



# Mobility leaders morning

## Summary of discussions

Held at K2 Corporate Mobility Guildford, UK

21<sup>st</sup> September 2023



### Attendees:

- Lucy Cowell – Diageo
- Max Newbigging – Aon
- Vicki Christofides – Thomson Reuters
- Eziebe Agomo – Equinix
- Julie Brightley-Davies – Relx

## Modern Families

**An exploration into supporting the modern mobile family, looking at how global mobility supports those on assignment with varied family dynamics (unaccompanied/ blended parental responsibility, elderly dependants etc.)**

### AIRINC survey:

- 58% of companies are implementing increased flexibility for families as a proactive measure to enhance diversity within their Global Mobility program.
- 50% of companies are offering support for non-standard dependents to join assignments (e.g, family members other than spouses or children) in order to promote diversity.
- 34% have identified non-traditional families as a specific area of focus within their DE&I efforts in their program.

Family dynamics are evolving, and it is increasingly common to see families on assignment who do not fit with a more “traditional” Western-based ideal. Some of the scenarios we explored included: single parent families, elderly dependants, separation whilst on assignment, additional needs, unaccompanied, or children living with former partner, and same sex couples.

A summary of some of the group discussions on how global mobility can work to best support these different family dynamics.

## Children remaining at home

An employee who moves without their child(ren) for various reasons

- Policies provide a framework – the company can make recommendations for additional support if needed.

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- Immigration can be a prohibitor in certain situations – it's not always possible to get visas approved for family members.
- The company needs to put in parameters on what dynamics are accepted or will be supported – i.e. situations that break western moral principles, such as employees requesting an additional partner, or new relationship, onto their existing family members list.
- The family dynamic must be explicitly outlined pre-assignment, otherwise it can begin to get expensive. Companies haven't always thought through the repercussions of not having a policy in place.

### Single parent families

An employee who moves without a partner, but has accompanying child(ren)

- Prevalence of a number of single-parent families within domestic relocations, but not discriminated against because of this (i.e. the same standard family-sized house would be offered)
- Single-parent families still need to feel they can go on assignment – companies need to adapt policies where appropriate/ possible to support them, e.g., consider childcare cases, such as elderly parents who accompany on assignment and look after children.

### Elderly relatives

Elderly relatives (parents/grandparents) who the employee may retain responsibility for

- Elderly relatives are now being built into policies for the first time.
- Healthcare can be an issue as this can't always be taken out for elderly parents, a lump sum may be provided to the assignee to cover this.
- Culturally, taking elderly relatives into consideration. In some locations, it is the norm to have dependant elderly family members.
- It can be difficult to balance what the business wants versus what can actually be achieved – immigration is quite often a blocker for additional family members on assignment.
- Seeing an increase in assignees needing trips back to home locations to see/ provide support for family.



## Additional needs

Employee/ family member who may require additional support

- If an assignee has a child with additional needs, organising a look-see trip to find suitable schools.
- Matching the end of an assignment with the end of term time, so that children are not heavily impacted – for children with additional needs, this is even more important to take into consideration, as adapting can be difficult.
- It is beneficial for an organisation to understand any special requirements ahead of a contract being signed, so that upfront costs can be evaluated.
- Sometimes situations arise outside of policy guidelines, important to be flexible/ able to adapt to ensure a family is fully supported.

## Life events

Life events which may happen whilst the employee is overseas / on assignment

- Life events cannot all be accounted for in a policy, flexibility may be needed by the company to account for this.
- Empathy and understanding must also be shown – e.g., a death on assignment may not mean a reduction in allowances.
- Certain life events may mean the end of assignment. In certain challenging locations, if a woman has had a baby whilst on assignment, they have chosen to return to the home location.

## Same sex couples

Same sex partners – either with or without accompanying family

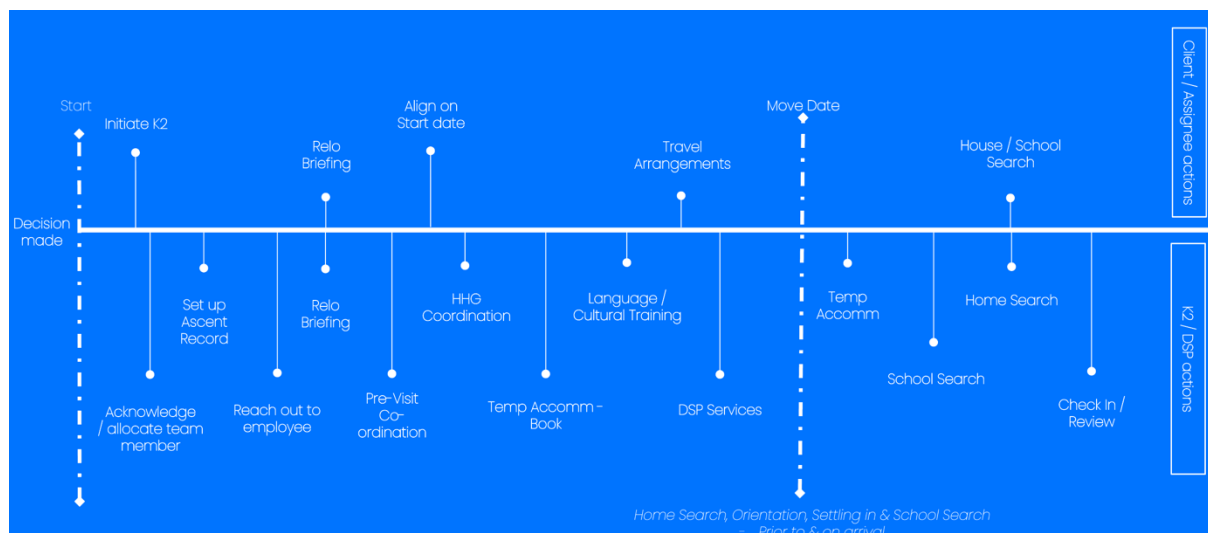
- Typically, there is generic wording included, but policies are often reviewed on an individual basis.
- A policy may not cater to all types of relationship, but fairness should be considered/ embraced by the company.
- There is also the issue of privacy – the individual may not have 'come out' to their employer/ colleagues, so this should be handled sensitively.

