

## Recruitment Pack for the At Home Childcare Service

The At Home Childcare Service is a scheme created by the Family Information Service, bringing together qualified, Ofsted registered childcarers and people who are looking for flexible care for their children in their own homes, ie;

- Parents working shifts or unsociable hours
- Occasional or emergency childcare needs
- Parents studying or training in the evenings or at weekends
- Children of different ages who all need looking after at home
- Children with a disability or medical needs requiring homecare

### To become an At Home Childcarer

- You must have a childcare qualification at Level 2 or equivalent (Applicants without a suitable qualification must demonstrate, at interview, that they have extensive experience in childcare.)
- You must be a Brighton & Hove resident
- You must have at least one weekday a week, available for work

### Benefits of becoming an At Home Childcarer

You can make a real difference to the lives of parents and children by using your skills and experience to offer a professional home childcare service. Benefits for you include:

- Working hours to suit your lifestyle
- Access to job opportunities, directly with families and through the council
- Competitive and flexible rates of pay - the amount you earn is negotiable between you and each family you work with, or at a published council scale
- Training (as required: free, subsidised and requiring payment) and ongoing support

### How to become an At Home Childcarer

You'll need to complete an application form and return it to the Family Information Service.

Email to [familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Or post to: Freepost FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE

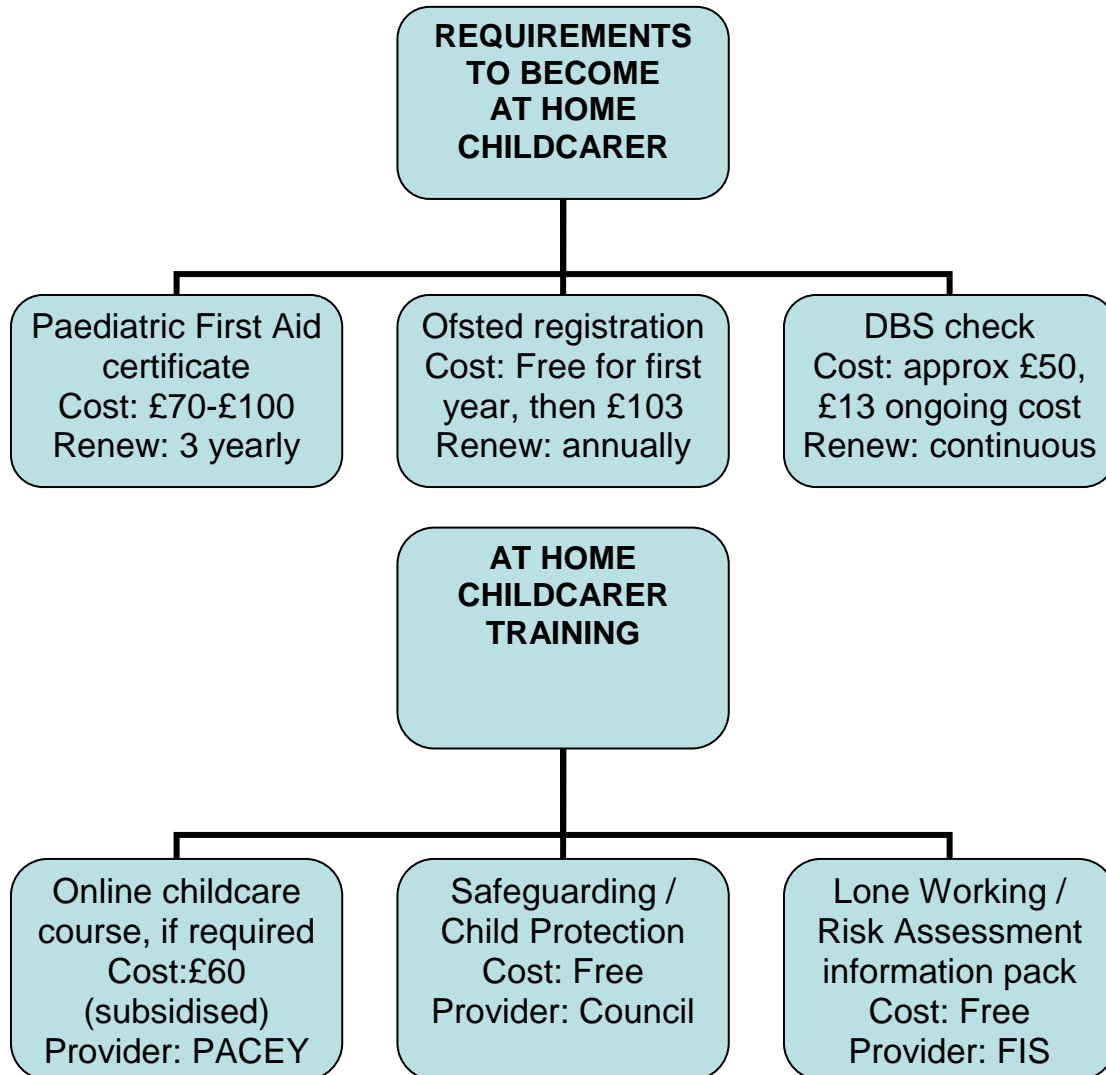
Alternatively, please call 01273 293545 and the Childcare Brokerage Officer will answer any specific questions you may have.

