

# Home Based Carers



# Home based carers

Home based childcarers are employed by parents to provide care for children in the family home. They may include nannies and au pairs.

They may fit in with unusual working hours and work part-time or even live in. Some may agree to do additional jobs around the house. Home based childcare gives you a greater say in how your child is cared for, for example what they eat and when they sleep. It may also be a more affordable form of care if you have children of different ages, whom you want to be cared for together. You may feel that your children will be happier and more comfortable being cared for in their own home.

Home based carers are not registered or inspected by Ofsted unless they have joined the Voluntary Childcare Register.

## Employing a nanny

Nannies provide childcare in the family home and can look after children of any age. Nannies often work flexible hours and may be a good option if you work hours that other childcare providers cannot cover. Not all nannies are trained and there are no legal requirements for them to hold any formal childcare qualifications. It is your responsibility as a parent to ensure that the person you employ is suitable.

### Step 1: Drawing up a job description

You will need to decide what you expect from your nanny. Consider the following:

- What will their duties include? e.g. childcare, cooking, basic housekeeping
- What hours would you expect them to work?
- Would they live-in or come in daily?
- Wages and salaries
- Start date and length of contract
- Terms and conditions e.g. holidays, sick leave
- Special requirements e.g. evenings, weekends, overnight care, driving licence, non-smoker.

## Step 2: Advertising for a nanny

Advertising the position and finding the right person can take time, so start looking well in advance. You can find a nanny in a number of ways:

- Advertise the position in a local paper, magazine or on a notice board. Give your general area rather than your home address. Include your telephone number as the point of contact
- Contact a nanny agency, which registers individuals in a similar way to a recruitment agency. You will find a list of these in a telephone directory or alternatively the Family Information Service can provide lists of nanny agencies
- Contact colleges that offer courses in childcare.

## Step 3: Interviewing applicants

A carefully conducted interview will increase your chances of finding the right person. Follow the tips below to ensure you gather all the important information from the applicant:

- Allow one hour per applicant
- Get your partner/relative/friend to interview with you
- Prepare a list of questions (see below) and make notes on their answers
- Ask the same questions to each applicant.

### Possible questions to ask:

- How long have you been a nanny?
- What ages of children have you worked with?
- What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses when working with children?
- How would you manage my child's behaviour?
- What qualifications do you have? (e.g. first aid/training)
- How might you spend the day with my child?
- Why did you leave your last position and, if appropriate, why are you leaving your present position?

Remember, you are picking a nanny who is suitable for your family. Ask questions on things that are important to you.

### What to look for in their answers:

- Childcare qualifications
- Experience of working with children – what age and in what type of setting?
- First aid training
- The ability to plan safe and fun learning opportunities
- An interest in children as individuals
- A confident and friendly personality.

## What do your children think?

Your children will spend much more time with the nanny than you will. Let them meet the potential nanny and see how they interact together. Suggest a trial period of employment.

### Interviews are a two way process.

Give the nanny an opportunity to ask you questions as well.

## Step 4: Checking your nanny

Once you have decided on the right nanny for your family, carry out some basic checks so you are confident that you are making the right decision.

### Always ask for:

**Proof of identity x 2** – passport, driving licence and/or birth certificate. Ensure you see the originals and at least one must carry a photograph.

**References x 2** – one should be from their most recent or current employer. If the nanny has not left college then one should be from the college tutor and one from their final year placement.

**A full employment history** – this should be from when they left full-time education to the present day. Fully explore any gaps in employment and ask for any evidence you feel is necessary. Be wary if they appear uncomfortable or unable to give a full explanation.

**Qualification certificates** – ask to see the originals, not copies.

**Medical check** – do they have any health problems, or have they had a lot of time off sick? Would they be prepared to obtain a letter from their GP confirming their fitness to work with children?

**Criminal Record check** – for a small fee the nanny can apply for a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Check. This will only list convictions that are unspent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which have to be declared when applying to work with children. If the nanny has already had a CRB check, ask to see their disclosure certificate (this will need to be an 'enhanced disclosure check'). Lists of agencies that will perform CRB checks can be obtained from the Family Information Service (01905 790560).

## Step 5 – Employing a nanny

As an employer you will be expected to do the following:

- Have employer and public liability insurance – you can get this from your home insurers.
- You must deduct tax and National Insurance from your nanny's pay unless you are paying less than the lower earnings limit. This can be done through the Inland Revenue's PAYE scheme. For advice and guidance contact your local Inland Revenue Office and ask for the New Employers Section.