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## Navigating the New Normal Housing Market

When it comes to relocation, every company will have a timeline and a process, but very infrequently is this followed step by step due to outside circumstances. Life events are continuous, meaning there is always an impact to global mobility.



### Market challenges

Housing is becoming more difficult in every European market and across the globe. Hostile locations face less issues, but in higher volume locations, we have seen a global wobble. Interest rates are up in the UK, which has put pressure on the sales market, and seen landlords looking to rent rather than sell. In a post-covid world, we've also seen a shortage of homes as 20% of these were sold during the pandemic, due to the stamp duty freeze. In cities such as London, we also have a huge international student market, who often come with 1-year of rent paid upfront, which knocks other bidders out.

Singapore and Hong Kong have also faced unprecedented levels of demand, which has seen prices skyrocket. In Melbourne, house prices have increased more dramatically than any other city in the world, with a 50% increase in the last 5-6 years.

### Events

Sporting events, such as the Paris Olympics, will also have an impact on the housing market. Between July and August 2024, accommodation in and around Paris will be overpopulated and difficult to secure, prices will also be driven up during these months. Assignee expectations will need to be carefully managed during this time.

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## Legislation changes

One legislation change can completely shake a market, such as we've seen in Berlin. A recent change to rental properties in the UK is the need for a certain EPC rating, which is potentially due to increase again within the next five years. Legislations such as this can cause landlords to panic-sell, leading to a change in the market once again.

## Introducing a sustainable angle

Our housing experts at K2 are doing what they can to ensure we incorporate sustainability into every aspect of our business. We are making small but considered changes, e.g., encouraging walking/ on foot home searches – which have seen great uptake!



## Bath University & K2 – Sustainable Partnerships

**K2 and Bath University have partnered to advance the development of environmentally friendly packaging and materials for relocations. Following the award of an innovate UK Knowledge Transfer Partnership grant, a University of Bath associate will be embedded within K2 for two years to create a set of behavioural nudge techniques that encourage clients to opt for more sustainable packaging and transport options. Bath University will soon initiate the process of onboarding the student into K2.**

When asked what Iina Ikonen (Bath Universities Assistant Professor) was most excited about regarding the partnership, she responded “the opportunity to find sustainable solutions which don't require companies to develop mandates (i.e. electric car schemes). We will use behavioural science to better understand the decision-making process and nudge people towards choosing more sustainable options.”



## Naomi House & Jacksplace – Challenging Convention

**As one of K2's newest charity partners, we invited Connor Phillips from Naomi House & Jacksplace's fundraising team to host a session on the power of challenging convention, and how the hospice has had to adapt to keep up with an unpredictable market.**

Key takeaways:

- Innovative & new – identifying the needs of our service users and adapting to these by trialling something new.
- Investing in our team – introducing brand new roles to the business to strengthen relationship building with benefactors.
- Adapting when necessary – identifying weaknesses in your market and adapting these to suit the current climate.
- Retaining the strategic review – new business planning to ensure that you are staying ahead of the competition.





## About K2 Advisory Services

**Our Advisory Services team are global mobility subject matter experts. Our experience spans all aspects of global mobility, gained managing in-house corporate global assignment programs and through independent consulting projects.**

We have spent time in multiple and varied industries – from leading financial institutions, cutting-edge telecoms, online retail giants, to multinational oil and gas concerns. We work with our clients as true business partners – becoming an extension of your HR function with a focus on strategic, cost effective and business driven solutions.

We pride ourselves on building excellent working relationships to truly understand the client organisation, ways of working and individual needs. Our approach is agile, flexible and independent, and always tailored to fit the organisational culture, structure, priorities and budget.



## K2 Foundation – Introducing our fundraising facility at K2 Corporate Mobility

**We are delighted to introduce you to the K2 Foundation, a brand-new fundraising facility brought to you by K2. Established at the start of 2023, the K2 Foundation was set up to enable us to improve the lives of children around the world, particularly within the regions that K2 operate.**

Funded by donations, the K2 Foundation supports a number of charitable initiatives, designed to help children whose lives are often bleak or uncertain.

In Q4 this year, 24 of our brave colleagues are heading out to Nepal to embark on an 18-day expedition in support of the K2 Foundation. Participants will split into two groups, the first taking on the physically challenging Everest Base Camp trek, and the second heading into some of Nepal's most remote locations for a community support project.

To help raise funds for the expedition, we're going out to our valued network to ask for donations. Any donation you can make is hugely appreciated and will go a long way in helping support the K2 Foundation. [You can donate through our JustGiving link here.](#)

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