

BFG Rebasing Bulletin



Transition to Life in Germany

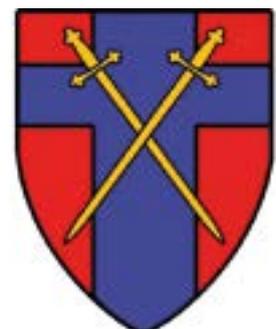
In this edition of the Rebasing (RB) and Drawdown (DD) bulletin we will focus on transitioning to life in Germany, for those looking to remain in Germany post drawdown of BFG in September 2019. We aim to provide you with advice and information, signpost available resources that are here to help you, and provide some top tips from Service Leavers who have already made the jump to living and working in Germany.

In developing this bulletin, we have collaborated with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to produce this edition as they offer support for all resettlement activity. They have a team based in Germany until March 2019 who have already helped numerous Service Leavers settle in Germany. The support they can offer ranges from helping you network, putting together your CV and applying for work here in Germany. We have also included a CTP checklist which you may find helpful.

Settling in Germany is still a big step and uncertainty remains as to how this may be impacted by BREXIT. However, we really hope this guide will kick start a very successful journey if you decide to remain here after BFG closes.

All that remains is for me to wish you the best of luck.

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Robin



Graeme

The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) put us in touch with a couple of Service leavers who have settled here in Germany. We asked them to share their thoughts on the process and provide you with some top tips.

Robin served as a WO1 in the RLC. He left the Army in September 2014 and now works as the Director of Supply Chain Performance Management.

Graeme served for 17 years in the REME and left as an Artificer Vehicles SSgt. He left the Army in January 2018 and works as a vehicle emissions and fuel economy test engineer.

Do you have any 'Top tips' for those looking to transition to work in Germany?

Robin: Get organised! Brush up on your language skills and ask for help if you're unsure of anything - there are lots of resources available to you. I was in permanent contact with my CTP consultant whose support was fantastic.

Graeme: I would say start early, understand what you want to do and where you want to live as these two factors are arguably the most important, but might not necessarily match. Make sure that you are realistic both in terms of what you are experienced at and what you would like to do. Finally, although the English language is very important your fluency in it cannot be your only selling point - your qualifications, experience and ability to do this in German is absolutely key to living and working in Germany.

What advice would you give anyone going through the process of leaving? What made it easier for you?

Robin: There are lots of things to think about - write a list. The CTP, HIVE and BFG office have loads of helpful information - ask them for their list, so you know you haven't forgotten anything.

Graeme: I ran my resettlement like a full on project, with a requirement, objective and a full Gantt chart. Whilst I am not saying this is critical, I certainly think this helped to guide me through the transition.

What has surprised you most about working in the German economy?

Robin: Being in the Army for a long time, small things like booking annual leave in advance is still a novelty. People usually start work a lot earlier and finish earlier. Do not be surprised if some things that are taken for granted in the military, are just not developed in a small or even medium sized company yet. Finally, the employee benefits are fantastic!!!

Graeme: The Germans are very process orientated and committed to what they do. The use of mobile phones for private calls is not

expected during work time. Work times are strict (professional), a total of 45 min break in a day is normal, but if you work late this can usually be taken as 'time off in lieu'. But, don't worry Germans are actually a lot like us, you can have a laugh and a joke at work and they do have a sense of humour.

Is there anything you would like to share about the process of finding housing and getting your car sorted?

Robin: If you are not fixed on where you want to live, it might be worth renting at first, because this significantly widens your scope for employment. I found myself re-organising many of my insurances, because it can be much cheaper when you are no longer in a 'dangerous' job. If you buy a house, you will also need to choose your utility providers and sort out property taxes with your local council.

Graeme: Knowing that Germany and Osnabrück would be our family's future we decided to purchase a house there and move the children into local schools. It meant that I already had one foot in Germany well before submitting my Notice to Terminate (NTT). This made the process far less daunting for me.

How are the language differences? Was this better or worse than you expected?

Robin: I am a native German speaker but I must say that the business terminology is still hard. I bought a book called 'Einführung in die allgemeine Betriebswirtschaftslehre' (Introduction to General Business Administration). It was really helpful.

Graeme: An employer might not necessarily understand what the VHS B1, B2 courses are and they will really judge your skills during the interview. Your ability to converse in the language may be more important than a certificate and therefore I would recommend that you seek out any opportunity for work experiences. I would also say don't sweat the language too much, there will be new words to learn, but Germans are always keen to speak English and you will genuinely have to ask them to correct you.

Is there any training that you did that you found particularly valuable?

Robin: The German CV writing training - it really focused me for my transition to life in Germany.

Was there any financial aspects that you found difficult to arrange - tax, medical insurance, pensions etc.? Any top tips?

