service Chairman. The formation of the DYEA, which separated Youth Exchange from RIBI to some extent, arose because of Certification for Child Protection which was introduced in the mid 2000s. Most of the Manual is concerned with the conduct of all concerned with the Youth Exchange programme in compliance with Certification rules. [See CP- Compliance and Procedure](#). This very important subject will be referred to later in this document.

Youth Exchange in GB & Ireland is managed as a Multidistrict but it is a District programme where the District Governor carries ultimate responsibility and delegates to the DYEO. As such, every May when Certification has to be renewed it is the DGE and the incoming DYEO who receive the document from Rotary International and who sign and return the form to RI. The name and contact details of the DYEO are then inserted into the Youth Exchange Officers' Directory which is circulated to all DYEOs electronically and updated every three months.

Youth Exchange students 'belong' to a Rotary Club regardless of whoever else assists the Club with the process.

The structures in place at District and Multidistrict RIBI level are to provide clubs with support and enable training and networking around the world for the exchange placements.

Support for the clubs cascades :

Multidistrict level - Specialists/ Coordinators for LTEP, STEP, Outbound C&T, Inbound C&T  
to

District level - District Youth Exchange Officer (DYEO), possibly with team.  
to the....

#### Club Youth Exchange Officer

The Club needs to appoint a Club Youth Exchange Officer (CYEO). This is often the Youth Service Chair but really should be a different person if possible because the deadlines for Youth Exchange and other youth activities are the same and make it difficult to fulfil both roles. In some clubs Youth Exchange is supported by the International Service Committee.

[See 'The Role of the Club YE Team for relevant programme \( L4, S4, C\(O\)4\)](#)

## The Programmes

Rotary Youth Exchange has two Short Term programmes (STEP) and the Long Term programme (LTEP).

Overall around the Rotary world about 8000 exchanges take place each year (most of these are LTEP).

Every outbound student who participates must be interviewed and accepted ('sponsored') by a Rotary club in order to go on the programme, whatever that might be. Sponsorship in this context does not carry the implication of a large financial outlay on the part of the club, in fact quite the contrary in most cases.

It follows that internationally well in excess of 4000 Rotary clubs are participating in Rotary Youth Exchange through one programme or another. Without this participation by clubs no exchanges can take place at all and the life changing experiences which so many now have would not be available.

### The Long Term Programme (LTEP)

The LTEP is the 'flagship' programme in Youth Exchange. Many students exchange around the world on this truly life-changing programme but unfortunately very small numbers of students in UK & Ireland put themselves forward.

Students spend a school year abroad. They attend the local school and live with two to three different host families. Our GB & I students generally go out after GCSE (aged 16+) because this is a natural break before a two year A level course, although the official age range is 15 – 18½.

At present UK visa regulations prevent students from countries outside the European Union entering UK to study at state schools for longer than six months. However, students from non EEC countries who are holders of an EEC passport by virtue of their family connections can come here on exchange so long as the family member on whose status their passport depends has been an EEC resident for the previous three years and is still alive. This means that with enough time to plan for it we can accept students from many parts of the world for long term exchange but in practice we look to Europe for most of our placements.

Undoubtedly if a club supports an outbound applicant for LTEP it can expect to be hosting an inbound either in the same year or a year later.

It is worth pointing out that inbound student, rather than the one whom the club chooses, who receives the year long attention and financial support from the club. However, without this the life changing experience which the club wants for its own student will not happen.

[See L- Long Term Exchange Programme](#)

### Short Term Programmes

These are:

#### Family to Family (STEP) - for 15 - 18 year olds:

The Exchange involves a paired arrangement where both students spend an equal amount of time - usually around 3 weeks each - in each other's home together in turn. The Exchange may be split across two school holiday periods but typically takes place over one summer with the students travelling together on the same flight from one home to the other. Usually students choose to exchange into a country in the northern hemisphere because of the similarity of the school calendar. This works best for students under 18 because of screening.

