

MOVING TO IRELAND



**Brent Irish
Advisory Service**

Moving to Ireland

Abhaile go hÉirinn

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Further copies of this booklet, together with other titles in this series, *Moving within the European Community (EC)* and the *Irish in Britain Directory (5th ed)*, are available from: BIAS Information Service, Electric House, 296 Willesden Lane, London NW2 5HW (Tel 081 459 6286/Fax 081 451 8865).

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This book has been produced by BIAS Information Service in response to the growing demand for information from people wanting to move, or in many cases, return, to Ireland.

Covering both Northern Ireland and the Republic, it offers an up-to-date guide to areas such as housing, employment, transferring benefits, education and training, health care, as well as to practicalities like organising removal of goods, importing belongings into the country etc.

A comprehensive *Listings* section detailing contacts for follow-on information and advice is contained in the second part of the book.

Basics

The following section will cover some of the practicalities involved in moving to Ireland.

Removals

A number of removal companies, based in Britain, specialise in transporting goods to Ireland. Prices vary but are usually based on the amount you want brought back and the number of staff involved (drivers, packers etc). There's normally a set minimum price, eg, London to Dublin £145 for 50 cubic metres. Be sure to check this out beforehand. You should send the removal company a list of the goods you want transported and they will supply you with a written estimate of costs.

Storage can be arranged if you're not taking all your belongings across at the same time and, once again, prices vary depending on the size of your load. You should also bear in mind that most companies require an average of two weeks' notice. The Irish newspapers in Britain (The Irish Post, Irish World etc) are a good source for telephone numbers of companies specialising in this type of removal.

Importing goods

If you're moving to the Republic of Ireland you will not have to pay duties on goods being brought into the country, as long as these goods are "used", ie not brand new. However, your belongings should arrive in Ireland within twelve months of you moving back permanently as you may be liable for charges if you exceed this period. Contact the Revenue Commissioners, Dublin Castle, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1

6792777) for more information. Goods being brought into Northern Ireland are not subject to charges.

You will need to complete customs form No 153 (Transfer of Residence), available from either your removal company or the Irish embassy (p.21), which should be presented at the port or place of importation.

All motor vehicles, including cars and caravans, which are less than six months old are subject to import charges. In all other cases the vehicle can be imported free of duties. You should be able to present the relevant registration book, card, or any other proof that the vehicle belongs to you.

If you're taking prescription drugs then you should check in advance about any restrictions on bringing them into the country. Although this does not apply to people returning to N. Ireland, anyone moving to the Republic should get a prescription from their GP before travelling as you may be asked to present this at customs. For more information contact the Department of Health, Food and Drugs Division, Custom House, Dublin 1 (Tel 010 353 1 714711).

For further information on importation and copies of the relevant forms contact either the Irish embassy in London (address p.21), or the Revenue Commissioners at Dublin Castle (address as before).

Entry

If you're travelling between Britain and Ireland then you may encounter problems under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Under the PTA, police can carry out security checks on anyone travelling between the two countries. This could involve you being stopped and held for questioning for up to twelve hours and could, in fact, lead to you being detained for another seven days without charges being made. It's a good idea, therefore, to carry the telephone number of the Irish embassy, that of a solicitor, as well as contact numbers of friends and relatives. For more information on the PTA contact, PTA Research & Welfare Association, PO Box 817, Camp Hill, Birmingham B11 4AF (Tel 021 551 0503).

Housing

If you're planning to return to Ireland then where you are going to live will obviously be one of your most important priorities. Your main options are either buying a property, renting from a local authority, or renting privately.

Buying property (North and South)

In general, the situation with regard to buying a property is the same in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. For information specifically on the South contact the Irish Auctioneers & Valuers Institute, 38 Merrion Square East, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 611794), who will send you a list of estate agents. Ask for the IAVI booklet.

For information on properties in the North contact the National Association of Estate Agents, Arbon House, 21 Jury Street, Warwick CV34 4EH (Tel 0926 496800).

It's also a good idea to check local newspapers for the area in Ireland to which you'd like to move. These can often be bought in specialist Irish shops or, in many cases, ordered through your local newsagent.

Mortgages

The procedures involved in taking out a mortgage are basically the same in both Ireland and Britain. If you're a client of an Irish bank in Britain, you can transfer your account and details to a branch in Ireland. For more information contact, Bank of Ireland Home Mortgages Ltd, Plaza West, Bridge Street, Reading (Tel 0734 393393) or Allied Irish Mortgage Services, Bank Centre Britain, Belmont Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 5A (Tel 0895 272222).

Special schemes

The following apply to people moving to the South of Ireland only. At present there are no special government schemes available to help people planning to buy property in the North.

Shared ownership scheme

Under this programme you can buy fifty percent of the property now and fifty percent later. To qualify you must be in need of housing, have an income below IR£12,000 pa or be a local authority tenant in Ireland. Under the Shared Ownership Scheme the property will be shared initially between you, as the occupier, and the local authority in Ireland.

Subsidised housing sites

This scheme is designed to help people in need of housing to build their own property. To qualify, you should be an approved applicant for local authority housing or a local authority tenant who wants to return their home to the council.

2,000 New house grant

You will qualify for this grant if you're building a new house for your own accommodation and you or your partner have not previously bought a house or built one. Your house must be built in accordance with standards and regulations laid down by the Department of Environment and the Government.

For more details on the above schemes contact the Housing Centre, 84 Merrion Square South, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 612877).

Renting from a Council (Local Authority)**The Republic of Ireland**

Tenants who leave a local authority/Housing Association property in Britain will not automatically qualify for rehousing by a local authority in Ireland. The majority of people in the Republic are homeowners and there are fewer local authority properties available than in Britain. This, in turn, makes the competition for housing intense.

As in Britain, you will have to meet certain criteria to qualify for local authority housing. These are, for the most part, related to income.

A complete list of all county councils/corporations is printed on p.21-24.

The following counties have either agreed to accept direct applications from people currently living in Britain or are willing to enter into exchanges with British local authorities.

