

Cross-Cultural Mission Training



A Standard of Care

Sending, supporting and returning overseas workers

by Miles Jarvis

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Executive summary

The aim of this handbook is to outline the standard of care that Commission, as a family of churches, aspires to in terms of recruiting, selecting, training, preparing, sending, supporting and returning long term workers overseas. It also provides useful guidelines of practice for those involved in short term mission.

Key stakeholders in the sending and supporting of overseas workers are defined and it is proposed that each is involved in creating a Memorandum of Understanding to confirm and clarify responsibilities and expectations. Note that defining and clarifying process is not to supersede courageous steps of faith - it is to enable them! Neither is it intended to reduce the importance of prayer and seeking wisdom from God, which it is assumed precedes, shapes and underpins all we do.

The sending process is outlined using a diagrammatic illustration based on a City Transit map which helps to visualise the responsibilities and relational dynamics between partners as the sending and supporting process is outworked.

Preparation and training is vital; Commission provides material to enable those being sent and the sending church leadership team to work through important issues together, ensuring that decisions are made wisely and with input from the relevant apostolic team.

Formal training is discussed; from basic foundational theological training to more context-driven requirements such as security management and language study.

Establishing a good home-based support team is an important part of the sending process, and just as important to enable those sent to thrive while away from their sending church. A 'buddy' who has lived in the same country can also be a good form of support and practical advice.

Returning home can be more of a traumatic experience than going, particularly if preparation is not thought through carefully beforehand. Just as in the sending, all partners should be involved in the planning and execution of returning home. A debrief is essential for returning overseas workers, and guidelines for this are suggested.

Overall, the process of sending and supporting overseas workers well depends on building and maintaining good lines of communication and clarity of expectations and responsibilities before leaving.

Introduction and background

‘ 71% of missionaries leave the field due to preventable reasons ’¹

Our philosophy of ministry as a church planting movement, with a high value placed on the local church, means that historically there have often been blurred or misunderstood lines of responsibility between those being sent, the apostolic team, and the church leadership team. This can result in a variety of unfavourable outcomes; from disappointment and feelings of isolation for those sent, through to returning home early and even leaving the church². Often this can be simply avoided by clarifying expectations and understanding who is taking responsibility for each stage of the sending process. Clarifying responsibilities is also important from a pastoral and legal ‘duty of care’ perspective.

The aim of this handbook is to outline the standard of care that Commission, as a family of churches, aspires to in terms of recruiting, selecting, training, preparing, sending, supporting and returning long term workers overseas. It also provides useful guidelines of practice for those involved in short term mission.

A core value of Commission is that the church is God’s mission agency. However, our call to go to the nations raises certain practical issues that we need to look at in order to fulfil this call with excellence and ensure people are well cared for. Not everyone is experienced in this, and church leaders need to feel released to draw on support that is available rather than feel they need all the answers. We approach sending as a relational process.

The Standard of Care outlines where those lines of responsibility might lie and how an appropriate training and support structure should be put in place to ensure that those sent are prepared and sent with apostolic ministry and central support working in close partnership with the sending local church.

It was originally compiled from learned experience as a wider network of churches (Newfrontiers), from historical partnerships with mission agencies, from those who have spent years in cross cultural contexts, and from those who have extensive experience in sending individuals, couples and families overseas.

This handbook cannot and does not attempt to outline all the circumstances by which individuals, couples and families are sent into different contexts. There is no fixed model. The purpose of this is not to define how things must be done, but instead, to outline what has been learned from experience and furthermore, what will enable more effective care of those we send for the benefit of all those involved. This document should not be formulaically adopted but used as a guide. Therefore, discretion should be used as to which elements are more relevant than others.

Care of those sent is as much about attitude as anything else. Sending should be seen as a privilege as it can connect the church to the wider world, giving capacity for far greater reach than previously. A key word in sending is partnership: where they go, we go.

This Standard of Care is separated into key areas outlining the stages of the sending process. Although the stages are split up for the purposes of explanation, in reality the lines between stages are more blurred and a flexible approach, as with all cross-cultural work, is required! We cannot make sending a one-size fits all pipeline, as the people, places and situations will vary almost every time, but a standard and recommended approach to present is important.

1 In: Global Connections: A Duty of Care - supporting your church’s mission partners.

2 Comments taken from interviews with returning long term workers and those currently in the field (2015).

The main sections include:

- ▶ Who are the key stakeholders involved in sending?
- ▶ Outlining a Memorandum of Understanding - what does this mean?
- ▶ Application and selection - looking at the individual/couple/family and their call.
- ▶ Training and orientation - this section is about preparing to go. What training should be undertaken, and how are workers to be oriented in the field.
- ▶ Setting up a Home Support Team.
- ▶ Pre-departure - what needs to be considered?
- ▶ Arriving and thriving, including planning 'sending country leave'.
- ▶ Returning home - issues around debriefing, reverse culture shock and settling in.
- ▶ A number of appendices with useful information, checklists and sources of further information.

Individuals, couples and families can be sent in a variety of ways with a variety of support structures. As noted above, there is no fixed model. There are those who are involved in a church based, apostolic move to plant a new church, and equally those who are going with a more vocational focus, or going as part of employment. While the guidelines outlined in this handbook will be of some value no matter the context, it is written with the former in mind as Commission is a church planting movement. However, we need to recognise the importance of ensuring that people are valued and celebrated for steps of faith when moving cross culturally, even though the amount or type of support we give may be different.

When an individual, couple or family are considering a move overseas for church planting or vocational reasons, early and honest conversations are needed with the local church leadership to clarify what, if any, 'sending support' will be available. Not everyone who goes can be supported, and it will depend on the context and resources available as to how much support can be given. Clarity of expectations early on is very important to save disappointment and frustration later.

The majority of this handbook is written with a high view of how a church sends in partnership with the apostolic team, and therefore relates primarily to those involved in a church planting team. It may present a high bar, but remember this is a journey, and much of this process comes down to simple, intentional, honest communication and clarification of expectations. We will not do this perfectly, but let's aim high!

1. How we work together

We regard the local church as central to the mission and purpose of God, served by Ephesians 4 ministries³. In general, therefore, we believe that it is the local church who primarily send, not the apostolic team. However, this should always be in partnership. The role of the apostolic team in identifying new nations to get involved in, and helping oversee the process of church planting in new nations is critical. The apostolic team are therefore pivotal in recruiting and shaping church planting teams that are sent overseas. In practical terms, this can mean that church plants can be initiated from an individual in a church, the sending church itself, or the apostolic team providing direction.

The sending process should be seen as a partnership between the following primary stakeholders:

- ▶ The individual/couple/family being sent
- ▶ The sending church leadership
- ▶ Apostolic team for the region
- ▶ In-country team leader (if appropriate). This person may not exist yet! Equally, the in-country team leader may be an ex-pat or a local national leader who is part of a national church leadership or apostolic team.
- ▶ Sometimes: another partner such as another Newfrontiers sphere⁴ or NGO, another employer, or an individual missionary. Commission frequently partners with others to further joint objectives. This is built on a framework of relationship, theological alignment and mission intent⁴.

Relationship between all needs to be established prior to deployment, and all need to be in agreement about the person/family going to the location. There should be a strong collaborative element in the partners working together. The role of the sending church leadership team is often underplayed and the process of sending can leave church leaders feeling disempowered and uninvolved.

Our research⁵ has shown that particularly the relationship between the sending church leader and in-country team leader has often not been well-established and has led to miscommunication of expectations which can cause difficulties. Men and women (ideally with experience) should be involved as part of the sending team, to bring greater insight and a rounded approach to all aspects of sending. This is especially important when couples and families are sent⁶.

3 'Who We Are - our values' Commission booklet 2017.

4 See 'Partnerships framework' and 'Collaborating with other Newfrontiers spheres' papers (SURE programme publication for SEND).

5 Commission survey of returned long term missionaries and those currently in-county (2015).

6 One of the main reasons families/couples leave is because one partner becomes disconnected from the vision/mission. Every member of the family needs to be connected in some way. Adults need to be directly connected to every other group including sending church, apostolic and local leadership. Indirect connection through (usually the husband) will not provide the family support required.

Determining ‘who’ is sending is important from a Duty of Care perspective; as there are important considerations from a safety and security perspective, as well as ensuring appropriate accountability and oversight. A clear understanding of how the partnership works should be established in the Memorandum of Understanding (see below). This should ensure clarity on roles and responsibilities particularly with finance, support structures and accountability.

Scott Marques emphasises the importance of attitude of heart when partnering together in church planting (and other) initiatives⁷; fostering a healthy attitude of heart for all involved needs to be foremost in our considerations for effective partnering.

“We need to actively cultivate an attitude of faith in God; especially that He is building his church. We keep in mind that the overall objective in planting is the most effective proclamation of the gospel and advance of the kingdom of God.

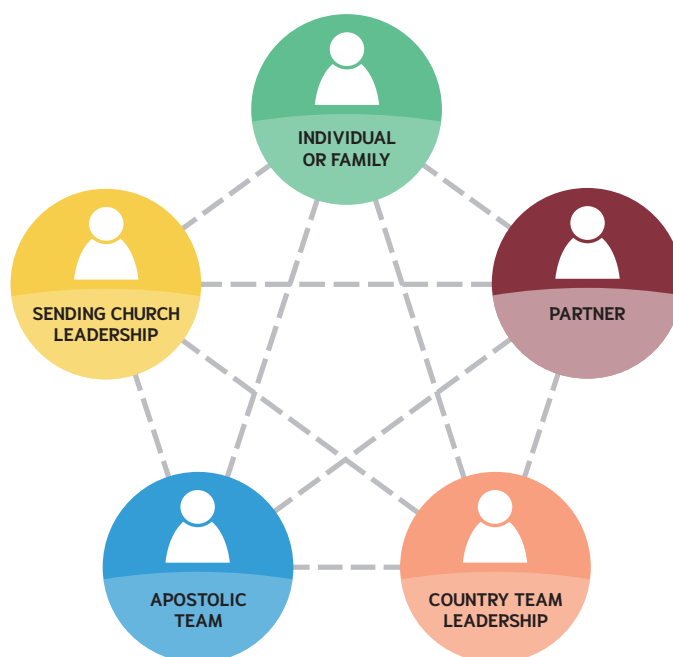
Within this we can maintain a sense of warmth and love towards one another, seeking together for ‘What is right or best in any given situation’ rather than ‘who is right or best in any given situation’.” (emphasis added)

This principle applies not only between the sphere teams relating together, but within each team itself. It is of great value for teams to discuss how our actual partnering together is a goal in itself, as Jesus said ‘they will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another.’

