

ALL IRELAND PROGRAMME
FOR IMMIGRANT PARENTS



NI
English





ALL IRELAND PROGRAMME FOR IMMIGRANT PARENTS

JUNE 2010

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The design of this information has involved input from a great many sources and we would like to acknowledge their assistance and experience.

Firstly, we would like to thank the cross-border funders of the project who gave us the resources to carry it out. Secondly, we would like to thank the members of the project management committee who have all given up much of their time and resources to contribute to this toolkit.

Thirdly, we would like to thank our Advisory Committee which is made up of both practitioners and parents from both sides of the border many of whom are themselves immigrant parents.

We also extend our appreciation and thanks to all those who commented and added to various sections of the resource pack including Barnardos Tuar Ceatha, the Office of the Minister for Integration, the Inclusion and Diversity Service Northern Ireland, the Health Service Executive and internal commentators within the ISPC. We would like to thank all of the practitioners, parents and young people who took part in our consultation process held throughout Ireland and also via the web. Thank you for your support and for providing us with the information needed to develop this Information pack.

Finally to any additional people, who lent their support to the programme, thank you!

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INTRODUCTION

The Globe: The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents is a time defined project aimed at helping immigrant parents with living and parenting in Ireland.

The resource pack is one of 3 products from the project.

The resource pack has been designed as a handbook for parents on aspects of living in Ireland. It contains up to-date information on 6 different topics and also links to other resources that you can access for further information.

Each section is separated for easy access so if there is a topic which is particularly important for you, you can skip straight to it.

SECTION 1:

Living in Ireland - A Brief Introduction

SECTION 2:

Living in Ireland - Practical Information

SECTION 3:

Legal Information

SECTION 4:

The Health and Social Services System

SECTION 5:

The Education System

SECTION 6:

Recreational and Social Activities

The sections are further divided into either questions and answers or information on a topic. This makes it easier to locate a particular section or get the answer to a particular question.

At the end of the six sections there is a list of commonly used abbreviations and acronyms and a glossary of words.

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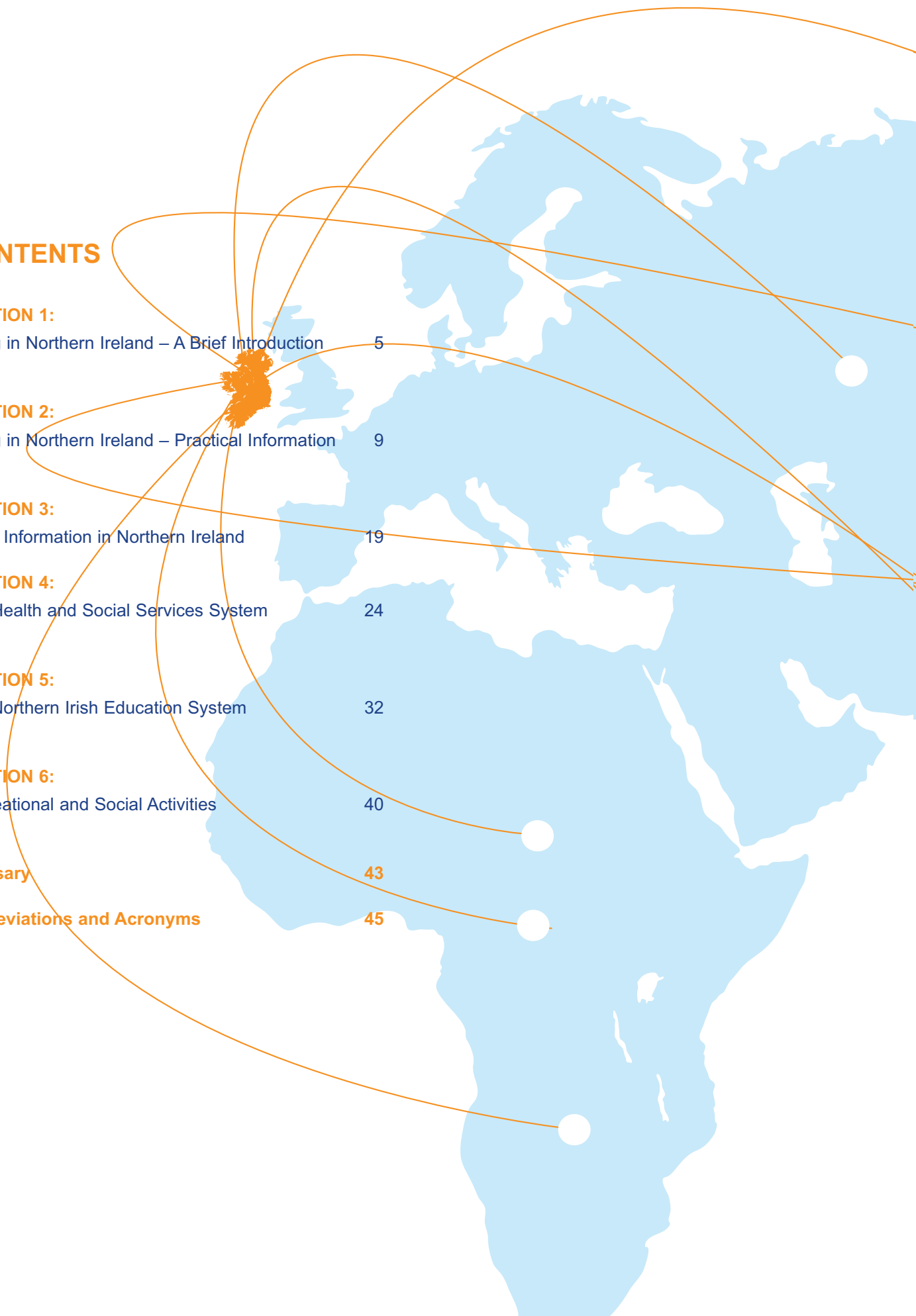
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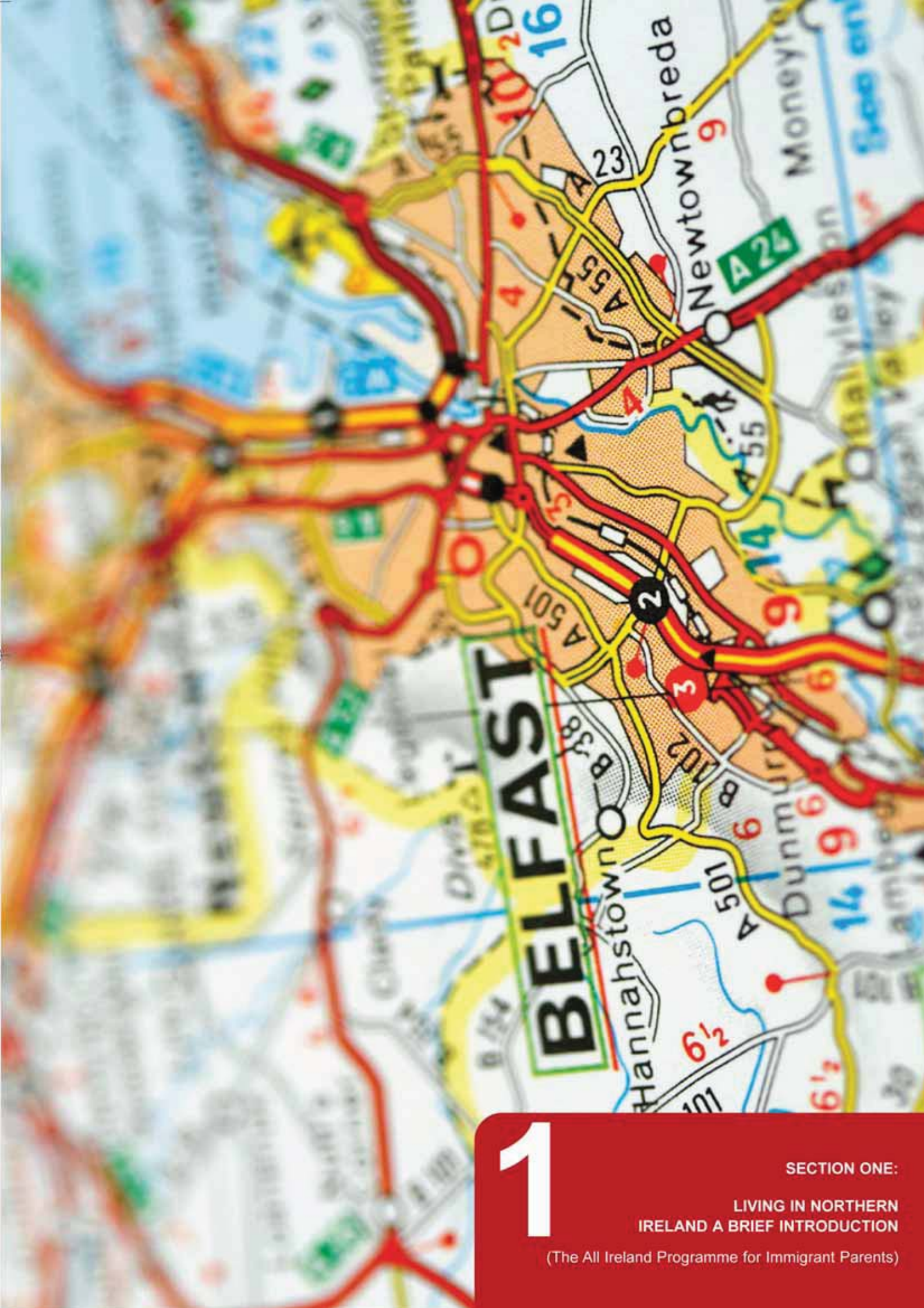
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- Information on the government? **See Section 1**
- Information on the population? **See Section 1**
- Information about paying bills? **See Section 2**
- Information about renting? **See Section 2**
- Information about children's rights? **See Section 3**
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SECTION ONE:

LIVING IN NORTHERN
IRELAND A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

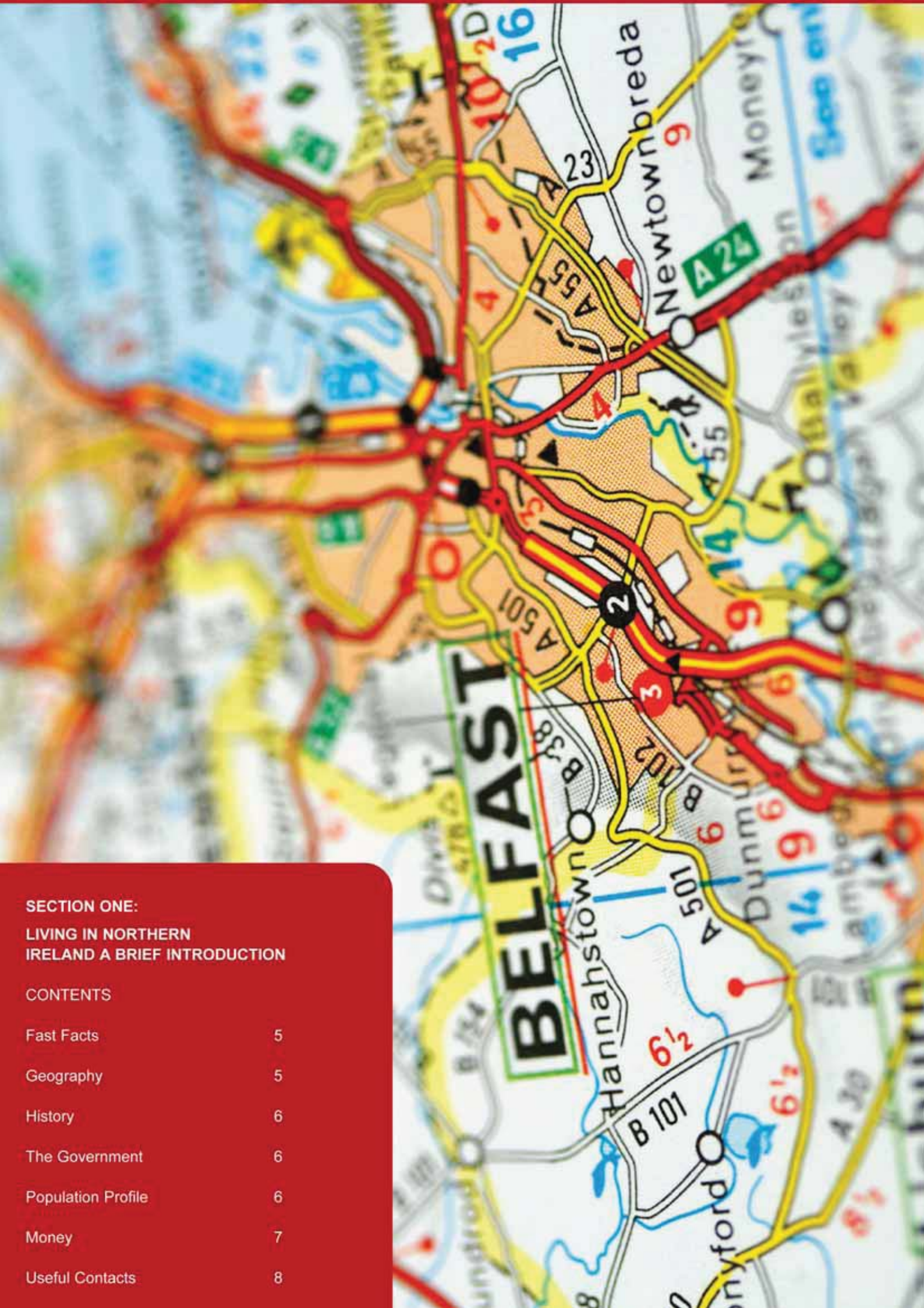
(The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents)

SECTION ONE:

**LIVING IN NORTHERN
IRELAND A BRIEF INTRODUCTION**

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FAST FACTS

Northern Ireland is contained within the island of Ireland. It is located in the Northern part of the island.

The size of the resident population in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2007 is estimated to be 1.759 million people.

The main city in Northern Ireland is Belfast.

The official currency of Northern Ireland is the Pound Sterling, written as £ before prices.

The official language of Northern Ireland is English.

Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

GEOGRAPHY OF IRELAND

Where is Northern Ireland Located?

Northern Ireland is located on the island of Ireland, an island located in North Western Europe. To the east of Ireland, the closest neighbour is Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) which is separated from Ireland by the Irish Sea.

Northern Ireland (which is part of the United Kingdom) covers one-sixth of the island and The Republic of Ireland covers five-sixths.

Northern Ireland is separated into 6 counties which are contained within the province of Ulster.



The Provinces of Ireland

- 1 -Leinster
- 2 -Munster
- 3 -Connaught
- 4 -Ulster

ULSTER

The province of Ulster lies to the North of the island. The majority of Ulster is part of Northern Ireland. There are nine counties in total in Ulster. Six belong to Northern Ireland and the remaining Three are part of The Republic of Ireland.

NAME	IRISH NAME	COUNTY TOWN
Antrim	Aontroim	Belfast
Armagh	Árd Mhacha	Armagh
Down	Dún	Downpatrick
Fermanagh	Fir Manach	Enniskillen
Londonderry	Doire	Derry
Tyrone	Tír Eoghain	Omagh

A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTHERN IRELAND

What is the history of Northern Ireland?