The councils/corporations who have agreed to accept direct applications are:

Carlow Co Council	Mayo Co Council
Cavan Urban District Council	Monaghan Co Council
Cork Co Council	Offaly Co Council
Dublin Co Council	Sligo Corporation
Kildare Co Council	Westmeath Co Council
Limerick Co Council	Wexford Co Council

The following councils operate mutual exchanges with local authorities in Britain. Through mutual exchanges you can agree to "swap" your council property in Britain for one in Ireland.

Carlow Co Council/	Dublin Corporation
Carlow Urban District Council	Dundalk Urban District Council
Cavan Urban District Council	Kildare Co Council
Cork Co Council	Kilkenny Co Council
Donegal Co Council	Roscommon Co Council
Dublin Co Council	Tipperary (Clonmel Corporation)
Dun Laoghaire Corporation	Tipperary (South Riding) Co Council
Mayo Co Council	

If you want information on one of the counties not included above, contact them directly at the addresses listed on p.21-23.

Where it's not possible to make an application while you're still living in Britain, you're advised to return and rent privately, or stay with relatives, in order to join the waiting list. It would appear that your chances of being housed are greatly improved by being resident in the country. However, in reality, all councils stress the length of waiting lists and the shortage of housing. So, if you're planning to apply for local authority housing, be prepared for a long wait.

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) has overall responsibility for council housing in N. Ireland. To qualify you should have been either born in N. Ireland or have accepted an offer of a job there. The NIHE operates a points system for allocating housing which is similar to the system in Britain. Points are allotted for reasons such as a lack of facilities, overcrowding, on grounds of age or for environmental reasons. Priority is given to those with the highest points.

When applying to join the waiting list from Britain you will be treated as a "transfer", with each application being considered on its own merit. For more information contact the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), Housing Centre, HPCU, 2 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8PB (Tel 0232 240588).

National Mobility Scheme (NMS)

This applies to people moving to N. Ireland who are currently in local authority housing in Britain. Ninety nine percent of British local authorities participate in the scheme. Nominations, which can be made for employment or social reasons, are handled by your local authority office in Britain.

Contact the following for more information: Housing Organisations Mobility & Exchange Services, 26 Chapter Street,

London SW1P 4ND (Tel 071 233 7077) or; National Tenants Exchange Scheme, PO Box 110, Gloucester GL1 1PE.

Housing Associations

Housing Associations are independent, voluntary, non-profit-making bodies which provide rented accommodation for people in need. Many target particular groups such as the elderly, mentally ill, disabled, single parents or homeless people. To be considered for this type of housing, you should already be on the local authority waiting list in the South or the NIHE waiting list in the North.

The overall number of Housing Associations in the Republic of Ireland, although expanding slightly, is still on a relatively small scale. There are, consequently, very lengthy waiting lists. Details of Housing Associations for the area you're interested in are available from the relevant local authority (addresses p.21-23).

The Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations (NIFHA) is among the smallest in Europe with only 1.7% of all dwellings being rented from Housing Associations. A directory of Associations in Northern Ireland, with details on the particular group catered for by each, is available from NIFHA Ltd, Carlisle Memorial Centre, Clifton Street, Belfast BT13 1AB (Tel 0232 230446).

Renting privately (North and South)

Generally speaking, it's difficult to find rented accommodation in Ireland whilst still based in Britain as you'll often need to be "on the spot" to chase up ads in newspapers etc. You can however check advertisements in local papers (sometimes available from your local newsagent) or contact one of the organisations mentioned on p.4 for lists of estate agents who handle rented accommodation. You can also try using accommodation agencies, although these will almost always charge a fee.

You will, in most cases, need a month's rent in advance plus money for a deposit. The amount of deposit required varies but can sometimes run to as much as the equivalent of two months' rent.

Always make sure to get a receipt for any money paid out and you should also insist on a rent book to keep a written record of payments.

Landlords can legally raise the rent by as much and as often as they choose - unless you have a specific agreement otherwise, ie, a lease. This lease can be either short- or longterm. Either way, make sure you're clear on what the conditions of tenancy involve. For general

information on your rights as a tenant contact Threshold on one of the telephone numbers listed on p.30.

Financial help

Anyone moving to N. Ireland will find the same housing benefit system as in Britain, whereby those on low income are entitled to help with rent payments.

There is no housing benefit system as such in the South of Ireland. Tenants in local authority housing come under the differential rents scheme, details of which are available from your local authority in Ireland (see p.21-23). Rent payments for local authority dwellings depend on your income.

In certain cases private tenants may qualify for financial assistance. You may, for example, be entitled to a rent supplement, available from the Community Welfare Officer at your local health centre. The amount of supplement you receive will depend on your income and how much rent you're actually paying. You may be refused rent supplement if you have turned down the offer of local authority housing or if you have given up a tenancy.

For more information contact the Community Welfare Officer at your local health centre in Ireland or the Department of Social Welfare, Supplementary Welfare Allowance Section, Apollo House, Tara Street, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 719799).

Rights and housing

Legislation in the Republic of Ireland states that you have a right to "shelter". This, in fact, means temporary, hostel-type accommodation, rather than permanent housing. Should you find yourself in real difficulty contact one of the agencies listed on p.30.

Employment

If you're considering moving to Ireland then you should be realistic about your chances of finding work. At the end of July 1992 unemployment in the Republic stood at around 300,000, the highest total ever. In Northern Ireland the situation is just as bleak, with figures for August 1992 showing a total of 111,390 (15%) of the workforce without a job.

For information on transferring Unemployment Benefit or on your rights to social security benefits in Ireland see *Social Welfare*, p.13.

Documentation and identification

When leaving a job in Britain, make sure to collect your P45 from your employer. This is important as it gives details of your earnings to date as well as the amount of tax paid. It also lists your National Insurance number. You will need your P45 when you start work in Ireland (North and South) or to claim social welfare benefits.