A willingness to sacrifice, to overlook offence, to be patient, and to be as flexible as possible are all important principles to underpin our joint partnerships.

The relationship between all primary stakeholder groups can be illustrated as below. The grey lines indicate a communication channel - overall the diagram highlights the need for clear communication between all partners, with no ‘indirect communication’ resulting in expectations that are not well clarified.

Figure 1. Relationship between the partners



⁷ ‘Partnering together for planting churches’. Scott Marques (2018).

It is vital that the roles of each of the key stakeholders are clearly defined. For example, it is often thought but not expressed or practised that the sending church remains pastorally responsible for those sent until this is re-defined by circumstances or developments in the situation in which they are working. The apostolic oversight generally holds responsibility for strategic planning in the region, while the team leader helps outwork the plan and vision for the specific location/country. This all needs to be discussed and noted prior to deployment.

Ideally, prior to deployment to the field, all stakeholders should meet together to detail who is taking responsibility for the different aspects of sending and supporting. This can be captured in the Memorandum of Understanding (see below).

2. A Memorandum of Understanding

Commission works as a family of churches, and partnership based on genuine relationship underpins our working together. Although we principally work through relationship founded on common values and friendship, we have learnt through our own experience of sending and supporting church-planting teams overseas that there is a very real need for greater clarity of roles and responsibilities, and of clear expectations of all parties involved.

Therefore, although we have not used this historically, we advocate the use of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all parties involved to outline those responsibilities and expectations. The MOU is intended to provoke conversation between all parties and enable a robust plan of support to be implemented. These responsibilities should be agreed by all parties prior to the departure of the individual/couple/family. The process of writing the MoU is as important as implementing it. A review process of the MOU also is required to enable flexibility and on-going relevance as the work develops.

The MOU is not a completely fixed document, set in stone; it provides a reference point to clarify expectations of roles in the sending and supporting process. It should have an annual review as a matter of course.

While introducing a level of formality which we have not adopted before, it is felt that it is a useful tool to help clarify who is doing what in terms of pastoral care, contact, visits, strategic oversight, accountability, reporting back from the field, financial support and so on. It allows a structure of accountability, appraisal and review which has been ad hoc to this point.

A template MOU can be found in **Appendix 1**. This should be adapted for each situation and is intended to be a prompt for conversation and agreement rather than an administrative exercise.

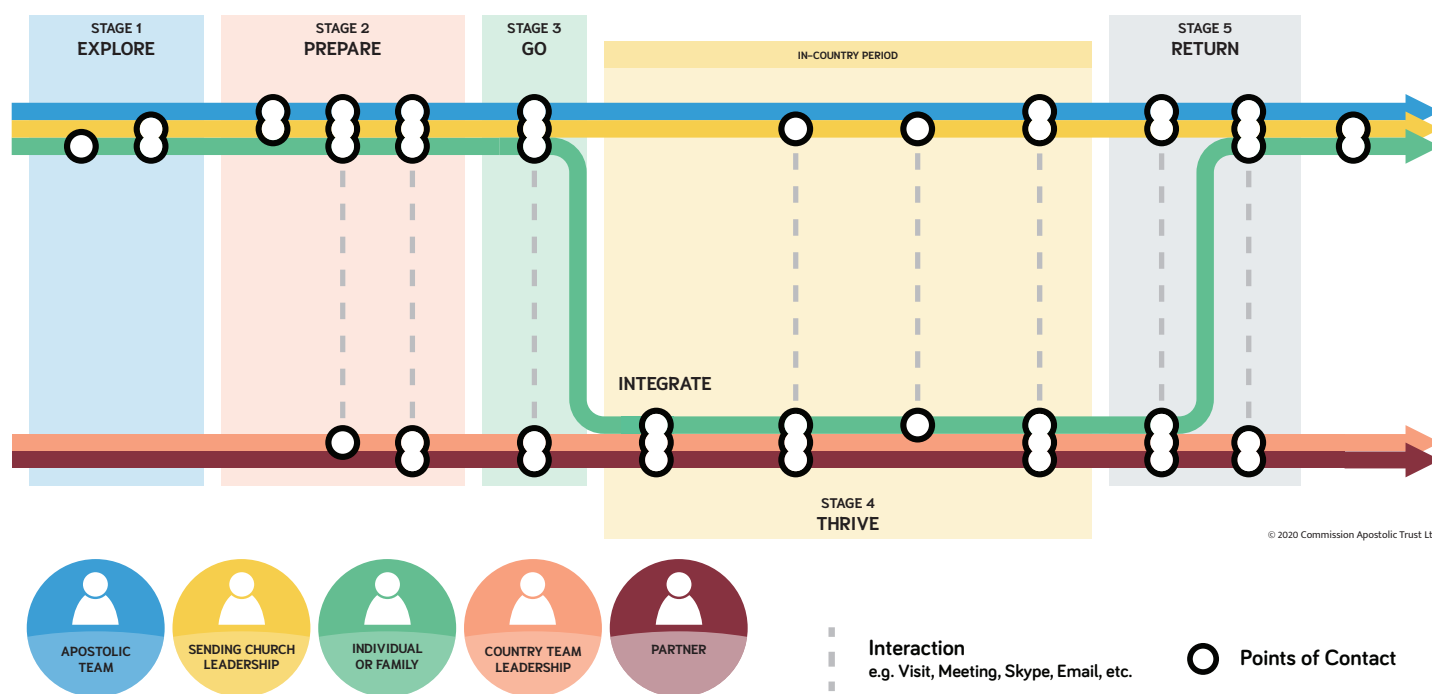
3. The sending process

The sending process is complex and can take many years for an individual or couple to complete from first being stirred about cross-cultural mission to actually departing. That journey can often be difficult and may mean sacrificial decisions being made that require good pastoral and strategic oversight.

This journey has been outlined overleaf. While the stages have been separated to aid visual appreciation of the process involved, there will inevitably be overlap and a flexible approach to each stage is needed. Based on a City Transit Map design, this diagram illustrates the stages of the journey in sending and supporting overseas workers, from the perspective of all key groups of people involved.

Significant points of contact are shown to ensure clear communication and clarify expectations. It is not representative of the frequency of points of contact or the duration of each stage, as this will vary for each situation.

Figure 2. The sending journey



The journey starts with an individual or couple feeling stirred by God to get involved with cross-cultural mission. An initial meeting with their church leadership is recommended, and if the call is followed further, a discussion with the apostolic team responsible for the country being discussed. If there is doubt about who to contact, email office@commission.global for further assistance and contacts.

The Commission cross-cultural training package which accompanies this Standard of Care will assist both the individual and church leader in shaping and furthering the initial call. See ‘Orientation and training’ below. There is helpful content and questions for each of the stages illustrated in the journey diagram above (see below).

Further interactions between all key stakeholders develops along the journey including initial visits to the field by the individuals and, ideally, the church leader. While it is vital that the sending church leadership team are in agreement about the individual/couple/family being sent, it is recommended that one of the church leaders is nominated to take responsibility from the sending church perspective. However, while the church leaders have to be fully on board and willing to take ownership of sending, often there are more appropriate people to champion this and make the connections. They may have more time, more experience or more passion for the nations. They do need to have the ear of the leaders, be trusted by the leaders, be given responsibility and be a solid, “core” member of the sending church. This should be agreed at leadership team level and clearly communicated to the individual/couple/family being sent.

Once sent, the individual/couple/family are still in regular contact with both home church and apostolic team, until such time that returning home needs to be considered. Again, returning home needs a collaborative approach from all partners to ensure practical challenges are overcome and appropriate pastoral support provided.

A full size version of this diagram and summary of the sending/returning process can be found in **Appendix 2**.

What about countries where Commission is not working?

Commission is a family of churches that are part of Newfrontiers, a global movement of churches founded by Terry Virgo. We regularly work in collaboration with other church families (or 'spheres' of churches) within Newfrontiers.

We will therefore never say 'we are not working there' in response to a particular nation enquiry. If people are feeling a call to somewhere and there are no details on the website, we would encourage them to get in touch with whoever is apostolically responsible for that region or contact the Commission office who can help put the individual/couple/family in touch with the appropriate people.

There are some places where we work with mission agencies but we sit down with the parties involved and clearly negotiate our values from the start.

4. Pre-departure

4.1 Starting the journey

It is important that those interested in working cross-culturally are given adequate opportunity to explore God's call on their life. Preparing to move overseas is often an extensive process. 'The further the jump the longer the runway' is a useful illustration of that point.

The aim of application/selection is to assess the suitability and maturity of those expressing interest. Ultimately this should be done with all the partners, with the country leader being consulted at the latter end of the process. Suitable preparation and training can then be undertaken.

For the purpose of simplicity, much of this Standard of Care combines individuals, couples and families being sent. However, the needs of people being sent will vary greatly and whilst some of the considerations are the same, it can be different preparing to go as an individual, as a couple or as a family. We want to ensure that everyone is supported in their spiritual, mental and emotional health and we particularly encourage those going as individuals, where possible, to connect with others.

This, and the practical details, will look different for each individual/couple/family being sent. The potential role of the individual/couple/family being sent will help determine the level of assessment and preparation needed. The context of how an individual's gift will be outworked also needs careful consideration. For example, in many contexts an individual may be looking to lead a house church of 10-20 people rather than leading a public church of 200! The sending church may need help in seeing how the individual/couple/family's gifts are worked out.

Practical details should be considered early on in the journey.

It is recommended that all those interested should obtain the Commission cross-cultural training material for each 'stage' of the journey. See **4.2 Orientation and training** below.

In addition to the practical and orientation training that is available, it is important that prospective team members are self-sufficient in their own walk with God. Church leaders should encourage all those being sent to undertake a course that focuses on identity in Christ (e.g. Freedom in Christ) and all married couples to undergo a marriage enrichment course prior to departure. Any issues highlighted should be resolved before departure as working through issues in a cross-cultural context is far more challenging, and could bring harm to those in the team or those being served. If unresolved, all need to be aware that not everyone is sent, for the good of all involved (see 'Not ready' below).

