

Emigrant Information Pack 2017

Includes Parish Resources



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Disclaimer: The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants (IECE) is affiliated with the Irish Chaplaincy and the Irish Apostolate USA. 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.

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.

Over 150,000 Irish citizens left Ireland in the last four years and more than 300,000 people of all nationalities left our shores during that time.

As a Church and a people we must continue to reach out to those who are affected by migration. We must remember and pray for all Irish people overseas, those who have recently 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 and pray that they will receive the same welcome that we would wish for our own emigrants far from home.

Many Irish emigrants in the United States are understandably anxious in light of changes in immigration enforcement policy. We have heard about the great distress it is causing families on both sides of the Atlantic, and pray that politicians will commit to finding a timely solution.

I commend those who are dedicated to caring for Irish emigrants abroad, particularly the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, the Irish Apostolate USA, the Irish Chaplaincy in Sydney and the Irish Chaplaincy in Paris. The pastoral support they provide is essential for Irish emigrants of all generations.

Críost linn,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Kirby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Kirby
Bishop of Clonfert
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants
March 2017

Introduction to the Emigrant Information Pack 2017

A report released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in August 2016 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. Figures published by the Central Statistics Office in August 2016 show that 76,000 people emigrated from Ireland. Of these, 35,300 were Irish nationals. There has been a slight increase in the number of people immigrating to Ireland this year at 79,300 (up from 60,600 the previous year).

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.

PREPARING PROPERLY FOR EMIGRATION

It is vital that those considering emigration are prepared for the experience. We hope that the practical information in this pack will assist emigrants to make informed decisions and support them while they are away.

This information pack also hopes to make emigrants more aware of the importance of travelling safely and we encourage people to download the TravelWise app. TravelWise will help Irish people travelling abroad to stay safe and informed while travelling, living or working overseas.

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. 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 these important issues.

COMING HOME

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.

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT FOR EMIGRANTS

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.

We would like to thank the chaplaincies, Irish immigration centres and organisations that provided us with information about their work. These centres and organisations work tirelessly to assist Irish emigrants of all generations and continue to contribute a huge amount.

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 journeys have been difficult. 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 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 long-standing problems facing generations of Irish emigrants.

THE EMIGRANT COLLECTION

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
(Matthew 25:35)

The acronym SIA (Supporting Irish Abroad) is also 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, then 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. 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

The number of Irish people leaving Ireland remains high, despite improvements in the economy and a fall in unemployment.

Figures published by the Central Statistics Office in August 2016 show that 35,300 Irish people emigrated in the twelve months prior to April 2016, a drop of 2,100 on the previous year. A total of 76,200 people of all nationalities left Ireland during the same period, 4,700 fewer than the year before.

With the improvement in the Irish economy the numbers of emigrants returning to Ireland is increasing – up by 8,900 on the previous year.

Irish nationals continue to experience net outward migration, although at a much lower level than in the previous year, falling from 23,200 to 10,700, while net inward migration among non-Irish nationals grew for the fourth year in a row.

The UK continues to be the most popular destination for emigrants of all nationalities leaving Ireland with 16,600 choosing to make it their new home, a decrease of 2,600 since last year. Coinciding with the changes in the visa application process, 10,700 Irish citizens availed of Canadian work visas. This equates to an almost 40 per cent increase in the number of visas issued in the past twelve months. Australia yet again experienced a drop in popularity amongst emigrants, with just 6,200 moving there from Ireland, down from 7,500 the previous year.

The number of Irish women emigrating outnumbered men 40,300 to 35,900.

Information for Emigrants

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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 when 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 strongly advised 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 job 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. You should 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 8801 6308

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

84 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

Phone: +44 20 7697 4753

Website: www.mind-yourself.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 in the US. 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; however, given the new administration (2017), comprehensive reform seems unlikely. Advocacy is being done on more targeted legislative initiatives.

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 re-entering the US.

VISA WAIVER PROGRAM (VWP)

The Visa Waiver Program allows an Irish citizen to travel to the US for business, pleasure or while in transit for up to ninety days without having to obtain a visa.

In order to travel without a visa on the VWP, you must have authorisation through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). ESTA is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) automated web-based system to determine eligibility to travel without a visa to the United States for tourism or business. Visit www.esta.cbp.dhs.gov for more information and to apply.

