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Overseas move checklist

An assignment overseas provides a great opportunity to experience other cultures. An overseas move is not always straightforward, so it is important to plan ahead and keep on top of any admin required. Here we have created a checklist to help guide you through an overseas move from a personal perspective.

ROYAL AIR FORCE Families Federation

Pre-confirmed notification of an overseas assignment received

	Action	Additional information	✓
General	Contact the Families' Section at Abbey Wood to initiate clearances*	MOD Abbey Wood | Cedar 3C, Mail Point #3351 | Bristol | BS34 8JH **Help Desk**: 030679 81013*/ 9679 81013 **Email:** mailto: DESDSCOM-FamSec-Gp@MOD.GOV.UK	
Medical	Complete and submit forms for medical and dental clearance*	This includes dependents attending UK boarding schools. **Email:** SGDPHC-O-GMSC-GroupMailbox@mod.gov.uk	
	Arrange appointments with family GP to discuss screening and vaccination requirements*	Any expenses for screening from a civilian GP can be claimed back by the Service person.	
Education	Research overseas education provision**	Using MOD Schools' page, educational suitability reviews, or independent research of schools offered through the local package. **(Where possible this should be conducted prior to volunteering.)** It is important to consider age range for schools, the level of education provided, and qualifications offered in the overseas location. In most countries, the curriculum is different to that of the UK. We suggest engaging the Overseas Education Supportability Team (OEST) prior to accepting an overseas assignment to discuss your circumstances, and request information and guidance to ascertain if the education provided overseas will meet your family's needs. OEST email: RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk. If you have children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) be aware some countries will not offer the same level of support provided in the UK. If you plan to use a UK boarding school for the first time, engage with your Unit HR and apply for Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) or CEA SENA.	
	Complete and submit forms for educational supportability**		
	Apply to selected school(s), if not using an MOD-run school**	**Note:** Paperwork submitted during school holiday periods may take longer to process.	
	Children with Special educational needs only: Request a statement or 'note in lieu' from Local Education Authority**	Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Contact the OEST early to discuss your child's needs, what provision may be available in the overseas location and paperwork that may need to be submitted as part of the supportability assessment process. Also refer to the	

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		Assessment of support needs for accompanied assignments overseas - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) guidance.	
	Pre-school research**	Identify availability, accessibility and cost of childcare and early years provision and possible entitlements to funded provision. You could enquire whether settings operate a waiting list and any other differences that can be expected, e.g. formula, nappies, vaccination requirements, etc.	
	Wraparound care research**	Identify availability, accessibility, opening hours and if they operate a waiting list. Please be aware holiday cover in some areas may be limited.	
	[USA ONLY] Make contact with educational staff at the Embassy**	Schools will not engage until you have an address within their catchment area. If your arrival falls within the summer school recess, obtain curriculum information before departure.	
Shipping & Storage	Review JSP 752	Specifically, JSP 752, Ch 12, Sect 4 – Movement and Storage of Personal Effects. Any queries you have on entitlements should be directed to your Unit HR. If Unit HR is unsure the query can be passed up the single Service Chain of Command. Any queries about the removals or storage process can be found on the MOD Contractors website, or once booked can be discussed with the MOD Contractor or contract managers.	

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Assignment Order (AO) received

	Action	Additional information	✓
General	Establish in-country contacts	Useful should you have any questions that require local knowledge. Consider reaching out to: buddies/sponsors, the Service person's predecessor, in-country HR cell, HIVE contacts, Facebook groups (referral may be required), etc.	
Shipping and Storage	Consider how much space you are allocated for shipping and decide what you want to store and what you want to ship	Consider how you will use your allowance: • You may wish to bring additional items back with you, therefore you may not want to use your full allowance on departure • In-country provision of furniture and differences in electrical power may mean you take less than you expect • Think about where items will be most useful, particularly in countries such as the USA and the Falkland Islands where shipping takes 10 – 12 weeks. (JSP 800 Vol 2 part 5- chapter 4- page 3 provides shipping estimates.) Tip: It may be of benefit to investigate soft furnishings allowances and if these can be organised ahead of travel.	
	Book shipping and storage consignments and arrange shipping surveys	This is done via Agility. Note: It is important to use an enduring email address when submitting your removals application, MoDNET email addresses are recommended (a UK Hotmail address is not useable overseas).	
Accommodation	Book Move-out for Service accommodation, or;	Ensure shipping is booked prior to organising a March-Out date.	
	Decide what to do with privately-owned accommodation: rent, holiday let, or leave unoccupied?	Additional actions will be required if you have privately-owned accommodation, these will vary based on personal circumstances. Note: if you leave your property unoccupied you may incur an Empty Homes Premium.	
	Apply for accommodation overseas	In some locations this is not possible and may need to be completed in-country. E.g. where there is no military provided housing. Depending on the assignment country, choice may also be limited. Therefore, families may need to experience a period of unaccompanied service whilst permanent accommodation solutions are identified. If military accommodation is not available in your destination country, it is worthwhile researching rental websites before travel.	

