

The Beginner's Guide to Ireland



RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM

Welcome to Ireland!

There is so much to discover about life in any new land. Every country has its own customs and culture, rights and regulations, State services and schooling. We hope this handbook will help you 'find your feet' in your first days and weeks in Ireland, and give you some understanding of Ireland's society, customs, laws and entitlements.



Living in Ireland brings with it many rights, but it also means that we all have obligations to society and to each other. It's important to learn what these rights and obligations are.

Obviously it takes time to make lasting friendships, but Irish people are generally sociable and will chat with a stranger. In Ireland there is a long-standing tradition of emigration to other lands to work and live, and Irish people can be well-traveled and interested in hearing about other cultures and countries.



Now that you are living in Ireland, you are expected to learn English, the main language spoken. Indeed, English is very important in getting a job and getting to know about Irish society. You will also receive support in housing and in your search for employment. You are entitled to State payments while you are looking for work and if you have no means (or money) of your own.



This Handbook is divided into four sections:

Section One gives you basic information about Ireland; the documentation you need to have here; and the people who will help you get started in your life here as well as faces you may meet in the local community.

Section Two gives you details about how to get your new life in Ireland started; how to find work, learn English, get around and communicate.

Section Three gives you more long-term information about life in Ireland and outlines the supports available to you here.

Section Four is for you to record and store any information you get yourself, such as personal records, letters or leaflets.



You are bound to have many questions and queries, and your Resettlement Officer is also available to help you with these. Please keep this Handbook and use it as the starting point for information about what it means to live and work in Ireland. Because you can use the 'My Checklist' areas to record all sorts of personal information, it will build up an invaluable guide to your new life in Ireland.

Note: This Handbook is for information purposes only. It is not a legal document.

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section one

**Ireland:
The Bigger Picture**

1. Ireland – The Fact File



Where is it?

Ireland is an island in the north-west of Europe. The Irish Sea separates us and the United Kingdom (UK) and the Atlantic Ocean separates us (by 3,000 miles) from the United States of America (USA).



Is it hot or cold?

The climate is mild throughout the country. The average temperature in summer is 19 degrees Celsius (66 degrees Fahrenheit) and in winter it is 9 degrees Celsius (48 degrees Fahrenheit). January and February are usually the coldest months, May and June the sunniest, and July and August the warmest. However, it can rain at any time of the year!



Government

The island of Ireland is divided into four provinces, which in total have 32 counties. Six of these are in Northern Ireland and are part of the UK. The remaining 26 counties together are called the Republic of Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is a parliamentary democracy, with two houses of parliament; Dail Eireann (the House of Representatives) and the Seanad (Senate). The law of the EU (European Union) applies here. You have voting rights in local elections. If you become naturalised (see Section III), you can vote in national elections.



Policing – An Garda Síochána

The Garda Síochána (Gardaí) is the name of the national police force. There are over 700 Garda stations throughout the country. The regular Gardaí are an unarmed service, aiming to serve the community and protect the rights of people living here. If you need to contact the Gardaí in an emergency, dial 112 or 999 on any telephone.



How many people live here?

In total, the Republic of Ireland has a population of about 4 million people, about 1 million of whom live in Dublin, the capital city. The regional capitals are: Cork in the south and Galway in the west. Other major cities are Limerick and Waterford. Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland.

How do people make a living?

Until the last century, the majority of Irish people working were involved in either agriculture or fishing. Although the agri-food industry is still important in Ireland, the growth in technology, financial and tourism sectors has been significant. Many large international companies have headquarters here, especially in the technology sector.

What languages are spoken?

Although the Irish language ('Gaeilge') is the first official language, the English language is the language spoken by the majority of the population. Public signs are often in both Irish and English. One sign you may need to recognise in Irish is on public toilets – the word 'mná' means women's toilet and 'fir' means men's toilet.



What religions are practiced here?

There is religious freedom in Ireland. About 92% of people in Ireland are members of the Roman Catholic church. Other religious communities represented here include: the Church of Ireland (Protestants), Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Greek / Russian Orthodox, Baha'i, Methodists, Jews and Muslims, Buddhists, recently developed African Christian churches and many more smaller religious groups.



Weights & measures

Ireland officially uses the metric system, though you will come across imperial measurements also. This conversion table should be useful.

1 Foot = 0.3 Metres
1 Metre = 3.28 Feet
1 Yard = 0.91 Metres
1 Metre = 1.09 Yards
1 Mile = 1.61 Kilometres
1 Kilometre = 0.62 Miles

1 sq Foot = 0.09 sq Metres
1 sq Metre = 3.28 sq Feet
1 sq Yard = 0.84 sq Metres
1 sq Metre = 1.2 sq Yard

1 Pint = 0.57 Litres
1 Litres = 1.76 Pints

1 Ounce = 28.35 Grams
1 Gram = 0.04 Ounces
1 Pound = 453.6 Grams
1 Gram = 0.002 Pounds
1 Pound = 0.45 Kilograms
1 Kilogram = 2.21 Pounds



Timezones

Ireland has the same time as Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). The following are some times around the world in relation to Ireland. To calculate the time in these cities, add the '+ number' to the current time: (for example, if it is 3pm in Ireland, it is 3pm + 3 hours in Cape Town ie 6pm).



London + 0
Berlin +1
Amsterdam + 1
Oslo + 1
Zurich +1
Sarajevo +1
Lagos +1
Zagreb +1
Bucharest +2
Moscow +3
Cape Town +3
Calcutta +5.5
Hong Kong +8
Beijing +8
Tokyo +9
Sydney +11

To calculate the time in these cities, subtract the '- number' from the current time: (for example, if it is 3pm in Ireland, it is 3pm -3 hours in Rio de Janeiro ie 12 noon).

Rio de Janeiro -3
Kingston -5
New York -5

2. Who you will meet in Ireland

Who you will meet in Ireland

From your arrival in the country, you will meet a number of people whose job it is to provide you with information and support as you settle in to your new life here. Many of these people have the name 'Officer' as part of their job title. In Ireland, this does not necessarily mean anything to do with the military, but means an official working for an organisation.

Immigration Officer:

When you arrive at the airport, you have to show your travel documents or passport to this person. You may be required to fill in landing cards during your journey to Ireland.

Reception and Integration Agency Resettlement Officer:

He/she will meet you at the airport and take you to your new home. This person is also available to answer your questions and provide you with guidance and information.

Community Welfare Officer:

He/she is employed by the national Health Service Executive. Based in the local health centre, he/she is responsible for the administration of Community Welfare Services, including the Supplementary Welfare Allowances and Medical Cards (see Section Two for more details).



Garda Immigration Officer / Garda National Immigration Bureau:

You must register with the Garda Síochána (the national police) at the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) or at your local Garda station. The Garda on duty will be able to help you with crime prevention and personal safety advice. For further information about registration, see number 4 in this Section 'Important documentation you need in Ireland'.



Housing Officer- Local County Council (similar to municipality):

He/she works for the Local Authority and is the person who deals with your application for housing.

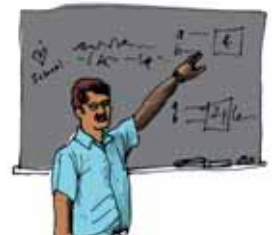
Doctor (GP):

Your Community Welfare Officer will help you to register with a doctor called a General Practitioner (GP). You can discuss any medical problems in confidence with your GP. A GP can assist and/or refer you to another doctor or specialist if you have mental health problems or need counseling



School Principal (person in charge of the school):

All children in Ireland are entitled to free primary and secondary education. Anyone of school-going age in your family will be registered with a local school.



