

Rotary Youth Competition Guidelines

2025 –2026

For ROTARIAN USE ONLY

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ

alongside the Information Packs for each
of the Rotary Youth Competitions

Rotary Youth Competition Guidelines 2025-26

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**PLEASE DESTROY ANY EARLIER VERSIONS OF THESE GUIDELINES
AND ENSURE YOU ARE USING
THE 2025-26 INFORMATION PACKS AND ENTRY FORMS**

Introduction

These guidance notes are for **Rotarian use only** and apply to all the Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland (Rotary GB&I) Youth Competitions for 2025-26.

They are designed to promote good practice and outline important legal and procedural requirements. They should be read alongside the relevant public facing 2025-26 Information Packs and entry forms for each competition. If there is any conflict between the Information Pack and these Guidelines, the Information Pack takes precedence.

These Guidelines and Information Packs will be followed at national level clubs, districts, and clusters are strongly encouraged to follow them too. However, you may adjust processes to suit local circumstances as needed but do ensure this is clearly communicated to all those involved in any capacity.

Editable resources available for each competition

- Customisable poster
- Winner certificate
- Participant certificate

These can be downloaded from the members' area of the rotarygbi.org website (login required).

Publicity and the wider work of Rotary

Clubs, Districts and Clusters should actively promote their involvement in Rotary Youth Competitions, taking every opportunity to showcase the broader impact of Rotary.

Why Local Publicity Matters

Local media are typically more interested in local young people than in large Rotary events held in the area. Highlighting individual or group stories is more likely to gain coverage and strengthen Rotary's community profile.

Working Together

Organisers are encouraged to collaborate with:

- District Youth Leads
- Public Image and Membership Teams
- Rotary GB&I Specialist Adviser Teams (Humanitarian Service, Public Image and Membership)
- The Rotary GB&I Competition Team – see below

These Rotarians can provide ideas, support and help with outreach before, during and after the competitions.

Who Can Enter

Competitions are open to all young people, who meet the criteria, as set out in each competition's Information Pack. Entrants may:

- enter privately
- be part of a school, college or youth organisation including:
 - home educated students
 - be RotaKids or Interact members
 - Scout or Guide groups, etc.

However, **all entries must be submitted through a Rotary club**, as outlined in the respective Information Pack.

Creating a Positive Experience

Our competitions aim to encourage young people to develop and showcase their talents. Rotary formalities should be kept to a minimum.

Priority should be given to the experience of the young people, their families and supporters – not Rotarians.

Publicising Results

Rotarians, clubs and districts are encouraged to share the achievements and participation of young people involved at all stages of the competitions. This may include:

- publishing results, photographs or short videos on websites and social media
- sending news items to local newspapers, community newsletters or broadcast media
- letting all entrants, their families, schools or other organisation know when publicity is being arranged

This inclusive approach helps build community support, highlights Rotary's engagement with young people, and encourages future participation.

Using the official Rotary Youth Competition entry forms ensures that the necessary permissions for publicity, including the use of names and images, are in place.

Venues

Venues selected for any stage of a Rotary Youth Competitions should be appropriate to the specific event and supportive of the needs of both the young participants and their supporters.

Venues must meet all legal and ethical criteria for accessibility and safety. They should provide a welcoming environment where young people can perform or display their work confidently and comfortably.

Additional Considerations

- If the event will last more than three hours, light refreshments should be provided or made available for purchase
- Consider seeking sponsorship or donations to help cover costs, e.g. through programme sales might help offset the costs
- Be mindful of travelling times when selecting the venue.

Rotary GB&I Policies and Procedures to be followed

These are the official Rotary GB&I policies and procedures that apply when organising any stage of a Rotary Youth Competition. Local organisers should ensure they are familiar with these requirements and apply them to any related events or activities as appropriate.

Child Protection/Safeguarding:

- The [Rotary GB&I Safeguarding Guidelines](#) **MUST** be followed at all times.
- Local organisers should consult their Club and/or District Safeguarding Officer for advice and support.

Health and Safety:

- Rotary GB&I [Health and Safety procedures](#) must be followed
- A [Rotary Event Plan](#) and [Risk Assessment](#) must be completed for all events
- Clubs should liaise with their Club and/or District Health and Safety Officer to ensure compliance.

