



Employing an **Approved Home Childcarer**



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1. Introduction

Employing an approved home childcarer is an important step. The quality of care your children receive will reflect the time you spend in selecting that care.

Choosing the right person to look after your children is all the more challenging when you also have to take on the role of employer. Getting it right provides you, however, with a safe, happy environment for your child(ren).

Choosing an approved home childcarer means that you may be eligible for financial help towards the cost through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or employer-supported childcare, for example, childcare vouchers. Find out more about this in Section 8: Help With The Cost Of Approved Childcare.

When you choose an approved home childcarer, your local Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust will have carried out checks, including an enhanced criminal records check, which includes a check of the barred lists held by any jurisdiction in the UK, along with a check of Social Services records to make sure that there is nothing recorded in the home childcarer's background to suggest that they are unsuitable to work with children. The HSC Trust will also have checked that the approved home childcarer has a valid first-aid certificate and has completed relevant training.

While it is reassuring to know that approved home childcarers have met these basic requirements, you, as the parent and employer, have the ultimate responsibility in selecting an approved home childcarer to care for your children.

This guide takes you through some of the things you need to think about before employing an approved home childcarer, for example, finding the right person, their employment rights, and ways of making your relationship with your approved home childcarer a success. Useful checklists and sample forms for risk assessments, interviews, medical checks and parental permissions are included.

Have a look at the checklist to see if you have considered some of the issues that might come up. There is a lot to consider before employing an approved home childcarer.



Employing a home childcarer checklist

Have you thought about:

- public liability insurance?
- employer's liability insurance?
- whether your home is safe for a home childcarer to work in?
- how much you can pay your home childcarer?
- drawing up a contract?
- tax and national insurance contributions?
- a job description for your home childcarer?
- what happens when you no longer need your home childcarer?
- what happens if your home childcarer is ill or becomes pregnant?
- agreeing "ground rules" on visitors, use of the phone, car etc?

2. Childcare choices

Choosing someone to look after your child is one of the most important and often most difficult choices you will ever make. With such a wide range of childcare options available, deciding on the type of childcare you want is rarely straightforward.

You will need to think about whether you want your child looked after in your home, or in the carer's home; whether you want your child to be looked after with children from other families; and whether you wish to use a carer who is approved as a home childcarer.

Whichever you choose, you will want your child's carer to care for every aspect of your child's well-being. For a full-time childcarer, this could include: planning and preparing play and educational activities; taking the children to school, nursery, appointments and activities; preparing their meals; or simply being there for them at night if you have to work unsociable hours. If you decide to use a home childcarer you will want someone whom you can trust, which is why the DHSSPS has developed the Home Childcarer Approval Scheme (see section 3) to carry out some of the basic checks to reassure you that there is nothing within those checks to suggest that the home childcarer is unsuitable to care for children. Some of the different types of options available to you are set out below:

Registered Childminders

Childminders are self-employed carers who work from their own homes and must be registered with their local HSC Trust if they look after children to whom they are not closely related, for more than 2 hours in any day, for reward.

Childminders can care for up to 6 children under the age of 12 (including their own), only 3 of whom may be under the age of 5 and usually only 1 under the age of 1 (exceptions may be made in the case of siblings, for example twins).

HSC Trusts register childminders. Annual inspections are carried out by Social Services on both the home and the childminder to assure the standard of care provided to children. In addition, the police check all those aged over 10 who live in the childminder's home.



2. Childcare choices

Many childminders are members of the Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) and have access to guidance, training and insurance from this organisation.

The advantages of using a registered childminder are that they:

- are registered and inspected annually by Social Services;
- are self-employed;
- usually have their own public liability insurance;
- can be flexible about the hours that they work;
- provide care, fun and learning in a home environment;
- care for children of different ages together;
- are ideal for babies and under-twos, who need to develop a close relationship with an adult through one-to-one care;
- often offer a school pickup service;
- usually are experienced mothers;
- develop a close relationship with families as children grow up;
- are eligible for the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit.

Nursery Schools and Classes

Nursery schools and classes, which are staffed by teachers and assistants, provide pre-school education primarily designed for children in their pre-school year.

Most places are available:

- at least 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours per day;
- 5 days per week;
- for at least 38 weeks during the period September to June.

Some nursery schools and classes may offer full-time places (around 4 hours, with lunch available).

All nursery schools are inspected by the Education and Training Inspectorate of the Department of Education.

Children who attend get the chance to play and learn alongside other children and acquire skills, which will give them a head start at school.

2. Childcare choices

The advantages of using a Nursery School are:

- children have the opportunity to play and learn as well as have fun with friends;
- children will be in a group led by a trained teacher;
- the service is free.

Playgroups

Playgroups provide daily sessions (usually 2-4 hours) of care and learning through play for children aged 2 years and 10 months old.

Playgroups are run by trained early years professionals and emphasise parental involvement. A parent committee runs some voluntary playgroups.

Playgroups are registered by their local HSC Trust and inspected annually.

Playgroups usually operate throughout the school term.

- children have the opportunity to play and learn as well as have fun with friends;
- you can participate in your child's early years education;
- you can meet and get to know parents in your area;
- can be free for children in their pre-school year.

Day Nurseries

Day nurseries are usually privately run and provide care for children aged from 0 to 5 years old. All day nurseries must be registered and annually inspected by Social Services.

There are strict guidelines on staff/children ratios which must be complied with: for under twos, the ratio is one carer to three children; for children aged two to three, the ratio is one carer to four children; and for three to five year olds, one carer is required for eight children. Day nurseries are usually opened from 8am to 6pm and care is usually provided all year round.



2. Childcare choices

Day nurseries participating in the Department of Education Pre-School Education Expansion Programme will have an allocation of funded places for which children in their final pre-school year can apply. These places will be available:

- at least 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours per day;
- 5 days per week;
- at least 38 weeks during the period September to June.

The advantages of using a Day Nursery are:

- 50% of staff must have a relevant childcare qualification;
- children have opportunities to learn and play with friends;
- childcare is reliable - if one member of staff is ill, others are available to cover;
- some day nurseries offer school pick-ups and out of school care;
- eligible for help with costs through childcare element of the Working Tax Credit;
- funded places may be available for children in their pre-school year;
- part-time places are often available.

Out of School Care

Out of school care caters for children of compulsory school age, up to 12 years and usually operates in the form of an afterschool club, which may operate from 2pm–6pm. Many after school clubs extend their hours during the summer to provide full day care.

Clubs are registered and inspected annually by their local HSC Trust and children receive a healthy snack and a full programme of activities. Some providers will transport your child from school to the club. Your child is signed in, and signed out again when collected.

Breakfast clubs are another form of out of school care. Usually operating from 7:30am, they allow working parents to leave their children in safe care and transport to school is normally provided.

2. Childcare choices

The advantages of using Out of School Care are:

- children can learn, relax after school and have fun with their friends;
- some clubs offer homework facilities;
- is geared to the needs of children with working parents;
- is eligible for help with costs through the Working Tax Credit.

Home Childcarer

A 'home childcarer' may also be known as a nanny. A home childcarer, or nanny, works in the family's home, caring for their child or children. Some can live in, others come to work daily, and others share their time between two or more families. They do not have to be registered and inspected by their local HSC Trust and are not governed by national standards. However, home childcarers or nannies may now be approved under a light touch scheme, the Home Childcarer Approval Scheme, which introduces minimum requirements and suitability checks, details of which can be found in section 3.

