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■■■■■ NEW: post #brexit immigration rules are shaping up to kill the au pair industry - on which 45,000 working families depend for affordable childcare. Seems mad. Stay with me. /1

<https://t.co/9N5wESgv4f>

First, what is an 'au pair' - sometimes assumed to be childcare for posh folk - but actually its really a childcare solution for doctors, police, nurses, single parents who have jobs that need reliable, affordable, full-time childcare. They can't afford nannies at £2kpcm /2

So they an 'au pair', which is a kind of cultural exchange. A young person (90%+ from EU/EEA) aged 18-26 comes to live in your house, they get contribution to English lessons, board and lodging and £100/week 'pocket money' in exchange for 25 hours childcare - it works /3

But now, with Free Movement ended, the Home Office has listed au pairs as a "skilled occupation" (code 61220 with minimum new entrant salary threshold of £20,480, requirement for sponsorship etc. That's a totally different ballgame /4

This, says Au Pair Agencies association boss Jamie Shackell, **@BAPAA\_Chair**, is totally inappropriate as au pairs aren't skilled in that sense.

And if the Home Office "doesn't provide a simpler visa route for au pairs, then the programme will be lost". /5

**@BAPAA\_Chair** So what does the Home Office say? Not much.

According to a letter sent to Ms Shackell they confirmed there will not be a 'dedicated route' for au pairs and they could use 'other routes' - either hiring British or using the Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS). Lets take each in turn. /6

<https://t.co/SolO2b97ju>

Anyone wishing to come to the UK would also have to meet the minimum salary requirements of £25,600 per annum, or £20,480 if they qualify as a new entrant. We only consider guaranteed basic gross pay, not accommodation or other in-kind benefits. An intermediate level of English language ability is also a requirement, which would preclude those who want to come to the UK to learn English.

The UK's points-based immigration system will not offer a dedicated route for au pairs. We recognise the end of Free Movement will mean represent a significant change for the way some businesses and individuals recruit. Yet immigration must be considered alongside investment in, and development of, the UK's domestic labour force, rather than as an alternative to it. This is especially relevant in light of the many UK workers who face an uncertain future given the current national emergency due to COVID-19.

However, there are other immigration routes which will exist for people from overseas who may wish to take up this role and those wishing to employ an au pair can look to offer a package which makes it attractive to those arriving in the UK under these routes to do so. Those who have general rights to work in the UK, such as those who arrive under our Youth Mobility Schemes (YMS) or as dependants of other workers, would be able to undertake such work.

**@BAPAA\_Chair** First English labour/jobless post Covid-19? Well, truth is BAPAA have tried to recruit local and failed. English kids, not surprisingly, don't want to go live in someone's house for £100/week and look after their kids. I wouldn't - but that's the point! /7

**@BAPAA\_Chair** As a young person I wouldn't have wanted to go to Edinburgh or London to au pair - but I might well have wanted to go to Barcelona, Rome or Paris or Berlin as a way of learning language/having cultural exchange /8

**@BAPAA\_Chair** What about Youth Mobility Scheme? That's for 18-30 year olds from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan

Monaco, New Zealand, Korea, San Marino & Taiwan and currently attracts 20,000 a year - all of whom get 2-year work visas. Again. Not suitable /9

### <https://t.co/HYYDBxRaoL>

**@BAPAA\_Chair** As Ms Shackell says, why would those on YMS who get two-year work visa anywhere want to work as an au pair at £100/week? The wouldn't - and don't - about 1% so far take 'au pair' jobs. /9

**@BAPAA\_Chair** Kevin Foster the immigration minister says that au pair families should offer a more "attractive" package to get YMS visa holders to do the job - see statement - but the industry has zero confidence that works. /10

### <https://t.co/tmryCDZZ5a>

FBIS Minister Kevin Foster said:

"As has been the case since 2008, the UK's points-based immigration system will not offer a dedicated visa route for au pairs and we will not be introducing one for the same reasons previous governments did not reintroduce one for Non-EEA nationals. Those EEA Nationals who arrived in the UK to work as an Au Pair before the end of the Transition Period, should apply to the EUSS to continue working in this role beyond 30 June 2021.