The new administration in the United States (20 January 2017) is due to introduce new measures for certain travellers. Prospective travellers who feel they may be affected should consult the US Department of Homeland Security or the US Embassy website for up-to-date information. Alternatively, up-to-date information is posted on the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/usa/our-services/travel-advice/

NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS

A non-immigrant visa allows you to visit, work or study in the US for a temporary period of time.

The most common non-immigrant visas used by Irish citizens include:

- » Student (F Visa): a student who wishes to attend a university or other academic institution in the US requires an F Visa;
- » Summer Work Travel Program (J1 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 (J1 Visa): this programme allows Irish students and recent graduates to participate in internships and travel in the US for up to twelve months;
- » Temporary Worker (US H-1B Visa): the US does not issue work visas for casual employment. Temporary worker visas are for persons who want to enter the United States for employment lasting a fixed period of time, and



are not considered permanent or indefinite. Each of these visas require the prospective employer to first file a petition with US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). An approved petition is required to apply for a work visa.

IMMIGRANT VISAS

If you wish to live in the US permanently you will need to obtain an immigrant visa, more commonly known as a green card. This applies even if you do not plan to work in the US. Usually you can only receive an immigrant visa if 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: this process applies to a spouse of a US citizen; an unmarried child under twenty-one 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 twenty-one 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: applying for employment-sponsored immigrant status is a multi-step process involving numerous submissions that requires the engagement of an attorney.

ACCOMMODATION

The price of accommodation can vary dramatically depending on where you are living. Big cities like New York, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco 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 begin with your own networks and contact any friends or family you have in the US. Create your new US network by making contact with the local Irish community. You should prepare a résumé. US résumés are quite different from Irish CVs. They are no longer than one page unless you have significant experience to detail. Make sure your résumé 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 you are going to visit, make sure that you have good travel insurance. If you are going to work, try to negotiate healthcare coverage as part of your terms of employment. Visit www.healthcare.gov for information on US health insurance options. Given the new administration, healthcare options and insurance are expected to change within the coming two years.



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. Visit www.usairish.org to find your nearest centre;
- » Bring sufficient funds to live on until you get paid and to cover additional expenses like rent deposits, food, medical costs;
- » 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. Visit www.usairish.org to find your nearest centre;
- » Get involved with the local Irish community through Irish clubs and organisations such as the GAA, Irish Network USA (www.irishnetwork-usa.org);
- » 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: coordinator@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: ie.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.sfipc.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

Email: 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 Outreach Ocean City

3314 Coastal Highway,

Ocean City, MD 21842

Phone: +1 443-523-6978

Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers

Website: www.ciic-usa.org

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-five 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; however, it must be specified work completed in a regional area to qualify.

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. Specified work completed in areas that do not fit within the definition of regional Australia cannot be counted towards the requirement. Specified work must be done within an eligible regional Australia postcode area. Work that is completed in a non-eligible postcode area for an employer whose office or post office box is in a regional Australia postcode area does not meet the requirement. 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 that 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.

SUPERANNUATION

If you spent time working in Australia, you may or may not be aware that you can be entitled to claim back contributions made on your behalf by your employer into a pension fund.

Payment into a superannuation fund, which can differ depending on the sector you work in, starts when you earn more than \$AU450 a month, and contributions work out as 9 per cent of your monthly wage.

As the purpose of the fund is to provide for people's retirement, strict rules surround accessing the money before the retirement age of sixty-five. This means that if you're a permanent citizen of Australia you can't claim it, but if your visa has expired, you should be entitled to claim it back. Before you leave Australia check how much is in your fund and enquire about transferring your fund to a fund in Ireland.

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. Certified copies of all documents of identification should be made and kept separately from the originals and a full set should also be left with family in Ireland;
- » 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.

Certified copies of all documents of identification should be made and kept separately from the originals and a full set should also be left with family in Ireland.

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

Irish Embassy in Canberra

20 Arkana St, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

Phone: +61 2 6214 0000

Website: www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/australia

Consulate General of Ireland in Sydney

Level 26, 1 Market Street, Sydney,
NSW 2000

Phone: +61 2 9264 9635

Website: www.dfa.ie/irish-consulate/sydney/

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

(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 Queensland 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 Support Agency

2 Wellington Street, Bondi,
NSW 2026

Phone: +61 2 9300 8019

Website: www.irishsupportagency.org.au

Email: admin@irishsupportagency.org.au

Melbourne – Irish Australian Support and Resource Bureau

440a High Street,
Northcote, VIC 3070

Phone: +61 3 9482 3865

(After Hours: +61 407 317 539)

Email: iasrb@iinet.net.au

Perth – The Claddagh Association Inc.

