Domestic Workers Report 2026

Pay, hours and working conditions of private domestic workers in the United Kingdom.

quinn.

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Legal Notice

Edition 2026

Publisher: quinn (ServiceHunter AG), Birmensdorferstrasse 94, 8003 Zürich
Editor: Luna Arnold
Layout & Graphics: Lilly Barak

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Introduction

Employing someone in your own home is one of the least visible corners of the UK labour market, and one of the least measured. Nannies, housekeepers, cleaners, carers and family assistants keep hundreds of thousands of households running, yet the state barely counts them. The Office for National Statistics publishes no standalone figure for the number of nannies working in Britain; the National Nanny Association puts it at roughly 30,000 in 2025, down from about 40,000 in 2022, as government-funded childcare expanded and VAT was added to private-school fees. Informality is the bigger blind spot. The International Labour Organization estimates that around 76 million people work as domestic helpers worldwide, roughly 80% of them informally, off the books, without registration or insurance. Britain is not exempt from that pattern.

In UK law a nanny is almost never self-employed, so a family that pays "cash in hand" without registering is not simply saving on paperwork — it is employing someone unlawfully, leaving the worker with no holiday pay, sick pay, pension or insurance, and exposing itself to HMRC penalties of up to 100% of the tax owed. HMRC now runs a dedicated "hidden economy" taskforce; undeclared household pay feeds directly into a UK tax gap the department estimated at £59.2 billion for 2024–25. This report begins to fill that gap with real numbers. It draws on quinn's UK employment database, built over more than two decades, which records the actual, agreed pay and working arrangements set out in private-household contracts. This edition is based on **over 3,000 UK household employment contracts.**

Methodology

To prepare this report, quinn conducted comprehensive literature research and analysed the employment contracts with real wage data registered on its platform. Employment data for active household workers until 31 December 2025 were considered. Reported averages are medians, which are more stable than the arithmetic mean at these sample sizes. The underlying data is based on employers' statements, and quinn accepts no liability for possible incorrect information provided by employers.

The legal situation

In UK law a nanny is almost always an employee, not self-employed, so the family, as employer, carries the legal duties. In short, that means registering with HMRC and running PAYE (Income Tax and National Insurance), paying at least the National Living Wage of £12.71 an hour (from April 2026), enrolling eligible staff in a workplace pension, holding employers' liability insurance, and granting statutory holiday and sick pay. Section 6 sets these obligations out in full.