Ireland has a very long history which is believed to date from about 7,000 B.C. and the first people are thought to have migrated from Scotland in Great Britain.

Ireland was invaded by many different groups including the Celts, Vikings, Normans and the English.

England ruled Ireland for nearly 800 years until the Easter Rising in 1916 when nationalists declared that Ireland was an independent republic.

In 1920 The Government of Ireland Act partitioned the island of Ireland into Northern Ireland (the 6 counties in the North East of the island) and Southern Ireland (the other 26 counties). The 26 counties were mainly Catholic and the 6 counties mainly Protestant.

In 1921 Northern Ireland was officially established as part of Great Britain following the 1920 Government of Ireland Act and was granted home rule.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) wanted all of the island of Ireland to be part of the Irish Free State (now the Republic of Ireland) and the Unionists wanted Northern Ireland to stay as part of Great Britain.

The Catholics in Northern Ireland believed that they were discriminated against as the mainly Protestant Unionists were in control of the government.

In 1966 'The Troubles' started which led to 30 years of armed conflict in Northern Ireland.

In 1969 the British Army was sent to Northern Ireland to control security.

1972 was the most violent year of conflict in Northern Ireland.

In 1985 The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed between the United Kingdom and Ireland and confirmed that Northern Ireland would remain independent of the Republic as long as that was the will of the majority in the North.

In 1998 the leaders of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland signed the 'Good Friday Agreement'.

In 2005 The IRA publically ordered an end to their armed campaign.

On 8th May 2007 devolution was returned to Northern Ireland (See The Government in the next section).

THE GOVERNMENT

Is there a government in Northern Ireland?

Yes, although Northern Ireland is part of Great Britain, they have their own government.

Devolution (where power was transferred from the government of Britain to Northern Ireland) was restored to the Northern Ireland Assembly on Tuesday 8 May 2007 following the election of a four-party Executive of 12 ministers.

Who is in charge in Northern Ireland?

The First Minister and the Deputy First Minister share responsibility for running the government. Together they make up the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

There are also 10 departmental ministers who are responsible for different areas of government including education, health, social policy and so on.

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the 10 Departmental Ministers make up the Executive which meets to agree on major issues and matters which cut across the responsibilities of departments.

What is the Parliament called?

The parliament in Northern Ireland is called The Northern Ireland Assembly. It has full authority to make laws and take decisions on the functions of the Northern Ireland Government Departments.

The Executive Committee, which exercises executive authority on behalf of the Assembly, brings forward proposals for new legislation in the form of 'Executive Bills' for consideration by the Assembly. It also sets out a Programme for Government each year, with an agreed budget for approval by the Assembly.

What are the representatives to the parliament called?

The Assembly currently has 108 elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). MLA's responsibilities include representing their constituents' concerns.

Can I vote in Elections?

If you are from the UK, Republic of Ireland, Malta or Cyprus you can vote in all elections in Northern Ireland. If you are from the EU then you can vote in European Elections.

POPULATION PROFILE

How many people live in Northern Ireland?

There are currently 1,741,619 people living in Ireland (2006 figures NISRA).

Of the 1,741,619 people, 853,404 are male and 888,215 are female.

In total:

- 380,141 are aged 0-16 years
- 343,298 are aged 16-29 years
- 375,419 are aged 30-44 years
- 403,414 are aged 45-64 years
- 239,347 are aged 65 and over.

What is the biggest city?

Belfast is the largest city in Northern Ireland and also has the largest population. 268,000 people live in Belfast.

What is the city with the second largest population in Northern Ireland?

According to 2006 figures from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the city with second largest population in Northern Ireland is Lisburn with 112,929 people.

MONEY

What is the currency used in Northern Ireland?

Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and uses the pound Sterling as the currency.

What do Sterling bank notes look like?

There are 4 different denominations of notes in Northern Ireland.

£50, £20, £10, £5



What do the coins look like?

There are 8 different Sterling coins.



£2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p, 2p, and 1p

The smaller coins are written with a p after them. The p stands for pence and there are 100 pence in a pound.

USEFUL CONTACTS

For more information on the geography of Northern Ireland.

The Department of the Environment

Telephone: (028) 9054 0540
Website: <http://www.doeni.gov.uk>

For more information on the history of Ireland.

Irish History Online

Website: www.irishhistoryonline.ie

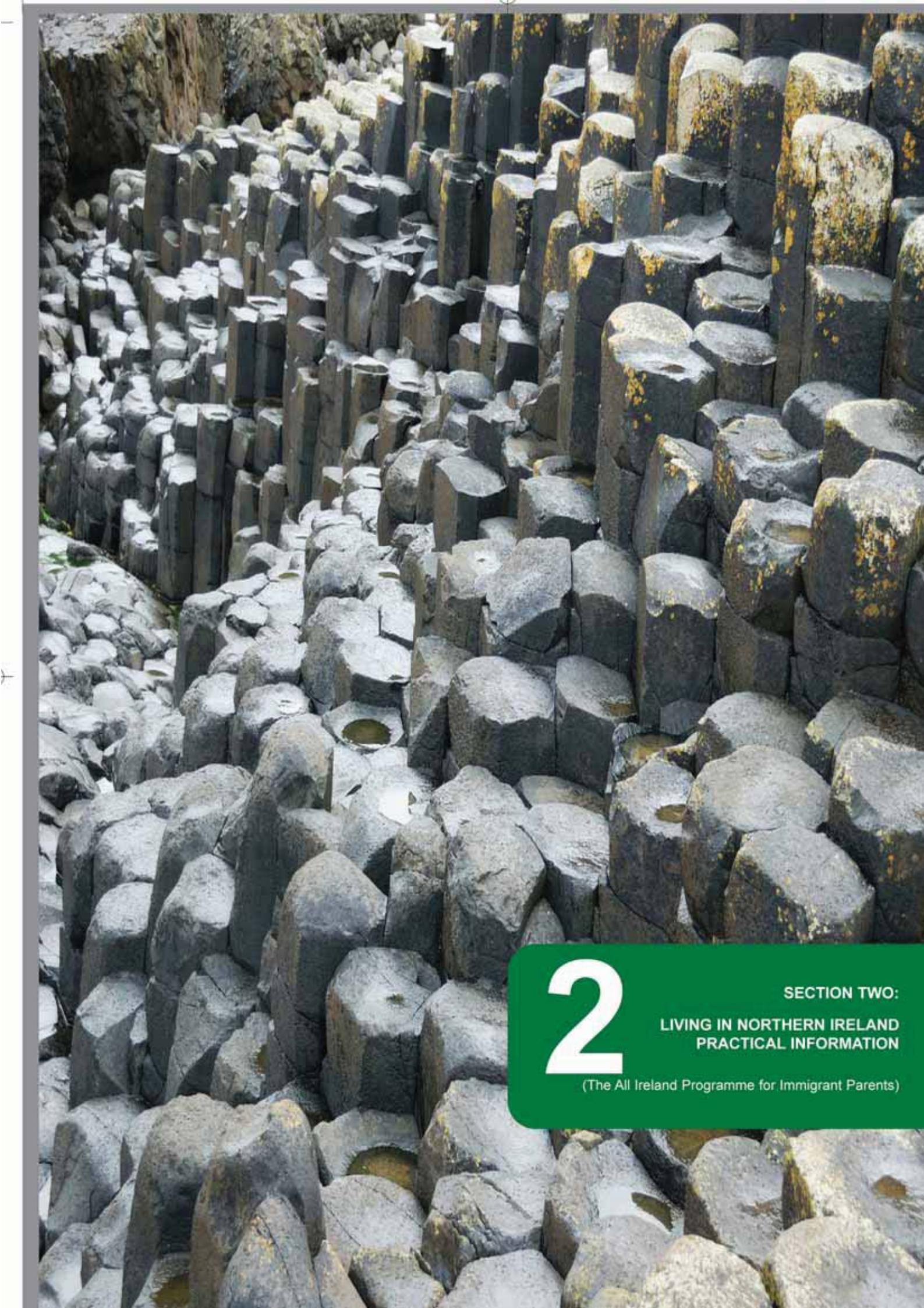
For more information on the government of Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Executive

Website: www.northernireland.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Website: <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/>



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**SECTION TWO:
LIVING IN NORTHERN IRELAND
PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

(The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents)



SECTION TWO:

LIVING IN NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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ACCOMMODATION

What are the main types of accommodation available in Northern Ireland?

There are three main types of accommodation for people in Northern Ireland.

- Private rented accommodation
- Local authority accommodation
- Social housing

PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

Where can I find rental accommodation?

For rented accommodation there are many advertisements in newspapers and online looking for people to rent or to share accommodation. Two popular online searches are:

<http://www.letbynet.com>

<http://www.letsni.com>

What different types of rental accommodation are there?

There are many different types of rental accommodation. Some are complete houses, others are houses divided into flats and others are in modern blocks designed as apartments.

What is a bedsit?

A bedsit, also called a studio, is a small flat where the living room and the sleeping area are the same room and there is a small kitchen and usually a bathroom.

Will I need to bring my own furniture?

No, most rental accommodation is furnished. This means that it will have all the basic furniture that you need. You can also rent unfurnished accommodation.

How often will I have to pay rent?

Rent is usually paid monthly but this will depend on your landlord.

What is a lease?

A lease is an agreement between the landlord or owner of the property and the person renting the accommodation.

The lease is a legal document and should contain information on:

- Landlord and renter's name
- How much rent you will have to pay
- The address of the property
- How often you will have to pay rent
- The dates of the lease (the start date and the end date)
- What furniture and accessories are in the house

What is a rent book?

A rent book is a notebook which contains all of the information above and is used to record the details of all the rent you pay. This is one of your rights so you must make sure that you get a rent book from your landlord.

What is a deposit?

A deposit is a payment of at least one month's rent (but can be more) that you must pay when you first move into rented accommodation. The landlord will keep your deposit and will return it to you when you move out as long as the property is in good condition. If you damage the property or move out early, the landlord may keep your deposit.

What is discrimination?

If you are renting property, you may find that you face discrimination. People who are letting property must not discriminate against you because of your race, sex, sexuality, religion, belief or disability. They are probably breaking the law if, because of your race, sex, disability, sexuality, religion or belief they:

- Refuse to let a property to you or offer you a property for rent on worse terms than other people
- Treat you differently on a housing waiting list
- Treat you differently from other tenants in the way you are allowed to use benefits or facilities such as a laundry or a garden
- Evict or harass you.

PRIVATE OWNED ACCOMMODATION

What about if I want to buy a house or apartment?

Buying a property in Northern Ireland is very expensive.

How do I buy a house or apartment?

Most houses or apartments are sold through estate agents and there are many estate agents throughout Ireland, including in most towns. Properties to buy are also listed in newspapers and on the internet.

What fees will I have to pay?

There are various fees that are also payable when you buy a property:

- Survey fees
 - Valuation fees
 - Stamp Duty Land Tax
- This is payable on properties costing more than £125,000 and is at least 1% of the purchase price.

- Land registry fee
- Local authority search
- Fees, if any - charged by the mortgage lender or someone who arranges the mortgage, for example, a mortgage broker
- The buyer's solicitor's costs
- Value Added Tax (VAT)
- Removal expenses
- Any final bills - for example, gas and electricity, from your present home which will have to be paid when you move

SOCIAL HOUSING

What is social housing?

Social rented housing is provided by the Housing Executive and Housing Associations. All Social Landlords aim to provide good-quality, affordable housing to people in housing need. Each Social Landlord is an independent organisation and can offer different services.

How do I apply for social housing?

If you wish to apply to be housed by the Housing Executive or a registered Housing Association you must complete an application form. The form is the same for all landlords and you can obtain one from any Housing Executive or Housing Association office. Completed forms may also be returned to any of the Participating Landlords.

You can also download an application form from:

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_application.pdf

What happens next?

The Housing Executive will then visit you, assess your need and ensure that you are registered on the waiting list as quickly as possible.

Or you can get further information from http://www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_selection_scheme_booklet.pdf

If you need help with understanding English, The Housing Executive can help you by providing translation. You can either call into a local office (which you can find by entering your postcode into

http://www.nihe.gov.uk/index/contact_us_home/office_finder.htm) or you can telephone them on 08448 920 900 and say which language you need help with.

BANK ACCOUNTS

Why should I open a bank account?

It is a good idea to open a bank account if you are working and living in Northern Ireland. Many people get paid directly into their bank accounts and it also allows you to save money and pay bills directly.

What different types of banks are there?

Financial institutions in Northern Ireland are divided into banks, building societies, credit unions and The Post Office which also allows you to open accounts.

All banks and building societies are regulated by the Financial Services Authority. They have produced helpful guides on your money available at: <http://www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk/>

What do I need to know about opening a bank account?

When you open a current account you should be aware of what services you get with your account and you should know what fees and charges you should pay. Many banks offer mostly free banking (with some conditions) and you should ask about this in the bank or building society.

What is a current account?

A current account allows you to make day-to-day transactions (i.e. paying a bill, receiving your salary straight to the account, making transactions etc.). These are offered only by banks and building societies.

What is a deposit account?

A deposit account allows you to build up savings and you may earn interest on this money. These are offered by most financial services firms – banks, building societies and Credit Unions.

When you open a deposit account you should know what percentage of your money you may earn in interest on your savings. You should also find out how you can access your money should you need it.

How do I open a bank account?

To open a bank account you will need to go to your local bank and fill in a form. You will need to bring proof of your address and proof of your identification.

What can I use to prove my identification?

The following list of forms of identification that provide evidence of your name and date of birth.

- Passport
- Current driving licence
- Current identity card with a photograph from a known employer
- Current student identification card with a photograph issued by a known third level college.

What can I use to prove my address?

The following is a list of documents that provide evidence of your address.

- Recent utility (for example electricity, gas or telephone) bill in your name
- Current driving licence
- Pension/benefit book
- Recent original bank statement issued in your name

What do I do if I have a complaint?

There are a number of things you can do if you have a problem opening a bank account.

Step 1: Ask to speak to a manager or the branch manager. If you are still not happy you can complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Step 2: You can contact the Financial Ombudsman Service at <http://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/> You can also write to the Ombudsman at: South Quay Plaza, 183, Marsh Wall, London E14 9SR; by telephone at 0845 080 1800 or by email at complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk

UTILITIES

What are utilities?

Utilities are public services such as electricity, gas, water and so on which are provided by the government but you usually have to pay for them.

ELECTRICITY

Who controls electricity in Northern Ireland?

Electricity services in Northern Ireland are provided by Northern Ireland Energy (NIE).

How do I get the electricity bills in my name?

A few days before you move house you should telephone the customer service helpline on 08457 455 455. You will be asked to provide a number of different things:

- Your date of birth
- Mother's maiden name
- Telephone number
They will also ask you for
- Your address
- Previous address
- Meter serial number
(on the front of the meter)
- Meter reading

And they will also ask you for your landlord's name and telephone number if you are renting.