Other things to consider as an employer:

- It is good practice to have a Contract of Employment. This should set out the main particulars of the nanny's roles and responsibilities: salary, holiday arrangements, sick pay entitlements and notice periods. An example form of a 'written statement of employment particulars' is available to view online at [www.berr.gov.uk/publications](http://www.berr.gov.uk/publications)
- You should familiarise yourself with Statutory Employment Rights, e.g. protection against unfair dismissal, minimum wage, unlawful deductions in wages, adverse treatment, etc. A leaflet 'Individual Rights and Responsibilities of Employees' is available to view online at [www.berr.gov.uk/publications](http://www.berr.gov.uk/publications).

You and your nanny will need to work together as a team to ensure you develop a good working relationship. Open and honest communication will help your children learn, play and enjoy themselves in a safe and secure environment. Remember to listen not only to your nanny, but also to your child as they are the most important part of the equation!

## The Ofsted Voluntary Childcare Register

The Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR) is open to those who want to register but do not have to do so. This includes:

- People who care for children aged eight and over
- Home-based carers such as nannies
- Other providers not currently required to register such as those who provide sports coaching.

Those who choose to register on the VCR must agree to meet a set of requirements about: the people who have access to children, the premises where childcare is provided and the provision of childcare. You can find the requirements for the VCR on the website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

People on the VCR will undergo an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and must have a current first aid qualification. Ofsted charge a registration fee. An annual fee for continued registration is also applicable.

Each year Ofsted will inspect a proportion of those who choose to register on the Voluntary Childcare Register and check that they comply with requirements. Where the provision is in the child's own home they will seek permission from the child's parents to enter the premises prior to inspection. After these inspections Ofsted will issue a letter. If the provider does not meet all the necessary requirements they will tell them what needs to be put right. Copies of letters will be published on the Ofsted website.

## Au pairs

Au pairs are often people from overseas who stay in your home and look after your children. For this they receive lodgings, board and pocket money (usually around £50 per week). Au pairs work on average 25 hours a week, with 1 or 2 evening babysitting sessions.

They should be provided with their own room, have the opportunity to study and learn the language and have free time each day at a mutually convenient time. It is advisable to have clear written instructions/guidelines that you and the au pair agree with. These should include information on your family and outline any duties they will have and should include any house rules. Send the au pair a copy before they arrive in the country so they know what is expected of them in advance. This also gives them the opportunity to query anything they don't agree with. Encourage the au pair to provide you with some information about them too.

The au pair will normally arrange their own flights etc, but the family usually arrange to pick them up from the airport/station. Remember, au pairs are often quite young and it may be their first time away from their own family. Be patient and sensitive to their feelings. A structured induction in the first few weeks will help them settle. Whilst the au pair is living with your family, give them as much opportunity as possible to learn and practice English, as this could be their main reason for visiting the country. It may be worthwhile finding out about language schools or classes in your local area.

Au pairs are not usually registered or trained to work with children.



## Useful contacts

### Worcestershire Family Information Service

01905 790 560

If you would like any further information or a list of nanny/au pair agencies, please contact Worcestershire's Family Information Service (FIS).

The Family Information Service provides free and impartial information for families with children aged 0-19 years on:

- Childcare
- FREE early education places
- Sport and leisure activities
- Rights of working parents
- Support services for families
- Support for children with special needs and/or disabilities.

The FIS also provides information for people who want to work with children, young people and their families.

### Other useful contacts:

#### Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

020 7215 5000

[www.berr.gov.uk/employment](http://www.berr.gov.uk/employment)

Provides a free and confidential complaints service about agency conduct. It will investigate any complaints made by families or nannies.

#### Working Families

0800 013 0313

[www.workingfamilies.org.uk](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk)

#### ACAS

08457 474747

[www.acas.org.uk/](http://www.acas.org.uk/)

Employment Rights – e.g. sick pay, maternity rights, etc.

#### Ofsted Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR)

08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/parents)

# Family Information Service

Tel: **01905 790560**

Fax: **01905 790551**

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm  
Answer machine at all other times.



Email: **familyinfo@worcestershire.gov.uk**

Website: **www.worcestershire.gov.uk/familyinfo**

Address: **3 De Salis Court, De Salis Drive, Hampton Lovett,  
Droitwich, Worcestershire, WR9 0QE**

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Family Information Service on 01905 790560 or at familyinfo@worcestershire.gov.uk.

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All information correct at time of going to print **August 2007**