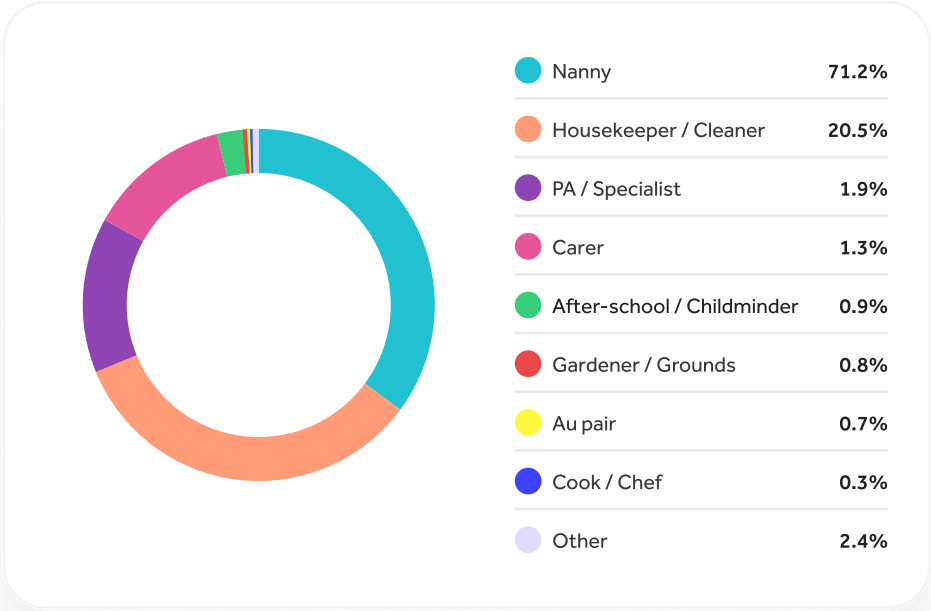
What domestic workers earn

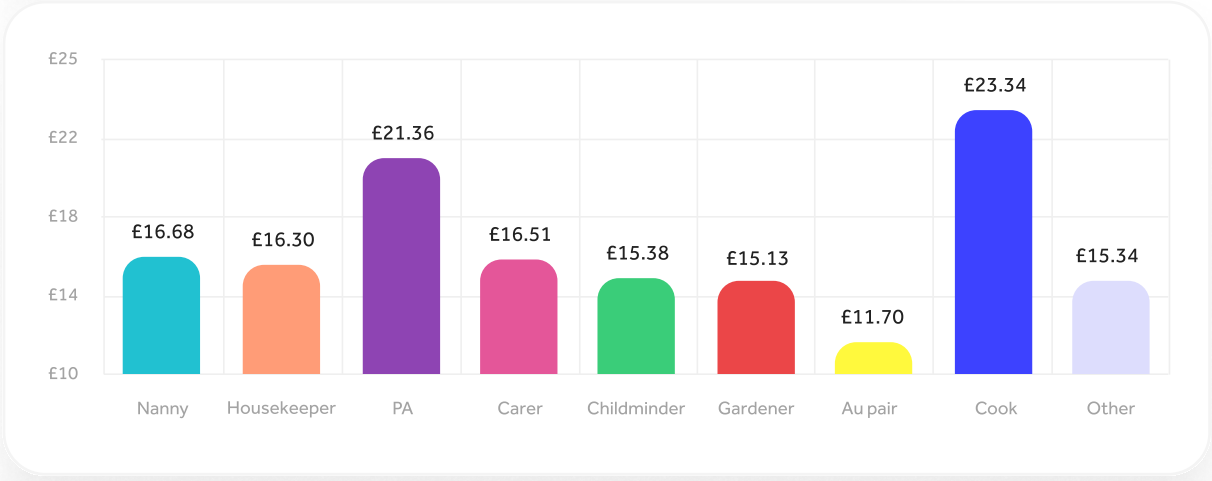
£16.59 average gross hourly pay across all UK household contracts.

The average gross hourly wage across all contracts with pay data is **£16.59**, with a median of £16.00. Pay is fairly tightly clustered around this figure: the middle half of contracts falls between £13.50 and £19.00 an hour. The spread widens at the edges — the lowest-paid tenth of roles sit at around £12.21 an hour, while the best-paid tenth reach £21.32 or more.

Pay varies most by role. Nannies make up just over seven in ten contracts, so the all-role average closely tracks nanny pay. Specialist and senior positions command a clear premium; live-in and entry-level roles such as au pairs sit at the bottom.