How often will I get an electricity bill?

Electricity bills are issued for home electricity services every 3 months.

How soon must I pay my bill?

You must pay your electricity bill within 14 days to ensure that your supply stays constant.

What do you mean by a meter reading?

The electricity meter is a machine in your house that measures how much electricity you use. In order to calculate your bill a meter reader will call to your house.

How can I pay my electricity bill?

There are a number of different ways to pay your electricity bill. You can pay your electricity bills through:

- Direct debit (where the money comes directly from your bank account). This saves money because you receive a discount. Ask in your bank about this.

- By post by cheque. You will be sent a Freepost envelope.
- By switch or debit card (either by telephone or online) at: <http://www.nieenergyonline.co.uk/homeenergy/onlineservices/index.asp>
- By telephone on 08457 455 455 (8am - 8pm Monday - Friday and 9am - 1pm Saturday)
- Shops that display the PayPoint or PayZone sign (in cash only)

Are there alternative ways to pay for my electricity?

Yes, you can also arrange to have a keypad meter installed which is like a 'pay as you go' service which is similar to buying mobile phone top-ups for your electricity. To arrange to have a keypad meter fitted to your house or apartment, contact customer service.

What happens if I am not at home when the meter reader calls to my house?

If you are not at home you can phone in an exact reading or enter it online by:

Telephone - call 08456 093 030 when prompted, provide your name, address, customer number and meter reading. Lines open 24 hours a day.

Email - send your name, address, customer number and meter reading to meter.reading@nie.co.uk

Online – complete the online form at:

www.nie.co.uk/customerinformation/meterreading.htm

How do I make a complaint?

Step 1: Telephone Northern Ireland Energy on 08457 455 455.

Step 2: If this is still not resolved then you can write to their Head of Customer Services:

120, Malone Road,
Belfast BT9 5HT

or by email to: complaints@nieenergy.co.uk

Step 3: If you are still not happy you can contact the Consumer Council at:

Elizabeth House,
116, Hollywood Road,
Belfast BT4 1NY

or by email to: complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

GAS

Who controls gas supply in Northern Ireland?

The main supplier of gas (mains and bottled) is Phoenix Gas. For more information contact Phoenix Gas on 08454 555555 or info@phoenixnaturalgas.com

How can I pay my gas bill?

There are a number of different ways to pay your gas bill.

You can pay by:

- Direct debit (where the money comes directly from your bank account)
- Debit card by calling 0845 900 5253 or online at: https://server2sweb.tibus.net/phoenix/pay_your_bill/
- Energy Saver Card through shops that display the PayPoint sign.

Are there any other ways to pay?

Yes, you can also arrange to have a Pay As You Go meter which means you can pay for your gas as and when you need it.

You will get a customer card with the meter and you can take this card and pay for topups by cash at an PayPoint shop.

What do I do if I smell gas?

If you smell gas immediately telephone 0800 002 001 to report it. This is a 24 hour telephone number.

How do I make a complaint?

The gas meter is a machine in your house that measures how much gas you use. In order to calculate your bill a meter reader will call to your house. The meter reader will call to your house three times a year.

What do you mean by estimations of gas used?

The meter reader calls to your house for three of your six yearly bills. For the other three bills, Phoenix Gas will estimate how much gas you have used based on previous bills.

How do I make a complaint?

Step 1: Telephone Phoenix Gas on 0845 900 5253 or email info@phoenixsupplyni.com

Step 2: If this is still not resolved then you can write to their Customer Accounts Manager:

Phoenix Supply Ltd,
197 Airport Road,
Belfast
BT3 9ED.

Step 3: If you are still not happy you can contact the Consumer Council at:

Elizabeth House,
116, Hollywood Road,
Belfast BT4 1NY

or by email to:

complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk

WATER CHARGES

Is water free in Northern Ireland?

No, there have been charges for water and sewerage in Northern Ireland since 2007.

Who pays the water and sewerage charges?

The person who pays the bill is the person who pays the bills in the household (not necessarily the owner of the house). If you are connected to mains sewerage you will also pay for this but, if you have a septic tank you will not pay the charge but you do have to pay to have your tank emptied.

How do they work out the water charges?

The charge for water and sewerage is in two parts. The first part is a standing charge of around £55 a year and the second part is a variable charge based on how much your house or apartment is worth.

How is the water bill worked out?

Your bills will be worked out in three ways:

- Standard Tariff – most people will pay based on the price of their house.
- Reduced Tariff – many people on low incomes will pay a reduced rate.
- Metered Tariff – from 2007 all new homes and first-time connections will have water meters installed and charges will be worked out this way.

REFUSE COLLECTIONS AND RECYCLING

Who is in charge of collecting rubbish?

Local Councils have the responsibility for managing, collecting and disposing of a wide range of waste in Northern Ireland.

How is rubbish collected?

Wheelie bins are collected from outside your door and the contents are tipped into a lorry leaving them free to be filled again.

How about recycling?

For information on recycling facilities in your area contact one of the waste management groups. Details are available at:

<http://www.wakeuptowaste.org/index/local-councils/local-council-links.htm>

It can be a good idea to recycle some items yourself. There are many different ideas, including games you can play with your children available at:

<http://www.wakeuptowaste.org/index/education/resources.htm>

What other ways can I recycle?

Several items, such as bottles, can be delivered to recycling centres which are areas with different containers for different materials. You can find your local recycle centre here:

<http://www.wakeuptowaste.org/index/recycle-bank-locator.htm>

Just put in your postcode and it will tell you where your local centre is.

Where can I find out more information about waste management?

You can read more about waste management on: <http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/waste/strategy.htm>

GETTING AROUND

DRIVING IN IRELAND

What do I need to do to drive my own car in Northern Ireland?

If you are moving to Northern Ireland or are already living here and you are importing a car or other vehicle, you will need to do three things before you can drive your vehicle in Northern Ireland:

- Complete a form saying that your car is set up for left hand drive and pay the appropriate fee.
- Pay motor tax.
- Have a certificate which says that your car has been tested and is safe to drive in Northern Ireland. This test is called the MOT (Ministry of Transport) test.

Can I use my existing driving licence?

It is possible to exchange a driving licence issued by an EU or EEA Member State for a full Northern Irish driving licence. Northern Ireland has agreements with all EU/EEA States and some other countries (Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Cyprus and Zimbabwe).

What if my driving licence is not from one of the recognised countries?

If your stay in Northern Ireland is more than 12 months and you are not from one of the listed recognised countries/States, you can apply for a driving licence in Northern Ireland if you want to continue driving.

How do I get a driving licence in Northern Ireland?

You must first apply for a provisional licence and complete your driving test in Northern Ireland. If you pass your driving test, you will be issued with a full driving licence for use in Northern Ireland.

If you want to apply for a driving licence in Northern Ireland and you are from an EU/EEA country you must have been normally resident for 185 days in the 12 months prior to applying for a driving test and full licence.

What is the MOT test?

The Ministry of Transport (MOT) is a test that your car must take if you want to drive in Northern Ireland and your car is over 3 years old. You can get more details from <http://www.dvtani.gov.uk/home/index.asp>

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Who controls public transport in Northern Ireland?

Public transport in Northern Ireland is controlled by the Translink group. Translink is responsible for public buses, intercity buses and the train system.

What do I need to know about Metro Bus?

Metro Bus is responsible for buses in the Belfast area. There are many different bus routes. You can get timetables online at:

<http://www.translink.co.uk/MetroCorridorTimetables.asp> or from the call centre (telephone 028 90666630). The opening hours are: Monday to Sunday 7am to 8pm.

How can I get a bus in/to another city?

Ulster Bus is responsible for most of the bus services in Northern Ireland (outside the Belfast area which is operated by Metro). You can buy your tickets online at <http://www.translink.co.uk> or from the local bus station in your nearest city or town.

Goldline is responsible for buses between cities in Northern Ireland and offer a quick and clean way to travel between towns and cities.

How can I get a train to another city?

NI Railways is responsible for trains in Northern Ireland. There are many different train routes available. You can buy tickets online at:

<http://www.translink.co.uk/NIRailwaysFares.asp> or from your local train station. Enterprise is a train service that is run jointly between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and it runs between Belfast and Dublin with limited stops along the way.

How much are the fares for public transport?

Fares for public transport depend on whether you are classed as an adult, a student or a senior citizen. All people over the age of 65 are entitled to free travel on all public transport.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

What are telecommunications?

Telecommunications are different ways to communicate with people at a distance. The best examples are TV, internet and telephones.

TELEVISION

How many television channels are there in Northern Ireland?

There are five TV channels available in Northern Ireland. The TV channels available are: BBC 1 and 2, UTV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

Northern Ireland does not have any TV channels of its own but does produce programmes through BBC Northern Ireland and UTV (which is part of the ITV network).

Do I have to pay for these channels?

Yes, any household that has a TV must pay an annual licence charge even if you do not watch the public TV channels.

How much does a TV licence cost and where can I get one?

The licence currently costs £48 (for a black and white television) and £142.50 (for a colour television) for the year and can be paid through the post office.

What happens if I don't pay my TV licence?

There are licence enquiry officers who call to peoples' houses to check if they have a licence and if you are caught without one you will be fined and/or prosecuted.

How can I get extra channels?

Many people in Northern Ireland also pay for extra channels through cable or satellite and there are different providers of these channels.

- SKY
- Virgin Media

Further information is available from www.sky.com or from www.virginmedia.com

TELEPHONES

What is the international dialling code for Northern Ireland?

The international dialling code for Northern Ireland is 0044. This means that if you are abroad and you need to dial a Northern Irish number, you need to dial 0044 before the rest of the number.

How do I find area codes within Northern Ireland?

There are area codes for each different area in Northern Ireland. From a landline phone you only need to dial the area code if you are calling a different area.

From a mobile phone you will have to dial the full number including the area code. The area codes will normally be listed in phone books, which are given out free to households once a year. You can also get a full list of area codes from:

http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=736076.

How do I get a landline phone?

To get a landline phone you will need to contact a company that provides a landline service. Like opening a bank account, you will need to have proof of address and proof of identification.

EMERGENCY SERVICE NUMBERS

Emergency number (free): 999/112 (from a mobile)

The emergency number will bring you through to an operator who will ask you if you need police, ambulance or fire services.

Operator assistance (free): 10

The operator is a service where you can ask for further information on phone numbers or how you make phone calls to other places.

Directory enquiries: 11811 or 118554

Directory enquiries is a service where you can ask for the phone numbers of people or businesses. This is not a free service and calls from mobiles can be very expensive.

MOBILE PHONES

What mobile phone companies are there in Northern Ireland?

There are six main companies in Ireland:

- O2 (www.o2.co.uk/)
- T-Mobile (www.t-mobile.co.uk/)
- Vodafone (www.vodafone.co.uk/)
- 3 Mobile (www.three.co.uk/)
- Virgin (www.virginmobile.com/)
- Orange (www.orange.co.uk/2)

All six companies offer different packages and you can have a 'pay as you go' or a 'pay monthly' phone depending on how much you spend on your phone and how much you plan to use it.

Can I change company but keep my mobile phone number?

Yes, you can also switch to a different company and keep your phone number. If you want to do this, you should ask the company you are switching to how you would do this.

What does 'pay as you go' mean?

A 'pay as you go' phone is a pre-pay phone. This means that you will not receive any bills but that you buy 'top ups' which allow you to have credit on your phone to make phone calls.

What does 'pay monthly' mean?

A pay monthly phone is a bill phone. You will be billed for all calls that you make each month.

PUBLIC TELEPHONES

Are there public telephones in Northern Ireland?

There are public phones in Northern Ireland, though the number is declining due to an increased use of mobile phones. Some public phones accept coins, the rest use phone cards, known as callcards. Callcards can be bought in shops, post offices and newsagents.

How can I make a reverse telephone call where the other person pays for the call?

International Reverse Charge calls or collect calls can be made from any phone. The International Operator Service number is 114.

INTERNET

How can I find out about getting the internet?

As with telephone companies, there are a wide range of internet companies that you can use in your home or there are also many cyber or internet cafes in big towns across Northern Ireland.

How much does it cost?

The cost and different types of connection depend on your provider. <http://www.broadbandni.com/> has a service that allows you to compare broadband prices in Northern Ireland.

MAKING COMPLAINTS

How do I make a complaint about a telephone, mobile phone or internet company?

To make a complaint against a telecommunications company you can contact the Office of the Telecommunications Ombudsman (OTELO). You can contact them at 0845 050 1614.

POSTAL SERVICES

Who is responsible for post in Northern Ireland?

The main service provider for postal services in Northern Ireland is the Post Office who deliver mail through a service called Royal Mail.

What are the opening hours for post offices?

Post offices are usually open from 9:00am – 5:00pm (from Monday – Friday) and some are open for a half day on Saturdays (depending on the office). You can find your local post office at

www.postoffice.co.uk/portal/po/finder?catId=20700386

You can often buy stamps and cards in normal shops also.

How often is post delivered?

Post is delivered to offices and homes once a day from Monday to Friday. There is no delivery at the weekend but post is still collected from post boxes.

How can I find out how much it costs to post something?

The cost of sending letters, parcels or packages depends on how quickly you want your letter to arrive and where it is going to.

You can ask in your local post office or work out the postage online at: www.postoffice.co.uk

How do I find a post box?

You will find post boxes in every town. They are often in front of or near the local post office. Post boxes are red in colour.

How do I know when post is collected from a post box?

The times that the post is collected from the post box are written on the front of the box. If they are not ask in your local post office stating where the box is located.

SHOPPING

What times are shops open in Northern Ireland?

The general shopping hours in Northern Ireland are:

Monday – Saturday:	9.00a.m. – 5.30 pm
Sunday	1.00p.m. – 6.00 pm

Some shops open late on Thursday and Friday evenings and some supermarkets in urban areas are open 24 hours a day.

Where can I find shops?

In cities and large towns shops are usually found in the middle of the town on the main street and streets off the main street. There are also shopping centres which are buildings with lots of different types of shops and there are also department stores which contain small areas that sell different products.

What are the main types of food shops?

There are four main types of food shops.

- **Supermarkets** - large shops that have a wide variety of different foods.
- **Convenience Stores** – are smaller shops, also called 'local shops' or 'corner shops'. These are generally open late and are generally more expensive than supermarkets.
- **Specialist Shops** - These are shops which sell food from a particular country or specially prepared meats (such as kosher and halal).
- **Single Food Shops** - These are shops that only sell one type of food, for example Bakeries which sell only bread and cakes or a Greengrocers which sell only fruit and vegetables.

What other information might be useful?

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has produced leaflets on different aspects of eating and cooking healthily. These leaflets are translated into lots of different languages and are available at:

www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/pubsmminority/

The Northern Ireland Consumer Council has information about how to make a complaint when you have bought something. You can contact them at:

116, Hollywood Road,
Belfast BT4 1NY;

by telephone on: (028) 9067 2488

or their website at: www.consumerCouncil.org.uk

BUDGETING AND MANAGING BILLS

What is a household budget?

A budget is a plan of money you expect to receive and how you expect to spend it. A household budget includes spending on bills, rent, food, school books and so on.

