

FINDING WORK

Safety & Screening as a Nanny or Au Pair

- **We recommend that nannies and au pairs work directly with employers, as agencies and platforms take a considerable cut of our wages and often provide minimal services to nannies and au pairs.**
- But we realise that agencies and platforms can be a useful way of finding work. Some of the platforms we use are Bubble, Koru Kids, Childcare.co.uk, Care.com, and Gumtree.
- There are also lots of groups on Facebook where nanny and au pair jobs are advertised. A few examples are *Nannies in London*, *South East London Nannies*, *SW London Au Pairs and Nannies*, and *Nannies/Childminders in London*. Jobs are posted on these groups by agencies and employers and nannies and au pairs can post when they are looking for jobs.

Topics to cover with potential employers

However you come into contact with a potential employer, there are some important topics you should cover before you accept the job. Once you have agreed on these issues, it is a good idea to get your agreement in writing. This helps if you have any later disagreements with your employer. Many of these topics are covered in more detail in the next section on employment rights.

- Hours: agree with your employer in advance how many hours they will expect you to work per week
- Holiday Pay: make sure your employer knows that you are entitled to paid holiday
- Sick Pay: make sure your employer knows the requirements for statutory sick pay, and ideally agree contractual contractual sick pay, e.g., your employer will still pay you in full for days you take off sick
- Late Cancellations and Flexibility: agree a late cancellations policy, for example, if your employer cancels a shift with less than 48 hours notice, you should still be paid for the cancelled shift. If your employer expects you to be available or on call for certain hours or days, then they should pay you for that time, even if you don't end up working
- Notice Period: confirm how many weeks' notice your employer needs to give you if they wish to end your employment and how many weeks' notice you need to give if you want to resign
- Duties: make sure you cover what duties your employer expects, for example, would they like you to do any housework in addition to childcare, and how will they pay you for this extra work?
- Self-isolation (COVID): cover what will happen if either you or your employer are required to self-isolate as a result of COVID
- Pay review: most employees receive pay reviews and increases every year. Ask your employer to include a regular pay review so that you have the opportunity to ask for increased pay

Screening & Safety Tips

Before you meet a potential employer in person, it's important to follow some steps to ensure your safety.

- Always speak to an employer on the phone before agreeing to meet them in person. Ideally, arrange a video call.
- If you are responding to a Facebook or Gumtree advertisement, make sure to check the employer's account page. Do they have a picture of themselves? Is there anything suspicious (eg. do they only have 2 Facebook friends?) Have they posted similar advertisements on groups before?
- If you are going to meet an employer in person, make sure you let a friend or family member know the employer's address and what time you expect to finish. If you have an iPhone, Find My Friend can be a great tool for sharing your location!
- If you are an au pair applying for a role from overseas, make sure you have a note of useful contacts in case you feel unsafe in your host family's home when you arrive in the UK. Useful contacts include the Nanny Solidarity Network, your home country's UK consulate or embassy, and the phone/WhatsApp numbers of any friends already living in the UK.
- Even if you are comfortable with an employer and have been working for them for a while, scary situations can happen to any worker at any time. Always make sure you have a friend's number or the number of an NSN organiser memorised in case you need to leave your employer's house quickly or if you don't have access to your phone.
- If you feel unsafe and would like support to leave your workplace (either live-in or live-out), contact the NSN or put a call-out on the NSN WhatsApp. Someone will always be able to come and help you leave safely!