193c Flinders St, Yokine, WA 6060

Phone: +61 8 9345 1713

(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. You need to have a return ticket, or enough money to pay for one.

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

Consulate-General of Ireland in Auckland

Phone: +64 9 919 7450

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 2017 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.

EXPRESS ENTRY

Express Entry is a new electronic management application system for immigration to Canada. It facilitates the selection and processing of Canada's economic immigration programmes: the Federal Skilled Worker Class, the Federal Skilled Trades Class, the Canadian Experience Class, and a portion of the Provincial Nominee Programs. Applicants make an 'expression of interest' in immigrating to Canada and, if they are eligible for at least one of the aforementioned programmes, they then enter the Express Entry pool. The federal government and provincial governments, as well as Canadian employers, are then able to select candidates from this pool who will then receive an invitation to apply for immigration to Canada under one of

the programmes. Express Entry moves Canada from a first-come-first-served (or supply-driven) system to an invitation-to-apply (or demand-driven) system. Modelled on similar systems in use in Australia and New Zealand, Express Entry aims to fast-track the processing of skilled immigrants deemed most likely to succeed in Canada.

New entry requirements now in effect dictate that visa-exempt foreign nationals who fly to or transit through Canada need an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). Exceptions include US citizens and travellers with a valid Canadian visa. Canadian citizens, including dual citizens, and Canadian permanent residents cannot apply for an eTA.

Entry requirements for other methods of travel (land, sea) have not changed.

PERMANENT RESIDENCY

Permanent residency in Canada applies to those who are not Canadian citizens but who have been granted permission to live and work in Canada without any time limit on their stay. A permanent resident must live in Canada for two years out of every five, or risk losing that status.

A permanent resident holds many of the same rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen, among others the right to work for any enterprise as well as for the federal or provincial government (under restriction of access rights to certain regulated professions). The main differences are that residents cannot:



- » vote in elections in Canada;
- » run for elected office;
- » hold Canadian passports.

In addition, they may be allowed to join Canada's armed forces if the national interest would not be prejudiced.

Permanent residents may apply for Canadian citizenship after four years in Canada; however, this is not mandatory.

Permanent residents also risk deportation for serious crimes committed while residing in Canada. 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 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.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org 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

Suite 1105, 130 Albert St, Ottawa,
Ontario K1P 5G4

Phone: +1 613 233 6281

Website: www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/canada/

Irish Canadian Immigration Centre

Phone: + 1 416 603 9549

Website: www.irishcanadianimmigrationcentre.org

Canadian Embassy in Ireland

7–8 Wilton Terrace, Dublin 2

Phone: +353 1 234 4000

Website: www.canada.international.gc.ca/ireland-irlande

Canadian High Commission in London

(handles visa services for Irish residents)

Canada House, Trafalgar Square,
London SW1Y 5BJ

Phone: +44 207 004 6000

Website: canadainternational.gc.ca/united_kingdom-royaume_uni/

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. If you wish to stay longer, you may make a request to the immigration officer at the airport or contact the local General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs three days prior to the expiry date.

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

Embassy of Ireland

Al Yasat Street off 6th Street
Al Bateen
PO Box 61581
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
Phone: +971 (0)2 4958200

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.ae/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 (pending Brexit), the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta. EU citizens can also work in Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Iceland and Norway.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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.

Contact Numbers of Irish Embassies Throughout Europe

| | |
|---|--|
| Czech Republic (Prague) . . . +420257011280 | Cyprus (Nicosia) +35722818183 |
| Poland (Warsaw) +48225642200 | Greece (Athens) +302107232771 |
| Slovakia (Bratislava) +421232338700 | Spain (Madrid) +34914364093 |
| Bulgaria (Sofia) +35929853425 | Portugal (Lisbon) +351213308200 |
| Romania (Bucharest) +40213102131 | Italy (Rome) +39065852381 |
| Denmark (Copenhagen) +4535473200 | Malta +35621334744 |
| Estonia +3726811888 | Slovenia +38613008970 |
| Finland (Helsinki) +35896824240 | Belgium +3222823400 |
| Hungary +3613014960 | Luxembourg +352450610 |
| Latvia (Riga) +37167039370 | Netherlands (The Hague) . . . +31703630993 |
| Lithuania (Vilnius) +37052629460 | France (Paris) +33144176700 |
| Sweden (Stockholm) +46854504040 | Germany (Berlin) +4930220720 |
| | Austria (Vienna) +4317154246 |

A list of countries where Ireland has an embassy or consulate can be found at www.dfa.ie/embassies/irish-embassies-abroad.

