

EMIGRANT INFORMATION PACK 2014



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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 2014

Although the number of people leaving Ireland remains high – 89,000 people left our shores between April 2012 and April 2013 – it appears the tide is turning and the number of people emigrating has begun to fall. The Economic and Social Research Institute predicts that 78,000 people will have left the country in the 12 months to April 2014, a decrease of 14 per cent.

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 in December 2013 its British helpline received 600 calls from Irish immigrants who were deemed to be of 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. Between April 2012 and April 2013, 15,700 Irish nationals moved back to Ireland. 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 to access 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.

This year marks the ten-year anniversary of the Pontifical instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (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

John Kirby
Bishop of Clonfert
Chair of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants
March 2014



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.



Emigration Statistics

A report released by the Central Statistics Office in August 2013 estimates that between April 2012 and April 2013 overall emigration increased to 89,000 and 57 per cent (50,900) of those who emigrated were Irish nationals.

During this period there was an increase in emigration to the United Kingdom and Canada, while there was a decrease in emigration to Australia and the United States. An estimated 21,900 people emigrated to the UK; 6,200 emigrated to the US; 25,700 emigrated to the EU; 15,400 emigrated to Australia; 5,300 emigrated to Canada; and 14,400 emigrated to the 'Rest of World'.

Preliminary CSO figures show that 34,800 of those who emigrated were in the 15–24 age group and 41,000 were in the 25–44 age group. The number of Irish men who emigrated increased from 26,000 to 27,100 and the number of Irish women who emigrated increased from 20,600 to 23,800.

In the United Kingdom, National Insurance numbers were granted to 15,540 Irish citizens in the 12 months to March 2013.

The quota for Irish participants in the 2014 International Experience Canada initiative is 10,700.

The Economic and Social Research Institute has said that the number of people emigrating from Ireland is decreasing. The ESRI predicts that 78,000 people will have emigrated in the 12 months to April 2014.



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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 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 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

The Federation of Irish Societies

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

6 Aztec Row, Berners Rd, London N1 0PW

Phone: +44 20 7354 5248

Website: www.mind-yourself.co.uk

Console UK

Console House, St Vincent's Centre, Carlisle Place, Westminster, London SW1P 1NL

Phone: +44 20 76300824

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 90 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 résumé specifically for the American market. 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 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

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: <http://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.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 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 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 18 and 30 to spend up to 12 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

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 18 and 30 and allows you to travel and work in New Zealand for 12 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 18 and 35 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 12 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 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.ireland.gc.ca

Canadian High Commission in London

(which handles visa services for Irish residents)
Macdonald House, 1 Grosvenor Square,
London W1K 4AB
Phone: +44 207 258 6600
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 30 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.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, 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) . . .	+420257530061	Greece (Athens)	+302107232771
Poland (Warsaw)	+48228496633	Spain (Madrid)	+34914364093
Slovakia (Bratislava)	+421259309611	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	+3524506101
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 90 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): 09042 450 100
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/ukadres.html>

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

One 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 18 and 30 to spend up to 12 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 18 and 30. Applicants can select either a 12-month or 23-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

Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla, 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

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 30 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 18 and 30 are eligible for the International Experience Canada (IEC) programme. This allows people to travel and work in Canada for up to 12 months. 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 12 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/our-embassy/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/our-embassy/our-embassy-dubai/

USEFUL CONTACTS

Canadian High Commission in London

Macdonald House, 1 Grosvenor Square,
London W1K 4AB
Phone: +44 207 258 6600
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 4H7
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

Take Care

While for many the experience of emigration will be very positive, some people may struggle with feelings of loneliness and isolation while trying to build a new life far from home. Console, an Irish charity supporting people in suicidal crisis and those bereaved by suicide, reported that in December 2013 its British helpline received 600 calls from Irish immigrants deemed to be at immediate risk of taking their own lives.

It is vital that emigrants are aware of the need to take care of their mental health and to reach out if they need help. Eileen O'Callaghan, senior programme coordinator at the Irish Pastoral Centre Boston, says:

'A lot of people leave home thinking that if they move country, just get to the States, just get a job, that a lot of their problems will dissipate and things will suddenly become a little bit better. Sadly, that isn't the case for everyone.

'If you're dealing with an internal struggle, with depression or another mental illness, taking yourself away from the normal social supports you have at home may exacerbate the situation. You may think that removing yourself from problems with alcohol and drugs will make things better: sadly, that's not always the case. These are things we see with a lot of newly-arrived immigrants.

