

## Riding the emotional relocation roller-coaster

### Deciding to go

Unless you have previously embarked on a relocation abroad and re-rooted your entire life, and possibly that of your family, it's hard to imagine the range of emotions and list of tasks that need to be completed to make your relocation dream a reality.

However, if you're considering moving abroad, it's important to understand from the outset the magnitude of what's involved, not just logistically but also emotionally.

You're likely to experience a whole range of emotions throughout the relocation process - from excitement to trepidation and nervousness. The more that you're able to rationally plan ahead, anticipate and know what to expect, the more likely your relocation will be a successful and enjoyable experience.

*Our customers often tell us that they experience a rollercoaster ride of emotions as they first consider and then plan their relocation, and as they go through the steps necessary to make the move possible and successful in the long-run.*

The initial decision to move involves a range of emotions, which could be different for each member of the family. Generally these are focused around your reasons for moving and the benefits your relocation is expected to bring versus the perceived disadvantages, such as moving away from family, friends and familiar environments to a new start in a new location.

It's important to remember the positives and the reasons for the move throughout the process, while also bearing in mind the logical and rational elements that you need to plan and put into place to make the move a reality.

**Vicky Newberry**, who moved to Abu Dhabi with her husband and their two sons, said: "The excitement about moving helped us to keep going through the lengthy admin process."

Telling your family and friends about your decision to move can often be the most difficult part but clearly explaining your reasons for this decision is essential. The greater their understanding the more support you could receive, and you can also help them to their first trip to visit you in your new home.

### Be organized, get expert help when you can

Visiting your potential new homeland is also an exciting part of the initial planning phase and is really useful to reinforce all the positive reasons for the move and to help you and your family get excited about the prospect. While there, try to think like a local rather

than a tourist, and make the most of the opportunity to gather as much information as you can.

**Lee Ascroft**, who moved from Bolton to Perth with his wife and three children, has the following advice to help you through those emotional early stages: "Remain focused on the end result and what you hope to achieve and that will get you through the move!"

And don't forget to take advice from the experts.

*Andy Cox, who has worked for Crown Relocations as an export packer for more than ten years and has helped relocate many families, comments: "Relocating is no easy task, so it's really important to be organised and get expert help where you can. Allowing plenty of time to prepare and de-clutter will make the whole process much more straight forward."*

## **Putting the wheels in motion**

Once you have made a commitment to relocate overseas and begun the emotional process of letting friends and family know, there are many more steps both practical and emotional to go through to make your dream of relocating abroad a reality.

Among the more practical steps you'll need to take is applying for entry and work Visas for your destination country as well as undertaking the legal process to apply to emigrate to a new country. This application process can take some time and the Visa and entry process can be quite complex as well as being an anxious wait to hear if you have been successful.

Some Visa applications can take up to eighteen months to two years to be approved so it could be a long waiting game. It is important to do your research first and make sure that you have the strongest case for relocation and that you meet the country's requirements for entry and work; for example having the right skill match to meet the country's criteria. You may wish to employ the services of a company that specialises in Visa applications as any inaccuracies in your submission could delay your move.

Retirees Jane and Paul Cowley sold their house in East Sussex to relocate to Australia to be closer to their son and daughter and their first grandchild.

"We managed to get a contributory parent visa, which took about 18 months. However as retired parents of children living in Australia, the other option is the non-contributory parent's visa, which has about a twelve year wait!"

In addition to the Visa applications there is also the issue of what to do with your house in your home country when you relocate. For some the move may be a temporary one, so renting your property while you are living overseas could be the best option. However if your relocation is a permanent move, or if you need the funds from your

house sale for your relocation, then selling your property could be another potentially lengthy and emotionally draining step.

## **Research, Research, Research!**

To maximise your chances of a successful, fruitful and happy relocation, research into your destination location is key. The more research and preparation that you can undertake before you go, the better. It's a good idea to do more extensive research once you have decided on the country that you want to move to. You can use the time while you are waiting for your Visa application to be approved very positively by undertaking more in depth research into the area where you will be building your new life.