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 (VWP) 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.

Under the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015, travellers in the following categories are no longer eligible to travel or be admitted to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program:

- » Nationals of VWP countries who have travelled to or been present in Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen on or after 1 March 2011 (with limited exceptions for travel for diplomatic or military purposes in the service of a VWP country);
- » Nationals of VWP countries who are also nationals of Iran, Iraq, Sudan, or Syria.

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

- » Exchange Visitor (J1 Visa): anyone wishing to take up prearranged employment, training or research in the US under an officially approved programme must obtain a J1 Visa.

There are several exchange visitor programmes available, including summer employment programmes, intern programmes for university students and au pair programmes. The US Government requires all applicants to attend an interview with the US Embassy in London or Belfast. You must first have a confirmed job offer before you can get your J1 Visa.

- » Student (F Visa): a student who wishes to attend a university or other academic institution in the US requires an F Visa.
- » Temporary Worker (US H-1B 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 twenty-one, 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: +44 28 9038 6100

Website: uk.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/belfast/

US Embassy in London

24 Grosvenor Square, London W1A 2LQ

Phone: +44 20 7499 9000

Website: www.uk.usembassy.gov/

British Embassy in Washington

3100 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington
DC 20008

Phone: +1 202 588 6500

Website: www.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

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. 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. Specified work completed in areas that do not fit within the definition of regional Australia cannot be counted towards the requirement. Specified work must be done within an eligible regional Australia postcode area. Work that is completed in a non-eligible postcode area for an employer whose office or post office box is in a regional Australia postcode area does not meet the requirement.

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:

- » Free treatment as a public in-patient or outpatient in a public hospital;
- » Subsidised medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS);
- » 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.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Australian High Commission in London

Australia House, Strand, London WC2B 4LA

Phone: +44 20 7379 4334

Website: www.uk.embassy.gov.au

British High Commission in Canberra

130 Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla
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, VIC 3000

Phone: +61 3 9652 1600

British Consulate in Brisbane

Level 9, 100 Eagle Street,
Brisbane, QLD 4000

Phone: +61 7 3223 3200

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

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.

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

New Zealand High Commission in London

New Zealand House, 80 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4TQ

Phone: +44 20 7930 8422

Website: www.nzembassy.com/uk

British High Commission in Wellington

44 Hill Street, Wellington 6011

Phone: +64 4 924 2888

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

British Consulate General in Auckland

Level 17, 151 Queen Street, Auckland 1142

Phone: +64 9 303 2973

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/

British Embassy in Dubai

Al Seef Road, PO Box 65, Dubai

Phone: +971 4 309 4444

EMIGRATING TO CANADA

British citizens between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five 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

Canadian High Commission in London

Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London SW1Y 5BJ

Phone: +44 207 258 6699

Website: www.unitedkingdom.gc.ca

British High Commission in Canada

80 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Ontario 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

5100–150 6 Ave SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 3Y7

Phone: +1 403 705 1755

Go Safely



Download the TravelWise app from the Department of Foreign Affairs

Check DFA travel advice for up-to-date information on the security situation in your country of destination

If there's something you can't live without, pack it in your carry-on


The best help is often close at hand – hotel reception, tour operator or hotel manager

If you need to carry ID bring a copy of your passport or passport card

Make electronic and paper copies of your travel documents – leave one set with family at home and bring one with you

Make sure you have the correct visa for the country/countries you intend to travel to

Become familiar with local customs and culture. Some behaviours considered normal in Ireland may seem inappropriate in some countries



Memorise your flight number

Stay alert at all times and take extra measures to protect your personal security

Keep a close eye on your personal belongings in public places such as internet cafes, trains and bus stations

Don't use ATMs after dark, especially if you're alone. Check no one has followed you after withdrawing cash

Follow @dfatravelwise for the latest travel updates

Before you leave home, print out the hotel's name, address and phone number, and save the latter in your phone

If you are visiting a number of destinations make sure someone at home has a copy of your itinerary

Check your passport is in date and valid for the duration of your stay. Some countries require it in date for several months after you leave

If you are travelling to a high risk destination it is important that you register with the local Irish embassy or consulate

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', the project is funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Emigrant Support Programme to work with intending, existing and returning Irish emigrants. It provides information, advocacy and referral services through its drop-in centre, phone and email services, website and publications. The service is open to anyone, but places particular emphasis on supporting those who are marginalised or in vulnerable situations.