If you're starting a job in the South of Ireland you will also need a Revenue and Social Insurance (RSI) Number. This is the equivalent to a National Insurance number as it records your Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions (see also p.15). RSI numbers are issued automatically when you reach the age of sixteen or when you first start working. You will need to quote this number if you change jobs or make a claim for social welfare benefits. Contact your local social welfare office if you have never been issued with an RSI number or perhaps have just forgotten it.

You should also have a copy of your P60, given to you by your employer at the end of every tax year. This shows your total pay, tax and national insurance deductions for the tax year. You may be asked to produce it if you're claiming a tax refund or applying for social insurance benefits. Contact your employer's tax office before leaving Britain to see if you're due a tax rebate.

The following is a brief checklist of the sort of documentation or forms of ID you should have with you.

Birth certificate (full version), driving licence (if applicable), curriculum vitae, references, copies of all educational/training certificates, P45, P60, a record of both your RSI number and the National Insurance number you used in Britain.

Remember, too, that even if you do find a job immediately you will have to wait at least four weeks before being paid.

Looking for work

The high unemployment in Ireland means that finding work, especially if you're currently living outside the country, will be one of your main difficulties. It's obviously best if you can manage to fix something up before travelling back, if at all possible. Check the Irish newspapers or your professional/trade journals for posts in Ireland. The Irish dailies can be bought in specialist Irish shops or, in many cases, ordered through your local newsagent.

Once you get back to Ireland, register immediately with your local FAS office/job centre. FAS is the central Employment and Training Authority in the South of Ireland and has offices throughout the country. Check the telephone directory for the address of your local office. FAS central office is based at 27-33 Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4 (Tel 010 353 1 685777).

Self-employed (North and South)

If you're returning to the North of Ireland and intend working on a self-employed basis, you should register with the Social Security Office, Connor Buildings, 107-111 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7AG (Tel 0232 246021). Anyone moving to the South should register with the self-employment section of the Department of Social Welfare, Aras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1 (Tel 010 353 1 733111/748444).

Starting your own business

There are a number of agencies offering information and advice to anyone thinking of starting their own business. If you're moving to N. Ireland contact LEDU (Local Enterprise Development Unit) at LEDU House, Upper Galwally, Belfast BT8 4TB (Tel 0232 491031).

Anyone moving to the South should contact either FAS at the address listed above or, the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), Wilton Park, Wilton Place, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 686633).

Other useful sources of information are European Business Information Centres (EBICs). See the BIAS booklet, *Moving within the European Community (EC)*, for a list of EBICs in Ireland. You can also seek advice from your accountant, bank manager or solicitor.

Employment rights

The South of Ireland does not have the same employment protection legislation as Britain. There is, for example, no general minimum wage legislation. It's important therefore that you insist on a written contract and know exactly what the terms of employment are. It's helpful to know about the following two pieces of legislation - the Anti-discrimination Pay Act which states that men and women should be paid the same rate for the same work and, the Employment Equality Act which deals with the problem of discrimination. For more details contact the Employment Equality Agency, 36 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 605966).

Unions

Companies are not required by law to have unions. For more information on union representation contact the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), Head Office, 19 Raglan Road, Dublin 4 (Tel 010 353 1 680641).

Training

Information on training courses can be obtained from your local FAS office/job centre. For details on how qualifications and training gained in Britain will be viewed in Ireland see *Education*, p.18.

Health

When it comes to ensuring continuity in your health care and the steps you can take before leaving Britain, then the situation is essentially the same whether you're moving to either the North or the Republic of Ireland. In all cases, you will have to tell your doctor in Britain of the approximate date on which you'll be leaving the country and, if possible, give a new address where you can be reached in Ireland.

Your GP may be contacted from the Health Services in Ireland for your medical record and where children are involved, your new GP in Ireland will definitely need medical records for information on the child's immunisation and vaccination injections.

Registering with a doctor

As soon as you return you should register with a doctor, and dentist, as close to your home as possible. In the South of Ireland, lists of doctors, dentists, hospitals etc are available from your local health board or Citizens Information Centre (CIC). In the North, you should

contact either your local DHSS office or a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). For addresses see *Listings*.

When registering with a doctor it's always helpful if you can provide some form of identification. If you're moving to Northern Ireland and have been registered with a GP in Britain then you should bring your medical/NHS card with you.

Health services in N. Ireland

The Health Service in N. Ireland is basically the same as in Britain, so people moving to the North should have few problems transferring from one to the other. For more information contact your local Health Authority (addresses p.24).

Health Services in the South of Ireland

There is no National Health Service as such in the South of Ireland but instead eligibility for public health services is based on two separate categories, Full Eligibility and Limited Eligibility. Everyone living in the country belongs to either one, or other, of these categories. For more details see below or contact your local health board in Ireland (p.23).

Full Eligibility

This category is means tested (see also p.15). People who are entitled to Full Eligibility are issued with a medical card which should be presented when using services. The medical card will cover the card-holders spouse and children under sixteen or other dependents such as students over sixteen. Application forms are available from your local health board (p.23).

Medical card holders are entitled to a full range of health services free of charge. This includes GP services, all in-patient hospital services in public wards, specialist services in out-patient clinics, and dental and ophthalmic services. You do not have to pay for maternity care, infant welfare services or hospital maintenance charges. Prescriptions are free to people holding a medical card.

Limited Eligibility

Everyone resident in Ireland who does not qualify for a medical card is automatically entitled to Limited Eligibility. It is not means tested.

People in this category are entitled to all in-patient hospital services in hospital wards. However, unlike medical card holders, you will have to pay maintenance charges (IR£15.00 per day approx). You will also be entitled to specialist services in out-patient clinics. This does not generally include dental, routine ophthalmic and routine aural

services. Maternity care and infant welfare services are also available to people in this category. This includes the services of a family GP during pregnancy and for up to six weeks afterwards for the mother and baby.

Anyone without a medical card will have to pay for prescriptions. Unlike Britain there is no standard charge but instead the cost depends on the medication and dosage you require. You are, however, entitled to a refund when the total exceeds IR£90 a quarter. Contact your health board for more details (p.23).