My Checklist



Some local support information is:

Name	Contact Details
Resettlement Officer:	
Immigration Officer:	
Community Welfare Officer:	
Garda Immigration Officer/ Garda National Immigration Bureau:	
Housing Officer - Local County Council (similar to municipality):	
Doctor (GP):	
School Principal (person in charge of the school):	

3. The role of the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA)



RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM

The Reception & Integration Agency (RIA) is part of the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, which is a Government department. Your Resettlement Officer works with the RIA. The RIA is responsible for co-ordinating the resettlement programme and the services provided to refugees. The RIA works in partnership with a number of State agencies, voluntary and community groups and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The RIA does not provide direct services but works with local service providers to ensure that you receive your rights and entitlements. During the first year after arrival, if you run into difficulties which you cannot resolve locally, you can contact the Resettlement Officer at the RIA and ask for advice and assistance.

4. Important documentation you need in Ireland

There are a number of important documents you need for living in Ireland. Please keep these in a safe place, as it can be difficult and time-consuming to get these re-issued if they are damaged, lost or stolen. Some of these must be carried on you at all times, and produced if required to do so by a State official.

You will receive all of the documentation listed here when you are in Ireland, with the exception of your passport and any documentation you bring with you from your country of origin.

Passport:

Your national passport, should you have one, is an important document, and in Ireland can be used as proof of identity (for example, to open a bank account or utility supply).



Country of origin documentation:

It is important to keep any documentation you have with you from your country of origin; for example, Passport, Birth Certificate, Marriage Certificate, Driving Licence, Identity Card etc.

Letter from Reception and Integration Agency confirming status:

This letter states that you are here as a resettled refugee. There is a sample copy of this letter after the next page. This letter is only issued once, so please keep it in a safe place.

Garda National Immigration Bureau Certificate of Registration:

Within three days of arrival in Ireland, you must register with the Garda National Immigration Bureau at its head offices in Dublin or at your local Garda station. Once registered, you will be issued a Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) Certification of Registration which you must keep with you at all times. The Certification of Registration is not an identity card and cannot be used for any identification purposes other



than for police and immigration purposes. It has to be renewed annually and it is your responsibility to do so. Acceptable forms of photographic identification in Ireland are a passport and driving licence.

Travel Document:

You can apply for a Geneva Convention Hard Cover Travel Document which will enable you to travel outside of Ireland. Your Resettlement Officer will help you apply for a Travel Document.



Medical Card:

Medical cards are issued to people whose income is below a certain level, or who are receiving social welfare payments. As a Medical Card holder, you can visit your GP free of charge and get prescribed drugs, hospital services and dental and optical services free of charge. Everyone over 70 years of age is entitled to a medical card, regardless of their income. Your RIA Resettlement Officer will help you apply for a Medical Card.



International Medical Card:

You can use this card for medical emergencies when you are traveling in another European Union country. Your RIA Resettlement Officer will help you apply for an International Medical Card.



Social Welfare Card:

This card contains your PPS Number (Personal Public Service Number). This number is vital to access a lot of public services and to apply for social welfare payments. You will need this card if you are getting social welfare payments paid to you at the post office (see Section II for information about post offices). It is important to keep this card safe.



Sample letters which will be issued by the RIA



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM
AN BORD DLI AGUS CDE, COMHIONANNAIS AGUS AITHREOIRTHE DLI
RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION AGENCY
AIDINEACHT PHÁILTE AGUS COMHTHAITE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

Surname	Name	Date of Birth	Relationship	Nationality
XXXXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXXXX

Records compiled and held in this office show that the above named were admitted into Ireland under Government Decision as programme refugees (Resettlement Quota Refugees) on _____ and currently reside _____

The above family members are entitled to social welfare, medical and housing benefits and may avail of language training and other training courses for employment purposes. They are entitled to remain in this State for as long as they wish to do so and have the right to travel from and return to this State in line with normal immigration procedures. Many refugees arrive with little or no documentation; however records compiled and held in this office confirm the information as stated above.

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX
Reception & Integration Agency
Date: _____

Bureau C, Avenue de l'Europe, 145-148 Ave. des Nations Unies, Dublin 2
Tél: 01 418 3271 Fax: 01 418 3271

Left: Sample Letter from the RIA confirming your status as a resettled refugee



DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM
AN BORD DLI AGUS CDE, COMHIONANNAIS AGUS AITHREOIRTHE DLI
RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION AGENCY
Aidineacht Pháilte agus Comhthaite

2nd Floor
94 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
Telephone: (01) 418 3200
Fax: (01) 418 3271

Unit 2
94, Faiche Shabhna
Baile Átha Cliath 2
Telephone: (01) 418 3200
Facsimile: (01) 418 3271

TO: All Refugees entering Ireland on the basis of Government Decisions.

In order to ensure that you receive your full entitlements to social welfare, education, health, housing and other public services, the Reception and Integration Agency will provide your name, address, date of birth and other relevant details about you and your family members to all appropriate Government Departments and public bodies.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and understood this notice

Signed _____

Date: _____

Right: Sample Letter from the RIA authorising the RIA to give your personal details to service providers so that services like health services can be organised for you.

5. Refugees' rights and entitlements in Ireland

In Ireland, your legal status is 'Programme Refugee'. A Programme Refugee is a person who has been admitted into Ireland under the Government resettlement programme in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The resettlement programme is financed by the Irish Government. In general, you have the same rights and entitlements as an Irish citizen. This means that you can get a job and can get an education, health care services and many other services in Ireland.

The rights and entitlements of refugees (including programme refugees) are set out in Section 3 of the 1996 Refugee Act:

Refugees:

- are entitled to seek and to enter employment, to carry on any business, trade or profession and to have access to education and training in the State in the like manner and to the like extent in all respects as an Irish citizen;
- are entitled to receive the same medical care and services and social welfare entitlements as those to which Irish citizens are entitled;
- have the same rights of travel in or to or from the State as an Irish citizen;
- have the same freedom to practice his or her religion and to the religious education of his or her child as an Irish citizen;
- have access to the courts to the same extent as an Irish citizen;
- have the right to form and be a member of associations and trade unions.

You also have the right to vote and to stand for election in local elections in Ireland.