While there are lots of things to consider when thinking about returning home, here is some practical information based on some of the most common queries 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. Made up of seven numbers and one or two letters (i.e. 1234567 AB), this number is the Irish equivalent to 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 PPS number registration centre, bringing with you your long form birth certificate, photographic ID and proof of your current Irish address. An online system is used for booking PPS number appointments and sometimes it can take a few weeks before the next slot is available at your local centre. To book, you will need to go to www.mywelfare.ie and set up a 'My Welfare' account.

HOUSING

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.

It is advisable to 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.

If you are considering renting privately, most landlords will require the first month's rent and a deposit equivalent to one month's rent up front. They also tend to look for work and previous landlord references. 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. Rent Supplement is slowly being replaced by the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), which is now operational in certain areas. To access HAP, you will need to be on a local authority housing list and your rent will need to be under a certain limit, in addition to other requirements.

If you are over fifty-seven years old living abroad in private rented accommodation or social housing and you are thinking of coming home, you could contact Safe Home Ireland. Based in County Mayo, this is a national organisation working to assist older Irish born emigrants to return to Ireland and secure housing. See their website www.safehomeireland.com or contact them by phone (+353 98 36036) or email (info@safehomeireland.com) 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 based 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 no 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.

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 www.migrantproject.ie or contact Crosscare directly.

PENSIONS

If you are in receipt of a State pension at present in the country in which you reside, it would be worth checking whether this can continue to be paid to you in the event that you move to live in Ireland. Occupational pensions can generally be paid to you no matter where you live; however, be sure to contact your pension administrator to check this with them.

If you are aged sixty-six or over and have worked in Ireland previously and have a record of social insurance contributions here, you may be eligible for an Irish State Pension (Contributory). You can begin the process of applying for this from abroad and you do not have to live in Ireland to avail of this pension. If you have worked in another EU country or in a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement (e.g. Australia, Canada, USA), you could also combine your social insurance contributions from abroad with those you made in Ireland to help you qualify for the Irish State Pension (Contributory). State Pension (Contributory) section can be contacted for specific queries on +353 71 915 7100.

If you are over sixty-six and you do not have sufficient social insurance contributions to qualify for a State Pension (Contributory), you could apply for a State Pension (Non Contributory) instead. This will require you to meet the Habitual Residence Condition and a means test.

To read more about pensions see www.welfare.ie.

HEALTHCARE

On your return to Ireland, you can access health services in the same way as any resident of Ireland so long as you can show that you are ordinarily resident. This should not be confused with the Habitual Residence Condition, described above. Being ordinarily resident simply means that you are living in Ireland and intend to do so for twelve months or more. Generally, proof of your Irish address is enough to show this.

Doctors' visits generally cost €50 to €65 per visit, and 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 doctor 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 or you can apply online by visiting www.hse.ie. Your sources of income will be examined in the application process for a Medical Card. If you are over seventy, the means test will be slightly more lenient.

If you do not satisfy the means test for a Medical Card, you may still qualify for a GP Visit Card, which allows you to see your doctor free of charge. GP Visit Cards are available to all those over seventy and to children under six and, as such, no means test applies to this group.

If you or someone you know is thinking of returning to Ireland and you would like further information, you can contact Crosscare by phone on +353 1 836 0011, by email at migrantproject@crosscare.ie or you can drop in to see us at our office at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe Road, Dublin 3 (Monday–Friday).

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

Judy McAvoy
Information and Advocacy Officer
Crosscare Migrant Project

A Caring Community

Irish Apostolate USA

For the majority of people, living and working overseas will be a positive experience, allowing them to meet new people and develop new skills, but some emigrants may have trouble finding work abroad, while others may find it difficult to integrate into a new society and culture. Many will struggle with feelings of loneliness and isolation and will miss the support they would have at home.

The Irish Apostolate USA is the response of the Irish and US Catholic Bishops to the practical and pastoral needs of Irish emigrants in the United States.

OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY SERVICES

The services offered at the apostolate centres scattered throughout the US bring together the goodwill and talents of many people – Irish and Irish-Americans, lay and religious. Their range of services is holistic, encompassing every human need, spiritual or temporal. Services include assistance with employment, accommodation, immigration, legal advice, accidents or unexpected illness, depression, relationships, suicide prevention, educational opportunities, hospitalisation or imprisonment, sacramental offerings, and marriage and bereavement counselling.

Many of our apostolate centres are parishes without boundaries. In times of illness or death of an immigrant or a family member in Ireland, chaplains gather the community together for comfort and support, and

pray or celebrate a Mass. Joyous family events such as baptisms and marriages are celebrated. In most areas, programmes and activities for seniors and their caregivers, as well as House Masses modelled on the Station Mass in Ireland take place. Some centres have flourishing mother and toddler groups, while others offer computer classes and self-development courses, continuing education opportunities, social and cultural activities, and games and weekend trips.

Irish chaplains play a vital role in this outreach and pastoral care, as well as responding to the particular needs of emigrants. Immigration advocacy and concern for the undocumented is of significant concern. Chaplains also work with students who flock to the US on J1 Visas for the summer or connect with the community through GAA events.

If you plan to emigrate to the United States, connect with your local Irish apostolate centre for welcome, support and response to any needs that navigating a new society involves. Please visit www.usairish.org or email coordinator@usairish.org for assistance in finding the resource or help you need.

Sr Marie Prefontaine
Coordinator IAUSA

Saint Patrick's Day, Bondi, Australia

Fr Alan Hilliard shares a memory of St Patrick's Day when he was chaplain to the Irish in Australia.

Saint Patrick's Day 2002 in Bondi was always going to be different. This luscious location is nestled in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, Australia between city and surf. Though synonymous with a beach culture and surf rescue television programmes, it has much more to offer.

There is a very diverse community living between the station at Bondi Junction and the beach, a mile distance. Today the Eastern Suburbs are a playground for the rich and famous who spend exorbitant amounts of money on property, especially property with a sea view. Many of those who live along Bondi Road moved to the area when property was reasonable, when a family could buy a block of land and could build a basic home quite cheaply. Many of these 'fibro' homes housed people with an Irish heritage but it was far from an 'ethnic enclave'.

Upon arriving in Bondi as the priest with responsibility for the Irish, I got an overnight lesson in diversity. Between the station and the beach there were residents who could claim to be Croats and Serbs, Egyptian Copts and Cypriots, Scots and Scandinavians, Hungarian Jews and Hungarian Christians, Brazilians and Outback Australians, New Zealanders and Portuguese, Lebanese and Latvians, English and Estonians, Germans and Greeks. There were also many thousands of transient backpackers living in many of these 'fibro' houses.

The diverse community that worshipped at Saint Patrick's Church knew that 2002 had to be different because Saint Patrick's Day fell on a Sunday. Other years Saint Patrick's Day was marked mainly by Irish who could get time off work to attend one of the uptown events run by the Lansdowne Association or the Parade Committee, but in Saint Patrick's on Bondi Road on Sunday, 17 March 2002, everyone, regardless of ethnic background, wanted to be Irish.

As the backpackers who were proudly wearing their county jerseys spilled into the Church, I made sure to say a special hello to the regulars, who were enjoying so much colour, fun and noise. About six seats from the back of the church in her usual place was Beryl. She had just turned eighty and had lived in Bondi all her life. From previous conversations I knew she was proud of her Irish heritage even though her heritage was mixed. She proudly sported a Saint Patrick's Day badge on her lapel. It reminded me of my childhood; a strip of green ribbon with a harp embossed onto gold metallic paper and a gold safety pin to attach it to your coat or jumper. For most migrants it is these small things that bring back memories of places that were once home and maybe still are!

The gold harp glistened as it caught the light. 'Lovely badge Beryl,' I said as she smiled with delight. 'Where did you get it?' What she said next blew me away, 'I won it in school when I was seven. I had an Irish sister teaching me and I won first prize for a Saint Patrick's Day essay competition.' For the last seventy-three years this badge was



proudly worn on 17 March. The amazing care that went into wrapping it and storing it so that it could lie unused for three hundred and sixty-four days of the year, only to be taken out for this one proud day, floored me. How many of these badges had come and gone in my home in that time!

Every year since 2002 I think of Beryl and her influence on me. She has enhanced my understanding of my Irishness. On Saint Patrick's Day it is often said that there are two types of people in the world – those who are Irish and those who want to be Irish. Maybe now there is room, and even need, for a third category – those who teach us how to be Irish.