Why would I need a budget?

A budget helps you to spread the cost of your bills and to manage your money so that you are not stuck with large bills you cannot pay.

How do I make a budget?

There are different ways to make a budget. For an easy-to-use version you can get a weekly spending diary from the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (Ireland), also known as MABS. Their website is www.mabs.ie and contains many useful leaflets on budgeting. You can also ring them from Northern Ireland on 00353 1 8129350.

What do you mean by prioritising?

Prioritising in terms of budgeting is simply deciding what is most important. For example rent, electricity, gas, food, school books, clothes and the TV licence should be paid before expensive items such as a car or a big TV are bought.

I need help with my bills, what can I do?

If you need help with your bills, the MABS service will be able to help you to sort out your money and your bills. You can call them at 00353 1 8129350 or visit their website www.mabs.ie

Another useful site is www.adviceni.net/advice/ which has links to finding where your local money advisor service is.

How can I reduce my bills?

A simple way to reduce your utility bills (See above, Utilities) is to reduce the amount of electricity or gas you use. You can get information on how to do this from www.sei.ie

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SECTION THREE:

LEGAL INFORMATION
IN NORTHERN IRELAND

(The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents)

SECTION THREE:

**LEGAL INFORMATION
IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

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FAST FACTS

Children and young people throughout the world have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which Northern Ireland has ratified.

Children in Northern Ireland have rights governing many aspects of their lives including employment, the age they can marry and the age of consent.

There are also many provisions on punishment and youth justice.

Domestic abuse is prohibited in Northern Ireland and there are many places people can go to for help if they are a victim of domestic violence (both women and men).

Northern Ireland has very strong employment rights and discrimination under any grounds is prohibited.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

What is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people a comprehensive set of rights. Northern Ireland ratified the UNCRC in 1991.

By ratifying the Convention, Northern Ireland became a 'State Party' to it and made a formal commitment to safeguard the rights of children set out in the Convention.

The convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights. These include the right to:

- Special protection measures and assistance
- Access to services such as education and health care
- Develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential
- Grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding
- Be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner
- All of the rights in the convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination.

LEGAL AGE OF MAJORITY (ADULTHOOD)

What is the legal age of majority (adulthood) in Northern Ireland?

Anyone under the age of 18 is considered to be a child in Northern Ireland. The legal age of majority (the age at which a child becomes an adult) is 18.

LEGAL AGE FOR WORKING

What is the legal age for working in Northern Ireland?

In Northern Ireland the working hours for young people are regulated by the Children (NI) Order 1995. The Order sets maximum working hours and does not allow children under 18 to work late.

What hours can children under 16 work?

Children under the age of 16 cannot have full-time jobs. If a person is 16 and has left school they can have a full-time job but there are still restrictions on where they can work (for example they cannot work in a betting shop).

What is the law for children aged between 13 and 16?

- Children under 13 are not allowed to work at all
- Children cannot work during school hours or for more than 2 hours on a school day
- Children cannot work before 7:00a.m. or after 7:00 pm

What hours can children over 16 work?

If children are over 16 and have finished school they are known as a 'young worker'. The law for young workers says that:

- They cannot work more than 8 hours per day
- They must have 12 hours rest between each working day
- They cannot work more than 40 hours per week
- They must have 2 rest days per working week
- They must have a 30 minute break after 4.5 hours.

What jobs can children do?

Children can only work in the following jobs:

- The delivery of newspapers, milk, groceries, foodstuffs, flowers or drapery goods
- Office work, except in a place that sells alcohol or is licensed for betting or gambling
- Hotel or catering work, except in the kitchen of a place that sells alcohol
- Shop assistant, except in a place that sells alcohol or is licensed for betting or gambling
- Domestic work
- Light agricultural work for their parents.

What are the maximum weekly working hours for children under 16?

Age	Under 15	15 - 16
School Day	2 hours per day	2 hours per day
Saturdays	5 hours per week	7 hours per week
Sundays	2 hours per week	2 hours per week
School Holidays	27 hours per week	37 hours per week

What is the minimum wage in Northern Ireland?

The current minimum wage in Northern Ireland is:

£3.40 – for people under 18

£4.60 – for people aged between 18 and 21

£5.52 – for people aged 22 and over

AGE OF CONSENT

What is the age of consent?

The age of consent is the age at which people can have sexual relationships.

Female Male	Female Female	Male Male
17	17	17

There are no set age limits for homosexual relationships but it is illegal for people under 16 to engage in any sexual relationships.

AGE OF MARRIAGE

What age can people get married in Northern Ireland?

The age at which people can marry in Northern Ireland is 18. People aged between 16 and 18 can get married if they have their parents' consent.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Will my child be physically punished at school?

No, corporal punishment in the education system is prohibited.

The following forms of discipline are not allowed (prohibited):

- Any form of physical violence
- Not giving children food or drink
- Cruel or degrading punishment

PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

Can I physically punish my child?

While there is no law in place which expressly bans physical punishment of children, slapping has become less acceptable as a form of discipline and increasingly few parents now support its usage. Parents can be prosecuted if the physical discipline is excessive.

Under the law in Northern Ireland, parents who severely punish their children can be charged with assault (under Article 2 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

What are the positive alternatives?

Alternative positive methods are suggested including 'time outs' and reward charts for young children.

For more information on positive parenting tips check www.ispcc.ie or www.barnardos.ie

YOUTH JUSTICE

What is the age of criminal responsibility in Northern Ireland?

The age of criminal responsibility is 10 years of age. This means that children who have not reached the age of 10 years cannot be charged with an offence.

What about children under 10 who break the law?

Children aged 10 who commit crimes will be brought before a Family Court and placed under a care or supervision order. Children aged 10-16 will be sent to a Juvenile Justice Centre.

Children can be sent to prison when they are 17.

Where can I find more information on youth justice?

For more information on the area of youth justice contact the Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland on (028) 9031 6400 or info@yjani.gov.uk. You can also visit their website <http://www.youthjusticeagencyni.gov.uk>

For more information on the Criminal Justice System which covers both the Youth Justice System and the Adult Justice System visit the website of The Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland at <http://www.cjsni.gov.uk/>

DOMESTIC INFORMATION

DOMESTIC ABUSE

What is domestic abuse?

Domestic abuse refers to the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships. It can also involve:

- Emotional abuse
- The destruction of property
- Isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support
- Threats to others including children
- Stalking
- And control over access to money, personal items, food, transport and the telephone.

Domestic abuse law is legislated by the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

How can I get help for domestic violence?

You can look in the local phone book or in a community services directory for the phone number for a refuge and counselling services closest to you.

There is also a 24-hour domestic violence helpline. The telephone number is 0800 917 1414. This is a Freephone number and language services (interpretation) are available.

You can also ring a Domestic Violence Officer of the PSNI on 0845 600 8000 or Women's Aid on 028 9024 9041.

What about in an emergency?

In an emergency you should contact your local police station for help or phone 999 (or 112).

FREE LEGAL AID

Can I get free legal aid?

Free legal aid in Ireland is available from the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission; The Children's Law Centre, the Law Centre Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

What rights do I have as an employee in Northern Ireland?

Workers who are from the EU/EEA and Switzerland or those who have fully valid work permits have all the same employment rights as people from Northern Ireland.

What about discrimination?

Discrimination against employees on grounds of age, gender, marital status, family status, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and membership of the Travelling Community is prohibited under the Employment Equality Regulations 2003 and 2006.

PATERNITY LEAVE

What is paternity leave?

Paternity leave is time off work for men whose female partner has had a baby. They are entitled to 2 weeks leave.

Will I be paid when I am on paternity leave?

You will get paid during your paternity leave, as long as you earn at least £90 a week. This pay is called Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP). If your paternity leave starts on or after 1 April 2008, you will get either 90% of your average weekly pay, or £117.18, whichever is lower. You may be able to get more than SPP if your contract of employment allows for this.

When should I tell my employer I'm going on paternity leave?

You should inform your employer at least 15 weeks before the baby is due. It is best to give as much notice as possible.

MATERNITY LEAVE

What is maternity leave?

Maternity leave is time off work given to pregnant women just before they give birth and for a certain period after.

How long is maternity leave?

A pregnant employee is entitled to maternity leave from employment for a period of up to 52 weeks regardless of how long they have been working for the employer or the number of hours worked per week. The first 26 weeks are called Ordinary Maternity Leave. During this period you will get the same rights under your contract of employment as if you were still at work. However, you will not get your normal pay unless it says so in your contract. You can also take another 26 weeks called Additional Maternity Leave. There must be no gaps between Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave.

How do I tell my employer I need to go on maternity leave?

You must tell your employer by the end of the 15th week before the baby is due that:

- You are pregnant
- The date your baby is due
- The date you want your maternity leave to start

You must give your employer a medical certificate called a MATB1. You can get this from your midwife or GP. It gives the date your baby is due. Once you have told your employer that you want to take maternity leave, they must write to you within 28 days and tell you the date you should come back to work.

Will I get paid when I am on maternity leave?

If you have worked for your employer for at least 26 weeks at the beginning of the 15th week before your baby is due, you may qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). To get SMP you must also earn at least £90 a week. You can get SMP even if you do not return to work after having your baby.

You can get up to 39 weeks' SMP. SMP is the minimum amount you should be paid, but your contract of employment may entitle you to more than this. Check your contract to see what you are entitled to.

If you don't qualify for SMP, you may be entitled to Maternity Allowance (MA). You fill in a SMP1 form which your employer will give you. You take this completed form to the Jobs and Benefits Office. You will qualify for MA if you earn an average of £30 per week or more.

You must also have worked for at least 26 weeks out of the 66 weeks before the week your baby is due. You do not have to have worked for the same employer during this time and the 26 weeks do not need to have been worked in a row. You may get MA if you are self employed.

What about my job?

If you have taken 26 weeks Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML), you have the right to return to the same job as the one you had before you went on leave.

If you have taken Additional Maternity Leave (AML) as well as OML, you are entitled to return to the same job unless your employer says this is not reasonable. In this case, you should be offered another suitable job with the same pay and conditions as you had before maternity leave.

If you were working full-time before your maternity leave, you may want to return to work part-time, job share or different hours. This is called flexible working. Your employer does not have to agree to let you do flexible working, but they must treat your request seriously.

You can get more information on your rights and responsibilities from:

www.delni.gov.uk/employees_10.10.06.pdf. This leaflet explains all your rights with respect to maternity leave.

You can also contact the Employment Rights Branch of the Department for Employment and Learning. (See the contacts page for more details).

USEFUL CONTACTS

For more information on children's rights, the following organisations have very useful information.

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Address: Millennium House
17-25 Great Victoria St.
Belfast BT2 7BA
Telephone: (028) 9031 1616
Email: info@niccy.org
Website: www.niccy.org

Children's Law Centre

Address: 3rd Floor, Philip House,
123 -137, York Street
Belfast BT15 1AB
Telephone: 0808 808 5678 (for children)
(028) 9094 5704 (for adults)
Email: info@childrenslawcentre.org
Website: www.childrenslawcentre.org

The following organisations provide useful information and help around domestic issues

Women's Aid

Address: 129, University St
Belfast BT7 1HP
Telephone: 0800 917 1414
Email: info@womensaidni.org
Website: www.niwaf.org

Northern Ireland Legal Service Commission

Address: 2nd Floor, Waterfront Plaza,
8, Laganbank Road
Mays Meadow
Belfast BT1 3BN
Telephone: (028) 9040 8888
Website: www.nilsc.org.uk

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Address: Temple Court
39, North Street,
Belfast BT1 1NA
Telephone: (028) 9024 3987
Website: www.nihrc.org

The following organisations are useful contacts for further information on employment rights.

Department for Employment and Learning

Address: Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide St
Belfast BT2 8FD
Telephone: (028) 9025 7777
Email: del@nics.gov.uk
Website: www.delni.gov.uk/index/er.htm

Northern Ireland Law Centre

The Law Centre has produced guides for migrant workers on their employment rights. These are available to download from:

<http://www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Publications.htm>

HEALTH BENEFITS

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**SECTION FOUR:
THE HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM**
(The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents)

SECTION FOUR:

THE HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

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HEALTH BENEFITS

KEY WORDS

General Practitioner
 Health Nurse
 Hospital
 Health Centre

FAST FACTS

If you are resident in Northern Ireland (NI) health care is generally free.

From April 2009 the Regional Health Authority covers all of Northern Ireland and will commission health and social services.

There are five Health and Personal Social Services Trusts who deliver health services across Northern Ireland.

Your entitlement to free health services in Northern Ireland is mainly based on whether you live in Northern Ireland or whether you are just visiting.

Emergency treatment is provided free to everybody. It does not matter where you are from or how long you are here for.

You do not have to pay for treatment if you have lived in Northern Ireland for more than six months.

In an emergency phone 999 or 112 from a mobile



You can dial 999 from both but you can dial 112 even if the key lock on your phone is on.

HEALTHCARE

Who is eligible for healthcare in Ireland?

If you are 'resident' in Northern Ireland you are entitled to a range of health services which are free or subsidised by the Government.

What does 'resident' mean?

Resident means that you have lived in Northern Ireland for a minimum of six months and plan to continue living in Ireland.

If I am sick do I go to the hospital?

No, you should only go straight to hospital if it is an emergency. If it is not too serious you should visit a GP first.

What free services are available?

Most services and treatments are free, such as:

- GP Services Hospital treatments
- Treatments at a specialist
- Emergency treatments
- Family planning
- Maternity services
- Community care services

What services are not free?

- Prescribed drugs and medicines - It is free to get a prescription, but there is a charge for the medicine. The current rate is £6.50
- Dental Treatment - It is free to register with a dentist but treatment is not free. Your dentist will give you a treatment plan which will include costs.
- Optical (eyes) and aural (ears) services - generally carry a charge.

Does anyone get these services for free?

Yes, certain groups are able to get free care or reduced charges:

- Children under 16/19 if in full time education
- Pregnant women
- People over the age of 60
- People suffering from certain medical conditions
- People on certain Social Security Benefits.
- People on low income

It is a good idea to ask if you are entitled to free treatment, whenever you contact a professional.

ACCESSING SERVICES

How do I access health services?

To get access to health services, there are two things that you must do:

- Register with the Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland.
- Register with a General Practitioner (GP), also known as a family doctor.

Why do I need to do this?

You need to register with both in order to be issued with a medical card which you use to get access to health services in Northern Ireland.

How do I get the Medical card?

To register you must fill in an application form. This form is called a HS22X. It is available in many different languages including Portuguese, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Czech, Russian, Slovakian, Urdu, Irish, Hindi, Chinese, Bulgarian and Romanian.

www.centralservicesagency.ni.nhs.uk/display/translations

Where else can I get the form from?

The form is also available from any GP practice, health centre or from the Central Services Agency office.

What do I do with the form?

When you have filled in the form you should take it to the GP. If they agree to register you at their practice they will take your form.

How long will it take to get my medical card?

This might take up to 8 weeks so you should register when you arrive in Northern Ireland rather than waiting until you get sick.

What documentation do I need if I am from outside the European Economic Area?