Family planning

As the Government in Ireland does not provide contraception or fund any organisations related to it, you will have to pay for all methods of contraception and family planning advice. Medical card holders are entitled to see their doctors free of charge for advice on family planning, but will have to pay for all methods of contraception. Branches of the Family Planning Association will see those on a low income for a reduced fee, but everyone must pay a minimum charge at least.

The Irish Family Planning Association, based in Dublin (see *Listings*, p.30) will be able to put you in touch with family planning centres in your area. They can also provide you with the names of local GPs who provide family planning services.

Social Welfare

If you're receiving social security benefits in Britain and intend moving to Ireland then it's essential you take steps before travelling to ensure that you continue getting payments once back in the country. This applies to people going to either the North or the South. In all cases be sure to tell your local DSS office in advance that you intend leaving Britain and, if possible, give them an address where you can be contacted in Ireland.

To make it easier for you to qualify for benefits, any social insurance contributions (ie, National Insurance payments) you make while in Britain will be taken into account when you make a claim for social welfare benefits in Ireland.

For more detailed information contact one of the following:

The Department of Social Welfare
Aras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1
Tel 010 353 1 748444

DSS Overseas Office
Longbenton
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne
WE98 1YX
Tel 091 225 3699

People going to N. Ireland can also contact the local Social Security office for the area they intend moving to.

Unlike Britain, some benefits/grants etc in the Republic of Ireland are administered by the Department of Health. For more information contact the Department of Health, Hawkins Street, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 714711).

Identification

Whether you're moving to the North or the South, it's still important that you can provide certain forms of identification as, without these, you're sure to experience delays with your claim. At least two of the following forms of ID are normally required.

Birth Certificate (full version), Passport, Driving Licence, Local Authority Rent Book, Mortgage Repayment Documents, National Insurance Number (which can be confirmed by P45/P60 or National Insurance Number Card), Fuel Bills addressed to you at your home.

N. Ireland

People moving to the North of Ireland will find that the same social security system operates there as in Britain. This includes National Insurance related benefits (eg Unemployment Benefit or Invalidity Payments) as well as payments which are not related to your Insurance Contributions (eg Income Support). For general information on benefits and entitlements in the UK call the DSS Free-Phone Number on 0800 666 555.

The Republic of Ireland

The social welfare system in the South of Ireland differs considerably from its UK counterpart. The following information will explain briefly the main areas involved.

RSI

In order to work or to claim benefits in the Republic you will need a Revenue and Social Insurance (RSI) Number. Your PRSI contributions are recorded under this number (see below). Contact your local social welfare office if you have forgotten or have never been issued with an RSI number. For more information on PRSI contact: PRSI Registration Section, Department of Social Welfare, Gandon House, Amien Street, Dublin 1 (Tel 010 353 1 748444).

Social Welfare Benefits

There are three types of social welfare benefit:

Contributory, or Social Insurance Payments, which are made on the basis of your PRSI Record. PRSI means Pay Related Social Insurance and is roughly similar to National Insurance contributions in Britain. Like National Insurance, PRSI contributions are deducted from your salary.

To qualify for contributory payments, you should have sufficient weeks of PRSI contributions on your record. These PRSI contributions should also be at the correct rate or class for the payment. Your National Insurance record in Britain can help you to qualify for contributory payments in Ireland.

Non-Contributory (Social Assistance Payments). If you find you haven't enough PRSI contributions to qualify for Social Insurance payments (or have never worked in the Republic and have therefore not paid any PRSI contributions), you may be eligible for Social Assistance payments instead. To qualify you will have to satisfy a means test.

Your "means" are any income you, or your spouse, (or the person you live with as husband/wife) may have, or, any resource which might provide earnings.

Universal Services (eg Child Benefit and Free Travel). These payments are not based on your PRSI record and they are not means tested. Further information is available from your local social services office in Ireland.

There are a wide range of benefits available depending on your circumstances. The following gives a brief explanation of some of the most requested payments.

Unemployed People

Transferring Unemployment Benefit. If you're already receiving Unemployment Benefit in Britain and you move to Ireland then you can still receive payments when you return home. To qualify you

should have been registered as unemployed in Britain for at least four weeks before leaving the country. When you get back to Ireland you must register as unemployed and available for work within seven days. It's vital that you do so within this seven-day period or you may lose your entitlement to payments.

Becoming Unemployed in Ireland. It's important to realise that if you have been working in Britain and find yourself unemployed in Ireland then you do not automatically qualify for Unemployment Benefit. In order to qualify you will need to have a social security contribution record in Ireland. To get one you must have worked in the country for at least one week. This may seem strange, particularly if you have worked right up to the time of leaving Britain, but it is an important rule to be aware of.

Benefits for Unemployed People. There are two different kinds of benefit available to unemployed people.

Unemployment Benefit: This is paid to those who are under 66 years, are able and available for work and are genuinely seeking employment. To qualify, you must be fully unemployed for at least three days in any period of six consecutive days. You must also meet the necessary PRSI contribution terms and be resident in the country. See also "Becoming Unemployed in Ireland" above.

You should apply for Unemployment Benefit on the first day you are unemployed by registering at your local Social Welfare Services Office. As with other benefits you will need to produce adequate means of identification.

Unemployment Assistance: If you do not qualify for Unemployment Benefit, you might still be entitled to Unemployment Assistance. To qualify, you should be between 18 and 66 years, be capable and available for work, genuinely seeking employment, be fully unemployed for at least three days in any period of six consecutive days and be living in Ireland. If you come from a job in Britain and find yourself unemployed in Ireland then you will most likely receive Unemployment Assistance. This is roughly similar to Income Support in Britain.

Unemployment Assistance is means tested. To apply you should register at your local social welfare services office. Once again, you will need relevant identification.

Pensions

Transferring pensions from Britain to Ireland. If you have paid sufficient Insurance Contributions in Britain, then you may still retire in Ireland and have your British pension paid to you there. It's best to

arrange to have the pension paid through a building society or bank, eg, Bank of Ireland or Allied Irish Banks, as you'll get a better rate of exchange than if the money was transferred through the Post Office.

