

EMIGRANT INFORMATION PACK 2015



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Disclaimer: The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) is affiliated with the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, the Irish Apostolate USA and the Irish Chaplaincy in Sydney. The IECE is not affiliated with any other organisation or website mentioned in this publication and cannot be held responsible for the content or material contained within.



Introduction to the Emigrant Information Pack 2015

Although the number of people leaving Ireland remains high – 81,900 people left our shores between April 2013 and April 2014 – it appears the tide is turning and the number of people emigrating has begun to fall.

A report released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in August 2014 found that Ireland continues to experience net outward migration – albeit at a lower level than the previous year. Tens of thousands continue to depart our shores in search of fresh hope and new opportunities. In the period April 2013 to April 2014, 81,900 people emigrated from Ireland. Of these, 41,700 were Irish nationals. There has been a slight increase in the number of people immigrating to Ireland this year at 60,600 (up from 55,900 the previous year). Of these, 19.2 per cent are Irish citizens.

While this is welcome news, emigration continues to have a profound effect on Irish society as many well-educated, enthusiastic young people travel abroad in search of new opportunities. It is vital that those considering emigration are prepared for the experience. We hope that the practical information in this pack will assist emigrants in making informed decisions and support them while they are away.

This information pack also aims to make emigrants aware of the importance of taking care of their mental health. For many people, living abroad will be a very positive experience but others may struggle with feelings of isolation and find it difficult to ask for help. Drug and alcohol abuse, depression and suicide are serious issues that affect Irish communities overseas. For example, Irish charity Console reported that its British helpline receives hundreds of calls annually from Irish immigrants who were deemed to be at immediate risk of taking their own lives. We hope the information provided in this pack will help raise awareness of the supports that are available for Irish emigrants and encourage people to talk about this important issue.

While emigration remains high, each year a significant number of people also make the decision to come home. No matter how long an emigrant has been away, it is important that they plan ahead for their return. We hope this information pack will also assist those who are returning to Ireland in accessing the supports they require.

In addition to practical assistance, emigrants need spiritual and emotional support. The Council for Emigrants, through its chaplaincies overseas, continues to provide essential pastoral outreach to Irish emigrants as they strive to build a new life for themselves far from home.



Message from Bishop John Kirby

CHAIR OF THE IRISH EPISCOPAL COUNCIL FOR EMIGRANTS

Emigration continues to have a dramatic effect on our society as thousands of people travel abroad in search of new opportunities, leaving behind loved ones and creating a void in Irish families and parish communities.

As a Church and a people we must continue to reach out to those who are affected by migration. As we prepare to celebrate St Patrick's Day, we remember and pray for all Irish people overseas, those who have left our shores for the first time and those who have been away for many years.

We remember the families they have left behind and pray that they will find strength and comfort as they cope with the pain of separation. We also remember those who have travelled from foreign lands to begin new lives in Ireland. We pray that they will receive the same welcome that we would wish for our own emigrants far from home.

When discussing emigration it is easy to become bogged down with facts and figures, but we must remember the human face of migration. In his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis reminds us of this, saying, 'migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more'.

Pope Francis also highlights the importance of creating better economic and social conditions at home so that emigration will not be the only option available to people: 'The creation of opportunities for employment in the local economies will also avoid the separation of families and ensure that individuals and groups enjoy conditions of stability and serenity'. It is our hope that as the Irish economy improves there will be a focus on job creation so that those who were forced to emigrate will have the opportunity to return home.

Last year marked the ten-year anniversary of the Pontifical instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christ* (The Love of Christ towards Migrants). This document highlights the fact that nearly all countries are now affected by migration and that faced with the vast movement of people, with the phenomenon of human mobility, 'faith reminds us how we are all pilgrims on our way towards our true homeland'.

Críost linn.



John Kirby
Bishop of Clonfert
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants
March 2015

The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants

The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) was founded in 1957 and is the response of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference to the needs of emigrants prior to and following departure. It shows the caring face of the Church and is particularly committed to the needs of the vulnerable involuntary emigrant. It strives to be a significant voice on behalf of emigrants, researching the ongoing needs of Irish emigrants, and creating awareness of these needs at home and abroad.

The plight of Irish emigrants in Britain was brought to the attention of the Irish Bishops in the mid-1950s by a group of Columban priests working in Manchester. Following their appeal and the obvious need, the Irish Bishops' Conference asked that priests be released to minister to this wave of Irish emigrants. Initially the work involved celebrating the sacraments; however, over time, more and more attention was paid to the living and working conditions of these emigrants, many of whom were on the verge of destitution.

The response was formalised by the Irish Bishops' Conference in 1957 when it set up the Irish Chaplaincy Scheme in Britain. This response was replicated in the United States in the mid-1980s and again in Australia in more recent times.

The IECE is particularly concerned for those emigrants whose journey has been a difficult one. We are especially mindful of the elderly Irish emigrant community, our undocumented in the United States and Irish prisoners overseas. During the Supporting Irish Abroad (SIA) campaigns of 2004, 2005 and 2006, the donations made by many Irish people provided funding for various front-line, outreach services. Funding has been primarily focused on the most vulnerable categories of Irish emigrants. The generosity of parishioners throughout Ireland helps sustain the work of the IECE today, as we continue to highlight the longstanding problems facing generations of Irish emigrants.

THE SUPPORTING IRISH ABROAD (SIA) CAMPAIGN

I was a stranger and you welcomed me — Mt 25:35



The acronym SIA is a Gaelic word meaning 'longer' or 'farther'. The aim of the SIA campaign was to reach out to our brothers and sisters abroad through awareness, prayer and funding. The campaign was launched by Bishop Séamus Hegarty, Bishop of Derry and Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants, on 21 February 2004. The SIA campaigns of 2004, 2005 and 2006 raised much-needed funds (approximately €1.6 million), which were channelled through chaplaincies and agencies to pastoral outreaches that are always overstretched. The vast majority of this fund has now been utilised. The IECE, on behalf of those chaplaincies and agencies, owes a deep debt of gratitude to the parishes and dioceses that supported the SIA campaign and subsequent emigration collections.



Emigration Statistics

A report released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in August 2014 found that Ireland continues to experience net outward migration – albeit at a lower level than the previous year. Tens of thousands continue to depart our shores in search of fresh hope and new opportunities. In the period April 2013 and April 2014, 81,900 people emigrated from Ireland. Of these, 41,700 were Irish nationals. There has been a slight increase in the number of people immigrating to Ireland this year at 60,600 (up from 55,900 the previous year). Of these, 19.2 per cent are Irish citizens.

During this period, an estimated 17,900 people emigrated to the UK; 6,900 emigrated to the US; 24,900 emigrated to the EU; 10,000 emigrated to Australia; 4,700 emigrated to Canada; and 17,500 emigrated to the 'Rest of the World'.

