Reimagining Duty of Care: A Legal Home for International Talent

For many global organizations, the concept of "duty of care" has traditionally been associated with emergency response protocols, security briefings, and medical evacuations. Yet, in a world where talent crosses borders more frequently and unpredictably than ever, duty of care is quietly evolving into something more foundational, closely related to legal clarity.

When employees move internationally, their employment relationship can begin to blur. Their original employment contract may be patched with addendums, shadow payrolls may emerge in parallel jurisdictions, and the question of which entity bears responsibility for the employee's ongoing safety and wellbeing, or in the event of a crisis, can become a matter of interpretation rather than fact. In such situations, companies find themselves relying not on the strength of legal structure, but on goodwill, luck, and the professionalism of their Mobility teams.

This ambiguity is often compounded by the fragmented nature of traditional expatriate administrative models, where legal employment may rest with different home country entities scattered across multiple jurisdictions, time zones, and languages. As a result, efforts to deliver a consistent and coherent approach to duty of care are hampered not by lack of intent, but by structural complexity. The response to a crisis may vary not just by region, but by which local HR team happens to hold the employment contract. This model inherently limits the organization's ability to act quickly, uniformly, and with legal confidence.

This is where the Global Employment Company model brings something uniquely valuable. By giving international assignees a single legal employer, one that is fully accountable and contractually bound to the individual, the GEC can eliminate uncertainty at the very heart of the duty of care equation. It doesn't just centralize administration; it centralizes responsibility.

When duty of care is embedded in the legal architecture, rather than layered on top of it, it becomes more resilient. A GEC can define, in black and white, what the employer owes to the employee, regardless of nationality, host location, or corporate reporting line. And when these duties are invoked, the organization can respond with coordination, rather than confusion.

This clarity can also reduce reputational risk. In the day-to-day management of the employee's wellbeing, as well as in moments of crisis, few things matter more than being seen to act responsibly and decisively. When a GEC stands

behind the assignee as the single point of legal accountability, the company is better positioned to deliver on both the ethical and practical dimensions of duty of care.

None of this removes the need for local compliance or host country support, but it reframes the way organizations think about care, not just as a moral imperative, but as a structural commitment built into the employment model itself.

The more internationally mobile the workforce becomes, the less adequate it is to rely on legacy assumptions about who the employer is and what that role entails. A GEC doesn't merely help the company deploy talent efficiently. It gives each assignee a legal home: stable, responsive, and fully responsible. That, increasingly, is what duty of care looks like.