

RELOCATION: IRELAND


Known as the 'Emerald Isle' because of its beautiful green countryside, Ireland has a rich cultural heritage and traditions. Indeed, the country's high quality of life means it is a popular destination amongst expatriates. International assignees typically relocate to the capital city of Dublin, in the east, which is home to a third of the country's population.

Ireland in Brief

- Capital: Dublin
- Other Significant Cities: Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford, Kilkenny
- Government: Republic
- Official Language: English, Irish
- Currency: Euro
- Population: 4.7 million
- Climate: Seasonal but mild, with high annual rainfall
- Time Zone: GMT +0
- Dialling Code: +353

Key Challenge Areas

Input from Cartus' Destination Services Provider on the ground in Ireland, highlights the following key areas for assignees:

Housing
 Schooling
 Transportation
 Cultural Issues
 Immigration

HOUSING

Unlike most European cities, the rental market in Ireland is rather limited, as traditionally, locals prefer to buy property. Rental accommodation that is available is of a good standard, but the lack of availability means that assignees relocating to the country, should remain flexible in their property search criteria.

The lack of available rental properties does push up prices, but encouragingly, in some areas of Ireland, including Dublin, rent controls are now in place. This means that landlords cannot raise annual rents by more than 4%. There are no agency fees for tenants to pay either. Although for properties rented at more than €30,000 per year (around €2,500 per month), tenants are required to pay Stamp Duty Land Tax at 1%.

Renting in Dublin

Ireland's capital city of Dublin provides good quality rental accommodation. Like the rest of the country, the rental market is rather limited when compared to the residential sales market, which means prospective tenants far outnumber available homes. To boost supply, there are a number of new housing developments set to be completed over the next 18 months, including new apartments in the popular Docklands area of the city. Currently however, the market is very fast moving, with properties in some cases, being taken within 24 hours. With this in mind, it is important that assignees move as quickly as they can, once they have found suitable accommodation. This means being as prepared as possible before the home search trip begins. To secure a rental property, assignees will need to have a bank account set up, an employment confirmation letter and available funds to pay the security deposit and first month's rent.

Below is an outline of the average rental rates in Dublin, in Euros per month:

Apartment	Rental Rates	House	Rental Rates
1 Bedroom	€1,400	1 Bedroom	N/A
2 Bedroom	€1,800	2 Bedroom	€1,800
3 Bedroom	€2,400	3 Bedroom	€2,500
4 Bedroom	N/A	4 Bedroom	€3,000

Note: Rental costs exclude utility bills and security deposits

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Smaller properties may have group viewings only, with up to 20 prospective tenants attending at one time. Most rental accommodation comes fully furnished. If requested, landlords may be willing to remove the furniture, but this should be negotiated before the lease is signed. Assignees should be aware however, that often properties are let 'as seen', with a number of landlords unwilling to make any changes.

The standard length of a lease is 12 months, with one month's notice period. Break clauses are not typically included in contracts as standard and it may not always be possible to negotiate to include them. Unfortunately, in the current landlord's market, tenants do not have a lot of negotiating power.

Those planning to relocate with pets could be asked to pay an additional deposit. Although, it should be noted that it is very rare for pets to be permitted in rental properties and if they are, a pet reference will most likely be required.

Dublin Neighbourhoods

The city centre consists mainly of apartments and is popular amongst young professionals, either relocating on their own or as a couple. Families typically choose to move to the outer areas of the city, where larger houses with gardens are more widely available. Popular neighbourhoods include Ballsbridge, which is close to the centre and has good schools in the area. South Co. Dublin, including Dalkey, has convenient local transport links and a nearby private school. Rathgar (in the south) also has good transport links, and Clontarf (in the north) and Sandymount (in the south) are both on the coast and just a 15 minute walk from Dublin's city centre.



Programme Advice

- To ensure assignees secure the property that they want in a timely manner, they should be as prepared as possible before the home search trip begins. They will need to have a bank account set up, an employment confirmation letter and available funds to pay the security deposit and first month's rent.

- As properties are not as large as they typically are in some western countries, assignees should carefully consider what furniture to bring on relocation, as not everything may fit. Although most rental properties are fully furnished, in some cases they may not be. In these instances, companies should be mindful of extra costs associated with unfurnished options and need to decide whether the assignee or the company is responsible for furnishing the property, before the home search begins.

SCHOOLING

In Ireland, pre-school begins at three years of age, with primary education starting at five years and secondary at 12 years. The academic year runs from September through to June and the majority of available schools are state funded and generally of a high standard.

International schools available in Ireland include the International School of Dublin (offering the primary years International Baccalaureate programme) and St. Andrews College (offering the diploma International Baccalaureate programme). There is also the Lycée Français d'Irlande school (offering the French Baccalauréat) and Sutton Park, which is associated with The New England Association of Schools and Colleges. St. Killian's German School follows the Irish primary school curriculum and also teaches German (prior knowledge of German is not a requirement). There is also a new school, Nord Anglia International School due to open in 2018.

Tuition fees can range from €6,000 per year for primary level and up to and exceeding €20,000 for secondary education. School uniforms, school transportation, books and other materials are at an additional cost. When taking school tours, we recommend that assignees bring reports from previous schools, copies of birth certificates and testimonials/references from teachers.