The advantages of using a home childcarer are:

- your child can form a close, one-to-one relationship with their carer in his/her own home;
- your child has his/her own toys, books, food and so on, close at hand;
- brothers and sisters of different ages can be looked after together;
- you have a high degree of control over your child's routine, diet, activities and play environment;
- often more flexible hours can be offered than is available from some other forms of childcare;
- evening babysitting, taking sole charge of your child when you are away may also be available;
- you and your child do not have to travel to the childcare setting;
- your child is cared for in his/her own community and can easily take part in local clubs and activities;
- your children can be looked after at home when they are not well;
- you may be eligible for financial help towards the cost through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and employer-supported childcare, for example, childcare vouchers.



3. The Home Childcarer Approval Scheme

The Home Childcarer Approval Scheme provides recognised status for individuals providing childcare in a child's own home. While this type of childcare is not required by law to be registered, the checks undertaken by HSC Trusts provide a basic level of assurance for parents using approved home childcarers and enables more parents to access tax credits and employer-supported childcare vouchers.

HSC Trusts will be operating the Scheme. For more information, your local HSC Trust contact details are listed at page 39.

The Trust will ensure that approved home childcarers:

- are 18 or over;
- have a childcare qualification or have attended an appropriate induction course;
- have first-aid training;
- have checks, including an enhanced criminal records check which will include a check of the barred lists held by any jurisdiction in the UK and a Social Services records check.

The Trust does not:

- verify whether non-EU childcarers have a valid work permit to be employed in Northern Ireland;
- clarify the age group that the childcarer is suited to work with;
- inspect a home childcarer's workplace i.e. the child's home;
- complete health checks or request medical references; or
- conduct 'job' interviews, check previous employment references or take past work experience into account.

The benefits to you, as a parent, are that:

- you know your approved home childcarer has been checked and has met basic criteria;
- you know the approved home childcarer has some understanding of children's needs and what to do in an emergency;
- you may, if you are eligible, be able to access financial support through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or through employer-supported childcare.

3. The Home Childcarer Approval Scheme

Childcare will not be eligible for tax credits support if it is provided by a relative of a child, caring for that child in the child's own home. A relative of the child means a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister whether by blood, half-blood, marriage or affinity. If you have any questions about this, please contact the Tax Credits Helpline (0845 300 3900).

Approval is valid for one year and the onus is on the approved home childcarer to renew his/her approval.

Non-renewal will affect your eligibility for financial help towards the cost through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or employer-supported childcare.

Childcare Qualifications

Approved home childcarers must hold a relevant childcare qualification or complete induction training before they apply to become an approved home childcarer.

Looking after children is a skilled and demanding job and relevant training will give the approved home childcarer the skills and confidence to do it well. The Home Childcarer Approval Scheme covers basic requirements. You may decide that the approved home childcarer you employ needs to have a higher-level qualification, especially if your child has particular needs. Knowing that your approved home childcarer has received some training can reassure you that they have a responsible attitude to children, are committed to the work, and know about the needs and development of young children.

First-aid Training

Approved home childcarers must hold a current and valid first-aid certificate suitable for the care of children and babies. This means that they should have completed first-aid training with a recognised training provider, within three years prior to application. The training must be repeated and the certificate renewed, every three years.



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The first-aid course needs to cover all the necessary aspects of dealing with emergencies including resuscitation, choking, shock and anaphylactic shock.

Suitability Checks

As childcare is a regulated activity under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007, a barred person must not apply for, accept or engage in any such work with children. If they do so, they will commit an offence. Similarly, an individual must not knowingly permit a barred person to engage in regulated activity with children. If they do, they also will commit an offence. The barred lists are maintained by the Independent Safeguarding Authority under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order.* They are a list of people barred from working with children and a list of people barred from working with vulnerable adults.

HSC Trusts undertake screening of people working in roles with children or vulnerable people. The check includes searches of police records and for any information relating to either the home childcarer or the addresses they have supplied. It confirms their identity and also investigates their background, highlighting any past incidents that may have a bearing on their suitability to be employed as a childcarer.

Home childcarer applicants provide details of their addresses for the past five years and an authorised person countersigns a form to confirm that they have seen proof of their identification – photographic ID, birth, marriage, divorce certificates etc.

An approved home childcarer will have an enhanced disclosure check completed which includes checks against the barred lists held by all jurisdictions across the UK. HSC Trusts will also check their client record database to ensure that there is nothing on record that suggests that an individual is unsuitable to work with children.

* The functions of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) will transfer to the new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from December 2012.

4. Your responsibility as an employer

There is a lot to think about when employing an approved home childcarer. You have to be sure you have chosen the right person to look after your children, and also think about your responsibilities as an employer.

Employing an approved home childcarer is different from engaging the services of a childminder, who is self-employed.

Childminders are responsible for setting their own hours of work and their own fees and conditions, whereas you will be responsible for setting your approved home childcarer's hours, wages and conditions (See the HM Revenue & Customs leaflets ES/FS1-'*Employed or Self-Employed for Tax and National Insurance Contributions*' and ES/FS2- '*Are Your Workers Employed or Self-Employed for Tax and National Insurance Contributions?*' for more information).

Payroll Specialists and Other Available Help

This section goes into your responsibilities as an employer in detail but it's worth remembering that there are organisations who can administer these responsibilities on your behalf for a small charge, usually between £10-35 per month. For more information refer to the other useful contact section on page 46 of this guide.

The type of services they can undertake on your behalf include:

- drafting an employment contract;
- maintaining payroll records, dealing with tax and National Insurance Contributions and providing payslips;
- processing of relevant HM Revenue and Customs documents, such as employer's annual return (P35), employee's pay deductions summary (P14), end of year summary (P60) and termination of employment (P45);
- support and advice on pay and employment related issues, such as absenteeism, redundancy, maternity and disciplinary issues;
- employment law advice.

For further information on finding organisations that provide similar services, (see page 46 for contact details) or refer to the 'Accountancy and Payroll Specialist' section in the Yellow Pages.



4. Your responsibility as an employer

HM Revenue and Customs has Business Education and Support Teams which offer help to new employers and run workshops throughout Northern Ireland, including one on taking on your first employee. Contact 0845 603 2691 for more information. More guidance is also available at: www.youtube.com/user/hmrcgovuk/

Your Home Childcarer's Employment Rights

Approved home childcarers cannot be classed as self-employed. As an employer, **you** are responsible for your home childcarer's tax and National Insurance Contributions.

You must provide your approved home childcarer with a P60 tax certificate after the end of each tax year (by 31 May) showing tax paid and National Insurance Contributions, and provide a P45 when he/she leaves your employment.

Time Off

Your approved home childcarer has an annual leave entitlement of at least 5.6 working weeks (which may include public/bank holidays). Annual leave is granted "pro-rata" – (so if the approved home childcarer works for five days a week the leave entitlement is 28 days' paid leave each year; if he/she work three days a week, the leave entitlement should be at least 16.8 days' leave). The approved home childcarer is also entitled to at least one day (24 continuous hours) off each week or 2 days off each fortnight. Working time should not exceed 48 hours per week averaged over 17 weeks unless the worker has voluntarily signed an opt-out agreement.

Sick Pay

As part of establishing the terms and conditions of employment you should state how much sick pay your approved home childcarer will be entitled to per year of employment.

If your approved home childcarer pays National Insurance Contributions, you are obliged to pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for absences from work because of ill-health for at least four consecutive days. This SSP will usually be paid in place of, or as part of, his/her usual pay. You may be

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able to claim the SSP portion of this pay back from HM Revenue and Customs.

You and your approved home childcarer should agree a procedure for times when he/she is off ill, including back-up childcare arrangements.

