

A Newcomer's Guide to the South East



A Newcomer's Guide to the

South East

Welcome

Fáilte

добро пожаловать

Vítejte

Witamy

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	Wexford County Council.
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Disclaimer

Members of the Regional Newcomer's Guide Group have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information contained in this booklet, "A Newcomer's Guide to the South East." However, they can accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience suffered by any reader as a result of information or advice contained in this booklet.

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Introduction

This guide aims to introduce newcomers to all aspects of living in the South East of Ireland (Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford) including understanding the everyday culture, finding somewhere to live and finding a job. Printed in English, Polish, Russian, and Czech, it also refers the reader to other, more detailed sources of information and support.

This guide has been produced through the co-operation of County Committees in each of the five counties and a Regional Steering Committee with the assistance of Comhairle and the Health Service Executive. This broad partnership brought together organisations such as the Local Authorities, representatives from the Health Service Executive, Social Welfare, the Revenue Commissioners, An Garda

Síochána, Vocational Educational Committees, Citizens Information Centres, Area Partnerships, FÁS and others with the aim of promoting cultural harmony and integration.

We would like to acknowledge the help of many others in the production of the guide which was based on the publication "The Newcomer's Guide to Cork City". This provided an invaluable template for this project. Sincere gratitude is also due to the members of the "Consumer Panel" – representatives of the new communities in the South East who volunteered their time to develop and shape the guide. We would also like to thank those who funded the guide, namely Comhairle and the Health Service Executive. All the sponsors of the County Directories are noted thereon.

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How to Use This Guide

The main guide has been written so as to apply to all the five counties, but there is much information that is specific to each county. With this in mind, a directory has been produced by each county that gives information about a range of local services and facilities. It is hoped that the directory will complement the main guide and extend access to as much information and support as possible. Please find this directory inside your main copy of the guide, or alternatively, you can view both the guide and the leaflet at your Local Authority website, the addresses of which are listed below.

Contact Details: Local Authority

www.carlow.ie
www.kilkennycoco.ie
www.kilkennycity.ie
www.tipperarynorth.ie
www.southtippcoco.ie
www.waterfordcity.ie
www.waterfordcoco.ie
www.wexford.ie

Further information:

Citizens Information Centres (CIC)

Citizens Information Centres (CICs) are located throughout the region and provide free, impartial and confidential information on all aspects of public services and entitlements. They are open to everyone regardless of nationality or status. The full list of contact details is given in each county directory or you may find out the location of the centre nearest to you by contacting any of the

centres listed below. Citizens Information is also available on Lo-Call 1890 777 121 and on the website www.citizensinformation.ie

Carlow CIC

St Catherine's Community Services Centre, St. Joseph's Road, Carlow
 Tel: 059 9138750, 1800 747 748
 Fax: 059 9131913
 Email: carlow.cic@comhairle.ie

Kilkenny CIC

4 The Parade, Kilkenny,
 Tel: 056 7762755, 1800 222 121
 Fax: 056 7720298
 Email: kilkenny.cic@comhairle.ie

Thurles CIC 34/35 Croke Street,
 Thurles, Co. Tipperary (North)
 Tel: 0504 22399 Fax: 0504 22488
 Email: thurles.cic@comhairle.ie

Clonmel CIC Market Place, Clonmel,
 Co. Tipperary (South)
 Tel: 052 22267 Fax: 052 28546
 Email: clonmel.cic@comhairle.ie

Waterford CIC 37 Lower Yellow Road,
 Waterford, Co. Waterford
 Tel: 051 351133 Fax: 051 379102
 Email: waterford.cic@comhairle.ie

Wexford CIC 28 Henrietta Street,
 Wexford
 Tel: 053 9142012 Fax: 053 9142341
 Email: wexford.cic@comhairle.ie

1. Setting the Scene

The Counties of the South East



Carlow

Carlow is one of Ireland's smallest and most beautiful counties. Located on the banks of the River Barrow, Carlow town is the shopping and industrial centre of the county, surrounded by towns such as the historic Tullow, the riverside town of Bagenalstown and the picturesque Leighlinbridge provide further attractions in a county often described as the best-kept secret in Ireland.

The name Carlow is considered to derive from the old Irish place name Ceatharlach, meaning "four lakes" or "city on the lakes". It is bordered on the east by the Blackstairs Mountains and on the west by the Killeslin Hills. Rich in

historic monuments, Carlow has many megalithic tombs, the most famous being the Brownhill Dolmen. The influence of the early Christian period is evident throughout Carlow with many ancient churches and monastic settlements such as St. Mullins founded by St. Moling in the 7th century. In 1361 the Exchequer moved from Dublin to Carlow, but, after persistent raids from outside the Pale, it was forced to return some time later. Carlow Castle, built between 1207 and 1213, survived until 1814 when an attempt to convert it to an asylum led to its near complete destruction.

The outbreak of the Rebellion in 1798 saw the massacre of 600 United

Irishmen at the hands of the British and their bodies are buried in a pit across the Barrow at Graiguecullen, called the “Croppies Grave”, where a memorial to them still stands.

Nineteenth century architecture features prominently in Carlow Town, notably Carlow Courthouse, Duckett's Grove and Carlow's impressive cathedral.

Smaller towns in the county are also historically significant. Tullow was the seat of the Catholic Bishops of Kildare and Leighlin and was the execution site of Fr. Murphy for his part in the Rebellion of 1798. Bagenalstown is known for its planned grid structure attributed to the Bagenal family.

Carlow became the location for the first sugar beet factory in Ireland in 1926 which thrived for 80 years contributing greatly to the economy of the country.

As with all other Irish counties, Carlow has a rich and varied sporting history. Handball, hurling, golf, rowing and horseracing have all been popular since the 18th century. The Carlow branch of the GAA was founded in 1888 to promote Gaelic games and hurling and Gaelic football are played enthusiastically throughout the county. Carlow's first golf club was formed in 1899 and moved to Oak Park in 1922. Golf has grown to be one of the most popular sports in the county.

Carlow and its environs have also produced many artists and writers over the years. Natives of Carlow include the children's author David Donohue and the multi-talented Val Vousden. George Bernard Shaw even left his mark on

Carlow with his donation of the Assembly Rooms on Dublin Street.

A county rich in agriculture and industry, Carlow has much to offer its residents and visitors while Carlow Town is dynamic, vibrant and progressive. Cultural and recreational facilities abound and provide an excellent quality of life for young and old.

Kilkenny

Kilkenny is justifiably famous as an international centre for contemporary art and culture. The county is centred on the ancient City of Kilkenny, named after a 6th century monk called St. Canice, whose memory lives on in the beautifully preserved St. Canice's Cathedral, built to overlook the city in the 13th century. Kilkenny Castle bears testament to the Normans who arrived in the city in the 12th century. The medieval city was the seat of parliament for 6 years during the 17th century. The infamous Oliver Cromwell invaded the city in 1650 and intellectual luminaries such as Jonathan Swift and Bishop Berkeley attended Kilkenny College. Kilkenny's pre-eminence as an internationally renowned centre for the arts and crafts came about largely as a result of the establishment of the Kilkenny Design Workshops in the 1970's.

This historic tradition spreads throughout the county which also boasts a rich heritage of important architectural sites. Other towns in the county include Thomastown. Attractively set in the Nore Valley, mainly on the north bank of the river, Thomastown was built in the 13th century and walls



were added in 1370, parts of which still survive. The town acted as a fortified inland entry point for Kilkenny. The earliest date of a settlement at Castlecomer is around 1200 when a castle and motte were erected. The town was laid out by Christopher Wandesford who also constructed Castlecomer Demesne. The town developed from wealth generated from the mining resources of the immediate area. The third largest town is Callan Town through which The Kings River flows from west to east. The town's earliest surviving developments an Anglo-Norman motte and an Augustine abbey, are located to the north of the river.

Graiguenamanagh is part of the town of Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch. Tinnahinch, which is on the east bank of the Barrow, is in County Carlow. Graiguenamanagh is situated in the

steep-sided Barrow Valley between Mount Brandon in County Kilkenny and Mount Leinster in County Carlow. The town's infrastructure developed around the extensive Duiske Abbey, an early 12th century foundation established by the Normans, in an area that has remains of settlements dating from thousands of years earlier. The narrow winding streets of the town centre, their interconnection to the Abbey and the relationship with the broad expanse of the River Barrow, gives Graiguenamanagh a unique and distinctive character.

The main sources of employment in the county comprise of agriculture, manufacturing, financial services, retailing, tourism, construction, food processing, mining and crafts enterprises. Small enterprises provide the majority of employment in Kilkenny and account for 90% of all business.

A wide range of sporting and leisure amenities are available in Kilkenny. To talk about hurling as merely recreational would be a mistake. Kilkenny people are proud of their hurling tradition and skills within the county. The display of the county colours - black and amber - also forms part of that proud tradition. Other sports activities include angling, canoeing, golf, clay target shooting, flying, gliding, squash, tennis, horse riding, racing, soccer and rugby.

The people of Kilkenny take pride in both their heritage and culture and enjoy a lively social scene.

Tipperary

Tipperary is part of Munster Province and the name is taken from the Irish “Tiobraid Arann” which means “the well of Era”, referring to the River Ara. The county’s prestige throughout the ages

is demonstrated by the fact that Cashel was chosen as the seat of the king of Munster from 370 to 1101.

Tipperary is also the largest inland county in Ireland and was therefore divided into two administrative areas, North Riding and the South Riding, which are still managed as two separate entities.

The principal town in the North is Nenagh. Its foremost building, the impressive castle tower, stands as a poignant reminder of the first castle built by the Butler family in 1220. Other towns include Thurles, the home of the Gaelic Athletic Association and its Semple Stadium, Roscrea, one of the oldest towns in Ireland with roots to St. Cronan’s monastic settlement of the 6th century, and Templemore, the location of the Garda Training College.



In the south the main town is Clonmel which is surrounded by mountains and borders Waterford on the river Suir. A very industrialised town, it has excellent employment opportunities. Cashel is the former seat of the Kings of Munster and site of the Rock of Cashel. Tipperary Town has seen a revival in recent years with many new houses being built and industries locating there, and has beautiful surrounding countryside and Carrick-on-Suir is a small town with a big heart in a wonderful location. Cahir has one of the best-restored castles in Ireland and a wealth of historical buildings. Fethard is a medieval town and is the centre of the equine industry in the county. The population of the whole of Tipperary is about 140,000. Traditionally the county was mainly an agricultural economy, but in modern times this has been replaced by construction and service industries.

The landscape of Tipperary is varied and beautiful. In the north, is Lough Derg one of the biggest lakes in Ireland and is famed for its boating, water sports and angling. The nearby Silvermines Mountains have sustained silver mining sporadically for over 700 years and the mine workings remain to enthral visitors. The centre of Tipperary is known as “The Golden Vale”, a fertile stretch of land in the basin of the River Suir, which runs north to south. The Glen of Aherlow, south of Tipperary town, comprises 16 miles of unspoilt countryside between the Galtee Mountains, Ireland’s highest inland mountain range, and the wooded ridge of Slievenamuck. The Comeragh Mountains, the Knockmealdown

Mountains and Slievenamon are all within reach of Clonmel. The landscape offers a superb range of outdoor activities to visitors and locals alike.

Tipperary has many historic towns and monuments. There are ancient monasteries, castles and towers to be explored, and archaeological sites, examples of fine architecture and museums to visit.

Waterford

Waterford is a coastal county, which stretches from the estuary of the river Suir in the east, to Youghal and the river Blackwater in the west. The county is bordered to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, and boasts many beautiful beaches. The Comeragh mountains, and the Knockmealdown Mountains run across the northern boundary of the county.

Waterford offers a contrast between a modern cosmopolitan city, a cluster of charming, vibrant seaside resorts, rolling fields and a mountainous hinterland. The city has been the home of Waterford Crystal Glass since 1873.

Sport plays an important role in the lives of the people, and the county colours are blue and white.

The county is also recognised for its love of music and theatre. The Theatre Royal and Garter Lane Art Centre host many amateur and professional Theatrical companies, and an International Light Opera Festival takes place each year during September. Irish traditional music is extremely popular throughout the county, and various Arts, Cultural and heritage events are evidenced by



numerous exhibitions, galleries, museums and performances. The Spraoi festival each August is renowned for its street theatre and is well worth a visit.

Waterford is the principal city of the South East. It was originally founded by the Vikings in the late ninth century and has evolved to become a major maritime centre. It is the closest Irish port to mainland Europe.

Many of Waterford City's most famous landmarks are located within walking distance of the quay, including Reginald's Tower, the French Church, the Undercrofts and the two neo-classical eighteenth century cathedrals, which were both designed by the famous architect, John Roberts.