Places can be low in availability for both state and private schools and we recommend that families research online before a school search trip begins. That way, applications can be made as early as possible. It is also a good idea to shortlist two or three schools, in case the first choice has no space available.

As state schools provide places based on catchment areas, the assignee will need to find a home in the chosen school's catchment area first and then apply for a school place. However, this does not guarantee a place and assignees should be made aware of this.

Programme Advice

- Due to limited availability, assignees with school-age children should apply for a private school placement as far in advance as possible. Companies should also send authorisation for school assistance to their relocation service provider as soon as an assignment is confirmed.

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- As state school places can also be limited, assignees may need to send their children to a private/international school. Organisations should budget for this possibility in their school allowances.
- Companies should allow plenty of time in the relocation schedule for assignees to view schools as families may not always be able to secure a placement in their preferred option.

TRANSPORTATION

Dublin is a relatively small city and as such, it is possible to travel around the centre on foot. The city also has limited public transport links with basic rail and tram lines, and bus routes which expatriates may find confusing. Assignees using public transport regularly should consider getting a Leap card, which can save up to 20% on transport costs.

The tram system, known as *Luas* (the Irish word for 'speed') can be very busy at peak times. When travelling by bus, assignees should be aware that the exact fare is required and change will not be given to those paying more.

Unlike some locations, bus stops in Dublin do not display information boards, timetables or route maps, so assignees need to conduct their research about where they wish to travel to, beforehand.



Those choosing to drive may use their home country's driver's licence for up to 12 months, from the date of residency (as long as the licence has not expired). After this time, an Irish driver's licence will need to be applied for, which involves passing both a driver theory and practice test. This can be challenging for some assignees and expectations should be set before the move. When acquiring a car, assignees should be aware that many car lease companies only offer a minimum lease of three years, which will not be suitable for those on shorter assignments. Also remember that the Irish drive on the left hand side of the road, which means that drivers give way to those on their right.

Programme Advice

- Before choosing a home or school, assignees should ensure they know how long a commute takes during peak times in the morning and evenings.
- As many car lease companies only offer a minimum lease of three years, organisations may consider setting up a corporate lease that can be used on a rolling basis by assignees on short-term assignments.

CULTURAL ISSUES

Ireland is a predominantly Celtic nation, with a love of the spoken word, music, tradition, a sense of humour and a strong focus on family. Religion is important and – outside of Dublin – the church is often the focal point of the community. It is also important for assignees to remember that whilst people from the north and south of Ireland, share common characteristics, culture and history, the two are separate political states.

Communication. To avoid the awkwardness of giving negative feedback, locals tend to put a positive spin on things, often hiding negative responses behind humour. The Irish are high-context and indirect communicators, so assignees may have to read between the lines and interpret body language, before responding.

Relationships. Establishing good working relations with colleagues is key to success, with social interaction based on personal rapport, trust and respect. Assignees should be mindful that when making small talk to, avoid discussing Ireland and Northern Ireland's political history.

Meetings. Face-to-face meetings are important in Irish business, a strict agenda may not typically be adhered to but meetings are instead used as forums for general discussion on a particular subject.

Time Keeping. Although, deadlines are expected to be met, the Irish are quite casual in their attitude towards time, so expect meetings to run a few minutes late. However, we recommend that assignees endeavour to be punctual.

Leadership. Anyone planning to take a leadership role in Ireland should be a sociable person, a strong decision maker and be able to demonstrate flexibility. Good communication skills are also key.

Programme Advice

- Consider offering cross-cultural training to assignees and their families moving to Ireland. The type of programme you choose should take the length of the assignment into account as well as the scope of relocation experience that the assignee and family has.

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IMMIGRATION

Whilst all non-EU assignees require a work permit, some moving to Ireland will also need to apply for an Irish visa to enter the country. Then on arrival, the assignee will need to register visa and work permits with the Garda National Immigration Bureau in Dublin. A Personal Public Service Number will also need to be obtained from the Department of Social Welfare. This is a unique identifier that will be required when dealing with public bodies like health services and banks.

Assignees who require a visa, should be aware that if they wish to leave the country, a re-entry visa must be applied for. It is therefore advisable to apply for a multi-entry visa once the initial visa has been registered. This includes travel to Northern Ireland.

New Legislation

It was announced in April 2017 that the processing time for Atypical Working Scheme applications is now a minimum of 20 business days. Instead of the previous one to two weeks. This change follows a significant increase in applications. As this is only an estimated timescale, some may be processed faster, whilst others may take longer. The Atypical Working Scheme, known as AWS, is designed for short-term stays of up to 90 days, it cannot be extended and can only be obtained once every 12 months.

Programme Advice

- Visa applications should be made as soon as an assignment is scheduled. As requirements for applications vary, it is recommended that assignees be prepared with their required documentation as early as possible. The more prepared they are, means the faster and smoother the immigration process may be, which is especially important as visa processing times can vary depending upon the country of issuance.
- Assignees renting accommodation should be aware that they will need to obtain their Personal Public Service Number within 30 days of their lease start date.
- For more information or advice, we recommend you speak with your immigration provider.

Cartus thanks our Destination Service Provider, Irish Relo for the information provided for this issue of MarketWatch.

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Source: Country Navigator powered by TMA World – www.tmaworld.com and AtoZ of the World (Cultural Issues section).

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