'Then there are long-term immigrants, especially those with undocumented status, who face huge hurdles reaching out and getting support. They would be very nervous, they may have panic attacks associated with going to healthcare providers, for example.

'We try to advocate within the Irish community on the importance of speaking up about these issues, of talking about them – and there's where Dochas came from.'

Dochas is a community collaboration between the Irish Pastoral Centre, the Irish Immigration Centre Boston, the GAA, other community groups and concerned individuals.

'The goal is to form a collaborative group which addresses issues like suicide and mental health issues among the Irish community here in Boston. We're at the beginning stage, which is a series of community meetings to address this.

'Figures from Ireland show that suicide among young males is the fourth highest in the EU, that one in four people will be affected by mental illness and that one in three people who go to see their GP have an underlying mental illness, mental disorder or some underlying depression. Those figures are very black and white.

'Young people are leaving Ireland and coming here with the same issues. We decided that we really needed to get the community talking, to try and address the stigma that is around mental health because stigma is the biggest thing that stops people from reaching out.



'It's about raising awareness. We have created gatekeepers – the GAA would be an obvious one. You have lots of young men and women who are associated with the GAA, who use it as a huge social support and who maybe don't even realise the importance of the GAA in their lives.

'We've also reached out to hospitals and other healthcare providers to look out for signs and to provide people with contacts. And then we have local people in the community who are simply concerned, so we give them information aimed at helping them feel comfortable bringing this up with people – and also to create that network.

'There are three huge things with mental health. The first one is stress management. Everyone gets stressed so what do you do once you're stressed? Are you okay with talking to other people, do you have social outlets? Think about what it will be like if you move and your social supports – like a friend you call down to and have a cup of coffee with – aren't as widely available especially in the first few months.

'Emigrants should think about that, even if it's just setting up a Skype date with someone at home and sticking to it or going to a local GAA club when you land in Sydney or here in the US.

'The second would be your work/life balance, having a healthy lifestyle and understanding the importance of sleep, of healthy eating, of exercise and moderation.

'Drugs and alcohol are a huge thing, especially when you land somewhere new, particularly with young guys. A new job in a new country does involve a lot of after-work drinks, a lot of socialising. It's all great, but just be aware that if you're feeling in any way low alcohol and drugs will feed on this and a problem that isn't that big will seem ten times bigger the morning after.

'The last thing is attitude – be kind to yourself, forgive yourself for the little things. If things are a little more challenging in the first few weeks and months say to yourself – look, it's okay, it's not great now, but it's certainly going to get better.'

Eileen O'Callaghan advises anyone who's feeling low to reach out to someone. 'It doesn't necessarily have to be to someone in a white coat. It can be to a friend, someone at home, a local chaplain, or the manager of your GAA team. Just talk to someone. Silence is the huge issue with suicide and mental health. Everything seems worse when we don't talk about it but when we're first able to break down those barriers, it's huge.'

People who are struggling can also reach out to the Irish centres or their local GP: 'Don't be afraid of walking into a health centre saying "I'm not feeling great". In the worst case scenario there is always of course 911 – you can pick up the phone if you are feeling critically low.



'There are loads of resources available to people: it can be a very intimidating conversation to start but every pastoral centre has had this conversation with numerous Irish people, so they will make you feel more comfortable and get you the services you need.'

'Some people may find it difficult to admit to those at home that they aren't as happy as they feel they should be: expectations are huge when you move abroad. You think it's going to be sunny and rosy and everything's going to be great. We especially find this with J-1 students or someone who has just left college. They think everything's going to be great and there are certain aspects of emigrating that are fantastic – but again, the issues that you were having before you left are likely to be exacerbated once you leave.'

'We would definitely encourage people to think before they leave: if the worse case scenario happens, what's my plan? If I run out of money, or feel very low, am I comfortable asking for help?'

'If I'm feeling really low, what am I going to do, who am I going to reach out to? Just give yourself that five or ten minutes to make a little plan, the same way you would buy health or travel insurance in case something might go wrong.'

'We need to think the same way about our mental health. It can be just as fragile as breaking a bone skiing when you're having a tough time and it can be really hard to see through it.'

Eileen would encourage families in Ireland to be aware that things might not be going well and to keep channels of communication open 'to reassure the person. I suppose people are often afraid of saying, look if things are going bad, just tell me about it, we're not going to think any less of you.'