Those who are interested in pursuing working cross-culturally should speak to their church leader initially. They can work through Stage 1 'Explore' together which asks questions designed to 'get beneath the bonnet' a little more, to understand what God may be saying, and how the individual is being led.

Once this is completed and there is ongoing interest, an 'expression of interest' form (Appendix 3) should be completed and sent to the member of the apostolic team responsible. While this may seem over formal, this captures the relevant information and will be useful for a meeting with the apostolic team member and the individual/couple/family.

The individual/couple and church leader (or designated person) should continue to meet, and work through Stage 2 'Prepare' which goes into more detail about the preparation process, and help to build authentic relationships with the leaders in the sending church (see **4.2 Orientation and training** below). This material is available from the Commission office.

Expectations of the sending church leader should be clarified. It may be unfair to expect the church leader to fulfil all that is required, and a team approach from the sending church may be required, due to experience, capacity or relationship.

It is important that those hoping to work overseas are self-aware and understand their own personality, as well as being able to work with people who may be very different. To assist this, undertaking personality and psychometric tests can be very helpful in understanding how the individual makes decisions and how they see the world. Ideally a paid for version to obtain the coaching and learning elements of this test. This may need help in being applied to the context in which the person is intending to serve.

Overall, approval for deployment must be from all stakeholders. The local church leadership or nominated leader should be involved at every stage of the process to ensure full 'buy in' and partnership once the individual has been sent.

Interviews with all members of the family (age and understanding appropriate) should be undertaken by the church leader and apostolic team leader.

The individual or family should visit the location and see the team on the ground.

Practical details should be considered early on in the process (Stage 3 'Go' examines the practicalities details of moving and living overseas).

Not ready?

Not everyone who feels a call, goes. After training and evaluation, some people may not be considered ready to be sent by Commission or as part of a wider partnership because it would not be healthy for them or the in-country team.

Reasons to not send include physical health, emotional health, mental health, financial stability, family situation, spiritual maturity, character issues, interpersonal relationship issues or "chemistry" with either the sending church or the receiving team.

If the individual/couple/family are not thought to be ready, then ideally the nominated church leader will provide pastoral support and work through any further requirements. The responsibility for arranging this and moving forward remains with the individual/couple/family.

Defining the roadmap

Once the process of defining the journey for the individual/couple/family has taken place, and it has been agreed by all the partners that deployment will take place, the following should be considered:

- 1) Determine what the individual/couple/family need in terms of training, orientation and briefing for the context in which they are intending to live. See 4.2 below.
- 2) Start to work out and clarify responsibilities - i.e. who will be doing what - at this stage the MOU can be drafted.
- 3) Work out language acquisition plan with country team leader.
- 4) Determine regularity of visits from apostolic team, pastoral visit from the nominated church leader, and which family/friends will visit and when. For those intending to live overseas, it is recommended that there are no visits from family/friends for the first 6-12 months.
- 5) Arranging a Home Support Team (see 4.3 below).
- 6) Above all, there needs to be clarity of expectation in terms of who is doing what. The individual/couple/family need to lead on ensuring the right system is in place for their context. If existing, in-country leaders should advise on orientation, visiting and communication specific to their context and what they have learned as good practice.
- 7) The MOU should be finalised and signed by all primary stakeholders.
- 8) Practical details should be considered by working through Stage 3 'Go' - this has a checklist to ensure all major details have been covered.

4.2 Orientation and training

There are a number of training opportunities within Commission and many resources to access outside Commission to help prepare for living overseas. These range from very generic to specific training for the context that is being explored.

Cross-cultural training material

A series of materials (Stages 1-5) has been developed to help prepare individuals/couples/families for cross-cultural mission. They should be worked through in order, particularly 'Explore' and 'Prepare'.

- ▶ **Explore** - Through asking relevant questions, this Stage helps the individual begin to understand and unpack whether God is calling them to be involved in cross-cultural mission.
- ▶ **Prepare** - Preparing well to go on cross-cultural mission is essential. This Stage provides more in-depth questions about the preparation process, helping build deeper relationships with the leaders in your sending church.
- ▶ **Go** - This Stage helps the individual think through some of the practical detail from developing a Home Support Team to preparing a budget, with handy checklists to make sure nothing is forgotten.

- ▶ **Thrive** - In order to thrive it is important to walk in fellowship with accountability with the country team leader, sending church and apostolic oversight. This Stage is designed to ask key questions to see how things are going and to help keep on track.
- ▶ **Return** - Returning to the home country can be challenging regardless of how long one has lived in a different culture. This Stage will help with the transitional process of returning and moving forwards.

Training days

The following options are not intended to be prescriptive; more to outline what is available, and to signpost to other resources.

- ▶ **General cross-cultural awareness days**

Commission, either individually or collaboratively with another Newfrontiers sphere will run a general cross-cultural awareness training day annually. The purpose of these training days is to understand how we work in terms of planting churches, hear where we are working and how one can get involved. Ministry and response are also a key part of these days. For those that are more advanced in their calling follow-up can be arranged to discuss next steps. For the majority, these days are the 'first rung of the ladder'.

- ▶ **Specific country days**

Occasionally Commission, or a partner Newfrontiers sphere or organisation, run training days that are specific to countries or regions for those people who are interested. These often include more detailed information about the country, testimony from those who are working there, and discussion about how to get involved.

- ▶ **'Advanced' Training weekends**

For those people who are intentionally in the planning stages of moving overseas, Commission are planning to run specific training weekends which focus on cross-cultural adaptation, meeting with the team and country leaders, and making plans for moving.

For more information on any of the Commission training days, visit www.commission.global.

Other training

As the journey of the individual/couple/family unfolds, the following training should be discussed:

- 1) **Reading** - The partners will recommend key reading for the individual/couple/family. This must be done as it forms an essential part of the training/orientation for the field.
- 2) **Theological training** - Generally, completion of a basic theological course would be sufficient for a team member. Completion of Commission training would be helpful but not always essential as equivalent training already completed would be considered. However, completion of Commission training also ensures alignment of values and helps build connections across the Commission family.
- 3) **Allocation of a buddy/mentor** - See 4.7 below.
- 4) **A short-term visit** - This must be made prior to any long-term plans being made. Once it is definite that the individual/couple/family will be going, it is recommended that the sending church leader also travels to the country. If the couple has children, they should also travel at least once on a short-term visit.

- 5) **Further education** - There are several courses offered both online and face to face that will help preparation. For those intending to work in the Middle East or in Muslim countries then the training offered by All Nations College should be considered. In addition, their 'En Route' is a good online course. See www.allnations.ac.uk for more details.
- 6) **Specific context training** - As the context becomes more defined, there may be additional training that needs to be undertaken - for example:
 - ▶ Language
 - ▶ Cross-cultural training specific to the intended context
 - ▶ First Aid training
 - ▶ Mental Health First Aid training
 - ▶ Leadership training
 - ▶ Conflict resolution
 - ▶ Working in a team
- 7) **Security training and management** - The importance of this cannot be understated. Team leaders and members should be aware of the security management procedures in Commission (see below) and access appropriate training which may include:
 - ▶ Hostile Environment and Awareness Training (HEAT)
 - ▶ Abduction awareness

4.3 Home Support Team

Home Support is vital for those living and working overseas to thrive. Consider a Formula 1 pit stop team - the Home Support Team operates in this capacity in supporting those sent. Neither can work without the other! Those who form part of the Home Support should be considered 'part of team', they are the ones who stay behind. As the individual/couple/family are 'sent', the whole team should be prayed for by the sending church.

Home support can take many forms (and names!). What is described below is an ideal, but many variations are possible. See the **Resources** section below for more information on setting up a Home Support Team.

The Home Support Team should not just be the church leader, but should include a close friend or allocated person who knows the individual/couple/family being sent. Neither do they have to be the same person as the 'buddy' (see below), although the buddy could form a vital part of the team.

Each member of the team, including all family members, needs a connection point. It is easy for individuals, whether married or single, to become isolated, which can sometimes lead to an early return. The impact of social isolation and loneliness can be accentuated in a cross-cultural scenario.

Ideally, the sending church form the backbone of the Home Support Team. The Home Support Team (HST) will probably have people from other churches/locations (including the family of those sent) but ideally it should be based in the sending church. It is useful to have someone with travel health experience on the HST.

The function of the Home Support Team is as follows:

- ▶ To pray and coordinate prayer requests regularly given to the wider church (e.g. termly or in times of crisis).
- ▶ To visit (after 12 months).
- ▶ To feed resources, talks etc from home (podcasts, preaches etc.)
- ▶ To send gifts/encouragements.
- ▶ To keep those working overseas up to date with news from home and church/Commission.
- ▶ To maintain regular contact - Email/skype, social media (if the security plan allows), apps such as WhatsApp and so on.
- ▶ To maintain profile in local church - e.g. make short videos to send out to those working overseas and receive similar back to be shown in church.
- ▶ Remember key events - children's' birthdays etc.
- ▶ To provide a support structure for the kids.
- ▶ To help with Home Ministry Assignment planning (e.g. practical details).
- ▶ To help arrange sending party.
- ▶ To help plan events when those sent are back in the UK to enable feedback to church.

The individual/family should write updates and keep in touch with home, even if busy. The frequency of this should be agreed as part of the MOU. Training in writing good updates may be needed with regard to length and content; also, the communication of sensitive information. Team leaders or buddies can help with this, as can the apostolic team.

4.4 Finance

Consideration of finances and preparing a realistic budget early on is very important. There are a variety of models in how overseas workers are supported ranging from being fully financed when sent (rare), to working full time in employment ('tent making').

Generally, the individual/couple/family being sent are responsible for raising their finance which will in reality be a combination of support from the sending church, friends, family, property rental, and employment income. Early and open communication about financial expectations is vital to the sending process working well. Contact Stewardship services (see Resources section) for further advice and practical assistance.

There will be one off and ongoing monthly expenses to consider. The Stage 3 'Go' material has more information. When writing the budget, the individual/couple/family should ensure they have discussed likely costs with their buddy (see below) or explored the potential costs thoroughly. Items such as visa costs (often more than anticipated), pension and NI contributions, holidays and so on should be considered as part of the budget. Also, consideration of savings for the future (buying a house, education) and an emergency fund if an emergency exit is required (cash in hand). Visits back to the sending church can also be expensive and built into the overall budget.

