

### In 2006 Emigrant Advice will:

- Run its information and advocacy services from its renovated premises in Cathedral Street, Dublin 1 (Emigrant Advice has been based at a temporary premises in Marlborough Street since March 2005).
- Improve communications systems with Irish organisations world wide – (i.e. establish regular communication with Irish organisations in the USA and UK in order to both keep up-to-date with issues of which intending vulnerable emigrants need to be aware and to promote its service for returning Irish) and with immigration organisations in Ireland – (in order to share information and co-operate on policy issues). Also, Emigrant Advice representatives will attend Coalition of Irish Immigration Centres and Federation of Irish Societies conferences in USA and UK respectively thus promoting its work and strengthening relationships.
- Produce and distribute high-quality publications including:
  - 'Thinking of Going to USA?' – up-dated version to be produced.
  - 'Thinking of Going to UK?' – up-dated version to be produced.
  - 'Thinking of Going to Australia?' – up-dated version to be produced.
  - 'Thinking of Going to New Zealand?' – new publication, to be confirmed.
  - 'Thinking of Going to Canada?' – new publication, to be confirmed.
- 'Dos and Don'ts of Emigration' pamphlet to be produced.
- 'Return To Ireland' fact-sheet up-dates to be produced.
- 'Coming to Ireland' for intending immigrants to be produced in Polish and other languages if possible.
- Run its outreach information service.
- For emigrants – use the findings of the recent Emigrant Advice research compiled by Dr. Patricia Walls into current emigration trends from Ireland to the UK in our outreach work with a wide range of voluntary & statutory services in Ireland to underline the fact that Irish people are still emigrating in vulnerable situations and also to bring attention to the service we provide.
- For immigrants – continue outreach service to Polish and Islamic Centres.
- Continue to provide back-up support to information provision organisations nationally and internationally by phone, email and inputs, where requested.

- Improve the Emigrant Advice database and continue to use data to compile social policy documents pushing for policy change.
- Publicise the work of EA widely.
- Up-date the Emigrant Advice mailing list on an on-going basis.

### Funding and Funders:

In 2005 Emigrant Advice was funded by Department of Social and Family Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs through its Irish Abroad Unit, St. Stephens Green Trust, Health Service Executive and Crosscare. Emigrant Advice is supported through FAS through its employment of a part-time administrative assistant through the Community Employment Scheme.

### Emigrant Advice 2005 – at a Glance:

#### In 2005 Emigrant Advice:

- provided information to and advocated on behalf of just under 1,300 people in the process of emigrating from, returning to and immigrating into Ireland;
- supported over 200 agencies in their migration work
- networked with and publicised the work of Emigrant Advice among key voluntary and statutory organisations in Ireland and internationally to encourage referrals;
- commissioned research into trends in continuing emigration to the UK with a plan to further develop its outreach information service for intending emigrants based on the findings;
- set up information clinics for non Irish nationals – for which demand is increasing;
- produced, launched and distributed the 5th edition of 'Returning to Ireland' in a new 'fact sheet' format;
- made submissions to influence key legislative developments regarding migration.

### Staff

Yvonne Fleming, Co-Ordinator  
Joe O'Brien, Information/Outreach Worker  
Paula Lally, Information Worker from July 2005  
Dick Stanton, Information Worker from September 2005  
Anthony Finn, Information Worker up to July 2005  
Karen Mulchinock, Information Worker up to July 2005  
Ian Brennan, Receptionist  
Celine Long, Administrator  
Thelma Mahon, Administrative Assistant

# EmigrantAdvice+

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# Emigrant Advice Annual Report 2005

EmigrantAdvice+

Emigrant Advice is a project of Crosscare.



CROSSCARE

Emigrant Advice is a project of Crosscare, the Dublin Diocese Social Care Agency.

Emigrant Advice is an information and advocacy project based in Dublin City Centre, under the auspices of Crosscare, the Dublin Diocese Social Care Agency. Emigrant Advice was established in 1987 as an up-dated response by the Dublin Diocese to the increased rate of emigration in the 1980s. Its mission statement is

- to provide a quality information, follow up and, where necessary, advocacy service to enable people, involved in a migration decision or experience, to make informed decisions, and
- to effect positive change in migration policy through social policy work, campaigning and networking.