'The expectation when you Skype someone abroad is that everything's great. Just be aware that things mightn't be and then encourage them to reach out to us at the pastoral centre or at different centres.'

Above all, Eileen would encourage people to talk: 'Talk is huge and it's really part of the solution so just have a chat, with whoever it is, whoever you choose to seek out, talk.'

Coming Home

Although emigration from Ireland remains high, each year a significant number of people also make the decision to come home. Between April 2012 and April 2013, 15,700 Irish nationals moved back to Ireland. Some people may have been abroad for many years, others for much shorter periods of time, and their reasons for returning to Ireland will vary. No matter how long someone has been away from home, it is important that returning emigrants plan ahead.

‘COMING HOME HAS NOT BEEN AS HARD AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE’

Sarah recently returned to Ireland after spending two years in Hong Kong and, with some forward planning, found it relatively easy to readjust to life at home:

‘I didn’t have to leave Ireland: my reasons for emigrating were simple, I wanted to have an adventure. I’d just finished college and decided instead of going to Australia I’d try Hong Kong. The main reason for that was the availability and ease of getting a well-paid job teaching English. I didn’t even have to do a TEFL course in order to get jobs paying up to €50 an hour. There were plenty of jobs for graduates who are what’s called “native English teachers” over there.

‘I really enjoyed my time in Hong Kong – a lot of people think it’s an expensive place to live, and it’s true rents are high. But it was really easy to make friends with other people my age teaching English and we could live really cheaply – transport is incredibly cheap and efficient and eating out was nearly cheaper than shopping in the supermarket. Going out to clubs and bars is also a whole lot cheaper than it is in Dublin.



‘I was planning to stay for a year, but liked Hong Kong so much I extended my stay. I was lucky enough to get an internship with an English-speaking charity and stayed an extra year. I came back because it was difficult to get any other kind of work without speaking Cantonese: I did study it briefly, but it is an extremely difficult language to master. And, after two years, the crowds do begin to get to you, although I found Hong Kong has a surprising amount of hiking trails, beaches, islands and remote destinations. It was also a great base from which to visit other parts of Asia, like Cambodia, Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines, as well as China.

‘Coming home has not been as hard as I thought it would be. I mentally prepared myself before returning for the cold weather, overly expensive transport and cost of living and the inevitable fact that my friends’ lives would have moved on.

'However, I've been lucky in that most of my friends are still in Dublin and I'd kept in good contact with them through Skype and Facebook, so it wasn't difficult to restart my life in Ireland. Of course moving back in with my parents has had its ups and downs: while it's great to have food in the fridge, it sometimes feels like reverting back to being a teenager. I'm currently working as an unpaid intern again, so they'll be stuck with me for a while longer.

'Generally I find Ireland isn't as depressing as the media coverage sometimes makes out. I have noticed an increase in the number of homeless people around the city centre, the most visible sign to me of the recession and its outcomes. Yet, in spite of the shockingly high rents, most of my friends have found places they can afford to live and it's obvious from Dublin nightlife and the booming café culture that a lot of people have money to spend.

'I think my transition to moving home has been relatively easy for a few reasons: my parents live in Dublin and luckily are happy to have me live with them, rent free, for the moment. I had made a big effort to keep up with people – I think you have to do that if you plan to come home to Ireland and it makes it that much easier to pick up where you left off. And I began thinking ahead before returning and applied for a number of internships before coming home, which got me the job I have now. All in all, coming home has been the right decision for me.'

SAFE HOME

Those who have been away for many years may need assistance when dealing with issues such as access to accommodation, getting a PPS number, obtaining a medical card and opening a bank account. Luckily, there are a number of organisations in Ireland that can help.

Mairín Higgins, programme director of Safe Home, describes the assistance they provide to returning Irish emigrants:

'The Safe Home Programme is a registered charity supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Emigrant Support Programme. Safe Home was set up to facilitate the desire some older Irish emigrants have to return to their homeland. In recent years we have noticed that a great many younger emigrants are contacting us looking for information about returning home. We welcome this contact because coming home is not easy and needs to be prepared for.

'The most important message we would like to get across to anyone considering a move to Ireland is to do their homework first. This is particularly important for those who may need to seek financial assistance from the Irish State when they come to Ireland.

'People are running into great difficulties in relation to the Habitual Residence Condition. In many cases these difficulties could have been avoided if the person contacted an organisation like the Safe Home Programme before making any firm plans to return.