Maternity Entitlements

If your approved home childcarer becomes pregnant while employed by you, she is entitled to certain statutory benefits, including 26 weeks' maternity leave and reasonable time off for antenatal appointments. If she has been in the job for at least six months at the 15th week before her expected due date, she is entitled to maternity pay of 90 per cent of her full-time pay for the first six weeks of maternity leave and 20 weeks of statutory maternity pay after this. Your home childcarer may not return to work until at least two weeks after the birth of her child.

You can **claim back in full the statutory maternity pay** you give to your approved home childcarer.

It is illegal for an employer to dismiss a woman because she is pregnant and she is entitled to return to work on the same or similar terms as before the birth of her child. You should discuss with your approved home childcarer possible arrangements in this situation.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Your approved home childcarer is covered by this Act when looking for and accepting employment. It is your responsibility to make sure you do not discriminate against an employee because of an impairment or medical condition. For more information, call Disability Action on 028 9029 7880.

Pension Arrangements

It is unusual for a home childcarer to be offered a pension as part of the employment package and at the moment employers with fewer than five employees are not required to make stakeholder pensions available to their employees.



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Redundancy

You may decide that you no longer need an approved home childcarer and have to make him/her redundant. To qualify for redundancy payments, the home childcarer must have been working for the same employer, with no breaks in employment, for at least two years. If you decide to change the nature of your childcare – for example, moving from using a full-time home childcarer to a part-time one – you are expected to offer him/her the position first, giving him/her first refusal. If he/she decides not to accept the offer of the new terms, he/she is entitled to redundancy pay, providing he/she has been continuously employed for 2 years or more. If, however, you offer him/her a suitable alternative job and he/she unreasonably refuses it, he/she may lose his/her right to statutory redundancy pay.

Depending on the clauses in your contract, your home childcarer may also be entitled to redundancy pay if you and your family move to another part of the country and he/she is unable to go with you. You can find out more about redundancy on <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/employment/redundancy-and-leaving-your-job/redundancy.htm>

Termination of Employment

Usually employers and employees each agree to give notice of one month before terminating a contract of employment. If you have agreed that your home childcarer will work a trial period, the notice required may be reduced to one week on either side during this period. The information above is subject to statutory minimum notice periods. You can find out more about notice periods on <http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/redundancy-and-leaving-your-job>

In the contract there should be a clear description of the dismissal procedure. For guidance on good practice and the minimum statutory requirements for disciplinary and dismissal procedures, including the appeal process, please refer to the LRA Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures. Please refer to www.nidirect.gov.uk for further information.

In the case of gross misconduct – examples of which should be clearly described in the contract – you may be able ask your approved home

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childcarer to leave immediately. (The LRA Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures provides detailed guidance on the Statutory requirements). Typical examples of gross misconduct would include harming or endangering a child, stealing from the family, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while working. It should be made clear that in circumstances where a child has been harmed, or placed at risk of harm, a referral must be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority and your local Social Services Gateway Team within the HSC Trusts (see page 39 for contact details).

Unfair Dismissal

If your home childcarer has been in post for 12 months or more, he/she is protected against unfair dismissal. If they feel his/her employment has been terminated, they are entitled to take their case to a third party such as an industrial tribunal. For more information on unfair dismissal refer to www.nidirect.gov.uk/unfair-dismissal

Out-of-hours Care

You may need childcare outside your home childcarer's usual working hours, especially if you employ an approved live-in home childcarer. When agreeing the contract, you and your home childcarer should decide whether occasional extra care is paid for over and above the net wage and, if so, whether it is to be paid separately or in the usual wage packet. Either way, the payment should appear on the payslip.

Insurance

It is essential that you and your home childcarer have adequate insurance cover for the work he/she will be doing.

You should have:

- Employer's liability insurance – to protect you against legal costs for any accident or injury that your home childcarer might suffer while working in your home. This is a legal requirement.



4. Your responsibility as an employer

- Home contents insurance (with an “endorsement” to cover home childcarers working in your home) – so that if he/she accidentally breaks or damage any of your possessions, you can claim the cost of repairs or replacement. Ideally, your household contents insurance policy should also cover your home childcarer’s personal belongings against damage and theft while in your home;
- Motor insurance, with your home childcarer as a named “business use” driver, if he/she will be driving your car as part of the home childcarer duties required by you.

Your home childcarer should have:

- Public liability insurance – to protect him/her against legal costs for any accident or injury that a child might suffer while in his/her care, and to cover the costs of any damage that a child in his/her care might cause to another person’s property;
- Motor insurance, with “business use” cover, if your home childcarer will be using his/her own car for work purposes.

What you will need to pay for

Approved home childcarers are entitled to receive at least the minimum wage if they live in or out, or are provided with separate accommodation. Workers aged 21 or over can expect at least £6.08 an hour (£6.19 from 1 October 2012). While the rate for workers aged between 18 and 20 is £4.98 an hour. You should always agree a gross (pre-tax) wage with your home childcarer. You will need to remember any changes to the minimum wage, which the Government announces by budget proposals.

When deciding how much to pay your home childcarer, you will need to bear in mind their experience and training, the number of children you need them to look after, the hours you want them to work, what other duties you expect them to complete, for example, housework.

Whether you need a live-in or live-out home childcarer will also determine the wages you pay. Some live-in home childcarers receive “benefits in kind”, as part of their wages – for example, private accommodation or the

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use of a car. There is guidance governing the payments of benefits in kind and employers should be aware of any special tax provision they need to make. The HM Revenue and Customs website: www.hmrc.gov.uk provides advice for employers.

Expenses

Your contract should set out the processes for your home childcarer to claim expenses incurred during work. You should ask him/her to keep all receipts and make a detailed claim at the end of an agreed period – usually weekly or monthly.

Tax and National Insurance Contributions

You have a duty to pay your home childcarer's wages regularly and on time; to provide a payslip showing how much you have paid, and detailing any deductions made. All employers are responsible for paying tax and National Insurance Contributions for their employees. For advice and guidance, call your local HM Revenue and Customs tax office and ask to be put through to the new employer section. Explain that you are employing a home childcarer as you may be eligible to use the **simplified PAYE deduction scheme** (www.hmrc.gov.uk/simple_deduction/index.htm), depending on the amount of money you intend paying your home childcarer. The new employer section will advise you about this. Tell the tax office how much you expect to pay your home childcarer – check that it is above the “lower earnings limit”. You will be sent a tax office reference number and a New Employer's Starter Pack.

Currently, the person must be earning more than £160 per week or £700 per month before they have to pay tax or National Insurance Contributions. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes made to the 'lower earnings limit'.

To work out National Insurance Contributions, call the Employer's Helpline on 0845 714 3143.



4. Your responsibility as an employer

Keeping Records

Once your home childcarer leaves and is no longer employed by you, you should keep their tax and insurance records for at least three years.

Interview notes of all applicants should be kept for a maximum of one year and then destroyed. This is in case of a claim against you for race, disability or sex discrimination. Equality law states a complaint must be made within 3 months of the date on which the complainant first had knowledge of the act complained of, or 6 months from the date on which the act was done.