## What we do – in general

Emigrant Advice's work includes:

- Running an information service which is accessible via our 'walk-in' centre in Dublin or by email, post, phone and via our website [www.emigrantadvice.ie](http://www.emigrantadvice.ie)
- Running an advocacy service (e.g. contacting an Irish organisation in the UK to research housing options for an intending Irish emigrant, assisting a returning Irish emigrant to access their social welfare entitlements on their return, supporting a non Irish national to challenge work exploitation through the Employment Appeals Tribunal).
- Producing and distributing high-quality publications on emigration, return migration and immigration.
- Running an outreach information service in a bid to reach the most vulnerable intending and returning emigrants and immigrants.
- Providing back-up support to information provision organisations nationally and internationally by phone, email and training inputs, where requested.
- Inputting all client contacts into a database and using data to compile social policy documents pushing for policy change. Policy work is vital as in much of our daily work we see that policies and lack of policies cause substantial problems for our clients.

## What we did in 2005

**Working with people planning to emigrate**

In 2005 EA worked with 492 people with information needs relating to emigration. Most of these queries related to DV Lottery to the USA and skilled migration visas to Australia. Approx. 300 of these contacts were made in October through the 'Working Down Under Expo' at the RDS, Dublin where we provided pre-departure information to people thinking about emigrating to Australia. The rest were general queries relating to emigration. In 2005 Emigrant Advice conducted research on recent vulnerable Irish emigrants to the UK in relation to their profile, experiences and pre-departure solutions. The aim of the research was to identify means of effectively targeting intending vulnerable emigrants in Ireland through our pre-departure information and advocacy service. This research will be published in early 2006. The following is an excerpt from a case study from the research:

### Case study – emigration\*

Michael is a 25 year old who moved from Cork to London in Feb. '04. He moved as he had been involved in some trouble in his locality, he had an addiction problem and his father had recently died. Michael left with a week's wages and no contacts. He stayed in a backpackers' hostel for a week and then became homeless as he ran out of money and was unable to access benefits without a national insurance number. During this time he slept rough and used day centres. Finally, after 4 months he got a national insurance number and could access hostel accommodation. He stayed in a few central London hostels for single homeless people. Finally Michael got a place in a shared house with other young Irish people. He achieved this after about a year of upheaval on coming to the UK. Michael met others who developed drug and mental health problems as a result of being in hostels: 'It only takes a month or two for people to fall into the wrong crowd you don't want to be isolated.' Michael now has benefits, secure housing and access to training and possible employment. He has encountered problems getting a bank account due to his inadequate documentation. He feels now that he is in a better position to improve his life. Although his family misses him, he still felt that there was nothing for him in Ireland and possibilities available in the UK.

\*actual names and details have been changed in all case studies

In 2005 Emigrant Advice's outreach service aimed to make contact with vulnerable people like Michael in a variety of ways:

- networked with a variety of public and voluntary services in Ireland who have contact with Emigrant Advice's target group e.g.: Probation services, Youthreaches and Youth Information Service, Traveller organisations and the Prison service.
- raised the issue of vulnerable intending emigrants in publications such as the Combat Poverty Agency magazine, the INOU Bulletin and the Irish Youth Work Scene magazine.
- linked in directly with services such as the Ana Liffey Drug Project and Peter McVerry's homeless services and made direct inputs to potential intending emigrants in vulnerable situations.

### Working with people immigrating into Ireland

625 people with information needs relating to immigration contacted Emigrant Advice in 2005. 137 of these non Irish nationals contacted Emigrant Advice through its outreach information service based in the Polish Centre and 104 of the total number contacted us through our information and advocacy clinics based in the Islamic Centre in Clonskeagh, Dublin. Below is a breakdown of the queries of the 625 people.

Nature of query	% of total queries
Work Exploitation/Employment Rights	36%
Work Permit	15%
Social and Economic Rights	12%
Change of Status	8%
IBC Residency	11%
Family Reunification	8%
Leave to Remain	5%
Student Visa	2%
Work Authorisation	2%
Working Visa	1%

Where necessary, Emigrant Advice works with non-Irish nationals to address their problems through the Employment Appeals Tribunal, the Rights Commissioner among other means.

### Case studies – immigration\*

Hans is a South African national who was granted refugee status in Ireland. Hans was harassed in his job to such an extent that he was forced to terminate his employment in Ireland. Emigrant Advice investigated this case and determined that Hans had a viable case for unfair constructive dismissal. Accordingly, Emigrant Advice initiated a case before the Employment Appeals Tribunal. However, before the case could be heard, Hans and the employer entered into a settlement agreement negotiated by Emigrant Advice giving Hans a cash settlement and letter of recommendation.

Riaz came to Ireland from India three years ago. Initially she had a work permit, however, when she was terminated from her post, she lost the permit. Riaz came to Emigrant Advice where it was clarified she was not only was the victim of an unfair dismissal but there was a potential immigrant trafficking case. A complaint was filed with the Employment Appeals Tribunal concerning the unfair dismissal and the authorities were notified regarding the potential trafficking case. Due to the fact that Riaz was a potential witness in the trafficking case she was put back into status so that she could remain in the State. The unfair dismissal case is pending and the trafficking matter is still under investigation.