You should inform your local DSS office of the date on which you're moving to Ireland and, if possible, tell them your new address. When you're making your application you should be able to quote the insurance/registration number you used while working in Britain. Contact one of the offices listed on p.14 for more information.

There are three types of pension:

Retirement Pension: To qualify you must be over 65, retired from full-time employment and meet the necessary PRSI contribution conditions. If you have been normally resident in Ireland then you should apply for your pension three months before your 65th birthday. However, if you have been working outside the country, you should apply six months beforehand as your claim will be slightly more complicated.

Old Age Contributory Pension. To qualify you must be over 66 and, once again, meet the necessary PRSI conditions. As before, you should allow six months for your claim to be processed if you have been working outside the country.

Non-Contributory Old Age Pension. If you find that you do not meet the qualifying conditions for either of the above type of pension then you may be entitled to Non-Contributory Old Age Pension. You should be over 66, satisfy a means test and be resident in Ireland. Once again apply at least three months before your 65th birthday as payments cannot be backdated.

Family benefits

Child Benefit: This is not a means tested payment. Each child under the age of sixteen, living in the Republic, qualifies for Child Benefit. You will also qualify if your child is aged up to eighteen and in full-time education or is mentally/physically handicapped. Claim forms are available from post offices, your local Social Welfare Services Office or, Social Welfare Services Office, Child Benefit Section, St Oliver Plunkett Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal (Tel 010 353 74 25566).

Family Income Supplement (FIS): This is a weekly cash payment to assist families who are on a low income. Applications should be made as soon as you move to Ireland as payments cannot be backdated. Claim forms are available from, social welfare services office, Family Income Supplement Section, 157-164 Townsend Street, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 748444).

Education

Generally speaking, Northern Ireland and Britain have the same education system and you should therefore find few problems in moving from one to the other. The education system in the South of Ireland however, differs considerably from its UK counterpart and it's on this that we will concentrate.

It is law that every child of compulsory school age (6-15) must attend a national or other suitable school (unless there is an exceptional reason otherwise). Most children in Ireland attend State National Schools with only a few going to private primary schools.

Education is provided free of charge in state-aided schools for pupils between the ages of four and eighteen. Most children move to secondary school at around twelve.

Enrolment

Enrolment is handled by individual boards of management for each school. This means that to have your child enrolled in school, you will have to contact the chairperson of the board or the principal of the relevant school. When you are sure of your new address in Ireland, write to the local school for details on enrolment.

Lists of primary and secondary schools are available from the Department of Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 (Tel 010 353 1 734700).

Schools

Primary schools are controlled by local patronage, usually under a particular religious denomination. There is no formal exam for children leaving primary school, although a report card, based on observation and progress records, is passed on to your child's secondary school.

Secondary schools in the South of Ireland are privately owned and managed. The majority are run by religious communities and the remainder by boards of Governors or by individuals. However, they still receive financial support from the Department of Education.

Examinations

Recognition of qualifications

As Ireland and the UK are both members of the European Community (EC), qualifications and experience obtained in one country should be recognised in the other. In other words, any qualifications you have

obtained while living in Britain, will be accepted by educational establishments or employers in Ireland.

Professional and vocational qualifications are also, for the most part, recognised throughout all EC countries. However, in many cases you will have to undergo special procedures to show that your qualification is appropriate. For more information contact your relevant trade or professional association or get in touch with one of the following:

The Department of Education
Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
Tel 010 353 1 734700 (for information on professional qualifications)

FAS
27-33 Upper Bagott Street
Dublin 4
Tel 010 353 1 685777 (for information on vocational qualifications)

You can also contact the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) in Ireland. The address is: NARIC, Higher Education Authority, 21 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 761545/612748).

The Examination system

The Junior Certificate Examination is usually taken at around the age of fifteen. This exam tests that you have completed a well-balanced course of general education suitable for anyone intending to leave full-time education at this stage or who wishes to go on to further study.

The Irish Leaving Certificate is usually taken at around seventeen. There are two levels of Leaving Certificate Examination: Ordinary Standard is approximately "O" level Grade while Higher/Honours Level requires study in more detail. Subjects passed at this higher level are generally considered to be above "O" level but not quite up to GCE "A" level.

As in Britain, higher education in Ireland is provided mainly by Universities, Technical Colleges and Colleges of Education. Lists of these are available from the Department of Education

Always remember to bring all examination/training certificates back with you when you go to Ireland.

Grants

Higher Education Grants in the Republic of Ireland are awarded by county councils and other local authorities. In general, in order to qualify for a grant, you must be on a course which leads to a degree or a diploma from either a university or an educational establishment which is recognised by the National Council of Educational Awards. Full lists of courses for which grants are available can be obtained from your local authority in Ireland (see p.21-23).

To qualify, you should meet basic conditions related to academic achievement and income. You should also be at least seventeen years of age on 1st January, and you must apply in your own local authority's area (ie, where your parents/guardians are normally resident if you are not being assessed independently). Means tests are generally based on your parents' or guardians' income although any income of your own will also be assessed.

ESF (European Social Fund) grants are paid to students on specific courses, mostly in Regional Technical Colleges. At present, the only requirement is to have a place on the course. Up until now, income levels were not relevant but there is a possibility that at some stage in the future, these awards will become means tested. All fees will be paid and only the maintenance element will be based on means. A list of qualifying courses is available from the Department of Education, ESF Section, Apollo House, Tara Street, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 734700).

Apart from the grants listed above, there are a number of scholarships available directly from universities and the Department of Education. Details are available from the Department of Education, Hawkins House, Dublin 2 (Tel 010 353 1 734700).