Amanda Winfield, who relocated to New Zealand with her partner Ravil Atlas, has the following advice:

“Research, research, research, because it isn't always easy to relocate. It's the best way of finding out all of the information you need to be able to make informed decisions.”

As the date for your move approaches, booking the travel tickets for your relocation is an emotional highlight and will make the whole process seem real and more immediate. It is also the point at which the dream becomes a reality and you will begin to close one chapter of your life in preparation for the beginning of a new one.

Kate Mitchell embarked on a new life on Australia's Sunshine Coast with her partner and their son. She has the following advice for anyone thinking about emigrating and starting a new life abroad:

“You need to be patient when arranging the Visas and permits as this can take a while. We miss the rest of our family but they will all come and visit and we can come back if we decide it's not for us, but nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

## **Settling in to your new home**

Finally you've done it! After months, or even years of planning, you've turned the decision to relocate into a reality and now you are embarking on a new life and a new beginning - living the dream.

However it may take some time before you feel truly able to call your new location home. Home is where the heart is, but you'll need to invest some time, emotional energy and commitment into making your new surroundings feel like home. It won't happen overnight, but if you've done your research and set your heart on the move, it won't be long before your new surroundings are home from home.

Policewoman Stella Hartley, who relocated from Barnsley to Australia, knows that the key to a successful relocation is to immerse yourself in the local way of life and culture as soon as possible.

"Relocating can be a bit lonely unless you throw yourself into the culture and embrace your new lifestyle. Once settled in, I joined a local hockey club - I played in the UK for many years with Barnsley Ladies. I also competed in the South Australia Police and Emergency Services Games with a view to go to the World Police and Firefighter Games in New York later this year."

The fundamental things and essential elements that make a new place feel like home are very important and you'll need to invest time and effort into getting these decisions right.

Many people choose to rent initially when they move overseas, as this means that they have more freedom to assess their surroundings and think about what type of accommodation and which areas would best suit their lifestyle.

Remember, just because you had a particular type of house and way of life before, it doesn't mean that the same will apply to your new location. You need to make sure that the pace of life and local facilities available will suit you and your family's needs in your day-to-day life.

It's vital when you select a place to lay down roots that it suits your needs and lifestyle now and for the immediate future. Getting away from it all in a remote location might sound appealing when you first start thinking about relocating, but if you've been used to living in a buzzing town or city, the reality of a quieter life in new country might not actually suit you and you could miss the convenience of local amenities.

Settling into new jobs and schools is daunting for anyone, and even more so in a new country, and starting from scratch making new friends and acquaintances, building new social lives and adapting to a new lifestyle can be quite a challenge for the whole family. Some family members may adapt quicker and settle in more readily, so communication with and support for each other is crucial during this time of change.

## Keeping in touch with loved ones can help to reduce the feeling of homesickness which is crucial when you first relocate

It is not uncommon to feel a bit lonely to begin with and you will no doubt miss your friends and family. The best way to combat this is to make an effort to get out and meet new people and accept that it will take time to adjust and develop a new social circle. Karen Wilde who relocated to Melbourne from Cambridgeshire with her family said: "We have fitted in well and have made some really great friends; the locals have made us feel extremely welcome. The children are settled into the local school and have joined up with sports teams. You never know what is around the corner or when the next adventure will call, but for now our home is in Melbourne."

Keeping in touch with loved ones can help to reduce the feeling of homesickness which is crucial when you first relocate. Thankfully, doing this is much simpler these days with all of the advanced communications gadgets available. For example Skype, which allows you to phone people through the internet so you can make free calls for as long as you like to wherever you like, and, if they have a webcam, you will be able to see whoever you're talking to.

Social networking websites such as Facebook are also great for allowing you to share photos, have live chats and catch up on what is happening back home. Make sure you keep your profile up-to-date so your loved ones can see what you are up to and in turn, keep you posted on the latest from them.

Finally, Stella has this advice. "If I were to give anyone thinking about moving abroad some advice, it would be to give it a try. It's not easy, but it's better to regret what you did do than what you didn't."