6. Resettlement Officer's checklist

The Resettlement Officer / Support Worker should complete this form for you

Newly-arrived resettled refugees accompanied to accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Landlord completed and signed Rent Allowance form SWA-3	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accommodation address provided to newly-arrived refugees	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ensure the Community Welfare Officer (CWO) has issued:

Supplementary Welfare weekly Payment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deposit for accommodation, if relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bedding allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cot allowance if relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pram allowance if relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allowance for oil if relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moving in allowance if relevant (pans & pots)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical Card application form signed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter confirming weekly income issued to refugee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheques cashed in the post office	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advised about euro currency and location of shops	<input type="checkbox"/>

House. Resettlement Officer / Support Worker to check:

Oven and all plates working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Washing machine working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fridge working	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heating working	<input type="checkbox"/>

Vacuum cleaner provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
Iron provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawnmower provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cutlery provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enough beds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enough chairs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Type of central heating	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gas	Reading
<input type="checkbox"/> Oil	
<input type="checkbox"/> Electricity	Reading nighttime Reading daytime
Lease agreement understood and signed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Registered with the Garda National Immigration Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initial cultural orientation talk provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resettlement Officer / Support Worker to check the following has been completed for the housing application:	
Housing application form completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of the lease agreement submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter from CWO confirming weekly income submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter confirming status from RIA submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of GNIB Registration Card submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>

Rent allowance form (SWA-3) signed & stamped by the Council ☐

Applied for deposit if relevant ☐

Registered with Family Doctor ☐

Education

Registered with FÁS (Adults) ☐

Registered for English language classes (Adults) ☐

Children enrolled in schools ☐

Application for school uniform submitted to Community Welfare Officer ☐

Applied for social welfare payment ☐

Advised about Family Reunification Scheme ☐

Applied for family reunification ☐

Advised about Travel Document ☐

Applied for Travel Document ☐

section two

A New Life in Ireland: The Basics

This section of the handbook explains the day-to-day practicalities you will need to learn in order to live here. This is basic information to help you settle in. For any aspect that requires more information, contact details are supplied. Your Reception and Integration Agency Resettlement Officer and Community Welfare Officer will also be able to assist and advise you.

1. Living in Roscommon



Where is it?

Your new home in Ireland is in the heart of the island, in Roscommon town. This is main town in Roscommon county, which is in Connaught, the western province. Roscommon is a pretty, bustling medieval market town with a young and well-educated population of about 1,500 people.

What's it like?

The town is busy and vibrant, with a great variety of shops, cafes, bars, restaurants and small businesses. The town centre, called Main Street, is dominated by an impressive square. It has good educational and employment opportunities. The surrounding countryside and waterways are very attractive, so there are plenty of recreational opportunities, both indoors and out.



How to get there

By car or train. Roscommon is two hours from Dublin city, 1 hour from both Sligo and Galway; 45 minutes from Connaught International Airport (also called Knock Airport) and two hours from Shannon International Airport.

2. Interpreters and learning English



Interpretation Services

Although you will have the services of an interpreter for the first few days in Ireland, long-term interpretation service is not provided. Some providers of services (e.g. Social Welfare services or State agencies) may provide an interpretation service, but they are not obliged to do so. In an emergency, contact your RIA Resettlement Officer.

Learning English

All adult refugees are eligible for free English language training courses through Integrate Ireland Language Training (IILT). Your RIA Resettlement Officer will help you enroll in a local course. Because courses do not run all the time, you may have to wait for a course to commence. In the meantime, you are expected to make as much headway as you can in understanding English.

Children between 6 and 16 must attend school (please see 'Education' further on in this Section for details). English is the language used in the vast majority of schools in Ireland.

3. Income

Social Welfare Payments

As you have just arrived in Ireland, and do not yet have a job here, you are entitled to receive Social Welfare payments from the Irish government (through the Department of Social & Family Affairs), in the same way as any unemployed Irish person (as long as you do not have money of your own). You will receive Social Welfare payments until you find employment or funded employment training, at which point you will be able to provide for yourself and your household. Your RIA Resettlement Officer will help you to apply to the Department of Social & Family Affairs for state financial support. It can take up to six weeks for this application to be processed.



In 2005, the Social Welfare Unemployment Assistance is €148.80 per week for the first adult in the family and €98.70 for their spouse (husband or wife). An additional €16.80 is paid for each child in the family. Please note: Social Welfare payments are subject to change annually, your RIA Resettlement Officer will explain what the current entitlements are.

Supplementary Welfare Allowance

While your application for Social Welfare payment is being processed, you will receive emergency payments from the Community Welfare Officer of the Health Services Executive. These are called Supplementary Welfare Allowance Payments. It is important to note that these are temporary payments, and will cease when your long-term Social Welfare payments commence. Your RIA Resettlement Officer will help you to apply for Supplementary Welfare Payments.



In 2005, the Supplementary Welfare Allowance is €148.80 per week for the first adult in the family and €98.70 for their spouse (husband or wife). An additional €16.80 is paid for each child in the family. Please note: Supplementary Welfare Allowance is subject to change annually, your RIA Resettlement Officer will explain what the current entitlements are.

You are also entitled to claim assistance towards the cost of your housing (if you do not have any money of your own). Please see 'Housing' for details.

All Supplementary Welfare Allowance payments are issued to you in the form of cheques, which may be cashed at the Post Office (for information on the Post Office, see number 5 in this Section 'Money, shopping and advice on money management'). Social Welfare payments are collected from your local Post Office weekly.

Other Social Welfare Payments

If you are disabled, or work as a carer for a relative, you may be entitled to other Social Welfare payments. Your Support Worker or Resettlement Officer will discuss any such entitlements with you.

Comhairle (the Irish word for 'to counsel or to advise') is the national organisation which provides information about social services and your entitlements. You can contact Comhairle on (01) 605 9000 or online at www.oasis.gov.ie

Citizens Information Centres (CICs): CICs are registered and supported by Comhairle and provide free, independent information about your rights and all aspects of social services. There are CICs in almost every town in Ireland.

In Roscommon:

You can contact the Roscommon Citizens Information Centre at Castle Street Tel. (090) 6627922.

My Checklist



	Amount	Date Applied	Date Received
Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA)	€		
Social Welfare Unemployment Assistance (UA)	€		
Child Benefit	€		
Old Age Non Contributory Allowance	€		
Disability Allowance	€		
One Parent Family Payment	€		
Carers Allowance	€		
School Uniforms Grant	€		
Other payment of	€		
Other payment of	€		
Other payment of	€		
Other payment of	€		

4. Working in Ireland

You are entitled to work in Ireland and you do not need a work permit to do so. You are encouraged to look for suitable employment as soon as you can: as well as providing you with an income, in any new country work is a good way to meet local people and extend your social network. However, as most employers will expect your English language skills to be good, your first 'job' will be to work hard at learning English!

Wages are subject to government tax. Ireland has a set minimum wage for adults. This is currently set at €7 per hour. Your Resettlement Officer will help you assess what work you might be suitable for, and give you information about local employers. Local newspapers can also be a good source of information about employment opportunities (see Section 'Communications, the media & library' for information about local papers).

FÁS

FÁS, Ireland's national training and employment authority, provides a range of services to help people find work. All FÁS services are open to men and women equally. The first step is to register at your local FÁS Office, where a FÁS Employment Services Officer will provide career advice and guidance including information on job and training opportunities as well as temporary employment options.



FÁS has over 800 training courses on offer. They vary in length from two weeks to two years, and take place in various FÁS centres nationally. You are eligible to take part on a course if you are unemployed or out of full time education. Age-linked training allowances are paid.

Community Employment Scheme: managed by FÁS, this Scheme is designed to help people who are long-term

unemployed and other disadvantaged people to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. You may seek other part-time work during the placement. After the placement, you are encouraged to seek permanent part-time and full-time jobs elsewhere based on the experience and new skills gained. As a Programme Refugee, you qualify to apply for this Scheme under the 'Part-time Integration Option'.

Should you be interested in starting a business, FÁS has a good training course called the Business Appraisal Training Programme. Support for setting up your own business is available from the Local Enterprise Board.

In Roscommon:

FÁS: Lanesboro Street, Roscommon.