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		Note: If your accommodation is privately leased, ensure both names are on any agreements. As you will need proof of address in some countries to apply for a driving licence, mobile phone, etc.*	
Travel	Self-Declaration of supportability	For further information read JSP 770 Part 1 Chapter 2A.	
	Complete and return the F/MOV/564e form*	This is required for all family travel and is to be completed once the Service person has completed supportability and has a confirmed AO from RAF Career Management.	
	Check passport expiry date(s) against requirements	At least 5 years is recommended, however if an assignment is extended 5 years may not be sufficient. Passport photo specifications vary from country to country; consider having some taken in the UK to take with you, should you require them later.	
	Renew passport(s) if needed	Costs can be claimed back by the Service person. Check the process and requirements before ordering. Refer to: 2017DIN01-117 (link live for Service personnel only)	
	Check travel options and allowances	Options include driving or flying. Before deciding find out which costs can be claimed back.	
	Check Visa requirements and timelines*	**Note:** Visas for dependents should be applied for even if they will be attending boarding school or university in the UK.**	
Spousal Employment	Give notice to employer, if unable to continue role overseas*		
	If looking for employment in overseas location, consider host country requirements*	Including; tax and employment documentation. In some countries you may need a permit or authorisation to work from the government. It is also worthwhile to check the visa will allow you to continue your profession. Some spousal visas do not permit work in education, healthcare, or study.	
Pets	Check import requirements for pets in the destination country	Check locally required vaccinations and treatments which may not be required in the UK.	
	Obtain pet passport, if appropriate		
	Arrange any vaccinations or health checks required		

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3 months before the assignment

	Action	Additional information	✓
Medical	Book eye test*	If you wear glasses, ensure you have a copy of your prescription to take with you.	
	Book dental checks and any required treatment*	Whilst dental treatment can be claimed back when overseas, it is expensive and initial payment will be from your own funds.	
	Book vaccinations*	Obtain a copy of vaccination certificates to take with you.	
	Book any other routine medical appointments or tests*		
Accommodation	Book house cleaning if not choosing self-clean option		
	Arrange welfare house, hotel, or other accommodation for final days in the UK		
	Arrange accommodation for arrival in new location	A hotel or apartment may be required for a short time – often recommendations will be made in Aide Memoire.	
Travel	Arrange transport for departure journey	Consider the number of bags you may be travelling with and ensure you arrange an adequately sized vehicle.	
Finance	Cancel unused accounts or credit cards	**Note:** You may wish to retain an account or credit card for UK credit history/score maintenance (BFPO addresses can now be used) and to pay for accommodation on arrival, etc. If you are in a position where you can use a UK address (whether it be your actual home or a family home) when applying for and managing credit accounts, it may be easier than using a BFPO address. Whilst BFPOs now have postcodes for processing they are not without issue. Top Tip: If you are retaining a UK bank account it is worthwhile ordering a chequebook to take with you overseas. If you have cards that are due to expire, order replacements whilst in the UK. For any cards and accounts retained ensure you have passwords saved securely.	
	Put together a budget for living overseas	It is important to research the cost of living for the specific area you will reside in. Local Overseas Allowance (LOA) may not always reflect all aspects and additional costs.	
	List and estimate expected costs on arrival	For example; vehicle purchase, rental deposit, insurance (contents, travel, cars, pets).	
	Arrange advance of pay, if needed	**Note:** In-country you will not have a credit rating.	

