



Employing an Au Pair

In this Insider Guide we look at the process you should go through when employing an Au Pair.

Job Description

Whilst Au Pairs are not employed in the legal sense of the word - they receive an allowance in return for board and lodging, childcare and domestic help - it's still a good idea to write a short job description, so that there is no misunderstanding about what is expected.

What should be in a job description?

Au Pairs know that they will be asked to carry out light housework and childcare duties. You can agree the hours between you or you may want to tell your Au Pair exactly what help you need and when - for example, if the children need collecting from school.

You will need to be very clear about what you expect and the hours you want your Au Pair to work. An Au Pair is expected to work for five hours a day, five days a week, but you can negotiate different arrangements. Also, you can invite someone as an 'Au Pair plus' (working 35 hours per week). The amount you pay should vary according to the hours worked.



A job description should include:

The other question to ask is: What resources have I got that I can draw upon?

- The hours to be worked
- Babysitting duties (up to two evenings of babysitting each week)
- Holidays/time off (you should give your Au Pair two days a week off, and you should give them a week's paid holiday every six months)
- Duties - what you expect the Au Pair to do - and when.

Your Au Pair should have a room to themselves, where they can to relax, unwind and simply be on their own. You should not expect them to share with your children.

Other considerations when employing an Au Pair

Finding an arrangement that works

It's up to you to find a way of working that suits all of you. Try to keep things as simple as possible, especially in the early weeks when language may be a barrier, and the Au Pair isn't used to your ways.

It is a good idea to start off by pinning the day's duties (with times) on the fridge door - and check that it's all understood.

It helps to be clear about what you want and that means being direct. If the ironing is not done as you would like it, explain kindly what you want changed. Alternatively, accept the fact that at least someone is doing your ironing and it's not the end of the world if there are still a few creases.

Talk about it - perhaps they don't understand what you are asking of them. Ask the agency to mediate if you have no joy, but also be realistic about the arrangement.

If they get on brilliantly with the children, but are hopeless at dusting, then perhaps it's worth having an untidy house but happy children for a few months. Plan to have a chat together, say, once a fortnight, and use this time to catch up and issue any gentle reminders that are necessary.

How much should I pay my Au Pair?

In the UK an Au Pair is treated as a family member and should get 'pocket money' – around £100 a week (for 25 hours work) or £150 (for 35 hours work) a week. More should be paid if they babysit outside the agreed hours.

When budgeting, you will of course have other costs to bear: food for your Au Pair plus perhaps higher gas, electricity and water bills. If you go on outings or holidays with your Au Pair, or need her to travel on public transport while working, then you will need to pay all these costs too. You may also decide to provide a mobile phone for your au pair to use whilst on duty.

How should I pay my Au Pair?

You could pay into an account or pay cash. You should expect to pay in cash, especially in the early weeks. It would be unreasonable to pay your Au Pair late, with a cheque if cash has been promised, or less than the full amount.

How much holiday should I give?

You should give your Au Pair one week's paid leave every six months. This will give them the opportunity to go home, or to travel elsewhere and do some sightseeing. You do not have to pay for any flights but some families like to do this, especially if they have been pleased with the au pair's work. If you go away for a few days and leave your Au Pair holding the fort at home, then you should still pay them.

Do I have to arrange home visits?

Whilst you don't have to make any of the arrangements if your Au Pair takes a trip home, it might help if you got involved, especially if there are phone calls to be made or visits to stations and offices where your English expertise would be valued.

What do I do if my Au Pair is ill?

The majority of Au Pairs (from within EU countries) will be entitled to free medical treatment from the NHS if needed. It is advisable to get your Au Pair registered with your doctor soon after they arrive just as a precaution in case they may fall ill with flu or an infection at any time your family may be ill.

Do I have to pay any insurance?

You should take extra motor insurance cover if your Au Pair is driving your car. In addition, your household insurer must be made aware that you have somebody else living in your home that is not family for monetary gain. This shouldn't affect your premiums but make an adjustment to the clause on theft, in which reasonable force must be shown rather than using their key!

What notice do I need to give?

Strictly speaking, you do not have to give any notice, as this is a friendly agreement rather than a contractual one. However, you should not ask your Au Pair to leave unless there is a compelling reason why they cannot stay, such as a serious disciplinary issue or illness in your family. If this is the case, then you should try to give two weeks' notice, as your Au Pair will have to find new accommodation as well as a new position.

If you have any problems, your first step should be to let the agency know; they should be able to offer advice both to you and your Au Pair. They can also mediate if any misunderstandings have arisen between the two of you.

What if the arrangement just isn't working out?

Sometimes it happens - you and your Au Pair do not hit it off - to the extent that you don't want them in the house for another six days, much less six months. First of all, try to sort it out with the Au Pair. Is it a language or communication problem?

If you have engaged a third party, look to these people for mediation and support. Remember that they will have ironed out problems many times before and may have useful advice.



Further information

For more information on Au Pair related issues, please see the resources below.

Organisation	Website	Contact
Gov.UK <i>Au pairs and the law</i>	www.gov.uk/au-pairs-employment-law/au-pairs	N/A
British Au Pair Agencies Association <i>BAPAA is the only recognised Trade Association for the au pair industry in Britain</i>	bapaa.org.uk/	N/A
AuPair.com <i>Au Pair Changes around Brexit</i>	www.aupair.com/en/au-pair-blog/for-au-pair/brexit-au-pair.php	Telephone: +49 221 310 61 840 Email: info@aupair.com
Gov.UK <i>Tier 5 Youth Mobility visa</i>	www.gov.uk/tier-5-youth-mobility	N/A
Gov.UK <i>Tier 4 General Student visa</i>	www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa	N/A



Recommended Service

Back-Up Care

We provide a trusted safety net when regular care plans are disrupted, for last-minute emergencies and upcoming gaps in care - but you still need to work.

Visit your **Client Landing Page** to book care today and access your wider benefits.