



HOST HANDBOOK

Essential Information for
Hosting a SWYM Trainee

Welcome



Thank you so much for offering to host a SWYM trainee. We really appreciate you being willing to do this and trust it will be a rewarding and great experience. Hosting can take many forms and there can be several things to think about as you welcome someone new into your home. We've put this handbook together to help you think through some of the issues that may arise.

If you have any concerns or challenges you need help with, do talk to the trainee's Line Manager and if they think it would be helpful they can put you in touch with your SWYM local Area Coordinator to talk with as well.

Thank you again for taking this on.

The SWYM Team



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“Hosting a SWYM trainee has been rewarding for us all; enriching our world view, giving us new insight into our theology and helping us use our God-given gift of hospitality. From our youngest to the oldest we all feel we now have a new lifelong member of our family. We are so thankful for this opportunity.

KEVIN & BRIDGET
Hosts





Our Vision

Our vision and passion is that every child and young person in the South West would encounter Jesus, come to know Him and make a choice to live for more.

So how do we seek to do that?
We work with local churches right across this region to support, equip and encourage them to reach out to children, young people and adults in their community with the Good News of Jesus.

One main way we do this is to place children, youth or community focused trainees with local churches or projects. Our trainees are each based in a local setting, getting stuck into the church and their mission in their community, whilst receiving training and brilliant support at the same time.

We want to reach out to children, young people and adults who don't know Jesus, whilst also discipling and equipping Christians to be a shining light where they are. Over the years we have trained over 650 people who are now serving God in amazing ways all over the world.

We love journeying with people, helping them as they explore God's calling on their lives. Thank you for joining us and being a part of the story.

Our Values

We have 4 main values that describe the kind of community we seek to build in SWYM. These values help us to encourage each other to be 'Living for More' individually and together.



Christ Centred Living

Our relationship with Jesus comes first. We build time into weekly clusters, conferences and in all that we do to help us to be focused on Christ and be growing to become more like Him.

Kingdom Focused Movement

We are passionate about God's Kingdom, not building empires. We love to partner with other organisations; we try to make sure we aren't overly protective of our own ministry, but seek the bigger picture.

Servant Hearted Community

We want to be a community that is focused on preferring each other, not fighting our own corner. You'll find a group of people seeking to die to ourselves and putting each other's needs above our own.

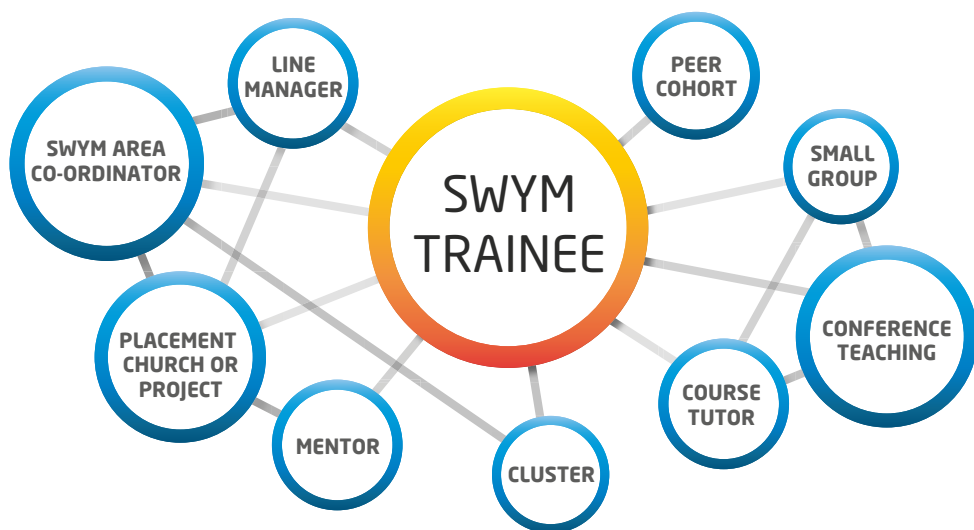
Pursuing Excellence Together

We want to do our very best in all we do: from our training and events to work on the ground with local churches. We don't want to do the minimum – but give our very best to God as we seek to serve and work for Him.



SWYM Support Structure

The trainee will have a number of support structures around to help them thrive:



Hosting a trainee can feel like a responsibility, but we really trust it will be a gift to you too. Through the years, we have heard lots of stories of hosts attending later weddings and other special events as a part of this key relationship in their life. What a privilege it is to welcome someone else into your home and invest in them at such a formative time of their lives.

As host you are a key part of the trainee's support, we know that it is important that a trainee feels "at home". Each trainee also has wider support structure, which includes the Line Manager in the placement and a personal mentor from the church. Trainees are also part of a SWYM Cluster, which meets locally every week. This is run by the SWYM Area Coordinator who oversees the trainees in your local area. Every 6-8 weeks the trainee also attends a block of training for 4 days where they have teaching, worship and meet with their small group, their peer cohort (year group) and course tutor.

Do please join us in praying for your trainee as they settle into your home. We will also be praying for you as you adapt to having them living with you.