4.5 Communication

Communications with home and the sending church in particular has been shown to be a source of potential difficulty for those sent⁸. Feelings of isolation and even rejection creep in as time goes by and 'out of sight, out of mind' naturally occurs.

A communications plan should be agreed and outlined in the MOU in terms of how often news and prayer requests are sent back to the sending church, and how often the nominated church leader, apostolic team and HST will contact those sent. Expectations should change depending on the season. i.e. during language learning have a standard set of prayer requests but don't expect many updates. After training is completed, expect longer updates and newsletters.

It is recommended that a regular (e.g. quarterly or termly) video/phone call with the sending church leadership should take place for the first 2 years. This can be reviewed as time goes on. This is in addition to communication with the HST. Face-to-face communications, either in-person or via video call is the standard. We have found that those who have face-2-face meetings either in person or via video-call feel much more connected than those who message, email or phone.

Note that newsletters and social media can actually increase feelings of isolation if there is no other contact.

The same frequency of contact with the apostolic team lead for the region is also recommended.

Those sent should send back regular updates and prayer requests. Although busy-ness occurs in any context, regular news back home is very important, otherwise commitment can wane over time. The flow of information along this two-way street is vital!

4.6 Visits

Visits are an excellent way of keeping the vision alive with the sending church and to encourage those on the ground.

The following is recommended:

- ▶ An annual visit from an apostolic team member, asking the questions relating specifically to ministry development as well as others. This should include asking about problems, team issues, and pastoral questions. There should be support for both members of a couple and children. Too often the apostolic leader meets just with the husband.
- ▶ An annual visit from the sending church leader, then two-yearly or what is felt appropriate and agreed with the partners. This should also include a meeting with the country team leader.
- ▶ This is a good opportunity to take short-term teams from the sending church or wider Commission network. This has multiple benefits if seen as a cross-cultural learning and exposure trip. This should only be done if the in-country team leader suggests it. Short term teams can be unhelpful for people in-country.
- ▶ Friends/family - not recommended to visit in the first 6-12 months. HST members should visit after this time if possible as well, bearing in mind the following point.
- ▶ Visits should not become a burden on those sent! Consideration of accommodation, young children and other circumstances should be considered.

See **Appendix 6** for further guidelines on pastoral visits.

⁸ Commission survey of returned long term missionaries and those currently in-country (2015).

4.7 The buddy system

The buddy system is where the individual/couple/family being sent is teamed up with someone who has lived in the region/country before. The buddy can help with all manner of advice from cross-cultural orientation to budgeting to working out practical details such as driving in-country and sorting out utilities. They can also form part of the HST, if they so desire.

They can be a useful friend to provide emotional support as the individual/couple/family prepare to leave and also as they return back to the sending country in due course. If a couple or family is being sent, then the 'buddy' should also ideally be a couple to present both a male and female perspective of living overseas. Likewise, if the sent person is a single female, ideally the buddy would be a single female etc. We should not assume that a married person feels the same pressures or has the same experiences.

It is usually possible to find a buddy from within the Commission churches, or else more broadly in local churches or within the Newfrontiers network of churches. Contact the Commission office for help if required.

4.8 Children

Good preparation of children is vital for the family to thrive while on long term assignment overseas. There are many resources available to help prepare children for such a move. They should be involved in each stage of the planning and preparation process, and be given time to express their feelings about the changes ahead.

Ideally, a buddy should be assigned who has experience of living overseas with children to help those being sent appreciate the challenges that are posed specifically to children.

Specific guidelines have been developed by **Global Connections**, and these are recommended to be used by the team as soon as it becomes clear that the family will be deployed. These do not need to be replicated here, but should be considered good practice recommended by Commission. See **Resources** section below.

4.9 Pre-departure briefing

The briefing is an opportunity to provide a framework for the work being done from a wide to a narrow perspective. This should be carried out by a member of the apostolic team and if possible the sending church leader should attend. It should be done near in time to departure if possible.

The Commission Security Policy Suite outlines a systematic approach for carrying out a briefing. Contact the Commission office for more information.

Those being sent should be aware of the overall vision and strategic direction of Commission if not already known, and the part they will play in that.

Detailed security and health information will also form a part of the briefing. See below.

Cross-cultural aspects should be discussed for the location, which will be in addition to the broader cross-cultural training that should have already been undertaken. This should include subjects such as how the expression of church life will differ to that of the home setting.

If representing Commission, those being sent should have access to the Commission Ethos Statement and Code of Conduct for Commission workers. The server handbook also provides useful guidelines on issues such as safeguarding and how to raise concerns.

4.10 Security risk management

We take the security of those being sent very seriously, and have a security management framework in place to assist the protection of those who are working overseas.

Local churches and Commission have a legal obligation to protect those it sends overseas to represent Commission, no matter how short the trip or how safe the location is perceived to be. This includes those people serving as part of a church-planting team, those sent as individuals acting on behalf of Commission or those who are part of a short-term team specifically managed by Commission.

Determining who is actually 'sending' will help clarify who is holding the duty of care, as this may vary, despite the assertion that it is the local church who sends.

In the event of an incident or claim we will be judged by the standards of other organisations and agencies operating in the same field and could be at risk of being found criminally negligent in the aftermath of a serious incident if we do not follow best practice in this area.

There are policies and procedures already in place to protect individuals and teams travelling regularly. Everyone travelling on behalf of Commission and anyone covered by Commission insurance should adhere to these procedures:

All those being sent by Commission should have a copy of the Commission Security and Safety Procedures which are applicable worldwide.

For a Commission led initiative, a Country Specific Security Plan (CSSP) is in place for each location where workers are sent for more than 6 months. This is a highly contextual security plan which details crisis plans, communications procedures, evacuation routes and details, emergency contact details and more. There should be a designated security officer for each location in-country which will not always be the team leader.

Each individual/family also has an emergency plan that details what they will do in an emergency situation that is shared with anyone who has responsibility for them.

The CSSP is reviewed regularly and those being sent agree to abide by the security procedures in place.

Other partners (including other Newfrontiers spheres) may be leading the initiative or in collaboration with Commission. If others are leading, a different approach to security management may exist. This will need review to ensure it is fit for purpose and changes negotiated with the lead partner.

In the event of a crisis, a UK crisis management team will operate and will ultimately be responsible for decisions relating to evacuation or relocation. More information can be found in the Security Policy, Security and Safety Procedures and CSSP. Contact the Commission office for more information.

4.11 Practical details

Preparation is key. There is a great amount of practical detail to work through in preparation for relocating overseas. The Stage 3 'Go' material provides more information and reminders about key issues. The main areas to consider are as follows:

- ▶ **Visa** and work permit issues - start planning early and establish costs (often more than anticipated). Discuss with in-country team who understand how often costs and requirements change.
- ▶ **Language** acquisition and cultural adaptation
- ▶ **Education** for children
- ▶ **Completion of training**
- ▶ **Finance** - preparation of a realistic budget, training and preparation costs, insurance and medical care, accommodation, education, pension. This needs careful discussion with the partners and likely the nominated 'buddy' who will also be able to contribute to shaping a realistic budget.
- ▶ **Issues to sort out prior to leaving** - e.g. renting out a home, payment of National Insurance, writing a Will, establishing guardianship of children in the event of parental death, shipping of goods overseas, accommodation when arriving in-country.
- ▶ **Writing up and agreement of the MOU** to clarify the issues of which partner is carrying what responsibility in the care and support of the individual/couple/family being sent. Holiday and home ministry assignment should also be agreed.
- ▶ **A full introduction to the team** should take place; roles, responsibilities, current plans, long term aims, progress and so on; by videocall if required.
- ▶ **Pre-departure checklists** - the individual/couple/family may find it helpful to write a 'countdown' checklist from 12 months down to the date of departure to help get the tasks organised; to list what needs doing and when. Again, a buddy may be able to help with advice on what may need to be considered.

More information can be found in 'Go'. This may need additional practical details to be covered for certain locations. The buddy should be involved in working through 'Go' to ensure there are no perceived gaps. There are other very useful online resources available such as Oscar and Syzygy. See **Resources** section below.

4.12 Health and stress management briefing

Management of health is a vital part of thriving in another culture. It is vital that the individual/couple being sent seek specialist advice (see **Resources** section below) to ensure they and any children are adequately protected. Specialist advice may be required for certain locations and additional costs may need to be considered when preparing the budget.

Ensure sufficient time is given to getting vaccinations up to date and obtaining additional medication such as anti-malarials. Attending a First Aid course for one of the adult members of the family would also be recommended. A team member should have undertaken a Mental Health first aid course.

Ensuring appropriate and adequate insurance is essential. Commission can provide information about insurers if required. See also **Oscar** and **Syzygy**.

Long term workers frequently suffer from stress and this is often under-recognised and poorly managed. All team members and leaders are recommended to read the Stress Management section of the Commission Security and Safety Procedures.

Ensuring adequate holiday is taken is an important part of managing the stressful nature of working cross-culturally. Holiday is NOT the same as a home ministry assignment (see 5.3 below) and needs to be taken into consideration by the partners when planning the MOU and work patterns of those being sent. Issues such as compassionate leave, maternity and paternity leave should also be discussed.

4.13 Safeguarding

Ensuring the safety of children and adults at risk is vital consideration when working cross-culturally. We need to ensure we practice to a high level in this area. How this is enacted will vary contextually and requires discussion at a team level. This will require a commitment to work to the safeguarding standards required and attending/providing appropriate training⁹.

4.14 Departing and relocating

A departure date can be arranged before the detailed preparation, training and briefing has taken place, although agreement from all primary stakeholders must be reached concerning the timing of this. Prior to relocation it is recommended that the following takes place:

- ▶ Finalising of the MOU.
- ▶ Agreeing a schedule of calls/Skypes as per the MOU (get dates in the diary).
- ▶ Shipping of goods etc. (where applicable).
- ▶ Arranging the first visit of pastoral care and visit from apostolic team.
- ▶ Arrange meeting of apostolic team member with wider family to discuss any concerns.
- ▶ Ensure HST prepped with prayer requests for first few weeks.
- ▶ Keep wider family in the loop.
- ▶ Clarify final budgets.
- ▶ Sending service in local church; include the children, HST leader and wider family.

⁹ Commission have developed guidelines on what is required. Contact the Commission office for more information or speak to the apostolic team leader.

5. In-country support – thriving while away

5.1 In-country support

Arrival

Ideally individuals/couples/families need to be met at airport upon landing.

