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1. Introduction

1B. Guidelines for using the 'Returning to Ireland' Folder

(This document is for the "Returning to Ireland" providers only)

A chara,

The fifth edition of the "Returning to Ireland" publication is in factsheet form. The guidelines below provide you with further information on how to use the publication in order to provide the best possible service to your client.

Guidelines

1. When a client contacts your organisation requesting information on "Returning to Ireland", we advise you to firstly provide your client with a brochure. The brochure informs your client on the Factsheets available. The brochure also encourages intending returnees to think strongly about the practicalities of coming home. Having read the brochure perhaps some people will decide that returning to Ireland is not for them, others will request factsheets.
2. When a client requests a Factsheet you must photocopy the relevant Factsheet for them. **Please do not give your client the original copy.** Each organisation receives only **ONE** copy of the "Returning to Ireland" folder. Alternatively, if your client has internet access you may direct them to our website, www.migrantproject.ie where the factsheets will be available online.

When developing the fifth edition of the Returning to Ireland we were very conscious of two points. The first point was that the information contained in the "Returning to Ireland" often became outdated quite quickly. At Emigrant Advice, we are committed to providing up-to-date information in a manner that is accessible to all our clients. The new edition of the "Returning to Ireland" allows us to update the information as soon as changes occur, therefore, keeping you, the information providers, informed and aware of all changes as they occur.

The second point related to the fact that many people who choose to return home to Ireland often feel overwhelmed with the amount of information they have to consider. Our aim was to try to make the information as comprehensive as possible and so we decided to put the information in 'question and answer' format. However, in some cases one Factsheet will not be enough to answer a client's query and you will need to provide them with further factsheets, containing related information, so that they can make an informed decision. For example, if your client requests Factsheet 2-B, he/she will also require Factsheets: 2-A, 2-O and 4 in order to make a fully informed decision. We have tried to limit this as much as possible so that you will not have to spend huge amounts of your time photocopying factsheets for clients. Below is a list of the Factsheets that need to 'go together'.

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1B. Guidelines for using the 'Returning to Ireland' Folder

Factsheet 1: Introduction

Every client receives **Factsheet 1-E**

Factsheet 2: Benefits and Entitlements

Every client receives the **Introduction**

If a client requests:

- **Factsheet 2-B:** You must provide that client with Factsheet 2-A, Factsheet 2-O and Factsheet 4
- **Factsheet 2-C:** You must provide that client with Factsheet 2-A, 2-O and 4
- **Factsheet 2-D:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-A, 2-B, 2-K, 2-M, 2-N, 2-O and 4
- **Factsheet 2-E:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-F:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-K:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-G:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-A and 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-H:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-A, 2-B, 2-E, 2-N, 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-I:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-A, 2-B, 2-n, 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-J:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-A and 2-O
- **Factsheet 2-M:** You must also provide the client with Factsheet 2-K, 2-L, 2-N

Factsheet 3: Pensions

Every client receives the **Introduction**

If a client requests:

- **Factsheet 3-A:** you must also provide that client with Factsheet 3-B, 3-F, 2-K, 2-L, 2-M
- **Factsheet 3-B:** You must also provide that client with Factsheet 3-D, 3-F, 2-K, 2-L, 2-M
- **Factsheet 3-D:** you must also provide that client with Factsheet 3-F, 2-A, 2-K, 2-L, 4

Factsheet 6: Accommodation

Every client receives the Introduction If a client requests:

- **Factsheet 6-A:** you must also provide that client with Factsheet 2-A

Factsheet 7: Finding a Job

If a client requests:

- **Factsheet 7:** you must also provide Factsheet 2-A

If at any time you wish to make a query with regard to the publication or you have any suggestions to make, please do not hesitate to contact Emigrant Advice. We hope you will enjoy using the new "Returning to Ireland" folder.

Best of Luck

Crosscare Migrant Project Team.

