

International HR Forum event, 17 May 2016

***Don't forget your toothbrush! Are your mission partners prepared to go?***

## Introduction

Preparation covers a wide variety of topics and areas. Each agency or church will have its own approach, but there are some areas that are key for everyone who is going long-term. This document contains three lists: **A.** Key areas checklist for mission agency / sending church, **B.** Detailed checklist for mission agency / sending church, and **C.** Detailed checklist for mission partners.

### **A. Preparation – key areas checklist for mission agency / sending church**

#### **1. Support structures**

It is good practice to ensure that appropriate support structures are provided to enable personnel and their families to function well in their situation, and that areas of responsibility and support for mission personnel are clearly defined for the sending organisation and supporting church *before* the partner(s) go overseas. This includes agreeing methods of communication and systems for maintaining regular contact between the sending organisation, supporting church and mission personnel. Good practice includes the consideration of:

- Practical and financial support
- Personal and prayer support
- Leave and holidays
- Wider family matters

#### **2. Training, briefing and orientation**

It is good practice to provide thorough training, briefing and orientation in all relevant areas. The whole family should be involved and areas specifically relevant for parents and children covered. Training methods and timing of training should be carefully chosen so training is not rushed and personnel are not overloaded with too much information at any one time. Good practice includes:

- Briefing about the sending organisation
- Briefing about the work and role
- Briefing about the environment, culture, church and working in a cross-cultural context
- Safety and security briefing and crisis contingency planning
- Health and stress management briefing
- Spiritual preparation
- Training in leadership, team building and relationship skills
- Specific preparation for single people, couples and children
- Preparation relating to the extended family or nominated contact
- Preparation regarding practical issues

#### **3. Other**

- Commissioning service prior to departure
- Arrival arrangements

## **B. Preparation - detailed checklist for mission agency / sending church**

### **1. Support structures**

It is good practice to ensure that appropriate support structures are provided to enable personnel and their families to function well in their situation, and that areas of responsibility and support for mission personnel are clearly defined for the sending organisation and supporting church *before* the partner(s) go overseas. This includes agreeing methods of communication and systems for maintaining regular contact between the sending organisation, supporting church and mission personnel. Good practice includes:

#### **Practical and financial support**

- Ensuring personnel are given adequate administrative and practical support, especially on matters such as tax, pensions and NI, renting out housing, information on medical care (including access to NHS care when visiting the UK), appropriate information regarding making a will and power of attorney
- Drawing up a detailed budget to include living costs, travel, education, insurance (including appropriate health insurance for visiting England if the person is unlikely to be able to access free NHS secondary care), pension, spiritual refreshment, holidays, home assignment, ongoing training and crisis contingency plans. This should include the additional costs of supporting a family.
- Providing appropriate professional indemnity insurance and membership fees
- Agreeing how the budget will be funded and raised
- Providing personnel with support raising advice, help and training
- Agreeing how any necessary equipment or services will be located and provided
- Agreeing and helping with arrangements for children's education

#### **Personal and prayer support**

- Ensuring that the sending organisation, supporting church and personnel agree, develop and maintain appropriate support structures
- Ensuring there are appropriate support structures for children
- Identifying a link person to act as a coordinator on issues relating to personal support, especially prayer
- Encouraging personnel to develop a prayer network for personal, ministry and wider issues
- Ensuring prayer requests are communicated on a regular basis
- Encouraging supporting church(es) to supplement formal support structures so personnel feel they are valued. Examples include updates of key church activities, newsletters, CDs of services, letters, emails, phone-calls, text messages, cards, books, gifts and magazines, though it is important to discuss the suitability of gifts and to check that personnel are able to receive them
- Discussing and encouraging (where appropriate) visits from supporting church(es), sending organisation, other friends and family members

#### **Leave and holidays**

- Ensuring that there is adequate provision for holidays and this is taken
- Providing appropriate arrangements for sick leave, compassionate leave, and maternity and paternity leave
- Ensuring there is good liaison between the sending organisation and supporting church(es) on the cost of these provisions and that they are appropriately funded

#### **Wider family**

- Ensuring that the ongoing needs of the wider family, especially parents, are considered

### **2. Training, briefing and orientation**

It is good practice to provide thorough training, briefing and orientation in all relevant areas. The whole family should be involved and areas specifically relevant for parents and children covered. Training methods and timing of training should be carefully chosen so training is not rushed and personnel are not overloaded with too much information at any one time. Good practice includes:

### **Briefing about the sending organisation**

- An introduction to the values, vision, mission and structure of the sending organisation
- A report of how and where the sending organisation works
- An explanation of policies and procedures, including child protection, evacuation policy, grievance procedures and disciplinary procedures, with personnel signing an agreement to adhere to these policies
- Access to an up-to-date handbook covering all key issues

### **Briefing about the work and role**

- A clear job description where possible. Where that is not realistic, an outline of the expected work, with clear indications as to the level of uncertainty which exists and the need for flexibility
- Information about the project and their role within it, and mission agency strategy for the assignment with partners (what to do & for how long (goals/aims/objectives))
- Information on the team and relevant related issues
  - Working as part of a national team (who is leading & mission workers input)
  - Role of colleagues, including volunteers & teams in-country
  - Agency country team (ways of working and individuals responsibilities)
  - Role of the Regional Team Leader (if there is one)
  - Planned future strategy & personnel needs
  - Practically supporting colleagues and praying together
  - Expectations regarding reports, updates and communication within the team
  - Discuss & agree communication with other agency departments, sending church & links
  - Discuss & agree how regularly the agency team should meet (sensitive to others needs outside the team)
  - Use of humour – times of laughter
- Information on lines of accountability
- Expenses (what will be covered and not covered, and by whom)
- Discussion about how to keep a work-life balance covering areas such as adequate time off, holidays, leisure and rest

### **Briefing about the environment, culture, church and working in a cross-cultural context**

- Specific information on the country where personnel will be based
  - History, geography & climate
  - Politics – points of conflict
  - Influence of the country – regionally and beyond
  - Advocacy – involvement or not
  - Human Rights – issues and involvement or not
  - The role of the church in the country
- Specific information on the culture in which personnel will be based
  - Gender/age issues (and relating to the opposite sex)
    - Appropriate behaviour between men and women
    - Boyfriend/girlfriend behaviour
    - Appropriate behaviour in various situations
  - Ethnicity – rich/poor (attitudes of majority)
  - Faiths and cults (ex-pats/nationals relating to)
  - Dress code (including in church & if leading within the church)
  - Food & drink (ways of eating – table manners/fingers/cutlery; importance of shared meals)
  - Hospitality
    - What to offer
    - Types of local food
    - Visiting homes – appointment/walk-in
  - Greetings and normal everyday ways of communicating
  - Poverty – how to give or if one should or not
  - Dealing with authorities and the police
  - Bribery & corruption
  - General Do's & Don'ts

- Importance of Relationships (building trust)
- Children being prepared for cultural shift
  - View of children and ways of relating
  - Interactions
  - Child protection issues
- Specific information on the church (Christian witness) in which personnel will be based
  - History of church and partner(s)
  - Structure (administration) – lines of authority
  - Leadership (who makes decisions/ways of relating to leaders)
  - Working in/with the church
    - Pitfalls
    - Strengthening local leadership
  - Theological outlook – ways of worship
  - Relating to other denominations
  - Witness/work of the church in the community
  - Place of men – women - children in the Christian communities
  - Use of and respect of the Bible
  - Expectations of the 'church' of mission workers
  - Relating to local believers – assistance/friendships
- Training on working in a cross-cultural context

### **Safety and security briefing and crisis contingency planning**

- Ensuring that policies and procedures relating to possible crises are in place and communicated. These should take as a basis the Global Connections [Safety and Security Guidelines](#) and include contingency plans related to threats to security, evacuation, kidnapping, breaking bad news, death, serious injury, illness, and other traumatic incidents
- Briefing personnel about safety and dealing with crises and danger
- Making sure insurance adequately covers the area visited and any possible crises
- Ensuring personnel have access to necessary funds in case of an emergency
- Keeping photocopies of passports, travel tickets and insurance details in a secure location known to a key contact
- Encouraging personnel to appoint a power of attorney and keep an up to date will, covering key issues such as funeral arrangements and guardians for children
- Encouraging personnel to inform a nominated emergency contact person and their sending organisation about such arrangements and the location of their will
- Taking particular care when assignments are in restricted access countries, informing personnel about how much information they should give others, and other precautionary procedures

### **Health and stress management briefing**

- Providing health briefing from medical professionals experienced in travel medicine
- Allowing sufficient time before departure to obtain necessary vaccinations and medications
- Providing HIV awareness and training, including guidelines about access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
- Ensuring access to first aid kits including needles and syringes, essential medical supplies, a travel health manual and /or membership of an accredited internet-based information service
- Recommending that personnel know their blood group
- Providing training in first aid, where necessary
- Ensuring that personnel have adequate health insurance, and a health plan for any medical attention they may require while overseas
- Providing adequate briefing on stress management