Tel (090) 6626802. www.fas.ie

Local Enterprise Board: Abbey Street, Roscommon.

Tel: (090) 6626263 / 6626765



My Checklist

I registered with FÁS on:

My FÁS registration details are:

Areas of employment I am interested in are:

Some local employers I have sourced are:

5. Money, shopping and advice on money management



Money

The currency used in Ireland is the euro. There are seven euro notes: €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200 and €500 plus eight euro coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent and €1 and €2.

Shopping in Roscommon

In Roscommon, there is a good variety of shops, so you should be able to get pretty much anything you need, from food to electrical goods, and household furniture to school books.

Grocery shops are a mix of large supermarkets, small convenience shops (often called 'corner shops' regardless of

where they are on the street!) and larger convenience chain stores. Most grocery shops are open seven days, though opening hours vary from store to store. Some of the larger chain stores have clothing, household and footwear departments as well as groceries. Most petrol / filling stations have a shop attached. Some sample grocery prices are:

White sliced loaf: from €0.93 to €1.55

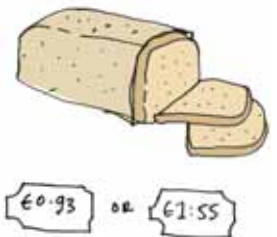
Litre of full fat milk: from €0.65 to €0.95

Cornflakes: from €1.60 (small) to €4.00 (large)

Half dozen eggs: from €0.90 to €1.60

Ireland can be an expensive country, and it pays to compare prices and shop around. Second-hand and charity shops (these are ones where the goods are donated by the public and then resold to make money for a named charitable organisation) can be a good source for cheap clothes and household items such as furniture and crockery.

The main shopping areas in Roscommon are Main Street and Market Square. Roscommon has plenty of clothes and shoe shops in the town centre and there is also a large department store. Three large supermarkets open between the hours of 8am - 8pm Monday to Saturday, and 10am - 6pm Sunday. There are also a number of smaller grocery shops. There are a number of furniture shops, hardware, chemist, newsagents and sports shops etc.





The Post Office

The Post Office ('An Post' in Irish) is Ireland's national postal service provider. As well as selling stamps and money orders, post offices are useful for many types of financial transaction.

You can collect your social welfare payments from the post office. It also provides many other services, including banking services, money orders and money transfers. You can also pay your electricity, gas and other bills here. For a full list of services, contact your local post office (contact details below).

Money management

Getting used to a new currency takes time. Managing your finances properly from the outset is important, as you will have many demands on your money.

Keeping your money safe

It's never a good idea to keep large sums of money in your home. You can put your money in:

- The Post Office (see above for information and below for contact details)
- A bank (see below for contact details)
- The Credit Union (A credit union is a group of people who save together and lend to each other at a fair and reasonable rate of interest. Credit unions offer members the chance to have control over their own finances by making their own savings work for them. Regular savings form a common pool of money, which in turn provides many benefits for members. See below for contact details)



Please note: You need identification and proof of address to open an account.

To open a bank account you will usually be asked to show a passport, Identity Card or current drivers licence and a utility bill addressed to you (for example an electricity bill).

Post offices and credit unions usually accept these types of identification: Social Welfare benefit book from the Department of Social and Family Affairs; a recent original bank statement addressed to you; and a recent household utility bill (e.g. your gas, electricity or phone bill).

In Roscommon:

Post Office:

The Square, Roscommon. Phone: (090) 6626148
Hours: Monday to Friday 9.00 - 5.30 & Sat 9.00-1.00

Credit Union:

Roscommon Credit Union Limited
Abbey Street, Roscommon. Tel: (090) 6626657.

Banks:

Allied Irish Bank (AIB)

Church Street, Roscommon
Hours: 10am - 4.00pm Monday - Friday including lunch
Monday late opening (5pm)
Telephone: (090) 662 6542/6180/6831

Bank of Ireland

The Square, Main Street, Roscommon
Hours: 10am - 4.00pm including lunch. Monday late opening
Phone: (090) 6626171

Ulster Bank

The Square, Roscommon
Hours: 9am - 4pm Monday - Friday including lunch. Monday
late opening
Telephone: (090) 6627356

Permanent tsb

Market Square, Roscommon
Hours: 10am - 5pm Monday - Friday, except Wednesday
(10.30am - 5pm)
Telephone: (090) 665355

Managing your money

There are a number of organisations which can help you manage your money. These include:



Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)

MABS is a free and confidential service that helps people cope with debt, make out budgets, and take control of their own finances.

Household Budget Scheme

If you are receiving certain Social Welfare Payments, you can use the Household Budget Scheme, which is operated by An Post (the national post office). Under this scheme, you can arrange for a regular amount to be deducted from your payments and put towards various household bills. You can pay the following bills through this scheme at your post office:

Electricity supply (ESB)

Gas supply (Bord Gais)

Telephone (landlines only) (Eircom).

Financial Information Service Centres (FISC)

FISC is a voluntary organisation which provides financial information, free of charge to people and voluntary organisations who cannot afford the services of accountants. The service is provided by qualified Chartered Accountants and is completely confidential.

In Roscommon:

MABS:

Castle Street, Roscommon

Tel: (090) 6627811; email: roscommon@mabs.ie

FISC:

c/o The Leinster Society of Chartered Accountants office

Tel: (01) 6377361; email: leistersociety@icai.ie;

web: www.lsca.ie

Managing your Finances

This document may be of assistance to you when managing your finances following your arrival in Ireland.

Weekly Income

Self	€	Partner/Spouse	€	Other Adults living with you	€
Total Family income		€			

Weekly Expenses

Rent	€
------	---

Utilities

ESB (Electricity)	€
Gas (Bord Gais)	€
Telephone (eircom)	€

Fuel (Coal)	€
Food	€

H.P. (Hire/purchase Repayments)	€
Clothes	€
TV Licence	€
Cable	€
Transport Costs	€
School Expenses	€
Pocket Money	€
Cigarettes	€
Entertainment	€
Magazines/Comics	€
Other	€
Total Expenditure	€

Insurance

House	€	Car	€	Life	€
-------	---	-----	---	------	---

Total Weekly Income	€
Total Weekly Expenses	€
Balance left over	€

My Checklist



I **bank** with:

The sorting code of my bank is:

My bank account number is:

My bank's opening hours are:

I have a **credit union** account with:

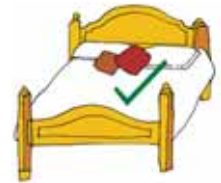
My credit union account number is:

I have a **post office** savings account with:

My post office savings account number is:

6. Accommodation and housing

Accommodation in Ireland can be either private (ie owned by an individual or company for either their own use or to let to others) or public (ie owned by a public authority or housing association). 80% of people in Ireland own their own homes - maybe one day you will own one here too!



The RIA will assist you to find private rented accommodation. The period of tenancy is usually one year. Both the tenant (ie you) and the landlord (ie the owner or person acting on the owner's behalf) have rights and obligations. You must pay the landlord a deposit (usually one month's rent in advance). This is paid to cover any possible damage to the house, or in case you breach the rental agreement.



As a tenant, you have a right to a rent book and a lease agreement which states:

- The name and address of the property;
- The name and address of the landlord or the person acting for them;
- The amount of rent you pay and how often (ie weekly, monthly or quarterly);
- The start date of your tenancy;
- The length of your tenancy;
- Inventory (list of things in the house/apartment).



