



Guide to Homebased Childcare

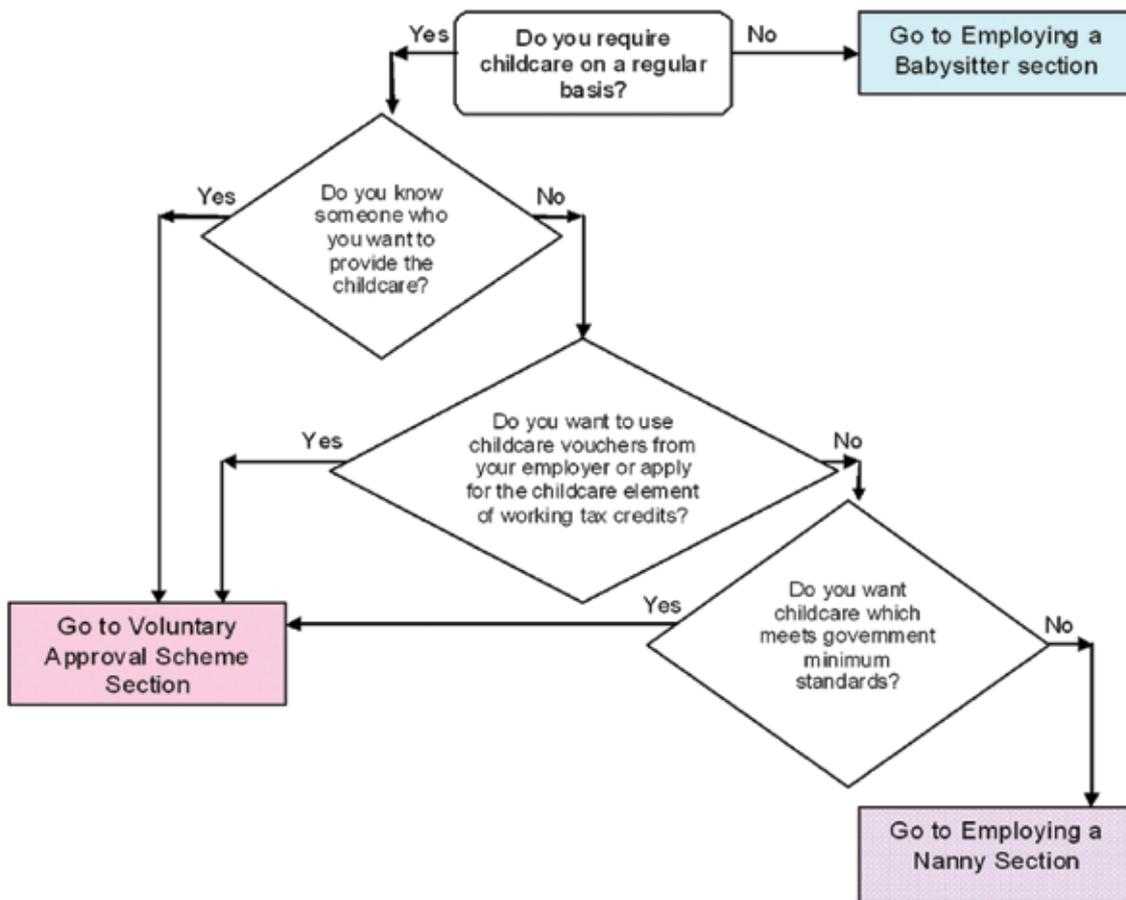
Parents may choose to employ a someone to look after their children in their own homes for a variety of reasons:

- irregular parental working hours
- childrens' toys, clothes and food easily accessible
- children comforted by familiar surroundings
- greater parental input into daily activities/routines
- siblings can be cared for as a group
- children with additional needs requiring specialised equipment / expertise
- childcare is still available when children are sick

However, unlike other forms of childcare, the majority of these providers are not regulated and inspected by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). Blaenau Gwent Family Information Service has provided this guide to enable parents to confidently employ a home based childcare provider and also to inform parents of the Voluntary Approval Scheme available to Homebased Childcare providers in Wales.

START

What type of homebased childcare would best suit you?



Voluntary Approval Scheme

By using a homebased childcare provider who is approved under this scheme parents can be reassured that the person being employed has met the minimum requirements, including an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. The scheme also provides confirmation that the person holds a recently acquired first aid certificate and a suitable childcare qualification (National Framework of Accredited Qualifications for Early Years, Childcare and Playwork level 2 or higher). Using an approved homebased childcarer also means that you may be eligible to claim the childcare element of working tax credit (dependant on personal circumstances) and other financial help such as employer supported childcare schemes. Application to the scheme costs £104 and the approval will be valid for 1 year.

If you know who you want to provide your childcare

1. Discuss your requirements with your potential preferred childcare provider.
2. Draw up a contract stating clearly what you expect from the childcare Arrangement (including who will pay for the approval process, you may want to consider if your provider will be caring for multiple families) *see employing a nanny section for suggestions on questions to ask.
3. Contact the CSSIW on 03000 0628757 to begin the approval process.
4. Both parties sign the contract once you are both satisfied that the approval conditions have been met.