### **Spiritual preparation**

- Helping personnel prepare spiritually so that they can grow while they are away from their usual support and resources
- Considering whether personnel should be offered additional theological training
- Considering how personnel can maintain spiritual vibrancy especially when local fellowship appears inadequate or absent
  - Opportunities and resources for maintaining spiritual health

- Maintaining a journal
- Maintaining spiritual well-being amidst spiritual oppression/warfare

### **Training in leadership, team building and relationship skills**

- Identifying potential leaders and providing training in leadership skills as appropriate
- Offering training in team and relationship issues, such as team dynamics, multicultural teams; conflict resolution, mediation, personality differences, and differences in theological viewpoints, forms of worship and learning styles

### **Specific preparation for single people, couples and children**

- Encouraging married personnel to maintain a fulfilling marriage and both single and married personnel to develop a network of supportive relationships. Useful tools might include books, courses, conferences, retreats, holidays, and meeting with a counsellor, spiritual director or mentor to review their specific and changing needs
- Offering children age-appropriate information and training about the new culture and customs and help in preparing for this major transition
- Encouraging parents to read relevant literature relating to Third Culture Kids (TCKs), for their own understanding and in order to help and support their children
- Alerting parents to the challenges of parenting in a cross-cultural context
- Agreeing a plan of support when concerns have been identified
- Discussing and drawing up long-term education plans for children

### **Preparation relating to the extended family or nominated contact**

- Providing opportunities for the extended family to be briefed, explaining policies clearly to them and ensuring they are aware of how they can communicate with the sending organisation and supporting church
- Ensuring that the sending organisation and supporting church are aware of any relevant issues among close friends or the extended family and discussing arrangements for compassionate leave, including funding for visits home
- Helping personnel to keep in regular contact with their support network
- Ensuring arrangements are in place for contacting next of kin or other nominated person in cases of emergency

### **Preparation regarding practical issues**

- Advice regarding obtaining visas and work permits, booking flights and packing/shipping belongings
- Agreeing how accommodation will be arranged and ensuring this is agreed with any local partner
- Arrival in the country; physical address of partner
- Need to register with the British Consulate
- Security & safety (insurance number and agency emergency number in mobile phones)
- What to do in an emergency
- What to do when lost
- Travel & Transport
  - Suitable times of travel
  - Bartering for a price – metered taxis
  - Appropriate places to walk
  - Means of transport – taxi/bus/metro/train etc.
  - Safety consciousness / road use in travel
  - How to protect from snatch thieves/pickpockets etc.
  - Going by bus – reading routes/seating arrangements (ladies only sections etc.)
- A few local language phrases for getting around
  - Directions
  - Stop and start etc.
  - Introductions and greetings
- Housing and furnishings (electricity – voltage/appliances, water, washing clothes etc.)
- Setting up 'Home'
  - Localities
  - Rents

- Types of housing
- Schooling (and nursery if needed for language training)
- Relating to other children
- Communications (mobile phones/email connection/phone credit)
  - Buying a SIM card
  - Internet connection
- Obtaining local currency – banking, and opening a bank account
- Health & Hygiene
  - Essential personal hygiene - insect/rodent protection
  - Understanding available health care; dentists etc. and the need to locate, visit and register at their nearest reliable health facility
  - Anti-malarials, vaccines etc.
- Shopping/Market
  - Clothing & personal effects (what can be obtained locally)
  - Food purchases – local market/supermarkets
  - Toiletry shopping
  - How to wear local clothing (e.g. a sari)
  - Shopping trip
  - How to bargain/barter
- Retreat, relaxation, holidays, days off / must see or do suggestions
- Visitors & communication with family from home country
- Thriving as a single person; married couple; family
- Networks / fellowship groups available
- Maintaining vehicles

### **3. Other**

#### **Commissioning service**

- Holding a commissioning service in the main supporting church with representative(s) from the sending organisation attending
- Holding other send-off events in other supporting churches (as appropriate)
- Ensuring the extended family is invited to appropriate send-off events
- Including children in the commissioning service and other send-off events, in ways with which they feel comfortable

#### **Arrival arrangements**

- Ensuring that arrangements for meeting personnel on arrival are carefully planned and communicated
- Ensuring that initial accommodation has been located while more permanent accommodation is finalised