Home Childcarers from Abroad

If your home childcarer is a national of a country in the European Economic Area (EEA), he/she has the right to enter and work in the United Kingdom just like British citizens. The following are EEA countries

Austria	Latvia
Belgium	Liechtenstein
Bulgaria	Lithuania
Cyprus	Luxembourg
Czech Republic	Malta
Denmark	Netherlands
Estonia	Norway
Finland	Poland
France	Portugal
Germany	Romania
Greece	Slovakia
Hungary	Slovenia
Iceland	Spain
Ireland	Sweden
Italy	United Kingdom

Although Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway are not members of the European Union (EU), their citizens have the same rights as EU citizens to enter, live in and work in the UK. An international treaty means that Swiss

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nationals have a similar right to live in the UK as EEA nationals. You should ask nationals from all EEA countries to produce a document, such as a passport, which confirms their nationality. If the home childcarer is from a country outside the EEA he/she generally needs to have a work permit. The Home Childcarer Approval Scheme **will not** verify whether the childcarer is eligible to work in Northern Ireland.

For more information on employing a foreign national call the Home Office UK Border Agency helpline on 0300 123 4699 or visit www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

If your home childcarer has lived continuously for six months or more in a country other than Great Britain, in the last five years prior to his/her application, he/she must produce evidence of his/her suitability to care for children covering the whole period they lived in that country, from an official source which the HSC Trust can verify. The HSC Trust will only accept originals of any records and documents, where necessary they must be translated by an accredited translation agency, embassy or high commission.



5. Finding and selecting an approved home childcarer

If you are considering employing an approved home childcarer, first decide what kind of person you want to look after your children, what tasks you will want him/her to do and write them down. This is sometimes referred to as a job description or person specification.

You will want your children looked after in a safe and stimulating environment, but what does this mean? Are there any specific activities you will want a home childcarer to do with your children? Will the school run be part of the job? How about preparing the children's meals? Will you want him/her to do the children's laundry or clean their room?

Think about what kind of person you want your approved home childcarer to be. Does he/she need to drive? And be a non-smoker? Think about your parenting style and whether you would like someone to match or complement your style.

Finding an Approved Home Childcarer

It does take time to find the right home childcarer, so allow yourself plenty of time – even up to several months. Your local HSC Trust may have a list of currently approved home childcarers. If you identify someone who is willing to become an approved home childcarer, you should advise them to contact their local HSC Trust for an application form (see page 39 for contact details).

Interviewing your Approved Home Childcarer

HSC Trusts will have arranged a meeting with the approved home childcarer during the application stage to check their identity and qualification documents, but they will not have interviewed them to assess their suitability as a childcarer or discuss past work experience. **This is your responsibility.**

You will have a good idea about the kind of person you want to look after your children, but even if the person you interview ticks all the boxes and has the highest qualifications and recommendations, if it does not feel right, keep looking. Trust your gut instinct as a parent and wait until you are happy with the person you have chosen and know that he/she will fit in with your family.

5. Finding and selecting an approved home childcarer

Ask someone else to help you interview; your partner, or a friend or relative. This person will help back up your opinion and also act as a witness to everything that is said.

You may wish to consider inviting the applicant back for a second “working interview” to enable him/her to spend more time with your family in the potential working environment. Spending half a day or a day getting to know the family may help to make sure that both of you make the right choice.

It is usual to agree to a trial period with the applicant before he/she accepts the job full-time. This may be anything from one week to three months and is usually negotiated into your contract. You should pay the applicant for the time spent with your family during this period and pay any expenses which would normally be available under the contract of employment.

A sample interview form is included in this guide (page 51) that you could photocopy and use when you are interviewing home childcarers. The questions set out are examples and are not meant to be exhaustive. Add your own questions, but make sure you ask each candidate the same ones to give each applicant a fair chance.

Meeting the Children

It is important that your home childcarer quickly establishes a rapport with your children and you can often see this on your first meeting. It is up to you when you first allow your prospective home childcarer to meet your children, but the second interview stage could provide a good opportunity. By then you will have had time to make sure you are happy with the candidate(s).

References

It is easy to gloss over this stage if you are really happy with the candidate you have chosen. **The Home Childcarer Approval Scheme does not check references** and an approved home childcarer applicant is not required to have had past childcare experience before being approved, so it is vital that you follow these up for yourself. You will need to take up and retain copies of two references to validate your Employer’s Liability Insurance.



5. Finding and selecting an approved home childcarer

You should seek from the approved home childcarer one or two references from previous families they have worked with and also a personal referee. If the approved home childcarer has just left college, then the college tutor should provide a reference.

Follow the references up by either phone or direct contact; you will get an immediate idea of what the approved home childcarer's relationship with the referee and the children was like through an informal conversation. If your approved home childcarer provides letters of recommendation or open references, these should also be followed up, as there may be things the referee would tell you that they have not written down or other issues which you would like to discuss.

Ask questions about why the applicant left, what their relationship was like with the children, whether he/she had any problems which impacted on the discharge of his/her duties and how these were resolved.

During the interview, you may find it helpful to make notes of questions that you would like to follow up with the referees.

Medical Checks

Medical checks are standard for registered childminders but are **not** required under the Home Childcarer Approval Scheme. So when employing an approved home childcarer, you should ask him/her to provide an up-to-date medical certificate authorised by his/her GP.

Obtaining a medical certificate is essential as a person's medical condition could impact on their ability to care for children.

You could also ask all applicants at the interview stage to fill in a medical questionnaire, which you will need to keep confidential. Include questions about their general health, how many days of sick leave they have had in the past 12 months and, whether they have any impairments or conditions which may have an impact on their ability to perform their duties. Where relevant, ask them how they will manage their conditions when looking after children and if you have any further concerns, discuss them with your GP. There is a sample medical questionnaire supplied on page 54, that you could use.

6. Working together

Settling a new home childcarer into his/her role is likely to take some time and some forward planning. Think about how he/she will spend the first week, what you need to talk about, and how you can help the children get used to their new carer. The more you can talk about and get down in writing in the first few days the better, because then everyone will know what the boundaries are and what to expect.

If at all possible, have a review meeting away from the children after the first few days to see how your home childcarer is settling in and discuss any issues that have come up. A lot of concerns that do arise occur in the early days of employment and if they are not dealt with straight away, can lead to resentment building up. Plan to have regular review meetings away from children after this initial meeting.

It may seem obvious but ask your children how they are settling in with their new carer and acknowledge their feelings. Work out ways in which the transition can be made easier for everyone.

Managing Children's Behaviour

It is important to discuss with your home childcarer and come to an agreement about what you think are acceptable and appropriate ways for him/her to manage the behaviour of your children. Think about and discuss what you find acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Your home childcarer will have been approved by your local HSC Trust which advocates a no-smacking policy.

There are many ways to promote good behaviour such as encouragement; being a good role model; and making your children feel secure of your love for them – even when they misbehave. Positive parenting is about bringing out the best in your child, by listening and understanding, praising and encouraging their efforts, noticing and rewarding good behaviour. These are the sort of issues you can consider with your home childcarer when discussing behaviour management.

It can be helpful to have a written policy about managing behaviour to reduce the chances of misunderstandings between you and your home childcarer. You may both have different attitudes, values and practices –



6. Working together

work together carefully to ensure consistency and continuity for your child and set out clearly what are acceptable and unacceptable responses to your child's behaviour.

A policy can be just a simple statement about basic expectations regarding children's behaviour and the strategies you would like used in response to undesirable behaviour which may vary depending on the different stages of development of your children.

The Children

Share detailed information about the children's routines; sleeping and eating habits, school, any extra-curricular activities, bath time and bedtime. It would be helpful to provide a typical daily and weekly timetable. Talk about:

- your children's likes and dislikes;
- favourite toys, songs, games and activities;
- what they like and do not like to eat;
- any people that are important to them like friends or grandparents;
- special words they use;
- any comforters;
- tips on how to respond when your child has a tantrum, or is tired or upset;
- whether your child has any additional needs or medical conditions and how these should be managed;
- managing your child's behaviour.