Waterford Institute of Technology, located on the outskirts of the city, is a significant provider of higher education in the region.

The county is also known as "The Déise". This name was derived from a tribe that inhabited it in pre-Christian times.

Dungarvan town is the administrative capital of the county. It is a bustling market town in a highly popular tourist area. George Pain built St. Mary's Church on Emmet Street in 1828. The town is noted for deep-sea-angling. Nearby is Ring, a flourishing centre for Irish culture and native language. It is the only Irish speaking area, or Gaeltacht, in the South East of Ireland.

Tramore, a traditional seaside holiday destination, has a 5km stretch of golden, sandy beach. It is the largest town in the county.

Ardmore is a most picturesque village with a delightful beach. It boasts a beautifully proportioned round tower and 12th century cathedral.

Lismore, is a beautifully quaint town, situated on the river Blackwater. The town is dominated by the majestic splendour of Lismore Castle.

Dunmore East is a charming fishing port and seaside resort on the estuary, near the mouth of the harbour.

Wexford

Welcome to County Wexford located in the South East Corner of Ireland. The County enjoys a rare mix of mountains, valleys, rivers, flora, fauna and breathtaking beaches spanning 200 km of coastline. Wexford is a multi-faceted county with a distinctive culture and vibrant people, which gives it a unique character. Further information on Wexford can be obtained at the website www.wexford.ie

Traditionally Wexford has been economically successful and prosperous.

This prosperity was built on the basis of an efficient and thriving farm sector and a significant industrial base, particularly in Wexford Town. Overall Wexford's position as 'the Model County' stems from this prosperity.

The County has four main towns, Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross. There is good national road linkage to Dublin and other commercial centres and easy access to Britain and mainland Europe via Rosslare Europort. Wexford has a strong sporting tradition and there are a range of activities that you can enjoy including swimming, athletics, golf, hurling, football, horse racing, soccer, badminton.

Wexford, with its large coastline, boasts many quality beaches, picturesque towns, villages and the 13th century Hook Lighthouse, believed to be the oldest functioning lighthouse in the World.



Wexford Town was once a Viking settlement, developed later by the Normans and famous for its narrow winding streets. The river Slaney flows gently into the sea in Wexford Harbour, where you can stroll along the award-winning quay. It is a vibrant, bustling and cosmopolitan town and boasts a colourful calendar of cultural and sporting events, the most famous being the Wexford Festival Opera.

Wexford Wildfowl Reserve on the North Slob is a site of ornithological significance and a year-round visitor attraction.

North of Wexford Town is the market town of Enniscorthy, dominated by the Norman Castle which now houses the County Museum and is overlooked by Vinegar Hill, scene of the infamous battle scene of 1798. St Aidan's Cathedral, built in the 1840's, is the work of architect Augustus Welby Pugin.

Gorey which was once a busy market town has now become a satellite town of Dublin with many preferring to commute to Dublin City and enjoy the gentler pace of life that Gorey has to offer.

To the south of Gorey lies the historic town of Ferns, the seat of the High Kings of Leinster and once the site of a monastery founded by St Aidan. Bunclody is a pretty market town at the foot of the Blackstairs Mountains.

To the south-west of the County lies the town of New Ross, which is situated on the River Barrow. It is home to the Dunbrody Famine Ship, a recreation of the actual 19th century timber-built ship. New Ross is also the ancestral birthplace of former US President John F Kennedy.

Culture

Irish culture is rich in its diversity and reflects the influence of the Celts, Vikings, Normans and others, who have come to Ireland over the centuries. The Irish language developed from one of the Celtic dialects during the Bronze Age in Ireland and Britain. The Irish language is still the main spoken language in parts of Ireland (known as the "Gaeltacht") and is visible on road signs and heard on television and radio.

Traditional Gaelic sports in Ireland include hurling, football, camogie and handball. All games are played throughout the country and county teams compete fiercely in All Ireland championships each year.

Irish traditional and folk music are part of a tradition that stretches back over many generations. The traditional instruments are the Harp, Uilleann Pipes, Bodhrán, Flute and Fiddle.

The Harp became the symbol of Ireland. Nowadays Irish traditional music is closely associated with pubs where it is often performed. Traditional Irish dance is also still popular, particularly amongst children, and has become famous worldwide through the touring show "Riverdance". Irish dancing sessions, called ceili, provide opportunities for all to enjoy the tradition.



Everyday Customs

As a newcomer to the South East (and Ireland) you may find some of the customs and unspoken rules of behaviour are quite different to those you are used to. This can lead to misunderstandings. Some useful points to remember are listed below:

Irish people are generally very polite and often use phrases such as “please” and “thank you”, “if you wouldn’t mind”, “sorry” etc.

They often don’t like to say “No” directly. In general they will be polite and friendly and soften negativity by saying things like “I’m afraid not”, “Unfortunately”, “I’m sorry” or just “Sorry”.

They usually shake hands when greeting one another. When speaking with someone, it is usual and polite to look him/her in the eye. Averting the eyes when talking may be interpreted as being uninterested.

When waiting for a service, e.g. in a bank, post office, shop etc. it is usual to go to the back of the queue of people who are already waiting. This queue is normally clearly visible. In some cases, such as waiting for a bus, there may not be an ordered queue. Yet even here, people take note of who was there before them and let them board first.

Most Irish people send greetings cards to friends and family to celebrate occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, marriages, new babies etc.

Amongst other customs, burial traditions are very strong in Ireland. The deceased is often laid in an open coffin at the home address to be

viewed by mourners before burial. Throughout this period, the body is not left alone, even at night, and therefore this is referred to as the “wake”. It usually lasts overnight and into the next day, but can be longer. During this time mourners may call to the house to pass on their commiserations. The deceased will then be taken to church, where a service is held before the body is buried. A function is then held for mourners so that the deceased can be remembered in good spirits. These rituals are extremely important to the Irish and should be respected.

Understanding Local People

You will notice that Irish people have accents. There are a huge variety of accents depending on where the person comes from. If you don’t understand an accent, ask the person politely to speak more slowly. Some commonly used words and phrases include:

“Cop on” – Means common sense, can be used as a noun or verb.
“Cop yourself on” means have some common sense.

“Craic” – Pronounced “crack”, this means fun, enjoyment and laughter and often refers to a good night out.

“Grand” – Literally means impressive. In Ireland it means fine, good or OK. For example, if you ask how someone is, they might reply “Grand”. It can also be used to say thousand, as in “50 grand” meaning 50,000.

“It is sorted” – Literally means some thing has been done, but it can also mean something is in progress or will be done.

“Sorry” – Literally an apology but in most cases means “Excuse me” and also takes the place of an outright “No” in order to be more polite.

“Your man” – Literally means the man belonging to you, but is used to refer to a specific person.

“Well” – This is a form of greeting

“Hun” or “Honey” – This is a form of informal greeting used mostly in Co. Wexford.

“Blaa” – This is a type of bread available only in Waterford

As a newcomer to Ireland, you will be made to feel very welcome, but you will also be expected to have an understanding of Irish culture, general history and way of life and to show sensitivity to these aspects of your new home.

Weather

The weather is a favourite discussion topic amongst Irish people. Strangers passing in the street often say “Lovely day” or, more often, comment on the rain. Temperatures are fairly similar over the whole country. Ireland has a temperate climate, meaning there are

few extremes in temperature or rainfall. The seasons are neither too hot nor too cold. The coldest months are January and February with average temperatures of between 4-7°C, and July and August are the warmest. Extremes of temperature, below -3°C or above 26°C are very rare. While snow is very rare, rain can be expected all year round. The wettest months are usually December and January.

Since Ireland is situated in the northwest of Europe, the days are longer in summer and shorter in winter. The evenings are bright up to 10pm in summer, while in winter it can be dark by 5pm. In order to avoid very dark days, the clocks are put back one hour in autumn (on the last Sunday in October) and forward again in spring (on the last Sunday in March).



2. Everyday Living

Government and Voting Rights

There are three layers of government in Ireland:

- Local:** Town, City, Borough or County Councils
- National:** Parliament made up of:
The Dáil (pronounced “doyl”) – Lower house
The Seanad (pronounced “shanad”) – Senate/
Upper house
- European:** The European Parliament

Elections are held for representatives at all levels, and also for the President. Changes to the Constitution are voted on in Referenda.

As a foreign national living in Ireland, your voting rights depend on your age (you must be at least 18 years of age), the type of election and the citizenship that you hold: (Fig 1.)

In order to vote in any election your name must be on the **electoral register** compiled by the local authority. The register is produced each year and includes the name and address of everyone aged over 18 who is eligible to vote. The draft register is put on display in libraries, post

offices and other public buildings every November and changes can be made up to 25th November. However, if you are eligible to vote but not included on the register, you can apply to be included in the Supplement to the Register. If you change your address, you should inform the Local Authority so that the register can be updated.

Local Authority Contacts

Carlow County Council, Athy Road, Carlow. Tel: 059 9170300

Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, Kilkenny. Tel: 056 7794000

North Tipperary County Council, Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh
Tel: 067 31771 or 44500

South Tipperary County Council, County Hall, Clonmel. Tel: 052 34455

Waterford City Council, Baileys New Street, Waterford. Tel: 051 309900

Waterford County Council, Civic Offices, Davitts Quay, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. Tel: 058 22000

Wexford County Council, County Hall, Wexford. Tel: 053 91 76500

Fig 1. Type of Election

Citizen	Local	Dáil	Seanad	Presidential	European	Referenda
Irish	✓	✓	✓ *	✓	✓	✓
UK	✓	✓			✓	
EU	✓				✓	
Non-EU	✓					

*Voting confined to a small, select electorate

Banking

Banks and building societies are usually open Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. When opening an account you will be asked for photo identification (passport, driving licence etc.) and proof of current permanent address (e.g. electricity, gas or phone bills). If an original bill is not available, if, for example the supply is not in your name, your employer may be able to help with a letter stating your name, address, date of birth and Personal Public Service (PPS) number. The exact documentation varies from bank to bank, so it is best to check what is required. Bank charges can be high so it's worth shopping around before opening an account. Money transfers can be made from banks, credit unions or post offices. Please note, you may see armed personnel around banks at certain times. This is entirely routine.

If you have difficulty opening a bank account contact the Financial Regulator.

If you find yourself in financial difficulties, there is a free, confidential and independent organisation that can help by providing information and advice, called the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS). There are offices around the country and you should use the one closest to you. The address can be found at the Citizens Information Centre (CIC) or at www.mabs.ie.

Further Information

Financial Regulator on

Lo Call 1890 777777 or check their

Web: www.itsyourmoney.ie

Public Holidays

Most organisations, including government offices, post offices, banks, are closed on public/bank holidays. Bus and train services may be reduced, but increasingly, city centre shops and shopping centres are open for part of the day. On Christmas Day everything, including the pubs, closes.

The following are public holidays

New Year's Day – 1st January

St Patrick's Day (National holiday) –
17th March

Easter Monday – Late March or April

First Monday in May

First Monday in June

First Monday in August

Last Monday in October

Christmas Day – 25th December

St Stephen's Day – 26th December

While not officially public holidays, many businesses also close on Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Newspapers

There is at least one local paper in each county and these are usually published weekly. They contain a classified advertisements section that is useful if you are looking for items to buy, services, employment or accommodation.

National daily newspapers include the Irish Examiner, Irish Independent and Irish Times. These cover national and international news and have supplements on accommodation, job vacancies etc. on particular days of the week. These newspapers, and many others can be read free of charge in most libraries.

Metro Éireann is a weekly multi-cultural newspaper with up-to-date information for immigrants and ethnic communities. Papers in other languages may also be available in newsagents.

Contact Details

Metro Éireann
Tel: (01) 8690670
www.metroeireann.com

Television and Radio

In Ireland there are four television channels.

RTÉ1

RTÉ2 (Largely English language)

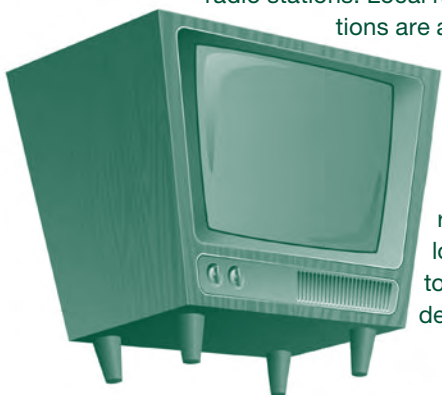
TG 4 (Irish language)

TV3

It is compulsory to have a TV licence in Ireland which can be purchased at the Post Office and is issued for a period of 1 year. One licence covers all the televisions in one household, but anyone in possession of a TV must have a licence for it.

