

Home Hospitality in the UK: An Introduction



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0845 300 1818

Home Hospitality (or 'HoHo') allows Scouts to be welcomed into the homes of Scouts in the area they are visiting. Although often organised as part of a World Scout Jamboree, HoHo can take place anytime. It is the ultimate cultural crossover that also offers a great opportunity to make some fantastic friends from around the world. Scouting's vast international community offers plenty of scope to explore other countries, but hosting HoHo in the UK also provides an opportunity for British Scouts, their family and friends to gain a truly memorable, international experience without even leaving their homes!

Guests will usually share their own cultures with their hosts, showing photos, and perhaps even bringing gifts from their town and country. This offers UK Scouts a unique insight into other ways of life.

Hosting experiences are diverse but essentially the aim is to form lasting International friendships, a better understanding of other cultures and to experience the worldwide family of Scouting at first hand.

There are two main methods of providing HoHo in your area.

FAMILY HOHO

The 'traditional' idea of HoHo allows guests to be hosted in the Scout's home. The guests become part of the family for a few days, joining in with the daily routine and lifestyle.

Whilst welcoming Scouts from overseas can initially be a daunting experience, families with experience of HoHo often say that the stay was a fantastic experience for both the hosts and their guests. Communication is usually the biggest

hurdle you will quickly learn the power of body language, mime and laughter; all adding to the global flavour of the experience.

What's expected from the host?

The following guidelines suggest a minimum level of requirements for host families:

- ✓ Homes should be welcoming, comfortable, clean and safe hosting 2-3 Scouts of the same gender.
- ✓ Guests should have sleeping areas separate from the rest of the family.
- ✓ Participants must have a suitable level of supervision, taking into account their age and maturity.
- ✓ Host families should (if possible) have young people of a similar age to the participants.
- ✓ Host families should involve participants in normal family life as far as possible while considering participant's religious and cultural obligations.
- ✓ To comply with our child protection policies, all family members over the age of 18 must undertake a Scout Association Criminal Records Bureau check or local equivalent. This involves the completion of a simple form, with information being checked against a national database of criminal records.

GROUP HOHO

Group-based hospitality allows a group of international Scouts to be hosted together in accommodation such as a Scout Meeting Place.

The Group or County/ Area is then ideally responsible for implementing a programme and catering for their guests.

What type of accommodation is suitable for Group HoHo?

Accommodation should be clean, safe and indoors (not camping). Guests should have access to toilets, washing and kitchen facilities. Beds or mattress should be provided and there should be separate sleeping areas for male and female Scouts and adult Leaders. If any of the visiting Scouts have Special Needs the suitability of the accommodation or any special requirements will need to be discussed with the visiting Scout's Leader. If HoHo is being offered as part of a larger event, such as a World Scout Jamboree, the organising HoHo team should be made aware of any accommodation suitable for those with Special Needs so that they can be matched with those with the right facilities and experience.

GENERAL POINTS FOR BOTH FAMILY AND GROUP HOHO

What about food/catering?

Guests should be provided with three meals a day, at least one of which should be hot! Breakfast and lunch need not necessarily be cooked and a 'help yourself' arrangement or packed lunch is fine. Hosts should be made aware, in advance, of any special dietary requirements. It is particularly important to remember that visiting Scouts may have particular needs with regards to particular religious or cultural views.

If Scouts are staying in Group accommodation, a team will need to be put in place to co-ordinate catering. Those who have hosted in Group accommodation have found it useful to talk to their guest's Leaders about the menu – even to the point of taking them with them to the supermarket!

Try to provide a balanced menu with both foods that are familiar to your guests, as well as new or

local dishes – fish and chips or produce from a local market for example.

Programme

It is useful to have some kind of outline programme arranged for international guests but this should be reasonably flexible. Think about transport, cost and weather when planning a programme. Sensitivity should also be shown to the cultural and religious needs and expectations of guests. Whilst it is great to offer an exciting range of activities and visits make sure there is time for relaxation - and don't put your guests 'on parade'.

Think about potential language barriers. A welcome or leaving dinner party is a great idea but not if it includes lots of long speeches or entertainment that the guests can't understand!

Essentially HoHo is about making new friends and experiencing another culture, and the programme should be flexible enough to facilitate this. In the past, families and groups have taken their guests to local places of interest, family/group gatherings and have sometimes participated in civic receptions. Even meeting up with Scouts at a locally organised BBQ can be highly enjoyable. Some guests have gone to school with the young people with whom they are staying. Whatever the family or local Scouts decide to do, it need not be costly. The aim of the programme is to help our guests experience our normal way of life, communicate, have fun and to enjoy international friendship.

The question of money

Hosting should be entirely voluntary and no payment is made to the family, host group or County/Area. When deciding to host visiting Scouts, a Group, District or County/Area may decide to fundraise to support joint activities or events. This however, needs to be a local decision by Groups or families. Remember that HoHo is simply about experiencing everyday life here, and therefore hosts need not feel pressured to put on extra special (and costly) activities.

Emergencies

It is a good idea to issue guests on arrival with a list of emergency numbers. If you can also find some local people who speak the language of the visiting Scouts they may be willing to help out in an emergency.

The Leaders of the visiting Scouts should be provided with the address and contact number of the host families. The local HoHo co-ordinator should also be provided with the same information.

Should a serious incident occur, normal Scout guidelines should be followed? Contact the Information Centre (0845 300 1818) for details.

Child Protection

Anyone over the age of 18 at the time of the event who may have unsupervised access to the young people (under 18 years old) will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check (CRB) in England or Wales, a Disclosure Scotland check (DS) or Access Northern Ireland check (ANI). Existing Scout Leaders or Section Assistants who have had a clear Scout Association check return in the last five years need not repeat the process. They may be asked for their unique disclosure number as confirmation. However, someone who has had a non-Scouting check (such as a teacher or Girlguiding UK Leader) will need to complete a new Scout Association check.

Unsupervised access means that another person cleared via the Scout Association is not present. For example, a relative visiting the house of a hosting family need not be checked, as the family members will have undergone the process. However, should that relative need to transport a young person in their car unsupervised, a check would be required.

All adults working with young people under the age of 18 should follow The Scout Association's Yellow Card code of practice. Copies are available free of charge from the Scout Information Centre on 0845 300 1818.

NB. Security checks can take a number of months, so planning ahead is essential.

The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email info.centre@scout.org.uk www.scoutbase.org.uk

Are all these checks really necessary?

The checking process is there to protect young people and their families and should not put off families or Group hosts from applying. Potential hosts will acknowledge the trust put in them by the visiting Scouts and their families.

Other tips and handy hints

- Make international Scouts aware of any UK laws that may affect them and are different to those in their home country (such as those regarding purchase of alcohol).
- Try to make links with international Scouts before they arrive and encourage communication between the young people.
- Make contact with families/groups that have previously hosted and use their experiences to help decide on the programme offered.
- Provide international guests with a phrase book containing key words. Likewise, UK Scouts and their families should try to learn some of their guest's language.
- Make a list of useful phone numbers available to all visiting Scouts i.e. local doctors surgery, taxi numbers and so on.
- Why not use HoHo to gain some positive PR for Scouting publicising the fact that we are a worldwide organisation?
- Encourage Scouts to maintain links once their guests have gone home and possibly arrange a return trip.
- Try to involve all Scouting Sections, Leaders, Assistants, supporters and members of Scout Fellowship with this international experience.
- Write down an evaluation at the end of the stay to help those on future organising teams!

For more information contact the international team at: international@scout.org.uk, Tel. 0208 433 7162