Initial accommodation should have been settled prior to leaving; even if this is not where the individual/couple/family will stay long term. Also discuss issues such as furniture, transport and any orientation schedule.

Similarly, education for any children should have been investigated and arranged, as this will likely be a significant part of the budget for a family living overseas.

Adjustment

The team leader can help with some practical matters when settling in, or delegate this to someone on the team who can help, but they should also encourage those sent to take responsibility for their own arrangements as part of their orientation to the context. Set expectations for what this looks like in practice - if a couple/individual needs handholding the whole time, they were probably not ready to come.

The individual/couple/family should receive an up-to-date security and safety briefing (i.e. the CSSP).

The individual/couple/family should be encouraged to get to know the local area, understanding where the key facilities and trouble spots might be. A good way to do this is to use public transport if appropriate.

If not already arranged, a language acquisition plan should be agreed with the team leader.

A good 'life balance' should be encouraged with adequate time off and particularly time spent with children as they adjust to a new life.

Overall, the team leader carries responsibility for the leadership and functioning of the team, and therefore should be aware of team dynamics and deal with any problems quickly.

Ongoing contact

As already noted, pastoral support is normally part of the responsibility of the sending church. This continues until a suitable alternative arises (e.g. idealistically setting in of elders in a church plant). This should be discussed by all partners, particularly if there is a leadership transition in the sending church.

Regular communication is vital; it is difficult to over-communicate initially. As time goes on, communication with home is known to wane significantly, leading to feelings of isolation and disappointment in those sent (especially singles). Generally, good communication between all partners needs to be in place long before departure, through to long after the person finally returns.

An annual visit from the sending church is recommended - perhaps the nominated church leader and HST leader for the first visit; and delegated appropriate persons thereafter.

An annual visit from the apostolic team lead for the country/region.

An annual review of all partners to clarify MOU agreements. This does not necessarily need to be face to face - video calls are a good alternative. Email or conference phone call is not enough. Note the standard for regular communication is videocall.

5.2 Ongoing appraisal and training

A review process is important to help support the individual/couple/family sent and to check progress against the aims and objectives of the team. This helps maintain a good accountability structure for all the partners.

This should also include a review for partners and to discuss how family life is working.

It is appropriate to set goals for language learning, for example, and explore ways to help if individuals are struggling. This should be done in a non-judgemental manner, and appropriate levels of confidentiality must be maintained.

Success needs to be defined for the context; we want to always celebrate the faith attempt not necessarily the outcome.

As with any appraisal, further training needs may be highlighted. The team leader should work with the partners to facilitate those where possible.

The Stage 4 'Thrive' material outlines an appraisal/review structure that is helpful to use when considering an annual review.

5.3 Home ministry assignment

A 'home ministry assignment' (HMA), sometimes called 'sending country leave', or 'furlough', is an important part of the rhythm of those living overseas for long periods of time. This sounds an overly organisational term, but it is meant to distinguish between this, and what is outlined below about holidays. Coming back to the home country can be a great time with family and friends, an opportunity to worship in larger groups and to be refreshed.

However, this is **not** a holiday and should not be counted as such. Annual leave should be taken elsewhere. Our research shows that sending country leave can be emotionally demanding, stressful and even exhausting for those returning and this needs to be considered part of their work. Limitations of annual leave if tent-making overseas make this difficult and therefore any burdens placed on those returning (e.g. travelling and speaking commitments etc.) for sending country leave should be minimal.

HMA can be considered as similar to a 'pitstop' in motorcar racing - those travelling back to the sending country are still part of the 'race' but are taking time to re-fuel, re-fresh and re-connect with the sending team. 'Home' may well have become the place they now live; so this is not considered going home, but returning to their sending church and country.

This can be very emotional and difficult, which is often not appreciated by the local church. It is often an unsettling time, coming back into one's 'old life' - especially in the early years, as those returning feel that they no longer belong at home but neither do they fully belong where they are.

The length and frequency of HMA should be discussed as part of establishing the MOU and built into the annual budget as it can be a considerable financial burden. Every three years is a minimum.

Generally, returning individuals/couples will need help with personal and practical issues such as housing, education, health, holidays, transport (there are resources available to help - for example cheap holiday accommodation, cars etc - see **Resources** section below).

HMA should include:

- ▶ A good reception - the HST should arrange, if possible, for collection from the airport.
- ▶ A time to feedback to the church; if possible, to have the apostolic team leader there as well.
- ▶ A time of spiritual refreshment - e.g. a conference.
- ▶ Time for children to go on holiday - there are specialist TCK holidays available (e.g. Re:Konnnect) - see Resources for more information.
- ▶ A medical check and debrief especially if crisis has occurred.
- ▶ Time for professional development and training if required.
- ▶ Good level of care for singles - e.g. retreats, accommodation etc.
- ▶ Staying in as few places as possible.
- ▶ An 'exit interview' before return to the field - preferably with the nominated church leader and apostolic team to discuss progress and plans.
- ▶ If possible, a talk with someone who has experienced going and returning.

5.4 When things aren't going well

Challenges frequently arise in cross-cultural work, often from unexpected sources. This section is primarily focused on challenges that may arise relationally among the primary stakeholders. All stakeholders can experience this, and we need to build an environment when raising concerns appropriately, is encouraged. We would advocate the biblical principle (Matthew 18) of speaking first with the person with whom there is challenge. This can require brave communication! The emphasis of this handbook is to provide a framework for intentional communication to ensure where possible issues are dealt with early before serious problems arise, and this is the principle when things are challenging too.

Should it be necessary, other stakeholders can be drawn into assist with discussions, and others (e.g. members of the apostolic team, church leaders) where helpful.

6. Returning

Returning home is a difficult time for those sent. Even if planned as well as possible, the emotional cost of re-entry is high. This is much greater if the individual/couple/family has had to leave suddenly (e.g. evacuated due to a crisis). Every situation is different so a clear process is hard to define but the following key points should be noted.

Returning home should ideally be planned carefully. The lead in to returning as a family may take months to arrange, to sort out school places for example. Financial planning is especially important and expectations clarified regarding any ongoing financial support and how long that may continue.

If returning home suddenly (e.g. due to a crisis), then the response will vary according to the nature of the crisis -e.g. are they planning to return; was it a forced permanent move home? The HST should help if possible with the practicalities of returning.

Collection from the airport is important especially after a crisis.

The church needs to be briefed so they know what questions they can ask and what not to ask. What is shared needs to be agreed and communicated with the sent individual/family so they know what the church already understands.

Time will be needed for re-entry and orientation to being home. Consideration of home, schools, finances, jobs, getting up to speed with home and church life, relearning own culture all takes time and therefore any financial support that has been given needs to continue, at least initially, when the individual/couple/family return. This will be context specific. Open conversations about finance need to be had to ensure all the team are clear with expectations.

If the individual/family has been renting out their house while away, having it cleaned - e.g. by the HST - will be gratefully received!

Individuals may need help with retirement planning if appropriate - this should be discussed long before actually returning home as part of the on-going discussions that will naturally take place as part of on-going pastoral and apostolic support.

Advice with issues such as tax can be found on the Oscar website (see **Resources** below).

6.1 Debriefing

A structured debriefing process for those returning after more than six months overseas is almost always necessary and should be undertaken by the sending church leader and apostolic team lead if appropriate, depending on the circumstances and length of time the individuals have been away.

The Stage 5 'Return' materials provide some guidance and debriefing questions to consider, to support church leaders. Once back in the UK work through the Stage 5 'Return' material and meet with the sending church leader or appropriate person within the first few days of returning. If the return date to the sending country is known, book the debrief before leaving the UK!

The debriefing should talk through practical, financial, emotional and spiritual aspects of re-entry. Returning home can feel like a bereavement and families can feel isolated and alone despite the appearance of being back among family and friends. A buddy can help enormously here - ideally the same buddy involved in the sending process should help the person return.

If the debriefing process is not handled well then distance can grow between the sending church and the individual/couple/family, sometimes even resulting in their leaving the church. It is important not to rush into any major life decisions and to plan realistic goals.

Children must not be left out of the debriefing process - there are resources available to help children, and camps which specialise in caring for children returning with their parents from overseas (so-called 'Third Culture Kids'). Parents should provide opportunities for their children to meet other TCKs. See Resources below.

Although a debriefing may only require one meeting, generally if a person has been away for more than six months, then a follow up session is recommended. If the church leader or apostolic team leader feel there are issues that require more specialist psychosocial support then there should be no delay in referring.

If returning suddenly, ensure a debrief is planned for within 72 hours of arrival in the UK if possible. Ensure transport from the airport is provided.

Follow up at 6 months and 1 year is also good practice.

More guidance on debriefing can be found in the Guidelines in Security and Safety procedures, and below in **Appendix 5**. Contact the Commission office for more information.

When back in the local church

The individual/couple/family must be welcomed home well regardless of 'success'.

Re-entry can be helped by the church leaders and HST showing an on-going interest.

The local church leader should try to actively use those returning in local church or wider setting as part of re-entry and promotion of work - i.e. to ensure that returnees realise they are valuable and have a significant contribution to bring to both church and 'apostolic' life.

Depending on the situation, consider future short-term visits; involve returnees in training or buddying with those who are preparing to go.

Above all

Good communication - between all partners - long before departure to long after the person finally returns - is the glue that will hold the entire process together.

7. Resources

There are a huge range of resources available in both printed and web based form.

Reading resources

Recommended reading includes (although the team leader may suggest others):

Surviving and thriving overseas

- ▶ **'Screams in the Desert' - Sue Eenigenberg**
Particularly focussed on women, this humorous book provides valuable insights into issues that many women encounter in the mission field.
- ▶ **'Pact To Go' - Rod and Ruthie Gilbert**
This useful guide looks at the development of a Home Support Team - or Personal Accountability Team. Lots of examples of how it can work well.
- ▶ **'Single Mission' - Debbie Hawker and Tim Herbert**
Aims to encourage and equip single personnel and help them to be strong in faith, effective in ministry, resilient and content with their lifestyle. An excellent resource to help us all understand the dynamics of being a single people in mission.
- ▶ **'Families on the Move' - Marion Knell**
The essential guide for those taking a family on a cross-cultural adventure - what to look for, managing transition, continuity in change and more. A must read.