'Emigrants who have secured housing via Safe Home will be given a list of the documentation they should bring with them and are told how important it is that they do not arrive without this material. For those coming under their own steam, it is essential that they too arrive with as much documentation as possible in order to ease their transfer into the system here in Ireland. We cannot stress often enough the importance of this. Coming home is stressful, so it is essential that those returning make things as easy as possible for themselves.



'Our appeal to anyone thinking about coming home is do not do so without advice. To avail of our free and confidential service contact Safe Home through our website www.safehomeireland.com, email safehomeireland@eircom.net, call +353 98 36036, or write to The Safe Home Programme, St Brendan's Village, Mulranny, Co. Mayo, Ireland.'

Safe Home advises those returning to consider the following issues:

DOCUMENTATION YOU NEED TO BRING WITH YOU

- » Personal documentation; for example, birth certificate, marriage certificate, divorce papers (if relevant), death certificate (if a partner is deceased) and any personal documentation relating to those returning with you;
- » Back-up documentation; for example, documentation regarding any medical conditions, the name and address of your last employer, your National Insurance or Social Security number, recent payslips if you have been employed, your latest P60 and P45 or the equivalent for the country you are returning from, up-to-date income statements from your pension providers, recent rent statement if you were a tenant, proof to show you have given up your tenancy abroad or sold your home, proof to show you have stopped any non-transferrable welfare payments, proof to show you have closed your bank accounts abroad*, six months of bank statements and, where possible, closing statements, NHS or similar medical card. (*In many cases it will not be possible to close a bank account abroad because you cannot transfer a pension until you have opened a bank account here.);
- » If bringing a car, bring your driving licence, registration book, insurance details and any documents associated with ownership of the vehicle.

OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

To open an account in Ireland most banks require photo identification and two utility bills in your name and an address in Ireland to show you are resident in the country. This can pose problems for returning emigrants as most utility bills are charged bi-monthly and this could cause a delay in getting pensions and benefits transferred.

When opening an account there are various forms of identification that may be used. A full passport is the favoured option; however, if this is not available the following may be acceptable: driving license or age card issued by the Gardaí; birth certificate accompanied by a passport photograph signed by the Gardaí; documentation issued by a government department showing the name of the person, together with a statement from a person of responsibility who is in a position to confirm the person's identity, e.g. a solicitor, doctor, accountant, religious minister, teacher or other professional.

The final decision on what is appropriate identification and supporting residency documentation rests with the financial institution.



APPLYING FOR A PPS NUMBER

One of the first things you should do when you arrive in Ireland is register for your Irish Insurance number (PPS number). This is the Irish equivalent of your National Insurance/Social Security Number. Please note: some people may already have this number, particularly if they are in receipt of a part Irish pension or if they worked in Ireland after 1979.

Your PPSN is made up of seven numbers and ends in one or two letters, e.g. 4567893W. To enquire about an existing PPSN contact Client Identity Services, Shannon Lodge, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim, Lo-Call 1890 927999 or phone (071) 967 2616. Alternatively email cis@welfare.ie

If you don't have a PPSN you will need to provide a long-form birth certificate, photo identification and proof of residency in Ireland when applying for one. Note: it usually takes about seven days to process the application for a PPSN.

CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT

Crosscare Migrant Project is an information, advocacy and referral organisation for migrants in vulnerable situations. The Migrant Project is a project of Crosscare, the Social Care Agency of the Dublin Archdiocese. Crosscare Migrant Project works with intending, existing and returning Irish emigrants. It aims to enable migrants, especially those in vulnerable circumstances, to make informed choices and access their rights.

The Migrant Project provides information to and advocates on behalf of emigrants, returnees and immigrants through its walk-in, outreach, phone and email services, website, publications, and support to generalist information services.

Crosscare Migrant Project produces comprehensive pre-departure factsheets for intending Irish emigrants, and monthly emigration news bulletins, which are available on www.migrantproject.ie

CROSSCARE MIGRANT PROJECT

1 Cathedral Street,
Dublin 1,
Ireland

Tel: + 353 (0)1 873 2844

Fax: + 353 (0)1 872 7003

Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie

Web: www.migrantproject.ie





Parish Resources

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Introduction (by the Presider)

Brothers and sisters, let us put words on our needs and bring them to God.