All landlords must ensure that their properties comply with certain minimum physical standards. They are also responsible for all repairs except minor repairs and any damage caused by you. The landlord or their agent should ensure that:

- The accommodation is in good repair (including wiring and gas pipes);
- Has hot and cold water;



- Has adequate heating and ventilation;
- Is not damp.

Most rental accommodation in Ireland is available furnished, which means that basic furniture and fittings (for example, kitchen appliances such as cooker, fridge etc) are included. Items such as televisions, toasters, microwave ovens etc are not necessarily included. If it is not supplied, you can ask your landlord for a written inventory of everything in the house or flat. When you move out, this list will be checked in case anything is missing or damaged. You are also required to keep the outside of the house/apartment clean and tidy and may be required to maintain any gardens.

Threshold

For more information about your rights as a tenant, please contact Threshold, the National Housing Organisation. Threshold provides free, independent, confidential professional information, advice and advocacy on housing issues.

Rent Allowance

As you will be unemployed when you arrive in Ireland, the only housing option available to you will be private rented accommodation. Subject to a means test (that is a check to see if you have any money of your own) you will qualify for a rent allowance. This money is an allowance towards the rent cost - you are expected to pay some of the rent from your income. The amount you pay is based on the income of all the family and the number of people living there with you over 17 years of age. This amount will be calculated by your Community Welfare Officer, who will generally ensure that your income after paying rent does not fall below a minimum level. This Rent Allowance is regarded as a short-term payment; you are expected to make every effort to become independent as soon as you can.



Public Housing

Even though you will live in rented accommodation, because you qualify for rent allowance, your name will be placed on the Public Housing list of the local authority. Local authorities in Ireland are the main provider of housing for people who need housing and cannot afford to buy their own homes. Local authority housing is allocated according to housing need, and rents are based on your ability to pay. Each local authority has its own rules for deciding the order of priority on the waiting list, called "schemes of letting priorities". As houses become available to your local authority for letting (renting out), they are allocated from the waiting list in order of priority, taking account of all the relevant circumstances. If you want to know your position on the waiting list, your local authority will inform you.



Utilities

In most private rental accommodation, you will have to transfer ownership of the utilities (e.g. electricity, gas etc) into your own name. This means that you are responsible for ensuring that bills get paid on time. Failure to do so can mean the supply of that utility being disconnected. Reconnection can be costly, as well as take time.



Electricity supply (ESB)

Gas supply (Bord Gais)

Telephone (landline) (Eircom).

See previous section on 'Money Management' for advice on ways to pay your utility bills.



In Roscommon:

The nearest Threshold National Housing Organisation centre is their Western Regional Advice Centre, located in Galway. Open: Monday - Friday 9.30am - 5pm.
Tel: (091) 563080; e-mail thresholdgalway@eircom.net;
www.threshold.ie

The Citizens Information Centre (CIC) will also provide advice and assistance if you need it. Tel: 1890 777 121.
www.comhairle.ie

My Checklist



My address is:

My landlord / landlord's agent name and contact details are:

My rent is € per

I applied for Rent Supplement of: on

Local authority contact details:

Utility Checklist:

My ESB Account Number:

My Bord Gais Account Number:

My Eircom Account Number:

Any other Account Numbers I should note

Account Details:

Account Details:

Account Details:

7. Transport

Public transport is available throughout Ireland. Free travel on State bus and rail services is available to everyone permanently living in Ireland that is 66 years of age and over or in receipt of disability allowance. You must apply to the Department of Social and Family Affairs for a Travel Pass. Certain people under that age are also entitled to free transport. Free travel is also available on a limited number of services that are operated by private bus transport companies that have opted in to the Free Travel scheme. Your Resettlement Officer or Support Worker will be able to help you find out if you qualify for a free travel pass.



By bus: Buses are the most common mode of public transport. The national bus carrier is Bus Éireann. Bus Éireann operates city bus services in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford and town services in Athlone, Drogheda, Dundalk, Navan and Sligo. There are also many private bus companies throughout the country.



Bus Éireann local services consist of stage services - 'stage-carriage' and 'rural'. Stage services operate regularly on a daily basis, serving all stops on a journey. The bus will stop at designated stops on request for passengers getting on or off. Tickets can be bought from the bus driver on all local services. Rural services operate one day a week to a market town from a hinterland catchment area. For information on the national bus services, call (01) 8366111 or go to www.buseireann.ie



By train: mainline railways, managed by Iarnród Éireann ('Irish Rail'), connect the main cities and towns. For information on the train services, call 1850 366222 or go to www.irishrail.ie

Driving

If you want to buy a car and drive it in Ireland, you must apply for a provisional licence and you must obtain the appropriate insurance and car tax. The application form for a driving licence is available from your local Motor Taxation Office, post office or Garda station. In Ireland, you must drive on the left hand side of the road. For a copy of the Rules of the Road, try your local post office or bookshop (it costs around €3.00). For further information, contact your Resettlement Officer.



Taxi services

There are two types of taxi service available in Ireland: Hackney cabs are cars you can hire by telephone or by dropping into a “walk-in” shop. You cannot hail these cars on the street - you must pre-book.

Taxi cabs are cars for hire that drive around looking for passengers. You can recognise these cabs by the taxi sign on the car roof. These cabs can be stopped on the street.

You can find telephone numbers for both types of cab by looking up ‘Taxis and Taxicabs’ in the ‘Golden Pages’ telephone book.

In Roscommon:

By bus:

Roscommon is on five local / rural commuter bus services, check locally for details or call (01) 8366111 or go to www.buseireann.ie

By train:

Roscommon town is located on the main Dublin/Westport rail line and is served daily by three passenger trains to Dublin and four from Dublin. It is also served by daily services to and from Galway and Castlebar. Times are subject to change, so please check locally before you start your journey. For information on the train services, call 1850 366222 or go to www.irishrail.ie

8. Communications, the media & libraries

Phone systems

The Irish telecommunications system is one of the most advanced in Europe. Telecommunication is available most readily by telephone. In addition fax, e-mail and internet services are also available. The Lo Call number (1890 at the beginning of the number) means the call will only cost you 5 cent a minute. The word Freephone before a telephone number indicates that your call is free.



The country code for Ireland is 353. A full list of international dialing codes for calls from Ireland is published in every local Phone Book. To receive a free copy of your local Phone Book by post, please call 1800 20 20 20. The local dial code for Dublin city and county is (01). When you see this prefix before a phone number, it means that it's a Dublin number.



In the event of emergency, dial 112 or 999 from any phone and you will be connected to the emergency services (police, ambulance, fire brigade, coastguard).

Mobile phones (cell phones): Ireland has one of the highest usage rates of mobile phones in Europe. There are three networks; Meteor, O2 and Vodafone. Mobile phones are relatively cheap to buy, but call costs can vary across the three networks, especially for international calls. Mobile phones can be bought post-paid (ie you receive a monthly bill and sign a usage agreement - you will need written proof of address such as a utility bill to buy a post-paid phone) or pre-paid (ie you pay for your calls in advance by purchasing a pre-paid card). You do not need a utility bill to buy a pre-paid mobile phone.

Newspapers & magazines

Four daily Irish newspapers are published in the Republic: The Irish Times, The Irish Independent, The Irish Examiner



and The Star. Evening and Sunday papers are also available. A number of UK and international papers and magazines are also on sale here. Local newspapers can be especially good for information about local employment and training opportunities.