[See S- Short Term Exchange Programme](#)

#### International Rotary Camps & Tours (C&T) – for groups within the age range 15 - 25 year olds

About a hundred themed Camps take place across Europe and beyond each summer. Competition is keen to be the one or two students per Camp who are chosen to represent RIBI.

See [C\(O\). Camps & Tours \(Outbound\)](#).

There are also Inbound Camps which are run by several RIBI districts. Several of them take place annually, others biennially and there has been a developing interest in getting more going.

See *C(I). Camps & Tours (Inbound)*.

More details of all these programmes can be found on the GB & Ireland Youth Exchange website.

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## The Website

[youthexchange.org.uk](http://youthexchange.org.uk)

The website plays a much more significant role than merely to provide information. It is responsible for the considerable growth in interest and a consequent increase in numbers of Registrations of Interest for the different programmes. These are received by the relevant Programme Coordinators and cascaded down to the relevant District Youth Exchange Officers who then locate suitable Clubs.

The website now hosts the Online Application System [WEBAPP](#) which is used to generate the application form which is used by Coordinators in placement and also records to be stored central centrally.

All DYEO are required to register to use WEBAPP as soon as they are in office.

*(See OS4: Multidistrict Online Administration)*

With this approach, of appealing directly to the students and cutting out the Gate Keepers, as well as promoting initiatives in social networking, the number of exchanges is increasing year on year. Also noticeable is that fact that registrations of interest are beginning to arrive earlier in the year. To encourage this trend the Registrations pages on the website close down, on 31st December for LTEP and on 1 February for STEP and C&T. In Youth Exchange we work in partnership with colleagues from all over the world and we must keep to the same timetable as they do or else we cannot provide our 'half' of the exchange.

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## The Youth Exchange Cycle

It is important to realise that the Youth Exchange Programme is unlike any other in Rotary in that there is a relentless year long momentum that is generated across the world. Countries which do not keep to the timing find it impossible to place their students abroad. The DYEO needs to have a sense of urgency which s/he transmits to everyone involved or else we let down very worthy students and earn a reputation for not being able to deliver.

Significantly, the administration for a Youth Exchange placement takes place in the Rotary year before the student goes abroad. This means that that undertaking by the Club is made with the signatures of the CURRENT officers, NOT of those who will be in place when the exchange actually happens. However, details of relevant officers in the Exchange year is given to the students at Orientation.

In brief the pattern is

July - December:	School/college/youth group visits. Potential exchanges identified
December - March:	C&T Invitations arrive with the Camps Coordinator and students bid for places.
December – March:	STEP students' placements are arranged.
End of March/April:	Orientation Day for Outbound Students
End June – end August:	Most STEP/ Camps take place between these times
Mid - end of September:	Feedback Day for returning outbound students.

This is only a quick outline. [D7: The Youth Exchange Cycle](#) gives a fuller 'working' scheme for the DYEO to follow.

[D8: The DYEO – Operational Leader and Trainer](#) gives an insight into how the responsibilities of the DYEO and the involvement of others and the materials which are needed at what stage and by whom.

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## The Exchange Process

Documents in the individual Programme sections of the Manual indicate how each exchange is administered and who should be responsible for each stage. In some cases this is an aspiration and the club may rely on assistance from District and the Multidistrict but the intention is that in time the club will gradually reclaim the initiative over their part of the process.

(See '[Operational Overview](#)' for particular programme (See L5, S5, C(O)5)

### Outbound Students

Students apply of their own volition, maybe through personal contact but maybe purely randomly, via the search engine, or increasingly through social media to a local club, through the District website or more commonly through the Youth Exchange website [youthexchange.org.uk](http://youthexchange.org.uk).

Otherwise, applicants arise from presentations made by District and Clubs in the local schools /colleges/ youth groups etc. This includes Interact and Rotaract clubs.

However they appear they all have to register their interest at the Website and so the process begins.

Once the DYEO is informed about the student s/he then needs to contact a club in the vicinity of the applicant's home to further the application.

### School/Youth Group Presentations - mainly in Summer and Autumn

Clubs may initiate presentations or at least contribute to them by giving brief information to the audience as to what Rotary does. The presentation often gives them the opportunity to establish links with the school to further the participation in other Youth Service programmes and competitions.