CSO figures are now available regarding the economic and educational status of emigrants. It is noteworthy that 47 per cent of all emigrants aged fifteen years and over hold a third level qualification. The figures also show that the majority of our emigrants were either a student, or in employment, in the three months immediately prior to their departure.

Unsurprisingly, younger age profiles dominate emigration statistics with 41 per cent aged between fifteen and twenty-four years of age and a further 46 per cent aged between twenty-five and forty-four years of age.



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Emigrating to the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom remains the most popular destination for Irish emigrants.

VISA

One of the biggest advantages of moving to the UK is that you do not need a visa to live and work there; however, it is necessary to obtain a National Insurance number if you wish to work or claim benefits in the UK. A National Insurance number is a reference number for the whole social security system. It ensures that the National Insurance contributions and tax you pay are properly recorded.

You will need to give your National Insurance number to your employer. Call Jobcentre Plus on +44 845 600 0643 to apply for a National Insurance number. Lines are open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday.

ACCOMMODATION

One of the biggest challenges people face in moving to the UK, and to London in particular, is trying to find good accommodation at an affordable price. Landlords often request two references – a personal reference and a reference from a previous landlord. You should have these documents and a deposit ready so you can act quickly when you find a property you like. Tenants are usually required to pay a deposit of one month's rent. You should ask to see a tenancy agreement before paying out any money. It is recommended that people do not arrive in the UK with the intention of applying for social housing as it may take months just to get on a waiting list.

EMPLOYMENT

If possible, you should begin your job search before you leave for the UK. Start by sending out your CV to get an idea of the jobs available in your sector. Recruitment agencies may be useful depending on the industry. There are many recruitment websites and this can be a good place to begin your search.

HEALTH INSURANCE

If you are ordinarily resident in the UK you will be entitled to free National Health Service (NHS) hospital treatment. You are ordinarily resident in the UK if you are lawfully entitled to be in the UK and you usually live there. You will also have the right to be registered with a GP, but it is up to a GP to decide whether to accept someone onto their list of NHS patients. You may be asked to show that your stay in the UK has a degree of permanence.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Research job opportunities and begin sending out your CV;
- » Identify several areas where you may find suitable accommodation;
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Read the London Irish Centre's guide for people moving to London. It is available on their website: www.londonirishcentre.org



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Contact Jobcentre Plus to arrange an interview to get a National Insurance number;
- » Make contact with a local Irish advice service as they can assist with problems relating to housing and employment;
- » Register with employment agencies;
- » Register with a local GP;
- » Open a bank account – this may take some time if you do not have proof of address and you need to check what form of ID will be accepted by a particular bank;
- » Meet people by getting involved in a local activity like a sports team or theatre group;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

50–52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Phone: +44 20 7482 5528

Website: www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk

Irish Embassy in London

17 Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7HR

Phone: +44 20 7235 2171

Website: www.embassyofireland.co.uk

Irish in Britain

Phone: +44 20 7697 4081

Website: www.irishinbritain.org

The London Irish Centre

50–52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Phone: +44 20 7916 2222

Website: www.londonirishcentre.org

ICAP (Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy)

96 Moray Road, Finsbury Park, London N4 3LA

Phone: +44 20 7272 7906

Website: www.icap.org.uk

Mind Yourself

CAN-Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH

Phone: +44 20 7250 8100

Website: www.mind-yourself.co.uk

Console UK

Console House, First Floor, 34 Buckingham Palace Rd.
London SW1W 0RH

Phone: +44 20 7821 8865

Website: www.consolecounselling.co.uk



Emigrating to the United States of America

While the United States is a popular destination for Irish emigrants, visa restrictions make it difficult to work and live there. Irish pastoral and immigration centres continue to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform, with the aim of creating pathways to citizenship for thousands of undocumented Irish people.

VISA

Obtaining a visa is one of the most challenging parts of emigrating to the US. It is vital that you have a valid visa and only remain in the US as long as your visa permits. Working without a visa may lead to arrest, detention, deportation and a bar from reentering the US.

NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

A non-immigrant visa allows you to visit, work or study in the US for a temporary period of time. The Visa Waiver Program allows an Irish citizen to travel to the US without a non-immigrant visa provided you are travelling for business, pleasure or transit only and you are staying in the US for ninety days or less.

There are a number of non-immigrant visas available, including the following:

- » Student (F-1 Visa): a student who wishes to attend a university or other academic institution in the US requires an F-1 Visa;
- » Summer Work Travel Program (J Visa): this programme allows college students enrolled in a full-time course of study to come to the US to work and travel during their summer holidays;

- » Intern Work and Travel Program (J Visa): this programme allows Irish students and recent graduates to participate in internships and travel in the US for up to 12 months.
- » Temporary Worker (H Visa): the US does not issue work visas for casual employment. To take up a pre-arranged temporary job in the US you must get a petition-based temporary worker visa.

IMMIGRANT VISAS

If you wish to live in the US permanently you will need to obtain an immigrant visa. This applies even if you do not plan to work in the US. Usually you can only receive an immigrant visa if someone (an employer or family member) files an immigrant visa petition on your behalf. There are several categories of immigrant visa:

- » Sponsorship by an Immediate Relative: applies to a spouse of a US citizen; an unmarried child under 21 years of age of a US citizen; an orphan adopted abroad by a US citizen; an orphan to be adopted in the US by a US citizen; and a parent of a US citizen who is at least 21 years old;
- » Sponsorship by a Family Member: applies to brothers and sisters of US citizens; adult or married sons and daughters of US citizens; and a spouse of a US permanent resident;
- » Sponsorship by a Prospective Employer: this begins with the potential US employer filing a Form I-140 immigrant visa petition for the worker.



ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation can vary dramatically depending on where you are living. Big cities like New York, Chicago and Boston can be expensive. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished so you will need to include money for furniture in your budget. Many landlords will require you to pay the first month's rent and a deposit in advance.

EMPLOYMENT

When looking for a job you should contact any friends or family you have in the US. Making contact with the local Irish community is also a good way of networking. You should prepare a one-page CV (called a *résumé* in the US) specifically for the American market. Make sure your CV is simple and clear and can be understood by American employers.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Medical treatment can be very expensive in the US so it is important that you have adequate health insurance. If possible try to get a job that includes healthcare coverage. Visit www.healthcare.gov for information about insurance options.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Learn about the visa categories and apply well

in advance for the appropriate visa;

- » Contact an Irish immigrant support centre as they will be able to provide advice on visa categories and eligibility;
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » Americanise your CV and cover letter and bring proof of your qualifications.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Contact an Irish immigrant support centre in your area for advice and support;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Arrange adequate health insurance;
- » Open a bank account – you may be asked for two forms of identification, proof of address and your Social Security number;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Support & Assistance