Metro Eireann is a national multicultural monthly publication. If you cannot get a copy locally, you can access it online at www.metroeireann.ie.

TV & radio

There are many television channels available including Irish channels - RTE1, Network 2, TV3, TG4 and international channels, for example - BBC1, BBC2, UTV, Channel 4 and SKY. There are also a multitude of local, national and international radio channels available. You should note that you must ask permission from your landlord should you decide to install a satellite dish.

Internet access

Ireland has a very high rate of internet access and public internet access points, such as internet cafes, are easy to find and can be cheap to use. Costs vary from place to place, so it pays to compare rates. Internet access is also available in the local library.

Libraries

The public library service is the largest information and cultural infrastructure in Ireland, and is provided by library authorities, typically the local county council or corporation. There are 12 million visits to Irish public libraries every year. Public libraries generally provide: lending services (fiction and non-fiction books); children's services; reference and general information services; local studies services; public internet access; self-directed learning. Libraries are also a great source of local information.



In Roscommon:

Phone

The local code for Roscommon is 090. To dial a Roscommon number from the local area, you do not need to use the code. For example, if your phone number is (090) 123 4567, you dial just the '123 4567' part if you are calling from a local phone. To call this number from abroad, you would have to dial 00-353-90-123 4567.

Newspapers

The local newspapers are the Roscommon Champion and the Roscommon Herald, both of which are published every Wednesday and widely available locally.

Radio

The local radio station in Roscommon is Shannonside FM (104.1 FM).

TV

Only the Irish channels are available free of charge in Roscommon - for all other international channels, you will need to have a digital television service installed into your home.

Library services

Roscommon Library is on Abbey Street.

Tel: (090) 6637273

E-Mail: roslib@eircom.net

Web: www.roscommoncoco.ie/services/

Open Tuesday - Saturday, hours vary.

9. The health service

Under the Medical Card Scheme, health services are provided free for those who cannot afford to provide health services for themselves or their dependents. Health care around the country used to be under the control of various health boards. It is now organized by the Health Service Executive.

Medical & dental care

Medical cards are issued to people whose income is below a certain level. Everyone over 70 years of age is entitled to a Medical Card, regardless of their income. Medical Cards are small plastic cards (similar in size to a credit card). Once you get your medical card you should keep it somewhere safe.



With a Medical Card, you are entitled to free GP (family doctor) services; prescribed drugs and medicines (with some exceptions); in-patient public hospital services; hospital out-patient services; dental, optical and aural services; medical appliances; maternity and infant care services; and a maternity cash grant on the birth of each child. You should be aware that there are waiting lists for most medical services other than GP services.



Applications for Medical Cards can take up to three months to process. Before you get your Card, you will receive a letter which states your medical card number. You should keep this letter safe as the medical card number written in the letter will enable you to get free health care while you wait for your Card.



Your Resettlement Officer / Support Worker will help you apply for a Medical Card.

If you need counseling or mental health services, please contact your GP for advice.

In Roscommon:

The local hospital is Roscommon County Hospital

Tel: +353 90 6626200

email: ros.admin@whb.ie

The hospital has 70 beds. A medical, surgical, psychiatric, geriatric and coronary service is available together with a new accident and emergency unit at the hospital. This hospital is wheelchair-accessible.



My Checklist

I applied for a medical card on:

I received my medical card on:

My medical card number is:

My GP's name, address and phone number are:

My GP's surgery hours are:

The emergency number is:

My dentist's name, address and phone number are:

My dentist surgery hours are:

The emergency number is:

In the event of a medical emergency,
dial 112 or 999 from any phone.

10. Education

Adults:

Language training is provided free of charge to adults. Please see the section 'Interpreters and Learning English' for further details. There are a number of routes into adult education in Ireland. Education opportunities, such as night classes, are often available locally; local schools or the FÁS office (see 'Working in Ireland') are a good place to look for information. For information on accredited adult education, see 'Third level education' below.



Children:

In Ireland, the vast majority of schools are free as they are paid for by the State. By law, everyone must attend education between the ages of six and 16, or until students have completed three years of second level education. The usual school-going age is from four or five years old until 18. The school year generally runs from September (October for third level colleges) to May/June and schools are open from Monday to Friday. English is the language used in the vast majority of schools in Ireland. Corporal punishment (for example, hitting) is prohibited in all Irish Schools. Many schools have a uniform which children are requested to wear. You can apply to the Community Welfare Officer to provide you with a "back to school" clothing and footwear allowance. Your Resettlement Officer will help you place your children in local schools.



Parents of children attending school should note the following information.

Parents may be expected to be involved in their children's education and to meet with teachers from time to time.

If you are worried about your child's progress you should arrange to meet with the class teacher or school principal. Parents of children attending primary school should take them to school and collect them each day, if they are not

taking a school bus or traveling with another adult. Most schools do not allow children to leave the school grounds during school hours unless they have permission from their parents to leave the school. There are many school holidays during the year. Information regarding holiday dates will be provided by the school. Schools often send notices or letters to parents. These notices are written in English only. You should contact the school if you do not understand a letter or notice sent to you by the school.

School Books Grant Scheme:

A limited grant scheme is available in Ireland for students in State primary and post-primary schools to help with the cost of school books. The scheme is mainly aimed at pupils from low-income families and families experiencing financial hardship. Funding for this scheme comes from the Department of Education & Science and the scheme is administered in each school by the School Principal.

There are three levels to education in Ireland:

First level: primary

These schools cater for children from 4 or 5 years of age until 12 years approximately.

Second level: post-primary

This level has two cycles: The Junior cycle, lasts three years, at the end of which students take the Junior Certificate Examination (at 15 or 16 years of age). The Senior Cycle lasts two or three years and culminates in students taking the Leaving Certificate Examination (at 17 or 18 years of age).

Third level

The third level education system is made up of universities, technological colleges and colleges of education. These all receive State funding. There is also a number of independent private college. Academic awards in Ireland

include; Certificates, National Diplomas, Bachelors Degrees, Graduate Diplomas, Masters Degrees and Doctorates.

Access to third level is largely determined on the basis of points achieved in the Leaving Certificate, which is the final school examination. If you are over 23 years of age and want to go to university or another third level institution, contact your Resettlement Officer / Support Worker or Citizens Information Centre for information on how to apply for third level education.

My Checklist



The Primary School is:

The Class Teacher is:

The Principal Teacher is:

The school hours are:

The Secondary School is:

The Principal Teacher is:

The Year Head Teacher is:

The school hours are:

The Third Level College is:

The Registrar / Head of Department is:

The college hours are:

11. Irish Law

In Brief

Like all Irish citizens, you are expected to abide by the laws of the land, and any breach of the law will be treated accordingly. The Garda Síochána (Gardaí), the national police force, exists to keep people safe and uphold the law.

The legal system in any country is detailed and complicated. This section is not exhaustive, but will give you some pointers about Irish law, which may differ from that of your homeland.

Women and men are equal under Irish and EU law.

It is illegal to leave a child under 14 years of age on their own in your home.

People under 16 are considered to be children in the eyes of the law.