Beryl may not have held an Irish passport and she may never have even set foot on Irish soil but something of the best of Ireland was shared with her in her school. Nationality is more than the country of our birth; we learn from others in our lives. Nationhood, citizenship and identity are changing at a rate of knots in our modern globalised world. Indeed, in Ireland today our ideas of nationhood, citizenship and identity are challenged by the influx of people to our land. They are affecting who we are and how we see ourselves just as Saint Patrick, the migrant, trafficked slave and bonded labourer, did all those years ago.

Parish Resources

I first 'emigrated' from Ireland on a school trip to London in 1973. We travelled by sea from Rosslare to Swansea. The most famous immigrant to Ireland came across the same Irish Sea, a young frightened captive, in the early years of the fifth century. Several years later, now a mature man and a missionary bishop, he would follow the same route to Ireland and never leave. The immigrant was now coming in response to the 'call of the Irish' (C. 23) bearing the seed of the Word. This Word, which he had heard anew and responded to as he herded pigs in the cold and rain of his captivity, was now deeply rooted in him. His one desire as he returned was to implant it in the hearts of the people 'at the ends of the earth' (C. 38 & 2) who had enslaved him. He would never return again to his homeland.

The Gospel today (Mt 13:24–32) shows God sowing the good seed of his Word in the soil of the world. Patrick's mission met with great success: 'Through me many were reborn in God ... whom [He] drew from the ends of the earth' (C. 38). Many through words and deeds tried to undermine him but 'the darnel' did not impede the harvest. The communities that grew up as a result of his preaching became places of shelter and nourishment for those in need like the birds inhabiting the mustard tree.

The first reading (Sir 39:6–10) gives us a graphic description of the scribe, the one in the religious community of Israel who through study and prayer enabled the people to understand and keep the Word. The beautiful *Confession of Saint Patrick*,

the account of Patrick's life as a missionary, is a light shining out of the otherwise dark period of fifth-century Ireland. He was not very educated in comparison to other priests and deacons but his direct and lively style and his familiarity with and use of scripture still speak powerfully to us today. 'His memory will not disappear'.

Patrick's deep sense of gratitude to God for what he had done for him and his desire to thank God by the sacrifice of his life in service pervades the *Confession*. Psalm 116 (12–19) echoes these sentiments: 'a thanksgiving sacrifice I make ... precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his faithful'. Patrick leaves us in no doubt about his desire to give his all even to death: 'For I crave ... for it ... [that God would], grant me that I drink of his chalice, as he has granted to others who love him' (C. 57).

Paul's exhortation to Timothy (2 Tm 4:1–8), his missionary companion and bishop of Ephesus, to be faithful and resolute in 'the work of preaching the Gospel' leads him to reflect on his own service of the Lord as he approaches his death. Patrick, at the same juncture of his life, likewise encourages his own companions to continue the mission he had begun: 'I wish only that you, too, would make greater and better efforts. This will be my pride, for "a wise son makes a proud father"' (C. 47).

A copy of the *Confession of Saint Patrick* is available at www.ccel.org/ccel/patrick/confession.toc.html.



PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

St Patrick, Bishop, Principal Patron of Ireland – 17 March 2017

The General Intercessions

Introduction (by the Presider)

As we turn to the Lord for our needs and those of the Church and the world we ask the intercession of St Patrick for our prayers.

Intercessions (announced by the deacon, cantor or another person)

1. That the Church throughout the world may enjoy freedom to proclaim and to live out the Gospel message. Let us pray to the Lord.
Lord hear our prayer.
2. For the land and people who welcomed Patrick, that we may always treasure his message and memory. Let us pray to the Lord.
Lord hear our prayer.
3. For those far from home, may they find welcome, friendship and support in their time of need. Let us pray to the Lord.
Lord hear our prayer.

4. For the sick and sorrowing, that they may have healing and comfort in their distress. Let us pray to the Lord.
Lord hear our prayer.

5. For missionaries and all who have left home and family to help others, that they may be rewarded for their generosity. We pray to the Lord.
Lord hear our prayer.

6. For those who have died in the peace of Christ and all the departed, that they may rest in peace in God's mercy. We pray to the Lord.
Lord hear our prayer.

Conclusion (by the Presider)

Heavenly Father, through whose strength St Patrick nourished your people with the truth of the Gospel, hear these our prayers brought to you with faith in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit, one immortal Trinity, forever and ever. Amen.

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