

Diversity & inclusion: Policy design

Diversity refers to characteristics that differentiate individuals and groups from each other. In global mobility policy design, encompassing diversity means having greater flexibility to respond to individual needs.

DIVERSITY CHARACTERISTICS

Diversity typically refers to characteristics such as gender, age, religion, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and marital/family status. But it can also include culture, socio-economic background, language, and neurodiversity. Hence, it encompasses a very wide range of differences.

Global mobility professionals should modify existing policy approaches or design new policies to align with organisational diversity and inclusion objectives. Policy design must foster equity.

RECOGNISING INDIVIDUALITY

No one wishes to feel that they are an exception. Policy should therefore operate in such a way that individuals and their families are able to make use of the support available to them as far as possible without having to draw attention to their own personal circumstances. Hence, flexibility is important as it can help cater for a range of diverse needs.

As everyone will have different characteristics and family situations and their assignments may differ in duration, location and pattern, there is potentially

an argument for individual tailoring of allowances and benefits. This is likely to be time consuming though and may potentially generate unintended inequity in treatment.

STRUCTURED POLICY APPROACHES

Another option is to devise a suite of structured policies – but with flexibility in choice of benefits – that can cater for a range of assignments and individual situations.

Structured approaches are helpful because they can maintain organisational culture and provide transparency to aid communication. Flexibility within a structured framework provides opportunities to enhance business objectives in the deployment of diverse talent while improving employee experience and organisational branding.

GUIDELINE APPROACHES

Having broad policy guidelines provides an alternative approach. This is likely to enable even greater flexibility. Care must be taken though to ensure that there is still transparency and equity in outcomes. As with structured policies, effective administration and communication are needed to ensure implementation meets the desired objectives.

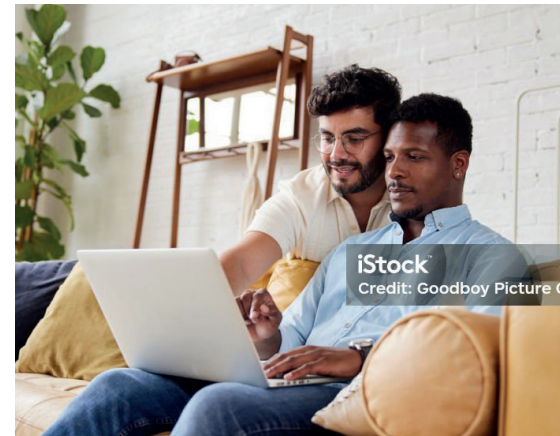
Guidelines must ensure direction so that employees know what do, for instance how they should take up and use support services. Without this, productivity can fall as assignees try to manage unfamiliar processes by themselves.

POLICY SUGGESTIONS

One key area that can make a big difference is the use of language. This should not be gendered nor make assumptions about the nature of the family. For example, the term partner

support rather than spousal support should be used. It is important to consider whether the language used will support a single parent, not just a more traditional family group.

The provision of support elements should be sufficiently flexible to address different needs. For example, it is important that housing is suitable for access by less mobile employees and their family members. Additional reunification flights may be necessary if assignees are separated from family members (such as aged parents) or partners due to legal issues (for instance, same sex couples if their relationship is not recognised in the host country).



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