"There are other immigration routes which exist for people who may wish to take up this role and those wishing to employ an au pair can look to offer a package which makes it attractive to those arriving in the UK under these routes to do so. Those who have general rights to work in the UK, such as those who arrive under our Youth Mobility Schemes (YMS), would be able to undertake such work.

"This route results in around 20,000 young people from participating countries or territories coming to experience life in the UK, with capacity for more. We remain open to negotiating Youth Mobility arrangements with other countries within the EU and further afield, but these must be reciprocal and we will not add nations unilaterally to the list."

**@BAPAA\_Chair** The Home Office approach is not surprising, but on inspection it really makes no sense.

Au pairs fill an important hole for working families, often keyworkers and professionals who really couldn't survive without them - why destroy that scheme? /11

**@BAPAA\_Chair** There's an ideological demand to end Free Movement and treating everyone the same - but the EU is NOT the same as Canada or New Zealand because it's on our doorstep. Why an au pair can come and go for six months, see family once or twice. Proximity does make a difference/12

**@BAPAA\_Chair** Mr Foster does hold a 'chink' of light by saying that he'll consider a YMS scheme with EU countries on a reciprocal basis, but that isn't going to happen any time soon on my reading of current EU-UK relations, the need for equal treatment etc. Though hope that's wrong/13

**@BAPAA\_Chair** Ironically one of the families I spoke to for that piece is a single-parent (Mark Lilley, from Chingford) voted **#Brexit** but told me he had no intention of excluding those coming to UK to provide useful service. /14

**@BAPAA\_Chair** His story below is typical. Spanish au pair, she was doing masters, learned English, taught some Spanish to Mark's daughter, helped with childcare, hung out with friends at weekend - it worked for everyone. He can't afford £2k/month for a nanny. /15 <https://t.co/LqhX3xgCA>

Mark Lilley, an oil trader from Chingford, east London, who is a single parent and has an au pair to help care for his 11-year-old daughter, Paige, said it was unrealistic to think UK workers would be willing to fill the gap.

"It's nuts. My last au pair, Mirella, was from Spain and was doing a masters, so while Paige was at school she was free to study. She improved her English and got to spend time in the UK, she gave Paige Spanish classes and helped with childcare — everyone was happy," he said.

**@BAPAA\_Chair** Or Oli Long, an NHS consultant who is married to another consultant - they use au pairs because nature of job means they're on-call, sometimes get stuck in emergencies etc. A live-in solution is really what they need - and again, the cultural exchange is good for everyone/16 <https://t.co/35FgO2pxaT>

Oli Long, an NHS consultant in London who is married to another consultant physician, said he was unsure how his family life could work without an au pair, having had six au pairs since his two daughters, aged eight and 10, went to primary school.

"We honestly couldn't manage without them," he said. "We both have senior positions and sometimes we unavoidably get stuck at work, and when that happens we know someone is there who can put the girls to bed. Leave aside the cost — a daytime nanny or childminder doesn't work for that," he said.

**@BAPAA\_Chair** All this makes me despair - **#Brexit** will just continue to retard relations with the EU on a personal/cultural level, it's inevitable.

There were attempt to negotiate special arrangements for students and young people under the TCA, but it all got stuck.  
/17

**@BAPAA\_Chair** The UK determination to have no mobility chapter - so attempts to make arrangements for researchers, pensioners also foundered - means that the barriers continue to go up, even at the expense of working UK families. /18

**@BAPAA\_Chair** Ms Shackell says there cd be a 'fix' if Au Pair agencies could act as sponsors and salary could be calculated pro-rata etc and that coudl get au pairs to £180/week - which is nearly double but better than nowt. Better would be to reinstate Au Pair Visa that existed til 2008 /19

**@BAPAA\_Chair** But I don't see much appetite looking at the comms from the Home Office.

Which is said, since you'd think 'au pairs' would be Tory street - allowing qualified, middle-class folk to work harder. I find it all rather baffling.

Good weekend all. ENDS