Radio is very popular in Irish daily life and there are a number of national radio stations. Local radio sta-

tions are a particularly good source of news and information. Please refer to the local directory for more details.



Faith Communities

The main religion in Ireland is Catholicism, but there is also a significant Protestant minority. Other faith communities are also represented and they can be contacted at their places of worship or via the internet.

Further Information

General Religious Information

www.theology.ie

Country of Origin Groups

There are a variety of groups in Ireland representing the interests of immigrants from many nations. A comprehensive list can be found at www.integratingireland.ie under Member Organisations.

There is also a group called the Eastern European Association of Ireland (Tel: 0214-823937; email: eeai@eircom.net).

For information about local groups, please refer to the local directory or contact your local CIC.

Libraries

There is a network of public libraries in Ireland that are open to all. Anyone can drop in and read a book or newspaper free of charge, find out more about local culture, history and facilities. To borrow books you need to join the library. This involves showing proof of your address and in some cases, paying a small fee. Application forms are available in the libraries themselves. They also have children's libraries. Depending on the individual library service, membership for children up to a particular age is free. Libraries often host free events for children and adults.

Further Information

www.librarycouncil.ie or contact your Local Authority

Public Parks

Many towns and cities in Ireland have parks that are open to the public and free of charge. They often have playgrounds, gardens and ponds.

Sports Facilities

There is a range of sports facilities in the South East. Some are private (e.g. gyms and swimming pools) and access is for members only. There are many public sports facilities open to the community.

Most towns have Gaelic games grounds run by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). This is a very old organisation formed to preserve and encourage the playing of hurling, Gaelic football and other Gaelic games in Ireland.

Horseracing is very popular in the south east and there are numerous race meetings throughout the year.

Further Information

www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

www.gaa.ie

www.horseracingireland.ie

www.irishrugby.ie

www.fai.ie

North Tipperary Sports Partnership

Web: www.ntsp.ie

Waterford Sports Partnership

Web: www.waterfordspartnership.ie

Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership

Email: krsp@eircom.net

Also see local directory

Recreation

There are many popular recreations that can be enjoyed in the South East and the best way to find out what is available in your local area is the local newspaper and local community notice boards. Here you will find local groups advertising various events, meetings and classes in a diverse range of activities such as yoga, drama, walking tours etc.



Miscellaneous

Refuse Collection

In Ireland, each householder is ultimately responsible for the safe disposal or recycling of the waste that they generate. The Local Authority ensures that there are systems in place in the area, but the householder must arrange and pay for the service. In some areas, tagged bin bags must be used for household rubbish and these are purchased from local shops or petrol stations. In other parts of the country, the Local Authority/ private contractors provide wheelie-bins. In some areas there is a refuse and recycling collection on alternate weeks. The Environment Department of your Local Authority will tell you what system is in place in your area. Recycling will lower the cost of refuse collection, so it is worth separating your rubbish. There is also a selection of Civic Amenities and Bottle Banks throughout the region. Please avail of the above services or you will be liable to prosecution under the Waste Management or Litter Pollution Acts. There are fines for littering and dog littering (All dog owners must have a dog licence which may be purchased from the Post Office.)

Tidy Towns

This is a national competition organised by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to promote high standards of tidiness in towns and villages. Residents volunteer to take part and compete against other

towns for the title and a cash prize. The groups meet regularly to bring their town up to standard by removing litter, landscaping public areas etc. The dates of meetings can be found in the local press.

Farmers' Markets

These are markets where good quality, locally grown food is sold directly by the producers. They take place all over the country. For further information see www.irelandmarkets.com.

Plastic Bag Charges

Retailers in Ireland are required to charge for every plastic bag given out. The charge is made at the point of sale, so that is at the shop, supermarket, petrol station etc. where the bag is purchased.

Smoking Ban

Smoking in enclosed places of work is illegal. This means that smoking is forbidden in any enclosed public place where people work e.g. office blocks, pubs, restaurants, company vehicles (cars or vans). It also includes halls and corridors.

Smoking in a confined place could lead to a heavy fine.



3. Accommodation

There are a number of choices when looking for accommodation in Ireland. You could rent a bed-sit, a flat or apartment or share a house. The types of accommodation are explained in more detail below:

Private Rented Accommodation

Bed-sit: Usually for one person, or occasionally two. It is cheaper than a flat but with less space. It would have one room for sleeping, eating, cooking and living. Bathroom and toilet facilities are usually shared with other tenants.

Flat/Apartment: This is for one or more people depending on size. Self contained with separate bedroom(s) and normally own bathroom.

House Sharing: More space, self-contained and often better equipment and facilities can make this good value for money.

Lodgings: Own or shared bedroom, with other facilities shared with host family.

Seeking rented accommodation

It can be difficult to find accommodation in the right place and at the right price and certain times in the year are more difficult, especially where the colleges and universities are re-opening after the summer holidays.

A good place to start is the classified advertisements (ads) section of the local newspaper under the 'To Let' and 'Flat/House Sharing' columns, advertisements on the notice boards in local shops and 'To let' signs displayed on flats or houses. Ask your friends or acquaintances as many of the best flats are passed on through personal contact.

Accommodation ads in newspapers include many abbreviations – here are some of the most common:

CH: Central Heating.

(GFCH – gas-fired central heating, OFCH – Oil-fired central heating)

FF: Fully Furnished

NRA: No Rent Allowance (i.e. the landlord will not accept Rent Allowance as payment for the rent. You must be able to pay for the rent yourself)

Professional (or prof): Someone currently employed and working

NS: Non-smoker

Another way to find accommodation is through letting and accommodation agencies and estate agents (check the Golden Pages under heading "letting agents" for contact details). However, most agencies charge a fee so check out their charges and services beforehand. Other places to look are the notice boards in supermarkets and in colleges. There are also some websites on the Internet or you could place your own advert in the local newspaper or shop notice board. The quality of rental accommodation can vary quite a bit so

you should view the property before making any agreement.

Rent, Deposits & Contracts

Once you've found suitable accommodation, be sure you clearly understand the terms and conditions, for example the amount of rent, when it should be paid, whether it includes bills such as gas, electricity and bin charges, the length one can stay etc. Most landlords ask for a deposit (usually one month's rent) as well as one month's rent in advance. Always ask for a receipt. The deposit will be returned to you when you leave, provided that you have paid all bills, given sufficient notice and not damaged the property. All landlords must provide a rent book.

What is a rent book?

A rent book is a document that records details about the tenancy and notes all payments of rent that you have made to the landlord. By law you are entitled to a rent book. Usually it is in booklet form but it can be another form provided it contains all the necessary details.

Your rent book should contain the following information:

The address of your accommodation
Your landlord's name and address or the landlord's letting agent (if any)

Your name

The date the tenancy started

The length of the tenancy

The amount of deposit paid

The amount of rent and how it is to be paid

Details of any other payments for

services, e.g., for heating or cable television

A statement on the basic rights and duties of landlords and tenants

A list of furnishings and appliances supplied by the landlord

Your landlord may ask that you sign a lease. A lease is a written agreement containing the conditions you both agree to. A lease is usually for a specific time (e.g. 6 or 12 months) and if you leave before this you may have to pay the rent for the remainder of the lease. If you sign a lease with others, you become responsible for each other's rent. If you don't understand the terms of the lease, contact the independent agency, Threshold (see address below) for free advice before signing.

What are your rights?

Your landlord cannot ask you to leave during the period of your lease, unless you have broken some of the terms of the agreement without providing the agreed period of notice. Your rent cannot be increased during that time unless a condition is put into the lease. Even if you don't have a lease, your landlord must give you at least four weeks' notice (longer if you have lived there longer than 6 months) in writing if he/she wants you to leave the property (you must do the same if you plan to leave).

If you think your deposit has been unfairly withheld, the terms of your lease have been broken or you have had problems with your landlord, contact Threshold or the CIC for free housing advice and information.

Contact Details

Threshold
21 Stoneybatter
Dublin 7
Tel: 01 678 6310
Email: info@ threshold.ie
www.threshold.ie

Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB)

A landlord can only rent out accommodation if certain minimum standards are complied with. These standards include:

- Repayment of Deposits
- Maintenance of the property i.e. safe electrics, boilers etc.
- Repairs
- Rent Increases
- Rent Supplement
- Notice of Termination of Rental Agreement
- Illegal Eviction

The Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) has been set up to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants. Landlords are required to register details of all their tenancies with the PRTB. (See contact details and address below)

The PRTB has engaged a number of mediators in a variety of locations throughout Ireland. The mediators have various professional backgrounds and profiles – many with expertise and experience in landlord and tenant issues and/or in mediation skills. You can avail of this mediation service by contacting the PRTB.

Contact Details

Private Residential Tenancies Board
Canal House
Canal Road
Dublin 6
Tel: 01 8882960
Email: prtb@environ.irlgov.ie
www.prtb.ie

Supports available when renting

In general if you are claiming a social welfare payment, a Health Service Executive or similar payment you may qualify for rent supplement to help pay your rent. The size of the allowance will depend on your income and the amount of rent payable each week. As with most social welfare payments, to be eligible you must satisfy the “habitual residence” and other conditions. You can get more information from your local Community Welfare Officer (CWO) at your local Health Centre.

Local authorities help those who cannot afford to buy or rent their own home, by providing houses and flats at a low rent. Local authority housing is also known as social housing, council housing or public housing. Demand for such housing is high and priority is given to families with children and older people. Applicants must meet eligibility criteria (e.g. around income levels) and even then they spend months or years on the waiting list before getting accommodation.

If you live in private rented accommodation and you pay income tax (PAYE) in Ireland you may be eligible for tax relief on part of your rent. To apply you must complete Form Rent 1,

which is available from the Revenue Commissioners or from www.revenue.ie.

Buying a Home

The price of houses in Ireland has increased dramatically since the mid 1990s. Prices vary a lot depending on where the house is. House prices tend to be much higher in the cities. Houses are usually advertised and sold through estate agents, although some are sold privately, e.g. through ads in newspapers. The types of property available are detached bungalows, semi-detached houses, two storey houses and apartments. You can find out more information about buying a house in Ireland on the internet.

To buy a house in Ireland, you will probably need to get a loan from an Irish Bank, building society or other lending institution. This loan is called a mortgage and is usually repaid over an agreed length of time. As well as this loan you will also need to pay a large deposit, although some banks and building societies are offering 100% mortgages in some cases. The size of the mortgage (loan) you qualify for will depend on the amount you earn. Information on other charges payable when buying a house and advice on mortgages is available from independent mortgage brokers, banks and building societies. However they all charge different interest rates so it's important to shop around. For independent information on interest rates, etc contact the Financial Services Regulatory Authority. See contact details opposite.

You will also face many other additional costs when buying a house. Depending on the cost and size of the house you may have to pay tax to the government called Stamp Duty. In general, you will also have to employ a solicitor and they usually charge about 1% of the purchase price to oversee the transaction on your behalf.

Further Information

Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority
P.O. Box No: 9138
College Green
Dublin 2
Tel. 01 4104000
E-mail: consumerinfo@ifsra.ie
www.ifsra.ie

Institute of Auctioneers and Valuers in Ireland
38 Merrion Square
Dublin 2.
Tel. 01 6611794
www.iavi.ie

Supports available when buying property in Ireland

The Shared Ownership Scheme

This is aimed at people in Ireland who cannot afford to buy their home. It allows you to share ownership of a house with a local authority. You pay mortgage repayments on the part you own and rent to the local authority on the part they own.

The Affordable Housing Scheme

This aims to help people with low incomes to buy their own homes. Your local authority will generally advertise the availability of houses for sale under this scheme in your local newspaper – houses are sold to eligible buyers at less than the market value.

Eligibility for both the above schemes depends on level of need and income, and residency status.

Further information on above schemes is available from the Housing Department of the local authority in the area where you want to buy a house. A full list Local Authority websites is available on page 18 of this guide.

Emergency Accommodation

If you do not have anywhere to stay in the case of an emergency or a crisis, there are some organisations providing temporary shelter for homeless people. The first point of contact should be your local Community Welfare Officer in your local Health Service Executive Centre who will advise you on your rights and entitlements.

Information on accommodation available to homeless people is also available from your local authority (ask to speak to the housing department in your local authority). Voluntary organisations such as St. Vincent de Paul, the Simon Community, the Salvation Army may also be of assistance but this depends on your location in Ireland and details of these are available at your local Citizens Information Centres.



4. Employment

The rules governing who can work freely in Ireland and who needs permission (a permit, visa or authorisation) are complicated. We have tried to give a general picture of the current situation, but cannot cover all cases.