Irish Apostolate USA

Email: administrator@usairish.org

Website: www.usairish.org

Irish Embassy in Washington

2234 Massachusetts Ave NW,

Washington DC 20008

Phone: +1 202 462 3939

Website: www.embassyofireland.org

US Embassy in Dublin

42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Phone: +353 1 668 8777

Website: www.dublin.usembassy.gov

Irish Immigration Centres

Irish Pastoral Centre Boston

15 Rita Road, Dorchester, MA 02124

Phone: +1 617 265 5300

Website: www.ipcboston.org

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

4626 N. Knox Avenue, Suite 301,

Chicago, IL 60630

Phone: +1 773 282 8445

Website: www.ci-is.org

Irish Immigration Pastoral Center San Francisco

5340 Geary Blvd, Suite 206,

San Francisco, CA 94121

Phone: +1 415 752 6006

Website: www.sfiipc.org

Aisling Irish Community Center, New York

990 McLean Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704

Phone: +1 914 237 5121

Website: www.aislingcenter.org

Irish Outreach San Diego

2725 Congress Street, Suite 2G,

San Diego, CA 92110

Phone: +1 619 291 1630

Website: www.irishoutreachsd.org

Seattle Irish Immigration Support Group

Phone: +1 425 244 5147

E-mail: SIISG@IrishClub.org

Website: www.irishseattle.com

Irish Immigrant Service of Milwaukee

2133 W. Wisconsin Ave,

Milwaukee, WI 53233-1910

Phone: +1 414 345 8800

Website: www.ichc.net

Irish International Immigrant Center

100 Franklin Street, Suite LL-1,

Boston, MA 02110

Phone: +1 617 542 7654

Website: www.iiicenter.org

Emerald Isle Immigration Center

59–26 Woodside Avenue, Woodside,

NY 11377

Phone: +1 718 478 5502

Website: www.eiic.org

New York Irish Center

10–40 Jackson Avenue,

Long Island City, NY 11101

Phone: +1 718 482 0909

Website: www.newyorkirishcenter.org

Irish Immigration Center of Philadelphia

7 South Cedar Lane, Upper Darby, PA 19082

Phone: +1 610 789 6355

Website: www.icphila.org

Irish Student Outreach Center

3314 Coastal Highway,

Ocean City, MD 21842

Phone: +1 410 520 0344



Emigrating to Australia

Despite a decrease in the number of people who emigrated to Australia last year, it remains one of the most popular destinations for Irish emigrants.

VISA

You will need to apply for a visa before leaving for Australia. The Working Holiday visa is a popular option. This visa allows people between the ages of eighteen and thirty to spend up to twelve months travelling and working in Australia. The primary purpose of this visa is to travel so you can only work with each employer for a maximum of six months. This visa can be extended for another year if you have worked in regional Australia for three months on your first Working Holiday visa.

If you plan to apply for a second Working Holiday visa you are advised to do your three months in regional Australia as soon as possible after arriving. If you delay this you may not be able to fulfil the three-month requirement in time. You should also be sure to renew your travel insurance for your second year in Australia.

Another option is to apply for an Employer Sponsored visa. This can be a temporary or permanent visa. The temporary 457 visa allows employers to hire overseas workers to fill skilled positions in Australia. This visa is valid for up to four years.

It is extremely important that you maintain your legal status at all times during your stay in Australia.

ACCOMMODATION

The cost of accommodation may vary but can be high in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne. When

you sign a lease you may be asked to pay the first month's rent and a rental bond which will be around four to six weeks' rent. Apartments are often rented unfurnished so you will need to include money for furniture in your budget. Landlords often request two character references, a letter from a previous landlord, photo identification, a letter confirming you have an Australian bank account and proof of employment. You should have these documents and a deposit ready so you can act quickly when you find a property you like.

EMPLOYMENT

If possible, you should begin searching for jobs online before you leave. Update your CV (called a résumé in Australia) so it is appropriate for the Australian market. When you arrive you should apply for your Tax File Number (TFN) as you will need to provide this to your employer. Visit www.ato.gov.au for more information about applying for your TFN.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Australia has a reciprocal healthcare agreement with Ireland which allows Irish residents visiting Australia to use the public health system for immediately necessary treatment during their stay. This includes any ill-health or injury that occurs while in Australia and requires treatment before you return home. This agreement does not cover those in Australia on a student visa.

There are many expenses that won't be covered by the reciprocal health agreement so you should also invest in private health insurance. For more information about the healthcare system in Australia visit www.humanservices.gov.au

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » If using a migration agent, look for one registered with the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA);
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Research job opportunities and start applying for jobs online;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » If you are emigrating with children, research school fees as these can be quite high;

- » Update your CV so it is suitable for the Australian market and bring proof of your qualifications.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Register with recruitment agencies;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Arrange adequate health insurance;
- » Open a bank account – you should bring your Tax File Number and identification. Usually if you open a bank account within six weeks of your arrival you only need your passport as identification;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Support & Assistance

Irish Chaplaincy Australia

Rev. Gerard Moran
Parish of St Patrick's, 2 Wellington Street, Bondi,
NSW 2026
Phone: +61 2 936 51195

Irish Embassy in Canberra

20 Arkana St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600, Australia.
Phone: +61 2 6214 0000
Website: www.embassyofireland.au.com

Consulate General of Ireland in Sydney

Level 26, 1 Market Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: +61 2 92649635
Website: www.irishconsulatesydney.net

Australian Embassy in Ireland

7th Floor, Fitzwilton House,
Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2
Phone: +353 1 664 5300
Website: www.ireland.embassy.gov.au

Australian High Commission in London

(which handles visa services for Irish residents)
Australia House, Strand,
London WC2B 4LA, UK
Phone: +44 207 379 4334
Website: www.uk.embassy.gov.au

LINK IRISH AUSTRALIA

Brisbane – Irish Australian Support Association of Qld Inc.

5 Abingdon Street, Woolloongabba QLD 4102
Phone: +61 7 3391 1300
(After Hours: +61 432 087 328)
Website: www.iasaq.com.au

Sydney – Irish Australian Welfare Bureau and Resource Centre NSW Inc.

2 Wellington Street, Bondi NSW 2026,
P.O. Box 346, Bondi 2026
Phone: +61 2 9300 8019
Website: www.iawb.org.au

Melbourne – Australian Irish Welfare Bureau

440 A High Street (Cnr Langwells Parade),
Northcote 3070
Phone: +61 3 9482 3865
(After Hours: +61 407 317 539)
Email: aiwbmel@iinet.net.au

Perth – The Claddagh Association Inc.

Phone: +61 8 9344 7204
(After Hours: +61 403 972 265)
Website: www.claddagh.org.au



Emigrating to New Zealand

With a mild climate and relatively low cost of living, New Zealand has become another popular destination for Irish emigrants.

VISA

There are a number of visas available which will allow you to live and work in New Zealand. The Working Holiday visa is available to Irish citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty and allows you to travel and work in New Zealand for twelve months. You must have a minimum of NZ\$4,200 to meet your living costs while you're there.

