

# Navigating A New Global Mobility World

The modern business world is evolving at a rapid pace, influenced by changes in society, changes in global culture and advances in technology; so keeping pace with that change is a major challenge for global mobility in 2017.

Over the past year we have seen increasing evidence of corporations listening to the voice of millennials who view assignments in a different way to many of their predecessors and who have different requirements and expectations.

But there remain some serious tests ahead as businesses consider how best to support their employees through this new territory - and how to cope with ever-tightening budgets as they do so.

Here are two key areas where global mobility will need to evolve in 2017:

## 1. Managing the rise of Core-Flex Policies

The days of a standard set of lucrative policy benefits, designed to persuade a senior level employee to uproot their family and taken on a foreign assignment, are short lived.

For a start many assignees need less persuading - they see working and living abroad as a way to build their career. They are also far more comfortable planning much of it themselves.

As a result, Core-flex policies, which combine a company's "must-have" policy elements with an optional approach for elements that allow for choice (typically by a manager or an employee) are growing in popularity.

For many employees in the past, the financial upside was an important motivating factor for a move, with the expectation that they would be able to bank a substantial amount of their assignment benefits. Today, expectations and budgets are different.

Moreover, companies often had policies that assumed all assignees' and families' needs were the same, regardless of location, assignment goals and family situation. This "one-size-fits-all" approach made planning and managing assignments simpler; it also made assignment support expensive and inflexible.

However, it is not a given that introducing Core-Flex policies will save money, which is often one of the primary reasons for their introduction. If not implemented appropriately they could even prove more expensive.

Here are five top tips to keep Duty of Care policies up to date:

1. Policy approach needs to consider service as well as financial assistance
2. Policy should be easy to follow and clearly communicated, including roles and responsibilities
3. A provision may be offered as a core element but the content may be flexible. For example, offering assistance with home country auto disposition is core, but an allowance is provided rather than direct reimbursement of expenses, so that the employee can apply the funds as appropriate
4. Companies may find flexible policy to be more expensive than the policy it replaced
5. All assignment/destination locations are not created equal - an assignee going to London may not face the same challenges as an assignee going to Nairobi. Company approach needs to take this into consideration.

Innovation and technology are changing the industry with businesses now embracing digital options.

## 2. Updating Duty of Care policies

In a year when significant terrorist events, natural disasters and major political upheavals have all made headlines, there is a challenge ahead for corporations to keep their duty of care policies up to date and relevant.

A survey carried out recently by Crown World Mobility found that 50 per cent of companies have not made any recent changes to their policies - despite these significant world events - and 34 per cent had not devised any protocols to communicate with assignees during a large-scale crisis.

Another concern is that special briefings tend to only be given to those people moving to traditional high risk locations such as Iraq and Russia. Now however, high risk locations can be anywhere in the world - as the Paris bombings proved - and therefore adequate training, communication and resources need to be provided.

The rise of 'do it yourself approach' whereby employees are organising their own relocation but still require support, is another consideration.

Here are five top tips to keep Duty of Care policies up to date

**1. Assemble a stakeholder group:** Pull together a cross-functional team and set up regular meetings to discuss key points that have affected, or are likely to affect, assignees and consequently the company's duty of care strategy.

**2. Communication:** Assignees are given a lot of information when they relocate so, as a long-term approach, the employer should send regular emails and texts to remind them what services are available. In addition, companies should make sure they have communication protocols in place in the event of a crisis.

**3. Tracking can improve safety:** Some companies have implemented travel tracking into their strategies for high risk zones. Being able to locate an individual 24/7 is advised if the person is relocating to an area where kidnapping is a significant threat.

**4. Update policies to allow for flexibility:** The DIY approach isn't going away. Therefore, companies should consider how they can make their policies more flexible to allow employees to book their own trips, or parts of their trip, without jeopardising safety.

**5. Provide a thorough briefing:** Our survey found that almost a quarter of companies provide assignees with security briefings designed for the general population rather than specific to the assignment location. In the interest of safety, companies should tailor each briefing and provide an induction. Assignees and their families need to have information at their fingertips of who to contact and what to do in a real emergency.



**SIMON DAVIES**

Head of Business Development  
UK, Ireland & Northern Europe,  
Crown World Mobility.