Insurance:

- organisers must refer to the [Rotary GB&I Rotary Club Insurance Guide](#), updated annually and available in the members' area (login required).

- for Rotary Year 2025-26, Bartlett & Company Ltd, Rotary's Insurance Brokers, have confirmed that all Rotary Youth Competitions are covered, and no additional notification is required
- organisers are still advised to check the [2025-26 Rotary insurance policy](#) (member login required) relevant to their jurisdiction
- Clubs must still complete the [Rotary Event Plan](#) and [Risk Assessment](#) as outlined in the [insurance guidance](#) for any events to be held.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):

- All personal data must be collected, held and administered in compliance with GDPR
- The official entry form and procedure is GDPR compliant and must not be altered
- Key GDPR requirements:
 - A compliant privacy notice covering all Rotary Youth Competitions/Awards **must** be used and adhered to
 - Each official competition specific entry form is GDPR compliant and is the only one that should be used. Districts and Clusters should ensure that all entrants for District and Cluster stages are using the official competition specific entry form
 - The parental/guardian consent section on the form must be completed including the photo/video permissions within it
 - If any photos or videos of people under 18 or adults at risk are included with the entry a signed consent form/s **must** be submitted for them with the entry
 - Ensure consent for media use (local, national, international) is highlighted to nominees and their parents/guardians if under 18 or not legally eligible to give consent
 - No photographs of entrants should be collected in advance of any stage of a Rotary Youth Competition. National winners' images may be used in the national final for face-to-face competitions in the event programme
 - In accordance with the Rotary privacy notice for all Rotary Youth Competitions & Awards, all data, including spreadsheets and databases **must** be securely destroyed within 3 months of the national event for face-to-face competitions for within 3 months of the announcement of the winners of the non face-to-face competitions
 - Rotary GB&I will retain only the names and official images of the winners of the national competitions for future publicity. No other details will be retained unless further specific consent is obtained.

Competition Contacts

For general queries relating to these guidelines, or the Information Packs and other materials for individual competitions, please contact the Rotary Youth Competitions Enquiry Team in the first instance at: Competitions@rotarygbi.org.

The Enquiry Team will refer any competition-specific or technical queries to the appropriate specialist team for that competition.

Details of the members of each competition team, along with other internal Rotary information, will shortly be available in the member's area of the rotarygbi.org website at [Rotary Youth competitions](#).

Dates for National Finals and other stages of each competition

The Rotary Youth Competition timetable should be planned in reverse from the National Final dates, allowing sufficient time for each stage. **Late entries will not be accepted.**

National Final Deadlines

- For **all non face-to-face** competitions, Districts must submit winning entries to the Rotary Support Centre by **Thursday 30th April 2026**
- The **face-to-face National Finals** for Rotary Young Chef and Rotary Young Musician will take place as a combined event with the Rotary Young Citizen Awards on **Saturday 25th April 2026** at a venue to be advised.

Cluster Finals – Face-to-face Competitions

Each Cluster will set the date and venue for their Cluster finals, ensuring that all events are completed in time for the necessary information about the winners competing at the national finals to be submitted by **Tuesday 17th March 2026**.

Cluster Final organisers must notify Districts of their chosen date as soon as possible.

District Finals – all competitions

District organisers must:

- notify clubs of District Final dates for face-to-face competitions
- notify clubs of the submission deadline for non face-to-face entries (Rotary Young Artist, Environmentalist, Photographer and Writer)
- Allow enough time for District winners to progress to the next stage (Cluster final for Face-to-face and National Final for Non Face-to-face)

Club competitions

Clubs must plan for their local heat/s to ensure that;

- winners of face-to-face competitions can advance to District finals on time
- winners of non face-to-face competitions meet the district submission deadlines.

District Entry to Cluster or National Finals

A competitor or team may only compete at District level if they have taken part in a club competition or, under exceptional circumstances, have been assessed as of appropriate standard by the District Youth Lead (or their representative).

Only District winners will progress to:

- Cluster finals for face-to-face competitions
- National finals for non face-to-face competitions.