Work Permits

Many people are free to work without a work permit, including:

- Citizens of a European Economic Area (EEA) country (This means the EU countries and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and Switzerland. Spouses and dependent children of these citizens are also included. This also includes the former EU accession states.
- Persons granted refugee status
- Person refused refugee status but given leave to remain on humanitarian grounds
- Post-graduate students where work is an integral part of course of study being undertaken
- Person given permission to stay in the country because they are a spouse of an Irish citizen or the parent of an Irish citizen
- Person coming to Ireland from overseas company for a maximum of 3 years' training, whether it involves paid work or not, at an Irish-based company (Evidence of details of training and its duration will be required)

Employers have to apply for work permits on behalf of prospective employees. They must be obtained before the employee starts work. Working without a valid work permit if you are required to have one is an offence under Irish law. If you have a work permit, it is possible to change employers but your new employer must apply for a work permit on your behalf. The existing work permit must be returned to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment with a covering letter from your old employer. An employer will pay a fee for a permit, which can last for up to a year. Applications for renewal of a permit should be made before the end of the current permit. Applications are currently taking around 4 weeks to process, if all documentation is in order.

A new system of employment permits is due to start late in 2006. This will greatly restrict both the number of permits issued and the sectors to which they will apply. It will be based on the annual salary of the post. Under current guidelines, work permits are only issued for highly specific, highly-qualified personnel.

Working Visas and Work Authorisation

If you are a non-EEA citizen it is possible to apply for working authorisation or a working visa in order to work in certain sectors where there are skills shortages. Applications must be made from outside Ireland and the person applying must

have an offer of a contract of employment from an employer in Ireland in one of the named sectors e.g. healthcare, information technology or construction engineering. These differ from work permits in that the employee applies for them and they must be obtained before entering the country. If you are a non-EEA national who needs a visa to enter Ireland, then you can apply for a working visa. If you are a non-EEA national who does not need a visa to enter Ireland, then you can apply for working authorisation. Work visas and working authorisations last for 2 years and you can change employer provided that you stay in the same sector.

Further Information

For the latest information and application forms contact:

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
www.entemp.ie

Work Permits Section

Tel: 01-6313333
Email: workpermits@entemp.ie

Working Visas

Tel: 01-6313186
Email: workingvisas@entemp.ie

Europass

Europass is an EU initiative to help people make their skills, and qualifications clearly understood throughout Europe. Europass brings together documents that have been developed at European

level to facilitate the movement of both learners and workers throughout Europe. These documents are Europass CV, Europass Language Passport, Europass Mobility Document, Europass Certificate Supplement and Europass Diploma Supplement. The five documents are collectively referred to as the Europass Portfolio.

People can use Europass documents when they are seeking jobs and when they wish to enter education and training programmes. The documents are especially helpful when people move between countries to work because they make it easier for employers to understand the qualifications and competencies of job seekers from other EU Member States. Europass also helps education, training and guidance practitioners to advise people about the most suitable learning paths and opportunities. Email: info@europass.ie or visit www.europass.ie

Support in finding a Job

There are several useful sources of information when you are looking for a job in Ireland:

Newspapers

The Friday edition of the Irish Times and Irish Examiner and the Thursday edition of the Irish Independent and Sunday Independent have recruitment sections. These are national newspapers so the jobs may be based anywhere in Ireland. Local newspapers are best for local jobs and can be read free of charge at libraries and some public offices including FÁS and Adult Guidance centres.

FÁS – The National Training and Employment Authority

FÁS provides a range of services to help people find work (provided they are eligible to work in Ireland). FÁS advertises job vacancies on its website or on notice boards at local offices and provides career guidance to job seekers as well as information on training opportunities. FÁS supports a network of Local Employment Service offices called OBAIR where staff can help with CV and interview preparation, career guidance and educational training for those who find it particularly difficult to find work. The first step to access FÁS services is to register at your local FÁS office.

Further Information

FÁS Training & Employment Authority

www.fas.ie

Employment Services Offices

Carlow
Unit 6A
Carlow Shopping Centre
Kennedy Avenue
Carlow
Tel: (059) 9142605

Kilkenny
Irishtown
Kilkenny
Tel: (056) 7765514

North Tipperary
Friar Street
Thurles
Tel: (0504) 22188

South Tipperary
2-3 Emmet Street
Clonmel
Tel: (052) 82240

Waterford
56 Parnell Street
Waterford
Tel: (051) 862900

Wexford
Peter's Square
Wexford
Tel: (053) 9123126 / 9123936

EURES

Set up in 1993, EURES is a co-operation network between the European Commission and the Public Employment Services of the EEA Member States. The purpose of EURES is to provide information, advice and recruitment/ placement (job-matching) services for the benefit of workers. Information on job opportunities, training and living in another EU country is available in 20 languages on the website.

Further Information

EURES

www.europa.eu.int/eures

Recruitment Agencies

Recruitment agencies also have accessible websites where jobs are advertised. See the Golden Pages for a full listing.

How to Apply for a Job

Once you've found a job advertisement that interests you and seems to match

your skills, the next step is to apply for the position. The job ad will tell you how to apply – this usually involves sending an application letter and a curriculum vitae (see below) by a specific date. It's important not to miss that date, as late applications are not usually considered. The employer may want you to apply using an application form, which is generally mentioned in the ad and is available from the employer.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A CV gives a brief outline of your education and work experience and seeks to show the employer why you are suitable for the job.

It should include:

- Personal details (name, age, contact details)
- Details of your education
- Work experience and employment history
- Interests and activities
- Additional skills e.g. foreign languages spoken, computer literacy
- Names and addresses of people who will give you a reference (usually past employers)

The layout of a CV is important. It should be easy to read, clear and concise (1-2 pages at most). You should adapt your CV to match the requirements of each job applied for. Sample CVs can be viewed at www.ucc.ie/careers.

Covering Letter

When applying for a job, always send a covering letter with your CV. Indicate the post you are applying

for and where you learned about the vacancy. Explain why you are interested in the job. Mention briefly your relevant qualifications and related work experience. Finally, indicate your availability for interview and if necessary ask for further information, such as a job description.

The Interview

The employer will invite applicants who seem best suited to the job for interview. If you are called for an interview, you should prepare well. Find out if there is any aptitude (ability, skill) test included in the interview. Research the organisation and the job itself. Think about your strengths and weaknesses. Think about good questions to ask the employer to show that you've considered what the job involves. Allow enough time to arrive 20-30 minutes early. Dress professionally and give a firm handshake. Listen to the questions carefully and answer clearly and concisely. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.

If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. When given the opportunity to ask questions, demonstrate what you know about the company. Leave on a positive note.



Income Tax and Social Insurance

Once you have a job you will pay tax in the PAYE (pay as you earn) system, unless you are self-employed. In the PAYE system, the amount of tax you owe is calculated by your employer and deducted from your wages every week or month. It is regulated by the Revenue Commissioner. Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions will also be deducted from your salary if you earn over a certain amount. Your PRSI contributions may entitle you to social welfare benefits at a future date. All employees are entitled to receive a pay-slip from their employers. It is a confidential written statement of the total gross earnings, any deductions and the net pay after deductions.

Shortly after the end of each financial year (31st December) your employer should give you a form called a Certificate of Earnings or P60. This sets out the gross amount of pay received during that year, and the details of deductions for PAYE and PRSI. If you leave the country before the end of the financial year, you may be entitled to claim a tax refund. Your P60 is important and should be kept safe as you may need it to claim social welfare benefits or tax refunds. It also provides you with proof of the deductions made from your pay. If you leave a job, your employer should give you a form called a P45, which you should then give to any new employer, this form comes in four parts. Part 1 is sent to the Tax Office by your employer.

Part 2 & 3 can be given to your next employer if you start in your new job immediately. However, if you are

unemployed for four weeks or more you can submit the Form P45 Parts 2 & 3 to the Tax Office with a completed P50 form in order to claim a Tax Refund. Any person who remains unemployed may use part 4 of the P45 to claim benefits from the Department of Social & Family Affairs. When you start work for the first time, you should obtain a PPS number (see below). Quote this number in all dealings with the tax office. Then you need to contact the tax office to get a Certificate of Tax Credits (CTC). To do this fill out Form 12A, which is available from any tax office or from the Revenue Commissioner's website www.revenue.ie. After receiving your completed form, the tax office will send both you and the employer a Certificate of Tax Credits which sets out in detail the amount of tax credits and standard rate cut off point that apply to you i.e. how much tax you have to pay. If your employer does not hold a CTC for you, s/he must deduct tax at emergency rates that may result in excessive deductions, although this would be refunded to you later.

Contact Details

PAYE – Lo-Call 1890 44 44 25
(South East Region)

Email: esepaye@revenue.ie,

www.reach.ie –
for all Government Departments

Revenue on-Line - www.revenue.ie

PPS Number

All employees should have a PPS (Personal Public Service) number. This is your unique reference number for all your dealings with the public services e.g. dealing with the Revenue Commissioners, applying for social welfare etc. If you are working you should apply for a PPS number as soon as possible to avoid having to pay emergency tax.

PPS numbers are allocated at the Social Welfare Office nearest to where you live. You must apply in person, complete the application form (Reg 1) in the office and provide proof of identity e.g. a passport, a national ID card, or, in the case of a non-EEA national, an Immigration Card, and proof of address in Ireland. You may also be asked for evidence of activity in your home country (i.e. evidence of birth/work/unemployment/residency/tax liability/education) so it is best to bring such documents with you.

Further information can be obtained from www.welfare.ie.

Health and Safety in the Workplace

There are laws in Ireland about health and safety in the workplace. It establishes rights and places responsibilities on the employer and the employee. The employer is required to provide a safe workplace where hazards are identified and the threat from them reduced as much as possible. It is necessary for employers to provide training and instruction about the hazards in a specific workplace and it is a further requirement that this is in a

language that the employee can understand e.g. a Safe Pass Construction Course delivered in Polish to Polish speaking workers.

Employees are required to take reasonable care for their own and their co-workers' safety. This compels employees to be aware of health & safety procedures in their workplace and to abide by them e.g. using personal protective equipment where required and not being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

All accidents in a workplace should be recorded. It is a legal requirement that all workplace accidents resulting in three or more days absence are reported to the Health & Safety Authority (HSA). The HSA provides information and publications on all areas of workplace health & safety. They can be contacted on LO-CALL Number 1890 289 389.

If an employee is injured at work he or she may be entitled to claim under the Occupational Injuries Scheme operated by the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

The Personal Injuries Assessment Board (PIAB) is an independent body whose function is to mediate between an employer and an employee in workplace accident claims to avoid lengthy court cases.

Further Information

Health and Safety Authority

10 Hogan Place

Dublin

Tel: local 1890 289 389

www.safework.ie

PIAB

PO Box 8, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Tel: Lo-call 1890 829 121

Email: enquiries@piab.ie

Web: www.piab.ie

Your Rights at Work

There is a wide range of legislation that guarantees minimum rights and protection for both full-time and part-time workers. Examples include:

Terms and Conditions

When you start a new job your employer must give you a written statement of your Terms and Conditions within two months of commencement. This sets out detailed information related to your wage, working hours, breaks, holidays, maternity pay, sick pay etc. It should also describe what your job entails.

Wages and Entitlements

There is a minimum wage in Ireland for experienced adult employees i.e. those who have been employed for any two years from the age of 18. Certain sectors of industry including agriculture, construction and hotel and catering are covered by special agreements that set minimum rates of pay for particular skilled workers. These may be in excess of the National Minimum Wage. You are entitled to a Sunday premium, either extra pay or time off for working on Sundays. Your employer is not allowed to deduct money from your wages unless it is required by law (e.g. tax, social insurance) or you have agreed to it or the deduction is written in your contract.

Working Time Rates

On average you should not work more than 48 hours a week (usually averaged over 4 months). You are entitled to at least 11 hours daily rest in any 24 hour period, one period of 24 hours consecutive rest per week, with a daily rest break preceding it. You are also entitled to one 15 minute break if working more than 4½ hours and a 30 minute break if working more than 6 hours. The amount of notice an employer must give before terminating employment is also regulated.

Holidays

All time worked qualifies for paid holiday time. Employees are entitled to four working weeks paid annual leave in each leave year. There are nine public holidays when your employer can either give you a paid day off on that day, a paid day off within a month, an additional day of paid annual leave or an additional day's pay. Part-time workers are also entitled to paid holidays depending on the number of hours they work.

Maternity and Parental Leave

From March 2007 if you are pregnant you will be entitled to at least 26 weeks maternity leave from your job and you can also take an additional 16 weeks unpaid leave. After this period you are entitled to return to the same job and the same terms and conditions of employment. Each parent is also entitled to 14 weeks unpaid parental leave for each child that can be taken in a single block or at intervals until the child is eight. Your employer will have to agree to the timing of this leave.