Pay and share by role



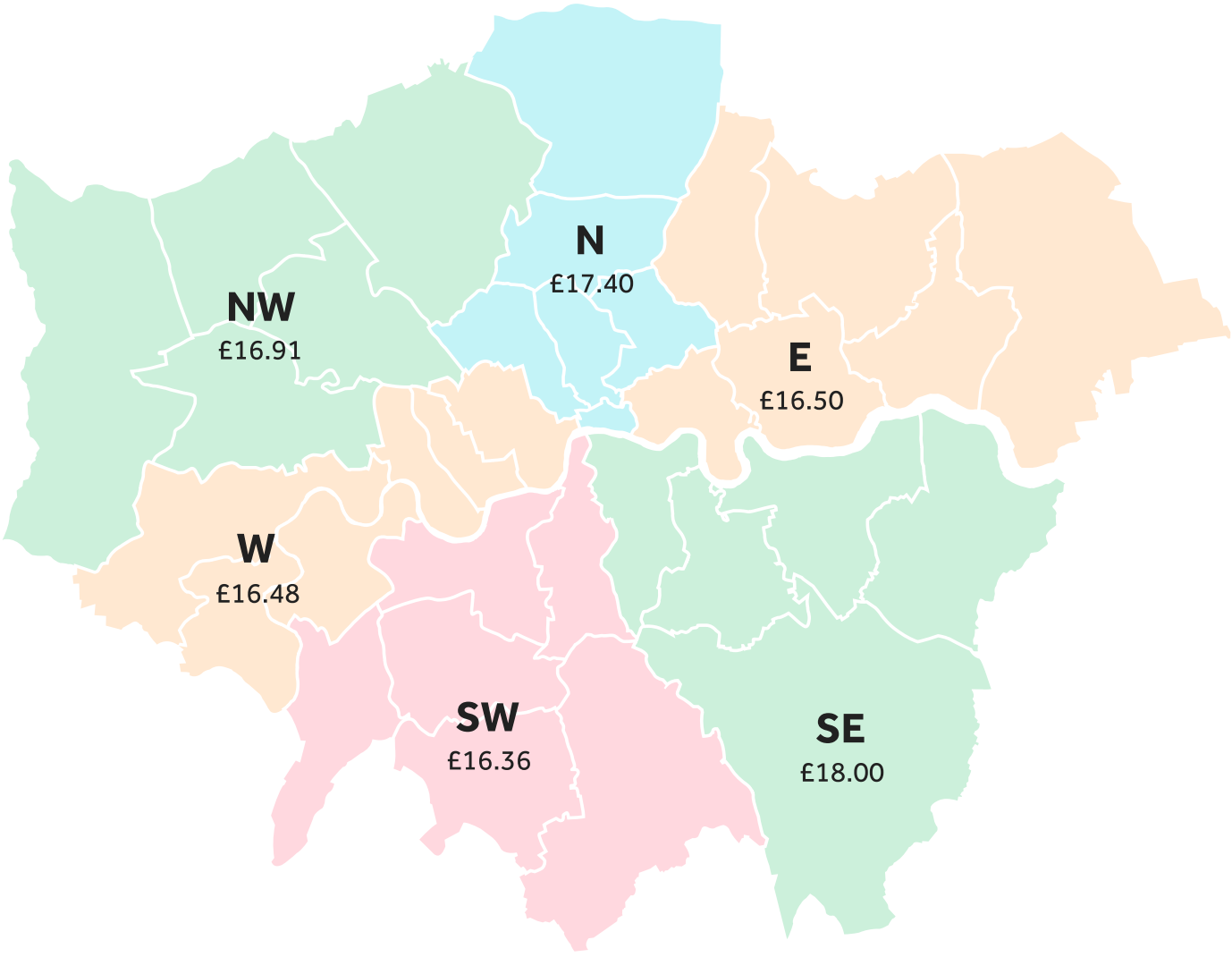


The clearest divide is at the top: a chef or a personal assistant in a private household earns about a third per hour than a nanny or cleaner, reflecting scarcer skills and, often, more senior remits. Au pairs are the outlier at the bottom, but their cash pay is only part of the picture, as the role usually includes live-in accommodation and meals.

The regional picture

+9.4% the pay premium for domestic work in London over the rest of the UK

Location matters, though less dramatically than for many other jobs. Domestic workers in London earn an median of **£17.00 an hour** against **£15.54** across the rest of the UK — a premium of about 9.4%. That gap is real but modest next to London's housing and general wage premiums, which suggests household pay is anchored more to the going rate for the role than to local cost of living. Demand, however, is far more concentrated than pay: the south west London postcode area alone accounts for nearly one in five of all contracts.



Household employment in the UK is overwhelmingly a London and south story, with a thinner scatter reaching Bristol, Bath, Cambridge, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Within London, the highest median rates sit in the south-east and north; the busiest area by far is the affluent south-west.

Average pay by postcode district

The table below shows the postcode districts with the most registered employments, listed alphabetically. Each figure is an average (median) gross hourly rate, and every district shown is based on at least ten employments; contract counts are not shown.