Welcoming a New Trainee

It's always hard adapting to a new living arrangement, both for you as the host and for the person moving in. We all have habits and traditions in our homes which can often differ from those of others. Below are a few thoughts to try and make it easier for everyone.

Before they arrive

Initial contact – Before the trainee moves in try and make contact with them – an email, phone call or letter to introduce yourself and break the ice. This can make moving-in day a much less nervous time for all involved.

Host Checklist

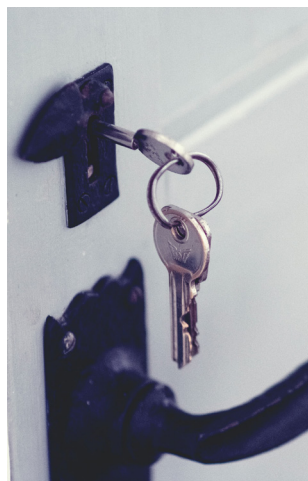
Read the checklist and complete this before arrival or in the first few days of them being with you. It can seem a little formal but can really help bring clarity around areas people don't initially talk about. However if expectations are made clear from the outset, and perhaps used to hold each other accountable, then it sets things up to go really well.

Within the first few days

Ask the trainee to let you know a break down of working hours/timetable so you can have an understanding of when the trainee may be at home. It is not a 9-5 job so they may be out a lot of evenings but around more during the day time, depending on their role.

In the first few weeks

Perhaps consider a review with the Line Manager and the trainee after the first half-term to give a space to talk about how you are both getting on and a chance to bring up anything that would be good to talk through.



Trainee Status

Depending on which course they are enrolled on, the trainee is either a full time student or a voluntary worker undertaking training. Depending on the type of accommodation provided and the trainee's personal situation, it is possible that the local authority will be able to help with some benefits, so this is worth investigating.

Council Tax discounts for students

Students living in accommodation where council tax is being charged may be able to claim a discount. When determining the number of residents in a property for the purpose of council tax, a person can be disregarded if they are a student. If the number of adult occupants who are not disregarded is either one or none, a discount can apply.

To qualify as a student for the purpose of council tax, a person must be either:

- » Attending a full-time course of higher education at a university, college or other prescribed educational establishment. The course must be of at least one year's duration and involve at least 21 hours attendance per week for at least 24 weeks in the year, or
- » Under 20 years of age and attending a course which lasts more than three calendar months and involves at least 12 hours attendance per week between 8.00am and 5.30pm. The course must not be undertaken by correspondence or in consequence of the person's job, nor must it be a course of higher education. In addition, the person must supply a council tax certificate issued by the college or university; a certificate of enrolment is not acceptable.

The following council tax discounts are available for students:

- » If all residents are students, the household will be exempt.
- » If all but one resident is a student, the household will be entitled to a 25% discount.

Several trainees have successfully applied for discounts, although we can't guarantee that you will get a discount. Each local authority works differently and you will need to do some homework before applying. Most authorities have websites with helpful information. Alternatively, a general inquiries phone call can be useful to explain your situation.

When applying for discounts you need to stress the following: A trainee is classed as full-time. Although their weekly academic study is for 8-16 hours including conference time, the 24-32 hours spent in the placement is necessary for the completion of the course.

If you would like a supporting letter from SWYM to send to your local council, please contact us at info@swym.org.uk and we will happily provide you with a personalised letter.



Culture Shock

Culture shock can happen to anyone - not just international trainees! Moving to another part of the country, or from an urban to a rural area, can be stressful. We all carry expectations of the right way to do things from our own culture; it is culture that makes you a stranger when you are away from home. Here is some information to help you understand more about culture shock, why a new trainee might be struggling, and what you could do to understand and help them through this.

What is culture shock/stress?

- » Stress felt by people living in a culture different from their home.
- » Anxiety produced when a person moves to a completely new environment.
- » Physical and emotional discomfort suffered when coming to live in another country or different location.

What causes it?

- » Not knowing a new country/culture well.
- » Being unfamiliar with the language, both words and gestures. Not understanding different rules for behaviour.

Much of culture shock can be due to 'transition shock', which is the:

- » Loss of close friends and relatives.
- » Complete change of environment.
- » Loss of status/role or known job.
- » Loss of church fellowship.

What can happen?

- » Sadness, loneliness or crying for no apparent reason.
- » Health problems are exacerbated.
- » Difficulty sleeping, even though they are tired all the time.
- » Mood swings.
- » Feeling it's too difficult to try to talk to anyone, no-one understands them.
- » They were important at home and now they are useless.
- » They don't know who they are any more.
- » They feel everyone is talking about them and laughing at them.
- » Everything at home seems wonderful.
- » They want to be with family and friends at home.
- » Coming here feels like a mistake.

What helps?

Here is a list of tips that we give our new international trainees on how to prevent culture shock. You might find these useful and be able to encourage your trainee in these areas.