Protection against Discrimination

There are laws to prevent discrimination at work on nine separate grounds (Chapter 8 Law and Order, Discrimination) and conditions of employment, such as training and promotion, are also covered.

What if I have a problem with my employer?

Employment law is a complex subject that cannot be fully explored in this guide. If you have any queries regarding your employment rights you can telephone the Department of Employment, Trade and Enterprise Employment Rights Information on Lo-call 1890 201 615 or your local CIC. They both provide leaflets in other languages. If you are a member of a trade union, you can consult them about any grievance you might have.

Trade Unions in Ireland

Research shows that you are much less likely to be discriminated against if you are represented by a trade union. Equally, your chances of successfully challenging work place problems are increased if you have representation. Employees in Ireland have a legal right to join a trade union. A trade union can provide an important source of information and protection in relation to employment matters, as well as negotiating with the employer for better pay and conditions.

Further Information:

Irish Congress of Trade Unions,
31/32 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1
Tel: (01) 889 7777
Fax:(01) 887 2012
www.ictu.ie

Starting your own Business

If you want to start a business in Ireland, there are many factors to consider. For example, you will require information regarding the formation of a company, registering your company, locating and naming your business, employing staff and the taxation, legal and regulatory information that governs every business in Ireland. Various organisations exist to help you in this decision, some of which are listed below.

Further Information

Business Access to State Information and Services

www.basis.ie

City and County Enterprise Boards

www.enterpriseboards.ie

The Revenue Commissioners

www.revenue.ie

The Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)

www.ibec.ie

Life Steps

www.lifesteps.ie

Companies Registration Office (CRO)

www.cro.ie

5. Social Welfare Services

General

The Social Welfare system in Ireland provides a range of income and family supports and other services. These are targeted at people with particular needs – e.g. those who are unemployed, families, people with disabilities and carers. Social welfare payments fall into three types:

- Contributory payments are available to those who have paid a specific number of Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions while working, and whether you qualify for a payment depends on you having paid a certain number of PRSI contributions.
- Non-contributory schemes are based on you and your family's circumstances. You are required to satisfy a "means test" and to be "habitually resident" in the state. This test establishes whether your income is below a certain level. The level will vary depending on the schemes and your family circumstances.
- Other payments such as Child Benefit, Free Travel and Respite Care Grant do not depend on PRSI contributions or a means test but some other conditions must be satisfied such as Habitual Residence for Child Benefit.

Anyone can apply for a social welfare payment in their own right if they satisfy all the conditions for payment. You must

tell the Department about any change in your situation that may effect whether you qualify, such as your spouse taking up work or a change of address. In this guide we can only give an overview of some of the main payments available.

For further information

Department of Social & Family Affairs

Web: www.welfare.ie

Habitual Residence Condition

Habitual Residence is a condition you must satisfy in order to qualify for certain non-contributory payments and Child Benefit. This condition exists since 1 May 2004 and affects all applicants, regardless of nationality. It refers to what is known as the Common Travel Area, which consists of Ireland, Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

You are likely to satisfy the condition if:

- You have spent all your life in the Common Travel Area
- You have lived there for the last 2 years or more, have worked there and are now living in Ireland
- You have lived in the Common Travel Area for 2 years or more and then move to Ireland and intend to make it your permanent home.

However, if you have spent a shorter time here but can demonstrate your future intent to remain in Ireland permanently e.g. you have bought a home here or have family here then you may also be

considered habitually resident as each case is examined individually.

Social Insurance and EU Regulations

The EU Regulations apply to people who travel and work within the European Economic Area (EEA). These regulations allow workers to combine periods of social insurance in any of the EEA countries to help them qualify for a benefit or pension. EU Regulations ensure that if you go to work in any of the EEA countries you will receive the same treatment in social security matters as nationals of those countries. You can use periods of payment of social insurance there to help you and your family qualify for social security benefits in Ireland.

Jobseekers' Benefit & Assistance

If you have no work you may be entitled to receive jobseekers' payment. There are two payments: Jobseekers' Benefit and Jobseekers' Assistance. The key difference between the two is that benefit is based on your PRSI contributions and assistance is based on a means test. If you have not worked before in Ireland or have not paid enough social insurance (PRSI) contributions then you will not qualify for Jobseekers' Benefit. Jobseekers' Assistance is means-tested meaning that any income that you or your partner has will be taken into account.

In order to qualify for either payment, you must be unemployed, under 66 years of age, fit to take up and be available for full-time work and genuinely seeking work. To apply you should contact your

local social welfare office and bring with you your birth certificate or passport, a household bill and, if you have been in work previously, your P45 form or a letter from your employer confirming that you are no longer employed and the reasons for this. It is important that you apply for a jobseekers' payment as soon as possible (ideally on the first day of unemployment) even if you do not have all the documents needed.

If you have been unemployed in your own country before you came to Ireland then it may be possible to transfer your benefit payment to here if your country is covered by EU Regulations.

Child Benefit

This payment is available to all parents or guardians regardless of their income or PRSI contributions, provided they meet the habitual residence condition. The amount paid depends on the number of children and benefit is paid each month until the child reaches 16 (or until aged 18 if they are still in full-time education or have a disability)

Child Benefit is usually paid to the child's mother (or stepmother), provided that the child is living with them. If the child lives with their father or stepfather, Child Benefit may be paid to them. If the child is not living with or being maintained by their parents then the person caring for the child may get Child Benefit.

All workers, from both inside and outside the EU will be able to access Child Benefit. EU workers will be able to get payment even if their children

are not resident in the State. People from outside the EU will have to be resident in Ireland with their children to get payments.

Early Childcare Supplement

An annual childcare payment gives parents an allowance paid in quarterly instalments for each child aged under 6 years. This payment is given to those who qualify for Child Benefit. The purpose of the supplement is to financially assist families with the cost of raising children. There is no separate application form for the Early Childcare Supplement. You will automatically get it if you are receiving Child Benefit for a child under 6 years of age.

One Parent Family Payment

One Parent Family payment provides support for men or women who are bringing up a child or children without the support of a partner (e.g. single parents, widowed, divorced, separated, partner in prison etc.). The payment is means tested and only available to those who are resident in the state and are the main carer of at least one child and are not co-habiting with another person.

All EU nationals working in the State will be able to apply for this if necessary, as it is considered a family payment along with Child Benefit under European Law. This does not apply to people from the EU who are newly-arrived in Ireland and have been unable to find work yet.



Family Income Supplement

This is a weekly payment for low-income families including lone parents, where one parent is at work. To qualify for this payment you must work at least 19 hours a week or 38 hours a fortnight and you can combine your hours with those of your spouse or partner. You must have at least one child who is normally living with and supported by you. Your average income must be below a fixed amount, which will vary with your family size. You should apply for this payment as soon as possible after starting work. This payment is not taxable.

Maternity Benefit

Pregnant women who work are entitled to at least 26 weeks (from March 2007) maternity leave from work. After this period you are entitled to return to the same job, terms and conditions. Maternity Benefit is paid to employed and self-employed women while on maternity leave. To qualify you must have made a certain number of PRSI contributions and should apply at least 6 weeks (12 weeks if self-employed) before you plan to start your maternity leave. This payment is not taxable.

Other Payments

Illness Payments – There are a range of payments for those who are ill or have a disability.

Carer's Allowance – Means tested payment for carers who live with and look after people who need full time care.

Carer's Benefit – Payment made to insured persons who leave the workforce to look after people who need full time care.

Widows/Widowers Pension – Payments for people whose husband or wife has died

State Pension – Pension for those aged 66 and over

Back to Work/Back to Education – there are a wide range of supports, which try and encourage people who are unemployed/ill but wish to return to work or enrol in an education programme.

Respite Care Grant – An annual payment for full-time carers who look after certain people in need of full-time care and attention. The payment is made regardless of means but is subject to certain other conditions.

Treatment Benefits – Dental, Optical & Aural are based on PRSI contributions.

Further Information

Department of Social and Family Affairs
www.welfare.ie

6. Community Welfare

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is responsible for administering a range of payments alongside social welfare. The Community Welfare Service within the HSE administers the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) scheme on behalf of the Department of Social and Family Affairs. SWA payments are not normally available if you or your spouse/partner work 30 hours or more a week, if you are in full-time education or if you are under 18 years of age. It is means-tested, meaning your finances and those of your spouse/partner will have to be assessed before it is paid to you. You need to be habitually resident to qualify for most payments. There may be other conditions not mentioned here that will have to be met for you to claim any of these payments but that cannot be covered within the scope of this guide. For example, recent changes allow EU workers to access some payments if they have not been habitually resident in Ireland but they have some work history here. For further information that relates directly to your personal circumstances, you should contact your local health centre, the location of which can be found on the HSE website at www.hse.ie or at your local CIC. Applications are usually made in person to the Community Welfare Officer who decides in the first instance if the payment will be made. There is an appeal system if you disagree with their decision. The types of payments available can be broken down under five main headings:

1. Basic Payments

This is a payment made to those who have no income or an income below the amount set annually by the government. The amount paid depends on the size of your family and your circumstances. It is often made when other income is pending, such as while waiting for social welfare payments to come through or when starting a new job and waiting for the first salary payment.

2. Supplementary Welfare Supplements

These are a group of additional payments to your income to meet the cost of ongoing need, which you may qualify for depending on your circumstances. They include:

- **Rent Supplement** – in general you need to be receiving a Social Welfare or similar payment or on a government-approved scheme, be in need of housing and unable to afford the cost from your normal income, be a legal tenant and an applicant for council housing.
- **Mortgage Interest Supplement** – If your financial circumstances have changed since you took out your mortgage and you receive a Social Welfare payment you may be entitled to help towards the interest part of your repayments.
- **Diet Supplement** – Helps to pay for one of the four specific listed special diets that either you or one or more

of your dependents need because of a verified medical condition that requires special food.

- **Heating Supplement** – This is for those who have ill health, are infirm and require extra heating for their homes, and satisfy the normal SWA conditions.
- **Other Supplements** – Help to cover a necessary expense over a period of time, such as travel costs for hospital visits where people have ongoing need and satisfy the normal SWA conditions.

3. Exceptional Needs Payments

These payments cover unforeseen or once-off expenses or occasions that may cause you financial hardship. You must be unable to meet the need from your own income and have no other source of assistance available and satisfy the normal SWA conditions. For example, funeral expenses, or essential furniture and household equipment costs. Each application is considered on an individual basis, taking into account the type of need, the availability of alternative help and the income of your household.

4. Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance

Payable between June and the end of September, this payment is designed to help with the cost of providing school uniforms and footwear for children in full-time education between the ages of 2 and 22 years.

5. Urgent Needs Payments

People who would not normally qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance may have an urgent need (such as after a flood or a fire) and they may then qualify for an Urgent Needs Payment.

Health Service Executive Payments

There are a range of other payments available from HSE to assist people with illness or disability. They are made in addition to social welfare payments and are meant to enhance the quality of life of a person, e.g. Blind Welfare Allowance, Domicillary Care Allowance, Respite Care Grant, Mobility Allowance, Motorised Transport Grant and Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance. For more information on these contact your HSE or local CIC.

- **Blind Welfare Allowance** – This is extra to Social Welfare payments where the person is unable to work or attend to their normal daily duties due to their disability.
- **Domicillary Care Allowance** – This payment is for the parent or carer of a child from birth to 16 years of age whose mental or physical disability is so severe that he/she requires constant care and supervision. The care should be greater than that normally needed by a child of the same age.
- **Respite Care Grant** – This is an additional payment made to the parent or carer of children who is in receipt of Domicillary Care Allowance in order to provide respite/ a break/ a holiday for the family.

- **Mobility Allowance** – This is a payment for a severely disabled person to enable him/her to have a temporary change in surroundings that would be beneficial.

Community Care Services

There are a range of services that are delivered by your local community care centre. These include:

Adult and Child Psychiatry
 Adult Counselling
 Audiology
 Child Care and Family Support Services
 Child Health
 Civil Registration
 Community Welfare
 Dental and Orthodontic
 European Health Insurance Card
 Food Safety and Environmental Health
 Health Promotion
 Immunisation and Vaccination
 Ophthalmology
 Palliative Care
 Psychology
 Regional Service for Sexually Transmitted Infections
 Social Inclusion
 Women's Health

The new Bereavement Counselling Service within the HSE is available only to those who have been bereaved as a result of traumatic deaths such as suicide, homicide, accidents at work, home or on the farm and road traffic accidents. This service is accessed through a General Medical Practitioner (Doctor). All GPs have been notified of this service. The regional contact telephone number

for the voluntary Community Suicide Bereavement support groups - Talk It Over - is 1850 201 249.

