

a *helping* hand

Having a baby can be daunting, yet an extra pair of hands can make all the difference. **Vine** catches up with expert maternity nurse **Frances Howard-Brown** to find out how she can help. Here, she gives us an insight into her work



Annie Martin
Director and Founder



Ellie Bonnett
Maternity Nurse Consultant

My ambition as a maternity nurse is to provide the highest quality service and crash course advice to new parents. Many people do not realise how stressful and exhausting it is to have a baby; for this reason I like to provide all the support I can and build a relationship with the family, whilst still allowing the mother to have full control throughout the period of the placement.

Once the placement has been confirmed, it is essential to familiarise myself with the parents-to-be and ensure they will be comfortable with me becoming part of their lives during this special time. Additionally, I am able to offer advice and help with arrangements prior to the birth, especially when mothers can feel apprehensive of forthcoming events. As a maternity nurse there are many preparations that I need to take into account – often these include organising the nursery layout, sourcing necessities for the newborn, creating a list of essentials needed for the hospital visit and completing research on specific maternity issues, such as breastfeeding, which may concern the mother. This period also allows me to arrange the specifics of living with the family before the birth, when it becomes too hectic to sort these things out!

I always look forward to welcoming the baby home. My daily routine is specifically tailored to suit mother and baby. As well as teaching the basics of baby care, such as bottle sterilisation and nappy changing, I always follow the mothers wish to breast or bottle feed and offer advice on this. I also keep a daily journal, which records the baby's activities, in order to structure the baby's routine.

I usually rise at around 6am, when the baby wakes, and will take the baby to the mother for the first feed – along with a cup of tea.. Throughout the day I ensure the baby has the appropriate amount of sleep and regular feeds. I take the baby for a walk in the mornings and then in the afternoons we both take a nap. The evenings consist of a bath-time session and spending time with older siblings if there are some; the baby is fed at 6pm and settled for the night by 7pm.

Most of the time, I dine with the parents, unless they don't wish so, and then have personal time until 10pm when the baby

wakes for its night feed with the mother. To make sure busy parents get a full night's sleep, I oversee all night time bottle feeds, or for those mothers breastfeeding, I will take the baby to the mother and settle afterwards. I often sleep in the same room as the baby in case it wakes and needs comfort.

Setting up a routine and seeing new parents learn to be comfortable with their baby is such a rewarding job; there is nothing else like seeing the bond grow every day. I feel I truly make a difference to families on every placement I take- many still come to me for advice long after I have left their homes.

I enjoy working with Nannies Incorporated and Maternity Nurses Incorporated as it gives me the confidence that should I have any problem, the agency will listen to my needs and also those of the parents, making sure both the nurse and family receive the support they need.

■ Call 0207 0383 757 or email london@nanniesinc.com



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