1. Introduction

1C. Crosscare Migrant Project's Foreword/Acknowledgements

A chara,

Crosscare Migrant Project (formerly Emigrant Advice) is pleased to present the fifth edition of the "Returning to Ireland" publication. This year it takes on a different format, in factsheet form, and we hope that you will find this more user friendly and informative. We realise that making a decision to return home to Ireland involves much planning, organisation and anxiety. You may sometimes feel overwhelmed with the amount of information available and the amount of issues you will have to consider before returning home. The new "Returning to Ireland" aims to reduce your feelings of "information overload" by providing comprehensive information in a manner and style that is easily understood and which allows you to gradually deal with the practicalities of moving home.

Crosscare Migrant Project's message to you is that it is important that you make an informed decision based on fact **not** on your memories of how things used to be. This publication is designed to help you do this.

To everyone using this guide, we wish you luck in whatever decision you make.

Go neiri an bothar libh,

Crosscare Migrant Project

This publication is intended for information purposes only. It is not a legal document. While every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is up-to-date and accurate, Crosscare Migrant Project will not be held responsible for any errors.

1. Introduction

1C. Crosscare Migrant Project's Foreword/Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Mairin Higgins (Safe Home Programme) and Joe O' Brien (Crosscare Migrant Project) for their assistance in writing and contributing to the publication. We would also like to thank the Department of Social and Family Affairs for funding this publication. Heartfelt thanks to the following people for their contributions: Fr. Alan Hilliard (Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants), Dick Stanton and Paula O' Sullivan (Emigrant Advice Network), Eithne Rynne (Federation of Irish Societies), Celine Kennelly (Irish Immigration Pastoral Centre), Ritchie Butler (Brent Irish Advisory Service), Breege McDaid (Irish Community Care Merseyside), Rita Morrissey and Joan 'O Shea (Department of Social and Family Affairs) and Pdraig Maher, Charmaine Coyle and Jamie Alcock (Kildare Youth Services).

1. Introduction

1D. Minister's Foreword

A message from Séamus Brennan T.D. Minister for Social and Family Affairs

I welcome the opportunity to introduce this new up-dated edition of the Returning to Ireland guidance book. Many Irish emigrants cherish a deep aspiration to return to the land of their birth to work or retire. For others, from all corners of the globe, Ireland is now an attractive employment location, offering new opportunities and an attractive quality of life for themselves and their families.

Ireland, in recent years, has experienced exceptional economic growth. One of the most rewarding aspects of this economic buoyancy has been the opportunities it has created for emigrants to return home and share in our prosperity. But the reality for most of those returning, or thinking seriously of it, is that the Ireland of today is very different to the country they left in past decades. That is why this publication is an essential guide to helping to smooth the pathway to a successful return to Ireland.

Information can break down barriers, ease anxieties and open up opportunities. The Returning to Ireland handbook is a mine of information. In its new format, the book provides information in a clear and easily accessible way. By providing integrated information on numerous practical topics, such as health, social services and legal matters, it demystifies complex issues and delivers solid, practical advice that will be invaluable to those thinking of taking the big step of returning to Ireland.

It is my earnest wish that everyone turning to this book for guidance and direction will end up making the decision that is right for them.

My message to our emigrants is simple - hold tight to that dream of returning to your native land but also make sure that you get all the facts before making that momentous final decision.

Is mise le meas,

Seamus Brennan TD,
Department of Social and Family Affairs.

1. Introduction

1E. Coming Home? Are you sure?

Read this information very carefully – It isn't meant to change your mind about coming home but it is meant to make you think very carefully about if it is the right thing for you to do.

The most important message to emigrants thinking about coming home is that the Ireland of today is a very different country to the one you left. This is especially true if you left Ireland a great many years ago. If you have not been home for ten or twenty years you will notice a very big difference. If you have been coming home for holidays often you will be much more aware of how much change there has been, but for those who have not visited Ireland for many years the Ireland that you left behind is a very different country.

The Cost of Moving

Moving home is always expensive. If you are moving to a different country the problems and the costs grow quickly. If you do not have family or friends who will help you to move, you will be depending on removal firms. Shipping furniture is very expensive and it might be worth your while at the 'thinking stage' to make some enquiries from specialist firms who do this kind of work.