Further Information

HSE

www.hse.ie

North Tipperary

Covered by HSE West
 31-33 Catherine Street, Limerick
 Tel. 061 483286/7
www.mwhb.ie

Carlow, Kilkenny, South Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford

Covered by HSE South
 Lacken Dublin Road, Kilkenny
 Tel. 056 778 4100

HSE Community Care Head Quarters Carlow/Kilkenny Community Care Head Quarters

Carlow Office Athy Road, Carlow.
 Tel: 059 9130053

Kilkenny Office James Green, Kilkenny.
 Tel: 056 7784600

Sth. Tipperary Community Care Head Quarters

Western Road, Clonmel,
 Co. Tipperary.
 Tel: 052 77000

Waterford Community Care Area

Cork Road, Waterford.
 Tel: 051 – 842800

Wexford Community Care Area

Grogans Road, Wexford.
 Tel: 053 – 9123522

7. Healthcare

General Practitioner (GP) or Doctor or Family Doctor

Anyone coming to live in Ireland should firstly choose and register with a GP or Doctor. Your GP should be your first point of contact if you are ill and may prescribe treatment for your illness or may refer you to a consultant or hospital for further investigation. Charges for visiting a GP are not set and will vary between doctors, so you should check prices beforehand. You will find a full listing of GPs in the Golden Pages or on www.icgp.ie

Registering with a GP on arrival will ensure that should you experience problems with your health, information regarding your medical history will be on record.

If you require a GP after surgery closes (6pm) or at weekends and your own GP is not on call, you can telephone an after-hours family doctors' service, e.g. Caredoc or Shannondoc. See your local directory for the telephone number.

Hospitals

The South East has a range of public and private hospitals that provide services on an inpatient and outpatient basis. Some provide general services, while others specialise, for example in maternity, psychiatric, or geriatric services. A full list of hospitals can be found in the Golden Pages. Your GP arranges hospital appointments for scheduled operations or illness treatments. Patients should not visit

a hospital without an appointment, except in an emergency. Healthcare in Ireland is available through both a public and a private system.

Public Healthcare

Anyone who is "ordinarily resident" in Ireland can access the public health system. To be considered "ordinarily resident" you must show that you intend to stay in Ireland for at least one year (e.g. by showing your work permit, registration card, rental agreement etc.). The Health Service Executive (HSE) is responsible for providing health and social services in Ireland, and this is divided up into regions. The public health system distinguishes between two categories of patient – medical card holders and others.

Medical Cards

If you qualify for a medical card, you are entitled to a full range of medical services, free of charge. Usually your dependants (e.g. dependant husband/wife and children) will also qualify for free medical services. These services include:

- Visits to family doctor (GP)
- Hospital services (in public hospitals only)
- Most medicines that are prescribed by your doctor
- Maternity and infant care
- Dental, optical and aural services
- Medical appliances

However, some of these services may have waiting lists.

To qualify for a medical card, you must pass a means test, that is your income should be below a certain level. The income limit varies depending on your age and family circumstances. Everyone aged 70 and over, who is normally resident in Ireland, is entitled to a medical card, regardless of their income. You may automatically qualify for a medical card if you already receive certain benefits such as supplementary welfare allowance, old age and widow/ widowers' non-contributory pensions, disability or deserted wife's allowances, one-parent family payment to name a few, provided this is your only income. To find out if you are eligible for a Medical Card and to obtain an application form you should contact your nearest Health Centre in your regional HSE or your local CIC.

GP Visit Card

When choosing a family doctor, you should select one from a list of doctors available in your HSE region. The doctor should sign an acceptance form, accepting you as a patient, which you then return to the HSE.

Eligibility for a GP Visit Card is assessed on a similar basis to a means- tested medical card. The income guidelines are higher than medical card guidelines. Rent or mortgage payments, childcare costs and work-related travel costs are taken into account. If eligible, you will not have to pay for visits to your GP.

The same application process for means-tested Medical Cards applies to GP Visit Cards. To find out if you are eligible for a GP Visit Card and to get an application form, you should contact the nearest Health Centre in your HSE region.

Private Healthcare

Without a Medical Card or a GP Visit Card, you will be considered a private patient when you visit your GP and must pay for their services. Charges for visiting a GP are not set and will vary between doctors, so you should check prices beforehand. You will also have to pay for prescribed medicines and drugs, although if these costs are above a certain amount, you might get state support. There is no charge for maternity services from GPs during and immediately after pregnancy. If you do not qualify for a medical card, you can still access services in public hospitals (including consultant services), but you will have to pay a charge.

Private healthcare is available to anyone who can pay for it. Many people take out private health insurance to cover the cost of treatment in private hospitals (or private rooms in private hospitals) and visits to private doctors and consultants. The main health insurers in Ireland are VHI, BUPA and VIVAS (see Golden Pages for contact numbers). Each offers a range of insurance schemes, but may not cover you for existing medical conditions. Income Tax relief is available for certain health expenses.

Emergencies

In an emergency situation, dial 999 or 112 and ask for the ambulance service. These numbers can also be used for fire brigade, Garda, lifeboat, coastal and mountain rescue emergencies. Calls to the services are free but should only ever be used in emergency cases.

A number of hospitals provide an emergency service on a 24-hour a day, 7 days a week basis. In a medical emergency, you can go directly to the Emergency department without an appointment. If you call an ambulance to attend the Emergency department and your condition is not deemed to be an emergency, you will have to wait a number of hours to be treated. Emergency services are for the treatment of sudden and unexpected serious illness or injury only and it is best to attend your GP for all other treatment.

Pregnancy

Maternity and infant care are provided free of charge regardless of whether you have a medical card or not, but provided that you are "ordinarily resident" for the period of pregnancy and for 6 weeks following the birth. This service is initially provided by your GP. Pregnant women should book themselves into a hospital for the birth of a child under the care of a consultant. Those who have received antenatal care elsewhere should bring with them their medical notes and results of any tests previously carried out to avoid unnecessary duplication. Women with pregnancy-related emergencies can go directly to their maternity hospitals where there will be 24-hour admission rooms.

Pharmacies/Chemists

While you can buy a number of medicines without a prescription at a pharmacy (often referred to as a chemist) most are available only if you have a prescription from your GP. If you have a medical card there is generally no charge for prescribed drugs or medication (although there are some exceptions). If you do not have a medical card you will have to pay for prescriptions. However, the Drugs Payment Scheme limits the amount that an individual or family must pay for prescriptions in any one month. The limit varies year on year, so check with your local health centre. Registration forms for this scheme are available from doctors' surgeries and the regional HSE's. Drugs for certain chronic or long-term conditions such as epilepsy, mental illness and Parkinson's disease, are available free on prescription under the Long-Term Illness Scheme. This does not depend on your income. Application forms for this scheme are available from GPs and the HSE. Please note that asthma is not one of the conditions covered by this scheme. Income tax relief for prescribed medicines is available subject to certain limits.

While most chemists are open from 9am to 5.30pm, there are a number that offer late-night opening until 10pm and others that have limited opening on Sundays and Bank Holidays. A list of chemists and their opening hours is available in the Golden Pages.

For contact details of the HSE, please refer to Chapter 6 Community Welfare.

8. Law and Order

The Irish Police Service

The police service in the Republic of Ireland is called An Garda Síochána (The Guardians of the Peace), usually referred to as the Garda or plural Gardaí (pronounced as gar-dee). It is responsible for all criminal investigations, the enforcement of all traffic law, the maintenance of public order, immigration control and it enforces drug laws. The force is unarmed and very friendly and serves the whole community. However it does not always require a crisis to contact the Gardaí – if you find yourself in difficulty you can contact the Gardaí and you will find them co-operative and helpful. The Garda emergency numbers are 999 or 112.

Any person who is a victim of crime will receive prompt attention from the Gardaí who will address their needs in an understanding manner. If you are a victim and are unable to communicate in English, Gardaí will provide free translation services so that you will receive the same quality of service.

If you are stopped by the Gardaí, you should co-operate and supply all the identification or documentation asked of you. It is advisable to be polite and stay calm at all times. The Garda should tell you the reason you are being stopped – if not, you should ask. In the unlikely event that you are arrested you must be treated fairly, politely and with respect. You will be informed of the reason for arrest and cautioned. The Gardaí are governed by a strict code of

behaviour that recognises your rights, including the right to legal advice (see below). An Ethnic Liaison Officer can be contacted at your local Garda station or at any of the regional headquarters listed below.

Contact Details

An Garda Síochána

Carlow

Tel: 059 9131505

Kilkenny

Tel: 056 7775000

Tipperary

Tel: 0504 25100

Wexford

Tel: 053 9165200

Waterford

Tel: 051 874888

Garda Confidential Line

Free phone: 1800 666 111

Garda Racial and Intercultural Office

Harcourt Square

Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6663150

Legal Advice

If you are in need of legal advice, you can contact a solicitor. The contact numbers and addresses can be found in the Golden Pages. If you can't afford a solicitor, you may qualify for legal aid, usually in civil cases only. In criminal cases, legal aid is awarded by a judge. Legal aid is available to any foreign national, regardless of their status, if their income is below a certain level (although it should be noted that there are often lengthy waiting lists). Free Legal Advice Clinics are often held in CICs.

If you are an asylum seeker going through the asylum process you can access free legal services from the Refugee Legal Service (see Chapter 10 Immigration Issues). For your nearest Legal Aid Board see web address on this page or contact your local CIC.

Contact Details

Free Legal Advice Clinics

Carlow

Tel: 059 9138750 or 1800 747 748

Kilkenny

Tel: 056 7762755 or 1800 222 121

North Tipperary

Tel: 0504 22399

South Tipperary

Tel: 052-22267

Waterford

Tel: 051 351133

Wexford

Tel: 053 9142012

Legal Aid Board

www.legalaidboard.ie



Discrimination

The law says you cannot be discriminated against directly or indirectly in the provision of a wide range of goods and services (such as accommodation, entertainment, credit and banking facilities, transport and education) on any of the following grounds: gender, marital status, family status, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation or race. There is also a law that bans the public use of words, written material or behaviour, which may result in hatred of particular groups.

If you are being harassed, you can contact the Gardaí for advice.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can complain to the service provider within two months of the incident, and if their response is not satisfactory, to the Equality Tribunal within 6 months. For initial advice on any case, you can contact the Equality Authority.

If you are of a victim of, or a witness to a racist incident, you can report it to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI). This is a government body that monitors the level of racism in Irish society, and they can refer you to all the relevant authorities.

Contact Details

Equality Authority

2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2
Tel.: 01 4173333
Lo-call No. 1890 245545
www.equality.ie

Equality Tribunal

3 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2
Tel.: 01 4774100
Lo-call No. 1890 344424

NCCRI

3rd Floor
Jervis House
Jervis Street
Dublin 1
Tel. 01 858 8000
Email: info@nccri.ie
www.nccri.ie

9. Transport in Ireland

Public Transport

Buses are the main form of public transport in most of the country. Ireland's national bus company is called Bus Éireann. It operates a number of services, including commuter services for cities such as Waterford, school buses, rural services, Expressway (inter-city) and Eurolines (to Europe). Rural areas are either served by what is known as Stage Carriage, which are regular daily services stopping on request where required, or Rural Services that run one day a week to a market town from the surrounding area. Expressway services run between larger towns and cities and there is no need to book a seat; tickets can be bought on the bus. There are also a number of private bus companies in each county.

The Eurolines service provides links to 1500 destinations in Europe. Details of timetables and fares can be found at the website shown below.

The Rural Transport Initiative provides a number of public rural transport services for those living in rural areas. See the local directory or contact your local CIC for more details.



The South East is relatively well served by the rail network. The national rail company is called Iarnród Éireann. There are different types of fares available and to find the best one for your needs, and for timetable information, see the website given below.

Contact Details

Bus Éireann

www.buseireann.ie

Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail)

www.iarnrodeireann.ie

Also check The Golden Pages

Driving in Ireland

Safety

Motorists drive on the left side of the road in Ireland. Everyone in a car must use a seatbelt – both front and back.

Appropriate child restraints must also be used, preferably in rear seats, for all children aged under twelve years old and depending on their height. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that this is the case. The speed limit is usually 50km/hour in cities, towns, villages and other built-up areas unless otherwise stated. It can be up to 80km, 100km, 120km/hour depending on the status of the road in other places. Roads are patrolled by Gardaí in marked and unmarked police cars and they do speed

checks. A penalty point system is in operation in Ireland whereby points are given for many offences, including speeding, mobile phone use, dangerous overtaking and failure to obey traffic lights. Drivers caught for these offences must pay a fine and receive penalty points on their driving licence (12 penalty points in 3 years mean you lose your licence).