Day-to-day Communication

You will need to decide when the best time is to talk with your childcarer. You should also decide if you would like your childcarer to keep a diary.

The daily diary could contain information about any activities the children have done during the day and also things like: how well they have eaten or slept. The diary could stay in one place with both of you filling in any information you need to pass on. The diary will become an important record of communication, providing less opportunity for misunderstandings, and also a keepsake for your children.

6. Working together

Make sure your home childcarer also keeps a record of any medication given and any accidents or incidents that have happened during the day. You should date and sign any such records.

House Rules

Make sure you have clear “house rules” from the start. For example, whether you will allow your home childcarer to smoke in your home; whether he/she are permitted to have friends round during the day; and how much use can be made of the phone.

Confidentiality

During the first few days of your home childcarer’s employment, discuss the issue of confidentiality and privacy. It is inevitable that when anyone is working in your home, he/she will find out information that should be kept confidential, for example, about family members’ health, business affairs or personal relationships. You may want to include a confidentiality clause in the contract of employment.

Think of instances when it would be appropriate for your home childcarer to share information, for example, when required to talk to your child’s doctor. Remember that all childcare professionals have a responsibility, if they suspect that a child is being abused, to share their concerns with an appropriate professional.

Think about areas in your home where you would rather the home childcarer did not go, and what should be the approach to answering the telephone during your absences.

You may have a lot of personal information about your home childcarer, such as their medical records and bank details. Keep these safe and confidential.



6. Working together

Supporting and Motivating your Home Childcarer

Your approved home childcarer is a professional and needs to be supported to develop in his/her role. He/she will have done some training in order to be approved; however, your childcarer may wish to continue with his/her professional development. Work out ways to help and support him/her with this; whether it is providing time off to go to classes or complete coursework. A home childcarer who keeps up to date with his/her skills and learning will feel motivated and your children will benefit in the long run.

Checklist

Have you discussed:

- managing your child's behaviour?
- a daily handover period?
- hours of work?
- daily responsibilities?
- household tasks?
- confidentiality?
- a daily diary?
- risk assessments?
- pets?
- smoking?

First day's checklist

Have you provided the following:

- clear details of hours and duties?
- good working conditions and a well thought out job description?
- a written contract of employment?
- a safe, clean home with plenty of equipment for fun activities?
- information about local parks, playgrounds, playgroups?
- contact numbers for you, your partner, and a relation or other responsible adult who knows the family well?
- details, including telephone number of the family doctor, or out of hours duty doctor's service?

6. Working together

- contact numbers for the child's school, nursery, playgroup?
- clear guidance on your child's health (including allergies and intolerances, medicines, diet and sleep preferences), behaviour management, special routines, favourite toys and games, and so on?
- written permission to administer medication to your child and to seek medical advice when necessary?
- written permission for photographing children, routine outings, transporting in a vehicle, bathing, water-based activities, sun-cream application, observations?
- a regular time to talk with and listen to your home childcarer?
- employer and public liability insurance (you can get this from your house insurers)?
- clear guidance on what decisions your home childcarer can make regarding your children's school or doctor?
- a tour of the house, including how to use household equipment such as the oven, door locks, and alarm system?
- guidelines on what to do in an emergency, for example, your house fire drill, where torches are in case of a power cut, and how to stop the gas, water etc?

The Contract

Discuss the job thoroughly with your home childcarer and make time to go through and agree a contract. By law, as an employer, you must provide your employee with a written statement of terms, or a contract, within the first eight weeks of employment. However, it is good practice to agree a contract before your home childcarer starts work – it can always be reviewed at a later date.

The contract will clearly set out all aspects of the job and forms a legally binding agreement between you and your home childcarer. A good contract would cover:

- names of employer and home childcarer;
- names and dates of birth of children to be cared for;
- place of work – and whether or not the home childcarer will be expected to work anywhere else, for example at the family's second home;
- duties expected of the home childcarer;



6. Working together

- start date, hours of work and dates of any trial period;
- salary details, including gross annual wage, how many payments will be made and how frequently. The contract should also give details of whether you will be using a payroll company to pay your home childcarer;
- date of salary review and appraisal;
- holiday leave allowances for both the home childcarer and the family;
- overtime and time off in lieu (TOIL) arrangements. This includes babysitting, caring for other children (for example, relatives or friends of the family) and any expectations of overnight duties;
- sick leave entitlements, including what arrangements should be made if your home childcarer is sick and unable to work; or you are sick;
- responsibilities of the home childcarer and parent if the child is ill;
- any perks, for example, use of mobile phone or family car;
- pension arrangements, if any;
- details of what constitutes gross misconduct;
- use of the family car for childcare duties, or mileage allowance if using home childcarers car;
- for live-in home childcarers, details of accommodation;
- house rules, including use of the telephone and other household equipment (for example, home computer, stereo, washing machine);
- visiting arrangements for childcare colleagues, partners, friends, and so on;
- payment of expenses, such as petrol, outings, snacks and materials for use in the home childcarer's work;
- confidentiality agreements;
- behaviour management arrangements, including clearly stating what sanctions are acceptable;
- arrangements for administering children's medication;
- permission for outings, bathing children, applying sun block, taking photographs, and so on*;
- whether any extra household duties are expected of your home childcarer;
- the notice period required by the home childcarer and the parents if either party wants to end the contract.

*It is important to agree clear guidelines about this aspect of your home childcarer's work, so that the children are kept safe and the home childcarer understands what you consider are appropriate "professional

6. Working together

boundaries". On page 57 and 58 of this book you will find sample consent forms that you can sign to give your home childcarer permission to take the children on outings, apply their sun cream, bathe them, and photograph or film them.

You and your home childcarer should each sign and keep a copy of the contract in a safe place. If any changes are then made to the contract, you and your home childcarer should again both sign both copies and keep them safe. The most recent contract is the valid one and overrides any previous arrangements.

If there are any changes to your home childcarer's duties or working conditions, always make sure they are written down in a new or revised contract. Agreeing changes verbally will put you in a difficult position if you and your home childcarer have a contract dispute in the future.



7. Keeping your home safe

You may be aware of some of the dangers that exist in your home with children around, but it is important when employing a home childcarer for you both to carry out a thorough risk assessment at the start of the contract and every six to twelve months thereafter. Your home is not inspected in the same way as a registered childminder's and it is your responsibility to create a safe environment for your home childcarer to work in.

A daily visual check of their workplace (your home) should be part of your home childcarer's practice and you can discuss that with him/her. The childcarer may have suggestions or concerns about safety, which you can work together to resolve. It could be something as simple as asking you to move a poisonous houseplant to a high shelf, fitting a smoke alarm or covering a garden pond.

On page 55 there is an example of a risk assessment checklist that you and your home childcarer could use to monitor safety in your home. Below is a list of risks that covers the most common safety hazards found in family homes. It is not exhaustive and together you may identify other risks. For each risk, write down what action is to be taken, by whom and (if appropriate) by when to eliminate or reduce the risk. When you and your home childcarer have completed the checklist, both of you should sign and date it.

Remember to review the checklist regularly to make sure that any action points have been completed and to take into account children's changing needs and any alterations to the home.