If you decide to go ahead, the brokerage officer and FIS manager will meet with you for an informal interview, at one of our regularly scheduled recruitment interview sessions, across Brighton & Hove.



## Step by step guide to becoming an At Home Childcarer

Complete application and return to FIS. Meet with co-ordinator for more information.  
Attend an interview, if interested and if accepted, decide whether or not to proceed.



Contact HMRC for employment tax advice and apply for insurance (Free for first year, then approx £70)

Family Information Service promotes service to parents and Parents then contact you to discuss potential work.

## **Ofsted – Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR)**

It is a requirement of the At Home Childcare Service that you are registered with Ofsted on their Voluntary Childcare Register (VCR).

*This acts as an assurance to parents about the quality and professionalism of you as a childcarer and of our service*

*and*

*It enables working parents to access Working Tax Credit which can be vital for the affordability of their childcare.*

If you ARE registered with Ofsted as a Childminder or you have VCR registration from other childcare work you have done, such as being a nanny, it will shorten your application process.

If you are NOT registered, it will take about 12 weeks to become registered.

## **Other requirements**

In order to be considered for the At Home Childcare Service, you must demonstrate at interview, that you are able to:

- Be responsible for those in your care, including the provision of activities that are appropriate for each individual child.
- Be respectful of the family homes where you work.
- Undertake tasks agreed with parent/carers in advance and be aware of, and respect the diverse nature of what makes a family.
- Treat any personal information as confidential. This approach is also important in forming and maintaining good working relationships.
- Be available for flexible working hours and reliable, as families will depend on your services as a professional childcarer.
- Provide feedback to help us to monitor the service
- Undertake training as required. The initial training requirements are essential to joining the register of At Home Childcarers. There may also be additional training as and when required.
- Follow the guidelines set out by the service, including completion of simple paperwork and keeping of appropriate records.
- Build relationships with families using your good communication skills. You should also have hygiene and safety awareness, an understanding of basic food preparation and administration skills.



## HM Revenue & Customs Information for At Home Childcarers

At Home Childcarers must take advice from HMRC on their employment and tax status. Please note the details given here are for guidance only and are not a substitute for HMRC advice.

### Self-employment

If you are contracted by parents to provide services in their home as self-employed, you are responsible for their own Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions.

This means that as a childcarer you will need to work out your income and expenses;

- Registration as self-employed
- National Insurance Contributions
- Income and expenses
- Record keeping of expenses
- Self-Assessment Tax Return
- Where to go for further advice and help

The helpline for newly self employed and registration is 0845 915 4515. For the Revenue and Customs Advice team call 01332 724410 or online [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

### Employee of family

A family who are your employer need to follow the guidelines on pay, tax and NI contributions. All enquiries on how and whether parents should register as an employer, should be made to Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC);

HMRC employer helpline 08457 143 143

Website [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

Other useful contacts for parents regarding tax and employment matters for At Home Childcarers, or for researching the terms of your agreement, include;

Government website (general information)	<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>
Nannytax (payroll support and services)	<a href="http://www.nannytax.co.uk">www.nannytax.co.uk</a>
Childcare advice (Prof. Ass. of Childcarers)	<a href="http://www.pacey.org.uk">www.pacey.org.uk</a>

### Next Steps Checklist

- 1) Read the next section 'Is At Home Childcare for me?'
- 2) If interested, apply, meet the co-ordinator and complete an interview
- 3) If you decide to become an At Home Childcarer and are accepted, complete the stages of the application which apply to you

## Is At Home Childcare for me?

At Home Childcare is a very specific type of childcare and does not suit everyone. It is similar in some ways to being a Childminder or a Nanny, but only similar; it is not the same. It is very different to working in a Nursery or other group setting!

### PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHETHER THIS ROLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

Some of the questions you should ask yourself when thinking about At Home Childcare are:

- Do I enjoy looking after children? Would I enjoy planning activities for them?
- Would I enjoy doing this on my own?
- Would I enjoy working with parents to ensure I deliver a good service?
- Would I be able to talk to parents about problems or concerns about their children?
- Would I feel comfortable working in someone else's home?
- Do I feel capable of respecting the individual needs of children who have different families, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to my own?
- Am I interested in caring for children with additional needs, such as children with a disability or behaviour difficulty?
- Would I like to work directly with parents? Would I be happy to complete all the paperwork involved?
- What hours am I prepared to work? Am I willing to offer flexible working hours?
- What effect will it have on my family or other commitments such as work or study?