It is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs or with a blood alcohol level of over 80 milligrams per ml in Ireland. There is no safe amount that you can drink – some people may be under the limit with one drink, others are not. It is culturally unacceptable to drink and drive in Ireland. The Gardaí have the power to stop drivers and randomly breath-test them. Detailed information on driving rules, road signs, etc. can be found in the book “Rules of the Road”, available in libraries and bookshops.

Driving Licences

If you already have a driving licence that was issued in an EU country, or Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, you can drive in Ireland for as long as it is valid. You may apply to exchange it for an Irish licence within one year of arrival, but this is not obligatory. If you have a licence from any other country, you may drive in Ireland for up to 12 months. However, if you plan to stay longer than 12 months you should apply for an Irish driving licence from your Local Authority. Drivers with licences from Australia, South Africa, Japan, Switzerland, South Korea, Jersey, Isle of Man or Gibraltar can exchange for

an Irish licence within one year of arrival, with no need to sit the driving test. You are obliged to carry your licence with you at all times when driving in Ireland.

How to Apply

The first step is to apply to your Local Authority for a provisional licence, which is usually valid for 2 years. Applicants must first pass a driving theory test (a written test on the rules of the road etc.). Once you have a provisional licence, you can start learning to drive. However, while on your first provisional licence, you must always drive under the supervision of someone with a full licence. When you are a competent driver, the next step is to apply for a full driving licence. To do so you must pass an oral and practical driving test. Full licences should be renewed every 10 years.

Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT)

In Ireland all vehicles must be registered with the Revenue Commissioners (except those brought in temporarily by a visitor). If you are moving to Ireland or are already living here and are importing a car or buying a new one, you must first do three things:

- Pay VRT
- Have motor insurance
- Pay motor tax



Vehicle registration tax is payable on registering the vehicle. Penalties for failing to pay this tax include forfeiture of the vehicle and prosecution. Strict time limits apply for registering the vehicle from the time when it is brought into the State. The form you receive on paying the tax allows you pay motor tax.

Certain groups are exempt from having to pay VRT:

- Visitors resident in Ireland temporarily who have owned the vehicle abroad for more than 6 months
- People who have moved here permanently and who have owned the vehicle abroad for more than 6 months
- Certain disabled drivers
- Diplomats

For more information on VRT, see www.revenue.ie.

Insurance

Motor vehicle insurance is compulsory in Ireland. You cannot drive a vehicle for which you are not insured and all vehicles must have an insurance disc displayed on the windscreen. Costs can vary greatly between different insurance companies so it is advisable to check prices with several companies. Some will accept a no-claims bonus from abroad. However, you will need to provide written evidence of your insurance record and each case is assessed individually. This includes vehicles that are registered outside the State. The Gardaí have the power to impound them if they are driven in Ireland without insurance and you may face a heavy fine or jail sentence.

Motor Tax

Drivers must also pay motor tax for their vehicle. The rate of tax varies depending on the engine size – the bigger the engine, the higher the tax. Motor tax discs (like insurance discs) must be displayed on the front window of your car at all times. When you have paid for your first motor tax disc, it can subsequently be renewed on-line. Further information and applications forms can be obtained from your local Motor Taxation/Drivers' Licence Office (See contact details below).

National Car Test (NCT)

To ensure they are roadworthy, all vehicles that are four or more years old must pass the National Car Test. Cars that pass the test are issued with an NCT disc that must also be displayed in the front windscreen. The disc is valid for 2 years and then the car must be re-tested. Vehicles that fail the test cannot be driven in a public place.

Parking

Parking is not allowed on roads or streets with double yellow lines, on footpaths and within 5 metres of a junction. Parking on streets with single yellow lines is forbidden at certain times. These times will be shown on a sign nearby (usually 8.30am – 6.30pm, Monday – Saturday). Cars parked illegally may be towed away or clamped. Look carefully for signs warning clamping is in operation. Drivers with a disability may apply for a parking permit that allows them to park in disabled driver spaces

Some cities and towns operate a paid parking system. This may be ticket or disc. Cars parked in a disc parking area (indicated by street parking signs) must display a valid parking disc. Cars that

overstay their disc may get a parking ticket fine or be clamped. Discs may be purchased at some newsagents and tickets can be bought at ticket machines on the street.

Contact Details

Motor Tax Offices

Carlow

Athy Road, Carlow

Tel: 059 9170342

Email: motortax@carlowcoco.ie

Kilkenny

County Hall, John's Street, Kilkenny

Tel: 056 779 4100

Email: motortax@kilkennycoco.ie

North Tipperary

Kickham Street, Nenagh

Tel: 067 44701/8

Email: motortax@northtippcoco.ie

South Tipperary

Emmet Street, Clonmel

Tel: 052 34444

Friar Street, Cashel

Tel: 062 64700

Email: motortax@southtippcoco.ie

Waterford

Cathedral Square, Waterford City

Tel: 051-849972

motortax@waterfordcoco.ie

Shandon Road, Dungarvan

Tel: 058 22087

Email: motortax@waterfordcoco.ie

Wexford

County Hall, Wexford

Tel: 053 9176333

Email: motortax@wexfordcoco.ie

Driving Tests

www.drivingtest.ie

National Car Testing Service (NCTS) Ltd.

Customer Service,

Citywest Business Campus,

Lakedrive 3026, Dublin 24

Tel: 1890 200670

Email: info@ncts.ie

www.ncts.ie

10. Immigration Issues

Immigrants are people who move from another country to Ireland to live and work. The term is very broad and includes international students, EU nationals, other nationals moving to live or work in Ireland, people seeking asylum, people with refugee status, people with leave to remain and undocumented migrants. The term "foreign national" is often used when referring to immigrants.

Visas

An Irish visa is a paper / sticker attached to your passport. It is a form of pre-clearance and permits a person to travel to Ireland during the period when the visa is valid. It does not grant permission either to enter or to reside in Ireland. This can only be granted at the port of entry by the Immigration Officer. The passport should be valid for at least 6 months after the expiry date of the visa.

Visas are issued and administered by the Naturalisation and Immigration service of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. There are

many different types of visa e.g. for visits/holidays, business, family reunification of refugees or medical treatment. The documentation that must accompany your application depends on the type of visa being applied for. Applications should be made at least 8 weeks before travel and should be submitted to the Irish Embassy or Consulate in the country of permanent residence.

Initially the visa issued will be for Single Entry. If you wish to leave Ireland for a short period, you should apply for a Re-entry Visa (Note: In order to do this, you must be registered with the GNIB. See below.) If you wish to leave the country on more than one occasion, you should apply for a Multiple Entry Visa.

Where To Apply

For 1st Visa - Your Irish Embassy or Consulate

For Re Entry Visa - Visa Section
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
13-14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2

Tel: Lo-call 1890 551 500
(10am-12.30pm weekdays)
Tel: 01-616 7700
(10am -12.30pm weekdays)
Email: visamail@justice.ie



GNIB Cards or Immigration Certificate of Registration

Any citizen from outside the EU if in Ireland for longer than 3 months must register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB). This can be done at any Garda District Headquarters. On registering, a person is issued with a residence permit, or Certificate of Registration. A fee is payable for this service but certain categories of persons are exempt (enquire at Garda station). This is a card with the applicant's details, photograph and the date that they entered the country and an expiry date. In order to get the registration card, you must have a valid permission to remain which is a stamp placed on your passport by the immigration authorities

There are a number of different stamps:

Stamp 1 – Migrant workers on permits who must have a permit to work and be contracted to an employer. They are not allowed to change employer. Self employed person with business permission.

Stamp 2 – Overseas students who are pursuing a course of at least one years duration and are allowed to work 20 hours a week in term time and full-time in the holidays.

Stamp 2A – Overseas students who are pursuing a course of less than a year. They have no right to work

Stamp 3 – Persons who have no right to work.

Stamp 4 – Refugees, persons with leave to remain, spouses of EU/ Irish nationals, parents of Irish citizens who have been granted leave to remain on that basis, persons on working visas/work authorisations and temporary registered doctors.

Stamp 5 – Persons who have been legally resident for over eight years (but not as a student or asylum seeker) may work or engage in business in Ireland.

Contact Details

Garda National Immigration Bureau

13-14 Burgh Quay

Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6669100

Hours of Business:

8.00am-10.00pm Mondays-Thursdays

8.00am-4.00pm Fridays

10.00am-2.00pm Saturdays

See also Garda District Headquarters Offices (Chapter 8)



Asylum Seekers and Refugees

An asylum seeker is a person who arrives independently in Ireland seeking to be granted protection under the Geneva Convention. This guide can only give a brief outline of the asylum seeking process.

- You are advised to apply for asylum at the port of entry and from there your application will be dealt with by the Refugee Applications Commissioner.
- The application must be accompanied by original documents such as passports, birth and marriage certificates.
- Whilst your application is dealt with, you will be required to reside at a Reception Centre or Accommodation Centre and to observe the rules of that facility. All food is provided and you might have to share rooms with other asylum seekers. These centres are administered by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA).
- You will be required to attend an interview so that the grounds for your application can be investigated further.
- You cannot leave Ireland without permission from the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform while your application is being considered.
- You will not be allowed to work, to trade or to take up third level education while your application is considered.
- Failure to abide by these requirements could seriously affect the outcome of your application.
- As an asylum seeker, you will be entitled to free legal advice provided by the Refugee Legal Service. Their details are given on the next page.
- If your application is unsuccessful, you can appeal to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT). There are strict time limits in place for doing this, and it will be your responsibility to ensure you have complied with them, so it is best to send all correspondence by registered post.
- If it is decided that you are to be granted refugee status, then you will be issued with a written declaration. You will then enjoy broadly the same rights as Irish citizens, in that you can take up employment or claim social welfare payments.
- If however, you are not declared a refugee, then the Minister can order that you be deported back to your country of origin. Prior to this taking place, he can also impose strict conditions on where you can live and require you to sign on at a police station on a regular basis. Rarely in Ireland, the Minister can grant an applicant who is not declared a refugee Leave to Remain and this gives similar rights as residency.
- Refugees and those granted Leave to Remain have to register with the GNIB as described above.

Contact Details

Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC)

79-83 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 602 8000

Email: oracmail@orac.ie

Reception & Integration Agency (RIA)

Block C, Ardilaun Centre

St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 418 3200

Email: RIA_Inbox@justice.ie

Refugee Legal Service

Timberlay House, 79-83 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2

Freephone: 1800 229 222

Tel: 01 631 0800

Irish Refugee Council

88 Capel Street, Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8730042

Email: refugee@iol.ie

Immigrant Council of Ireland

2 St. Andrew Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 6740200

Email: info@immigrantcouncil.ie

www.immigrantcouncil.ie

Refugee Information Service

Tel: 01 8382740

Email: info@ris.ie

www.ris.ie

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland

55 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8897570

Email: info@mrci.ie

www.mrci.ie

Irish Citizenship

There are a number of grounds on which immigrants can apply to become Irish citizens. Certain conditions apply, including being 18 years of age or over, being of good character and making a declaration of fidelity to the State. The amount of time you have resided in Ireland with legal permission to do so is also important. If you have Irish parents or grandparents, you are entitled to citizenship. This is a complex area and you are advised to contact the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (see page 53) for specific advice. You may also refer to citizensinformation.ie



11. Children and Parenting

Birth Registration

The birth of a baby must be registered before the baby is three months old in the office of any Registrar of Births which are located in Health Service Executive Offices. If this is not done, a statutory declaration must be completed, signed in the presence of a Peace Commissioner and brought to the Registrar for the district where the birth took place. No fee is payable for registering a birth but a fee is payable for every Birth Certificate that is requested. Check with your local CIC.

Immunisation

Immunisation (also known as vaccination) is a safe and effective way to help the body prevent or fight off certain diseases. Vaccinations under the Childhood Immunisation Programme in Ireland are provided free of charge to all children. Parental consent is required for the administration of vaccinations to children and young people up to the

age of 16. Vaccination is not mandatory in Ireland, but is strongly advised by the health authorities. Parents who wish to have their children vaccinated should contact their GP/family doctor or local health service centre.

Childcare Options

There is no state provision of pre school services for young children. However there is a range of childcare facilities available including preschools, Montessori schools, nurseries, crèches, playgroups and individual childminders. Many of these are privately run and fees can be high. Some community facilities provide subsidised childcare for people in the area. A list of childcare services and the contact addresses for crèches and preschools can be obtained from the Health Service Executive. Information on Childcare services, and some useful free publications are also available from the County Childcare Committees. Please see contact details of your local County Childcare Committee below.