Temporary Work visas are available for people who have a job offer from a New Zealand employer or are skilled in occupations that are in demand. There are several visa options available for people who want to live in New Zealand permanently. The Skilled Migrant Category offers the opportunity to move permanently to people who have the skills, qualifications and experience New Zealand needs. If you're aiming for residency and your talents are needed by New Zealand employers, you can apply under the Work to Residence category.

For more information about applying for a visa, visit the Immigration New Zealand website at www.immigration.govt.nz

ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation will vary widely depending on where you are living. You will be asked to pay a bond of up to four weeks' rent. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished so you will need to include money for furniture in your budget.

EMPLOYMENT

Immigration New Zealand has an Immediate Skill Shortage List and a Long-Term Skill Shortage List, which show the occupations that are given priority for visas. When you arrive in New Zealand you should register with local recruitment agencies and search for jobs online. You will need to register with Inland Revenue and obtain an IRD (Inland Revenue Department) number. Visit www.ird.govt.nz for information about applying for an IRD number.

HEALTH INSURANCE

In New Zealand, publicly-funded healthcare is available to citizens, residents and work-permit holders who have been issued with a work permit for a minimum of two years. Visitors to New Zealand must pay for health services unless they are needed as a result of an accident. For more information visit www.health.govt.nz

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Research job opportunities and start applying for jobs online;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » Update your CV so it is suitable for the New Zealand market and bring proof of your qualifications.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Register with recruitment agencies;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Arrange adequate health insurance;
- » Open a bank account – you will need photo identification and proof of address. Some banks will allow you to open an account before you arrive in New Zealand;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

New Zealand High Commission in London

New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket,
London SW1Y 4TQ

Phone: +44 20 7930 8422

Website: www.nzembassy.com/uk

Honorary Consul General in Auckland

Phone: +64 9 977 2252

Email: consul@ireland.co.nz

Auckland Irish Society

Website: www.aucklandirish.co.nz

Wellington Irish Society

Website: www.wellingtonirishsociety.com

Christchurch Irish Society

Website: www.christchurchirishsociety.co.nz



Emigrating to Canada

Canada is now a very popular destination for Irish emigrants and the quota for participants in the 2014 International Experience Canada (IEC) programme is 10,700.

VISA

A large number of Irish people travel and work in Canada through the International Experience Canada (IEC) initiative. This allows people between the ages of eighteen and thirty five to travel and work in Canada for up to two years. To be eligible to participate in this working holiday programme you must have medical insurance for the duration of your stay and have C\$2,500 to help cover expenses at the beginning of your stay.

If you have at least twelve months full-time skilled work experience in Canada you can apply for the Canadian Experience Class visa. Under the Family Sponsorship Program, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor certain relatives.

It is extremely important that you maintain your legal status during your time in Canada. If you are planning to stay in Canada long term, you may need to apply for your next visa long before your current visa expires. If you are found without a valid visa you risk deportation and the possibility of having an exclusion order made against you.

ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation can vary depending on where you are in Canada. The cost of living in Toronto and Vancouver is very high. Apartments are generally rented unfurnished so you will need to include a budget for furniture when you first arrive. Tenants will usually be asked for references and you may also be asked for employment and income details.

EMPLOYMENT

While people tend to gravitate towards the bigger cities in Canada, it is worth considering employment opportunities in other parts of the country. The provinces have their own immigration programmes for people who want to stay long term. Examining these programmes may give you a good idea of the jobs that are available in different provinces. You will need to prepare a Canadian-style résumé.

HEALTH INSURANCE

All Canadian citizens and permanent residents are eligible for public health insurance. Each province has its own health insurance plan and in some provinces temporary workers may also be eligible for healthcare coverage. To find information about healthcare in Canada visit www.hc-sc.gc.ca

WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU GO

- » Research job opportunities in all provinces, not just in the bigger cities;
- » Update your CV so it is suitable for the Canadian market and bring proof of your qualifications;
- » Arrange temporary health cover;
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits;
- » Bring several forms of identification – passport, driving licence, birth certificate;
- » Bring references from previous employers and landlords;
- » Consult www.moving2canada.com for advice on visas, finding accommodation and employment, obtaining your Social Insurance number and opening a bank account.



WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations;
- » Contact the Irish Canadian Immigration Centre for help and advice;
- » Research health insurance options and arrange private health insurance if necessary;
- » Apply for your Social Insurance number;
- » Open a bank account – you may need to present proof of identity, proof of address and your Social Insurance number;
- » Register with your local parish and ask if there are other Irish people in the area.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Irish Embassy in Ottawa

Embassy of Ireland, Suite 1105 (11th Floor),
130 Albert St, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5G4
Phone: +1 613 233 6281
Website: www.embassyofireland.ca

Irish Canadian Immigration Centre

Phone: + 1 416 603 9549
Website: www.irishcdn.org

Canadian Embassy in Ireland

7–8 Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2
Phone: +353 1 234 4000
Website: www.canada.ie

Canadian High Commission in London

(which handles visa services for Irish residents)
Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London SW1Y 5BJ
Phone: +44 207 004 6000
Website: www.unitedkingdom.gc.ca



Emigrating to the United Arab Emirates

The UAE offers a high standard of living and the chance to earn a tax-free income, making it an increasingly popular destination for Irish emigrants.

VISA

Irish passport holders will be granted a 'visit' visa on arrival in the UAE. This visa is valid for thirty days but can be renewed once for a fee. As a visitor you should have a valid return ticket and a passport which is valid for a minimum period of six months.

To work in the UAE you will need to be sponsored by an employer who will obtain work and residence permits for you. The work permit will be issued for the duration of your job contract. The Department of Foreign Affairs advises that if you are planning to reside in the UAE you should get all relevant Irish documents attested at the Consular Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs before you travel.

ACCOMMODATION & EMPLOYMENT

It is important to be aware that in the UAE it is against the law to live with or share a hotel room with someone of the opposite sex to whom you are not married or closely related. Business is done through English so language is not a barrier to employment. As in all Muslim countries, Friday is a day of rest so the working week is Sunday to Thursday.

HEALTH INSURANCE

There is no free healthcare for foreigners in the UAE so you will need to obtain travel insurance which will cover all medical expenses. If possible, try to get a job that includes medical insurance. Some prescribed and over-the-counter medicines available in Ireland are controlled substances in the UAE and you will require prior permission from the UAE Ministry of Health to bring these medications into the UAE. A list of restricted and controlled

drugs can be viewed at www.uaeinteract.com/travel/drug.asp

It is recommended that visitors contact the UAE Ministry of Health drug control department to check whether their medication is on the list of controlled medicines.