### Working with Irish people returning to Ireland

In 2005 Emigrant Advice worked with 178 people with information needs relating to return migration. Most of these queries were made by phone, letter and email from people living abroad planning their return. Most frequent queries are in relation to Habitual residence condition, social welfare entitlements, transfer of benefits and accommodation.

In 2005 Emigrant Advice completed its new version of 'Returning to Ireland'. Launched in Dublin and London by Minister Seamus Brennan, Minister of Social Affairs, this publication is in 'fact sheet' format so information given to clients is specific to their needs and fact sheets can be up-dated when their content changes, e.g. after the December '05 budget a number of Returning to Ireland fact sheets required up-dating. With 20,000 Irish people returning to Ireland annually (CSO) and a prediction that this figure will increase, the up-dating and distribution of this publication is key.

### Case studies – return migration\*

John, who was born on Achill Island, emigrated to the United States in 1956 when he was 19 years old to work on building sites in Cleveland, Ohio. During the intervening years he returned home only once to attend his mother's funeral. Now in ill health, John told his sister (based in Ireland) that he wanted to return home. John's sister contacted Emigrant Advice saying her brother could live with her in Castlebar but they did not have sufficient funds to pay for both this airfare and the shipment of his personal effects. Emigrant Advice forwarded information on Irish societies with branches in the Cleveland area that aided Irish immigrants there to John's sister and supported her to draft requests for assistance. As a result, John received several small grants sufficient to finance his return home.

Brid, a native of Co. Louth, moved to the UK in 1966 when she was 20 years old. Settling in London, she worked as nurse and married an English man. Over the years, Brid returned home from time to time to visit her family. Brid did not have any children and her husband died in 2001. By 2005, when Brid decided to return home, all of her family members in Co. Louth had either died or migrated. Brid contacted Emigrant Advice because, though she wanted to return to Co. Louth, she had several concerns. While she had some funds to support herself, she needed some welfare assistance. Brid was also concerned about loneliness since she no longer had any friends or relatives in Louth. Emigrant Advice advised Brid on her social welfare entitlements, how to access them and on various social activities that are available for older people in the Louth area. After Brid moved back home she called into Emigrant Advice to report that she had 'settled in' and had made friends in Louth while participating in several of the activities she had learned of through Emigrant Advice.

### Supporting agencies in their migration work

In 2005 Emigrant Advice supported 218 agencies to resolve migration queries with their clients. These figures do not reflect the frequency or detail of queries with each of these people and agencies.

### Case studies – working with agencies\*

Project Irish Outreach based in the Aisling Centre, NY contacted Emigrant Advice (EA) in relation to an Irish woman, Joan. Joan's husband died suddenly in NY where they lived for 17 years. Joan has 3 children aged 15, 11 and 9 years. She returned to Ireland to bury her husband, returned back to the USA to sort out personal and financial matters and plans to return to Ireland presently. While Joan was home in Ireland for the funeral, a family friend who worked in a local authority helped her with applications for welfare payments and accommodation. Project Irish Outreach contacted EA to find out if there was anything else which could be done to assist Joan to prepare for her return. EA made contact with Joan's local authority contact to find out exactly what had been done to date. Joan's applications for One Parent Family payment and Local Authority housing were being processed. Joan's contact advised EA that a letter from Project Irish Outreach stating that Joan did not own a property in the USA would help Joan's 'Habitual Residence Condition' application. EA followed up on this matter with Project Irish Outreach. At the time of writing Joan had not yet returned to Ireland. However, Joan plans to link in with EA for further support on her return.

A Citizens Information Centre (CIC) in Ireland contacted EA on behalf of a client who wanted to study in the USA on an F1 Academic Study visa, but had been refused by the USA Embassy. The client had been to the USA before on a 90-day visa waiver. He wanted to return there now for both study and personal reasons. EA contacted the USA Embassy on his behalf to ascertain why his visa application was refused. The USA Embassy was not satisfied that he was in fact going to study not work as he had not given proof of his college place and had made frequent visits to the USA in the past. EA explained to the CIC worker that the client would have to re-apply, pay another fee and go through another interview. Later, the client contacted the CIC and told her that he had been successful in securing a Visa to Study in the US.

### Social policy work

In '05 we made submissions to the 'Immigration & Residency Bill', the 'Employment Permits Bill', the 'National Social Inclusion Consultation Process' and the 'Budget'. Emigrant Advice is an active member of the Emigrant Advice Network, Integrating Ireland and the NCCRI Migration sub-group, among other bodies.