

This is an overview supported in the Manual by a series of Guidance Sheets relevant to Club involvement in Youth Exchange.

Much of what follows applies to all programmes unless otherwise stated.

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+) 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.

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.

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. There are currently relatively few Camps which are organised across Great Britain & Ireland but this is changing.

The Website

Details of all these programmes can be found on the RIBI Youth Exchange website
youthexchange.org.uk

The Youth Exchange Cycle

Significantly, the admin 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. In general the pattern is

July - December:	School/college/youth group visits. Potential exchanges identified
December - March:	Camps & Tours Invitations arrive with the RIBI 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.

Rotary Youth Exchange In RIBI

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 RIBI level are to provide clubs with support and enable training and networking around the world for the exchange placements.

All Districts belong to the RIBI Districts Youth Exchange Association which is set aside from RIBI to comply with the requirements of Rotary International Certification. Certification is a very important issue and is dealt with at length later.

Support for the clubs comes from:

At RIBI level - Specialists/ Coordinators for LTEP, STEP, Outbound C&T

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

The Club Youth Exchange Officer

The Club needs to appoint a Club Youth Exchange Officer (CYEO). This is often the member who is 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.

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

The Exchange Process

The Exchange Sequence sheets show 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 RIBI but the intention is that in time the club will gradually reclaim the initiative.

(See '*Operational Overview*' for particular programme (See L5, S5, C(O)5)

Finding The Outbound Students

Students apply of their own volition, maybe through personal contact but maybe purely randomly, or increasingly through social media to a local club, through the District website or more commonly through the RIBI website www.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.

The District Youth Exchange Officer will then 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 either 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 Youth Speaks, Young Chef and other Chef competitions as well as Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) and Interact clubs.

The District Youth Exchange Team provides clubs with the opportunity to be trained in giving presentations to schools.

Home Visits/Interviews

Students who apply for an exchange need to be followed up very quickly. 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.

(See OB3: Student Selection – All Programmes)

All outbound students must 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 (the Club Youth Exchange Officer, CYEO) 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. 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.

Students applying for paired exchanges need to be ready when students from abroad are there to be exchanged with – usually from January/ February.

International Rotary Camps & Tours are heavily oversubscribed. The RIBI Outbound Camps Coordinator begins to receive invitations from districts abroad from the end of December, peaking in about mid February. There is usually only one place per country and this is filled on a first come first served basis so speed is extremely important if your student is to stand any chance of a place. Selection Interviews for the Long Term Exchange Programme are more rigorous and can include obtaining a school/ community reference and asking the applicant to write a letter of application.

When A Student Is Accepted For An Exchange:

The DYEO supplies the student with an online application form and the CYEO monitors its progress and ensures that the complete form is sent to the DYEO. The CYEO visits the family to witness their signatures and arranges for the President's signature.

For all exchanges except Camps the district which receives your student (the Host district) will send you an inbound student in return.

The club needs to appoint a Counsellor for the inbound student of any age. How this person is selected and the role and function are set out in the Guidance Sheet for each programme.

(See IB2: Counsellor Selection - All Programmes)

(See The Role of the Counsellor...for a particular programme L6, S6, C(I)6)

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 Protection against malicious litigation. The Conditions of Certification lay down rules for the manner of preparing students for exchanges for their ongoing care.

Disclosure & Barring Service Checks For Youth Exchange

One of the conditions of Certification is that for all inbound students any adult care giver in the household of the host family or the Counsellor's household (LTEP only) will need a current Enhanced CRB Certificate for Youth Exchange Hosting & Supervision/ Counselling & Supervision. *(CP5 Screening Adults for Youth Exchange) (IB8: Dealing with the DBS Application Form)*

Note - If you accept a student to go out on an International Rotary Camp & Tour there is no reciprocal inbound student so there is no DBS requirement and no need for a Counsellor or home hosting.

'Back Door' Exchanges

Any Club arranging a project in the name of Rotary involving a young person under 18 from a foreign country without their parents should know that this is regarded as a Youth Exchange and Clubs must make the DYEO aware that it is happening so that the correct procedure is adhered to. This includes arrangements between contact clubs where members have known each other well for many years.

(CL3: Club to Club Exchanges – Managing them within Certification Requirements)

(See 'CP: Compliance & Procedure' Section)

Before 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 former exchange students. 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. Clubs are also welcomed at the Feedback meeting, held in September which is when 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 Orientation meetings, delivered by The District YE team.