Examples of risks include:

- banisters or railings that wobble, or with spaces where children could trap their heads or hands;
- blocked fire exits;
- cracked, broken or dirty toys and equipment;
- dangerous items (alcohol, matches, medication, cigarettes, plastic bags, etc) accessible to children;
- electrical sockets not covered;

7. Keeping your home safe

- low level glass (e.g. in windows, doors and coffee tables) that isn't safety glass;
- no stair gates (if caring for babies or toddlers);
- open fires and portable heaters with no fireguards;
- poisonous houseplants within children's reach;
- slippery rugs and loose carpets;
- radiators hot enough to burn a child;
- safety catches not fitted on windows;
- smoke alarms not fitted or not working;
- toys and other items that don't meet current safety standards;
- trailing tablecloths, blind pulls, curtain cords that could cause someone to trip;
- dangerous items (matches, sharp knives, cleaning fluids, razor blades, toiletries, etc, accessible electrical switches (should be pull-cords);
- slippery baths, shower trays and floors;
- unhygienic flannels, sponges, towels or nappy-changing arrangements;
- flexes trailing from kettles, irons, etc;
- harnesses on highchairs broken or missing;
- nappies being disposed of in kitchen bin;
- no fire blanket or fire extinguisher;
- pets allowed on tables and work surfaces;
- pets' food and/or litter trays accessible to children;
- unhygienic dish cloths, mops and tea towels;
- unhygienic food preparation or storage arrangements;
- animal mess;
- broken gates, walls and fences;
- climbing frames, slides or swings broken, not securely fixed to ground, or positioned on a hard surface;
- dangerous equipment (tools, garden machinery, chemicals, fishing tackle, etc) accessible to children;
- garden toys and furniture dirty or broken;
- loose paving stones, steps or manhole covers;
- points where children could escape from the garden;
- poisonous plants accessible to children;
- ponds, fountains, streams, pools, wells or water butts accessible to children;
- sheds, outbuildings, greenhouses, garages and cellars accessible to children;
- signs of infestation by vermin;



7. Keeping your home safe

- children's car seats broken, wrong size or not provided at all;
- inappropriate or invalid motor insurance;
- no child locks on rear doors;
- no MOT.

8. Help with the cost of approved childcare

The DHSSPS has made it possible for the Working Tax Credit to be available to more parents by developing a Home Childcarer Approval Scheme. Also, parents using registered or approved childcare whose employers provided childcare vouchers are now eligible to receive the first £50 of vouchers each week free of tax and National Insurance Contributions.

This means that parents using unregistered home childcare, who were previously unable to claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit, will now be able to do so - provided the childcare is approved under the new scheme and depending on their earnings and the cost of the childcare.

If you are using relatives for approved home childcare, you will not be able to claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit and you will have to pay tax on your childcare vouchers.

If you are receiving Working Tax Credit, it is your responsibility to inform HM Revenue and Customs if there is any change in your circumstances.



9. Questions and concerns

When Problems Come Up

If anything is worrying you, you should speak to your home childcarer straight away as worries can sometimes grow out of proportion. Encourage your home childcarer to do the same. Most difficulties can be settled through a friendly chat or by referring back to the contract. Consider whether your complaint is about the home childcarer or the quality of his/her work.

If your complaint is a contractual one then you can ask your home childcarer to leave.

Child Protection

If you suspect child abuse, you should suspend the home childcarer (you could speak to the Social Services Gateway Team at your local HSC Trust or, if you use their services, your payroll specialist, for advice) and you **must** inform your local police as well as notifying your local HSC Trust (see the child protection contacts on page 42). If the police or Social Services believe there are grounds for investigation, then the local HSC Trust's Gateway Team will withdraw approval and notify HM Revenue and Customs. Should the investigation clear the home childcarer, he/she will be re-instated accordingly.

If approval is permanently withdrawn as a result of an incident which harmed a child, or placed a child at risk of harm, you as an employer and the Police or HSC Trust must make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. This may result in the approved home childcarer being included in the children's and/or adults barred list.

You can also contact the NSPCC's free and confidential 24 hour helpline services at 0808 800 5000 or at www.nspcc.org.uk and the PSNI on 028 9065 0222.

Note: if you make an unfounded and malicious complaint, your home childcarer may pursue legal action.

10. Appendices

Childcare Qualifications

Before a home childcarer is approved, they must hold a childcare qualification or have attended induction training. The range of childcare qualifications and induction courses that are considered suitable for a childcarer to be approved are constantly under review. For an up-to-date list, visit: www.nidirect.gov.uk/childcare

The main awarding bodies for childcare qualifications are the Council for Awards in Education (CACHE), Edexcel, City and Guilds, and the Open University.

NICMA and EYO (see contacts on page 48) also provide a number of courses suitable for people working in childcare.

Childcare students study at different levels (usually Level 2 – certificate, or Level 3 – diploma) according to their needs, experience and academic ability. Level 3 (for example, an NVQ Level 3 or CACHE diploma) qualifications are aimed at people who may work alone, so they are ideal for a home childcarer.

Current Level 3 childcare qualifications include:

CACHE Diploma in Childcare and Education (DCE – formerly NNEB or Diploma in Nursery Nursing). This is a two-year, full-time course totalling 1650 hours of study, 750 hours of which are practical training. Students learn about children at different stages of growth and development, how to care for and educate them, and how to work with parents, carers and other childcare professional.

BTEC National Diploma in Early Years is a practical, work-related course, which requires students to complete projects and assignments based on workplace situations. It is made up of 18 units and is a Level 3 qualification equivalent to 2 'A' Levels. It is awarded by Edexcel.

NVQ Level 3 in Early Years Care and Education – a candidate may undertake an NVQ without having gained any previous qualifications. NVQ candidates are normally already employed in an early years setting, and are assessed on their performance in their work against a set of national



10. Appendices

standards. To achieve an NVQ Level 3, a candidate must be assessed competent in a range of mandatory units and optional units. They are also “underpinning knowledge” and understanding of early years care and education to complete the award. CACHE, Edexcel, City and Guilds, and the Open University are among the awarding bodies for the NVQ Level 3 in Early Years Care and Education.

Introductory Courses

Level 3 qualifications are aimed at people who may work alone, without supervision. Your home childcarer may, however, have started their training at a more basic level – especially if they have been working under supervision.

Courses include:

- CACHE Foundation Award in Caring for Children – a one-year, full-time, Level 1 course;
- CACHE Certificate in Child Care and Education – a one-year, full-time, Level 2 course;
- City and Guilds Progression Award in Early Years Care and Education – a level 2 course involving 120 hours of practical childcare work to complete assignments;
- An Introduction to Childminding (NICMA).

NB: Level 3 courses are at advanced level, equivalent to ‘A’ Levels. Level 2 courses are at intermediate level, equivalent to GCSEs. Level 1 courses are at foundation level.

Useful Contacts

Health & Social Care Trusts

Health and Social Care Trusts are the local government bodies responsible for the registration, inspection, monitoring and support of childminders and day care providers. Most HSC Trusts have specialist teams of Social Workers to cover this area of work, usually called Early Years Teams.

By law, HSC Trusts must operate a registration and inspection system for the following types of childcare services:

- day nurseries;
- playgroups;
- out-of-school care;
- childminders;
- summer and holiday schemes;
- crèches.

Although home based childcare is not required, by law, to be registered, your local HSC Trust is the body responsible for approving home childcarers, so you can be assured that your home childcarer meets the basic checks and qualifications as outlined at Section 3. If you identify someone who is willing to become an approved home childcarer, you should advise them to contact your local HSC Trust for further information and an application pack. Your local Trust also may have a list of currently approved home childcarers.