UK									£16.00
AL1	£17.00	NW3	£16.90	SW12	£16.49	SW6	£15.09	W4	£14.89
AL5	£16.50	NW5	£17.95	SW13	£14.12	SW7	£16.67	W5	£15.79
KT10	£18.00	NW6	£16.44	SW14	£17.71	TN13	£16.00	W6	£18.46
N1	£20.17	NW8	£18.00	SW15	£14.50	TN15	£17.50	W8	£17.51
N10	£17.10	SE15	£18.25	SW17	£17.50	TW1	£18.15	W9	£16.04
N2	£19.00	SE21	£17.82	SW18	£18.30	TW10	£19.24		
N3	£12.79	SE22	£19.50	SW19	£15.87	TW11	£15.27		
N6	£18.18	SE24	£19.09	SW20	£14.50	W10	£12.71		
NW1	£18.30	SL6	£16.00	SW3	£14.29	W11	£17.67		
NW10	£16.87	SW10	£15.50	SW4	£17.42	W14	£18.01		
NW11	£17.27	SW11	£17.72	SW5	£14.00	W2	£17.02		

Profile of domestic workers

The data from quinn as at 31st December 2025 indicates:

Domestic work in the UK is overwhelmingly part-time and overwhelmingly female: 97.6% of workers are women, and two-thirds of contracts (66%) run for fewer than 35 hours a week. The typical working week averages 27.9 hours, with a median of 25.5. Pay is almost always agreed in gross terms ‘only around 4% of contracts are set net of tax’ and most workers (92%) are paid monthly rather than weekly.

27.9 hrs average week

66% part-time (<35h)

97.6% women

Four types of employment compared

If you want to employ a domestic worker in a private household, you essentially have four options. They differ sharply in cost, effort and legal safety.

1

Self-managed employment

You meet every legal duty of an employer yourself: registering with HMRC, running PAYE for income tax and National Insurance, issuing payslips, enrolling eligible staff into a workplace pension, and arranging employers' liability insurance. Done by hand it is time-consuming and demands real expertise. Where that expertise is lacking, mistakes creep in that can cost both employer and employee.

2

Employment with quinn

You remain the legal employer and decide who you hire, what you pay and how they work — but you hand the whole administration to quinn: the contract, HMRC registration, monthly payroll, tax, National Insurance, pension auto-enrolment and the payments themselves. This route is legally secure, fair, transparent and completely digital.

3

Agency

Here a nanny or cleaning agency is the employer, not you. It is more expensive because of agency margins, and often opaque: the terms of employment aren't disclosed, you have little say over pay (usually set at the lower end), and workers can be stretched across tightly packed schedules.

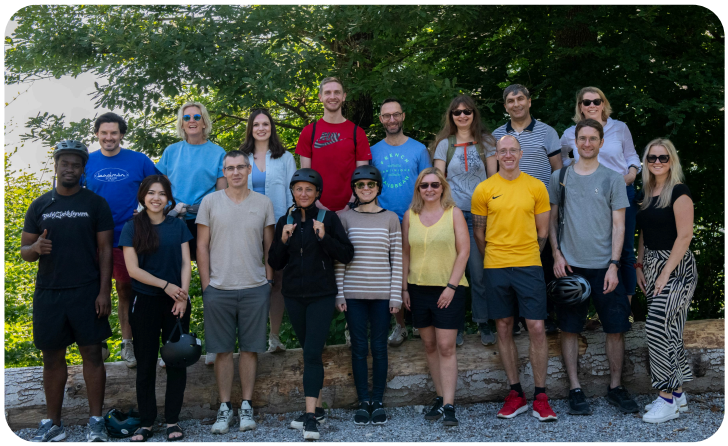
4

Undeclared work

Paying "cash in hand" does not remove your obligations: engage someone in your home and you automatically become their employer. Skipping PAYE means unpaid tax and National Insurance, no pension and no employers' liability insurance, leaving both sides exposed. It is illegal, unfair to the worker and a serious risk to the household.

About quinn

quinn is an app-based managed payroll and employment administration service for households and companies who employ people directly. For households, quinn handles the correct employment of domestic staff such as nannies, cleaners, carers and gardeners: the customer stays the legal employer and sets the pay and terms, while quinn registers the employment, runs the monthly payroll, makes the payments, and handles taxes, National Insurance, and pensions — all in one app, with one point of contact.



quinn has offered its service in the United Kingdom for over 22 years, formerly as PAYE for Nannies. Internationally, quinn operates in Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom, and has processed over CHF 1.5 billion in payroll for 50,000+ private households.

Questions about this report?

For media enquiries or questions about the figures behind this report, Phil is happy to help — get in touch any time.



Philip Norman
CEO of quinn UK
philip.norman@quinn.uk

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