



INTRODUCTION:

This brief guide has been prepared by the Reception and Integration Agency in order to assist you to settle into the area you have chosen to reside in.

If you have further queries please contact the relevant organisations. Phone numbers and addresses can be found at the back of this leaflet.

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ACCOMMODATION:

- Irish people will, in general, make you feel welcome and many areas have groups which monitor the activities of those in the area to ensure areas are safe from crime and general vandalism.
- There are a number of small organisations such as Residents Association, Neighbourhood Watch, Community Alert, and you are welcome to join such groups. A primary aim of resident's associations is to ensure estates, roads and green areas are kept tidy, and that litter, rubbish, loitering and general nuisance activities are prevented. For example, do not leave litter in your front or back garden/ lawn.
- Keep your accommodation tidy and avoid unsightly objects such as broken-down vehicles, etc.
- Do not engage in unsocial activities.
- It is the norm in Irish society to keep curtains/ blinds in your accommodation open during the day - having curtains/ blinds constantly drawn can arouse suspicion and can also attract adverse attention to your accommodation.
- Trading illegally is prohibited in this State.
- It is important to build up a **working, respectful relationship** with your landlord, however in many cases you will secure your home through a third party e.g. An estate agent.
- The landlord is looking for a tenant who will treat property with respect and will adjust well to their new environment.
- If problems arise, the landlord has the right to cease your contract of tenancy.

- Some landlords may be a good source of information about employment and activities locally, so it is in your interest to build up a good relationship with them.
- Your neighbours may also be a good source of information about employment and activities locally, so it is in your interest to build up a good relationship with them too.

LAW AND POLICING

The National Police Force, The **Garda Síochána** are there to protect your rights and ensure that all residents in the State uphold the law.

We welcome the diverse range of cultures that are now in this country, but ensure that any practise is not breaching Irish or International law.

Any breaches of Irish law will be dealt with accordingly.
For example, the following are offences under Irish law:

- **Begging**
- **Carrying a weapon**
- **Larceny (stealing, shoplifting)**
- **Creating a nuisance or disturbance**
- **Driving without a licence or insurance**
- **Assault**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Drunk and disorderly behaviour**
- **Loitering**

If you have a problem, if you feel you are being harassed or are the victim of racist abuse - contact the Gardaí who will be glad to help.

CULTURE

While residing in a residential area it is respectful to other residents to keep the noise level (e.g. T.V., music) to a minimum. **Being respectful of other people in your living environment leads to a happy and more pleasant environment.** Constant loud noise early in the morning or late at night is considered to be disturbing the peace and can therefore cause residents to feel disrespected and resentful. This will eventually lead to problems and bad feeling and may even result in the resident's association contacting the local Gardaí.

It is not the practice to severely slap or beat children in this country, therefore **punishment of that nature is not acceptable under any circumstances** and if you are seen to mistreat your children it can have grave consequences and may result in prosecution.

As stated in the Accommodation section of this leaflet most residential areas have a resident's association. These associations meet on a regular basis to discuss local issues. **Most associations would have *rules and regulations for their area and residents should adhere to them.**

BREACH OF SUCH RULES MAY RESULT IN INTERVENTIONS BY THE POLICE, AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA. RESPECT YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND KEEP YOUR HOME AND SURROUNDING AREA IN A CLEAN AND TIDY WAY.

*** SOME COMMON ISSUES:**

- **Use of rubbish bins- where bins are provided please use them and ensure that they are not left on footpaths and roads where they may cause a nuisance.**
- **Gathering in large groups can cause a lot of fear amongst other residents, and can be seen as a form of intimidation.**
- **Motor vehicles must display current tax and insurance certificates.**

MONEY MATTERS:

Managing your weekly income can become a major problem if you do not take particular care from the very beginning. You may have been living in a situation for a long period where you have not had to deal with the burden and costs of day to day living. Social Welfare payments are designed to meet your daily needs of food, heating, clothing, etc. If you get into difficulties seek advice immediately as delays can often result in pressure on you and your family.