Useful Contacts

Early Years Teams

Northern HSC Trust

Ellis Street
Carrickfergus
BT38 8AZ
Tel: 028 9331 5112

Sperrin House
43 Queen's Avenue
Magherafelt
BT45 6BX
Tel: 028 7930 1700

Suite 7
Riverside House
Castle Lane
Waterside
Coleraine
BT52 3DR
Tel: 028 7035 8158

Raphael House
11B Fenaghy Road
Galgorm
Ballymena
BT42 1HW
Tel: 028 2563 5110

South Eastern HSC Trust

91 Hillsborough Road
Lisburn
BT28 1JN
Tel: 028 9250 1266

Ward 25
Downshire Hospital
Ardglass Road
Downpatrick
BT30 6RA
Tel: 028 4461 3311 (ext 3184)

Dunlop Units 57-58
4 Balloo Drive
Bangor
BT19 7QY
Tel: 028 9127 0672

Belfast HSC Trust

124 Stewartstown Road
Belfast
BT11 9JQ
Tel: 028 9060 4208

Glen Villa
Knockbracken Healthcare Park
Saintfield Road
Belfast
BT8 8BH
Tel: 028 9056 4977

Southern HSC Trust

Gosford Place
The Mall
Armagh
BT61 9AR
Tel: 028 3752 2262

Useful Contacts

Dromalane House
Dromalane Road
Newry
BT35 8AP
Tel: 028 3082 5000

Child & Family Care Office
2 Old Lurgan Road
Portadown
BT63 5SQ
Tel: 028 3833 3747

Western HSC Trust

Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital
Community Services Department
Omagh
BT79 0NS
Tel: 028 8283 5020

Community Services
2 Coleshill Road
Enniskillen
BT74 7HG
Tel: 028 6638 4000

Clooney Hall Centre
36 Clooney Terrace
Londonderry
BT47 6AR
Tel: 028 7132 0950



Useful Contacts

Child Protection Contacts

If you have any concerns about children being abused or harmed in any way, you should report these immediately to the relevant Trust for further investigation.

Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC's free and confidential 24 hour helpline services at 0808 800 5000 or at www.nspcc.org.uk. You can also contact the PSNI on 028 9065 0222.

Trust Contacts:

South Eastern HSC Trust Telephone (for referral) 030 0100 0300

Family Resource Centre
James Street
Newtownards
BT23 4EP
Tel: 028 9181 8518

Stewartstown Road Health Centre
212 Stewartstown Road
Dunmurry
Belfast
BT17 0FG
Tel: 028 9060 2705

Children's Services
81 Market Street
Downpatrick
BT30 6LZ
Tel: 028 4461 3511

Belfast HSC Trust Telephone (for referral) 028 9050 7000

414 Ormeau Road
Belfast
BT7 3HY
Tel: 028 9020 4550

Southern HSC Trust Telephone (for referral) 028 3741 5285 Freephone 080 0783 7745

The Duty Team
Lisanally House
87 Lisanally Lane
Armagh
BT61 7HW

Brownlow HSS Centre
1 Legahorry Centre
Brownlow
Craigavon
BT65 5BE

Dromalane House
Dromalane Road
Newry
BT35 8AP

E Floor
South Tyrone Hospital
Carland Road
Dungannon
BT71 4AU

Useful Contacts

Northern HSC Trust
Telephone (for referral)
030 0123 4333

Coleraine Child Care Office
 7A Castlerock Road
 Coleraine
 BT51 3HP
 Tel: 028 7032 5462

Unit 5A
 Toome Business Park
 Hillhead Road
 Toomebridge
 BT41 3SF
 Tel: 028 7965 1020

The Beeches
 76 Avondale Drive
 Ballyclare
 BT39 9DB
 Tel: 028 9334 0165

Western HSC Trust
Telephone (for referral)
Tel: 028 7131 4090

Tyrone & Fermanagh Hospital
 1 Donaghane Road
 Omagh
 BT79 ONS

Whitehill
 106 Irish Street
 Derry
 BT47 2ND

2 Coleshill Road
 Enniskillen
 BT74 7HG

Out of Hours Services

Belfast HSC Trust
 Tel: 028 9056 5444

South Eastern HSC Trust
 Tel: 028 9056 5444

Southern HSC Trust
 Tel: 028 3833 4444

Northern HSC Trust
 Tel: 028 9446 8833

Western HSC Trust
 Tel: 028 7134 5171



Useful Contacts

Education and Library Boards

Belfast Education and Library Board

Contact: Transfer Department
40 Academy Street
Belfast
BT1 2NQ
Tel: 028 9056 4000
www.belb.org.uk

North-Eastern Education and Library Board

Contact: Schools Branch County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
Co Antrim
BT42 1HN
Tel: 028 2565 3333
www.neelb.org.uk

South-Eastern Education and Library Board

Contact: Pre-School Education Helpline
Grahamsbridge Road
Dundonald
Belfast
BT16 2HS
Tel: 028 9056 6200
www.seelb.org.uk

Western Education and Library Board

Contact: Pre-School Education Helpline
1 Hospital Road
Omagh
Co Tyrone
BT79 0AW
Tel: 028 8241 1411
www.welbni.org

Southern Education and Library Board

Contact: Pre-School Education
3 Charlemont Place
The Mall
Armagh
BT61 9AX
Tel: 028 3751 2200
www.selb.org

Useful Contacts

Childcare Partnerships

The four Childcare Partnerships in Northern Ireland are made up of representatives from the main statutory and voluntary organisations working in Early Years' services. The role of Childcare Partnerships is to ensure there is high quality, affordable childcare for children up to the age of 14.

Northern Childcare Partnership

Health and Social Care Board
County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1QB
Tel: 028 2531 1225
gerry.conway@hscni.net

Eastern Childcare Partnership

Health and Social Care Board
Champion House
12-22 Linenhall Street
Belfast
BT2 8BS
Tel: 028 9055 3965
evelyn.curran@hscni.net

Southern Childcare Partnership

Health and Social Care Board
Tower Hill
Armagh
BT61 9DR
Tel: 028 3741 4521
jenny.mcdaid@hscni.net

Western Childcare Partnership

Health and Social Care Board
Gransha Park House
15 Gransha Park
Clooney Road
Londonderry
BT47 6FN
Tel: 028 7186 0086
maura.mason@hscni.net



Useful Contacts

Other Useful Contacts

Barnardo's aim to help vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfill their potential. It campaigns for better care for children and champions children's rights.

Tel: 020 8550 8822

www.barnardos.org.uk

British Red Cross Society is a leading member of the largest independent humanitarian network in the world – the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – working with people from all countries, regardless of their background or beliefs.

Tel: 028 9073 5350

www.redcross.org.uk

Child Accident Prevention Trust is a national charity in the United Kingdom committed to reducing the number of children and young people killed, disabled and seriously injured as a result of accidents.

Tel: 020 7608 3828

www.capt.org.uk

ChildLine is the free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. Children and young people can call the helpline about any problem, at any time – day or night.

Freephone: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Children are Unbeatable! is an alliance of more than 350 organisations and projects which campaigns for children to have the same legal protection against being hit as adults and promotes positive parenting.

Tel: 028 9040 1290

www.ci-ni.org.uk

The Children's Law Centre works to promote children's rights and develop an advice service on children's rights and the law.

Tel: 028 9024 5704

www.childrenslawcentre.org

Useful Contacts

The **Citizens Advice Bureau** helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice from over 3200 locations, and by influencing policymakers.

Tel: 028 9023 6522

www.citizensadvice.co.uk

Daycare Trust is the national childcare charity. They promote high quality affordable childcare for all and provide information for parents on childcare issues.