Returning

- ▶ **‘Burn Up or Splash Down’ - Marion Knell**
This looks at the issues surrounding re-entry to the home culture and relocation, and how to manage the unanticipated difficulties upon return. This encouraging book seeks to aid the re-entry process by identifying areas of potential struggle, dealing with emotional challenges and facilitating a smooth transition.
- ▶ **‘Debriefing Aid Workers and Missionaries: a comprehensive manual’ - D Lovell-Hawker**
Available from www.peopleinaid.org - the website also has information on workshops to train debriefers.

Marriage and family

- ▶ **‘The 5 Love Languages’ - Gary Chapman**
Falling in love is easy. Staying in love is the challenge! How can you keep your relationship fresh and growing amid the demands, conflicts, and just plain boredom of everyday life?
- ▶ **‘The Meaning of Marriage’ - Tim and Kathy Keller**
In this book, co-authored with his wife, Kathy, Tim turns his attention to that most complex of matters: our need for love, and its expression in marriage. This is a profound and engaging work that will challenge and inspire people in all stages of life - single, newlywed and married.
- ▶ **‘The Marriage Book’ - Nicky and Sila Lee**
How can we be happily married to one person for the whole of our lives? How do we resolve conflict? How can we discover and rediscover sexual intimacy? Full of practical advice, this best-selling book is easy to read and is designed to prepare, build and even mend marriages.
- ▶ **‘Shepherding a Child’s Heart’ - Tedd Tripp**
Dr Tedd Tripp not only draws on his thirty years of experience as a pastor, counsellor, school administrator, and father, but he also shares insights gained in ten years of teaching this material in conferences worldwide, providing more valuable help for parents.

Cross-cultural and missiology

- ▶ **‘Strange Virtues: Ethics in a Multi-Cultural World’ - Bernard Adeney**
Theologian and veteran missionary Bernard Adeney addresses in-depth what may be the stickiest cross-cultural communication problem of our day: differing approaches to morality.
- ▶ **‘Contextualization in the New Testament’ - Dean Flemming**
Dean Flemming examines how the New Testament missionaries and writers (particularly in Acts, Paul’s letters and the Gospels) communicated the gospel for particular cultures and communities, and shows how these patterns and parameters can inform today’s missionaries, apologists and evangelists.
- ▶ **‘Reaching the Nations’ - Mike Frisby**
A very helpful short guide to preparing, working and returning as a long term missionary. Long recommended by Newfrontiers churches.

- ▶ **‘The Power of the Story: Touching the Lives of Listeners’ - Rob Harley**
Rob Harley has a personal passion: to help communicators master the art of story-telling. As an international award-winning TV documentary maker, Rob knows the raw power of great stories. In *The Power of the Story*, he shares some of the most breath-taking tales you’ll ever hear, and teaches the awesome potential of illustration for public speaking.
- ▶ **‘Foreign to Familiar’ - Sarah Lanier**
Good introduction to the common issues surrounding cross-cultural work. Emphasises the difference between ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ cultures and the unanticipated errors of judgement that can be made.
- ▶ **‘Global Humility’ - Andy McCullough**
The aspect that needs training, more than any other in cross-cultural workers, is humility. Pride and mission are polar opposites. Pride pollutes mission, but the mission of Christ is humble mission. How dare we turn up with all the answers when you don’t even know what questions people are asking? This book is a vital read for cross-cultural Christian workers and candidates, for those involved in multicultural cities in their own nations, for sending pastors, and for anyone whose ministry or Christian walk takes them across cultural divides.
- ▶ **‘The Art of Crossing Cultures (2nd Edition)’ - Craig Storti**
In this completely revised and expanded edition of the classic *The Art of Crossing Cultures*, Craig Storti shows what it takes to encounter a new culture head-on and succeed, whether in business, diplomacy, education, or as a long-term overseas.

Reaching the Muslim world

- ▶ **‘In the Land of Blue Burqas’ - Kate McCord**
True stories from sharing the love and truth of Christ with women living in Afghanistan, which has been called ‘the world’s most dangerous country in which to be born a woman’.
- ▶ **‘Reaching Muslims’ - Nick Chatrath**
This is a fascinating introduction to Islam, covering demography, theology, culture, politics, justice, and other aspects of Islamic identity.
- ▶ **‘A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is drawing Muslims around the world to faith in Jesus Christ’ - David Garrison**
Dr David Garrison’s long-awaited global survey of Muslim movements to Christ reveals that we are in the midst of the greatest turning of Muslims to Christ in history.
- ▶ **‘Touching the Soul of Islam’ - Bill Musk**
This volume aims to explain the differences in outlook between Western and Muslim cultures, in order to present the Gospel without creating unnecessary barriers.
- ▶ **‘Encountering the World of Islam’ - Keith Swartley**
Discover God’s heart for Muslims: Investigate Islam through this positive and hopeful 640-page book.

Web resources

- ▶ **OSCAR - www.oscar.org.uk**
If you’re involved or interested in world mission or Christian work around the world, OSCAR is your gateway to useful information, advice and resources.

- ▶ **Syzygy Missions Support Network** - www.syzygy.org.uk
A valuable resource site with key links to support services and an insightful blog to help prepare and support long term workers overseas. A must-visit site.
- ▶ **Salt Insurance** - www.saltinsurance.com
Specialist charity insurance broker for charity workers, aid workers, missionaries and church groups.
- ▶ **Global Connections** - www.globalconnections.org.uk
Global Connections is a growing network of over 300 UK churches and agencies with a passion for mission. Global Connections members include organisations of all sizes working in countries all over the world. This site has a wealth of resources - key guidelines and links. If intending to travel with children, the TCK guidelines are particularly helpful:

www.globalconnections.org.uk/guidelines/tck-guidelines
www.globalconnections.org.uk/guidelines/member-care-guidelines
www.globalconnections.org.uk/events/tck-holiday-reconnect-for-teens-5-days/150824
- ▶ **Thrive Worldwide** - www.thrive-worldwide.org
Thrive Worldwide (formerly Interhealth) have decades of experience in the physical and emotional preparation and return of long and short-term workers overseas. If further assistance is required for debriefing, this would be the first place to ask for help.
- ▶ **Arrest (Resilient Expat)** - www.resilientexpat.co.uk
A specialist site looking at supporting mission personnel and humanitarian workers overseas from well-recognised experts Dr Debbie Hawker and Dr David Hawker.
- ▶ **All Nations College** - www.allnations.ac.uk
All Nations College is an independent, evangelical, interdenominational mission training Bible College. The purpose of All Nations is to train students in cross-cultural mission. Today, All Nations is the largest College of its type in Europe and welcomes students and their families from all over the world.
- ▶ **Moorlands College** - www.moorlands.ac.uk
Moorlands offers a 10-week short course in foundations for Living and Working Cross-Culturally.
- ▶ **Redcliffe College** - www.redcliffe.ac.uk
Redcliffe College offers flexible courses provide excellent Bible-based training in cross-cultural mission, leadership, member care and linguistics, equipping you to serve God anywhere.
- ▶ **To Win Some** - www.towinsome.com
A website specifically aimed at Christian workers crossing cultures.
- ▶ **Stewardship** - www.stewardship.org.uk
Stewardship Services help the Christian community in the UK give and receive. They can provide excellent services and help for individuals/couples/families intending to work overseas, enabling simple giving and receiving of funds. Anyone considering long term work overseas while continuing to receive any kind of support from the UK must consider using their services.
- ▶ **The Myers Briggs Foundation** - www.myersbriggs.org
A well-recognised personality typing test that will enable greater understanding of how individuals perceive the world, make decisions and relate to others.

Appendix 1: Template MOU

This serves as a template and trigger for conversation. It is not intended to include everything that should be considered and not everything will be relevant. Review and amend to your context.



Memorandum of Understanding

‘Between

[Individual/couple/family]

And

[Sending church leadership]

And

[Apostolic team oversight]

And if applicable

[In-country team leader]

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out the terms and understanding between the above parties for the sending, supporting in-country and return of [individual/couple/family] while serving in [country] under the care of *Commission* and [sending church]. [Also list any other partners involved - e.g. another Newfrontiers sphere]

Background and purpose

Commission works as a family of churches to start new churches, raise leaders, care for the poor and go to the nations. Partnership is key to these endeavours. Although we principally work through relationship founded on common values and friendship, we have learnt through our own experience of sending and supporting church-planting teams overseas the need for clarity of roles and responsibilities and expectations of all parties involved. See our Standard of Care for sending/supporting and returning workers for more information.

This MOU outlines those responsibilities and expectations. The MOU is intended to provoke conversation between all parties to enable a robust plan of support to be implemented. These responsibilities need to be agreed by all parties prior to the departure of the individual/couple/family.

A review process of the MOU also is required to enable flexibility and on-going relevance as the work in [country] develops. The review date is for discussion and detailed below.

1. Responsibilities of the individual/couple/family

1.1 Pre-departure

- ▶ To undertake selection and recruitment process, training, reading and orientation as detailed in the Standard of Care
- ▶ To prepare local church/other support structures during preparation. The local church team member will be [name] who will be responsible for coordinating the Home Support Team who provide [prayer group support, helping co-ordinate HMA, etc.] Further details on Home Support Team can be found in the Standard of Care.
- ▶ To be prepared to wait according to the advice of the church leader and apostolic team if further training or support is required.

1.2 In-country

- ▶ **Accountability** - Team members are accountable to the team leader for all aspects of team life and ministry. Specifically this includes:
 - ▶ Personal and spiritual accountability as a commitment to follow Jesus.
 - ▶ Accountability to a language-learning plan created and agreed.
 - ▶ Accountability in friendships and ministry constantly seeking to grow in effectiveness.
 - ▶ Being open and honest about the state of their relationship with God, their general physical, emotional, spiritual and financial condition (e.g. culture shock, dryness, burn out), about relational issues in the team, marriage and family.
 - ▶ Being open and honest about time stewardship.
 - ▶ Discussing significant life and ministry decisions with the team leader.
 - ▶ Discussing timing of short breaks, holidays, vocational or ministry training and sending country leave with the team leader in advance of making specific plans.
 - ▶ Discussing home schooling of children (including the need for and recruiting of home school helpers).
- ▶ **Home church link:**
 - ▶ To remain connected to the sending church through regular personal and financial updates. A newsletter will be sent [enter frequency e.g. termly].
 - ▶ To visit the church and meet with church leaders during home visits
 - ▶ HMA to be undertaken every [time period] for [time period] and will be funded [describe how]. Individual to liaise with partners and HST to plan well.
- ▶ **Walk with Jesus:**
 - ▶ To take primary responsibility for personal spiritual growth.
 - ▶ To grow in biblical understanding and prayer.

