

Offshore relocations
Moving to Guernsey



Ogier

Guernsey is a fantastic example of island life and community.

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Moving to Guernsey

A beautiful and secure island, Guernsey offers an ideal base for relocating families, individuals and businesses.

More and more, people are relocating to Guernsey for its high quality of lifestyle, healthcare and education, strong and reliable travel links, its thriving entrepreneurial culture, an availability of quality property, and its straightforward route to residency.

Of course, the traditional arguments for moving to the island - unspoilt beaches, sunshine, great restaurants, golf courses and favourable tax rates - also still hold true.

The process of moving offshore needs specialist advice, which is why our relocation teams are called in to assist on the residency process, wealth structuring, and buying property – and are able to guide clients to trusted contacts in the property, tax and banking fields for expert, bespoke advice.

In recent years, the island has reformed tax arrangements for high-net-worth individuals, making them more attractive to wealthy newcomers.

Our specialist relocation team in Guernsey has seen an increase in enquiries both from businesses and families – partly driven by the establishment of government agencies to market the island as a relocation destination – who are looking for a base to operate from or a new home. While favourable tax rates are a factor, the deciding reasons often relate to island life and everything it offers.

In addition to the traditional market of retirees, Guernsey is drawing more and more entrepreneurs and people with young families. These relocators are lured by a combination of the lifestyle and sports on offer, the friendly and secure environment, and the infrastructure for travel, health and education services.

Ogier's specialist relocation teams offer a discreet, knowledgeable and proactive service to navigate the unfamiliar process of moving offshore, delivering a bespoke outcome that fulfils and surpasses our clients' expectations.



[Guernsey is] a rock of hospitality and freedom.
Victor Hugo



Figures from Locate Guernsey show that in 2022, 33 individuals and 13 businesses relocated to Guernsey. Locate Guernsey also received 273 relocations in that year with 1558 enquiries to date.*

** These figures have been provided by Locate Guernsey and relate solely to those who interacted with Locate Guernsey. The figures do not represent all relocators to Guernsey in the noted period.*



Martyn Baudains is “Mr Property” in Guernsey. If he doesn’t know something, it doesn’t exist. A very reliable and thorough legal expert, but with savvy local non-legal market knowledge. Legal 500 UK, 2023



About Guernsey

The largest of the islands making up the Bailiwick of Guernsey, located 27 miles from France.

The ability to be at home or on the beach within minutes of leaving work, the absence of capital gains or inheritance taxes, and an enviable work-life balance are still key drivers for inward investment and decisions by high-net-worth individuals.

But the reasons why the relocation shortlist is often whittled down to Guernsey go much further than tax and lifestyle.

What makes Guernsey an attractive community environment?

- The island's travel and transport links enable residents to get to some parts of the UK quicker than they could from London
- Some of the highest fibre-optic broadband connection rates on the planet underpin an emerging digital sector
- Guernsey has top-class education and health services and a very low crime rate
- An exceptionally high quality of professional services, including some of the world's leading banks, financial institutions and law firms, offering the same quality of advice and professionalism you would expect from the top London institutions

A huge and often decisive factor in decisions by high net-worth individuals is finding the perfect home.

The local legal sector have long-established connections with professionals in the island's property sector. Providing a range of services to domestic and international clients relating to the purchase and ownership of Guernsey property assets, the Ogier team expertly guides clients through every step of the process.

Many clients also spend substantial sums on developing and renovating Guernsey properties. Our specialist relocation team assists and advises on the negotiation and appointment of designers, architects and other professionals and offer guidance through a planning system that can be particularly complex where older properties are concerned.



Guernsey is home to many first-class restaurants, sports facilities, a thriving music and arts scene and a theatre, meaning there is lots of things to do, to keep busy.



Guernsey is only 24 square miles but is a global player in the insurance, banking, law, private wealth and fund management sectors.



The Bailiwick of Guernsey also includes small neighbouring islands of Sark, Herm and Alderney, which are all a short ferry trip away.



The education system in Guernsey has an excellent reputation. Children follow the GCSE and A-Level curriculum, and also have access to first-class private education through its three independent colleges.

Why businesses choose Guernsey

Guernsey offers a geographically convenient business centre close to many of the major European cities, but also a safe and friendly place in which to live.

- Guernsey is self-governing and has its own system of taxation and a long-standing, fair and competitive tax regime that meets OECD standards of transparency and information exchange
- Guernsey has a favourable personal and corporate tax regime with no capital gains, inheritance or value-added taxes
- Companies generally pay tax at 0% although financial services companies pay tax at 10% and utility companies at 20%
- Economic and political stability
- Guernsey has a government which is willing and keen to encourage inward investment and business relocation
- Proximity to London and an ability to deal with New York and Hong Kong in the same business day
- Ability to demonstrate real substance in the jurisdiction
- Modern and flexible legislation
- Good supply of infrastructure resources including office space and support services
- Skilled local workforce
- The personal tax rate is a flat 20%, after deduction of personal allowances and reliefs – note there is the ability for those with high incomes to cap their liability. Additionally there is a special regime for those who are resident in Guernsey, but not solely or principally resident, where a single annual standard charge of £40,000 is paid. These residency definitions relate chiefly to the number of days spent in Guernsey during a tax year of charge and, in many cases, during a number of preceding years



Very approachable,
is quick to understand
our requirements and
responds to queries in
a timely, practical and
professional manner.
Legal 500 UK, 2022





A world-class commercial environment
in a relaxed, safe, holiday location –
what more could you ask for?





Establishing a Guernsey workforce

Guernsey law requires everyone working on the island to have a valid resident's certificate or employment permit to show they are lawfully housed.