If you are coming home as an applicant to the Safe-Home programme the property you will be coming home to will probably be a great deal smaller than the home you have now so you will probably have to get rid of a lot of your furniture. Can you bear to do this? If your furniture is not quite new, worth a lot of money or has sentimental value you may well decide to get rid of it all and buy new furniture when you arrive in Ireland. Have you considered the cost? The cost may, in the end, be less than shipping furniture to Ireland but it is still money you need to budget for.

Thinking about Coming Home

If you are leaving a rented home, particularly if it is Council or Housing Association property, coming home is a one-way trip. If you change your mind and go back to the country you left you may well find yourself in a position where you will not be offered accommodation. If you left Council or Housing Association property they will **NOT** re-house you because you will have made yourself intentionally homeless by leaving the accommodation you had when you moved to Ireland. If you sold your house to move home, particularly in cities like London, you may not be able to afford to move back there.

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1E. Coming Home? Are you sure?

The cost of living

Ireland is one of the most expensive countries in Europe and the cost of living can be high depending on your own individual needs. Ireland is currently in the grip of high inflation and this is most noticeable in the cost of buying property. However, Ireland, especially Dublin, is also expensive for groceries, alcohol, eating out in restaurants, petrol etc. It is important that if you are returning to Ireland that you realise that the cost of living may be higher than the country from which you are returning and it is important that you are prepared for this.

What should I bring with me?

You should bring:

- Details of your qualifications obtained abroad
- CV and employment details
- Records of your insurance contributions abroad (for Social Welfare/Insurance purposes)
- If you have children who will be attending school in Ireland you should bring school reports and references from your children's schools.
- Driver's Licence and details of your insurance cover
- Birth certificates
- Marriage Certificates
- Divorce Certificates (if applicable)
- Proof of eligibility for Irish citizenship/naturalisation for non-EU family members
- Proof that you are returning to Ireland long-term, evidence that you have terminated a tenancy agreement, sold a property, closed a bank account etc.

Issues to consider before deciding to return

The following is a list of issues you should consider before making your decision to return home. Remember this is not an extensive list but is intended to act as a guide. Your own circumstances may require more detailed research.

Accommodation

What type of accommodation will I need? Where will I live? Will I buy or rent? Will I be able to afford to rent or buy in Ireland? Will there be amenities close by, schools, hospitals, shops, etc?

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1E. Coming Home? Are you sure?

Social Welfare and Transferring your Benefits

Will I be entitled to social welfare payments when I return home to Ireland? How do I satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition? Will I be able to transfer payments that I am getting to Ireland?

Pensions

Will I be able to transfer my pension to Ireland? Am I entitled to an Irish pension? What if am entitled to both? If I am in receipt of a pension am I entitled to any other payments?

Health Care

Am I entitled to free health care in Ireland? Am I entitled to a medical card? What options do I have if I do not qualify for a medical card? Can I transfer my health insurance? How do I buy private health insurance?

Education

Is there a school nearby where I can enroll my children? What types of schools are available? What if my children can't speak Irish? I would like to go to university, am I entitled to free fees? Am I entitled to a grant?

Banking

How do I open a bank account in Ireland? What documentation do I need? What if I do not close my bank account abroad, will I be taxed on my savings in Ireland?

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1E. Coming Home? Are you sure?

Finding a job

Am I entitled to social welfare while I am looking for a job? What are my chances of getting a job in Ireland? Where should I look?

All of this is meant to make you think very seriously about whether you really want to move home or not.

All we can advise anybody intending on returning to Ireland is to think very hard about why you want to come. For most people who think of coming home it is a dream. You need to make sure, before you go any further, that coming home is not just a dream for you too.

Make a list of what you will miss; make a list of the good things and bad things about moving back home and a list of the good things and bad things about staying where you are. If you come through this exercise still determined to come back then you are probably doing the right thing for you and we wish you all the luck in the world.