

Issue 38: April 2022

Benchmarking bonanza

Ear for yourself

## Welcome

Welcome to our new-look Expat Academy Round-Up ("EAR") where we bring you a handy summary of all that we've heard from our Networks in the past week or two.

## Round-Up

The Easter holidays sees a short break from our regular events but the Benchmarking service, on the other hand, has never been busier!

Here we give you a round-up of the challenges members have been keen to share with each other in the last seven days and patterns that we have seen in Q1 of this year.



## Intro

This update gives you real-time intel on what's occurring this week in super-charged Global Mobility circles. It's purpose is to help inform your decision making on technical issues. Consign it to the bottom of your inbox and you'll be left behind.

## Benchmarking Activity

### Past Week

There have been seven active benchmarking questions over the last week, six of which remain open for your shared knowledge and expertise.

The latest queries are largely concerned with GM policy and technology solutions - and also some of the challenges that come with a changed Global Mobility, such as the topic of remote working.

### Remote working restrictions in China and India

One member has been advised by her Tax department that remote working is prohibited in China and India due to aggressive tax regimes in both countries. The business and APAC HR are pushing back on these

stipulations. Other members concede with this position, adding that currency controls also create significant work for corporate tax teams. As a result, the policy is often no remote working in these locations with no exceptions or for critical business reasons only. Where remote working is permitted, it is important to understand set up: Those with a reporting presence in India are able to run payroll and tax returns with recovery from UK payroll for employee taxes. Other considerations are recharge and a usual 10% mark up to remote working location, plus ensuring you work with Tax to understand ALL additional costs including the position on tax deductibility of payroll costs. For China, the restrictions are data security related too, requiring security briefings with the individual and a suggested pool laptop to make remote working possible. Lower salary scales in China and India also make it necessary to ensure remote working does not give rise to any employment law issues.

### Other Challenges

- Reimbursement of covid testing costs during home leave
- Flexible wording around home and host based approaches

## How to Connect with Benchmarking

In order to keep your finger on the pulse and the latest hot topics, please make sure your benchmarking notifications are switched **ON** in your Expat Academy portal account.

If you are the designated benchmarker for your company, you will be notified via email as each new member question is submitted and will be invited to share your knowledge and expertise. If you participate in the question (always anonymously), then you will be notified again when the collated results are available for viewing.

To switch on email and push notifications for benchmarking, go to <https://members.expat-academy.com/my-account/settings>

ALL licenced members can ask a benchmarking question of their own and also view our extensive library of past questions. Click [HERE](#) to access.

Sharing is crucial for the ongoing success of this service so please start TODAY by answering some of the open questions listed on page 1. Share [HERE](#).



-Right to work check technology

- STAs - per diem policy and management of host country model

For full questions and to provide input, click [HERE](#)

### Key Learnings from Q1

As we look back further to Q1, the benchmarking service has seen 53 diverse questions.

As with Brexit and the pandemic, it has proved to be an excellent tool for helping members navigate significant and often unforeseen challenges for Global Mobility.

The first of many urgent questions on the Ukraine crisis was submitted on 27 January, so let's start here with key learnings from everything you have asked and shared:

### Ukraine and Russia

-Questions started with evacuation planning, policy support for local hires in both Russia and Ukraine and work

with Global Security teams.

-On compensation, support is offered in the way of cash allowances and advances. Some organisations are currently paying their Russian inbound assignees via their home country payroll. Others have permanently or temporarily repatriated their assignees. Some local assignees are changing bank accounts if they are experiencing difficulties receiving salary.

-An immigration question on visa applications in the UK under The Ukraine Family Scheme suggested that GM teams would initiate their immigration providers if necessary or use the free service being offered by some providers.

### Technology Solutions

- Increasing interest in business tracker tools and duty of care obligations post-COVID. Also in working from anywhere technology. Integration of GM with HR and travel systems continues to be discussed for

the purpose of achieving a positive and complete employee experience. Allow 3-6 months for integration.

### Policy

-Allow average processing time for STAs end to end of 3 months.