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

1. For our emigrants, that in the hospitality of Christians they may experience welcome wherever they travel. Lord, hear us.
2. For the unemployed and all who are unsure about their jobs, that those in authority may work to secure employment for all in their own country. Lord, hear us.
3. We pray that those who have travelled from other lands to make Ireland their home may be warmly welcomed into our communities and may enrich us with their presence and their gifts. Lord, hear us.
4. For our brothers and sisters in prison, particularly those in prison overseas, that we may not forget our duty to care for them and their families. Lord, hear us.
5. For Irish people all over the world, that they may enjoy God's favour. We remember especially those who are lonely and those who cannot return home. Lord, hear us.
6. For the elderly and all who are lonely, that they may know our support during dark winter days. Lord, hear us.
7. For those who have died recently, especially those who have died tragically overseas and in prison, and for all our dead. Lord, hear us.

Conclusion (by the Presider)

Loving God, caring shepherd, you look after your people at every moment of their lives. Hear the prayers we make, in trust and faith, through Christ our Lord. Amen.



HOMILY NOTES

The past nine years as chaplain to the Irish community in Boston have been a journey, a fruitful journey, that I will reflect on today, 17 March. It is a day when everybody wants to be Irish and the festivities abound from parades to Irish food and music.

As Irish people, we know how Patrick was captured and brought into slavery in Ireland where he tended the swine on Sliabh Mis. It tells us that no matter how bad a situation is, something good comes out of something evil. Patrick, with all his hardships and all that he suffered, prayed night and day to God. He finally escaped and returned to his family. And yet Patrick heard the call of the Irish to return, not to seek out vengeance but to evangelise. Saint Patrick became one of the most successful missionaries ever in the Church. We all do our little bit to spread the Gospel among God's people and we are no different at the Irish Pastoral Centre in Boston. We too hear the call of the Irish, but it is the young Irish man or woman who is undocumented in our Boston Irish community. We are called not to be judgmental or to condemn, we are called to support and be there for those who are experiencing hardship.

Despite the strong sense of Irish identity in the community, many Irish immigrants feel isolated and lonely. This is especially true in these challenging economic times when unemployment is on the increase and construction has halted indefinitely. The Irish chaplaincy is charged with 'caring for everyone who comes in need of our help'. The Gospel of Matthew reminds us that we will ultimately be judged on how we have helped those less fortunate than ourselves: 'I assure you, as long as you did it for one of my least brothers you did it for me' (Mt 25:40).

I remember the three brothers from the West of Ireland living and working in Boston. One of the brothers died by suicide. They were devastated and turned to me for help and support. I guided them through the investigation process. I met the family when they came from Ireland and arranged a wake service and a memorial Mass. The brothers were unable to return to Ireland for the burial, so I provided the support they needed here to work through the bereavement process. This heart-wrenching tragic event is not an isolated event. We must pray for a resurgence of the economy. We must believe and have hope for the future, and we must provide a pastoral response to the critical needs of the afflicted.

Then there was the call from concerned neighbours regarding the living conditions of a woman from Ireland in her seventies. I made an unannounced visit to her and was astounded at the unsanitary living conditions. I knew I had to act quickly and get her the help she needed. And there is the young man from County Limerick who was tragically killed on a work site in downtown Boston earlier this month. I accompanied his brother-in-law to relay the news to his sister. She was overwhelmed with grief and struggled as she grasped the enormity of the tasks ahead of her. We prayed, we cried and we prayed again. We got through it and continue to pray for an ease to the loss and an acceptance of her new reality.



On a different note, let's be thankful for the young Northern Ireland gentleman who was imprisoned after some violent acts while under the influence of drugs and alcohol. He reached out to the Irish Pastoral Centre and is now sober, back at work and contributing positively to society.

Saint Patrick's faith in the Gospel of Jesus has given us and Irish culture something of which we can all be proud. We have a homeland that has come through the difficulties of penal times and the Great Hunger, but today there are great challenges to overcome. The scourge of emigration has broken up families and scattered us all over the world to seek out a living and create a new life. The faith of the Irish in Boston still carries us through. As daughters and sons of Patrick let us continue to do the work of Patrick and, in doing so, we will make our world a better place where loving our God and our neighbour brightens our own lives and the lives of those we serve every day in our ministry.

The chaplaincy is the fulfillment of my commitment to service and is consistent with my pledge to serve the community as Jesus would want me to. Combining pastoral care with celebrating the sacraments provides a holistic approach to addressing and meeting critical needs of a vulnerable and dispossessed community. The chaplaincy is an instrument by which I can continue God's work of reflecting the image of God in each human being since we are created in his image and likeness.

Fr John McCarthy
Chaplain, Irish Pastoral Centre Boston

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

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