The section [CL – Reference for Clubs](#) provides materials to inform clubs about the programme so that they can put over the right message in schools presentations. DYEOs need to give them access to the Manual very early on.

The District Training Team is able to share techniques on putting on effective presentations.

### Student Interviews & Selection

Students who apply for an exchange need to followed up very quickly by the DYEO and then once the DYEO has informed the club it is vital to get a date into the diary to meet the student and parents at home without delay.

All outbound students must to be interviewed at home with their parents, a process which usually lasts up to an hour and a half. A 'panel' of two Rotarians, including at least one from the potential sponsor club deals with this, which is in part information giving but is mainly to establish whether or not the student is suitable for the exchange for which they have applied. Selection Interviews for the LTEP are more rigorous and can include obtaining a school/ community reference and asking the applicant to write a letter of application.

The panel reported back to the club. It is particularly important that a favourable recommendation should be confirmed as quickly as possible and not delayed by pedantic process. Timing is usually very tight and the student can completely miss out on the opportunity of placement because the administration has not been given the chance to get going.

*See OB: Outbound Student (OB1 – OB3A)*

## Applications & Placement

When a student has 'passed' the interview and has been accepted by a club the student is introduced to WEBAPP, the system which generates the Application form

There is a sequence of events which is set out in  
OS4A: WEBAPP – The Online Application System in GB & Ireland.

Once the application form is complete the Coordinators begin to communicate with overseas colleagues towards Placement.

*OB4: Student Placement – All Programmes*

## Before, During and After the Exchange

The DYEO organises Orientation Day for all outbound exchange students to prepare them for going abroad in as wide an interpretation of the word as is possible.

This full day event usually takes place on a Saturday or Sunday before Easter. It is compulsory for students to attend all day and for their parents in the afternoon (this is one of the conditions which they sign to agree to do).

The District Youth Exchange team is responsible for delivering it, with the help of ROTEX, the alumni of Youth Exchange. CYEOs and other members of clubs involved are always invited to attend and the students are appreciative when they know that the club is supporting them there.

While on exchange the LTEP student is expected to remit to District four approximately quarterly reports.

The DYEO arranges a Feedback meeting, held in mid September where the returning students give presentations of their exchanges to each other and file their official reports to District.

Returning Long Term students and their parent also attend Rebound Orientation meetings, delivered by the District YE team. The purpose is to ensure that they are having no problems readjusting to having the student back at home and to deal with reverse culture shock if it arises.

*OB6: Outbound Orientation*

*And then what?*

Hopefully the club will retain contact with student and family. The membership dividend has already been touched on above. The students can also be very helpful as the 'internal agent' in a school where the clubs wants more contact. You may find that your student applies next year for another exchange. This is usually accepted readily by the club.

You can also expect applications from siblings in due course.

ROTEX have already been mentioned. They help to promote the programme and can be called upon to speak at presentations to potential applicants for youth exchange. Clubs can also help them to keep in touch with Rotary so that when they are ready to commit themselves to joining Rotaract or Rotary the process is made as easy for them as possible.

## Inbound Students, Hosts and Counsellors

Practically all of our Inbound students come to RIBI on exchange as reciprocals arrangements initiated for our Outbounds. There is no question but that a district which receives a student from your district will expect to send one to you in return.

Independent of this arrangement are Inbound Camps, whose inbound students are not connected in any way with students on Outbound Camps,

Inbound students need a Counsellor and most need Host Families – Inbound Camps could be using hostels instead.

Host Families for Inbound STEP students are the parents of Outbound students but they still have to go through the same selection procedure as potential hosts for other programmes. The difference is that if they are found to be unsuitable their son or daughter will not be able to take part in their chosen exchange - STEP.

The selection will normally take place on the same occasion as the student's interview, so would be conducted by the Club. The Club would select the Host Family for LTEP, with the assistance of the DYEO, and the Inbound Camps team would probably select the accommodation for the Camp. This may be home hosting (students could be in pairs) or hostel/ camping accommodation according to the location and theme of the Camp. Camps usually last around two weeks.