LOCAL LAWS & CUSTOMS

It is very important to respect local laws and customs at all times in the UAE. Public displays of affection such as kissing and holding hands are considered disrespectful and may lead to a police caution or arrest. There is a zero tolerance approach to drink driving, and while alcohol is served in licensed hotels and clubs, it is a punishable offence to drink or be drunk in public. There are also serious penalties for possession of drugs and the presence of drugs in the body constitutes possession. The non-payment of bills and fraud (which includes writing a cheque that bounces) are also serious offences which can result in imprisonment or a fine.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Irish Embassy in Abu Dhabi

1 and 2 Khalifa Al Suwaidi Development,
19th Street (off 32nd Street), Al Bateen, Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates
Phone: +971 2 4958200
Website: www.embassyofireland.ae

Abu Dhabi Irish Society

Website: www.irishsocietyabudhabi.com

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Ireland

45–47 Pembroke Road, Dublin 4
Phone: +353 1 660 0000
Website: www.uae-embassy.ie

Irish Business Network Dubai

Website: www.irishbusinessnetwork.me

Emigrating to Europe

Irish citizens can live and work in most EU member states without a visa. These countries are: Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands, the UK, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta. EU citizens can also

work in Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Iceland and Norway. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows EU citizens to access public healthcare services in member countries. Applications for the EHIC are processed through Local Health Offices in Ireland. Forms can be downloaded from www.citizensinformation.ie

USEFUL CONTACTS

Contact Numbers of Irish Embassies Throughout Europe

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Czech Republic (Prague) . . . | +420257011280 | Greece (Athens) | +302107232771 |
| Poland (Warsaw) | +48228496633 | Spain (Madrid) | +34914364093 |
| Slovakia (Bratislava) | +421232338700 | Portugal (Lisbon) | +351213308200 |
| Bulgaria (Sofia) | +35929853425 | Italy (Rome) | +39065852381 |
| Romania (Bucharest) | +40213102131 | Malta | +35621334744 |
| Denmark (Copenhagen) . . . | +4535473200 | Slovenia | +38613008970 |
| Estonia | +3726811888 | Belgium | +3222823400 |
| Finland (Helsinki). | +35896824240 | Luxembourg | +352450610 |
| Hungary | +3613014960 | Netherlands (The Hague) . . | +31703630993 |
| Latvia (Riga) | +37167039370 | France (Paris) | +33144176700 |
| Lithuania (Vilnius) | +37052629460 | Germany (Berlin) | +4930220720 |
| Sweden (Stockholm) | +46854504040 | Austria (Vienna). | +4317154246 |
| Cyprus (Nicosia) | +35722818183 | | |

Emigrating from Northern Ireland

This section provides additional information for those who are emigrating from Northern Ireland and hold British passports.

EMIGRATING TO THE UNITED STATES

The Visa Waiver Program allows a British citizen to travel to the US without a non-immigrant visa provided you are travelling for business, pleasure or transit only and you are staying in the US for ninety days or less.

There are a number of non-immigrant visas available for British citizens, including the following:

- » Exchange Visitor (J-1 Visa): anyone wishing to take up prearranged employment, training or research in the US under an officially approved programme must obtain a J-1 Visa. There are several exchange visitor programmes available, including summer employment programmes, intern programmes for university students and au-pair programmes;
- » Student (F-1 Visa): a student who wishes to attend a university or other academic institution in the US requires an F-1 Visa;
- » Temporary Worker (H Visa): the US does not issue work visas for casual employment and, in general, work visas are based on a specific offer of employment.

If you wish to live in the US permanently you will need to obtain an immigrant visa. As of 1 February 2013, all individuals who are issued immigrant visas at the US Embassy in London must pay a \$165 Immigrant Fee before travelling to the US. There are several categories of immigrant visa:

- » Immediate Relative Visa: applies to the spouse, parent, step-parent, child and step-child under the age of 21, of a US citizen and the spouse of a deceased US citizen;
- » Family-Based Visa: applies to brothers and

sisters of US citizens; adult or married sons and daughters of US citizens; and a spouse of a US permanent resident;

- » Employment-Based Visa: there are five categories – (1) priority workers; (2) members of 'the professions' and persons with exceptional ability in the sciences, arts and business; (3) professionals; (4) special immigrants, including religious workers; and (5) investors.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Consulate General of the United States in Belfast

Danesfort House, 223 Stranmillis Road, Belfast, BT9 5GR

Phone (from within the UK): 020-3608-6998

Website: <http://belfast.usconsulate.gov/index.html>

US Embassy in London

24 Grosvenor Square, London W1A 2LQ

Phone: +44 20 7499 9000

Website: <http://london.usembassy.gov>

British Embassy in Washington

3100 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20008

Phone: +1 202 588 6500

Website: <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/>

British Consulate General in Boston

1 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02142

Phone: +1 617 245 4500

British Consulate General in New York

845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022

Phone: + 1 212 745 0200

British Consulate General in Chicago

625 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 2200, Chicago IL 60611

Phone: +1 312 970 3800

Phone: +1 312 970 3800

EMIGRATING TO AUSTRALIA

The Working Holiday visa allows British citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty to spend up to twelve months travelling and working in Australia. The primary purpose of this visa is to travel so you can only work with each employer for a maximum of six months. This visa can be extended for another year if you have worked in regional Australia for three months on your first Working Holiday visa.

Another option is to apply for an Employer Sponsored visa. This can be a temporary or permanent visa. The Temporary 457 visa allows employers to hire overseas workers to fill skilled positions in Australia. This visa is valid for up to four years.

Australia and the UK have a reciprocal healthcare agreement and UK residents visiting Australia are entitled to the following health or injury treatments:

(1) free treatment as a public in-patient or outpatient in a public hospital; (2) subsidised medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS); and (3) Medicare benefits for out-of-hospital treatment provided by a doctor. If you are in Australia on a student visa from the UK you will be covered by Medicare.

EMIGRATING TO NEW ZEALAND

A Working Holiday visa is available to British citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty. Applicants can select either a twelve month or twenty-three month stay in New Zealand. To be eligible you must be permanently living in the UK, have a British passport that is valid for at least three months after your planned departure from New Zealand, and meet certain health and character requirements.

Temporary Work visas are available for people who have a job offer from a New Zealand employer or are skilled in occupations that are in demand. There are several visa options available for people who want to live in New Zealand permanently. The Skilled Migrant Category offers the opportunity to move permanently to people who have skills, qualifications and experience New Zealand needs. If you're aiming for residency and your talents are needed by New Zealand employers you can apply under the Work to Residence category.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Australian High Commission in London

Australia House, Strand, London WC2B 4LA

Phone: +44 207 379 4334

Website: www.uk.embassy.gov.au

British High Commission in Canberra

130 Commonwealth Avenue, Canberra, ACT 2600

Phone: +61 2 6270 6666

Website: www.ukinaustralia.fco.gov.uk/en/

British Consulate General in Sydney

Level 16, Gateway Building, 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney, NSW 2000

Phone: +61 2 9247 7521

British Consulate in Perth

Level 12, 251 Adelaide Terrace, Perth, WA 6000

Phone: +61 8 9224 4700

British Consulate General in Melbourne

17th Floor, 90 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria

Phone: +61 3 9652 1600

British Consulate in Brisbane

Level 9, 100 Eagle Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

Phone: +61 7 3223 3200

USEFUL CONTACTS

New Zealand High Commission in London

New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ

Phone: +44 20 7930 8422

Website: <http://www.nzembassy.com/uk>

British High Commission in Wellington

44 Hill Street, Wellington 6011

Phone: +64 4 924 2888 (This number is not for passport or visa enquiries)

Website: www.ukinnewzealand.fco.gov.uk/en/

British Consulate General in Auckland

Level 17, 151 Queen Street, Auckland 1010

Phone: +64 9 303 2973

EMIGRATING TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

British passport holders will be granted a 'visit' visa on arrival in the UAE. This visa is valid for thirty days but can be renewed for a fee. As a visitor you should have a valid return ticket and a passport which is valid for a minimum period of six months. Holders of British Overseas Citizens Passports who do not have the right of abode in the UK will need a visa to enter the UAE. To work in the UAE you will need to be sponsored by an employer who will obtain work and residence permits for you.