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		When considering an advance of pay it is worth noting the repayment period may be as little as 12 months. Alternatively, a loan from the UK may be better suited.	
	Apply for Disturbance Expense		
Shipping and storage	Sort through and dispose of any unwanted personal effects		
	Plan shipping contents and estimate value for insurance		
Vehicle(s)	Look into shipping process / Private Passage option if taking the vehicle overseas; or,	View the latest information on taking your car out of the country on GOV.UK. Ensure you factor any import duty into budgeted costs.	
	Review viability of storage/long term parking; or,		
	Plan intended timescale for sale; and,	If you plan on selling take photos of your vehicle and draft an advert.	
	If selling, plan your vehicle requirements in overseas location	Things to research and consider: • Opportunities to purchase a vehicle from departing family/SP • In-country Facebook selling groups (some locations will have specific UK military selling groups) • Local car dealerships or used car sellers • In-country insurance and tax requirements	
	Check in-country car seat regulations**	UK car seats may not be legal in some countries and therefore you will need to source one which meets the specific in-country requirements.	
	Apply for an International Driving Permit (IDP)*	An IDP allows you to drive in countries where a UK licence alone is not sufficient – and is a fundamental requirement after the end of the EU Transition period. It is helpful as it reduces the urgency to apply for a local driving licence.	
Pets	Review pet transport companies for air travel	When planning consider arriving in-country before your pet(s). Worrying about pets when you arrive in country can add to stresses. If you can, leave pet(s) in the UK for a week and get a company or friend to put them onto an aircraft for you to meet it in-country.	
	Research vets for your pet in-country	This is particularly important if a licence is required.	

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		Note: UK required vaccinations must be kept up to date to ensure they can return.	
	Consider return arrangements also	**Note:** In some locations returning is more expensive than arriving.	
General	Cancel unwanted post		
	Arrange postal redirection	BFPOs cannot yet be arranged online and are not available in every location.	
	Create a list of organisations to notify of change of address		
	Check entitlement to Relocation Leave and book as required		
	Check your clothes are suitable for the overseas climate		
	Check any kit requirements		

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6 weeks before the assignment

	Action	Additional information	✓
Travel	Check travel arrangements and tickets	Ensuring your arrival dates don't clash with in-country public holidays, etc.	
	Check you have appropriate military travel orders and letters	These are essential to explain circumstances for immigration.	
	Check visa(s) have been received		
	Arrange appropriate travel insurance(s)		
	Prepare a 'first week box'	Your shipping will not arrive at the same time as you. It may be useful to take some essentials with you, such as: • Special items for children • Electronics and chargers • Toiletries • Cleaning supplies • Bin bags • Toilet roll • First aid kit • A few pots and pans • Plates, cups and utensils • Scissors • Towels	
Education	Engage with schools and childcare providers	Confirm arrangements, discuss transitions including any possible visits when they arrive in location and enquire whether any further information is required.	
Vehicle(s)	Advertise vehicle(s)	Using advert prepared.	
	Prepare a documents folder for your vehicle	This might include: • V5C Certificate • MOT Certificates • Service history records • Warranty information (if applicable)	
	Once sold, cancel vehicle insurance and vehicle tax	**Tip:** Check the no claims retention period with your insurer once a policy has lapsed. Some insurers allow 3 years. Some people purchase a car in the UK prior to returning to ensure no claims are retained, however this is not always straightforward.	
	Arrange temporary use of a vehicle	Consider: • Car hire or rental • Borrow a vehicle from a family member or friend	

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Medical	Collect prescriptions	Request approx. 6 months' supply. Take initial few weeks supply in your flight baggage and ship the remainder.	
	Check you have copies of vaccination records and any medical certificates*	Carry hard copies of these with you when you travel.	
Shipping and storage	Prepare contents and personal effects for shipping	See 'Furniture Movement Service and Removal Service Overseas tasks' - JSP 800, Annex A to Part 5 Chapter 3 or 'Guidance Notes' provided by Agility during survey. We recommend you: • Photograph higher value items • Note serial numbers • Packing bulkier items in vacuum storage bags, e.g. bedding and clothing • Check intended contents against prohibited Items list • Create a contents per box The contractor paperwork often contains only brief descriptions. If you need to make a claim additional detail may be beneficial.	
	Take out contents insurance that includes transit	Most contents policies do not cover transit. It is worth considering a specific policy for this - most military insurers offer this.	
	Arrange specialist insurance for storage		
Accommodation	Action recommendations from pre-March out appointment		
	Arrange proxy if required		
	Ensure all keys and paperwork available for handover of Service Accommodation		
In-country	Arrange internet provision	Identify timeframes for setup. If it is a considerable amount of time, consider arranging temporary provision for arrival. Alternatively, if the destination country allows (and an address has been allocated) you may be able to arrange internet provision in advance.	