The Outbound LTEP students are asked to help in the search for host families for their Inbound exchange. Some are able to offer their own homes but it is not obligatory and often the students whom you would want to help is not in the position to do so. However, where they are looking into their communities this opens up possibilities for younger people to be introduced to Rotary. The LTEP needs two or three host families. From a cultural point of view it is desirable for a student to experience different households.

Rotarians are not expected to host students, although many do and really enjoy the experience

Counsellors are also normally selected by the club and may well act as Counsellors on many different occasions.

In all cases the DYEO provides the Selection materials and deals with Training for the Hosts and Counsellors.

The Selection materials include an Agreement for Working in Youth Exchange and includes DBS screening and taking up references.

*IB. The Inbound Student, Host and Counsellor* covers selection and training.

*CP6: Involvement of Adults in Youth Exchange , CP5 Screening Adults for Youth Exchange, .*

## Orientation of Inbound Students

Preparation for exchanges is thorough. Students are required to attend Orientation conducted by their 'Sending' district. They will also receive Preparation materials from the district about to host them and then further information when they arrive, which should be 'live'. The DYEO arranges this.

See *Orientation of the Inbound..... Student (S10,C(I)10, L10)*

## Rotary involvement during the year for an Inbound LTEP student.

The LTEP student is more often than not created an Honorary member for the Club for that Rotary year. The student attends meetings frequently and on a regular basis, including Business meetings, and take part in club projects (could even initiate one). S/he belongs to the whole club, not just to the CYEO who is in over all control, and between them the members ensure that the student gets to achieve what is on his/her wish list.

There is also District involvement - taken by the DYEO to District Council soon after arrival and soon before departure, and to attend District Conference and RIBI Conference.



## Certification For Youth Exchange

Every district which participates in Youth Exchange must satisfy Rotary International every year that it has policies in place for Child Protection and General Liability Insurance. The conditions of Certification lay down rules for the manner of preparing students for exchanges for their on going care. See *CP: Compliance & Procedure*

### 'Back Door' Exchanges

DYEOs need to become aware of any clubs in the district which have projects, possible with contact clubs involving young people under 18 coming from a foreign country and unaccompanied but their parents. Often such arrangements have been going on between clubs where the members know each other very well. Nonetheless the club is required to treat each student as an exchange student and to adhere to the correct procedure as for an inbound student.

See *CL3: Club to Club Exchanges – Managing them within Certification Requirements*.

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## Financial Matters

All Students on all programmes pay for their return fares, insurance and visa and inoculations where necessary. They also pay a non-returnable Administration fee (set at £25 in 2016) to the District's Youth Exchange Association as soon as they are placed. Rotary camps now have a fee, which is also entirely met by the student.

There is nothing to prevent clubs from assisting with any of this in a very deserving case but this is not usual or expected.

### What it costs the Club - Short Term Exchange

In brief, it can cost as little as a few meals. It depends on the exchange and also on how the club chooses to use the opportunity of engaging with new young people and their parents who could well be interested in membership of Rotary if treated appropriately.

In addition most clubs send students away with a few club banners and sometimes a small amount of pocket money and gifts for the host club.

Outbound exchange students are usually invited to a club meeting – certainly with a parent if under 18 and optionally if older. There is a good opportunity to interest the parents in Rotary.

After the exchange clubs invite their student back as speaker, where they will give a presentation on their experience and say thank you to the club.

In paired exchanges both students involved are expected to give presentations to their host club. The CYEO arranges this for the inbound student.

### What it costs the Club - LTEP

Financing the LTEP student is a significant factor in a club's decision to support that student. However, this does not usually deter even small clubs from doing so when they weigh up the benefit to the applicant in front of them. This is because the money is not needed until the August of the next Rotary year - usually at least six months ahead - and even then in instalments over the year.

The club can expect to have to put aside between £1800 and £2000, which includes hospitality at Rotary club meetings.

*(IF1: Cost of Exchange programme to Districts, Clubs and Students)*

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