EMIGRATING TO CANADA

British citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty are eligible for the International Experience Canada (IEC) programme. This allows people to travel and work in Canada for up to twelve months. To be eligible to participate in this working holiday programme you must be a citizen of the United Kingdom and be able to demonstrate habitual residency in the UK for at least three years directly prior to your application. You must also have medical insurance for the duration of your stay and have C\$2,500 to help cover expenses at the beginning of your stay. If you have at least twelve months full-time skilled work experience in Canada you can apply for the Canadian Experience Class visa. Under the Family Sponsorship Program, Canadian citizens and permanent residents can sponsor certain relatives.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in London

30 Prince's Gate, London SW7 1PT
Phone: +44 20 7581 1281
Website: www.uae-embassy.ae/uk

British Embassy in Abu Dhabi

22 Khalid bin Al Waleed Street,
PO Box 248, Abu Dhabi
Phone: +971 2 610 1100
Website: www.ukinuae.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/ourembassy/our-embassy-abu-dhabi/

British Embassy in Dubai

Al Seef Street, PO Box 65, Dubai
Phone: +971 4 309 4444
Website: www.ukinuae.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/ourembassy/our-embassy-dubai/

USEFUL CONTACTS

Canadian High Commission in London

Canada House, Trafalgar Square,
London SW1Y 5BJ UK
Phone: +44 207 258 6699
Website: www.unitedkingdom.gc.ca

British High Commission in Canada

80 Elgin Street, Ottawa ON K1P 5K7
Phone: +1 613 237 1530
Website: www.ukincanada.fco.gov.uk/en/

British Consulate General in Vancouver

1111 Melville Street, Suite 800, Vancouver, British Columbia V6E 3V6
Phone: +1 604 683 4421

British Consulate General in Toronto

777 Bay Street, Suite 2800, Toronto,
Ontario M5G 2C8
Phone: +1 416 593 1290

British Consulate General in Montreal

2000 McGill College Avenue, Suite 1940,
Montreal, Quebec H3A 3H3
Phone: +1 514 866 5863

British Consulate General in Calgary

3000-150 6 Ave SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 3Y7
Phone: +1 403 705 1755



Waves of Emigration

A wave is usually understood as involving energy and motion, whether this is waving a hand, to signify hello or goodbye; the movement of water carrying boats across the sea; airwaves, bringing messages between loved ones. Emigration is usually described in terms of waves. There are push and pull factors. It involves energy and motion. Ireland is currently experiencing such a wave but it is not the first.

Emigration from Ireland to Britain and beyond was established before the Great Famine. People left Ireland seeking work in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s, and numbers reached a peak in the 1850s. Almost a century ago, in the turbulent period surrounding the 1916 Easter Rising, the Irish economy performed poorly, a period that coincided with more restrictive immigration regulations in the US, the wave of emigration from Ireland to Britain gathered momentum. Stagnation in Ireland resulted in the labour force not growing from Independence to 1950, a period during which one million people emigrated. In the 1930s and during and after the Second World War, Irish labour was actively recruited by government agencies and private employers in Britain. During the Second World War the Ministry for Labour issued permits to Irish workers who were required for civilian work. The emigrant outflow during the war years was very high, a reflection of both depressed conditions at home and buoyant demand for labour in Britain.

Following the Second World War, reconstruction provided a strong pull factor, with plentiful demand in the building sector. In Ireland inheritance patterns were a strong push factor, as were lack of opportunities for marriage. Post-war Britain ushered in the development of a comprehensive welfare state, a National Health Service (NHS), free education, 'cradle-to-the-grave' social security and made inroads into improving the housing infrastructure. The welfare state and the National Health Service (NHS) and its infrastructure provided ample work for Irish men, while Irish women obtained work in the service and healthcare sectors. The National Motorways Programme of the mid-1950s and the power station programme of the 1960s also provided work. Britain was the most heavily urbanized country in the western world. In 1958 nearly fifty thousand citizens emigrated from Ireland. In 1961 Ireland had its lowest ever recorded population of 2.8 million.

Throughout the late 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, Irish women were recruited through large advertisements in Irish newspapers to train as nurses. They were needed during the war and afterwards to work in the National Health Service. While in Ireland most hospitals demanded a fee from young women to train as nurses, British hospitals did not and they also paid a small salary. While in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Irish female emigrants found jobs in domestic service and factories, after the Second World War Irish women were found in banks, nursing and clerical environments and by the 1980s they worked across wider occupations. The Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) submission to the 1951 Commission on Emigration expressed concern with the status of women workers: '...our members are emphatic that loss of social standing is involved in entering domestic service in Ireland, but menial work may be undertaken in England without such loss'. In the late 1950s an estimated fifteen thousand Irish migrants – mostly women – worked



Waves of Emigration

in hotels, clubs and cafes in the West End. The 1951 Census of England and Wales shows that over a quarter of all economically active Irish females were 'persons engaged in personal service', domestic servants, cleaners, and waitresses. A sixth of Irish born women in England and Wales in 1951 were professional: mostly nurses and midwives. The post-war wave of emigrants tended to be poorly skilled, with low levels of education and lack of preparation, money, resources and access to accommodation and information.

The 1980s ushered in another wave of emigration. Years of borrowing and spending in the 1970s, along with a second oil price crisis in 1979, led to economic problems developing in 1980s Ireland. National debt rocketed whilst the number of people at work remained relatively static despite a huge growth in the labour market caused by the 1960s baby boom. Increased unemployment was followed by increased emigration. Over two hundred thousand (net) left Ireland in the 1980s, with the majority leaving in the latter part of the decade. More males than females emigrated in the 1980s because of the construction downturn and the increasing integration of women into the Irish labour force. The majority were aged between fifteen and twenty four and were better educated than previous generations of emigrants; emigration reached a peak in 1989 with seventy thousand leaving. Irish people continued to emigrate during the Celtic Tiger era. And in the latest economic downturn a new wave gained force and energy.

Dr Patricia Kennedy, author of Irish Migrant Welfare in Britain since 1957 (Irish Academic Press).