If you are from outside the EEA you will need evidence that you live in Northern Ireland, for example your visa or work permit.

Can I get free healthcare if I am an asylum seeker?

Yes, you are eligible to apply. You must provide proof that you have made an application for asylum to the Home Office.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

What is a GP?

A General Practitioner (GP) is the official term for a community based doctor in Northern Ireland. The GP is responsible for all your treatments and is the one who will refer you to specialists/hospitals when necessary.

What is a family doctor?

A family doctor is simply another name for a GP.

Where can I find a GP?

There are 350 GP practices in Northern Ireland. A full list is available from:

- Central Services Agency
- Citizen Advice Bureaux

- Online at www.centralservicesagency.ni.nhs.uk/files/currentmedicallists/file/GPNI200801.pdf

What services do GPs provide?

There are 350 GP practices in Northern Ireland. A full list is available from:

- They listen to your health concerns.
- They will decide if you need to see a specialist.
- They will decide if you need medicines and give you a prescription to buy them.

Do I need to make an appointment to see the GP?

Yes, you must make an appointment to see a GP by telephoning them or calling into the practice.

If you are too sick to go to the practice, you might be able to get a GP to call to your house. The GP will decide if you are sick enough to get a home visit.

Are GP surgeries open all night?

No, most GP surgeries are only open during the day. You should ask in your GP surgery about out-of-hours services when you register.

What are my rights?

There are 350 GP practices in Northern Ireland. A full list is available from:

- You can ask for a doctor of your own sex.
- You can change doctors at any time.
- You can ask your doctor to arrange a second opinion from a specialist or another GP. But the GP does not have to do this if they do not feel that it is necessary.

Further information about registering with a GP is available from:

www.nhssb.n-i.nhs.uk/multilingualResources/index.php

HOSPITAL CARE

Can I get free hospital care?

Every person who is resident in Northern Ireland is entitled to free hospital care in public hospitals. Private hospitals are not free.

What do hospitals in Northern Ireland do?

Hospitals in Northern Ireland are there to treat and care for ill and/or injured patients.

What do hospitals in Northern Ireland provide?

- Accident and emergency services (24 hour treatment), there are 10 acute hospitals in Northern Ireland.
- In-patient services
- Out-patient services
- Day services

Can I go to the hospital instead of a GP?

Unless you have an emergency, you should visit your GP first. Generally you must be referred by a GP in order to avail of services in public hospitals (except accident and emergency services).

If you (or a member of your family) are ill at night, at the weekend or on bank holidays and cannot wait until your own GP surgery next opens you should contact your GP out-of-hours.

GP Out-of-Hours cannot treat injuries such as cuts, Abrasions or broken bones. Minor cuts may be dealt with in a Minor Injury Unit however any serious accidents or injuries should be treated in an Accident and Emergency Department. If the condition is potentially life-threatening (e.g. suspected heart attack) telephone 999 direct or 112.

How do I contact GP Out-of-Hours and what will happen?

1. Phone your GP and the phone number for GP Out-of-Hours will be on the answering machine or your call may be put through directly to GP Out-of-Hours.
2. A receptionist will take your details and a health professional will phone you back.
3. You may be given advice over the phone, asked to attend a centre, a doctor may come out to visit you, or you may be redirected to a more appropriate service.

The website: http://www.gpoutofhours.hscni.net/aboutGPOOH.html#P10_408 provides guidance on accessing GP out of hours services.

FAMILY PLANNING

Where can I get family planning advice in Ireland?

Advice on family planning in Northern Ireland is free and confidential.

If you need advice on family planning you can contact your GP or a local 'Family Planning Clinic'.

You can find a list of contraceptive clinics in Northern Ireland on: <http://www.fpa.org.uk/findaclinic/>

Pregnancy counselling is available from a number of volunteer services and your GP.

Can I get an abortion in Northern Ireland?

Abortion is illegal in Northern Ireland except in exceptional cases, mainly where there is a risk to the life

MATERNITY CARE AND INFANT SERVICES

MATERNITY CARE

What services can I access when I am pregnant?

If you are pregnant or planning to have a baby you should contact your GP. Your GP will help you to decide of the mother. (It is legal, however, to travel to another country to seek an abortion).

where and how you want to have your baby and can give you a pregnancy test to confirm you are pregnant.

You are entitled to antenatal examinations from a midwife or from your GP. If any complications you have the right to free help from an obstetrician and you can always request to see an obstetrician if you have any worries.

If you are working you have the right to paid time off for these examinations.

Do I have to pay for maternity services?

No, you are entitled to free maternity services. If you are pregnant you are also entitled to free:

- dental care
- free prescription drugs
- lower optical service charge

INFANT SERVICES

What services will my baby and I receive after giving birth?

The midwife will care for you and your baby up to 28 days after birth. He or she will visit you in your home to check that you and the baby are healthy.

Your baby will have a hearing test in hospital.

You will be given a personal child health record (a red book) which will be used to record how your child is doing and make notes of important development milestones.

Health visitors who are trained community nurses will visit you 10-14 days after your baby is born and will give you support on all areas of health for you and your baby

Will my baby get vaccinated?

Yes, at 8 weeks old, your baby will be given their first vaccination. These are free and given out at the GP practice. This vaccination will protect your baby against Diphtheria, Tetanus and Whooping Cough, Polio, Hib (Meningitis) and Pneumococcal infection.

When are they given their next vaccinations?

- At 3 and 4 months your baby will be given the second and third sets of vaccinations against the illnesses.
- At 12 months your child will be given a vaccine against Hib and a booster against meningitis C.
- When your child is 15 months old, they receive another vaccination called MMR. This vaccination protects your child against another 3 diseases (Measles, Mumps and Rubella). They also receive a booster against pneumococcal infection.

By law all births occurring in Northern Ireland must be registered. You will require proof of the birth for various purposes including claiming child benefit and registering your baby with a doctor.

When must a Birth be registered?

A birth must be registered within 42 days of the date of birth.

What do you need in order to register a Birth?

A Birth Registration form (http://www.groni.gov.uk/index/downloadable_application_forms/birth-registration-form.htm) filled in by the person registering the birth (usually the mother).

Where can a Birth be registered?

With the District Registrar:-

- in the district where the birth took place or
- in the district in which the mother normally lives.

Who can register a Birth?

The principal informant would be the mother or father of the baby - if they are a married couple. However, in the case of a child born to an unmarried couple, the name of the father may only be recorded in the entry of birth if both parents attend and sign the registration together or a declaration of paternity is produced (http://www.groni.gov.uk/index/downloadable_application_forms/gro-declaration-of-paternity.htm). An unmarried father who registers the birth of his child jointly with the child's natural mother, and has his name recorded on the birth registration form, will for children born on or after 15th April 2002, acquire parental responsibilities.

The following people may also register the birth:

- The Grandmother, Grandfather, Uncle or Aunt of the baby who has knowledge of the birth,

- Any person present at the birth,
- Any person having charge of the child,
- The occupier of the premises where the baby was born.

Where is my local District Registrar Office?

District Registrars are based in the council offices. District Registrars are responsible for the registration of all life events (e.g. births, marriages, deaths) in Northern Ireland (see www.groni.gov.uk for details of your District Registrar).

What will the Registrar give you?

- Once the registration is completed, the Registrar will issue the following forms:-
 - One free short birth certificate and an Infant Registration Card HS123 to register with the family doctor and obtain a medical card.
- PLEASE NOTE THAT A BIRTH REGISTRATION CANNOT EASILY BE CHANGED ONCE COMPLETED.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

What sort of birth certificate do I need for my child?

There are 2 forms of a birth certificate – a short form and a long form. The short birth certificate is used for things like enrolling a child in school. For legal and other purposes a long birth certificate is needed.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

There are different health services for children and families (See Maternity and Infant Services) that are free and available to all.

CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 16

What services are children under 16 entitled to?

Children under the age of 16 (or 19 if in full-time education) are entitled to a range of free services, including:

- Free prescription drugs
- Free/reduced price optical services
- Free/reduced price dental care

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

What health services do children in school receive?

School nurses provide a health check for all children in school. This includes vaccinations and immunisations, eye tests, hearing tests, measuring height and weight. Parents are allowed to be present at these tests if they wish.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

What does child development mean?

A child's development from baby to toddler, from child to teenager and from teenager to adult usually follows an expected pattern.

Sometimes this pattern of development is delayed. The delay may be mild or severe.

What do I do if I have concerns about my child's development?

If you have any concerns about your child you can discuss them with your GP or health nurse.

SUPERVISION

Most parents have to spend some time away from their children, whether it's for longer periods like going to work or shorter periods like social activities.

It can be hard to look after your child, and it can sometimes be expensive.

Children rely on adults to protect them and parents are responsible for making sure that their children are happy and well looked after.

There is no set age at which it is legal to leave children home alone. It depends on whether the child is mature enough to cope. Children mature at different ages but the following is a rough guide to when children can stay home alone.

Can I leave my baby home alone?

It is never ok to leave a baby home alone, not even for a few minutes.

Can I leave my young child home alone?

Young children should never be left home alone, not even for a short time. An hour without you or another adult can be lonely and pose safety risks.

Can I leave my older child home alone?

Children under the age of 14 should never be left home alone for more than a very short time.

Can I leave my teenager home alone?

Teenagers over the age of 16 can be left home alone.

What age does my babysitter need to be?

If you need to use a babysitter you should always make sure they are over 16 and you should ask them for 2 references to check they are responsible enough to be left with your children.

CHILD PROTECTION

What do I do if I have a concern about a child's welfare?

If you are concerned about emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect of a child you can contact your trust's gateway service team. They can be contacted during regular office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm) and can also be contacted out side of these hours (see out of hours contacts).

Trust	Contact in regular business hours (Mon-Fri, 09.00-17.00)	Contact out of hours (Mon-Fri, 17.00-09.00, Sat, Sun, Bank & Public Holidays)
Belfast	Telephone: 028 9050 7000 In person: Speak to a Duty Social Worker at 414 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3HY	Telephone: 028 9056 544
Southern	Telephone: 0800 783 7745	Telephone: 028 38334444
Western	Telephone: 028 71314090	Telephone: 028 71345171
South Eastern	Telephone: 0300 1000 300	Telephone: 028 90565444
Northern	Telephone: 03001234 333	Telephone: 028 7965 1020

If you have an immediate concern for the safety of a child you can contact the police by telephoning 999 or 112 (from a mobile).

MALE AND FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

MALE CIRCUMCISION

Can I get my son circumcised?

Male circumcision is not routinely performed on males born in Northern Ireland. However, many people from Jewish, Islamic and African communities seek to ensure that their male children are circumcised.

Male circumcision is not illegal in Northern Ireland but it must be carried out by a trained doctor.

If you would like your male children to be circumcised, it is important that you seek medical advice from your GP who will be able to refer you to a medical service that can carry out the circumcision.

Your doctor should advise you about:

- Routine infant male circumcision not being a recommended procedure.
- The ethical considerations of infant and child rights.
- The risk of complications and potential harm.

The doctor may consider your request if it is religious or cultural.

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

Can I get my daughter circumcised?

No, female circumcision is not an accepted practice in Northern Ireland and anyone found to have performed or arranged for their female child to be circumcised in Northern Ireland can be prosecuted.

SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

For parents who satisfy the residency condition and are not subject to immigration control they may be entitled to receive social welfare benefits like child benefit automatically.

IMMIGRATION CONTROL

What do you mean by immigration control?

You may not be able to get Child Benefit if you are subject to immigration control. For Child Benefit purposes, you are subject to immigration control if the Home Office says your leave to enter or remain in Northern Ireland is on the condition that you do not have recourse to public funds, or if you require leave to enter or remain in the UK but do not have it.

ORDINARY RESIDENCE, PRESENCE AND RIGHT TO RESIDE

What do you mean by ordinary residence?

Ordinary residence is a condition imposed which means that you normally live in Northern Ireland and you intend to remain there.

You are ordinarily resident if:

- If your partner and children have also come to live in Northern Ireland, this may show that you and your family intend to stay and so are ordinarily resident.

- If you have a settled home in Northern Ireland - for example, you have bought or leased a home here, this may show you are ordinarily resident. It does not necessarily mean you are not ordinarily resident if you have not bought or leased a home here - there may be other reasons for this, such as lack of means.
- If you have lived in Northern Ireland for more than 3 years you are accepted as ordinarily resident (but you do not have to live here that long to be ordinarily resident).

What do you mean by presence?

Presence means that you normally have to be physically present in Northern Ireland and have a right to reside to receive benefits.

What do you mean by right to reside?

The following groups have a right to reside in Northern Ireland when claiming Child Benefit:

- All UK nationals and those who have a right to reside in the Common Travel Area (which covers the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

- All EEA workers legally working in the UK
- Third country nationals with indefinite leave to remain in the UK.
- People from the A8 European Union Countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) can claim if they have lived in Northern Ireland for more than 12 months.

CHILD BENEFIT

What is child benefit?

Child Benefit is a monthly payment for each qualified child normally living with you and being supported by you. A qualified child is:

- A child under age 16 or
- A child aged under 19 who is in full time education or
- A child aged 16 or 17 who has left school recently and has registered for work or training with the Training and Employment Agency.

When should I claim child benefit?

You should claim as soon as your child is born or comes to live with you. If you delay, you may lose benefit. You can get a claim pack by contacting the Child Benefit Office on 0845 302 1444.

If your child has just been born, you may receive a claim pack from the hospital if your child was born in the Northern Ireland.

You can also claim child benefit online at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/ch2.pdf>

Where can I get more information?

You can get more information from HM Revenue and Custom's information leaflet available online at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/ch5_notes.pdf

USEFUL CONTACTS & FURTHER INFORMATION

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Address: Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast BT4 3SQ

Phone: (028) 90324431

Website: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/>

Central Service Agency

Address: 2 Franklin Street
Belfast, BT2 8DQ

Phone: (028) 90324431

Website: www.centralservicesagency.n-i.nhs.uk

Family Practitioner Services (028) 9032 4431 and ask for the Department of the Service you require:

Dental or e-mail: dental@csa.n-i.nhs.uk

Medical or e-mail: medical@csa.n-i.nhs.uk

Ophthalmic or e-mail: ophthalmic@csa.n-i.nhs.uk

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Address: Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury Square
Belfast BT2 7DP

Phone: 028) 90500600

Email: information@equalityni.org

Website: www.equalityni.org

Northern Ireland Ombudsman

Address: Freepost BEL 1478
Belfast BT1 6BR

Phone: (0800) 343424 (freephone)

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)

Address: 61, Duncairn Gardens,
Belfast BT15 2GB

Phone: (028) 9087 7777

Website: <http://www.nicva.org/>

On 1 April 2009 the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) replaced four HSS Boards. It will focus on commissioning, resource management and performance management and improvement.