▶ **Importance of family life:**

- ▶ Our priority is God and our families and then other things such as language, work and ministry.
- ▶ As a team, we recognise the value the Bible places on family. Consequently, whether we are married or not, have children or not, we will seek to support the family life of all team members.

▶ **Commitment to the team vision and goals:**

- ▶ Team members are on board and committed to the team leader and vision.
- ▶ Fulfilling team duties and roles willingly.

▶ **Use of giftings:**

- ▶ Seek to use and grow in our giftings to encourage people on the team and serve the overall vision of the team.
- ▶ Encourage one another to also use their gifting.

▶ **Security:**

- ▶ To follow all security protocols in place and attend security briefings/updates when necessary.
- ▶ Comply with decisions made in the best interests of the security of the team (e.g. evacuation).

1.3 Return to the UK

- ▶ To attend mandatory debriefing sessions with sending church leader / other delegated appropriate person.
- ▶ To attend follow-up sessions with specialist support if required.

2. Responsibilities of the sending church leadership

- ▶ To assist [individual/couple/family] prepare as outlined in the Standard of Care.
- ▶ To define prayer support for [individual/couple/family]. The identified Home Support team leader is [name of individual/couple in the church who will be responsible].
- ▶ To profile the [individual/couple/family] in prayer meetings, main Sunday meetings (when back on HMA) and in church news.
- ▶ To send church newsletters/updates to the [individual/couple/family].
- ▶ Contact schedule will be:
 - ▶ [X] number of videocalls/phone calls per year (e.g. monthly, termly etc.).
 - ▶ This to be reviewed annually [detail this here].
 - ▶ The [individual/couple/family] are responsible for arranging dates with the sending church leader.

- ▶ To carry ultimate pastoral responsibility for [individual/couple/family] for at least the first [X] years of [individual/couple/family] being in-country. This will include getting involved with any major issues in the team member's life. This will require annual review as the sending church structure may change and on-going support require further discussion
- ▶ To send a representative from the church to visit the team member in the first year of being on the field, and then as required beyond this.
- ▶ Supporting the team members [individual/couple/family] in re-entry to the home country on return from the field.
- ▶ Discussing financial support with the team members and ensuring they have appropriate financial support in place for the long term, whether through home financial support, or income from jobs in country (see **Section 6** below).

3. Responsibilities of the apostolic team oversight

- ▶ To assist the nominated church leader [name] and [individual/couple/family] in preparation pre-departure.
- ▶ To provide introductions to the team as appropriate.
- ▶ To provide apostolic oversight and direction to the team.
- ▶ To assist the country team leader in providing leadership and direction to the team.
- ▶ To give pastoral oversight and care of the team leader in partnership with their sending church.
- ▶ To agree the team vision and values.
- ▶ Annual visits to the team.
- ▶ To assist in the development of robust security procedures.
- ▶ To carry responsibility, together with the Commission crisis team, for any major team decisions (e.g. evacuation, relocation. etc.).

4. Responsibilities of the in-country team leader

- ▶ Accountable to apostolic oversight for all aspects of team life and ministry.
- ▶ Responsible for the vision and welfare of the team before God.
- ▶ Setting, defining and modifying the vision of the team under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and in conjunction with apostolic oversight.
- ▶ Ensuring each team member is building a healthy and sustainable spiritual, physical and emotional life. However, ultimate responsibility for this rests upon the team member himself. The team leader's role is to provide the necessary support to enable this to take place.
- ▶ Final approval of new team members.
- ▶ To provide a context for team accountability and personal accountability within the team.
- ▶ To help new team members to settle in and adjust to their new environment including acculturation, language learning and securing suitable accommodation.

- ▶ To provide advice, support and encouragement to team members so that they can minister to their full potential.
- ▶ To encourage initiative and creativity among team members. There is freedom to minister, chart new paths and to question team assumptions within the limits of the team's expressed vision and goals.
- ▶ To provide a source of accountability for team members in their life (character, walk with God etc.) and personal and ministry goals.
- ▶ To consider individual gifts of team members in determining his/her role within the CP team.
- ▶ To give encouragement and vision to the team and help equip them for ministry.
- ▶ To provide a male 'covering' to single female team members [if necessary].
- ▶ To provide co-ordination in the planning of team visitors, holidays and HMAs.
- ▶ To meet at least twice a year with each team member to review their activities and progress and for a time of sharing, mutual encouragement, and accountability in ministry and language goals.
- ▶ To provide security briefings as appropriate and update team members.

5. Reporting and review

All parties will adhere to the agreements as detailed above and refer to the apostolic team if it is felt that parties are not fulfilling their responsibilities. If required, re-negotiation of responsibilities can take place with agreement from all parties.

Reporting will be made back to the sending church leadership and apostolic team.

The MOU will be reviewed on: [insert review date]

6. Funding

This MOU is not a commitment of funds. However, the financial support of [individual/couple/family] must be discussed and agreed including:

- ▶ Costs of training pre-departure.
- ▶ Financial support while in-country (flights, initial rent etc. education, insurance including medical cover).
- ▶ NI/pension costs.
- ▶ HMA contributions.
- ▶ Crisis funds.
- ▶ Costs of visits from local church.
- ▶ Return and re-integration costs.

7. Duration

This MOU shall become effective upon signature by the partners above and will remain in effect until modified or terminated by any one of the partners by mutual consent. In the absence of mutual agreement by the above partners this MOU shall end on [end date of partnership].

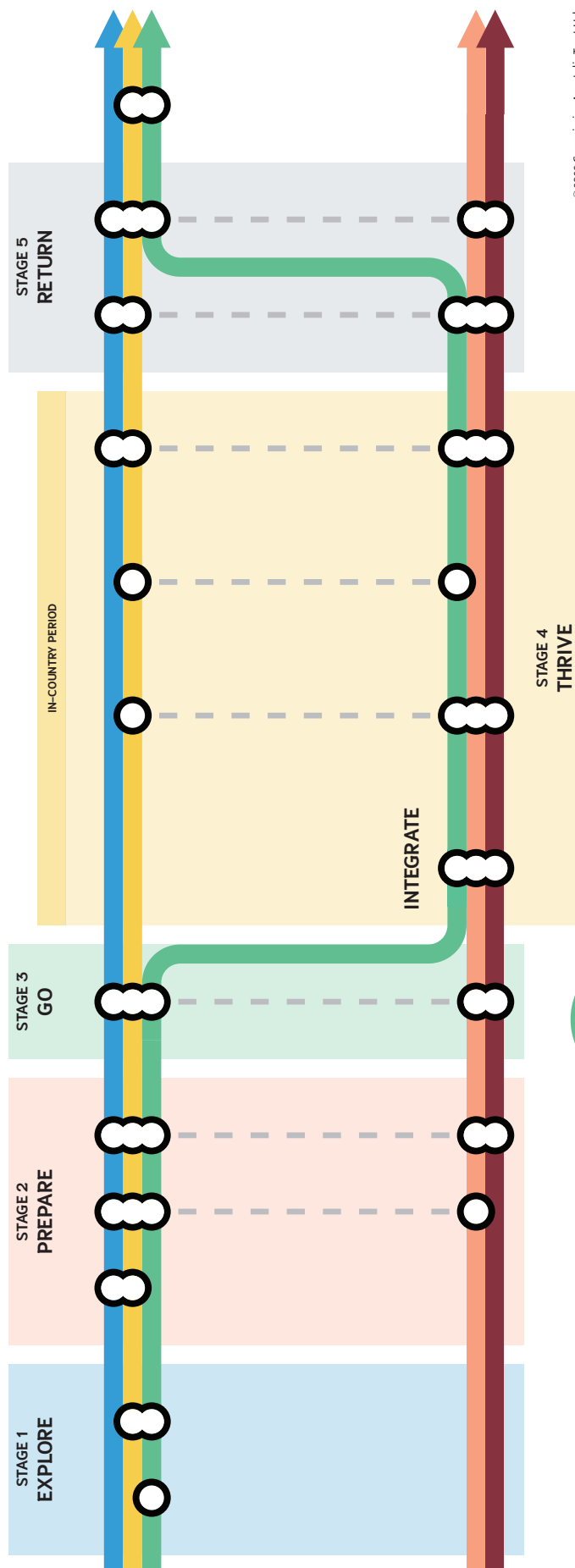
Contact Information:

	Individual / couple	Sending church leader	Apostolic team lead	In-country team leader
Name				
Telephone				
Email				

Signatures:

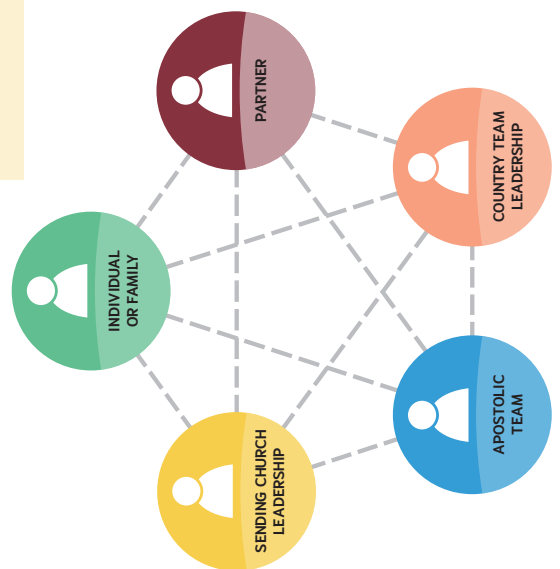
	Individual / couple	Sending church leader	Apostolic team lead	In-country team leader
Name				
Signature				
Date				

Appendix 2: Summary of the journey



Interaction
e.g. Visit, Meeting, Skype, Email, etc.

Points of Contact



Based on a City Transit Map design, this diagram illustrates the stages of the journey in sending and supporting overseas workers, from the perspective of all key groups of people involved.

Significant points of contact are shown to ensure clear communication and clarify expectations. It is not representative of the frequency of points of contact or the duration of each stage, as this will vary for each situation.

