

Childcare in your own home



Home Childcarers

Home Childcarers are a form of approved childcare to enable parents to have their children cared for in their own home. They can look after children of up to two families at any one time and can either be self employed or employed by one of more of the families.

Do Home Childcarers need to register?

Home Childcarers do not have to register with Ofsted but may choose to register on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register to:

- Reassure parents that they are checked, insured and have had minimum training
- Enable eligible parents to claim the Childcare Element of Working Families Tax Credit

What are the requirements to register?

The requirements for registration are in the 'Guide to Registration on the Childcare Register' which can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk and will include:

- A first aid qualification
- Hold the minimum of Level 2 childcare qualification
- Aged 18 or over
- An enhanced DBS disclosure
- Public liability insurance

How long does it take to register?

The process could take up to 12 weeks, but will depend on the checks that need to be carried out.

How much does it cost?

The cost is £103 registration fee onto the Childcare Register and an annual fee payable on the anniversary of your registration date is £103.

Nannies

Nannies do not have to register with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) because the care is provided in your own home. A nanny can live in your home or come to work daily. A live-in nanny should be provided with their own room and food on top of whatever you pay them.

Many nannies will have a childcare qualification but this is not compulsory. It is best to use a nanny who is trained in first aid.

If you employ a nanny it is your responsibility to deduct tax and national insurance from their pay. Ring your local Inland Revenue Office for information. Ring the **New Employer Helpline** on **0300 200 3211** for advice about national insurance contributions and statutory sick pay.

Their salary depends on qualifications, experience and duties. Nannies are covered by the National Minimum Wage. Contact the **Inland Revenue National Minimum Wage Helpline** on **0300 123 1100** for information.

You should provide your nanny with a written contract of employment stating hours, responsibilities, salary, holidays, sickness pay, terms of dismissal and probationary period.

Always check their employment history and at least two references. One should be the nanny's last or present employer. If they are coming to you straight from college, ask for a reference from the college tutor and from their final year placement.

Au pairs

An au pair is usually a foreign student who wants to learn English. An au pair should not work for more than 25 hours a week and they should have at least two days off each week to attend English language school and enjoy some free time. You must give them a weekly allowance of at least £70, their own bedroom and all meals.

Most au pairs will be 17–27 years old with no formal childcare training. They should not be given responsibility of a young baby. An au pair is better suited to school aged children. As well as providing help with childcare, they can do light housework and the odd nights babysitting.

To find our more information visit www.bapaa.org.uk

Parent's help

A parent's help with no formal childcare qualifications will be better suited to caring for school aged children. They could look after younger children if you work part-time but this would be at your discretion.

You would pay them an hourly rate. Local childminder fees can be used as a guideline – call the Children and Families Information Service to find out what these are.

A typical parent's help does not usually live in. They will come to work daily, take your child to and from school, give them a snack or their evening meal and do some light housework. They do not have to register with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) because the childcare is provided in your own home.

Finding a nanny, au pair or parent's help

- Contact the Children and Families Information Service to find out if there are any nanny agencies in your area.
- Ask friends, relatives and other families if they can recommend anyone.
- Try local advertising – school noticeboards, Jobcentre Plus offices or colleges. The advert should state the hours of work, duties, number of children, their ages and the area where you live. If you don't want to put your telephone number, set up a box number through the post office for applicants to write to.
- Ask applicants for details of their experience, qualifications, employment history and an explanation of why they want the job.
- Arrange for someone to interview applicants with you. Prepare a list of questions and don't be scared to probe their answers!
- Here are some examples of questions to ask:
 - What qualifications and training do you have?
 - What experience of caring for children do you have?
 - What do you enjoy about caring for children?
 - How would you organise my child's day?
 - How do you feel about early starts and late finishes?

- What's your policy on potty training, food, sweets, television, discipline?
- How have any difficulties in past jobs been resolved?
- Ask for at least two references (make sure you check them), two proofs of identity (passport, driving licence or birth certificate) and qualification certificates (if applicable). Do not accept photocopies.
- Let your child meet the applicants to see how they react to each other before making a final decision and if you are unsure about anyone, don't use them!

Can I claim tax credits to help pay for childcare in my own home?

Yes, if the home childcarer joins the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register. They can do this as long as they do not look after the children of more than two families. To find out more contact the Children and Families Information Service.

Babysitters

A babysitter will look after your children in your own home for short periods of time.

How would I find and choose a babysitter?

- Ask people you know if they can recommend someone they have used before.
- Place an advert in a local shop window or on a college noticeboard.
- Contact the Children and Families Information Service to find out if any registered childminders in your area provide babysitting.

Some precautions are advisable!

Ask a potential babysitter to provide you with at least two people you can contact for a reference. This could be a parent who has used them recently, a college tutor or a teacher. Speak to the referees on the telephone and ask them to back up what they say in writing.

Introduce the potential babysitter to your children to see how they get on. Ask your child what they think before making a decision. If your child isn't happy about a particular person, try someone else.

Before using a babysitter, discuss house rules! For example, if the children wake up are they allowed to come downstairs? Can the children have a snack? Can the babysitter bring a friend?

As a parent, you are responsible for ensuring that your children are not left in a potentially dangerous situation so make sure you feel comfortable and happy with the babysitter you choose. Follow your instincts and if you or your child have any doubts about someone, don't use them!

How much should I pay a babysitter?

This is something you will have to discuss before any babysitting takes place. The time and day of the week should be taken into account. For example, you would pay a higher hourly rate for weekend babysitting and for after midnight. Refreshments should be provided for the babysitter and if they don't have transport you should take them home or pay for a taxi.

What if there was an emergency?

Give the babysitter a contact telephone number, just in case. If this can't be you, ask a relative or friend who lives nearby.

What is the law regarding babysitters?

Babysitters do not have to register with any agency because they are looking after your children in your own home. There is no law in England to prevent anyone of any age babysitting but it is advisable to use someone

over 16 who is mature enough to keep your children safe. A person under the age of 16 cannot be charged with neglect or ill-treatment of a child left in their care.

What about qualifications and experience?

Most will not have a formal childcare qualification but it would be good practice to use someone trained in first aid. Also, try to use someone with experience of babysitting or looking after younger siblings.

Can I leave my child home alone?

NSPCC advice says: there is no law that states the minimum age a child can be left alone. However, it is an offence to leave a child alone when doing so puts him or her at risk. Parents can be prosecuted for wilful neglect if they leave a child unsupervised 'in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health'.

You should never leave a baby or young child alone, whether asleep or awake, even for a few minutes. Left unsupervised, it doesn't take long for something to happen.

Most children under 13 should not be left for more than a short period of time. Under 16s should never be left alone overnight.

For advice please contact the NSPCC Helpline on **0800 800 5000**.

For more information please contact:

Children and Families Information Service,

**Children and Families Services, Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate,
Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1RD**

T: 03457 125 737

E: childrens.information@cumbria.gov.uk

www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrenservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis.asp

www.facebook.com/ChildrenandFamiliesInformationService

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