Robin: Medical insurance. Research the various providers for the right one for you. Having to do a tax return was a novelty. You will need to do this every year, especially if you are in receipt of an immediate pension, and you will pay more German tax because of it; it's called "Progressionsvorbehalt". I would recommend employing a "Steuerberater" (tax advisor), who can help you claim any money back, advise you which forms you need, and show you how to fill them out.

Graeme: Your German health insurance may want proof that you have been insured previously (in Germany nobody is allowed to be "uninsured"), but they may not understand that with the NHS we don't have insurance. A letter from the medical chain may be needed just to officially state that you have been covered by the NHS prior to discharge. Make sure you ask for your full medical and dental documents or they will automatically be sent to the NHS!

Do you have any tips for job hunting, networking and developing your CV?

Robin: Start applying for jobs early - 6 months before you are available to work. Save the online job advert to your computer - if you are asked for an interview, they have often already taken the advert down. If you have a LinkedIn page, remember to make sure it matches your CV.

Graeme: Download job apps or pin job openings to your phone and make sure you read the adverts. This will help you pick out key words, which you can use to build the vocabulary and will help to fix in your head the title and name of jobs that you are interested in. Take time to understand the job market in your area. I have been really surprised at how many jobs there are for mechanical engineers with English skills.





Your German CV ("Bewerbung/Lebenslauf")

A sharp well written CV can be the difference between being invited to interview or being resigned to the 'polite decline' pile. CV's, covering letters and application processes are markedly different to the UK. For the majority of roles in Germany you will need a German CV (Lebenslauf). A Bewerbung or Bewerbungsmappe (Application) may consist of some or all of the following parts:

- Anschreiben – Covering Letter
- Deckblatt – Front Cover
- Lebenslauf – Tabellarischer (Personal data sheet) or 40/50+ (dependant on age, experience etc.)
- Anlagen – Includes Berufszeugnisse (Certificates), Qualifikationen (Qualifications) etc.

Start putting this together early and use the resources available to you such as a 1 day workshop or German Lebenslauf review service.



CTP/Resettlement

The CTP are the official provider of Armed Forces resettlement. In Germany, the CTP is equipped to assist service leavers transition to life in Germany and work on the German economy. The advisors have successfully supported around 100 service personnel annually. From networking opportunities, employer events and German CV courses, the Resettlement Centre in Sennelager will be an invaluable resource to you.

Contact the Resettlement Centre on email: rcgermany@ctp.org.uk or call **0049 (0) 5254 9825448** or check out their Transition Guides - www.ctp.org.uk/resettlement-guides/living+%26+working+in+germany-421603

The Resettlement Centre in Sennelager will close in March 2019, after which advice will be available from the overseas Resettlement Centre based in the UK.



Language Training

When moving to another country where English is not the first language, learning the native language should be your number one priority! Your language skills will not only determine what job you can get, but also whether you can get a job that you will enjoy.

41 AEC is on hand to help you ensure that your German language skills do not let you down. Not only do they run a whole plethora of internal courses, they also have an expert language advisor who will assist you identify the right training to meet your individual goals.

The Autumn Course Brochure is out now with individual tutoring or group lessons on offer – www.bfgnet.de/bfg-noticeboard/aec-autumn-2018-brochure.html

To enrol or for more information, please email the Language Coordinator at: 41AECGP-LANGUAGECOORD@mod.uk

Checklist



LANGUAGES. Make sure that your language skills do not prevent you from reaching your potential – brush up on your German.



HOUSING. You will no longer be entitled to SFA. Work out where you want to be based and start to look for somewhere to live (immobilienmakler / local paper) - www.immoscount.de



JOB SEARCH. Start Job Research & Networking – make sure you have strategy, tactics and are armed with information to help you secure employment.



YOUR CV. Create your German CV and covering letters (Lebenslauf, Bewerbung, Bewerbungsmappe, Anschreiben).



REGISTRATION. Register with your local community at the Registry Office (Anmelden). You will need your passport, biometric photo, address and proof of discharge (Einwohnermeldeamt).



TAX NUMBER. Obtain your Tax Number (Steueridentifikationsnummer). This is a legal requirement to work in Germany.



SOCIAL SECURITY CARD. Obtain your social security card (Sozialversicherungsausweis). This is also a legal requirement to work in Germany.



MILITARY AUTHORITY FOR LOCAL RELEASE. You will need to initiate your authority for local release with your Unit Admin Office (SIBFG 3211 Annex A).



LOCAL JOB CENTRE. Register and arrange an interview with the local job centre (Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA)).



DEREGISTER AND REGISTER YOUR MOTOR VEHICLE. BFG/Strassenverkehrsamt.



ARRANGE HEALTH INSURANCE. It is a legal requirement to be medically insured (Krankenkasse).



ACCREDIT UK QUALIFICATIONS. Consider whether any of your UK (or overseas) qualifications are recognised and if not, do you need to seek accreditation.