If you wish to borrow money or apply for loans for any purpose, ensure that you apply to reputable agents such as banks, building societies, credit unions etc. There may be unscrupulous moneylenders willing to loan you money but at very high interest rates and penalties. Sometimes you may need guidance in how to manage your money.

In Ireland we have a **Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)** for individuals/families who need advice in managing their finances. Most major cities and towns have a MABS office, and you should try to visit the office sooner rather than later.
(See back of leaflet for details)

SOCIAL WELFARE

On moving to new private rented accommodation you are required to inform the local **Community Welfare Officer (CWO)**. The CWO will advise you of your personal entitlements. These entitlements can be made to you directly through the local social welfare office, local post office or through the CWO.

In the case of persons granted refugee status who are unemployed and actively seeking employment, and do not have means to support themselves, they are entitled to **unemployment assistance** that is paid by the State through the Social Welfare local offices. You cannot claim unemployment assistance if you are working, and to do so is illegal. If you work while claiming this payment you will be asked to refund any payments that you received and that you were not entitled to.

If at anytime you feel that you were inappropriately dealt with by an official of the Social Welfare Services, you may lodge a complaint with the manager of the Social Welfare Services office or you may also write to the Customer Services at **Department of Social and Family Affairs, Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store Street, Dublin 1.**

EDUCATION

All young people in Ireland are entitled to free primary and second-level education. All children between the ages of 6 and 16 years are required **by law** to attend school. Most children in Ireland start school at 4 years of age and continue through primary school until they are approximately 12 years old. On completing primary education the students then transfer

to the **junior cycle** second-level education that lasts three years. Students at the end of the junior cycle must sit the national **Junior Certificate Examination**.

Most students continue into **senior cycle** that lasts 2 or 3 years. Students at the end of the senior cycle must sit the **Leaving Certificate Examination**.

The majority of Irish children complete the Leaving Certificate with the intention of attending **Third Level** education.

If you have any queries in relation to you child's education you can contact the **Department of Education**. *See back of leaflet for details.*

Please ensure that your child attends school on time, and also ensure that you are on time when collecting him/her from school.

Children should not be left unsupervised in the school yard before or after school.

EDUCATION AND ADULTS:

If your command of the English language is not of sufficient standard you can apply for **English Language Training**. This is provided through either **Integrate Ireland Language and Training** (IILT), which is Dublin based, or through the **Vocational Education Committees** (VECs). *See back of leaflet for details.*

If you feel that your English is sufficient then you can apply for Third Level courses. However, there are certain educational standards that apply - check each course for details. Remember interaction with your neighbours and local community is a wonderful language training tool.

FÁS/ CERT: These two state training agencies provide training for employment. They offer a wide range of courses. Certain entry criteria apply and there is usually a waiting period for courses. Enquire at the local FÁS/ CERT office.

You should be registered with FÁS if you are claiming unemployment assistance.

FÁS also offers excellent employment services - they advertise jobs in their offices and on their website (www.fas.ie).

EMPLOYMENT

The stamp which you receive on your **Certificate of Registration*** determines whether you are permitted to work or not. If you are issued with either **stamp no. 1** or **stamp no. 4**, then you are entitled to work.

Stamp no. 1 is the stamp given to the holder of a valid work permit.

Stamp no. 4 is the stamp given to a person who has been granted full refugee status, permission to remain on the basis of parentage of an Irish born child or marriage to an Irish/ EU National. This stamp entitles you to work without the requirement of a work permit and you are also entitled to receive employment related training.

**this certificate is issued depending on where you reside. If you reside in the Dublin area it is issued by the Garda National Immigration Bureau, Harcourt Street, Dublin 2. If you reside outside the Dublin area this certificate is obtained from the local Immigration Officer.*

Every person employed in Ireland full or part-time must register with the **Revenue Commissioners** to be assessed for taxation purposes. Your income tax due is automatically deducted from your wages/ salary.

If you are self-employed or set up your own business, you must calculate and pay your own income tax.

IT IS ILLEGAL TO WORK IN IRELAND WITHOUT REGISTERING WITH THE REVENUE COMMISSIONERS AND PAYING INCOME TAX DUE.

