

The EuRApean

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MEMBER FOCUS

Quintessential Relocation, Channel Islands CEO Jo Stoddart



Jo Stoddart, Founder & CEO
Quintessential Relocation

Relocating to the UK, or establishing a business in Britain is relatively straightforward. Yet for those with a spirit of adventure, there is still the opportunity to try something a little different. To find a location that is spectacularly unique. Somewhere that offers a quality of life so far removed from rush hour that you have to pinch yourself on a daily basis. A thriving, entrepreneur-friendly business environment respected the world over. I'm talking about the beautiful Channel Islands – essentially British, but with a distinctly exotic flavour of the continent.

The Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey are thriving jurisdictions set in the Bay of St Malo in the English Channel, approximately 70 miles south of England and just a few miles away from France. The French and English battled for control of the islands for centuries but they are now independent jurisdictions with allegiance to the British Crown. Known as "Crown Dependencies", the Channel Islands rely upon the UK for matters of foreign affairs and defence but have their own democratically elected parliaments, make their own laws, set their own budgets and their own levels of taxation.

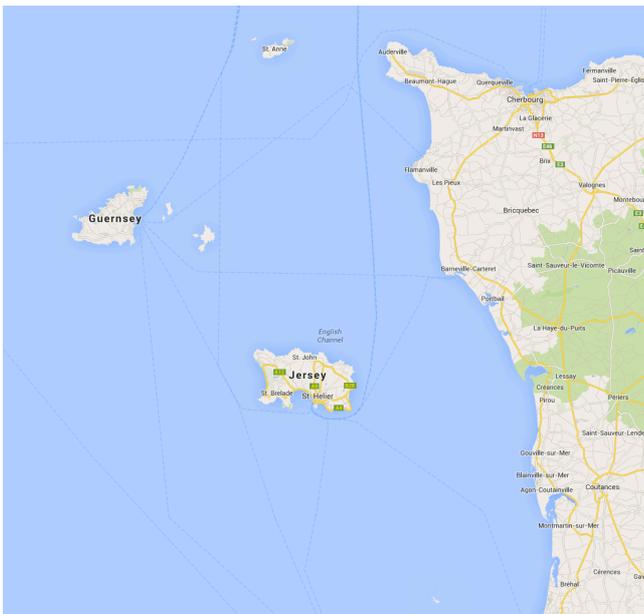
Jersey and Guernsey offer beautiful countryside, stunning coastlines and, courtesy of the Gulf Stream, a mild climate. The greatest attraction however, is the quality of life and favourable work-life balance enjoyed by residents. Offering a dynamic and well-regulated environment in which to do business, Finance is the main industry on both islands and many assignees relocate to fill high-powered "city" style jobs. Newcomers quickly realize that the islands are not only attractive places to work with a lower rate of income tax than the UK, but they also offer interesting employment opportunities without the stress of commuting or inner-city living. The islands have retained a wonderful community spirit, provide an excellent education system and offer a safe and nurturing environment in which to raise children. In addition to the Finance Industry, the islands are becoming more involved in Green technology, Data Centres, e-commerce and Intellectual Property. Guernsey recently launched the world's first Image Rights Register and is also the home of optical giant, Specsavers.

Quintessential Relocation Consultants (QRC) was founded in May 2010 by Jo Stoddart who

spotted a gap in the market to assist newcomers to the islands. Working in estate agency on both islands and having lived through international relocation herself, Jo was ideally placed to assist other in-coming residents and help them to navigate their way through local rules and regulations to find the right homes and schools and to make new lives for themselves on the islands.

Jersey's housing laws changed quite significantly in July 2013 and although the rules are simpler than they used to be, the majority of in-coming assignees still need to be granted a housing licence permitting them to live and work on the island. Licence holders now have a greater choice of properties than they would have had, but the licence is critical. That said, some larger firms are now permitted to hire a limited number of "registered" residents for whom the rules are slightly different – they don't need a licence but they have fewer properties to choose from. HNW residents have to make an application for residency and fulfil certain criteria before being granted right of abode on the island, but anyone bringing in a

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new business is welcomed with open arms.

Guernsey operates a two-tier housing system and the vast majority of in-coming assignees will be given a housing licence permitting them to live in “Local Market” accommodation. However, there are strict rules and regulations about which properties can be occupied and for how long the assignee will be allowed to stay on the island. For those companies not able to obtain a housing licence, there is the option for staff to be housed on the “Open Market”, although this will be considerably more expensive than on the Local Market. Residency as a HNWI in Guernsey is very straightforward and provided that an in-coming resident would qualify for right of abode in the UK, the simple fact of buying or renting an Open Market property will give them the right to live and work on the island. In-coming residents who are looking at bringing a business to Guernsey are also very welcome, especially if they are likely to be creating jobs for local people.

Due to their relatively small sizes (Jersey is 45 square miles and Guernsey 24 square miles), strict controls exist to manage population growth and this can be a bit baffling for assignees

and RMCs alike! One of our clients succinctly summed it up when she said “you don’t know what you need to know”. She had really appreciated our assistance because there were so many things she wouldn’t have thought about had we not been there to

guide her. On both islands, the system of Housing Licences exist to ensure that any in-coming assignee does not take a job which could have been filled by a local person.

Employers are therefore required to advertise jobs locally to prove that there is no-one currently available on the islands to fill the role and then to apply for a licence to bring in a suitably qualified and experienced worker to do the job.

QRC is the only Member of the ARP and EuRA operating in the Channel Islands. With offices and staff on each island, we are truly a pan-island business. All our client-facing team has lived through international relocation and between us we speak French, Afrikaans, Flemish, Dutch and German. We are passionate about what we do and having been on the other side of the fence, we have special empathy with our clients because we really **do** understand what they are going through.

We were very proud to be nominated for the ARP’s Destination Service Provider of the Year Award as well as the Property Finder of the Year Award in September 2013 and place a great deal of importance on training and CPD. Jo has

reached ERQ3 and is one of the first graduates of the new MIM qualification. Liesl Esterhuizen (Guernsey office) and Helen Hart (Jersey office) are part-way through the MIM qualification with Annie Killian (Jersey office) and Kirstie Trudgeon (Guernsey office) both receiving in-house MIM training.

We are currently working on a short presentation about the housing rules in Jersey and Guernsey, focussing on questions RMCs need to be asking their assignees when offering programmes here. Both Jo and Helen will be at the EuRA Conference in Edinburgh in April 2014 and would be delighted to meet with anyone interested in learning more about the Channel Islands.

If we have piqued your interest in the Channel Islands, or you require specialist, expert assistance with relocating to this very special part of the world, please get in contact with us – we’d love to help!

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