Contact details:

The Chief Executive Health and Social Care Board
Headquarters 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS
Tel: 028 9032 1313

Website: <http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/>

NORTHERN TRUST AREA

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Address: Equity Unit
The Cottage
5, Greenmount Avenue
Ballymena BT43 6DA

Phone: (028) 2563 3745

Northern Health and Social Services Board

Address: County Hall
182, Galgorm Road
5, Greenmount Avenue
Ballymena BT42 1QB

Phone: (028) 2531 1000

Northern Health and Social Services Council

Address: Houston's Mill Site
10A, Buckna Road
5 Greenmount Avenue
Broughshane
Ballymena BT42 4NJ
Phone: (028) 2586 3950

Antrim Area Hospital

Phone: (028) 9442 4000
Textphone: (028) 9442 4242
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open
24 hours a day

Causeway Hospital

Phone: (028) 7032 7032
Textphone: (028) 7034 6188
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open
24 hours a day

Whiteabbey Hospital

Phone: (028) 9086 5181
Opening Hours: 9am – 5pm (Mon – Sun)

SOUTHERN TRUST AREA

Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Address: Equality Assurance Unit
The Bungalow
Lurgan Hospital Site
100 Sloan Street, Lurgan
Co. Armagh BT66 8NX
Phone: (028) 3831 6691

Southern Health and Social Services Board

Address: Tower Hill
Armagh BT61 9DR
Phone: (028) 3741 0041

Southern Health and Social Services Council

Address: Quaker Buildings
Lurgan
Co. Armagh BT66 8BB
Phone: (028) 3834 9900

Craigavon Area Hospital

Phone: (028) 3833 4444
Textphone: (028) 3861 2764
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24
hours a day

Daisy Hill Hospital

Phone: (028) 3083 5000
Textphone: (028) 3083 5081
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24
hours a day



BELFAST TRUST AREA

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Address: Knockbracken Healthcare Park
Saintfield Road
Belfast BT8 8BH
Phone: (0800) 22 88 44 (Freephone)

Eastern Health and Social Services Board

Address: Champion House
12-22, Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BS
Phone: (028) 9032 1313

Eastern Health and Social Services Council

Address: 1st Floor, McKelvey House
25-27, Wellington Place
Belfast BT1 6GQ
Phone: (0800) 917 0200
Textphone: (028) 9032 1285

Royal Victoria Hospital

Phone: (028) 9024 0503
Textphone: (028) 9063 3883
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24
hours a day

Royal Victoria Hospital Eye Casualty

Phone: (028) 9024 0503
Textphone: (028) 9063 3883
Opening Hours: 9am – 3pm (Mon – Fri)

Royal Victoria Hospital Children's Casualty

Phone: (028) 9024 0503
Textphone: (028) 9063 3883
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24
hours a day

Mater Hospital

Phone: (028) 9074 1211
Textphone: (028) 9080 2557
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24
hours a day

Belfast City Hospital

Phone: (028) 9032 9241
Textphone: (028) 9023 9581
Opening Hours: Emergency department is
open 24 hours a day

SOUTH EASTERN TRUST AREA

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Address: Thompson House Hospital
19-21, Magheralave Road
Lisburn
Co. Antrim BT28 3BP
Phone: (028) 9266 9111

Eastern Health and Social Services Board

Address: Champion House
12-22, Linenhall Street
Belfast BT2 8BS
Phone: (028) 9032 1313

Eastern Health and Social Services Council

Address: 1st Floor
McKelvey House
25-27, Wellington Place
Belfast BT1 6GQ
Phone: (0800) 917 0200
Textphone: (028) 9032 1285

Ulster Hospital

Phone: (028) 9056 4875
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24 hours a day

Lagan Valley Hospital

Phone: (028) 9266 5141
Textphone: (028) 9260 3120
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24 hours a day

WESTERN TRUST AREA

Western Health and Social Care Trust

Address: Equality and Human Rights Unit
Tyrone and Fermanagh
Donaghanie Road
Omagh BT79 0NS
Phone: (028) 8283 5278

Western Health and Social Services Board

Address: 15, Gransha Park
Clooney Road
Londonderry BT47 6FN
Phone: (028) 7186 0086

Western Health and Social Services Council

Address: 'Hilltop' Tyrone and Fermanagh
Hospital
Omagh
Co. Tyrone BT79 0NS
Phone: (028) 8225 2555

Erne Hospital

Phone: (028) 6638 200
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24 hours a day

Tyrone County Hospital

Phone: (028) 8283 3100
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24 hours a day

Altnagelvin Hospital

Phone: (028) 7134 0503
Textphone: (028) 7161 1298
Opening Hours: Emergency department is open 24 hours a day

USEFUL LETTERS FOR HEALTH CARE

Letter to GP about Interpreter

Date: _____

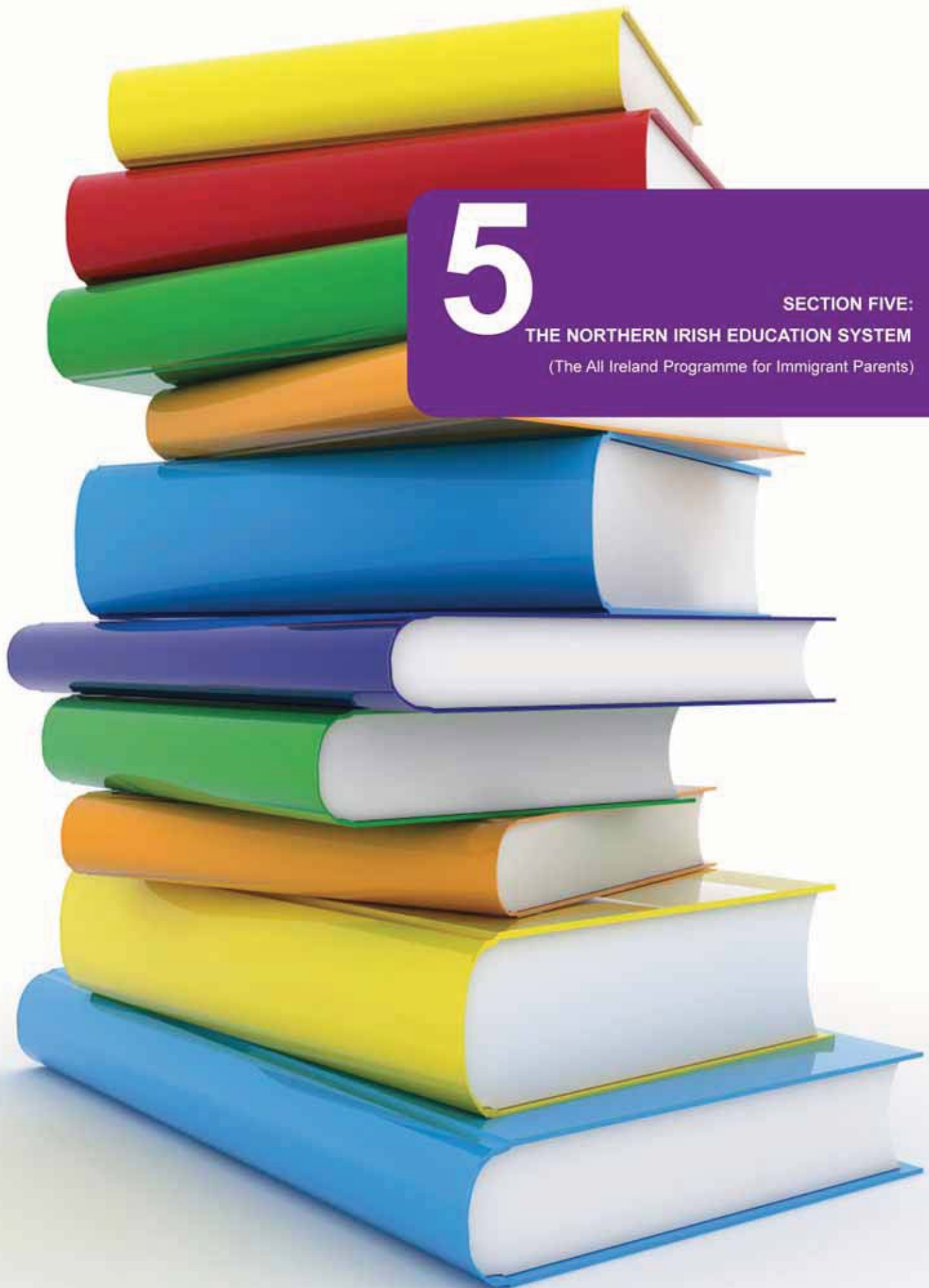
Dear GP,

I have an appointment on _____ at _____ a.m/p.m.

Could you please let me know if you can arrange for an interpreter in _____ to be present.

Signed: _____

(parent/guardian)



5

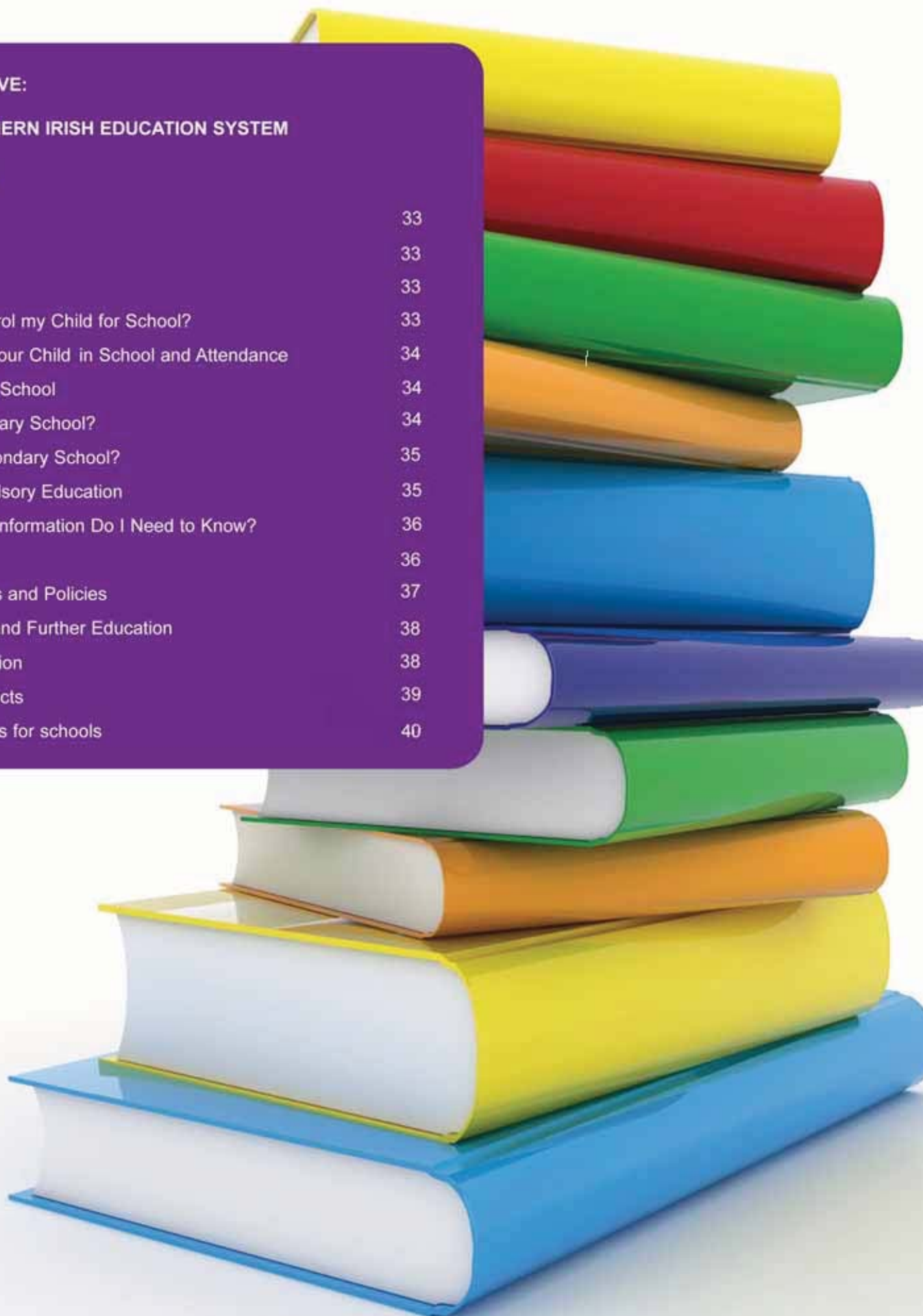
SECTION FIVE:
THE NORTHERN IRISH EDUCATION SYSTEM
(The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents)

SECTION FIVE:

THE NORTHERN IRISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

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KEY WORDS

School
 Schoolbag
 Teacher
 School calendar
 Class
 Principal
 Register
 Uniform

FAST FACTS

Children must go to school between the ages of 4 and 16 (Children start school in September if they have turned 4 by the previous 1st July)

Compulsory education is divided into 4 Key Stages:

Foundation Stage: Covers Years 1 and 2

Key Stage 1: Covers Years 3-4

Key Stage 2: Covers Years 5-7

Key Stage 3: Covers Years 8-10

Key Stage 4: Covers Years 11-12

There is a statutory assessment made of children at age: 8, 11 and 14.

At the age of 11 children transfer from primary school to secondary school. The transfer system is currently changing in Northern Ireland. You can check how your child transfers with the school or with your child's teacher.

At the end of each school year, parents receive a report on how the child is doing in school, in all subjects and in their skills development. The report also advises parents what the main areas for development for the child should be.

WHAT IS PRE-SCHOOL?

Pre-schools are not compulsory in Northern Ireland but every child in Northern Ireland is entitled to go to a pre-school service for one year.

When do children go to pre-school?

The group that pre-school services target are children who are in their final pre-school year – that is children who have turned 3 before or on the 1st of July can start in September.

What is the aim of pre-schools?

The aim of pre-schools is to introduce the children to school life and to create a bridge between the gap of home and school. The children will normally learn structured play and the child will have the opportunity to interact with other children before attending school.

How long does my child go to pre-school for?

Normally your child would go to pre-school five days a week for either 2 hours or for 4 hours.

Note: You are normally only entitled to one free place meaning that your child can either go to a pre-school or to a playgroup for free not to both.

However, the number of free places is limited and it varies from area to area. For more information please contact your local Education and Library Board.

HOW DO I ENROL MY CHILD FOR SCHOOL?

How do I find a primary school for my child?

You can send your child to the local school of your choice, as long as there is a place for them. While most primary schools can enrol all the children who apply, there is no guarantee of a place in the local school.

Each Education and Library Board will have a list of all schools in your local area. The contact details for the Education and Library Boards are contained at the end of this section.

What is the process for enrolling my child for primary school?

To enrol your child, you should complete an application form stating your 3 preferences of schools.

This application form and information on your local schools is available from the Education and Library Board in your area.

When should I enrol my child for school?

The application form must be completed by January of the year you want your child to start in September.

If you send your form in late it will be considered after all forms that arrived on time and you may not get your preferred school.

Does choosing a primary school have implications on their second-level education?

When choosing a primary school, you may also need to know about the admissions policies of post-primary schools. Some post-primary schools give priority to students from certain primary schools.

What class will my child be put in?

Children starting school for the first time will be put in the first year of primary school. If your child has attended school before, for example in another country, the school will take their age and previous education into account.