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Final week before the assignment

	Action	Additional information	✓
Finance	Clear outstanding bills and commitments		
	Cancel contracts (e.g. broadband, telephone, mobiles)	**Note:** It may be helpful to retain a UK mobile phone, switching it to an international package (ensuring international use is enabled prior to departure) or a PAYG plan. This will ensure you have use of a phone when you arrive, including data for Sat Nav, and a UK phone when returning to the UK for holidays, receiving verification codes for HMRC and the bank, and when returning home. Sometimes arranging an in-country phone can take a few days.	
	Cancel direct debits as appropriate		
	Cancel UK subscriptions and memberships as appropriate		
	Order in-country currency	When arriving in country it is useful to take some cash in the local currency with you with you. This can be used as a deposit when you set up an in-country bank account and will mean you have immediate access to the money. **Note:** A money transfer from the UK can take 4/5 days. **Tip:** Consider a prepaid debit card, they can be used like you would a debit card, in multiple currencies and funds can be uploaded via an app. This is useful as a temporary measure until you have an in-country bank account setup.	
General	Take electronic and paper copies of important documents	It is useful to have hard copies with you when you travel, as well as having electronic copies accessible. Often on arrival in-country it can be difficult to source a photocopier.	
	Put all documents required on arrival into a folder to take with you	This may include: • Driving licence • Passport pages • Birth and marriage certificates • Spouse CV* • Vaccination records* • Children's school records** • Medical records • Financial records • Insurance documents • Pet medical records*	
	Apply for postal or proxy voting	Vote by proxy documents are on GOV.UK	

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	Update address for UK driving licence(s)	**Note:** You cannot register your UK driving licence to an overseas address. A BFPO address may be used but can be problematic. Maintaining a UK address, such as a family member's, will make hiring a car when you get back to the UK more straightforward.	
	Update address for any accounts and policies retained	It is often easier to change address in advance of leaving. **Note:** increasingly utility bills are required for a change of address. If this is not possible, you will be able to obtain a letter from your nearest unit on arrival in-country.	
	Buy stamps	If there is a BFPO in your location, consider buying a batch of stamps to take with you so you can use it on arrival.	
Shipping and Storage	Prepare contents for storage	See 'Storage tasks' - JSP 800, Annex B to Part 5 Chapter 3 or 'Guidance Notes' provided by Agility during survey. We recommend: • Washing clothes to be stored 7 days ahead • Prepare appliances 1-2 days ahead, e.g. washing machine and dishwasher • Defrost fridge freezer 24hrs ahead **Top tip:** minimise risk of mould for appliances in storage by placing silica gel sachets or a teabag (placed in a container to prevent staining) inside. • Airing clothes and furniture • Dismantling beds • Disconnect appliances and electrical items Make sure all travel docs, including passports, are with travel bags and out of the way of packers. Even consider putting them in the car for the day, to make certain they will not be packed.	
Travel	Prepare Bags for travel	Put travel bags to one side, clearly marked as not for storage. Consider booking extra hold luggage – your storage will not arrive when you do so it is worthwhile taking extra items to ensure you are fully prepared and to reduce in-country purchases on arrival. **Top Tip:** List bag contents on a spreadsheet. If you are living out of bags for a period this will help you find what you need efficiently.	
	Ensure you have the appropriate plug adapters	Adapters will be required for any UK electrical devices or appliances you take with you. As well as considering the type of adapter, ensure you have sufficient quantities.	

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First week in-country

	Action	Additional information	✓
Local	Where available, attend arrival briefing	These are useful to get the latest in-country advice.	
	Identify any community events to attend	Coffee mornings and meetups are a really good way of meeting people locally and can help you to bed in.	
	Arrange local documentation, as required	This will vary from country to country, but may include: • Driving licence (test may be required) • National/Social number • Work permit	
Financial	Apply for local bank account		
	Arrange split of pay, if required		
Medical	Non-serving person(s) to register for medical care		
Vehicle	If you are importing a car you will need to register it, or;		
	Arrange purchase of a vehicle, and;		
	Arrange appropriate tax and insurances		
General	Arrange local mobile phones		
	Purchase any supplies that couldn't be obtained in the UK	E.g. school uniform	
	Update contents insurance		
Accommodation	Update/arrange Licence to Occupy (all Service Accommodation)		
	Landlords only – Complete NRL1i form(s) for HMRC	This is an application for a non-resident landlord to have UK rental income without deduction of UK tax.	
Shipping	Receive shipped items	Open each box before the contractor leaves. Pay particular attention to boxes opened by customs, checking for damage – complaint form can be downloaded here. **Note:** it is beneficial to retain your shipping inventory for return travel to prevent tax being charged.	

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