The following are all offences under Irish law:

- Begging.
- Smoking in any public building or place of work.
- Carrying a weapon such as a knife.
- Larceny (such as stealing or shoplifting).
- Creating a nuisance or disturbance.
- Driving without a valid licence or insurance.
- Assault.
- Domestic violence (that is assaulting a partner, either male or female, in the home).
- Violence against children and child abuse.
- Drunk and disorderly behaviour.
- Female Genital Mutilation (for information on male circumcision, please contact the doctor (GP) with whom you are registered).
- Littering in public places.

Racism and Discrimination

Racism and discrimination because of race or ethnic origin are illegal in Ireland. If you think you have been discriminated against, contact:

The Garda ethnic liaison officer at your local Garda station or;

The Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel St, Dublin 2,
Lo Call 1890 245 545 or;

The National Consultative Committee on Racism & Interculturalism, Third Floor, Jervis House, Jervis Street, Dublin 1. Tel.(01) 858 8000.

You can also contact the Resettlement Officer for advice.

Legal Aid

Free legal aid is available in Ireland, on a case by case basis.

section three

**Creating a Future:
Information and Advice**

1. Family reunification

You can apply for family reunification for close family members such as children, spouses or other persons who you can prove were dependent on you prior to your arrival in Ireland. There is also provision for the admission of special cases at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform.

Family reunification is designed to reunite close family members, particularly spouses who have become separated, or, to reunite children under the age of 18 with their parents. In general, other family members are not considered for family reunification except in exceptional circumstances.

It's important to be aware that there can be a considerable waiting period in processing applications for family reunification.

Your Resettlement Officer will help you with any application for family reunification you wish to make.

2. How to become an Irish citizen

To become an Irish citizen, you must have been legally resident in Ireland for a minimum of three of the past five years. You must have been resident for one full year immediately prior to making an application to become an Irish citizen.

There are certain conditions you must meet in order to qualify for naturalisation (the name for the process to become an Irish citizen). In particular, you should not have committed any criminal offences in Ireland as offences may be taken into account when your application is processed.

You must supply the names of two Irish citizens who are prepared to act as referees for you (persons who will attest to your good character). It is therefore important that you get to know some Irish citizens.

If you become a citizen, you will have the right to an Irish passport and will no longer be considered a refugee.



3. Traveling outside Ireland

If you have your own national passport you may continue to use this in the normal way. If you do not have a passport, you must apply to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for a Geneva Convention Travel document which is similar to a passport. The RIA Resettlement Officer can help you to apply for a travel document.

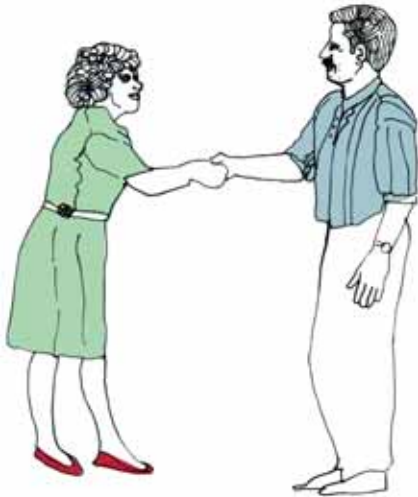


Before you travel, you should check with the Embassy of the country to which you wish to travel whether you need a visa to travel there. If you are transiting through another country during your journey you may need a transit visa.



It is advised that you do not travel without valid travel documentation.

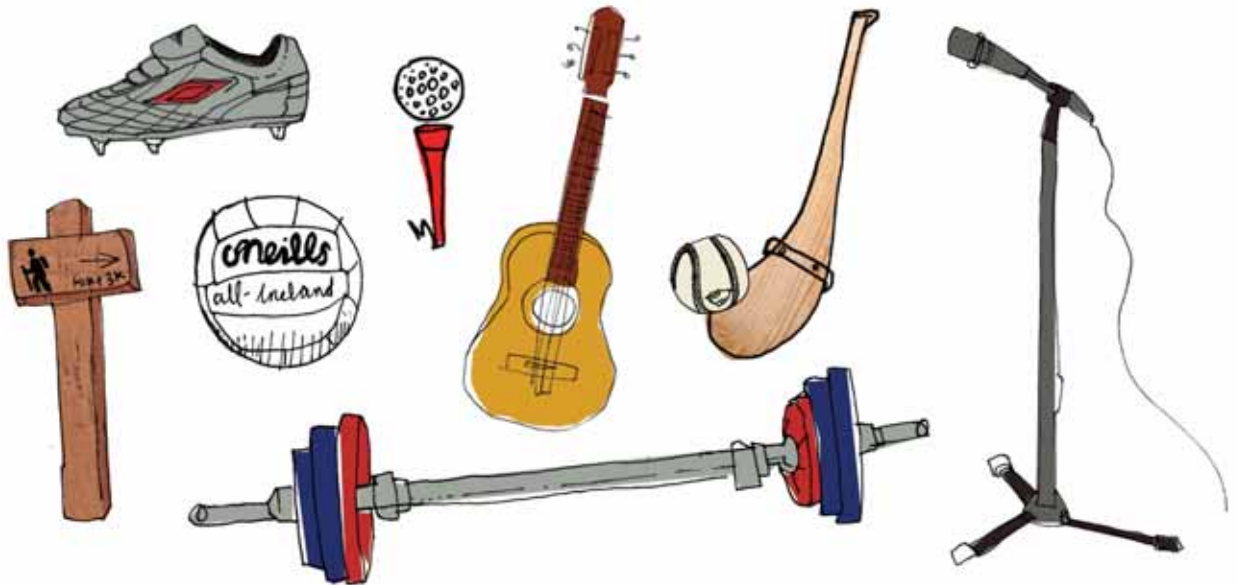
4. Contact Book: meeting Irish people and members of your own community locally



One of the best ways to find your feet in a new country is to meet new people. The Irish are generally very sociable and friendly and it is typical of people to chat to new faces. However, a casual chat is just that; forming real friendships with Irish people takes time. Irish social interaction often takes place in a bar/pub (though the consuming of alcohol is not necessary). Sporting events are also very popular, so it might be worth your while going to a few local fixtures – people are generally happy to explain what's going on! Your Support Worker or Resettlement Officer will be able to help you to join local clubs.

The phrase 'How are you?' is often meant as a casual greeting, like 'hello' or 'hi' and not as an enquiry into your health! It is also typical in Ireland to shake hands with people and look them in the eye when you are introduced to them. It is considered respectful to say 'please' when asking for something and 'thank you' when you receive an answer.

Talk to your Resettlement Officer if you would like to be put in touch with other members of your own community in Ireland.



In Roscommon:

There are a great variety of leisure facilities available, such as arts theatre with a seating capacity of 190, a 25m swimming pool with sauna and steam room, a gymnasium, handball alley, all-weather pitch and GAA and soccer pitches.

There is coarse angling with an abundance of all types of fish. An 18 hole championship golf course with a newly built clubhouse is located 3/4 of a mile from the town with open membership. A racecourse with six meetings a year and excellent facilities offers a day out for all.

Three night clubs operate in the town and there are also two live music venues with various artists and bands featured regularly. Roscommon is a flat county and walking is of big interest to people. A number of waymarked paths exist in and around the town.

5. Contact Book: official sources of support

The following alphabetical list includes State agencies, organisations, social service providers and support groups who may be of help to you.

