

## What is an Au Pair?

An Au Pair is a young single person without dependants, between the ages of 17-27 who come to the U.K. to learn English and to live as part of an English speaking family to learn more about the English way of life. Their stay can be from 2 months up to a maximum of 2 years.

In order to enter the U.K. legally as an Au Pair they must be from a Western European country including: Cyprus, Malta and Turkey or from the Eastern European countries of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Citizens from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey require a visa obtainable from the relevant British Consulate and a letter of invitation from the family is required before such a visa can be obtained. A person (other than a national from the European Community or the EEA countries of Iceland and Norway) who has entered the U.K. in some other capacity (e.g. visitor) will not be allowed to remain as an Au Pair.

Before coming to the U.K. an Au Pair should be able to speak a certain amount of English in order to be able to converse with the family.

The Au Pair will live as a member of the English speaking family in exchange for doing some light housework e.g. vacuuming, dusting, using washing machine and helping with the preparation of meals and also looking after the children.

Regular Au Pairs work a 5 hours day plus up to 2 evenings a week baby-sitting and have two completely days free per week. For this they will receive pocket money of not less than £55 per week.

An Au Pair plus works 26-40 hours per week and can only come from EU countries, they carry out the same duties as an au-pair but for up to 40 hours per week and require pocket money of not less than £70 per week.

Free time: 2 full days per week and the au pair must be allowed to attend English classes if they wish either during the day or in the evenings (normally 2-3 times per week).

Holidays: Au pairs should receive at least 2 weeks paid holiday after 6 months. It is important to ascertain whether your au pair wishes to return home for a holiday whilst they are staying with you. This could be during the summer or at Christmas.

It must be remembered that Au Pairs are NOT trained nannies nor are they domestic servants. They are not a cheap alternative to childcare. They should not be expected to take full responsibility for the children and all the household tasks. They must have their own room, full board and be paid pocket money as agreed.

Health care: The au pair should be registered with your doctor soon after they arrive to entitle them to free NHS health care if necessary.

The Au Pair is responsible for paying their own travel costs to and from the U.K. as well as any school fees.

Any problems should always be discussed between the parties involved and an amicable solution sought. The Agency is always available to offer help and support together with translation to make sure that the Au Pair or Family understands fully what the problem is to enable a quick solution. It cannot be stressed enough that problems need to be dealt with quickly, an Au Pair or Family will not always be aware that there is a problem and if left the Au Pair or Family can become very unhappy. However as the agency is purely introducing one party to another it cannot arbitrate on disputes as it is remote from both parties.