LISTINGS

The Irish Embassy

17 Grosvenor Place

London SW1

Tel 071 235 2171

Government Depts

Republic of Ireland

Prefix all the following with the code for Dublin (010 353 1)

Agriculture and Food 789011

Customs and Excise 6792777

Defence 771881

Education 734700

Environment 6793377

Finance 767571

Foreign Affairs 780822

Health 714711

Industry and Commerce 614444

Justice 789711

Labour 765861

Revenue Commissioners
6792777

Social Welfare 748444

Northern Ireland

Agriculture 024 77 71249

Customs and Excise 0232 234466

Environment 084 94 29715

Finance 0232 763210

DHSS 0232 650111

Inland Revenue 0232 244345

County Councils

Carlow Co Council

County Officer

Carlow

Tel 010 353 50 3 31126

Cavan Co Council

Courthouse

Cavan

Tel 010 353 49 31799

Clare Co Council

The Courthouse

Ennis and New Road

Ennis

Clare

Tel 010 353 65 21616

Cork Co Council

County Hall

Cork

Tel 010 353 21 276891

Donegal Co Council

County House

Lifford

Donegal

Tel 010 353 74 41066

Dublin Co Council

Civic Offices

Parnell Square

Dublin 1

Tel 010 353 1 727777

Galway Co Council

County Buildings

Prospect Hill

Galway

Tel 010 353 91 63151

Kerry Co Council

County Buildings

Rathass

Tralee

Kerry

Tel 010 353 66 21111

Kildare Co Council

St Mary's
Naas
Kildare
Tel 010 353 45 97071

Kilkenny Co Council

Johns Green
Kilkenny
Tel 010 353 56 21196

Laois Co Council

County Hall
Portlaoise
Laois
Tel 010 353 502 22044

Leitrim Co Council

Courthouse
Carrick-on-Shannon
Leitrim
Tel 010 353 78 20005

Limerick Co Council

County Buildings
79-84 O'Connell Street
Limerick
Tel 010 353 61 318477

Longford Co Council

Dublin Road
Longford
Tel 010 353 43 46231

Louth Co Council

Crowe Street
Dundalk
Louth
Tel 010 353 42 35457

Mayo Co Council

Aras an Chontae
The Mall
Castlebar
Mayo
Tel 010 353 94 24444

Meath Co Council

County Hall
Navan
Meath
Tel 010 353 46 21581

Monaghan Co Council

County Offices
Courthouse
The Glen
Monaghan
Tel 010 353 47 82211

Offaly Co Council

Courthouse
Tullamore
Offaly
Tel 010 353 506 21419

Roscommon Co Council

Courthouse
Roscommon
Tel 010 353 903 26100

Sligo Co Council

Headquarters
Riverside
Sligo
Tel 010 353 71 43221

Tipperary (North Riding) Co Council

The Courthouse
Newagh
Tipperary
Tel 010 353 67 31771

Tipperary (South Riding) Co Council

County Hall
Clonmel
Tipperary
Tel 010 353 52 21399

Waterford Co Council

Arus Brugha
Dungarvan
Waterford
Tel 010 353 51 42822

Westmeath Co Council

County Buildings
Mullingar
Westmeath
Tel 010 353 44 40861/5

Wexford Co Council

County Hall
Wexford
Tel 010 353 53 22211

Wicklow Co Council

County Buildings
Wicklow
Tel 010 353 404 67324

Corporations in Ireland**Clonmel Corporation**

Town Hall
Clonmel
Tel 010 353 52 22100

Cork Corporation

General Office
City Hall
Cork
Tel 010 353 21 966222

Dublin Corporation

Civic Offices
Fishamble Street
Dublin 8
Tel 010 353 1 6796111

Dun Laoghaire Corporation

Town Hall
Marine Road
Dun Laoghaire
Tel 010 353 1 2806961

Galway Corporation

City Hall
College Road
Galway
Tel 010 353 91 68151

Kilkenny Corporation

City Hall
Kilkenny
Tel 010 353 56 21076

Limerick Corporation

General Offices
City Hall
Limerick
Tel 010 353 61 415799

Sligo Corporation

Town Clerks Office
Town Hall
Sligo
Tel 010 353 71 42141

Waterford Corporation

City Hall
Waterford
Tel 010 353 51 73501

Wexford Corporation

Town Hall
Wexford
Tel 010 353 53 42611

**Health Boards (Rep.
of Ireland)****Eastern Health Board**

(Dublin City and County
Counties Kildare and Wicklow)
1 James's Street
Dublin 8
Tel 010 353 1 537951

Midland Health Board

(Counties Laois, Longford Offaly and Westmeath)

Arden Road

Tullamore

Offaly

Tel 010 353 50 621868

Mid-Western Health Board

(Limerick City and County Counties Clare and Tipperary NR)

31-33 Catherine Street

Limerick

Tel 010 353 61 316655

North-Eastern Health Board

(Counties Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan)

Kells

Meath

Tel 010 353 46 40341

North-Western Health Board

(Counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo)

Manorhamilton

Leitrim

Tel 010 353 72 55123

South-Eastern Health Board

(Waterford City and County Counties Carlow, Kilkenny Tipperary (SR) and Wexford)

Lacken

Dublin Road

Kilkenny

Tel 010 353 56 21702

Southern Health Board

(Cork City and County and County Kerry)

Cork Farm Centre

Dennehy's Cross

Cork

Tel 010 353 21 545011

Western Health Board

(Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon)

Regional Hospital

Merlin Park

Galway

Tel 010 353 91 51131

**Health Authorities
(N. Ireland)**

**Eastern Health and Social
Services Board**

12/22 Linenhall Street

Belfast

Tel 0232 321313

**Southern Health and Social
Services Board**

20 Seagoe Industrial Area

Portadown

Craigavon

Armagh BT5 QD

Tel 0762 336611

**Northern Health and Social
Services Board**

County Hall

182 Galgorm Road

Ballymena

Co Antrim BT42 1QB

Tel 0266 653333

**Western Health and Social
Services Board**

15 Gransha Park

Clooney Road

Derry BT47 1TG

Tel 0504 860086

Citizens Information Centres (CICs)

Citizens Information Centres provide free and confidential information on a wide range of issues.

Abbeyleix CIC - Main Street, Abbeyleix, Co Laois.

Ardee CIC - Day Centre, Church Hill, Ardee, Co Louth, Tel 53045.

Arklow CIC - c/o Quinnsouth Car Park, Arklow, Co Wicklow, Tel 32411.

