
Now you can hire a Norland Nanny – for £17.50 an hour

Once the preserve of high society, the most sought-after babysitters are now just a click away. We put their service to the test

By Anna Tyzack

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Norland nanny Charity Schofield with Anna Tyzack's children Hector, 9, and Edgar, 1

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A sick nanny, four children and a work deadline. This should spell mayhem – but thanks to modern technology, a temporary supernanny is just a few clicks away. Charity Schofield, 26, bikes up to my front door five minutes earlier than her allocated start time, and brings calm to the chaos, setting up a board game for the older three and building towers with the toddler. She doesn't mind that there are no handover notes or instructions: at Norland College in Bath, where she, and every other nanny on this new (and aptly-named) babysitting app, Marvellous, received a rigorous training for four years, you're taught to pick up where the last nanny has left off. "I love it – it actually gives me an adrenaline rush," she says. "All I need to know is where the tea bags are kept."

The reassurance that comes with knowing that the stranger I've booked online to care for my children is trained in paediatric first aid, child nutrition, tae kwon-do, paparazzi avoidance and dealing with kidnappers enables me to focus fully on my work, without worrying about what's going on downstairs.

At nap time, Charity irons the boys' school shirts and cooks a bolognese, finding her way around an unfamiliar kitchen, and by the time I've finished, the children have done their homework and helped her tidy the playroom, which is unheard of. They've also done their piano practice – Charity is a trained classical soprano opera singer – and had their bath. "Don't worry, I'm also a trained lifeguard," she assures me. "I wanted to be certain that should an emergency arise in the water, I'd know exactly what to do."

I can fully see why high profile parents, including the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, go out of their way to hire Norland-trained nannies – with their degree in Early Years Development and Learning and Norland diploma they're more qualified in parenting than parents. And if Charity and Maria Borrollo – Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis's nanny, who graduated from Norland College a couple of years before her – are anything to go by, they're also well spoken, impeccably turned out and jolly good fun.



Charity Schofield says her work as a Norland nanny for hire is helping her save up to buy a flat

According to Dr Janet Rose, Principal of Norland, which has been training super nannies for the world's smartest families for 130 years, there is currently a ratio of one Norlander for every 10 families searching. "Families will pay well over six figures to stop a treasured Norlander from getting lured away and throw in entire Chelsea apartments and Range Rovers to keep them," confirms Lucy Challenger, founder and CEO of super nanny agency, Polo & Tweed (Poloandtweed.com), which regularly places Norland nannies. "There's such a lack of good nannies at the moment that even Norlander graduates are earning up to £95,000."

What a coup, therefore, that those of us who can't afford a super nanny can now rent Norland nannies by the hour for babysitting and emergency childcare. Marvellous, which charges £17.50 per hour for Norland-trained babysitters (or £12.50 per hour for a student), was founded by Eleanor Trigwell, 24, herself a qualified Norlander, to make Norland nannies and their expertise more accessible. The app launched quietly last December, in partnership with Norland College, and they were soon so overwhelmed with bookings that Trigwell had to draw up a waiting list, with parents now requiring an access code to log in. "We want to make sure there are sufficient nannies in the area before we take on new nannies," she explains.

Given their lucrative salaries, I'm surprised there are any Norlanders available on it at all. After a long day of nannying, I'm pretty sure I wouldn't want to go and look after someone else's brats. Charity confirms that certain super nannying roles would not fit with ad hoc work – the ones where you are on standby to jump on the private jet or yacht at all times and sleep in the children's bedrooms, for example – while others have exclusivity clauses written into their contract, banning ad hoc babysitting. "It takes a very generous super nanny employer to allow their nanny to go out and work for a competitor," Challenger explains. "They want their nanny to be fresh in the mornings. If the nanny needs to supplement their wages, they might prefer to give them a pay rise."

Yet Trigwell has new Norlanders signing on every week; parents in the hotspots of London, Bath and Bristol receive their log-in codes almost immediately, she says. Many of those available are student Norlanders, who are on probation with families and not yet earning the big bucks, as well as newly qualified nannies and those on rota contracts, who work intensively for a family before having a few weeks off. “Some super nannies decide to do ad hoc work for a while after they’ve finished a job – it’s a full-on career,” adds Challenger. Others are semi-retired Norlanders with their own children who pick up the odd job as they miss nannying.



Students at Norland College in Bath | CREDIT: South West News Service

For Charity, who grew up in a large family in Yorkshire, and shares a flat with other Norland nannies in London, one four-hour babysitting job pays for her weekly shop. She’s poised to start a new full-time position with a family in Notting Hill but will continue using the app for occasional babysitting. “Like a lot of Norland nannies, I’m saving up to buy my own flat,” she says. “It’s expensive living in London and the extra income really helps. I’m also passionate about childcare and love the variety of meeting different families.”

Of course if you’re just heading to the cinema, and your child is going to be in bed asleep, it might seem better value to pay a local teenager the UK average babysitting wage of £8.38 an hour. But then, as Charity points out, a Norland nanny is not going to sit on the sofa and watch television all evening. “I’d feel as if I was cheating if I did that,” she says. “If there are jobs to be done; washing to be folded, toys to be tidied, I’ll get on with them. That’s what you get with a Norland nanny.”

What you don't get, however, is the uniform. Parents sometimes request that their Norland babysitter comes wearing the traditional Norland uniform of felt hat, white gloves, brown dress (or tweed jacket for male 'mannies') and highly polished shoes, but that, Trigwell says, is reserved for special occasions such as christenings and weddings (and shoots with the *Telegraph*). "People stop and take photographs if I wear the uniform to work," agrees Charity, who has perfected the art of the Norland bun, with hair net and no wispy bits. "I do miss wearing it but jeans and trainers are much more practical."

Download the app at [Marvellousbabysitting.com](https://www.marvellousbabysitting.com)

For information on hiring a Norland nanny visit [Norland.ac.uk](https://www.norland.ac.uk)

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