## **C. BEFORE YOU GO...**

### **Detailed checklist for mission partners**

#### **Family**

- Talk with your family. What would they expect if a family crisis occurred while you are away? What if you yourself fall ill? Consider the ongoing needs of your wider family, including parents.
- Think about the implications of the different education options available for your children – discuss and draw up a long-term plan.
- Nominate a family member as the main point of contact (next of kin) and pass on details to church and agency.
- Pass on the agency's UK emergency number to your nominated contact.
- Be aware of any procedures the agency might have about emergency contact and proof of life – and brief the nominated contact.
- Make sure you have addresses, phone numbers and contacts in your receiving country.
- Make sure your sending organisation and church are aware of any relevant issues among close friends or extended family.
- Read relevant literature relating to Third Culture Kids (TCKs) for your own understanding and in order to help and support your children. Be aware of parenting challenges in a cross-cultural context.
- Ensure children are given age-appropriate information and training about the new culture and customs, and help in preparing for this major transition.
- If married, discuss, take advice, and plan together how to keep your marriage healthy in the new setting and how to develop a network of supportive relationships.
- If single, discuss, take advice and plan how to develop a network of supportive relationships.

#### **Finances and legal**

- Think about your will – you will need to make one before going overseas if you have not already. Include named guardians if you have children.
- Consider giving someone Power of Attorney.
- Decide whether you need a financial adviser or someone to look after your financial affairs (e.g. tax / pension / NI / bank account). If so, organise.
- Make sure your passport and your children's passports are valid for at least four years.
- Check how much (and what) money you need to take with you including the country regulations for taking that money in.
- Know how to open a bank account and whether the country has facilities to use a bank card/ATM.
- Draw up a detailed budget, together with your church/mission agency, to include living costs, travel, education, insurance (including appropriate health insurance for visiting England if you are unlikely to be able to access free NHS secondary care), pension, spiritual refreshment, holidays, home assignment, ongoing training and crisis contingency plans. This should include the additional costs of supporting a family.
- Ensure there is clarity with your church / mission agency regarding finances and support-raising etc. Agree how the budget will be funded and/or raised.

## Housing

- Sort any housing issues including renting out your own home and forwarding of mail.
- If you have no house in the UK you may need to change the address on your driving licence – ideally, this should be a family member's home address in the UK where you may stay on return.

## Health and Medical

- Sort any outstanding medical matters.
- Visit the dentist for a check-up and any necessary treatment.
- Get a copy of any prescriptions required e.g. glasses (check that contact lenses are appropriate).
- Read health briefings and *The Travellers Good Health Guide* – available from InterHealth
- Read the health briefing for your country on the InterHealth website:  
<https://www.interhealthworldwide.org/home/around-the-world/>
- Obtain supplies of personal medication, first aid and Aids kit if necessary and check whether it is advisable for you to take mosquito nets or water filters to your new country.
- Complete your vaccination programme (and keep your vaccination record safe).
- If you are going to Europe to study, check which form you need for free health care.
- Ensure that you have a record of your blood group and give to agency/nominated contact.
- Tell your GP you are going away.
- Make sure you have adequate overseas medical insurance and a health plan for any medical attention you may require overseas.
- Read up-to-date information on access to NHS healthcare for overseas visitors  
<http://www.globalconnections.org.uk/nhs-access> and talk with your church/mission agency about whether or not you will need medical insurance when visiting the UK.
- Obtain training in first aid, where necessary.

## Culture and country

- Speak to as many people as possible that have knowledge of the country you are going to.
- Visit churches/communities in the UK where there are groups of people from the country you are going to (if possible).

## Practicalities

- Make sure you know visa and work permit requirements for the country.
- Ensure arrangements are clear regarding booking flights, and get advice on packing and shipping belongings.
- Ensure you take legalised and authorised copies of birth/marriage/qualification certificates.

## Support structures

- Talk to your church and mission agency and agree how to develop and maintain appropriate support structures, including those for children.
- Find a link person to act as a coordinator on issues relating to personal support, especially prayer

- Build a prayer network and plan how to communicate regularly.

### **Leave and holidays**

- Ensure there is adequate provision for holidays and how these will be funded.
- Ensure there are appropriate arrangements for sick leave, compassionate leave, maternity and paternity and adoption leave, parental leave and pay.

### **Training and orientation / preparation**

- Ask your church / mission agency to give you clear briefing about your work and role, the environment/culture/church you are going to, and training for working in a cross-cultural context.
- Ensure you are given training on safety and security, and crisis contingency planning.
- Request help with spiritual preparation, additional theological training if necessary, and training in how to maintain your spiritual vibrancy when overseas.
- Ask for training in team and relationship issues - such as team dynamics, multicultural teams, conflict resolution, dealing with personality or theological differences, different worship styles etc.
- Obtain training in first aid, where necessary.