

HOST FAMILY INFORMATION



Experiment in
International
Living UK

Thank you for enquiring about becoming an EIL host family. We hope that you will find the following information useful and that you will decide to join our hosting network!

EIL UK is a registered charity based in Malvern, Worcestershire and is part of a Federation of over 25 member organisations around the world. From its creation in 1936, EIL has aimed to promote inter-cultural understanding through meeting people from different nations. EIL believes that people 'learn to live together by living together'. Part of our work involves arranging programmes for overseas groups or individuals to visit the UK and for British people to travel abroad. In collaboration with our partners, arrangements are made to ensure a well-organised and memorable visit.

Homestays are an integral part of our programmes and below is some information which may help you decide whether being a host family is for you.

What type of visitor will I host?

This will vary according to the programme. The visitor will always be from a different country - they may be a high school or university student or a more mature person. They could be a lone traveller or part of a group programme and will be coming to stay because they want to learn about and experience British culture and family life.

How long do visitors stay?

Visitors may stay for a couple of days or a few weeks. Some will come for longer periods, for example 4 or even 10 months. It is up to you as the host to decide which length of visit suits you.

What will the visitor do here?

The majority of visitors will be out during the day Monday to Friday i.e. for high school and group programmes, but will spend the weekend joining in with your family life and activities.

However their time is organised, we ask that you spend time talking to them, sharing your life and experiences and taking an interest in theirs. It is not necessary to spend all your time with the visitor and you should allow them a degree of independence and privacy, especially if the visitor is staying for a longer period of time. We do not expect you to act as a tour guide or full time entertainer!

Do host families get paid?

EIL host families do not host for the money – they host because they enjoy learning about and sharing different cultures. A small amount is paid to cover basic expenses incurred and any monies paid are exempt from tax and National Insurance contributions. Expenses vary from £19 per night for short term stays to £98 per week for longer stays.

Why should I host?

All families tell us how much they gain from the experience and they often develop life-long relationships with their visitor (families have been invited on holiday and to weddings all around the world!). The whole family can benefit from hosting - especially children who not only get to hear about life in a different country but may also be inspired to learn a different language!

What do I need to consider?

Before applying to be an EIL host family, you need to ask yourselves the following questions. Are all members of the household:

- willing to share your home and activities with someone from a different cultural background?
- keen to learn about the visitor's way of life?
- clear about rules in your home and able to be consistent and fair in enforcing them?
- tolerant to people who may have different views and beliefs?

What EIL expects of you

EIL is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all host families to share this commitment. Before being accepted as an EIL host family, every person over 18 in your home, including temporary residents, will need an acceptable Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure (EIL can provide forms if necessary).

You must be able to provide a private room suitable for a visitor, all necessary facilities (e.g. electricity, heating, washing machine, etc.) and all meals (breakfast, packed lunch and cooked dinner).

You will need to have a sensitivity to the cultural differences between you and your visitor, understand their needs and be able to explain your own.

The most important thing is that you are welcoming and treat the visitor as a member of your family.

What EIL expects of your visitor

We ensure that everyone is clear that during their stay they must:

- Fit in with family life, including helping with household chores and respect the house rules
- Provide their own activity money and pay for any personal items, trips or entertainment
- Be clear about their individual needs, i.e. diet, allergies, etc.

Support

You are not alone! Host families are often part of a hosting 'community' which is co-ordinated by an EIL Local Representative. The Local Rep arranges the placement with you and is available to help with any problems.

If you live in an area which is not linked to an established hosting community, you would then be one of our 'Individual Host Families' and deal directly with a dedicated EIL staff member.

EIL has a 24 hour emergency phone number which is: **0300 3030 173**.

The application process

If you decide that you would like to host for EIL, the next steps will be:

- Complete the application form and return it to EIL at the address below or return to your Local Rep if they gave it to you;
- You will be contacted by EIL or the Local Rep to arrange a home visit;
- EIL will take up references and arrange for enhanced DBS checks;
- A confirmation letter will be sent to you;
- EIL or Local Rep will contact you with any suitable placements.

If you would like any further information about hosting, please contact EIL. We will be happy to answer any questions and, if you are new to hosting, we could arrange for you to speak to an experienced host family and get the inside story.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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