Club involvement during the year of having an Inbound Long Term student.

The LTE 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.

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 want 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.

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 Districts' Youth Exchange Association as soon as they are placed. Many 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 - Long Term Exchange

Financing the Long Term student is a significant factor in a club's decision to support a Long Term 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 up to £1800, which includes hospitality at Rotary club meetings.

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

Hosting Students On Youth Exchange

Host families need to be found for INBOUND students on the following programmes:

Long Term Exchange

Inbound Camps & Tours

Self evidently, STEP hosts are normally the families of the students on exchange.

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

For Inbound Camps the onus is upon the host club to arrange accommodation for the students. 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 LTE 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 LTE needs two or three host families. From a cultural point of view it is desirable for a student to experience different households.

(See IB3: Host Family Selection – all programmes).

The Manual is a collection of documents which can be used at many different levels of involvement in Youth Exchange. It should make informative reading for anyone but the following seeks to enable Clubs to gain at least the minimum knowledge and understanding and then to guide them to further reading as required. (Index numbers are at the foot of each document)

Contents for Clubs

General information

Introduction & Main Menu

OS3: Jargon & Abbreviations in Youth Exchange

CL1: An Overview of Youth Exchange for Clubs

CL3: Club to Club Exchanges – Managing them within Certification Requirements

Operational Information which applies to all programmes:

OB3A: The Student Interview Support Pack – All Programmes

OB3B: The Student Interview Support Pack – Essential Background Information for interviewers

IB2(S): The Counsellor Selection Pack for STEP

IB3(S) The Host Family Selection Pack for STEP

CP10: Rules and Conditions of Youth Exchange

OS5. WEBAPP – THE Online Application System for GB & Ireland

The Role of Clubs for the Exchange programmes: (refer to as necessary)

Camps & Tours (Outbound): all files C(O)1 – C(O)7

STEP: S1 – S5

LTEP: L1 – L5

For Clubs interested in running an inbound Camp:

Camps & Tours (Inbound): C(I)1 – C(I)5 and C(I)17

The history of Youth Exchange must be bound up in the fellowship formed between clubs from different countries. It moved on to promote the individual student who was not necessarily a Rotary child but it is inevitable that when clubs twin with each other they will want to 'exchange' their youngsters with those of their Rotary friends abroad. This may take a variety of forms – individuals or paired or a group – one way or 'exchanging' - and it may involve the participation of more than one nation/district/club.

Sadly, the world has moved on from the innocent scenario which was the foundation of all these connections and Rotary has had to bring in regulations to safeguard not only the young people involved but also the reputation of Rotarians and also that of Rotary International itself.

Now all situations where a young person under 18 travels abroad without his/her parents within a Rotary organised event are classified as Rotary Youth Exchanges. This covers not only the usual 'set piece' programmes which are organised in districts for random individuals but also those situations where clubs exchange their young internationally, either one way or both ways.

The so called 'back – door' exchange is one where this activity goes on without reference to the Safeguarding protocols which define Certification for Youth Exchange. Where this happens it places in jeopardy all the 'legitimate' activity carried out by Youth Exchange Officers in their district who are working for all their young people who want to go on exchange. The condition of Certification is contravened, Rotary International removes the Certificate and the district is no longer allowed to practice. It is possible that this will also happen to the partner district in the arrangement.

Club to Club Exchanges are permissible provided that every inbound student involved is treated in exactly the same way as an individual Youth Exchange student on the Short Term Exchange Programme. (*Refer to CP3: Certification beyond Youth Exchange – advice from RI*) Detailed information about this process is available at the references below.

Operational Reference:

- DG District Leaders' Reference DG3
- OB Outbound Student, OB3, OB3A, OB6
- IB Inbound Student, Host Family & Counsellor IB2 & IB2(S), IB3 & IB3(S)
- S Short Term Exchange Programme S1, S4, S5, S7 & S7A , S9 & S9A, S10, S10A, S10B

Core Reference:

- CP Certification & Protocol - all files
- IF Insurance & Financial – IF4, IF4(I) IF4(O) and IF5

The Formalities

As can be seen from the references above, students on Club to Club exchanges need to complete [CL3A: The STEP Application Form](#). (downloadable here)

Read [CL3B: Guidelines for Completing the STEP Application Form](#) (downloadable here) carefully and adhere to the advice in order to enable the interactive properties of the form to work effectively.

The DYEO will give support to clubs involved in the administration of their exchanges.