Finding an approved homebased childcare provider

1. Contact Blaenau Gwent FIS on 08000 323339 or fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk to get a list of approved childcare providers who cover your area.
2. Check the lists to ascertain if any of the approved childcare providers are available to work the hours you require.
3. Contact the childcare provider, arrange to meet, if you agree that you want the person to look after your children, draw up a contract clearly stating what you expect from the childcare arrangement (including who will pay for the approval process, you may want to consider if your provider will be caring for multiple families) *see employing a nanny section for suggestions on questions to ask.
4. Both parties sign the contract once you are both satisfied that the approval conditions have been met.

Other things you should know

The approval scheme does not verify if the childcare provider is eligible to work in the UK

- It does not clarify the age group that they are suitable to work with
- It does not guarantee that parents using an approved child carer are entitled to financial support either via working tax credit or employer supported childcare.
- It remains the responsibility of the parent to ensure that individuals are suitable to look after their children
- Childcare provided by a relative even if they are approved under this scheme would not be eligible for

Employing a Nanny

Employing a nanny can have many of the same benefits as employing an approved homebased childcare provider, however you will not be able to claim the childcare element of working tax credits or pay your nanny using childcare vouchers issued by your employer. It is also important to note that there is no legal requirement for nannies to undertake childcare training or have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. With this in mind, we would advise that you consider employing a nanny through a nanny agency, as nanny agencies may have certain criteria which have to be met - always ask the nanny agency what qualifications / checks they require a nanny to have. Please contact the Blaenau Gwent Family Information Service on 08000 323339 for a list of nanny agencies.

Job Description

When hiring any employee it is important to be clear about the job you are employing them to do. You should consider the following:

- Start date (including settling in period)
- Hours of work
- Specific duties and responsibilities with regards to the children (e.g. school runs, administration of medication, outings, routines, food preparation) and household tasks if desired (laundry, cleaning, shopping).
- Salary
- Holidays (do you require their holidays to be taken at the same time as you take yours, will they be required to holiday with the family)
- Can the nanny have visitors, if so who, how often, will the visitors be left alone with your children
- Use of car, telephone, computer
- If you are hiring a live-in nanny describe the accommodation, discuss the provision of meals, use of communal areas.
- Additional needs / disabilities

Interview

The interview should cover the following:

- Discussion about your family
- Discussion about the position (see above)
- Discussion about the nanny (including detailed analysis of her CV) and what she wants from a new position—see questions below for suggestions
- Opportunity for the nanny to ask any questions.

Although you will want to check how any potential childcare provider will interact with your children it may be best to do this at a follow up session with shortlisted candidates, so as to avoid confusing your children and keep the interview structured.

Questions

It is important that you learn as much as possible about the nanny during the interview process. To avoid closed “yes” or “no” answers we would recommend using questions that begin with “What?”, “When?”, “Why?”, “Where?”, “How?”, “Tell me about”. Some ideas for questions are included below (this list is not exhaustive and you will probably want to include questions relating to your individual family situation):

- What made you decide to become a nanny?
- What is your favourite part of the job?

Questions (continued)

- What do you think are the qualities needed to be a good nanny?
 - Describe how you update parents on the childrens' development / achievements.
 - How many days sick leave have you had in the past year?
 - Have you got a partner? (If it is a live in position—discuss arrangements for visiting)
 - What sort of activities would you do with my children?
 - Where would you take my children on outings?
 - Are you a smoker?
 - How would you describe a typical day?
 - What experience do you have of preparing bottles/weaning/potty training/disciplining children/ preparing for school?
 - Can you give an example of unacceptable behaviour and explain how you would deal with this? (Explore rules and expectations of behaviour management)
 - What would you do in an emergency?
 - When did you last update your first aid training? Have you ever had to use it?
 - What type of food would you cook for our children?
 - Would you consider becoming an approved homebased childcare provider?
 - Will you be working for other families?
- (Always check references, photographic identification, criminal records bureau checks, first aid certificates, driving licence, qualification certificates)**

Employing a Babysitter?

A babysitter should only be employed for ad-hoc infrequent care of your children, for childcare which is required on a more regular basis please see the Voluntary Approval Scheme and Employing a Nanny sections.

Other Considerations

The NSPCC recommends that you only employ babysitters over 16 years old, as anyone younger than 16 cannot be charged with neglect or ill treatment of the children in their care, meaning that if concerns arise you could be charged with neglect.

- Listen to your children. If they are not happy with your choice, find someone else.
- Use a registered childminder or an approved homebased childcare provider as they will have undertaken a Criminal Records Bureau Check, have first aid qualifications and have potentially more experience than non-registered candidates.
- Contact the Family Information Service on 08000 323339 for a list of childminders or approved homebased childcare providers who provide babysitting services in your area.

Checklist

Make sure that you have checked the babysitter's references by calling them personally.

Ensure you have enough time before leaving so that you can show your babysitter around and inform them of house rules (e.g. where the food/nappies/plasters are kept and let them know the childrens' routines)

Always let your children know that a babysitter is coming and what you expect from the babysitter and from them.

Ensure that the babysitter knows where you are going and has a contact number (mobile and landline). If possible leave the number of an emergency contact who can come quickly if extra help is needed.

Agree the length of time that you will be absent (overestimate if necessary).

Make sure that you have contact details for the babysitter should your children be ill/ upset after you return and you require some additional information.