Ashbourne CIC - Church Grounds, Main Street, Ashbourne, Co Meath, Tel 351806.

Athenry CIC - New Line, Athenry, Co Galway.

Athlone CIC - Dr Dobb's Memorial Home, Northgate Street, Athlone, Tel 72174.

Athy CIC - The Courthouse, Athy, Co Kildare.

Ballina CIC - Community Centre, Teeling Street, Ballina, Co Mayo, Tel 21221.

Ballyhaunis CIC - Parochial Hall, Ballyhaunis, Co Mayo, Tel 30212.

Ballymun CIC - Ballymun Library, Ballymun Road, Dublin 11, Tel 8421890.

Ballyshannon CIC - Over Day Centre, College Street, Ballyshannon, Co Donegal, Tel 51666.

Blackpool CIC - 90 Gt William O'Brien Street, Blackpool, Cork, Tel 501787.

Blackrock (Cork) CIC - Convent Road, Blackrock, Cork, Tel 358352.

Blackrock (Dublin) CIC - Health Centre, George's Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin, Tel 2885406/2888423/2882980.

Blanchardstown CIC - Roselawn Health Centre, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15, Tel 8212666.

Boyle CIC - The Social Services Building, The Court House, Boyle, Co Roscommon, Tel 62986.

Bray CIC - Health Centre, Killarney Road, Bray, Co Wicklow, Tel 2860532.

Buncrana CIC - St Mary's Road, Buncrana, Co Donegal.

Cabra West - St Finbar's Court, Cabra, Dublin 7, Tel 381993.

Carlow CIC - St Catherine's Community Service Centre, St Joseph's Road, Carlow, Tel 31063.

Carrickmacross CIC - Credit Union Offices, 17 O'Neill Street, Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, Tel 61006/61923.

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Castlebar CIC - Social Service Centre, Castle Street, Co Mayo, Tel 21880.

Claremorris CIC - Social Service Centre, Dalton Street, Co Mayo, Tel 62096.

Clonmel CIC - 14 Wellington Street, Clonmel, Co Tipperary, Tel 22267.

Clontarf CIC - 3 Churchgate Avenue, Wernon Avenue, Dublin 3, Tel 331687.

Cobh CIC - St Colman's Parish Centre, Roche's Row, Cobh, Co Cork, Tel 812134.

Cork CIC - 6 Camden Place, Cork, Tel 506922.

Crumlin CIC - 146 Sundrive Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12, Tel 546070.

Dalkey CIC - Our Lady's Hall, Castle Street, Dalkey, Co Dublin, Tel 2858655.

Donnycarney/Beaumont CIC - St John's Court, Malahide Road, Donnycarney, Dublin 9, Tel 319783.

Drogheda CIC - Community Services Centre, Fair Street, Drogheda, Co Louth, Tel 36084.

Dunboyne CIC - Alpha House, Navan Road, Co Meath.

Dundalk CIC - 15 Clanbrassil Street, Dundalk, Co Louth, Tel 32848.

Dundrum CIC - Holy Cross Church Hall, Main Street, Dublin 14.

Dungarvan CIC - The Courthouse, Dungarvan, Co Waterford.

Dun Laoghaire CIC - Boylan Centre, Sussex Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin, Tel 2808403.

Ennis CIC - Clarecare, Harmony Row, Ennis, Co Clare, Tel 28178.

Enniscorthy CIC - The Athenaeum, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, Tel 33746.

Finglas CIC - Social Service Centre, Wellmount Road, Finglas, Dublin 11, Tel 342843.

Galway CIC - Social Service Centre, Francis Street, Galway, Tel 63581.

Inchicore CIC - 52A Bulfin Road, Inchicore, Dublin 8, Tel 531660.

Kilkenny CIC - Dessart Hall, New Street, Kilkenny, Tel 62755.

Killarney CIC - Health Centre, St Anne's Road, Killarney, Co Kerry, Tel 32297.

Killester CIC - Social Service Centre, 2 Sybil Hill Road, Dublin 5, Tel 313700.

Kilrush CIC - Community Centre, Tober Street, Kilrush, Co Clare, Tel 51269.

Letterkenny CIC - Day Centre, Oliver Plunkett Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Limerick CIC - Basement, 91 O'Connell Street, Limerick, Tel 311444.

Longford CIC - St Mels Road, Longford, Tel 41069.

Loughrea CIC - Health Centre, 60 Main Street, Loughrea, Co Galway.

Lucan CIC - Town Hall, Lucan, Co Dublin, Tel 6241975.

Malahide CIC - Library Car Park, Malahide, Co Dublin, Tel 8450627.

Maynooth CIC - The Library, Main Street, Maynooth, Co Kildare, Tel 6285477.

Monaghan CIC - Day Centre, Broad Road, Monaghan, Tel 82290.

Mount Argus CIC - 179 Lr Kimmage Road, Dublin 12, Tel 921225.

Mount Merrion CIC - St Therese's Community Centre, North Avenue, Tel 2888700.

Mullingar CIC - Social Service Centre, Bishopsgate Street, Co Westmeath, Tel 40700.

Navan CIC - Trimgate Street, Navan, Co Meath, Tel 21937.

Naas CIC - 10 Basin Street, Naas, Co Kildare, Tel 79489.

Nenagh CIC - Loreto Hall, Kenyon Street, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, Tel 31800.

North Wall CIC - 4 Emerald Street, Saville Place, Dublin 1.

Palmerstown CIC - Parish Centre, Village, Palmerstown, Dublin 20, Tel 6260899.

Rialto & District CIC - c/o Old Rialto School, Parish Centre, South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Tel 539965.

Roscrea CIC - Rosemary Street, Roscrea, Co Tipperary, Tel 21568.

Shannon CIC - Kincora Flats, Town Centre, Shannon, Co Clare, Tel 364704/5.

Sicdda CIC - Liberties, 90 Meath Street, Dublin 8, Tel 536098.

Skerries CIC - Medical Centre, Strand Street, Skerries, Co Dublin, Tel 8491717.

