

Guidelines for Au Pairs and Host Families participating in the BAPAA Au Pair Programme in Britain – September 2017



The guidelines below are to be considered in use from Thursday 7 September 2017 for new placements and fully implemented by 1st January 2018.

Individual families or agencies may wish to improve on these benefits, but these should be offered as a minimum.

Nature of the Programme: The Au Pair programme is a cultural exchange programme. Au Pairs must be welcomed as a member of the family. The vast majority of Au Pairs are young people taking a 6-12 month gap in their studies to improve their knowledge of language and culture.

Age: An Au Pair is aged 18 – 30 and BAPAA recommends member Agencies do not place any Au Pair under the minimum age guideline. An Au Pair without visa requirements (from EU) can be older.

Hours on duty: Au Pairs can be on duty up to 30 hours per week **to include** any evening babysitting that is required.

Keep in mind that an Au Pair is an unqualified child carer. Their hours and duties should reflect this. An Au Pair should not be expected to have sole charge of a child all day unless exceptional circumstances occur.

An Au Pair cannot perform regular night duties – BAPAA does not recommend that an Au Pair regularly babysits or is solely responsible for a child or children **overnight**. I.E. Parents cannot leave the Au Pair regularly in charge overnight, whilst they are away on business/holiday or working night shifts. Furthermore, the Au Pair cannot be given responsibility for looking after a child or children at night (given baby monitor etc) whilst parents are also in the home. If the Au Pair is ever required to do this, a responsibility payment should be given.

Pocket Money and Additional Incentives:

- Pocket money must be **minimum £80** per week for 30 hours **to include** any evening babysitting requirements, regardless of whether the minimum hours are worked. Many agencies recommend slightly higher pocket money. All expenses relating to the Au Pair's role must be paid in full by the family.
- BAPAA recommends that the host family contributes **at least £20 per month** towards language school costs or equivalent benefits.
- BAPAA recommends that the au pair is paid a completion bonus equivalent to **at least 1 week's pocket money** on completion of their agreed length of stay with the family (for placements of 6 months or more). This completion bonus should be agreed in advance.

Babysitting: Additional pocket money should be paid for any additional evenings. Au Pairs should not be asked to babysit on either of their two free days. Babysitting hours are evening time only when the parents are out. For extra babysitting, we recommend a minimum of £4 per hour.

Leisure time: The Au Pair's schedule must provide sufficient time to attend language school, and the Au Pair shall receive two free days each week and should be offered one full weekend off per month.

Holidays: BAPAA recognises that the Au Pair is not a worker or employee and recommends best practice 4 weeks' paid holiday per 12-month period (pro rata) plus Public Holidays. Pocket money will be paid during this time. The Au Pair should be encouraged to take holiday at a time that is convenient to the family. Holidays should ideally be mutually agreed between host family and Au Pair at the start of the placement.

Childcare: An Au Pair should not have any sole charge of children under the age of two. An au pair is not a qualified childcare provider and BAPAA recommends some daily formal childcare arrangements for pre-school children.

House Rules: House rules have to be clear at the beginning of the placement. Families must take time, when the Au Pair arrives, to explain and set out the family expectations when on and off duty.

Room and board: The Au Pair receives full room and board from the family throughout the stay. The Au Pair must have her own private room with a window and not be required to share with children, and she should be given facilities to study. Families are required to send photo of the Au Pair's bedroom and accommodation.

Travel and Travelling Costs: The Au Pair is required to pay their own travelling cost to and from the UK, unless the family chooses to fund this. The family should, wherever possible, collect the Au Pair from the airport. If this is not possible, they must pay for collection by taxi or organise reasonable onward travel and the family must be at home in time for their arrival. Long tube journeys with a year's worth of luggage are not acceptable.

Insurance: An Au Pair from the EU must travel to the UK with an EHIC card which lets them get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes free. The Au Pair may also wish to take out additional health insurance and travel insurance to cover loss of belongings, repatriation in case of accident, death etc.

Language School and Costs: Au pairs must be given enough time to attend language school. There are many colleges and courses in the UK enabling Au Pairs to learn English - some are state run further education colleges or centres and some are privately run courses. The costs will vary depending on the type of course and the hours which are offered. The Au Pair's host family or UK based agency will be able to help them find some good local options. Some families will offer to pay for their au pair's language course and others will offer a contribution (see **Pocket Money and Additional Incentives**), but the Au Pair must be prepared to bear the majority of the costs.

Written Offer: Each agency shall ensure that the Au Pair receives a written offer from the family covering pocket money, hours, holidays, description of au pair's bedroom and what help would be expected etc.

Notice Period: The host family can terminate the arrangement by giving two weeks notice to the au pair. If they wish the Au Pair to leave before the end of the notice period the host family must pay for their B&B accommodation or flight home and two weeks pocket money.

Light Housework: An Au Pair's primary role is childcare; light housework should be a lesser part of duties and BAPAA recommends that **up to 20%** of the au pair's hours is spent on household duties. Acceptable standards of cleanliness must be maintained by the Au Pair and host family. A list of suggested light housework tasks can be found below.

The host family: Each agency shall ensure that the family is suitable to host an Au Pair and understands the nature of the Au Pair programme. Please remember, it is a cultural exchange programme, giving a young person the opportunity to learn about British culture and improve language skills through interaction with children. The Au Pair is there to help the family and is not in charge of the house.

List of housework tasks accepted as light housework:

- Washing dishes, including loading and unloading dishwasher
- Preparing simple meals for children
- Keeping kitchen tidy and clean, including sweeping and mopping floors
- Loading and unloading children's laundry into washing machine
- Ironing for children
- Putting washed clothes away
- Vacuuming
- Dusting
- Making and changing children's beds
- Cleaning children's bathroom
- Everything to do with keeping their own room/bathroom clean and tidy
- Light shopping (not the entire household shopping)
- Walking and feeding pets
- Emptying bins

List of tasks considered unsuitable for an Au Pair:

- Gardening
- Window cleaning
- Spring cleaning
- Cleaning the oven, other than simple wiping out
- Washing carpets
- Washing the car
- Weekly shopping
- Pet training
- Clearing up after untrained pets
- Making parents bed
- Ironing for parents
- Cleaning parents' en-suite bathroom
- Polishing silver and brassware
- Cooking the family meal, unless the Au Pair enjoys cooking and has chosen to do this for the family

N.B. Au Pairs should not be required to do housework such as ironing, when looking after children of primary school age or toddlers, due to safety reasons.