In this case, the principal will decide on the class with you and the class teacher.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL AND ATTENDANCE

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

What is the role of parents in their child's education in Northern Ireland?

Parents (or guardians) are the child's primary educator. Support from home is vital for your child's development during school.

How can I support my child?

To support your child, you can:

- Show interest in what your child is doing in school.
- Consult with the school on your child's progress.
- Attend parent teacher meetings.
- Talk with the class teacher about any concerns you may have, and
- Praise your child's efforts at every opportunity. Your encouragement means a lot and will motivate your child to continue trying.

What is a parent teacher meeting?

A parent teacher meeting is a meeting with the teacher to discuss your child's progress in school.

ATTENDANCE

What is my role regarding attendance?

As a parent you should make sure that your child attends school every day that school is on. They should not go to school though if they are not fit to attend (i.e. if they are sick).

If your child cannot attend school you should make sure that you let the school know by sending a note letter explaining why your child is not in school.

Can I take my child on holidays during term time?

Taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on. As a result, they may fall behind with school work and lose confidence in their abilities.

What will the school do if my child misses a lot of school?

The law states that parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and that they arrive on time. Parents can be fined up to £1000 for each child who fails to attend regularly. The Education and Library Board can also apply for a Education Supervision Order.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

What different types of schools are there?

The education system in Northern Ireland consists of different types of schools under the control of management committees.

- Controlled Schools – are under the management of the Education and Library Boards and a Board of Governors.
- Maintained Schools - are under the management of the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools and a Board of Governors.
- Integrated Schools - are under the management of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.

Do boys and girls go to the same school?

Single sex schools teach boys and girls separately. Co-educational schools teach boys and girls together.

Who runs the school?

The principal teacher (who is the head teacher) is responsible for running the school. The principal answers to the Board of Governors. The principal can be male or female.

WHAT IS PRIMARY SCHOOL?

How long is primary school?

Primary education consists of seven years divided into three key stages.

- Foundation Stage (P1 and P2)
- Key Stage 1 (P3 and P4)
- Key Stage 2 (P5, P6 and P7)

The three stages cover years 1-7 of compulsory schooling.

What will my child learn in primary school?

The curriculum taught in primary schools tries to give your child a love of learning that will last a lifetime. School is meant to be a pleasant and fun experience.

The curriculum for primary school is set out in 6 areas of learning:

Language and Literacy and Numeracy (reading, writing, maths and English) are the most important. Children will also learn about The Arts, Geography, History, and Science and Technology.

This education also helps children to develop their social skills through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding.

Physical Education is also important and this includes play and physical exercise.

How is my child's learning assessed?

Assessment means checking what a child has learned by testing or observing what the child knows. This is so the teacher can see how the child is making progress, developing a skill or understanding a particular topic. In the early years, assessment is informal, based on observation by you and the child's teacher. In primary school the teacher uses many different ways to assess your child's learning. These include setting tests, tasks, project work and portfolios.

What are standardised tests?

Standardised tests are used to see how children are progressing compared to other children in the country. In years 4-7 children will undertake a statutory assessment in Reading and Numeracy towards the start of the year.

WHAT IS SECONDARY SCHOOL?

How is post-primary education organised?

Compulsory secondary education in Northern Ireland consists of two stages:

- Key Stage 3
- Key Stage 4

KEY STAGE 3 (Years 8-10)

What is Key Stage 3?

Key Stage 3 is the first stage of post primary education. Students start key stage 3 at age 11/12 and complete it at age 13/14. It consists of three years (Year 8, 9 and 10).

What does my child study in Key Stage 3?

Key Stage 3 has a great emphasis on skills development, creativity and enterprise.

The areas of learning are separated into 8 different areas: The Arts, English, Environment and Society, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Physical Education, Science and Technology and Religious Education.

Further information on Key Stage 3 is available from http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/key_stage_3/index.asp

KEY STAGE 4 (Years 11-12)

What is Key Stage 4?

Key Stage 4 is the second and final stage of compulsory primary education. Students start key stage 4 at age 14/15 and finish at 16/17. It consists of two years (Year 11 and 12).

What does my child study in Key Stage 4?

Key Stage 4 has 7 areas of study: The Arts, Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Numeracy, Environment and Society, Science and Technology, Modern Languages and Learning for Life and Work.

At age 14 pupils select which subjects to continue to study for the General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Are there any exams during Key Stage 4?

Yes, compulsory secondary education in Northern Ireland is concluded with a state examination - the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) which is taken in June.

AFTER COMPULSORY EDUCATION

What happens after the GCSE exams?

The GCSE exams mark the end of compulsory education in Northern Ireland. Students who decide to continue on with schooling after compulsory study complete an additional two year cycle which ends with A-Level (Advanced Level) examinations.

A-Level results are the main basis on which places in the further and higher education are based.

What subjects do they study?

Students generally take 3-4 subjects at A-Level which is the examination used to determine entry to further or third level education.

What age do students finish school?

Students who choose to sit A-Levels examinations will finish secondary school at age 18/19.

WHAT OTHER INFORMATION DO I NEED TO KNOW?

THE SCHOOL YEAR

What is the structure of the school year?

A primary school has 3 terms. The first term is from the beginning of September to Mid December (Christmas). The second term is from January to March or April (Easter). The third is from after Easter until the end of June.

A secondary school also has 3 terms. The first two are the same as primary school but the third term finishes at the end of May.

There are also breaks in the middle of terms called half-terms where the children are on holidays for a few days to a week.

How do I know when my child should be off school?

At the start of the school year (or when you enrol your child) the school will give you a calendar of events which will give details of when the school will be closed during the year. Any other days will be notified to you during the year.

THE SCHOOL DAY

How long is the school day?

The school day lasts for a minimum of three hours for children under 8 and four and a half hours for all other children.

The school day last longer in secondary school. You should ask the school for more details on the length of the school day as it varies from school to school. Schools are open from Monday – Friday.

What time does class start?

Classes start between 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. depending on the school. It is very important that your child is on time for school so make sure to ask the school what time classes start.

What breaks does my child get?

There are two breaks during the day. There is a break in the morning (around 11 a.m.) and a lunch break (around 12:30 p.m.)

HOMEWORK

Will my child have to do homework in primary school?

Schools set their own policy in relation to homework. For example, in some schools children from first to sixth

class are given homework each week night. Other schools give a small amount of reading or maths to infant classes.

Will my child have to do homework in secondary school?

Yes, in secondary school students have significantly more homework than in primary school. They will also have to study for examinations.

Homework will usually take between 2-3 hours for a student in secondary school.

How can I help my child with their homework?

If your child does get homework, you should give them space and encouragement to do it. If they need it, offer your help.

Take time to talk with your child about what they do in school each day.

Set aside a quiet time where your child is sitting comfortably at a table and will not be distracted by television or other noise.

Homework time should include time for oral as well as written work.

Oral work (speaking and repeating what they have learned) is particularly helpful in the early years.

Encourage your child to keep their books and copies clean and tidy.

If your child is working on their own, be available to help and show an interest in what they're doing.

Praise your child's efforts whenever you can. Try to be patient with your child.

What if my child is having problems with their homework?

If your child is having ongoing problems with homework discuss this with the teacher.

If your child can't do their homework for any reason, let the teacher know. Write a short note explaining why.

What do I do if my child has a problem with school?

You should first talk to your child. A problem could be with learning or it could be a personal or social one.

If you cannot sort out the problem at home, you should make an appointment to speak to the class teacher. If this doesn't resolve the problem you may need to make an appointment to speak with the principal.

If your child is in secondary school you should make an appointment to speak to the principal or the form teacher if your child has one.

What is supervised study?

Some schools offer supervised study for students in secondary school for a fee.

This is a structured study time where children can do their homework and study after school.

The children are supervised by a qualified teacher or responsible adult.

Ask in your school whether they have supervised study available.

SCHOOL RULES AND POLICIES

What do you mean by school rules and policies?

As mentioned previously, all schools have their own rules and policies in a number of areas including:

- Enrolment or Admission
- Uniform
- Healthy Eating
- Codes of Conduct and behaviour
- Bullying

ENROLMENT OR ADMISSION POLICY

What is the enrolment or admission policy?

The enrolment or admission policy is the rules governing enrolment of children into the school. Schools that cannot enrol all students must have an admission policy. This is set by the Board of Governors of the school. This policy must comply with Northern Ireland's Equal Status Act which means that your child cannot be discriminated against.

UNIFORM

What is the uniform policy?

The majority of schools in Northern Ireland have a uniform policy. This means that all the pupils or students must wear a uniform to school. The school will give you details of what your child must wear to school.

What happens if I don't want my child to wear the uniform for cultural reasons?

If you have a problem with your child wearing the school uniform for cultural reasons, you should discuss this with the principal.

HEALTHY EATING

What is the healthy eating policy?

Many schools have a healthy eating policy. This means that they will have a list of foods that children are allowed to bring to school for their lunch and for their break. Generally sweets, junk foods and fizzy drinks (like coca-cola) are not allowed.

CODES OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

How do schools discipline children?

Teachers praise children when they work hard and produce good work and homework. Praise helps to motivate children.

Each school has to have a code of discipline and parents are given a copy of this. You are responsible for accepting the school code and making sure your children understand and keep to it. You will be asked to sign this when you enrol your child.

The teacher or principal will inform you if your child continually breaks the rules. You will have a chance to discuss the issues with them. They will expect you to make sure that your child's behaviour improves. You should try to sort it out with your child first and involve the class teacher if necessary.

For a serious breach of the school rules, the school could decide as a last resort to suspend a child from the school. This is a rare and serious decision. The school must have tried all other options before deciding to suspend. They will send you notice of the suspension. You can appeal it to the board of governors. As a last resort, you can contact the Children's Law Centre or the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

BULLYING

What are the rules regarding bullying in schools?

Physical pushing, threatening physical abuse and verbal abuse are not acceptable in Northern Irish schools. Bullying sometimes occurs in school and on the way to school. If your child is being bullied by other children or is involved in this type of behaviour, it is a serious matter. No child should have to suffer at the hands of a bully.

What should I do if my child is being bullied?

Do not confront the other child's parents. Talk with the class teacher or the principal about what is happening and try to resolve the problem this way. If you cannot resolve it at school, you may ask the Department of Education to investigate (<http://www.deni.gov.uk/>).

If your child is bullying other children you can:

- Try to find out if this is a temporary response to a change in the child's life (for example a new baby, a bereavement or stress at home).
- Talk to your child and try to get them to see how the other child might feel.
- Stay calm and avoid being aggressive yourself
- Talk to the class teacher. You will find that the teacher wants to help. It is important that you and the teacher take the same approach.

It's worth considering these longer-term steps as well. Bullies often suffer from a lack of confidence. Don't compare your child's achievement with others. Praise them whenever they do something helpful or kind.

THIRD LEVEL AND FURTHER EDUCATION

How is third level education organised?

Third level education is divided into two sections:

- Further education and training
- Higher education and training

The Department for Employment and Learning is responsible for further and higher education in Northern Ireland.

FURTHER EDUCATION

What is further education?

This is education and training which happens after second level but is not part of the third level system.

Who can access further education?

If you are over 16 you can access further education on either a full-time or part time basis.

How many further education colleges are there?

There are a number of area based further education colleges.

Can I get funding for further education?

Yes, you can get funding for further education if you are aged between 16 and 19. You can get an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The EMA is means tested but is a grant of up to £60 per fortnight.

Where can I get more information?

You can get more information on further education from <http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education.htm>

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

What is higher education?

Higher education comprises of all courses run by universities, university colleges of education and institutes of further and higher education, which are substantially funded by the Department for Employment and Learning. There are also private colleges.

How can my child get to higher education?

Access to higher education is based on the results of the A-Level Examinations at the end of Secondary School.

Where can I find more information on higher education?

You can get more information on higher education from www.delni.gov.uk/index/further-and-higher-education.htm

ADULT LANGUAGE CLASSES

How can I find English Classes?

There are many adult language classes run throughout Northern Ireland.

To find information on English Language classes visit your local library or Citizen's Advice Bureau or your local community centre.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Department of Education

Address: Rathgael House
Balloo Road
Bangor BT19 7PR
Phone: (028) 91279279
Email: mail@deni.gov.uk
Website: www.deni.gov.uk

Western Education and Library Board

Address: 1, Hospital Road,
Omagh
County Tyrone BT79 0AW
Phone: (028) 82411411
Email: info@welbni.org
Website: www.welbni.org

Council for the Curriculum Examinations & Assessment

Address: 29 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast BT1 3BG
Phone: (028) 90261200
Email: info@ccea.org.uk
Website: www.ccea.org.uk

North Eastern Education and Library Board

Address: County Hall
182, Galgorm Road
Ballymena BT42 1HN
Phone: (028) 25653333
Website: www.neelb.org.uk

Belfast Education and Library Board

Address: 40 Academy Street
Belfast BT1 2NQ
Phone: (028) 9056 4000
Website: www.belb.org.uk

Southern Education and Library Board

Address: 3, Charlemont Place
The Mall
Armagh BT61 9AX
Phone: (028) 37512200
Email: selb.hq@selb.org
Website: www.selb.org

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Address: Grahamsbridge Road
Dundonald
Belfast BT16 2HS
Phone: (028) 90566266/7
Email: info@seelb.org.uk
Website: www.seelb.org.uk

USEFUL LETTERS FOR SCHOOL

1.) Letter from parent/guardian to the teacher about an absence from school

Date:

Dear Teacher, My child will not be in school on _____ as they have to attend

The GP _____ The Dentist _____ The Health Nurse _____ Other _____

Signed: _____ (parent/guardian)

2.) Letter from parent/guardian to the teacher about early departure from/ late arrival to school.

Date:

Dear Teacher, My child will need to leave At _____ On _____

My child will not be in school Until _____ On _____

Signed: _____ (parent/guardian)



6

SECTION SIX:
RECREATIONAL & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES
(The All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents)

**SECTION SIX:
RECREATIONAL & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**

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FAST FACTS

There are a wide range of activities for families to enjoy in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has a range of cultural, social and sporting activities available.

Northern Ireland has many places to enjoy outdoor activities (weather permitting!).

It is very important for children to play as it facilitates their emotional, mental and physical development.

MAKING TIME FOR YOUR FAMILY

How is a person's day divided?

In broad terms, a person's day can be divided into 5 different 'times'

- **Work time** – This is time spent at work, (paid or voluntary) studying or childcare.
- **Home time** – This is time spent doing house work and washing and eating.
- **Family and Friend Time** – This is time spent with your friends and family.
- **Me Time** – This is time you make for yourself and included time spent relaxing, exercising and sleeping.
- **Quiet Time** – This is the time you have for yourself to think about things.

What about parents?

that you have very little time for yourself, especially after you have looked after your children's needs.

All parents experience stress about not having enough time to spend with their children but there are some easy ways to spend quality time which might include: spending 10 minutes talking to your child about their day; going for a walk; eating together; doing the washing up together and so on.

It is very important, therefore, that you take time to relax and enjoy some kind of recreational activity, either by yourself, with your family or with your friends.

