

But if it's a long-term childcare solution you're after and money is too tight to mention, **nanny sharing**, which is popular in the south, is also available on your doorstep, with the launch of **thenannysharers.co.uk**.

This website does not find the nanny, but will locate a family to share with and the service is free.

Mums, **Theresa Byrne**, 36, and former Gatley girl, **Alex Dalton**, 35, got together in London to share a nanny three years ago. Though the share was successful, they found the process of finding each other rather more complex. "We scoured gym notice-boards, asked friends and painstakingly pored over small ads in baby magazines," says Theresa. "Once we found each other, the process of organising how the share would work was easy. With this in mind, they decided there was a need for a facility which would do the hard work for potential nanny sharers.

"A positive by-product of nanny sharing is that friendships between the children and parents of sharing families can form and local support networks grow stronger. This will prove to be a real bonus for working parents who can sometimes feel isolated."

Advice when considering a nanny share includes:

Ask these questions before you consider a share - is the other family close enough? Are their views on parenting similar to yours? Is the price right? When you've worked out how the nanny will be splitting his/her time, then start working out how to split the cost.

Think about where the children will be looked after if they're sharing the nanny's time. Will you choose one house to base the share in?

Agree how you're going to approach organising holidays. If children will be eating together, take time to chat through likes, dislikes and allergies.

If your child is sick, consider your partner family.

Be nice to nanny - your demands as an employer are probably being matched by your partner family. If you're employing someone to look after your child, be thorough about references.