Tel: 0845 872 6260

www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Disability Action works to ensure that people with disabilities attain their full rights as citizens, by supporting inclusion, influencing Government policy and changing attitudes in partnership with disabled people.

Tel: 028 9029 7880

www.disabilityaction.org

Employers For Childcare offer an Approved Home Childcare service to families across Northern Ireland. Employers For Childcare employ the Approved Home Childcarer, taking away the employment responsibility from the family. Employers For Childcare provide the service around the hours of childcare that families need, including early mornings, evenings and weekends. Approved Home Childcarers are regulated by the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Freephone 0800 206 1488

www.approvedhomechildcare.co.uk/looking-for-childcare.aspx

The **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The Commission's general duties include working towards the elimination of discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different racial groups.

Tel: 028 9050 0600

www.equalityni.org



Useful Contacts

EYO the Early Years Organisation, promotes and supports the provision of high quality early childhood care, education and play facilities for children and their families. They offer support, training and information to people concerned with early years care and education, including parents, early years providers and students.

Tel: 028 9066 2825

www.early-years.org

The **Independent Safeguarding Authority** (ISA)'s role is to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. (The functions of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) will transfer to the new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) from December 2012).

Tel: 01325 953 795

www.isa.homeoffice.gov.uk

The **Labour Relations Agency** is an independent public body with responsibility for promoting the improvement of employment relations in Northern Ireland. The agency provides an impartial and confidential employment relations service and can give advice on employment rights.

Tel: 028 9032 1442

www.lra.org.uk

National Childbirth Trust aims to help all parents enjoy the experience of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood through a range of antenatal classes, helplines and social and educational events.

Tel: 0300 330 0700

www.nct.org.uk

Netmums.com provides local information networks throughout the UK, including Belfast and Lisburn, for mums and provided by mums.

www.netmums.com/belfast

Useful Contacts

NICMA, the Northern Ireland Childminding Association, is a charity and membership organisation which works to support childminders, home child carers, parents and children by the provision of quality childcare and education in registered home based settings. NICMA run a free information and vacancy service for parents looking to find a childminder or employ a home childcarer.

Tel: 0871 200 2063

www.nicma.org

The **Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People** promotes and safeguards the rights and best interests of children and young people.

Tel: 028 9031 1616

www.niccy.org

NSPCC, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, is a charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children.

Tel: 0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Order of Malta is a charitable organisation that maintains an ambulance corps and provides first aid training.

www.orderofmalta.ie

Parenting NI has a regional remit to promote positive parenting by providing support, training and information on family issues and influencing policy, provision and practice at all levels.

Tel: 0808 8010 722

www.parentingni.org

PlayBoard is the lead agency for children's play and the development of school age childcare in Northern Ireland. The ethos and remit of the agency is grounded in a commitment to meet the play needs of all children.

Tel: 028 9080 3380

www.playboard.org



Useful Contacts

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) is actively involved in the promotion of safety in all areas of life – at work, in the home, and on the roads, in schools, at leisure and on (or near) water.

Tel: 0121 248 2000

www.rosipa.com

St John Ambulance Association provides first-aid training and services, and operates care services and ambulance fleets in the UK.

Tel: 028 9079 9393

www.ni.sja.org.uk

Tax Credit Help

For information on Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit and for a claim pack.

Helpline: 0345 300 3900

www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits

Voice is the union for education professionals. Voice looks after the interests of members and works to promote the best possible practice in childcare.

Tel: 01332 372337

www.voicetheunion.org.uk

Sample Interview Form

Candidate's Personal Details

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone No:

Mobile No:

Email address:

Details of ID supplied (e.g., passport, driving licence)

Before you start:

- Approval letter
- Full clean driving licence
- Medical check form completed
- Non-smoker
- References supplied

Have you ever been included in a children's or adults' barred list?

Have you ever been considered for inclusion in a children's or adults' barred list?



Sample Interview Form

Training and Qualifications:

- Valid first aid certificate
- Relevant childcare qualification

Other courses attended

Are you a member of any professional organisations? If so, what ones?

Do you belong to any childcare groups or networks? If so, what ones?

Skills and Experience:

Tick for an acceptable answer and add your notes below.

- Why did you decide to become a home childcarer/nanny? What do you enjoy most about the job?
- What are your future career plans?
- Tell me about the children you have looked after before. What kind of activities would you do with my children?
- What kind of meals and snacks do you enjoy preparing for the children?
- What do you consider to be unacceptable behaviour and how would you deal with this?
- What would you do in an emergency involving yourself or one of the children?
- Where do you like to take the children out?

Notes:

Sample Interview Form

Personal Qualities:

- What do you enjoy most about looking after children?
- What do you find challenging about looking after children?
- Tell me about the biggest achievement since being a home childcarer/nanny.
- Tell me about a difficult situation you have had to deal with at work.
- How do you communicate with the parents that you work with?
- What do you feel are the most important qualities in a good home childcarer/nanny?

Notes:

Discussion Checklist:

- Managing children's behaviour
- Hours and duties
- Salary
- Payment method
- Child safety
- Ground rules
- Use of car
- Accommodation (if live in home childcarer/nanny)
- Invited for second interview**
- References followed up**



Sample Medical Form

CONFIDENTIAL

Approved Home Childcarer Medical Form

This medical form is intended to check whether you have any impairments or conditions, which might have an impact on your ability to perform your duties as a home childcarer. The information you give here will be kept in the strictest of confidence and, if you are not successful in gaining a position with our family, the form will be kept for a maximum of six months.

Full Name:

GP medical certificate shown

How many days off sick have you had in the past 12 months?

Do you have any impairment, which may have an impact on your ability to perform your duties as a home childcarer?

YES NO

If you answered “yes” to the above question, then please give more details in the space below

Sample Risk Assessment

Risk	Action	Actioned By	When	Completed



Sample Risk Assessment

Risk	Action	Actioned By	When	Completed

Signature of home childcarer

Date

Signatures of parent(s)

Date

Date

Sample Parental Permission Form

Childcarer's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name(s) of Child(ren) (BLOCK CAPITALS)

I/we agree for the above-named child(ren) to:

DELETE AS APPROPRIATE:

- Go on routine outings with the above named childcarer
- Be transported in a private vehicle with the above named childcarer
- For sun protection cream to be applied by the above named childcarer
- Go swimming and take part in other water based activities with the above named childcarer
- Be bathed by the above named childcarer
- Be observed and development accessed by the above named childcarer in order to support them in working towards professional qualifications. These may be in the form of written statements, photographs, videos or tape recordings

Parent/guardian's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed: Date:

Parent/guardian's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed: Date:



Sample Photo and Video Permission Form

Dear Parent/Guardian

While caring for your child(ren) I may sometimes wish to take photographs or video footage to share with you, use in promotional materials, accompany coursework, or keep for my own records. I would like your permission to do this.

Name(s) of Child(ren) (BLOCK CAPITALS)

I am/we are the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the child(ren) named above and I/we give permission for my/our child(ren) to be photographed and/or filmed by the childcarer named below, for the following reasons (please tick all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> the childcarer's own album/records | <input type="checkbox"/> the childcarer's coursework |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the family's album/records | <input type="checkbox"/> the childcarer's website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> publications, e.g. NICMA, NIPPA | <input type="checkbox"/> other organisations' websites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="text"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="text"/> | |

I/we understand that there will be no payment for my/our child(ren)'s participation.

Parent(s)/guardian(s)' names (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Address (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signature(s) of parent(s)/guardian(s) & Date

Home Childcarer's name (BLOCK CAPITALS)



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