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WELCOME TO THE NANNY STATE

Brits spend £18bn on domestic help

Brits spend a whopping £18bn a year on domestic help – shattering the myth that hiring staff is for the landed gentry and revealing how the modern world is changing our lives.

Having your own nanny, gardener, cleaner or odd job man is no longer considered to be a luxury – a third of us, from professionals to parents, now bring in outside help, according to a survey from the UK's busiest recruitment site, Gumtree.com, with over 22 per cent of those describing it as a necessity they could not live without. And we are spending upwards of £50 per month each in a bid to buy ourselves a few precious hours of spare time - with 3 per cent of Brits admitting to spending £500 or more a month.

With the amount of people working long hours on the increase and Britons putting in 36 million hours of free overtime each year* it is not surprising that over 50 per cent of people say they simply don't have enough time in the day to get all their chores done.

Where mothers would once have given up work to look after children, two thirds are now returning to work after giving birth, an increase of 50 per cent since 1988**. The Gumtree.com survey revealed that 50 per cent of parents are now hiring an extra pair of helping hands thanks to cheaper and more reliable services like those found through recruitment sites like Gumtree.com. In fact the site has seen a 120% increase in people looking for nannies since March.

Paying someone else to do the chores is also saving our relationships - it's not just the cleaning and gardening that won't get done if you don't have the time - this survey shows that people are hiring help to spend more time with loved ones, with a quarter of people saying they would have huge rows with their partners if help wasn't at hand.

Dr Aric Sigman an American psychologist living in Britain says "The British 'Upstairs, Downstairs' view of hired help has vanished. Hiring help when you need it no longer carries the baggage of the servant/master relationship and is available to many more people not only the privileged few. The fact that British people now have more money than before - but far less *time* - has forced this change in attitudes and practice to hiring help. There really has been a dramatic reversal in how we view getting help around the house."

Sophy Silver of Gumtree.com says: "It's really not surprising that so many people are desperate for help around the home. People these days value time more than money - so paying someone else is the only way to spend time with the kids and on themselves.

"We've seen a phenomenal rise in recruitment postings on Gumtree.com - particularly for domestic help like nannies and dog walkers. We now have over 1,000 posts a month requesting nannies and with the school holidays coming up, we are expecting a huge increase in the number of posts looking for help around the house.

"Recruiters know they can use the site to find the best person for the job and with 50,000 jobs live on the site at any one time, people looking for jobs can browse to really find what suits them best."

Other findings include:

- One in ten of us use expert websites like Gumtree.com to find domestic help
- Window cleaners are the most popular, with 24 per cent hiring one, followed by 8 per cent who hire cleaners and 7 per cent who get an odd job man in
- 14 per cent of kind-hearted women do their bit for society, hiring domestic help to give work to those who really need it

- 24 per cent feel guilty about hiring in help, often cleaning before the cleaner arrives!
- One in five men hire domestic help so they can free up more time for making love
- This compares with 40 per cent of women, who say they would spend the extra time reading a good book...
- One in twenty people would have to give up their jobs completely without extra support around the home

As the UK's busiest employment site*** Gumtree.com receives over 4,000 posts each month from people looking for casual work, ranging from cleaners to nannies and personal trainers. And its not just nannies we're looking for – here are some of the more unusual jobs posted on Gumtree.com:

- Singer to replace Boy George in 80's supergroup Culture Club
- Funeral Parlour seeks mortician's assistant
- Couple to look after Scottish island
- Crew for a luxury yacht sailing round Northern Europe
- Hot air balloon ground crew to support team in Europe
- Chocolate fountain operators
- House sitters in the foothills of the Andes for six weeks
- Cook/Deckhand for tall ship sailing around the Scottish Highlands
- Roadie to drive South American band from London around South America for six months
- Horse and Carriage drivers on the island of Sark in the Channel Islands for the summer

* Source TUC

** Source Policy Studies Institute

*** Source Alexa.com June 06 comparison on daily reach

Further survey data

QUESTION	MALE	FEMALE
What are your reasons for hiring in people to help in your home? <i>I simply do not have the time – I work long hours</i>	38%	29%
How do you envisage your life would be if you did not hire in people to help you? <i>The house would be a tip</i>	14%	21%
Which of the following do you consider hiring help to be	20%	24%

<i>A necessity you cannot live without – everyone needs a breather after all</i>		
Which statement best describes how hiring in help makes you feel <i>Successful- I have earned enough money to afford it</i>	29%	17%
What would you do if you had an extra two hours in the day <i>Make love</i>	22%	17%
What would you do if you had an extra two hours in the day <i>Read a book</i>	30%	41%

	What are your reasons for hiring in people to help in your home? <i>I simply do not have the time – I work long hours</i>	Roughly how much do you spend each month on outside help? <i>Up to £50</i>	Which of the following services do you use <i>Cleaner</i>	What would you do if you had an extra two hours in the day <i>Make love</i>
London	31%	55%	12%	20%
Birmingham	27%	69%	6%	15%
Manchester	33%	69%	7%	20%
Southampton	35%	55%	12%	12%
Leeds	35%	77%	7%	29% (highest in UK)
Nottingham	25%	83%	n/a	18%
Newcastle	31%	69%	5%	22%
Liverpool	40%	67%	2%	15%
Bristol	37%	56%	9%	20%
Glasgow	42%	86%	n/a	19%
Edinburgh	25%	70%	15% (highest in UK)	7%
Plymouth	21%	86%	13%	29% (highest in UK)
Norwich	38%	69%	3%	7%
Cardiff	33% (highest in UK)	83%	7%	7%
Brighton	50%	33%	10%	14%
Belfast	33%	100% (highest in UK)	n/a	33%