SCHOOLING. Register your children with local schools.



PETS. If you own dogs, please ensure that they are registered with your local Stadt.



Networking Opportunities

What better way to practise your language skills than at a "Kaffeeklatsch" (Coffee and Chat) hosted monthly by 41 AEC at Löseke Community Centre. Meetings always run from 1400-1600hrs on a Saturday. Take a mug and cake will be provided!

Dates for next meetings are:

- 22nd September 2018
- 13th October 2018
- 17th November 2018
- 18th December 2018

To book email: 41AECGP-LANGUAGECOORD@mod.uk



- DEUTSCH-ENGLISCHER CLUB/ANGLO-GERMAN CLUB PADERBORN E.V.
- For more than fifty years, the Club has been a close link between British and German culture in Paderborn. The Club comprises of 270 members; approximately a third of them are British nationals. To find out more and for a full programme of the upcoming events visit dec-paderborn.de.
- Events coming up include:
 - Wednesday 19th September 2018 at 1830hrs in Large Conference Room, Old City Hall – British Consul General, Mr Rafe Courage speaks on future partnership with the UK and the EU.
 - Friday 28th September 2018 at 1600hrs in the Diözesanmuseum, Paderborn. This is a Guided Tour through the exhibition "Gotik" (Gothic).
 - Tuesday 9th October 2018 at 1600hrs. Visit of the German testing laboratory for hunting and sports weapons (DEVA) in Altenbeken-Buke, followed by a get together at the restaurant "Rodizio" (An der B64 1, Altenbeken).



To register for events and find out more email info@dec-paderborn.de



Housing

Service Family Accommodation (SFA) will not be available to you after you have left the Army, so you will need to establish a private family residence. It is advisable to start searching for accommodation at the earliest opportunity. If, due to the length of residual service remaining, you need to return to the UK, but have less than 6 months to serve you will not be entitled to SFA. This means that your family must either rent accommodation in the UK or establish private accommodation in Germany.

In Germany, renting is fairly commonplace. It is much more common to rent flats rather than houses in Germany. As in the UK, property can be found via the internet, in newspapers or through an estate agent. A deposit of 2-4 month's rent is normally required.

It is advisable to speak to an expert, either at your local bank or a local estate agent.



Vehicles

By law you must de-register your vehicle from the BFG system prior to discharge and re-register either in the UK (DVLA) or Germany. Your local station VLO will be able to advise you of the steps that you need to take.

In addition, two Service leavers who have settled in Germany have put together some guidance on registering their cars. This is based on their own experiences. It is guidance only and should not be considered as legal advice - www.ctp.org.uk/assets/document/491145



BREXIT

The UK leaves the European Union (EU) on 29th March 2019 and this will have an impact on those British Passport holders wishing to continue to live in Germany. The UK government has reached an agreement with the EU on citizens' rights. This agreement will allow UK nationals to stay in their Member State of residence after the UK leaves the EU. In March 2018 an agreement was made with the Commission on the terms of a time-limited implementation period. This means that all UK nationals lawfully residing in an EU Member State on 31st December 2020 will be covered by the citizens' rights agreement.

Post 31st December 2020 you will require a residence document (SIBFG 3211 gives clear direction for non-EEA pers) to live in Germany. For up to date information go to: www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-germany and sign up for regular emails.



Accrediting Qualifications

Whilst your UK (or overseas) educational qualifications (Degrees and school qualifications) will be recognised and accredited in Germany, to find out about accreditation of any vocational qualifications that you have, you will need to arrange a meeting with the Anerkennungsstelle, IHK or Handwerkskammer. Each individual case is very different and a decision will depend on a diverse set of factors.

For Paderborn and Bielefeld areas go to:

<https://www.ostwestfalen.ihk.de/bildung/berufsbildung-international/auslaendische-abschluesse/>

The Federal Recognition website is also a useful source:

https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/professional_recognition.php



Job Fairs

Job fairs can be extremely helpful in finding employment. The CTP run events for German employers, so make sure you do not miss the opportunities on offer. For tips on how to prepare and make the most of your job fair attendance visit: www.ctp.org.uk/events

Your CTP consultant will be able to assist you with more information.



Finance & Pensions

You will be required to fill in a yearly tax return. To assist with this a good tax / pensions advisor might be money well spent. You can expect to pay approx. € 80 per hour.

Make sure that you inform your banks of changes to your circumstances including any change of address.

FIND OUT MORE:

www.ctp.org.uk

www.ctp.org.uk/resettlement-guides/living+%26+working+in+germany-421603

www.howtogermaany.com

www.make-it-in-germany.com

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk

www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-for-british-nationals-travelling-and-living-in-europe

www.aff.org.uk/contact/

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We are keen to hear your feedback.

Please send comments to scs@bfgnet.info