

University of Oxford

School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography

**Institute of Social and Cultural
Anthropology**

51 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PE



COMPAS Research Project:
“Changing status, changing lives? The socio-economic
impact of
EU accession on low wage migrant labour in the UK”

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW
AU PAIR AGENCIES**

(March 2004)

BUSINESS PROFILE

Interview Number:

Name of Agency	
How many offices	
Where offices located	
Partnership with other agencies - UK	
Partnership with other agencies - abroad	
Sectors provide for	
Membership of professional organisations	
Numbers of au pairs deals with (ranges)	
Number of host families deals with	
Position of interviewee	

1. Can you tell me about the history of your agency, when it was founded and why the founders went into the au pair industry?

Objective: to understand how the agency developed

- Have they always specialised in au pairs?
- Do they do any other form of recruitment or employment placement?
- What nationalities of au pairs have they specialised in? Have there been any changes in this?
- Do they focus on the local area or place au pairs UK wide?
- Do they offer supervision or any additional services?
- What would they see as the selling point of their agency?

2. Could you give a breakdown of the au pairs currently on your books by country of origin?

- UK nationals?
- accession nationals by country
- EU workers
- non EU workers
- gender of the above
- Do they expect any changes with accession?

3. What are the arrangements that they have with au pairs?

Objective: To understand the relationship between the au pair and the agency?

- Do they have a contract/written agreement with the au pair? What sort of issues does this cover?
- Does their partner agency have a contract/written agreement with the au pair? What sort of issues does this cover?
- Do their host families typically have a written agreement with the au pair? What sort of issues does this cover?
- Are there any insurance arrangements that they have with au pairs (e.g. health, accident etc)? Do they offer any advice on insurance?

4. Do they have relationships with overseas partners?

- How do they make contact with partner agencies?
- Do they advise or assist with immigration requirements for au pair visas?
- Do they have workers au pairs on working holidaymaker scheme visas?
- Would they consider taking on foreign students?

5. Are there any nationals that are particularly hard to place?

- is there any preference for particular nationalities? If there is, can you explain this?
- is it particularly difficult or easy to place EU nationals?

6. Could you tell us how you attract host families and how you would meet their requirements?

- do they advertise for host families? How and where?
- do they have any requirements for host families? Do they have to produce any documentation?
- how do they match host families and au pairs?
- if there is a problem between host family and au pair do they provide another au pair? And do they provide another host family?
- do they perform any services for the host family other than finding the au pair (e.g. checking references, arranging insurance, travel arrangements etc)

7. Could you tell us how you attract au pairs and how you would meet their requirements?

- do they advertise and what use do they make of the internet?
- what documentation does the au pair have to show them?
- do they offer any services in addition to au pair placement (insurance, immigration advice, transport)
- do they offer any assistance with finding language schools

8. What do you do in case of difficulties between host families and au pairs?

- Do you have a role?
- Have you ever felt unable to place an au pair?
- Have you ever felt unable to offer an au pair to a host family?

9. How can you tell a cowboy operator? What kind of practises give the industry a bad name and how can they be prevented?

10. Do you feel that the current systems for obtaining au pair visas is functioning well. Would you have any suggestions on how to make it work better?

11. What do you think the impact of accession will be on the au pair system, and on your agency in particular?

- Have they made any changes or are they planning to make any changes to business practises in line with accession?
- Have they had any concerns expressed by au pairs or host families regarding the impact of accession?