

Crosscare Migrant Project

is a project of Crosscare, the social support agency of the Dublin Archdiocese. Crosscare has supported Irish emigrants for over 70 years.

We provide a direct information & advocacy service to intending and returning emigrants, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

We also undertake policy & research and provide training & capacity building support for Irish organisations overseas and organisations in Ireland working with emigrants.



Challenges for returning emigrants



Immigration & residency permission for family members

Waiting times for visa pre-clearance are between 6 – 12 months (*only relevant for visa-required nationals*). Spouses can register with Immigration immediately on arrival. De facto partners must make a written application after arrival and there are 6 – 12 month waiting periods during which applicants cannot work or travel. This is posing a barrier to return as people are worried about the financial and other implications of the delay.



Solutions:

- Reduce processing times of all applications to 3 months
- Facilitate pre-entry applications for de facto partners OR introduce a bridging permission for the application processing period



Homelessness and emergency supports for crisis returnees

Emigrants returning home in crisis cannot always access homeless or other support services with ease. This includes those who are deported and those who are assisted to return by Consular services, including those returning from conflict zones, fleeing domestic violence situations or with serious health needs.

Solutions:



- Include returning emigrants as a recognised group in homeless service provision policies
- Establish a mechanism for pre-arranged emergency supports for emigrants returning in crisis

Emerging issues

Our Irish Abroad Networking Project stems from the Global Irish Diaspora Strategy to foster stronger connections and collaboration amongst Emigrant Support Programme-funded organisations worldwide. In 2016 we undertook 6 overseas trips and met with over 65 Irish emigrant organisations in the UK, USA, Australia, Canada and Ireland.

We are currently undertaking a survey of emigrants who have returned in the last 2 years to identify what their concerns were before returning, and what their experiences were in the period after returning.

Emerging themes from our survey and our work with Irish support organisations overseas include:



→ **Mental Health:** recent Irish emigrants face challenges relating to their mental health and would benefit from culturally sensitive support from Ireland. This is mirrored in the experience of returnees but is not a recognised issue

→ **Older Irish Emigrants:** there is an emergence of older isolated Irish emigrants in the USA in particular who would benefit from greater access to nursing home care in Ireland



→ **Access to social welfare support:** There is some misinformation among Irish emigrants about their ability to access social welfare support upon return to Ireland, with many unaware that there are provisions for returning Irish emigrants 'resuming their residence' in Ireland. While some returning emigrants do encounter difficulties with the Habitual Residence Condition, this is primarily due to *implementation at a local level* as opposed to a lack of entitlement



→ **Coming home:** There is increased interest in returning to Ireland from recent Irish emigrants, with family as the main motivation for coming home. Practical concerns include:

- Securing employment
- Car insurance and driving licences
- Health insurance and access to the health system
- Relocation costs
- Affordable childcare and housing

However, many are not prepared for the emotional impact of their return and would benefit from supports in Ireland. In some cases, recent Irish emigrants who left during the recession are also emigrating between countries (for example, from Australia to Canada) rather than returning home.