Cluster Final for face-to-face competitions only

The following are the Cluster groupings for the Rotary Young Chef and Rotary Young Musician. Once details of Cluster finals for these competitions have been agreed, districts and clubs within the Cluster should be notified as soon as possible.

Cluster	District
Central & Eastern England	1080, 1090, 1240, 1260
London & The South	1110, 1120, 1130, 1145
Midlands	1060, 1070, 1210, 1220
North of England & North Wales	1030, 1040, 1180, 1190, 1285
Scotland & Ireland	1010, 1160, 1320
Southern Wales & South West	1100, 1150, 1175, 1200

Organisers are encouraged to rotate Cluster Final venues where practical, recognising that some districts may have more suitable facilities for specific competitions. Collaboration across districts is key to ensuring high-quality and inclusive Cluster finals.

ROTARY GB&I NATIONAL FINALS

RECOGNITION, PRIZES AND AWARDS

At National Final level for 2025/26, recognition will be given to all participants with certificates of participation for all entrants and certificates for the winners

Templates will be available

- recognition of participation certificates for all stages of each competition
- winners at each stage of each competition

If Clusters, Districts and Clubs include prizes at their stage of any of the competitions it is recommended that they be vocationally relevant. For example, a master class or work experience with an expert in the relevant field e.g. a professional musician or renowned chef or a prize that supports further development of their skills.

Plagiarism or Close Copied Images

Plagiarism or close-copied images are not permitted in any Rotary Youth Competition. It is important that we respect and protect the originality of creative work. While inspiration can come from many sources, there is a clear distinction between being inspired by another's work and copying it too closely. For the purpose of the Rotary Youth Competitions

- 'Close copying' refers to work that, in the opinion of a reasonable observer, appears strikingly similar in key elements to an existing piece created by someone else
- We are seeking original entries that relate to the theme of the competition in a personal and creative way – not reproductions or adaptations of existing material.

Competition organisers and judges should remain vigilant to ensure the integrity of each submission.

Entry forms for all Rotary Youth Competitions

All entries must be submitted through a Rotary club. It is the responsibility of the club to provide entrants with the correct unaltered 2025/26 official entry form for the relevant competition.

Rotarians must access the Members' area of the rotarygbi.org website, navigate to the relevant competition page, and download the entry form for that specific competition.

Using the official entry form ensures that all legal and data protection requirements are met.

Submission of Entries for non face-to-face competitions

When submitting entries for non face-to-face competitions the following requirements must be met:

- Entries must not be photocopied or photographed without permission from the competition organiser
- Judges' comments from previous rounds should not appear on the entries themselves
- Entries must not display names or identifying information but should clearly be linked to the corresponding official entry form
- Any necessary consent forms for photographic or video images used must be included

- For District submissions to the National Final winning entries should name the documents with the district and competition category in the file name for the documents

Entry Form Requirements

- The official Rotary GB&I entry form must be fully completed and submitted by the entrant
- For non face-to-face competitions, the entry form must be submitted separately from the competition work, but be clearly linked to it
- The same official entry form must be used at all stages of the competition. It should be passed on to the next organiser as an entrant progresses to the next stage
- Use the 'Official Purposes Only' box on the Entry Form to record each stage

Submitting to Rotary GB&I

Winning entries at District level for the non face-to-face competitions should be submitted to Rotary GB&I for the National Final to the Rotary Member Services and Events Team by emailing them to cds@rotarygbi.org.

File Size Limits

IMPORTANT: Each email must **not exceed 15Mb**. Emails over this size will not be received.

If your files are too large:

- split them across multiple emails
- or contact Andy Smith at cds@rotarygbi.org to arrange an alternative file transfer method.

Judges

National Level

At the National Level judges will be appointed by Rotary GB&I and will not be Rotarians. A Rotarian with relevant expertise will act as the liaison/advisor to the judges providing logistical support and context where needed.

Club, District and Cluster stages

To ensure fairness and transparency at earlier stages, it is recommended that:

- Rotarians are not used as judges
- a Rotarian with appropriate experience acts as a liaison/advisor for the judges but should not influence decisions
- different judges are used at each stage of the competition, so no judge is serving for a subsequent stage involving any of the same entrant/s

APPENDIX 1

Specific Competition Guidance additional to details found in the Information Packs

1. Rotary Young Artist

[Information Pack for Rotary Young Artist](#)

National Final

Winning entries from districts are to be sent digitally to the Rotary GB&I Support Centre by **30th April 2026**.