#### Before I start - Is it expensive to get started? (Recap of previous information)

- **Ofsted** registration - Free for the first year; £103 thereafter
- **DBS** police check – Approx £50 and £13 annual DBS update service
- **Insurance** – Free for the first year; approx £70 thereafter
- (If you are using your own car, you need to investigate business use car insurance)
- **Childcare online course** (if required) - £100 fee (after council subsidy)
- **Safeguarding training and Lone Working & Risk Assessment information** – Free

## **Where can I gain support setting up?**

- You can gain support and guidance from the At Home Childcare Co-ordinator, the FIS manager and the FIS team.
- View other At Home Childcarer profiles at [www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk](http://www.familyinfobrighton.org.uk) / Parent Carer Zone / Childcare Providers / FIS At Home Childcarers

## **Once I am registered**

- How many children can I look after?

You will not be registered for a set number of children, however you should always consider what is an appropriate limit to you providing a safe and professional childcare service.

You are limited to looking after children from no more than 2 families at any one time. (To look after children from 3 or more families, you must register as a Childminder.)

- Is there financial support?

Once registered some council-run training courses may be subsidised or even free. Other childcare related training may be funded on a discretionary basis relating to the needs of a specific childcare role you wish to undertake.

## **Will I get any other support?**

Yes, you can get extra support from:

- Networking Sessions – 3 times a year, a networking session is held for all home childcarers to attend to network, share and support each other.
- Newsletters – 3 times a year, an email newsletter is sent to update and advise home childcarers on upcoming information such as training dates, legislative changes and so on.
- The Family Information Service advertise your vacancies and pass your details to families looking for childcare – you have the option to also have your profile on our online directory.

## **Can I offer Government funded places for 3 and 4 year olds?**

No. This is a childcare role as opposed to a nursery education role.

## **Can I take childcare vouchers from private companies?**

Yes, all registered childminders can take these. You need to liaise directly with parents and the company involved.



## Market Research and Business Planning Top Tips

A useful 'task' even before starting any At Home Childcare work is to consider the following questions. Many of your answers will form the basis of your written profile, promoting yourself to parents.

Thinking about what childcare services are already on offer in your area and what parent's childcare requirements are, will help you decide what kind of service you will provide and if there are any gaps in the market.

### About you

- How confident are you about setting up and running your own business and dealing with parents, professionals, HMRC, etc
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How will this new work affect your current working / life pattern and your family?
- What salary expectations do you have?

### About your location

- How far will you travel, within Brighton & Hove, as an At Home Childcarer?
- Who is your competition?
- How many Childminders and other childcare providers operate in your area? (ie. nurseries, schools, playgroups, out of school clubs, nannies - FIS can help with this.)
- What services are Childminders and day care providers offering in your area? What can you offer that's different and better?
- What range of childcare services do parents in your area need? Baby care, Toddler care, Out of school hours, Overnight, Full days / Half days, Children with additional needs, Early / late opening hours, Weekends ?

### Business Planning

- What services will I offer?
- What prices will I charge? What guidance/help is available?
- How many children do I want to look after? What ages?
- What days / times do I want to run my service?
- Do I want to work with other people? Could I meet up with other childcarers?
- What equipment will I need? What financial assistance is available?
- What location am I going to target? How will this fit in with my current lifestyle?
- What legislations and regulations will I have to meet? (Ofsted, Health & Safety)
- What training will I need to do? Initially and ongoing? What costs are involved?
- What contingency plans are in place if I have to stop At Home Childcaring for any length of time (for example because of a child protection investigation)?



## The importance of setting up a working relationship with parents, using a written agreement – things to consider and include:

- Settling-in charges, ongoing fees, method of payment, extra charges
- Deposits, Notice, Review of working arrangement.
- Leave arrangements – Holidays, paid/unpaid leave. Also consider unusual/ emergency/ compassionate leave circumstances such as bereavement, family accident/illness.
- Care of unwell children and/or with ongoing additional needs, possibly requiring medicines, special diets, procedures and involvement with other professionals
- Signed parental permissions
- Agreed duties and responsibilities

(Please note, this list is suggested, not exhaustive)

**IMPORTANT:** Your customers will be influenced by the 'whole package' so be clear on what you are offering before you start thinking of advertising and producing promotional materials.

## How to promote yourself

- Family Information Service – our work with parents and professionals such as Health Visitors and Social Workers can be a main source of job opportunities.
- Websites – there are several parent, childcare and job related sites you can advertise on.
- School premises – speak to local schools to see if they can inform parents of your service.
- Word of mouth – with parents and at other childcare providers.
- Badges/uniform – we do not require you to identify yourself as an At Home Childcarer but some childcarers prefer to create their own identity through business cards, name badge or printed clothing.

## Useful information in creating and maintaining your childcare business

Brighton & Hove City Council has a [Business Support web page](#) where you can find help, advice and interactive tools on running a sustainable business.

### Getting started - HMRC e-learning course

This [HMRC e-learning course](#) is free and aimed at anyone starting a business as a sole trader (running the business on your own). It will answer all your queries about tax, National Insurance, business records and expenses and help you to ensure you are compliant with regulations from HMRC, Companies House and/or the Charity Commission.

## For further information, contact:

Sian Bruce, Childcare Brokerage Officer, Family Information Service  
01273 293545 / [Familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Familyinfo@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