What about children?

Children spend their time a little differently from their parents as they do not have to provide for themselves.

Children need more sleep than an adult and how much sleep depends on their ages.

How do activities help my family?

Enjoying activities as a family is a good opportunity to maintain close relationships with your children and to enjoy being a parent. It also helps your child's emotional, physical and mental development.

Are there any social and recreational activities in Ireland?

Yes, Ireland has many social and recreational activities for people to enjoy. Many of the activities available are either free or do not cost a lot of money.

THE LIBRARY

What services do public libraries offer?

Public libraries in Northern Ireland offer many different services. If you become a member you will be able to get access to:

- Information, books, music, DVDs and more
- Free Internet
- Local events or classes

How do I join the library?

To access the services at the library you must become a member. It is very easy to join a library.

In order to join you can either:

- a) Fill out an online application form or
- b) Fill out an application form in your local library

Whether you fill out an application form on the internet or in the library you must bring proof of your identity and your address with you.

Where can I get more information?

You can get more information from: www.ni-libraries.net or from your local library.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

What cultural activities are there to do in Northern Ireland?

There are many cultural activities available to do throughout Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland has a long cultural history including music, dancing, literature and theatre.

MUSEUMS

Why should I go to a museum with my child?

Museums are a good way to spend time with your children but also to educate them. Many museums in Northern Ireland are free and often have special information for children which makes them accessible to both adults and children.

How many museums are there in Northern Ireland?

There are 4 main museums in Northern Ireland: The Ulster Museum, The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, The Ulster American Folk Park and the Armagh County Museum. More information about museums in Northern Ireland is available from: <http://www.magni.org.uk/>

MUSIC

Is music popular in Northern Ireland?

Yes, music has a very important tradition in Northern Ireland and traditional music is still performed throughout Northern Ireland as well as more modern music by world famous bands.

Are there performances in my area?

Yes, many pubs around Northern Ireland have special evenings or afternoons where traditional bands play. Often these performances or 'gigs' are free.

You must check with the venue whether you can bring your children with you but generally children are welcome until 7.30pm in the evening, although it is up to the pubs to decide whether people under 18 can enter the pub.

Are there any concerts in Northern Ireland?

Northern Ireland is also a popular venue for concerts and most famous singer and bands include dates in Northern Ireland on their world tours. Concerts can be expensive especially if they are in a big venue and are a well-known band. Concerts are usually advertised in national newspapers and online for a few months before the concert.

I like classical music, where can I find performances?

For people who enjoy classical music or opera, there are also many concert halls and other venues that have concerts.

What about music festivals?

There are also many music festivals run throughout Ireland. They welcome families but do not recommend bringing children under 5 as there are no facilities. For people who enjoy classical music or opera, Belfast Waterfront Hall, Grand Opera House and concert halls in other cities have also a range of performances.

THEATRE

Are there any theatres in Northern Ireland?

Yes, Northern Ireland also has many theatres which cater for a range of tastes for different age groups. Many have plays for children and musicals which are family oriented.

FILM

Are there any cinemas in Northern Ireland?

Yes, Northern Ireland has many cinemas and most areas now have access to a cinema that shows films quite quickly after they are released in America or other countries. There are also cinemas that show more art cinema and they will often show films in their original language with subtitles in English.

A good website to check all cultural events that are happening in Northern Ireland is:

<http://www.culturenorthernireland.org>

SPORT AND LEISURE

What sports and leisure activities are there to do?

Northern Ireland has a wealth of sporting activities and a long history of sports and competing at world level in a wide range of sports. There are many sporting facilities for children and also for families to enjoy.

SWIMMING

Swimming has increased in popularity in Northern Ireland in recent years. Although Ireland is an island and the water is very clean, there is little opportunity to swim in the sea (unless you are very brave!) apart from the summer months.

Where can I find my local swimming pool?

Most district councils have at least one public swimming pool and is often a cheap option for family fun. Children are often free and for adults there is a small charge. For a list of swimming pools in your area www.swimmerguide.com is a good guide as it shows all available pools in most countries including Northern Ireland.

SOCCER (FOOTBALL)

Soccer is a very popular sport. Nearly every town throughout Northern Ireland has a local team and a children's team. A lot of people in Northern Ireland support both their local and national clubs but also world teams and teams from the English football championships.

Where can I find my local football club?

The best way to find out what soccer teams are available to play for, your local sports centre should have a list of teams and people to contact.

You can find where your local club is by logging on to: www.irishfa.com, the Irish Football Association for Northern Ireland.

Children can also often get access to a club in or through their school.

GAA

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is the body responsible for 4 sports – two of which are exclusively Irish sports – Football and Hurling.

What is Gaelic football?

Gaelic football is not the same as soccer and has very different rules. It has been compared to a mixture of other sports including rugby, soccer and Australian rules. It is a very fast and also a very popular sport in Ireland.

What is hurling?

Hurling is the fastest field game in the world and is a very dynamic game which again is very popular throughout Ireland. Hurling also has a female game called camogie. Both football and hurling are very popular and most towns will have a local team and children's team.

Where can I find my local club?

You can find out where your local club is by logging on to: <http://www.gaa.ie/page/provinces.html>

WALKING AND HIKING

Walking and hiking are very popular activities in Northern Ireland. Many walking routes are mapped out.

Where can I find a walking route?

There are different routes available on <http://www.geographia.com/northernireland/ukiwalk1.htm>

Walk Northern Ireland are responsible for providing walking routes in Ireland. There are many marked paths. See <http://www.walkni.com/> for more details.

PARKS AND FORESTS

Where can I find my local park or green area?

There are green areas or a park in almost every Northern Irish city and town. The parks offer a safe environment for families to relax and enjoy themselves. They often have playgrounds and picnic or barbecue areas.

There are also a good many forests in Northern Ireland and having a walk or a picnic in the forests is a nice way to spend your recreational time.

The forest service in Northern Ireland has more information on forests and green areas available at <http://www.forestserviceni.gov.uk/>

OTHER SPORTS

What other sports are there in Ireland?

There are many other sports available for families, adults and children throughout Ireland.

Land Sports - other land sports played in Ireland include rugby, basketball, handball, tennis, boxing, martial arts and rounders.

Water Sports - other water sports played in Ireland include surfing, windsurfing, kite surfing, sailing and fishing.

YOUTH CLUBS

What do youth clubs do?

In many areas throughout Northern Ireland there are youth clubs. The youth clubs run activities with an education or recreational element including supervised homework clubs, after schools clubs and games and sports.

Who runs the youth club?

There are adult volunteers or staff who supervise the clubs but often the young people have a say in how they are run.

Who can join a youth club?

The clubs are usually for children aged between 12 and 18. There is a fee to join a club but usually this is low.

Where can I find more information?

The Youth Council for Northern Ireland advises and encourages youth services throughout Northern Ireland. More information on the YCNI is available at <http://www.ycni.org>.

GLOSSARY

The glossary contains words that are used in the text and may require explaining.

SECTION 2

Accessories - In a house are all the additional furniture in a rented house including kettles, fridges, cutlery etc.

Area Code - Are the codes or 2-4 digits that you dial before a number. For example the area code for Belfast is (028) so if you dial a number you dial 028 plus number.

Bereavement - Means dealing with death.

Breach - Means to break (for example a contract).

Credit - When it is to do with mobile phones, credit means that you pre-pay for calls you make by adding money to your credit account on your phone.

Eligible - Means that you meet all the different needs to be able to qualify for something.

Estate Agents - A service that deals with the buying and selling of properties.

Fee - Fees are the money that you pay someone for providing a service. For example the GP might cost £50 to visit each time if you do not qualify for either the medical card or the GP visit card.

Landline - A landline phone is a phone that is not mobile. It is fixed in your home.

Landlord - Is the person who either owns or looks after rented accommodation.

Means Test - Your income and everything you spend will be examined.

Online - On the internet.

SECTION 3

Domestic Violence Officer - is a police officer specially trained to deal with situations of domestic abuse.

PSNI - The Police Service of Northern Ireland. They are also known simply as The Police.

Refuge - A refuge is a safe house where you can live free from violence. You can also bring your children with you.

SECTION 4

Abortion - Means ending a pregnancy.

Accident and Emergency - Is the section of the hospital that treats people in an emergency.

Aural - To do with ears.



Birth Certificate - Is a document which lists the name of the child, where and when they were born and who their parents are. This is an important document and must be kept safe.

Booster - A repeat vaccine given to strengthen your child's defence against a disease.

Charge - Is the money you have to pay at the hospital.

Contraceptive - Are drugs designed to stop women from getting pregnant.

Dental - To do with teeth.



Diagnose - Is to find out what is wrong with someone.

In-Patient Service - Is where you have to stay over night.

Metabolic disorder - are rare genetic diseases that only affects a small number of children.

Miscarriage - When a pregnancy ends by itself.

Optical - To do with eyes.



Out - patient service - Is where you have to come back to the hospital for checks but not stay overnight.

Physical exam - is where the doctor or nurse looks at the body of your child to see if there is anything wrong with them.

Referral - A referral is where your doctor contacts another specialist, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist, and tells them that you need to see them.

Screening programme - the screening programme is where the public health nurse or area medical officer will examine your child to look for diseases and other problems.

Subsidised - Means that the government pays part of the cost. You don't have to pay all of the costs.

Surgery - This is the office of a doctor or a dentist.

Treat - Is to fix the problem or illness.

Time Out - Is an area where you send your child to sit for a certain amount of time if they have misbehaved. This includes a corner or on the stairs. They sit for the same number of minutes as their age. For example if they are 5 then they sit for 5 minutes.

Vaccinations and Immunisations - Are injections given to children to stop them from developing certain childhood illnesses. Vaccines are made from the same germs that cause disease but they are safe to give to your child because the germs are killed or weakened first.

SECTION 5

Community run - This means that the pre-school is controlled by the local community.

Compulsory - Means that children are required by law to attend school.

Education System - Includes all of the levels of education including primary school, post-primary school, third level education, adult and further education.

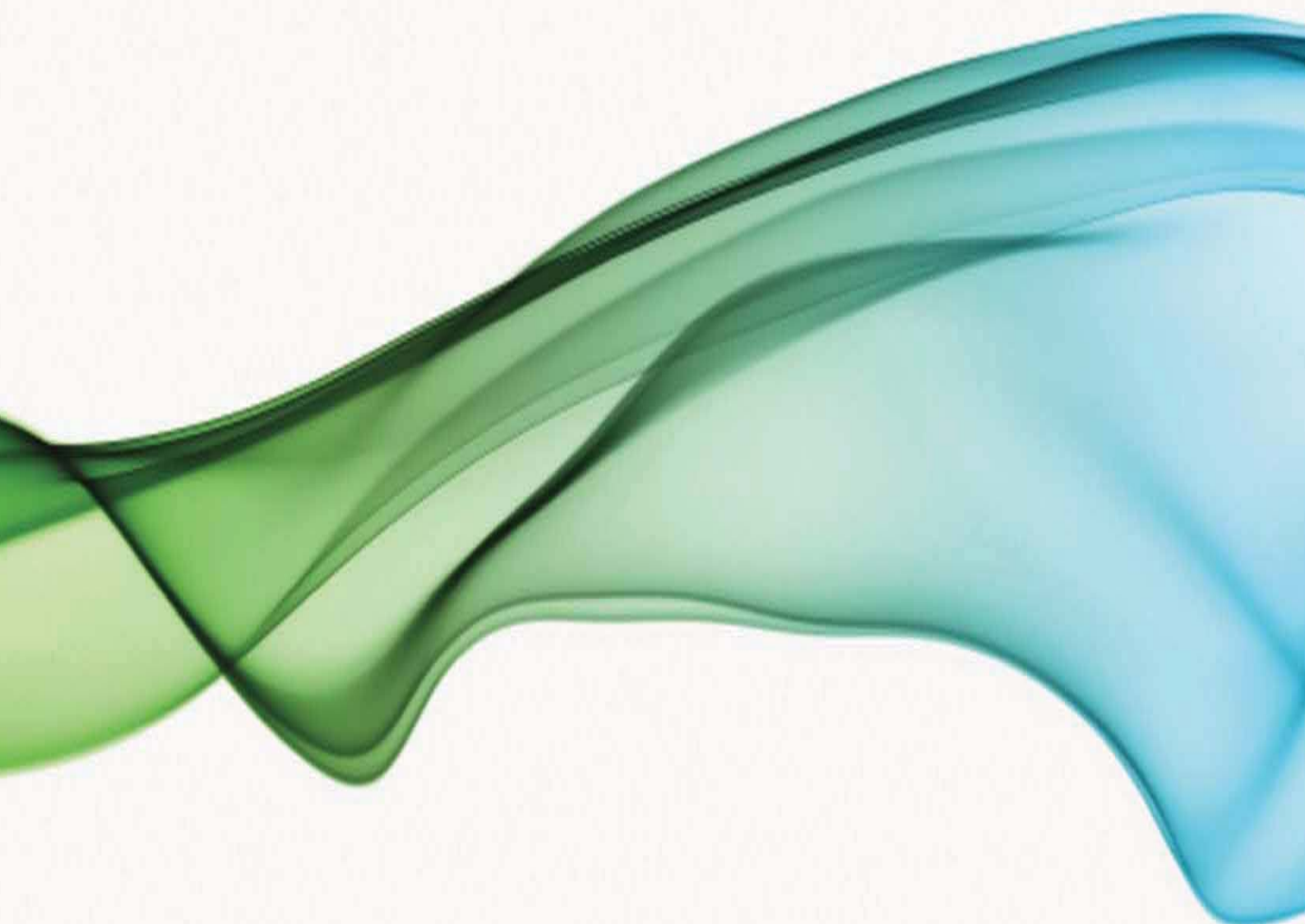
Second Level Education - The majority of students transfer to second level at age 12/13, i.e. when they have finished primary school. This level is also known as post-primary.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCG	Bacillus Calmette-Guérin
EU	European Union
EEA	European Economic Area
FSA	Food Standards Authority
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GP	General Practitioner
HiB	Haemophilus influenzae Type B
HRC	Habitual Residency Condition
FSA	Food Safety Authority
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GP	General Practitioner
HiB	Haemophilus influenzae Type B
HRC	Habitual Residency Condition
ITV	Independent Television
MABS	Money, Advice and Budgeting Service
LSA	Leaving Certificate Applied
MABS	Money, Advice and Budgeting Service
MMR	Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccine
MOT	Ministry of Transport Test
NIE	Northern Ireland Energy
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency
TB	Tuberculosis (BCG Vaccination)
TV	Television
VEC	Vocational Education College
VRT	Vehicle Registration Tax

globe

ALL IRELAND PROGRAMME FOR IMMIGRANT PARENTS



Family Support Agency



Féilmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



AN t-ÁRÁIN OIDEACHAIS
ABUS EOLAÍOCHTA | DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND SCIENCE



Department of
Health, Social Services
and Public Safety
www.hss.gov.ie



The
ATLANTIC
Philanthropies



Barnardo's



Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
An t-Árainn Dlí agus Cúil, Comhionannas agus Athchóiriú na Dlí