Sample summary of the sending process

Prior to departure

- ▶ Initial conversation with one of the church leadership team.
- ▶ Work through Stage 1 'Explore' material.
- ▶ Read through 'Standard of Care guide'.
- ▶ Attend mission awareness day.
- ▶ Start to work through Stage 2 'Prepare' material.
- ▶ Make contact with apostolic team.
- ▶ Discussion with in-country team.
- ▶ Not necessarily in this order:
 - ▶ Short-term visit.
 - ▶ Specific training weekend.
- ▶ On-going discussions with sending church leadership and apostolic team.
- ▶ Allocate 'buddy'.
- ▶ Work through Stage 3 'Go' material.
- ▶ Complete training as recommended/required.
- ▶ Sort out Home Support Team.
- ▶ Clarify MOU.
- ▶ Security and cultural briefings.
- ▶ Commissioning service in sending church.
- ▶ Depart.

While in country:

- ▶ Regular communication/interaction with sending church leader, HST and apostolic team.
- ▶ Work through Stage 4 'Thrive' material regularly with in-country leader.
- ▶ Plan return home with good communication with all partners.

Returning:

- ▶ Regular communication with sending church leader and HST, regarding plans.
- ▶ Work through Stage 5 'Return' material.
- ▶ Follow up as required.

Appendix 3: Initial expression of interest form

This should be completed by any individual/couple/family who are expressing a serious interest in serving overseas. This information helps us connect them with the right people and also enables us to recommend further training or equipping events that we may be arranging.

Personal details	
First Name(s):	Surname:
Address:	Country of permanent residence:
Phone no.:	Marital status:
Email:	Number and age of dependants:
Current occupation:	Date of birth:
Church details	
Name of church:	Town/City:
Leader's name:	How long have you been a member?
Email:	Have you discussed your interest in working overseas with them?
In what ways are you involved in the life of your church?	
Other details	
Nation(s) of interest:	
Please explain your background and how you feel God is calling you to serve overseas?	
What is your area of ministry interest? (e.g. church planting/leading, health, education, etc.)	
When do you think (at this point) you might be ready to go?	
Please add any other comments or information overleaf that you feel may be relevant.	
Commission complies with the Data Protection Act 2018.	

Appendix 4: A checklist for preparing the runway

Have I... ?

Item	Notes	Tick
Sorted visas		
Prepared budget		
Established Home Support Team		
Discussed and agreed MOU with sending team		
Worked through recommended books (to include marriage, kids going (TCK)		
Done Freedom in Christ / equivalent		
Done marriage enrichment		
Other practical details:		
Joined Stewardship services		
Discussed tax and NI contributions		
Pension		
House - renting out, etc.		
Shipping		
Insurances needed		
CSSP		
Cultural and security briefing		
Organised accommodation for arrival		
Arranged education for children		
Outlined and agreed a language acquisition plan		
Arranged annual visit with: home team, apostolic lead, church leader		
Flights booked		
Annual review organised		
Have apostolic team met/offered to meet with wider family to discuss/allay fears, etc.		
Do I have to hand: (make sure copies also at home)		
▶ Birth certificate		
▶ Marriage certificate		
▶ Insurance documents		
▶ Other key records (naturalisation papers, power of attorney, etc.)		
▶ Details of doctor		
▶ Copies of wills		
▶ Emergency details (part of CSSP)		
▶ Driving Licences		
▶ Passports and copies		
▶ Tax Clearance certificate?		
▶ Reference letters		
▶ 1 year's worth of bank statements		
▶ CV and qualifications with certificates		
▶ Employment references		
▶ Copy of no claims bonus for car insurance		
▶ Copy of settled balance accounts - proof of good credit		
▶ Medical prescriptions		
▶ School records		

Note: This is only a start. It will be clear very quickly that this list is far from complete. Please help us by sending back your check lists that were helpful so that we can update this guide.

Appendix 5: Checklist for the sending church leadership

A significant responsibility lies with the sending church and hence it should be seen as a partnership and potential long-term commitment, while recognising that the sending church has a much bigger role to play than just financial monthly support. There are four key areas to consider in sending well which should have a team approach:

1. Financial support clarified.
2. Preparing people sufficiently for cross-cultural mission.
3. A clear plan for communications.
4. Prayer support.

The following checklist has been put together to assist the church leader in ensuring that they have considered the major points when helping to prepare and send overseas workers from their church which captures these four points, and which are considered as part of the MoU.

For more information about any of these points please contact the Commission office (office@commission.global) or the member of the Commission apostolic team you know best.

Question:	Notes:
Is the individual a member/regular attender who is actively involved in the life of the church? How do they serve?	
Have they completed Stage 1 and 2 material with you?	
Have they attended a mission awareness day or similar?	
Have you discussed plans with a member of the Commission apostolic team?	
Is it clear who is providing apostolic oversight and strategic input? Do you have confidence in that?	
Do you have any pastoral concerns?	

Question:	Notes:
Have children been adequately prepared and involved in the process?	
If married, has the couple done a marriage enrichment course?	
Has the individual/couple/family worked through any significant issues? (e.g. attended 'Freedom in Christ' course)	
Have you discussed our legal responsibilities with the church Trustees, appreciating the burden of duty of care that is taken on by sending the individual/couple/family?	
Have you talked openly about producing a budget?	
Is the budget realistic for both the church and individual/couple/family?	
Has the budget been verified by a member of the country team or buddy?	
Have different models of support been discussed (e.g. personal support, giving to a central church-held fund, use of Stewardship, etc.?)	
Has length of support from the sending church been clarified?	
Have expectations been clarified regarding what success looks like?	
Has the Home Support Team been put together?	
How will the individual/couple/family maintain their profile in church life?	

Question:	Notes:
Have visits been discussed and agreed?	
Has language acquisition been discussed and a plan put in place?	
Has the MOU been written and agreed?	
Has 'sending country leave' been discussed and agreed?	
Is the church itself ready to send? Are people envisioned enough and caught up in this together?	
Has a commissioning service been planned?	
Are the initial communications (e.g. Skype) planned?	
When a return date is known, has an initial debrief been planned?	

Appendix 6: Guidelines for the debriefer

Initial points to consider:

- ▶ Debriefing is a mandatory part of the sending process.
- ▶ A debrief will never happen unless it is planned before. Therefore plan it well ahead!
- ▶ The debrief should be arranged to take place within the first week of return, or within 72 hours if returning due to a crisis.
- ▶ While a single session of debriefing may be all that is required; often more are necessary.
- ▶ Further help may be needed - don't be afraid to ask for, or refer to specialist care.
- ▶ The debrief is an opportunity to talk about experiences while the individual/couple/family was away and since returning home. It allows an opportunity to reflect on their experiences, and to be open and honest. It can be an opportunity to acknowledge the difficulties that have been faced, recognise what has been achieved and to share emotions and reactions in a safe environment.

The Stage 5 'Return' materials should be given to those returning prior to the debrief to allow time to consider the questions. This guide is to be used as preparation for a debrief for those returning back to a local church.

Questions to be considered by those returning are as follows:

- ▶ What was the purpose of your trip?
- ▶ Overall how did it go?
- ▶ What went well?
- ▶ What was surprising / bad / difficult / good?
- ▶ Did you have any troubling/stressful situations - what were these?
- ▶ How did you react?
- ▶ What might you do differently in these situations, or if you went again?
- ▶ How do you feel about those situations now?
- ▶ Were there any administrative problems relating to home while you were away? (e.g. unmet expectations, poor communication, failed communication, support from home, etc.)
- ▶ What could have been done better?
- ▶ How did the team work together?
- ▶ How have you been since you got home? (e.g. any stress-related symptoms such as tiredness, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, appetite changes, nausea, irritability, difficulty coping with everyday life, poor concentration, poor memory, flashbacks, or continually thinking about that happened, sense of guilt, anger, unable to relax, difficulty making decisions, tearful, or unable to cry).
- ▶ How has it been with friends and family? Anything surprising / difficult?

- ▶ Have you had reverse culture shock? This is experienced when you return to what you expect to be home but feels different. You view things differently. You may also feel the following:
 - ▶ Boredom.
 - ▶ No one wants to listen.
 - ▶ You can't explain what happened.
 - ▶ Reverse homesickness.
 - ▶ Relationships have changed.
 - ▶ People misunderstand you.
 - ▶ Feelings of alienation.
 - ▶ Inability to apply new knowledge and skills.
 - ▶ Loss / compartmentalisation of experience.
- ▶ What are you doing to reduce stress levels (relaxing, exercise, spending time with friends/family)?
- ▶ Thinking about the future? Do you have any new goals / objectives for the next period in your life? What do you need to achieve this?
- ▶ Do you have any questions?

Appendix 7: Guidelines for pastoral visits

- ▶ Annually for first 3 years; thereafter review with apostolic team, individuals and capacity of local church.
- ▶ Clearly define rationale - pastoral care, encouragement, as part of appraisal.
- ▶ Prepare well - health, etc.
- ▶ Read about the culture, etc.
- ▶ Give plenty of time - not just a weekend flying visit.
- ▶ Go to listen - a lot.
- ▶ Don't judge.
- ▶ Don't be a drain on hosts:
 - ▶ Consider using a hotel.
 - ▶ Avoid busy seasons including festivals/conferences etc.
 - ▶ Don't put undue financial pressure on hosts (e.g. tourist attractions can be expensive if on a local budget).
 - ▶ Don't go exhausted.
- ▶ Be an encourager .
- ▶ Treat them to dinner - the whole family too!
- ▶ Take some presents for adults and children.
- ▶ Bring news from home.
- ▶ Go ready to share from the Word - privately and publicly.
- ▶ Consider taking link person or someone else who is developing a call to the nations.
- ▶ Pray with them and for them.

See also 'Global Connections Good Practice Guide - 10.1 Church visits to mission partners'.

This Standard of Care resource should be used alongside the five stages of Cross-Cultural Mission resources also published by Commission, shown below (available as a single printed booklet or separate interactive PDF forms):



For more information or questions, please email:
office@commission.global

As a family of churches, Commission aims to send and support overseas workers with excellence.

This Standard of Care booklet outlines how we seek to do this, providing good practice guidelines and signposting to other key resources and organisations.

Written after consultation with many long-term overseas workers, and those with years of sending experience, this Standard of Care is a must read for any Commission church leader or individual/couple/family preparing to live overseas under the care of a Commission church.



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