

Greetings, I read avidly through the CVs and personal statements and was disappointed that not one of the candidates this year had a clear statement on the views of said person regarding recruiting and training of younger people. Not just children or teenagers, would also include persons up to say 25 or 30. Does the Board not have an established policy for this, to motivate these age groups more into amateur radio. Peter Ebsworth, G8CKB (from Norway)

Answered by Andy Mace, MOMUX

For those that don't know me, I'm Andy, MOMUX and I came on to the Board last April [2020]. I'm the youngest member of the current Board by a good 20-odd years and therefore took on the Board Liaison role for the Youth Team. I also look after Amateur Radio on the International Space Station [ARISS] and the Technical Forum.

When it comes to youth, the guidelines that we have is the RSGB Youth Team aims to inspire young people up to the age of about 25 into amateur radio.

I just want to go through a couple of things that we are doing at the moment:

The RSGB does currently give free Membership to those in full-time education up to the age of 25 and to those not in education up to the age of 21. They have to have a licence and, unfortunately, it still requires a written application, but they can get that.

The RSGB Board is currently actively supporting IARU YOTA [Youngsters On The Air] activities and we hosted the YOTA Summer Camp in 2017. We have a general policy where we encourage people of all ages in amateur radio. The current Youth Team, which is headed up by Rob, G2RE, has done a lot of work on the 'barriers to entry' that stop more young people getting on the air. As an example, the most obvious is the word 'exam'. I think few young people like that word. Any parents out there, like myself, know that young people don't want to study for an exam that's going to enable a future career, let alone one that involves a hobby.

Some stuff that we are going to be doing; the Youth team is going to put in some adult Youth Leader roles to progress our goals. If anyone is interested in helping us out in that I'll give an email at the end. I would very much welcome an email.

So, I think looking into the future, we have some fantastic specialist groups that the RSGB run already, some of them are of little interest to those of a younger age range. For example (but not criticising any groups we have at the moment), the Planning Committee is not likely to be seen and used by a younger age group that don't own property yet. It might benefit their parents but not the youngsters themselves. So I think in order to attract younger Members we need to do a bit of research to develop and create some new services and initiatives that show value to that younger age group that will enable youngsters to get enthused like we did when we were young and get to enjoy the hobby. I think, ultimately, it boils down to having the right people, a diverse Board of Directors and people that have a passion for bringing in the next generation of amateurs into the hobby and setting up the RSGB as a business to cater for that. In summary, yes youth is very important, but in my view, to increase numbers we need to do a bit of refocussing and modernisations. It's going to be a slow and inexorable change process but has to be done with the existing Members' support no matter what age range and help put it in rather than put in a big change. I'm happy to take any other questions around youth or other things I look after, via email to MOMUX@rsgb.org.uk

