



### **The role of a host church for YFC gap year student.**

Being a placement Church for a gap year volunteer is an exciting way for your church to be partnered with SYFC by co-supporting a young person who has expressed a desire to spend a year volunteering in youth work ministry.

So that you can explore how you can join us on this exciting journey, here are some facts and information about what is expected and what you can expect in return.

#### **What does it involve?**

Each academic year SYFC apply to National YFC to be a placement for 2/3 gap year students. The YFC gap year programme gives students an opportunity to come and be part of our team, gaining experience in all aspects of the work we do. At the same time, we place them with a local church who will 'host' the Volunteers during their time in Swindon. In return for providing the Volunteer with lodgings in a family situation that they can become part of, the church will benefit from having a young person who can serve the church by being part of their youth ministry for up to 8 hours per week.

We are looking for local churches who can see the benefits of working with us in this way to ensure SYFC, your church and the student, all experience a time of growth, maximising potential and using every opportunity to reach out to the young people of Swindon.

#### **How long would the student be available?**

The student normally joins the team in the middle of September so would join your church straight away. They will have received 2 weeks training with all the other YFC students on the programme before they arrive in Swindon. The student will be with the church until the end of July.

The Volunteer is entitled to 1 long weekend off per each of the three school terms. They also have 1 week holiday at Christmas and 1 week holiday at Easter. We ask that the Volunteer is available some Sundays to support the work of SYFC through visiting other churches in the town when necessary, this should not be more frequent than 1 Sunday morning per each of the three terms.

#### **The gap year student will be unavailable:**

- During National YFC conference the first week in January.
- During their mid-week retreat in March (Normally Monday – Thursday)
- During their end of year de-brief in July (Normally Monday – Wednesday)

Currently they also have training 6 times a year with the National programme which takes them away from Swindon for 1 night at a time. Days vary for these.

Occasionally there may be other special events or activities that the gap year is asked to be part of, or they specifically ask to take part in (e.g. A YFC residential or a family wedding etc....) if however this activity/visit will take them away from their commitment to a church activity, this will need to be arranged in advance between SYFC and the Church. Equally, if the church is running an activity

that falls outside of the normal timetable, the church can make a request to SYFC for the gap year to attend. i.e. – A youth weekend away, Soul Survivor, or a church holiday club.

### **What activities will the gap year be involved in?**

The gap year will be involved in supporting our Schools work programme, detached youth work, BIOS sports sessions and running lunchtime clubs, assemblies and other youth events throughout the year. Alongside these activities they will be a volunteer leader in youth work activities at your church.

The volunteer has applied to YFC to give them opportunities to serve primarily in youth ministry. They may, however, have a musical gifting, a passion for children's ministry, an interest in sports ministry or other such gifts they can bring to your church. Their primary focus however is working with young people aged 11-18.

Our desire is to ensure that the volunteer receives a wide ranging diverse experience from their year spent in Swindon and that this is reflected in their weekly timetable of activities that they are involved in with the church and SYFC.

### **How much time will the student spend at the Church?**

The church is entitled to a maximum of 8 hours of the volunteer's time per week. This time is usually arranged to coincide with the times of the churches existing youth ministry programme/outreach activities. The church can decide how they would like the volunteer to use their time. As an example, attend youth club (2 hours) assist with Sunday morning youth worship (2 hours) attend evening service and help with after church youth group (2 hours) help out at mid-week youth group (2 hours). Where the church does not have a full 8 hours of youth ministry activities for the Volunteer to be involved in, the Volunteer may help at other activities such as a Primary school aged club - or they may only serve the church for 6 hours per week. Please note that administration and supervision undertaken by/for the church is included within these 8 hours. It is important that whatever they do adds value to the church and work done in local schools with SYFC may establish a link via the volunteer between the school and the church.

It should be noted however, that the volunteer is not fully qualified, and the host church should not be looking for them to lead, develop and have overall responsibility for the youth ministry. They are better seen as a trainee youth worker, serving as part of the volunteer youth work team.

### **Where will the student live?**

The church is responsible for finding a suitable host home for the volunteer where they can be provided with a bedroom of their own and access to bathroom and washing facilities. The host is expected, in negotiation with the student to provide breakfast, food for a packed lunch, and an evening meal.

The church usually makes a gift to the host to cover the cost of this provision. Typically this ranges from £25- £50 per week depending on the means of the host and the arrangement with the church. Based on the student being with the host for 40 weeks, this totals in the region of £1000 - £2000 for the year.

### **Are there likely to be any other costs?**

The host church is responsible for reimbursing the volunteer for any resources, materials and expenditure which they are asked to make to run any of the youth work activities in the church (e.g. Sweets for prizes at a youth club etc...)

### **How can the church support the student?**

The volunteer receives support and pastoral care from the SYFC team as well as the National YFC team who run the programme. They will also be provided with a local mentor who does not work for SYFC or go to the host church.

The host church is expected to welcome the volunteer into the church family and as part of that Christian community provide a level of pastoral care and support for the volunteer, as they would any other church member. We hope that within their weekly timetable there would be space for the volunteer to attend a church service or a mid-week home group to ensure that they do not simply serve the church but are spiritually fed too.

### **Who manages the Volunteer?**

SYFC will provide a line manager for the volunteer who will be responsible for managing their workload and all other management responsibilities.

It is also useful, however, for a member of the church leadership team, or the church minister to be appointed as the Church line manager. This might involve having a regular meeting with the volunteer - say every two weeks - to check all is going well and generally being available for the student to talk to should they need to.

It is important that when the volunteer is serving in a church youth group, they know who the group leader is and who they are responsible to for that activity/event.

The Church Line Manager, the SYFC line Manager and the Volunteer will meet together once a term to ensure everything is running smoothly. It works best when the placement church and SYFC have strong communication links so that expectations are understood and issues or problems are confronted and dealt with swiftly and responsibly.

### **What training does the Volunteer receive?**

The Volunteer will receive training in their first week with SYFC. This will include Child Protection training. Other training will be provided throughout the year either locally or via YFC Head Office. Should there be specific training that the volunteer will need to complete a role at the church, then the church will need to offer this specifically for them

### **Why should my Church consider being a placement church for a Volunteer?**

Our previous experience has shown us that volunteers can make a huge positive impact to a churches youth ministry and make a real difference to the lives of the young people they meet through this work at their host church.

If you would be interested in hosting volunteer or would like to talk about how a volunteer could support your youth ministry, please Dave Clarke at [dave@syfc.org.uk](mailto:dave@syfc.org.uk) . Alternatively, give us a call on 01793 977696.