- » Learn as much as they can about: culture, language (vocabulary book), non-verbal language: greetings, gestures and hospitality requirements. Talk to other internationals who have already made all the mistakes.
- » Ask as many questions as possible: no question is a stupid question! Questions allow them to find out how things are done and why.
- » Seek friendships with nationals as well as people of their own culture.
- » Enjoy the good things of the new culture: explore new things - be willing to learn and try new things.
- » Enter into the culture and enjoy the difference – make it an adventure.
- » Ask themselves 'what can I learn from this culture?'
- » Bring items from their own culture to make them feel more at home.
- » Learn to like the local food and try new things regularly.
- » Set reasonable goals.
- » Read a good book (in their own language), listen to the news in their own language and keep up private family traditions and hobbies.
- » Stay in contact with people at home (but don't overdo it!).

We hope you found this information helpful. If you are struggling with your international trainee, please contact your Area Coordinator for further advice.

Stages of Culture Shock

Stage 1: **Honeymoon**

Everything is new and exciting. The country is interesting, people are friendly and helpful and the future looks good!

Stage 2: **Storming**

Excitement of everything being new has worn off. Using a new language is tiring and frustrating. It seems hard to make friends so local people seem unfriendly and you miss your friends from home.

Stage 3: **Recovery**

Communication becomes easier because fluency in language is improving. What was impossible is now hopeful. Life is better. You laugh more again.

Stage 4: **Stability**

The new situation begins to feel more like home. The new culture has good and bad things to offer. There is a greater sense of belonging and self-understanding.

Stage 5: **Re-entry**

When returning home, the culture there will seem different because you have changed and your understanding of the world has changed. It's not easy!



Host Checklist

This checklist is to help you share information about expectations, details of family members etc. There are a few questions to answer before the trainee arrives, plus a few ideas of what information needs to be shared once the trainee has moved in. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to get in contact with your Area Coordinator for guidance.

Things to decide...

On arrival...

Cleaning

- » How often is the trainee expected to clean the room?
- » What other cleaning/clearing up is the trainee expected to do?
- » Is the trainee responsible for their own clothes washing?

- » Establish a rota for chores.
- » Explain how the washing machine/dishwasher work and where to find cleaning products.
- » Explain the routine for emptying bins, recycling.

Cooking and Meals

- » What meals will be prepared for the trainee?
- » How much notice does the trainee need to give if a meal won't be needed?
- » How often is the trainee expected to cook or help prepare meals?
- » Are there any dietary requirements within the family?
- » Can the trainee help themselves to any food in the kitchen?

- » Explain expectations for family meals: Do you all sit together? Are mealtimes set each day?
- » Explain any rules set in place for children in the family that the trainees should role model, e.g. not having phones at a meal table.
- » Are there particular foods/dishes the trainee would like to introduce the family to?
- » Have a system where the trainee can add food to a shopping list.

Visitors/Guests

- » Can the trainee invite guests?
- » Can a guest stay overnight?
- » How much notice would be needed if a guest is staying or if the trainee intends to be away?

- » Trainees are expected to follow good practice in appropriate behaviour.
- » Explain your expectations for visitors/guests.

Curfew/Locks

Things to decide...

- » When is the latest you would like the trainee to arrive home?
- » Are there times when music/noise needs to be kept to a minimum?

On arrival...

- » Explain how any locks and security features/alarms work.
- » Is there a spare key with a neighbour?

TV/Internet/Phone

- » What are the restrictions for using the internet?
- » Are there restrictions for using the TV?
- » Is there a landline the trainee can use?

- » Explain how the trainee connects to the internet, accesses the TV etc.

Studying

- » Are there particular times and places for trainees to study?
- » There will be times when a trainee may appear to be hiding in their room for hours – that probably means they are studying hard because an assignment is due!

- » Talk through whether a trainee can use other areas of the house to study when not in use, e.g. at a kitchen table.
- » Chat about the trainee's study habits – do they cram last minute, study early!

Children

- » What are the names and ages of children in the house or who regularly stay?
- » How do you expect the trainee to interact with the children?
- » Would you ask the trainee to babysit?
- » What should the trainee do if a child needs correcting?

- » Explain to children in the house that the trainee's bedroom is their private space.
- » Discuss with the trainee how to deal with any misbehaviour, e.g. initially they may just inform you.

Pets

- » Are there any pets in the house?
- » Is the trainee expected to help with caring for the pets? e.g. walking the dog, feeding rabbits when you are away.

- » Introduce the trainee to any pets and explain any particular rules, e.g. the cat doesn't go upstairs.

Things to decide...

- » Would you ever be able to provide transport for the trainee? If so, how much notice would you need?
- » Is there space for a trainee to park a car/store a bike if needed?

On arrival...

- » Trainees may need some guidance on local public transport or routes around the area.
- » This may be very different to what the trainee is used to, especially if they have moved from a very urban area or another country.

- » What should the trainee do if something gets damaged or broken?
- » Is there a neighbour who can be contacted in an emergency?

- » Show the trainee any potential hazards in the house.
- » Show the trainee the location of any fire extinguishers, first aid, etc.
- » A trainee may need to register with a doctor, dentist or optician when they arrive. Can you provide them with the details of local practitioners?



We have created an editable document which you can use to make notes, and includes space for you and the trainee to sign as an agreement.

Scan this QR code to download and edit, or email your Area Coordinator for a copy.



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