If businesses intend to employ nationals of countries outside the European Union/European Economic Area, then a work permit or other immigration clearances may be required for those people. This is distinct from the residential certificates or employment permits issued by the States' Population Management Office. Work permits in Guernsey are issued by the Guernsey Border Agency, part of the Home Department.

While there are no controls over who can own a property in Guernsey, there are controls surrounding where an individual can live. The housing market is divided into two sectors:

- local market – where there are controls on who can live in the accommodation and for how long
- open market – where properties can generally be owned and lived in by anyone for any length of time

The Population Management Office can grant employment permits or residential certificates (as appropriate) which will enable you to recruit/employ staff from outside Guernsey, subject to any necessary immigration clearances.

In granting employment permits, the Population Management Office will first have to determine whether or not the skills sought are already available on island. At present, the vast majority of employment permits sought are granted without issue.

There are different types of employment-related permits:

- long term – granted for an initial three-year period and may be extended up to eight years
- short term – granted for up to 12 months, renewable upon expiry until a person reaches three consecutive years of residency in Guernsey
- seasonal – granted for up to nine months, followed by an obligatory three-month break away from the UK common travel area. This can continue indefinitely.

Depending on the nature of the role that requires the permit or certificate, there may be restrictions on the type and size of accommodation the holder can occupy and who can reside with them (if anyone).

From 3 April 2023, the regime has changed to allow the Border Agency and the Population Management Office to work closely together, reducing processing time and helping applications to run more smoothly. A joint policy called the "Employment Permit Policy" now covers employment and work permits. This change means permits for the same job roles are now available to all nationalities.

Establishing a business in Guernsey

Guernsey is open for business – the island has invested time and effort into making the relocation process seamless.

Foreign companies can conduct business in Guernsey and there is no requirement that a business be owned by a Guernsey company. However, many businesses do incorporate a new Guernsey company to hold or operate the business. Alternatively, it is often possible to migrate a foreign company to Guernsey through a deregistration and reregistration process.

It is often easier to relocate using an English scheme of arrangement or a straight forward share swap (where there are not many shareholders) and insert a Guernsey holding company. Ogier has expertise in all these areas and will work with your local advisers to implement such structuring.

Guernsey has many financial services industries. As an international finance centre, the island provides first-rate services in numerous fields such as banking, fund management and administration, private wealth and insurance, amongst others.

For more than 50 years, Guernsey has been one of the world's best regarded and most successful international finance centres.

Across the various industries mentioned, the jurisdiction's strong reputation is based on five key strengths:

- core services of a very high quality
- high regulatory standards and a transparent tax regime
- innovation as a hallmark of problem-solving and creating new opportunities
- Guernsey's positive relationship with the UK

Understanding the local tax system

Income tax in Guernsey is generally less than the UK, with a flat rate of only 20%. The island has no capital gains, inheritance, value added or withholding taxes.



An individual who is resident in Guernsey may qualify for a tax cap of £160,000 a year in respect of worldwide income, or £320,000 a year in respect of worldwide and Guernsey-derived income.



If those relocating to Guernsey and buying an open market property during the six-month period before or after they relocate pay document duty (a form of stamp duty) of at least £50,000 – meaning they pay at least £1.5 million for an open market house – they will be entitled to a tax cap of £60,000 for their first four years of residency.

There are also a number of favourable tax allowances and the facility for those with high incomes to “cap” their liability. Guernsey uses the pound sterling which makes banking easier when moving from the UK.

The tax regime in Guernsey is different to that elsewhere. For financial matters that may be complex, involve large sums or income from a variety of sources, discussions with expert local tax advisers are recommended.

In order to determine the method of assessment of an individual liable to pay Guernsey income tax, it is necessary first to consider that individual's residential status. For tax purposes, an individual will be resident, solely resident and/or principally resident in Guernsey.

The definitions relate chiefly to the number of days spent in Guernsey during a tax year and in many cases, during a number of preceding years.

An individual who is resident but not principally resident in Guernsey can either elect to pay a standard charge of £40,000, or is liable to Guernsey income tax on their worldwide income. Special provisions are available for those who are in Guernsey solely for employment purposes.

Ogier has expertise in all these areas and will work with your local advisers to offer seamless advice.



Very responsive and took a pragmatic and commercial view focusing on essentials so as to de-escalate a potentially contentious negotiation.
Legal 500 UK, 2022



Moving your family to Guernsey

Guernsey is a great place to live and do business, where people understand the need for a good work-life balance.

With plenty of sports, leisure opportunities, and stunning cliffs perfect for sunset walks, there's plenty to do to keep busy.

Your free time doesn't have to be a rare treat. Forget motorways and long train journeys. At roughly eight miles long and three miles wide, everything in Guernsey is just a short drive or even a walk away, allowing you more time to spend with friends and family.

When nowhere is far, why not spend your evenings or lunch break on the beach soaking up the sun? Or perhaps at a waterside restaurant sampling some fresh seafood.

You're spoilt for choice in Guernsey, from the beautiful beaches of the west coast to stunning cliffs in the south and charming cobbled town streets. Ask anyone who lives here. There's a lot to see in Guernsey's 24 square miles.

Guernsey is also known for its safe and friendly environment. Crime rates are very low and, with a maximum speed limit of 35mph, road accidents are rare. Even the hedge veg tradition – where locals sell their produce on roadside stalls using an honesty box – shows what a trusting island Guernsey is.

The beauty of Guernsey isn't just in its scenery. It's in the lifestyle the island offers as well.

Whether you're enthusiastic about sports, interested in history and culture, passionate about food and drink, or just looking for somewhere quiet to relax, Guernsey is the place for you.

Contact us



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