Sligo CIC - Charles Street, Sligo, Tel 43838/45682.

Stillorgan CIC - The Scout Hall, Lr Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan, Co Dublin, Tel 2885629.

Swords CIC - 10 North Street, Swords, Dublin, Tel 8406877.

Tallaght Welfare Society - 1 Main Street, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Tel 515911/513731.

Thurles CIC - Social Service Centre, Rossa Street, Thurles, Co Tipperary, Tel 22399.

Tipperary CIC - St Michael's Street, Tipperary Town, Tel 51162.

Togher CIC - Girls' Old School, Togher, Co Cork, Tel 312427.

Tuam CIC - Social Service Centre, Tuam, Galway, Tel 24577.

Tullamore CIC - 18 Chapel Street, Tullamore, Co Offaly, Tel 52204.

Waterford CIC - 37 Lr Yellow Road, Waterford, Tel 75261.

Westport CIC - Social Service Centre, Mill Street, Westport, Co Mayo, Tel 25669.

Wexford CIC - St Bridget's Centre, Roches Road, Wexford, Tel 23301.

Whitehall CIC - Social Service Centre, Collins Avenue, Whitehall, Dublin 9, Tel 370472.

Citizens Advice Bureaux (N. Ireland)

Antrim - Pogues Entry, Church Street, Antrim BT41 4BA
Tel 084 94 28176

Antrim Road - 211 Antrim Road
Belfast BT15 2GW
Tel 0232 752114

Ards - 13A Conway Square
Newtownards BT23 4DA
Tel 0247 819257

Armagh - 9 McCrums Court,
Armagh BT61 7RS
Tel 0861 524041

Ballymena - 28 Mount Street
Ballymena BT43 6BW
Tel 0266 44398

Banbridge - Old Dunbar School, Downshire Road,
Banbridge BT32 3JY
Tel 08206 22201

Bangor - Bangor Library,
Hamilton Road, Bangor BT20
4LG Tel 0247 270009

East Belfast - 342
Newtownards Road, Belfast
BT4 1HE
Tel 0232 739447

Carrickfergus - 65 North Street,
Carrickfergus BT38 7AE
Tel 09603 51808

Central Belfast - 6 Callender Street, Belfast BT1 5BN
Tel 0232 243196

Coleraine - 19 The Diamond,
Coleraine BT52 1DN
Tel 0265 44817

Cookstown - 48 James Street
Cookstown BT80 8LT
Tel 06487 66126

Derry - Custom House St,
Derry BT48 6BJ, Tel 0504
362444

Down District - 3A-D English Street, Downpatrick BT30 6AB
Tel 0396 614110

Dungannon - 38A Market Square, Dungannon BT70 1JM
Tel 08687 25299

Falls - 8 Springfield Road Belfast BT12 7AG
Tel 0232 321702

Fermanagh - 25A Darling Street, Enniskillen BT74 7DP
Tel 0365 324334

Glengormley - 18 Febro Buildings, 341 Antrim Road, Glengormley BT36 6HH
Tel 0232 844592

Hollywood - Queen's Hall Sullivan Place, Hollywood BT18 9JF
Tel 0232 428288

Larne - Riverdale Hall, Riverdale, Larne BT40 1JL
Tel 0574 60379

Lisburn - Bridge Community Centre, 50 Railway Street, Lisburn BT28 1XG
Tel 0846 662251

Lurgan - The Town Hall, 6 Union Street, Lurgan BT66 6AS, Tel 0762 323571

Newry - McGrath Centre, 1 Margaret Street, Newry BT34 1DF, Tel 0693 62934

Portadown - Town Hall, 7 Edward Street, Portadown BT62 3LX, Tel 0762 353260

Rathcoole - Newtownabbey Methodist Mission 35A Rathcoole Drive Rathcoole BT37 9QA
Tel 0232 852271

Shankill - 179 Shankill Road Belfast BT13 1FP
Tel 0232 327702

Strabane - 31 Patrick Street Strabane BT82 8DQ
Tel 0504 382665

Suffolk/Andersonstown - Flat 3, Owenvarragh Buildings Andersonstown Road Belfast BT11 9BX
Tel 0232 301916

Equal Opportunities

Employment Equality Agency
36 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2
Tel 010 353 1 605966

Council for the Status of Women
64 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2
Tel 010 353 1 615268

The Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern

Ireland
Chamber of Commerce House
22 Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 2BA
Tel 0232 242752

Other Useful Telephone Numbers

Aids Alliance, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 733799 (branches in other parts of the country).

Cherish (single parents), Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 682744.

Dail Eireann, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 789911.

FAS (Training and Employment Authority), Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 685777.

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Family Planning Association, Belfast, Tel 0232 235488.

Focus Point (Housing), Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 712555.

Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC), Tel 010 353 1 719672.

Friends of the Elderly, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 731855.

Gay Mens Helpline, Belfast, Tel 0232 322023.

Gay Switchboard, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 721055.

Gingerbread (Northern Ireland), Belfast, Tel 0232 231417/234568.

Housing Grants, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 6793200.

Irish Family Planning Association, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 727276/727173/727363.

Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 6795316.

Legal Aid Board, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 787295.

Minceir Misli (Travellers Organisation), Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 694766.

Positively Irish Action on Aids (PIAA), London, Tel 081 983 0192.

Registrar (Birth, Death and Marriage Certs), Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 710000.

Shelter, Belfast, Tel 0232 247752.

The Disability Helpline, Belfast, Tel 0232 370240.

Threshold (Housing), Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 726311.

Threshold (Housing), Cork, Tel 010 353 21 271250.

Threshold (Housing), Galway, Tel 010 353 91 63080.

Women's Aid, Belfast, Tel 0232 326287.

Women's Aid, Dublin, Tel 010 353 1 961002.

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Credits

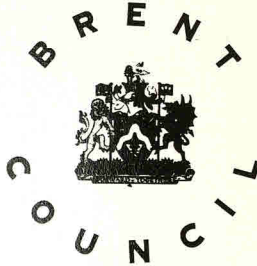
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