There is a **National Minimum Wage** in Ireland that applies to both full and part-time workers. If you are not being paid the minimum wage or you feel that you are not getting your employment rights you should talk to your employer, or contact the **Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment**. There is a website with information on employment rights: www.entemp.ie. You can also write to the **Employment Rights Information Unit**, Davitt House, 65A Adelaide Road, Dublin 2.

Please note:

You should **not** claim Social Welfare payments while you are working.

On commencing work you should contact your local Community Welfare Officer, who will advise you of your rights in relation to the retention, if necessary, of some of your rent supplement.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Citizens Information Centre,

Augustine House,
St Augustine Street
Tel: 091 56 33 44
Services include legal & consumer advice.

Money Advice & Budgeting Service (MABS)

Augustine House
Augustine St
Galway
Tel: 091 569347

Galway Rape Crisis Centre -

3 Augustine Street
Tel: 091 564983
Provides a confidential service for women who have suffered sexual assault and rape.

Samaritans,

14 Nun's Island,
Galway
Tel: 091 561222
Provides a confidential counselling service for people suffering from depression and stress.

Galway Arts Centre,

23 Nun's Island
Tel: 091 565886
47 Dominic Street
Tel: 091 565886/091 565886
E-mail: gac@indigo.ie
Website: www.galwayartscentre.ie
(incorporates Galway Youth Theatre).
The Arts Centre promotes an interest in the arts among the local and wider community. There are classes, exhibitions and workshops on a regular basis

Galway City Vocational Education Committee,

Island House,
Cathedral Square
Tel: 091 562292

Galway Voluntary Social Services

Francis Street,
Galway
Tel: 091 563581 / 091 569495

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

Ozanam House,
St. Augustine St,
Galway
Tel: 091 563233
provides support for disadvantaged members of the community

CURA

Newtownsmyth,
Galway
Tel: 091 562558
provides support for women with unwanted pregnancy

STEPS, Youth Advice & Drop-in Centre,

108 Prospect Hill,
Galway.
Tel: 091 56229.

Galway Youthreach Centre

Tel: 091 589085

Youth Service Support

Tel: 091 567194
Providing information for young people on issues of concern.

Anti-Racism Circle

1 The Small Crane,
William Street West,
Galway

Galway One World Centre,

4th Floor,
The Halls,
Quay Street,
Galway
Tel: 091-530590
E mail: gowc@iol.ie

Galway Refugee Support Group,

3 The Plaza,
Headford Road,
Galway
Tel: 091-779083

Galway Islamic Society,

Sandyview Drive,
Riverside
Tel: 091 751621

Community Workers Co-operative

78 Prospect Hill,
Galway

Tel: 091 563644

Galway County Library

Island House

Cathedral Sq

Tel: 091 562471

Libraries provide you with access to the Internet. Most libraries have tapes that can be used for learning English. They also provide access to a wide range of newspapers in a warm and friendly atmosphere. As a member of the library you may hire books.

Community Welfare Office

Newcastle Road

Tel: 091 523122

E mail: gwayserv@whb.ie

Garda Liaison Officer

Sgt G.Mangan

Garda Station

Mill Street

Tel: 091 538000

Immigration Office

Garda Station

Mill Street

Tel: 091 538000

Refugee Legal Service

Montague Court,

7/11 Montague Street

Dublin 2

Freephone:1800 50 30 60

Refugee Information Service,

Business Office,

Morning Star Ave,

Dublin 7

Tel: 8090437

E Mail:refinfo@eircom.net

Irish Refugee Council

40 Lr Dominick Street,

Dublin 1

Tel: 8730042

E Mail: refugee@iol.ie

FÁS

Island House

Cathedral Sq

Galway

Tel: 091534400

Post Office

3 Eglinton Street

Tel: 091 562051

Department of Education and Science

Marlborough Street,

Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8734700

Integrate Ireland Language and Training

Unit 4A
Trinity Enterprise Centre
Grand Canal Quay
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 677 5344/5337

Macnas

Fisheries Field,
Salmon Weir Bridge
Tel: 091 561462

Galway County Council

Áras an Chontae
Prospect Hill
Galway
Tel: 091 509000