Access Ireland

Access Ireland promotes refugee representative groups.
41 Dominick Court, Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1.
Tel. (01) 8780587. <http://www.accessireland.ie>

African Refugee Network

A network for African refugees in Ireland.
90 Meath St. Dublin 8.
Tel.(01) 4734523. www.integratingireland.ie/members/115

Africa Solidarity Centre

Assists and supports the African immigrant community to integrate into Irish society.
Terenure Enterprise Centre, 17 Rathfarnham Rd,
Terenure, Dublin 6W.
Tel. (01) 4903237

Amnesty International Irish Section

Amnesty international works on human rights issues worldwide
Seán McBride House, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2.
Tel. (01) 6776361

ARASI (Association of Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Ireland)

An organisation set up by asylum seekers for asylum seekers.
Spiritan House, 213 North Circular Road, Dublin 7.
Tel.(01) 8381142.
<http://www.integratingireland.ie/members/146>

Bosnian Community Development Project

The project caters for the needs of Bosnians in Ireland.
40 Pearse St. Dublin 2.
Tel.(01) 6719202

Cáirde

Cáirde is a non-governmental organisation committed to responding to the health needs of ethnic minority communities, mainly refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants.

19 Belvedere Place, Dublin 1.

Tel. (01) 8552111. www.cairde.ie

Comhlamh

Comhlamh is interested in linking global and local issues. Comhlamh provides a mail address for a number of groups including those representing the interests of Nigerians, Congolese and Togolese.

10 Upper Camden St, Dublin 2. Tel. (01) 4783490.

Citizens Information Centres (CICs)

CICs are registered and supported by Comhairle and provide free, independent information about your rights and all aspects of social services.

Citizens Information Phone Service 9am-9pm Monday to Friday

Tel. 1890 777 121. www.comhairle.ie

Comhairle

The national State agency responsible for the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services.

Hume House, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

Tel. (01) 605 9000. www.comhairle.ie

**Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
Immigration and Citizenship Divisions**

13/14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.

Tel. (01) 6167700. www.justice.ie

Reception & Integration Agency

The Reception & Integration Agency has responsibility for co-ordinating the services provided to refugees. The Reception & Integration Agency co-ordinates such services in partnership with a number of State agencies, voluntary and community groups and Non-Governmental Organisations.

Block C, Ardilaun Centre, 112 - 114 St. Stephen's Green West, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 4183200. Lo Call 1890 777727.

www.ria.gov.ie

Immigrant Council of Ireland

2 St Andrew Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel. Information service: (01) 674 0200. Administration: (01) 674 0202. www.immigrantcouncil.ie

Integrate Ireland Language & Training (IILT)

Organisation that co-ordinates the provision of English language training for adult refugees. 126 Pembroke Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel. (01) 6677232/ 6677295. www.iilt.ie

Integrating Ireland

The National Network of Refugee, Asylum Seeker & Immigrant Support Groups c/o Comhlamh, 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2.

Tel. (01) 4783490. www.integratingireland.ie

Irish Red Cross Society

The Irish Red Cross is a voluntary organisation which has many branches located throughout the country. The Irish Red Cross is a member of the International Red Cross and, in line with the Fundamental Principles of the Movement, seeks to bring relief to those who suffer.

16 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Tel. (01) 6765135. www.redcross.ie

Irish Refugee Council

The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) is an independent Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). Its work includes policy, research, information provision and legal work concerning refugee issues.

Dublin Office: 88 Capel Street. Dublin 1.

Tel. (01) 8730042. www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie

Ennis Office: 1 Bank Place, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Tel. (065) 6822026.

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

The NCCRI is an independent expert body focusing on developing a strategic approach to combating racism and to promoting an intercultural society.

Third Floor, Jervis House, Jervis Street, Dublin 1

Tel. (01) 8588000. www.nccri.ie

Nigerian Support Group

Organisation which aims to raise awareness, give support and assistance to Nigerians living in the State. Offers counseling and an information service and refers Nigerians seeking asylum in the State to the appropriate agencies.

c/o Comhlamh, 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2.

Tel. (086) 8704051. www.integratingireland.ie/members/585

Rape Crisis Centre

The centre provides a 24 hour crisis telephone service for victims of rape and sexual abuse.

70 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

Freephone: 1800 778 888. www.drcc.ie

Refugee Information Service

The Refugee Information Service exists to counter social exclusion through the provision of a specialist information, referral and advocacy service to asylum seekers and refugees.

Administration Office, 27 Anamoe Terrace,
off North Circular Road, Dublin 7.

Tel. (01) 8382740. www.ris.ie

SORUSSI (Society of Russian Speakers in Ireland)

This is a Russian speaking Community Association.

The Franciscan Friary, 4 Merchant's Quay, Dublin 8.

Tel. (01) 6771128.

SPIRASI (Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative)

SPIRASI provides advice, training and support to asylum seekers and refugees and also has a centre for the care of survivors of torture.

213 North Circular Road, Dublin 7.

Tel. (01) 8389664. www.spirasi.ie

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR is the United Nations agency whose role is to protect and assist asylum seekers and refugees worldwide.

Suite 4, Merrion House, 1/3 Lr Fitzwilliam St, Dublin 2.

Tel. (01) 6314510. www.unhcr.ch

Vietnamese Association

This association caters for the needs of Vietnamese people in Ireland.

45 Hardwicke St. Dublin 1. Tel. (01) 8742331

Vincentian Refugee Centre

The centre provides a drop-in support service for refugees and asylum seekers.

St Peter's Church, Phibsborough, Dublin 7.

Tel. (01) 8102580. www.vincentians.ie/VRC.htm

Volunteer Resource Centre

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups,
Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7.

Tel. (01) 872 2622.

6. Some dates to note in Ireland!

Every country has its own feast days and days of celebration and Ireland is no exception. Because Ireland is predominately Catholic, some religious holidays are treated as national holidays (ie schools and public services are closed, though shops may be open).

The biggest feast days celebrated here are:

St. Patrick's Day - 17th March every year

This national holiday marking the feast day of Ireland's national saint, is celebrated all over the country with parades and events. If you see people wearing green leaves on their clothes, it's called shamrock, and it is worn on this date.



Easter

The date varies each year, but it usually in April. Easter is a religious festival. At this time of year gifts of chocolate in the shape of an egg, both large and small, are exchanged amongst children.



Halloween - 31st October

It is customary for children to dress up and go to neighbours' houses looking for sweets and fruit. This is known as 'trick or treat'. Please do not let children do this without adult supervision.



Christmas Day - 25th December

This is the biggest national holiday in Ireland and a particularly special time for children in this country, who hope to be visited by Santa Claus as they sleep.



During Easter and Christmas, schools close for about two weeks and many offices and shops close for a number of days.

section four

My Information

1. Personal information

Use this checklist to record your own information and data, it will be useful to keep it all in one easy-to-find place.

My name:

Address:

Phone number:

Mobile phone number:

Date of birth:

Documentation checklist: Record the numbers of your important documentation, such as your passport, GNIB card, birth or marriage certificates here:

Document title:

Number:

Document title:

Number:

Document title:

Number:

Document title:

Number:

Document title:

Number:

Document title:

Number:

Resettlement Officer name and contact number:

GP name and contact number:

Community Welfare Officer name and contact number.



Reception and Integration Agency

Block C

Ardilaun Centre

112 - 114 St. Stephen's Green

Dublin 2

Telephone

+353 1 418 3200

Facsimile

+353 1 418 3271

www.ria.gov.ie