Take Care

GOOD TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

In 2014 the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas launched an information campaign, 'Good to Know Before You Go', to encourage young Irish emigrants to take care of themselves and each other while travelling and living overseas.

This campaign was in response to the current wave of emigration and an increase in the number of Irish prisoners in certain jurisdictions. It emphasised the importance of being aware of cultural differences and of adhering to local laws and customs, while also raising awareness of the services of ICPO so that emigrants who get into difficulty are aware of the supports available.

The campaign consisted of a brief video and snappy, often humorous messages and images which were developed particularly for social media. Launching the campaign in the departures area of terminal two in Dublin Airport, Bishop John Kirby, Bishop of Clonfert and chair of the Irish Bishops' Council for Emigrants, said, 'The Catholic Church is committed to supporting the pastoral needs of our people abroad. Since the 1950s Irish chaplaincies, and since 1985 the ICPO, have reached out to our emigrants in need of help, and who find themselves voiceless: often vulnerable, isolated and alone.'

The 'Good to Know Before You Go' materials and other resources are available on the ICPO website at www.icpo.ie.





Coming Home

THE YEAR OF RETURNEES

This is the year of returnees; at least that is what many are saying. The Government is encouraging people to come home as there are jobs on offer and there is a definite skills shortage in some sectors. We've had increased emigration since 2009. The first phase is the strange excitement of going. It is a strange feeling because there is an underlying and unarticulated sense of loss but a person never knows how that loss will affect them until they leave. This occurs in the midst of feelings of excitement and opportunity.

The interim years since 2009 have been the 'ping-pong' years, with those who have left popping back and forth for holidays, celebrations, funerals and on occasion even just to surprise family members. For some the 'ping-pong' is over and settlement is definitely in the new land with its new opportunities. Maybe emigrants have met someone they want to spend their life with or they are just enjoying themselves too much to consider permanent return. For some they might want to be in Ireland but it is just too hard as there are no perceived opportunities in their field of work or study. As a result they linger away from home.

RETURNING

For others they hear the more optimistic tones and see a gradual growth in what are considered to be important economic indicators. The time away has taught them what is important. They have a greater understanding of what they love and what they cherish. Based on these instincts the decision is made and they are either coming home, or are considering the option. Research tells us that while departure is difficult returning can be infinitely more difficult for all involved. It is probably made all the more difficult by the presupposition that it's just a matter of slipping back into the flow of things. Remember the one who returns has changed at many levels. The experience of living in a new place radically alters one's view on things. What they believe, how they perceive, think, and feel, can be very different. Remember when Jesus went to his home place; he met with strange reactions. People were not ready to acknowledge him for who he was and they rejected Him (Mk 6:1-6).

CHANGES

Within the family unit occasions of huge emotional preparation and heightened farewells with bursts of emotion are sometimes easier to deal with than the constant humdrum routine of the every day. Coming home for a few weeks is vastly different to coming home for good. Things may have changed on other fronts while a person was overseas; you at home may have changed as well! And there is always the issue of the other siblings looking on from the side-line seeing the great fuss being made of the returnee. They have their thoughts, views and feelings on what is happening as well. And of course there may be a new significant other who is returning or planning to visit in the near future.



‘MIGRATORY MOURNING’

These short observations show underlying changes that may present difficulties. Return, like a lot of change, has to be negotiated. There is delight but there is also a degree of anxiety. This is all part of the process that can be collectively called ‘migratory mourning’. When I wrote about this in the Generation Emigration section of *The Irish Times* on 19 November I was surprised by the response. The comments alone showed the multi-faceted dimensions of ‘migratory mourning’. While the focus was on the emigrant, a lot of the comments were from people like parents and siblings who were left behind or from those who had already returned. They were strong heartfelt comments. Mourning or grief is as much about change and adaption as it is about loss. It can be as much about place and atmosphere as about people. With all these issues in the mix it is quite clear that returning is never just a matter of fitting in to the old ways; this approach is sure to cause conflict and damage relationships.

ADVICE

Furthermore a person may not realise how much they have changed until they come back. When they return they see, hear, sense and feel things differently. It is only when they begin to reengage with life here that they begin to realise how much they have changed. This experience can be quite startling in itself. Feeling that they are strangers in a place they once felt totally at home in can be very unsettling. There is no real advice or instruction pack for this transition. In fact a lot of ‘packs’ that deal with migration have reduced themselves to the lowest common denominator which is information; they keep the emotion out of it because they don’t understand it, perceive it, or they just prefer to ignore it.

The only advice one can give is don’t try to get back to the way things were. It’ll only cause heart-break. From a practical point of view make sure the returnee brings back as much paper work as possible. Bills, tenancy agreements, tax receipt forms, phone bills, driving licenses with former names and addresses on them. If you want to feel like a total nobody present yourself at a desk where you hope to receive an entitlement. If you have little proof as to where you have been or what you have achieved for the last few years to back up your claims it feels as though you don’t exist.

Fr Alan Hilliard, Board member of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants.

Coming Home

CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT

Crosscare Migrant Project is one of the programmes of Crosscare, the social support agency of the Dublin Archdiocese. Initially established in 1987 as Emigrant Advice. We are funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Emigrant Support Programme to work with intending, existing and returning Irish emigrants. We provide information, advocacy and referral services through our drop in centre, phone and email services, website, and publications. Our service is open to anyone, but we pay particular attention to supporting those who are marginalised or in vulnerable situations.

While there are many things to consider when thinking about returning home, here is some practical information based on many of the most common queries we receive in relation to returning to Ireland.

PPS NUMBER

If you previously lived and worked in Ireland, you may have an Irish Personal Public Service (PPS) number. This number is made up of seven digits and one or two letters (i.e. 1234567 AB) and is the Irish equivalent of a Social Security Number in the USA or a National Insurance Number in the UK. To check if you have a PPS number, contact Client Identity Services by calling +353 71 967 2616 (or 1890 927999 if you are calling from Ireland). You will be asked a number of questions to verify your identity, such as your full name, date of birth, mother's maiden name and your last Irish address. If you do not have a PPS number, once you are living in Ireland you will need to apply for one by going to your local PPSN registration centre, bringing with you your long form birth certificate, photographic ID and proof of your current Irish address.

HOUSING


Start looking for accommodation before you return to Ireland. If you are thinking of renting privately or of buying a home on your return, the websites www.daft.ie or www.myhome.ie will be useful in your search. Most landlords will require the first month's rent and a deposit equivalent to one month's rent up front. If your rent is under a designated limit, it may be possible for you to get state assistance in the form of Rent Supplement, however you will need to satisfy the habitual residence condition (see below under 'Social Welfare Assistance') among other requirements to qualify.

Once home, you may be eligible to apply for social housing from the local authority. This will depend on your individual circumstances. It is important to be aware that there is a shortage of local authority housing so if you are eligible it may be a long period of time before you are granted social housing.

