

Sleepy mums head for the nanny state

BY DAN MCMULLAN

POSH parents desperate for a good night's sleep are driving a boom in demand for night nannies.

Affluent mums and dads in Cheshire are turning to an £80-a-night service providing a hired assistant to look after baby through the early hours until it is time for the parents to get up for work.

Such is the demand that one company is looking to double its workforce.

Organisers believe the clamour has been partly driven by a rise in the number of wealthy women choosing Caesarean births and finding they are unable to look after their babies in the first few weeks of parenthood.

Caroline Glain, 47, who runs Night Nannies, based in Heaton Moor, said the company has 20 staff members and is looking to find 20 more.

"We set the business up two years ago and we are now really seeing it begin to take off."

Demands

"We have taken our time and built up a good group of experienced nannies who can offer overnight maternity care, allowing parents to get a good night's rest while we help get the children into a night-time routine.

"We have a lot of mothers who have had Caesareans and so find it difficult to cope after that, particularly if they already have another child."

Caroline added: "Many calls we get are from parents who are both working and many find it difficult to cope with the demands of a newborn child."

The nannies do not live with the families, but go to their homes at 9pm to take over child care and feeding until 7am the following morning, helping parents get their babies into a night-time routine.

The service costs from £80 a night for a single child to as much as £120 per night for triplets.

Night Nannies has seven branches around the country, but Caroline's branch is the only one outside London and the Home Counties.

She said: "Cheshire seemed the obvious choice when you look at the type of people who can afford our services, but we do also cover the Manchester area and have placed nannies into some homes in the city.

"In London and the south, it is the norm in some circles to order your maternity nanny when you become pregnant, although I am not sure that is the case in Cheshire, as a lot of ladies are a little uncomfortable with the idea."



■ TIME for a rest . . . nanny Felicity Ramdenee takes over from mum Cheryl to look after baby Esta

Picture: MIKE GRIMES

£80 - the price of a good night's rest

MUM-of-three Cheryl Shuttleworth has been using Night Nannies three times a week since the birth of her four-week-old daughter Esta.

Cheryl, 37, and her husband Richard, 55, took the decision to hire the overnight service when she was three months' pregnant.

The couple, from Macclesfield, who run carpet and furnishing shops in Poynton and Chapel-en-le-Frith, already have two other children

Jamie, 4, and 18-month-old Phoebe.

Cheryl said: "I went to Night Nannies because when I had my last little girl, I found it so difficult.

"I had heard from a friend about the service and I decided to give it a try.

"I met my nanny Felicity before the baby was even born and she made me feel very comfortable. She is fantastic, she knows what she is doing and she takes charge.

"We use her three times a week and

she usually comes at 9 o'clock, so I go to bed early and she sorts out the feeds and changes nappies.

"I still get up in the night to do the feeds, but Felicity settles Esta down again and that's what takes the time.

"Like all newborn babies, she sleeps all day and then wants entertaining in the middle of the night which you don't always want to do.

"At the moment, we use our nanny three times a week, but that will

reduce to twice a week and then scale off over time. The nannies only stay until the baby is three months old, by which time they have hopefully got into a sleep routine.

"It is not cheap, we have been saving since I was three months' pregnant. But for the first three months it's worth it - it lets you enjoy this special time in your child's life and allows me and my husband a decent night's sleep."