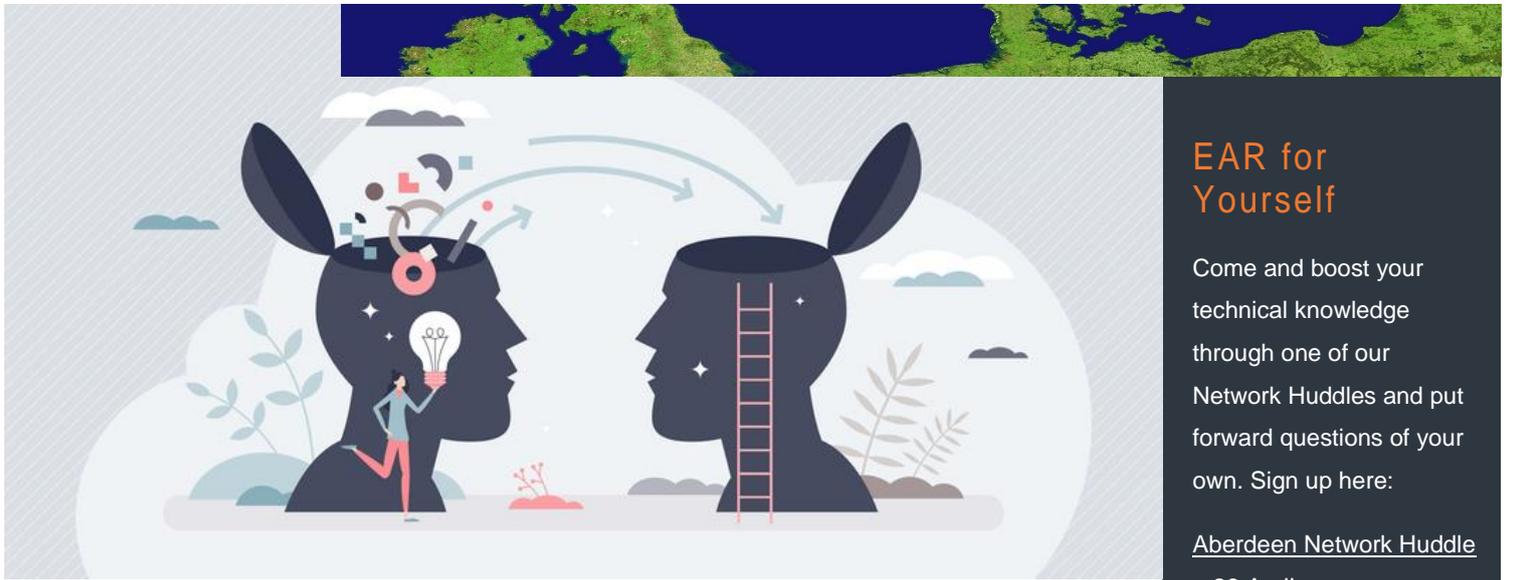
-Majority do not support travel for visa renewals unless the application cannot be done in country.

-Huge variation in clawback policy for company funded visas (first 12 months or sliding scale etc) and policy on funding cost of dependant visas for ILR.

-Relo allowance not typically provided to interns.

-Temp accommodation usually 30-90 days depending if permanent transfer or LTA. Sometimes extended due to current shipping delays.

-The majority do not support travel for visa renewals unless the application cannot be done



in country.

-US skills levy typically not clawed back from leavers.

-Whilst there isn't a standard amount or policy around disturbance allowance, most organisations are supporting assignees with such a payment in the first month's salary in the new location. The alternative is using the RMC to process payment in advance.

-Most respondents pay relocation allowance via payroll. The remainder ask a vendor to pay it on their behalf.

### Tax

The majority of respondents do offer tax equalisation. The remainder offer tax protection or the "assignees" are on a host policy, paid a host salary and therefore pay tax themselves. For all those that tax equalise assignees they do not exclude the Middle Eastern countries or those locations with no tax.

### Remote Workers

Whilst organisations differ slightly in the support given, the main difference is that less or

no support is given if remote working in another location is an employee driven request. Some or full support is given for business driven requirements to work in another location.

### Post-Brexit

-Post-Brexit changes for STAs relate primarily to immigration, social security, business travel and health cover.

-Many are implementing business travel tech as the immigration compliance rules are too complex and varied between countries to manage in-house. Some are also looking at pre-travel assessments. The rate of business travel is still limited, partly due to slow speed in processing visa applications. Communications have been stepped up to educate stakeholders and business travellers on what to expect.

### Employee Experience

Members have plenty of low cost ideas for maximising the employee experience:

Mentoring, global assignee intranet, FOCUS, living abroad relocation centre, security risk assessment, extra mental health care, home leave, regular check points, networking groups, assignee webinars, flexible benefits, family budget vs partner support allowance.

### Talent Drain

-Due to concern about losing talent from certain locations, some organisations are stipulating 12 month minimum periods in a position before applying for another role or increasing notice periods

-A number of organisations have seen an increase in requests to move out of Hong Kong - particularly short term moves / remote work abroad rather than transfers. No policy in place to manage this yet, but a little more leniency is applied around remote work limits.

## EAR for Yourself

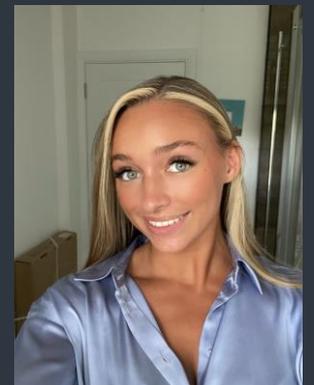
Come and boost your technical knowledge through one of our Network Huddles and put forward questions of your own. Sign up here:

[Aberdeen Network Huddle](#)  
– 26 April

[US Network Virtual Huddle](#)  
– 11 May

[European Super Huddle](#) –  
23 May

## Contributor



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