If you are over 56 years old living abroad in private rented accommodation or social housing and you are thinking of coming home, you could contact the Safe Home Programme. Based in County Mayo, it is a national organisation working to assist older Irish-born emigrants to return to Ireland and secure housing in the voluntary sector. See their website www.safehomeireland.com or contact them by phone (+353 98 36036) or email (safehomeireland@eircom.net) for further details.

SOCIAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE

Social welfare payments in Ireland are broadly split into two categories – 'benefits' and 'allowances'. Benefits are contribution-based payments granted on social insurance contributions you made in Ireland in the past.



Allowances are means-tested payments designed for people who do not have sufficient social insurance contributions to qualify for a benefit payment.

One of the first places that you should call to on your return if you do not have the means to financially support yourself is your local social welfare office. Be aware, however, that there is not an automatic entitlement to access social welfare assistance in Ireland on your return.

If you have not lived in Ireland for a considerable period of time, it is likely that you will be applying for an allowance rather than a benefit. In order to qualify for this, you must satisfy a means test which takes your sources of income into account. You must also satisfy something called the habitual residence condition. The habitual residence condition is a test that requires you to prove that you have a sufficiently strong connection with Ireland to warrant the support of the Irish state. When deciding if you are habitually resident in Ireland a social welfare officer will consider the following five factors:

1. the length and continuity of your previous residence in Ireland and in any other country;
2. the length and reason for any absence from Ireland;
3. the nature and pattern of your employment;
4. your main 'centre of interest' (based on facts such as whether you own or lease a home here, where your close family members live, whether you belong to social or professional associations here, and any other evidence or activities indicating a settled residence in Ireland);
5. your future intentions to remain in Ireland.

In our experience, if you are returning to Ireland after a period away it is very important that you have as much documentation as possible to verify that connections with your previous country of residence have been cut. For more information on the sort of documents to include see our website or contact us directly (details below).

HEALTHCARE

On your return to Ireland, you can access health services in the same way as any resident of Ireland. GP visits generally cost €50 to €65. Residents are entitled to subsidised prescribed drugs/medicines, and free public hospital services, but may have to pay in-patient and out-patient hospital charges.

If you have a low income on your return to Ireland, you may be entitled to a medical card. Issued by the HSE, the medical card allows the holder to access a variety of health services free of charge including visits to the GP and prescribed medicines for a small contribution. You can apply for the medical card via your local health centre where application forms will be available. Your sources of income will be examined in the application process for a medical card.

If you or someone you know is thinking of returning to Ireland and you would like further information, you can contact us by phone on +353 1 873 2844, by email at migrantproject@crosscare.ie, or you can drop in to see us at our office located at 1 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1 (Monday – Friday, office hours).

You can also visit our website www.migrantproject.ie for more information.

Sarah Owen, Information and Advocacy Officer, Crosscare Migrant Project.



Parish Resources

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

St Patrick's Day

1. That the leaders of our church in Ireland may exhibit the humility, courage and wisdom of St Patrick. Lord hear us.
2. That the spirit of peace and friendship may flourish between all the people on our island. Lord hear us.
3. That those in government may be guided by the highest and noblest ideals of truth, integrity, justice and service. Lord hear us.
4. That all who are connected to Ireland by ancestral heritage may hold fast to the faith of their forebears and live lives guided by gospel values. Lord hear us.
5. That those who have come from abroad to make a new life among us may find a warm and generous welcome. May we be open to the richness of experience that they can bring to our land. Lord hear us.

Celebrant: God of all nations we rejoice today in St Patrick who first brought the Gospel to our shores. Keep us true to that faith and answer our petitions this day.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.



HOMILY NOTES

'Happy Paddy's Day' the slogan proclaims on the oversized leprechaun's head gear in a Dublin city-centre shop. In a sense this encapsulates what is wrong with the popular understanding and celebration of our national apostle. The day has become a celebration of 'Irishness' in some vague and generalized way – a feast of leprechauns and green beer, a day for the 'craic' and of course for drowning the shamrock in a sea of alcohol; it's all a long way from the reality that was St Patrick.

The feast of St Patrick invites us each year to celebrate the roots of our faith in Ireland. It celebrates a young boy kidnapped from Britain and enslaved for six years who was to return as a free man as priest and bishop because he had heard the voice of the Irish calling. It celebrates his proclamation of the Gospel to a pagan people and the success that his preaching produced. Above all it calls us back to a time of unity in the faith before the wounds of history had driven a wedge between believers on our island and way beyond.

Such was the success of Patrick's mission that the missionary impulse that brought him here was to inspire a missionary zeal and fervour that would see the Irish themselves setting out on missionary endeavours of their own, breaking new ground as evangelisers in many parts of Europe and beyond.

Traditional church art presents Patrick to us in the mode of a mitre-sporting, Roman vestment-clad Bishop. It usually incorporates the shamrock and sometimes the banished reptiles fleeing in his path. The mitre and other episcopal paraphernalia were in reality a much later development in the Church.

Patrick is held up as a nationalist icon and on this his feast, we hear the 'cúpla focal' at Mass and sometimes Irish dancers and musicians make an annual appearance in celebration of this most Irish of Irishmen. The reality is rather different – the real Patrick hailed from Britain and was a citizen of Rome who wrote his Confessions in Latin.

So we need to rediscover St Patrick without the trimmings. In doing so we will find him primarily as he describes himself in his confessions. The very opening phrase of that document provides us with a wonderful glimpse into the nature of this extraordinary man: 'I, Patrick, a sinner, a most simple countryman, the least of all the faithful and most contemptible to many.' Here is a man with no illusions about himself; a man characterised by humility above all else. These opening words are reminiscent of another apostle, a man of our own times, who on his election as Pope bowed before the throng in St Peter's Square and asked them to pray for him. This was a gesture of true humility; a humility that has become the hallmark of his ministry.





In the face of misunderstanding and open hostility to his mission, Patrick's humility would remain as a bulwark saving him from both triumphalism and despair. Patrick was also a driven man; driven by a passion for the Gospel of Christ; driven by a deep desire to lead others to the truth that had set him free; driven by an unrelenting fidelity to the mission entrusted to him. He was a man with both feet placed firmly on the ground who was prepared to enter into dialogue with all who would listen.

The Irish diaspora brought their faith with them to the many places where they made their new home and in these places abroad they formed a significant part of the local church, often a rich source of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In the U.S. alone almost forty million people claim Irish roots, not to mention those in the U.K., Australia and indeed across the globe. They too will celebrate the national feast, their connection with Patrick the man of faith. Let us hope it will be more than a Paddywhackery fest!

Catholicism in Ireland is at a crossroads and many who had journeyed with the Church have had their faith in her shaken. It is clear that we must find a new way of being Church in a society that looks on us with suspicion and mistrust. Perhaps the humble faith-filled founder of Christianity on our island has more to teach us than we had imagined!

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Additional Homily Notes for St Patrick's Day are available in the March edition of Intercom.



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