

JUST ONE MONTH TO GO...

Organisation is key to staying sane with just a few weeks left before leaving the UK for a new life in Australia, writes **Karen Bleakley**

There's no way to sugar-coat it: the last month in the UK before you emigrate will be hectic, happy, exciting and terrifying, all at the same time.

While you're riding this emotional rollercoaster, you'll also need to scale the tallest admin mountain you've ever seen. Thankfully, the adrenaline that comes from your new life being so close will pull you over the finish line.

If I could give you one piece of advice, it would be this: buy a notebook and carry it everywhere. I'm a writer and a list-fiend, so I'm used to writing every thought down, but even my laid-back husband started sneaking his hands on my notebook to write his 'to do' list.

You'll have so much going on and this will keep you organised and sane.

GETTING READY

I felt like I spent our last month in the UK on the phone. Cancelling utilities, updating addresses and arranging final bills – there was so much to remember.

I set aside some time each day to review our outstanding actions and my husband and I took turns making calls.

The couple took turns making calls (left) and making 'to do' lists



We had to update the address of the UK bank account we were keeping open (to my parents' house) and we closed everything else down.

We also decided to keep one credit card for emergencies, so I rang them to let them know we were moving abroad. I didn't want them to put a stop on any purchases we made in Australia (as this had happened when we paid for our hire car and temporary accommodation).

A few weeks before we moved, I spoke to our new bank and told them our arrival date so they could order debit cards to be ready for collection at a city branch.

When we landed, it was a huge hassle to travel into the CBD to collect the cards as we were busy trying to buy cars and sort out a rental. Later we found out we could have arranged to have our cards sent to a branch near our temporary accommodation. This would have made our lives a lot easier, so it's definitely worth asking about this.

Our twins had been allocated a place in reception at the local school for September. Although I'd informally told them we were in the process of moving abroad, we didn't 'officially' give up the

Most of the family's belongings were shipped off a few weeks before their departure



places until we handed our keys to the estate agent on the sale day in late August.

I'd heard a horror story from somebody else who had given up their place, only for their sale to get delayed and then they had no school place for their child, so I didn't want to risk that happening.

our fingers crossed. Thankfully somebody collected it the morning before we flew out, but in hindsight leaving it so late was an added stress.

We packed a file of bills (the last two or three for each utility/credit card/bank account) so we could take it in our hand

said instead of the card, they would accept the official statement showing the purchase (a printout of an online statement wasn't good enough).

Luckily, as we'd only recently booked the flights I had this in my file. Phew – disaster averted.

Just before we moved, I printed off a couple of copies of our visa confirmation letter, although I didn't expect to need them as I knew our data was stored electronically on our passports.

It turned out taking a paper copy was essential. While the IT systems may have moved on, people haven't! We were asked to show it upon arrival at the airport and then it became a valuable source of ID when we landed and were setting up our new lives.

By the time you get to this stage, you'll probably be pretty worn out. It's best to take it one task at a time and celebrate every checklist tick. Remember that not everybody has what it takes to close down one life and begin another. But you do, and you've got this. 🇦🇺

“I SET ASIDE SOME TIME EACH DAY TO REVIEW OUR OUTSTANDING ACTIONS”

I spoke to the Inland Revenue to tell them the date I was closing down my UK business and filled in their online forms. I also organised for my outstanding tax return to be completed by my accountant as I knew I'd be too busy to think about it once we landed. As my husband was PAYE, he printed out a P85 form to complete in case he was due a tax rebate.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING!

Timing the sale of our car was tricky. If we'd sold it too early we'd have been trapped in a tiny seaside town with no transport and leaving it too late was risky in case we ran out of time to sell it.

We decided to put it on the market about 10 days before we moved and kept

luggage in case we needed to speak to any of the companies. Everything else was shipped in our container.

It proved useful as the day before we flew, we discovered we needed to bring the credit card that we'd booked the flights on to the airport. We'd thrown this away already as we'd cancelled it!

I rang the airline in panic and was told we wouldn't be able to fly unless we could prove how we'd booked the flight. They



■ Karen is a freelance travel writer and blogger. You can read about her migration journey on her family, travel and lifestyle blog at www.talesofatwinmum.com or on Twitter @TalesofaTwinMum.