2. Rotary Young Chef

[Information Pack for Rotary Young Chef](#)

The competition now requires a two-course healthy meal (main and dessert) for two people with a maximum cost of £18.00.

District Final

Rotary Clubs must notify their District of their intention to submit an entrant by completing any reservation form or following District specific instructions and pay any applicable fee.

National Final

The Rotary Young Chef Final will be held on **Saturday 25th April 2026** at a venue to be advised.

Knife Skills

Safe and appropriate knife use should be emphasised. Some competitors may need support or reminders in this area.

Tips:

- A sharp knife is a **safe** knife
- Care & attention are required when working with knives in the kitchen

DO

- Use a knife suitable for the task & food being cut
- Keep your knife sharp with a good sharpener
- Always cut on a stable surface (chopping board)
- Take your time and stay focused
- Handle knives carefully when cleaning or storing
- When cutting fruits or vegetables, cut them so there is a flat side and lay it down for stable cutting

DON'T

- Leave loose knives on work surfaces where they could accidentally be pushed off
- Try to catch a falling knife
- Use knives improperly e.g. as a can opener
- Carry knives while holding other items
- Engage in horseplay with a knife
- Carry a knife in your pocket

To illustrate these rules, watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ydc_SaQ_eRQ

3. Rotary Young Environmentalist

[Information Pack for Rotary Young Environmentalist](#)

National Final

Winning entries from districts are to be sent digitally to the Rotary GB&I Support Centre by **30th April 2026**.

4. Rotary Young Musician

[Information Pack for Rotary Young Musician](#)

National Final

The Rotary Young Musician Final will be held on **Saturday 25th April 2025** at a venue to be advised.

Venue

Cluster and Finals often feature performances of an exceptionally high standard. Ideally, chosen venues should reflect the prestigious nature of the competition, offer acoustics that enhance performance and be superior to standard school halls where possible.

A suitable acoustic piano should be provided.

- A well maintained upright piano is preferable to a poor quality grand piano
- Digital pianos are **not acceptable** at Cluster or National level
- Seek expert opinion if unsure about piano suitability

Format

This is a live performance competition.

- No recordings are permitted or accepted at cluster and national finals
- Each competitor performs a selection of works of their own choice, not exceeding 13 minutes

If a club, district or cluster reduces the maximum time for a performance at an earlier stage from the 13 minutes this must be clearly communicated to the competitors. It will be a maximum of 13 minutes for the national final.

If a competitor is using an electrical instrument or a vocal, guitar or percussion entrant is using electrical equipment they must show the organiser on the day of the competition a current Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) certificate as set out in the Information Pack.

Performance

Organisers must provide:

- practice areas available for the competitors and their accompanists
- a suitable piano for performances and accompaniment (see the advice in the Venue notes above).

A master of ceremonies should invite each competitor in ballot order, to the front or stage to perform. Competitors should briefly introduce their programme before performing.

Licensing

Venues must hold a Performing Rights Society (PRS) License. If not, organisers must obtain one via www.prsformusic.com.

5. Rotary Young Photographer

[Information Pack for Young Photographer](#)

National Final

Winning entries from districts are to be sent digitally to the Rotary GB&I Support Centre by **30th April 2026**.

6. Rotary Young Writer

[Information Pack for Rotary Young Writer](#)

National Final

Winning entries from districts are to be sent digitally to the Rotary GB&I Support Centre by **30th April 2026**.

7. Rotary Youth Speaks

[Information Pack for Rotary Youth Speaks](#)

National Final

There will be **no National Final** for Rotary Youth Speaks in 2025-26.

Each district and cluster will decide if they will be running this competition at district and cluster level or not and advise their clubs accordingly.

8. Rotary Youth Speaks: A Debate

[Information Pack for Rotary Youth Speaks: A Debate](#)

National Final

There will be **no National Final** for Rotary Youth Speaks: A Debate in 2025-26.

Each district and cluster will decide if they will be running this competition at district and cluster level or not and advise their clubs accordingly.