Demand for childcare is usually high and it may be difficult to secure a place for your child. An alternative to crèches and preschools is to find a private childminder. These are usually advertised in local papers. You may also be able to find the details of childminders and babysitters on the notice boards in shopping centres



Contact Details

County Childcare Committees Carlow

Tel: 059 9140244

www.carlowchildcare.com

Kilkenny

Tel: 056 7752865

www.kkccc.ie

North Tipperary

Tel: 06744886

www.northtipperarychildcare.ie

South Tipperary

Tel: 052 82274

www.southtipperarychildcare.ie

Waterford City

Tel: 051 860444

www.waterfordcitychildcare.com

Waterford County

Tel: 058 43601

www.waterfordcoco.ie

Wexford

Tel: 053 9237156

www.wexfordchildcare.ie

Some support is available to people on low income or receiving social welfare benefits (e.g. the Back-to-School Clothing & Footwear Allowance may help with uniform costs (See Chapter 6 Community Welfare). Transport is available to bring pupils to school if they live a particular distance from the school. Information on transport is available from the school. Many schools offer additional supports to pupils who have particular needs. The school year starts in September and all schools close during July and August (secondary schools are also closed in June). Other school holidays take place at Christmas, Easter and between terms (usually end of October and February).

Primary Schools

When starting school, usually at age 4 or 5, children enrol in primary (or national) school, where they study for 8 years. You can send your child to any school of your choice, provided that a place is available there. Lists of local schools are available from the Department of Education & Science (contact details below).

Once you've chosen a school, contact the principal to see if a place is available. If not, he/she may be able to suggest an alternative school. Most primary schools are under the management of a church (the majority are Roman Catholic) but there are some multi-denominational schools.

Post Primary/Second Level Schools

At age 12 or 13 children go to post primary/second level school. There

School System

The law requires that all children must participate in full-time education between the ages of 6 and 16 (although most children start school at age 4 or 5). Most schools in Ireland are state-aided and attendance is free for all children – regardless of nationality or status. However, there are usually some costs involved (e.g. towards books, photocopying or school uniforms).

are a number of different types of post primary schools – the most common is the secondary school.

Other types of school include community and comprehensive schools and community colleges. As with primary schools, most second-level schools are denominational.

Children must stay in second level until they reach 16 years of age. While the Irish language is a compulsory subject some students may be exempt, e.g. children who attended education outside Ireland up to 11 years of age.

Second level education involves two cycles, each of which ends with an examination:

Junior cycle – a three-year programme ending in a Junior Certificate exam

Senior cycle – a two or three year programme (three year programmes include a “transitional year” focusing on personal development, work experience and other new skills). Most students do the regular Leaving Certificate programme, which involves six or seven subjects. However, other options include the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied. Entry to third level education is usually linked to the results achieved in the Leaving Certificate, with the most popular courses taking only those with the highest scores.

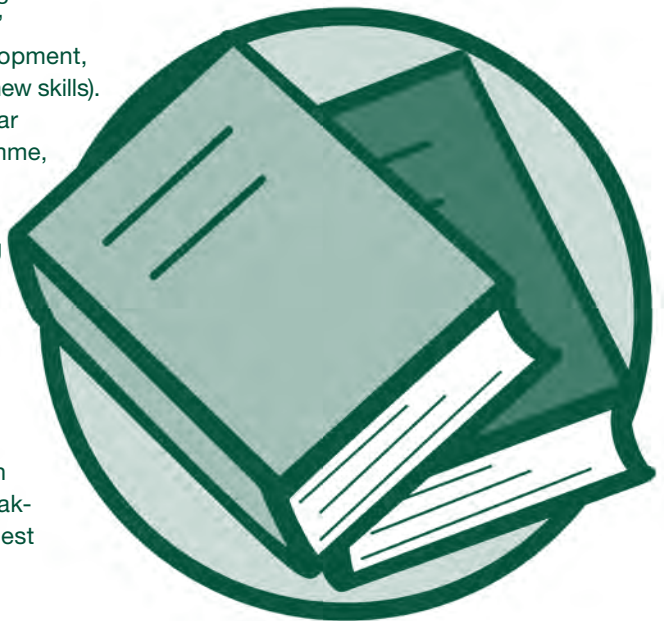
How to find a school

A list of all primary, second level and schools with classes that provide additional supports for pupils with special needs is available on the Department of Education website www.education.ie or Tel. 090 6483600.

Child Protection

Each Community Care Area has a Duty Social Work Team who should be contacted in the event of concerns arising in relation to children who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, or in relation to any other serious concerns, which threaten the physical or emotional well-being of a child.

The telephone number for each Community Care Centre is listed in Chapter 6 of this Guide.



12. Further Education/Adult Education

Further Education

The term “Further Education” embraces education and training which occurs after second-level schooling but which is not part of the third-level system. The following bodies provide advice, guidance and training for adults and young persons:

The Vocational Education Committee (VEC), see contact list below.

The National Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) www.fas.ie.

Please refer to page 30.

Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) see www.welfare.ie.

Examples of the many programmes on offer in the region are:

E.S.O.L: English for Speakers of Other Languages refers to education that is concerned with developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in functional language for everyday use. This is provided by Vocational Education Committees and there is usually a charge for attending classes. However, in some cases, employers arrange sponsorship if the participants are working for that company.

Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC): These are full-time one and two year programmes of integrated education, training and work experience. The post leaving certificate course aims to prepare participants for employment or further education/training, as well as developing the learner’s skills for specific occupations.

Adult Literacy / Numeracy (Basic Education)

This involves one to one tuition and group tuition for basic literacy and numeracy. Personal development skills are an integral part of this programme.

Adult Community Education: This programme aims to support community groups, organise and set up learning opportunities in the local community. Community education offers the learners an opportunity to ‘taste’ lifelong learning. It targets specific groups such as women’s groups, men’s groups, older people, travellers, and people with disabilities.

Contact Details

Co. Carlow VEC Tel: 059 9138560
www.carlowvec.ie

Co. Kilkenny VEC Tel: 056 7770966
www.kilkennyvec.ie

Co. Tipperary N.R. VEC
Tel: 067 31854/31250
www.tippnorthvec.ie

Co. Tipperary S.R. VEC
Tel: 052 21067/23067
www.tippsouthvec.ie

Co. Waterford VEC Tel: 058 41780

Waterford City VEC Tel: 051 874007
www.waterfordvec.ie

Co. Wexford VEC Tel: 053 91 23799

Third Level Education

Universities and Institutes of Technology (IT) mainly provide third level education in Ireland. Universities generally offer degree programmes at Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate level. Institutes of Technology generally provide progression from certificate, diploma to degree level as well as postgraduate degrees. Each university and IT produces a prospectus every year, which outlines all its courses and other services and is available free of charge. In addition, a number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in a number of professions such as medicine and law. Private colleges also provide third level education.

Third Level Fees

Irish and EU citizens pay no tuition fees for their first full time, undergraduate course. People with refugee status may also qualify for free fees. All other students, including non-EU citizens, post graduate students and part time students etc must pay fees. The rate of fees may vary depending on factors such as length of residency.

A grant scheme operates which supports students on Third Level courses. It is called the Higher Education Grants Scheme and this provides maintenance grants for eligible students attending full time courses. Additional top up grants are available for disadvantaged students. These are currently administered by the Local Authorities, but from mid-2007, the VEC will take over this role.

The grant scheme is open to Irish and other EU/EEA citizens, people with refugee status and some other categories of people with permission to remain in the state. To qualify your income must be below a certain level and you must have lived in the area for one year before applying. Fees vary between colleges and courses. Tax relief may be available on fees for certain courses.

Contact Details

The Student Support Unit of the Department of Education

Tel: 057 932 4381/4387/5344

Email: studentsupportunit-tullamore@education.gov.ie

Regional Educational Guidance Service for Adults (REGSA)

www.ncge.ie

Applying for Third Level Education

Applications for most full time, undergraduate courses are made once a year (closing date is usually 1 February) through the Central Applications Office (CAO). Applicants should indicate which courses and where they would like to study in order of preference. Once the Leaving Certificate results are available in August, offers of places are sent to applicants. Entry requirements are linked to Leaving Certificate results and some courses require very high results (e.g. medicine). A list of all courses and information on how to apply is available in the CAO handbook

If you have taken your secondary school exam in another country you will need to check if your qualifications will be sufficient to secure a place in the Irish third level course of your choice. Contact the Access Officer at the college directly before making your application.

Further Information

CAO

33 Eglinton Street
Galway
Tel 091 5098000
www.cao.ie

Mature Students

Mature students (i.e. those aged 23 or over) may apply for third level courses regardless of their Leaving Certificate results. See the “Guide for Mature Students” available free of charge from the Department of Education and Science. Supports, exemptions and application procedures for mature students differ between colleges – many now have mature student officers who can provide advice and information. See www.education.ie

Qualification Recognition

At present a number of different bodies in Ireland award or validate qualifications in the further and higher education sectors. For example universities award their own degrees, diplomas etc. and most institutes of technology and other colleges grant degrees, diplomas and certificates which are validated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) or the Further

Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). Both Awards Councils work within the ambit of the NQAI.

If you have obtained a qualification outside Ireland, you may wish to have it assessed in order to gain accreditation. If you want to find out whether it’s recognized in Ireland, contact the NQAI. See also Chapter 4 Employment – Europass.

Contact Details

National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI)

5th Floor
Jervis House
Jervis Street
Dublin 1.
Tel: 01 8871500
Email: info@nqai.ie

Other Training

FÁS is Ireland’s national training and employment authority. It aims to promote a more competitive and inclusive knowledge-based economy, by enhancing the skills and capabilities of individuals and enterprises. FÁS offers day, evening and online courses. Citizens from EEA member states and Switzerland are entitled to register for employment or training and can avail of guidance and counselling services. Training and childcare allowances may apply. To contact FÁS, see www.fas.ie. See also Chapter 4 Employment.

13. Support Services

There are a number of organisations that might be of help to you during your stay in Ireland. Website addresses and support telephone numbers include:

- **Active Retirement Associations** – www.fara.ie
- **Aware** – for people suffering from depression. Tel: 1890 303 302
- **Comhar** – Adult counselling service. Tel: 1800 234 118
- **Cura** – Unplanned Pregnancy. Tel: 1850 622 626
- **Drugs/HIV Helpline** Tel: 1800 459 459
- **Gay Switchboard** Tel: 01 8721055
- **National Drugs Awareness Helpline** Tel: 1850 719 819
- **Parentline** – Parents Under Stress. Tel: 01 8733500
- **Samaritans** – Emotional Support. Tel: 1850 661 771
- **Schizophrenia Ireland** Tel: 1890 621 631
- **Solas** – Child bereavement support. Tel: 01 4732110
- **Victim Support** – Crime victims helpline. Tel: 1850 211407
- **St. Vincent de Paul** – Christian charity promoting friendship, support, self-sufficiency and social justice. www.svp.ie
- **Youth Information Services** – www.youthinformation.ie
- **Women's Aid** – Support for women and their children in abusive situations. National Helpline Tel: 1800 341 900

The websites of the embassies and consulates in Ireland could also be of use to you. A full list can be found at www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie.

Glossary

- **An Garda Síochána** – National police service of Ireland.
- **CIC** – Citizens Information Centre. Provides free, impartial and confidential information, advice and advocacy to the general public.
- **Comhairle /Citizens Information Board** – National agency supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services.
- **CWO** – Community Welfare Officer. Administers Community Welfare Services on behalf of Health Service Executive.
- **EEA** – European Economic Area. The 25 states of the EU plus Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland.
- **FÁS** – National training and employment authority.
- **Golden Pages** – Telephone directory listing many businesses and organisations under a list of general categories, such as “Plumbers”.
- **GAA** – Gaelic Athletic Association.
- **GP** – General Practitioner. Doctor practising from local surgery who, other than in an emergency, should be the first point of access to the health service.
- **Habitual Residence** – Having a proven close link to Ireland or other parts of The Common Travel Area, such as the length and continuity of time residing there.
- **HSE** – Health Service Executive. Provides health services and administers Community Welfare Services.
- **Local Authority** – This may be a County, City, Urban or Town council.
- **MABS** – Money Advice and Budgeting Service. Organisation providing advice and support for those in financial difficulties.
- **NCT** – National Car Test. Test of roadworthiness for vehicles over 4 years old.
- **PPS Number** – Personal Public Service Number. Unique reference number allowing access to social welfare payments, public services and information.
- **PRSI** – Pay-Related Social Insurance. Contributions paid by employees, employers and self-employed people into Social Insurance Fund. Class and rate of contributions depends on nature of work.
- **SWA** – Supplementary Welfare Allowance. Paid by Health Service Executive when income does not meet cost of needs.
- **VEC** – Vocational Education Committee. Local education authority providing accessible adult education, training programmes and educational support services.
- **VRT** – Vehicle Registration Tax. Tax to be paid to the Revenue Commissioner on the registration of new and imported vehicles.

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