

Residency information for de facto partners of Irish citizens

Crosscare Migrant Project

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Introduction

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet provides information for non-EEA de facto partners of Irish citizens who are looking for residency permission from the Irish immigration services.

Who is considered a de facto partner?

For immigration purposes you may be considered as the de facto partner of an Irish citizen, opposite or same sex, if:

- you have a mutual commitment to a shared life to the exclusion of all others, akin to a marriage or civil partnership in *practice* though not in law
- your relationship is genuine and continuing
- you and your Irish de facto partner live together or do not live separately and apart on a permanent basis

You must be able to show that you have been living together with your Irish de facto partner for at least two full years before making your application.

What are the steps for applying for residency based on being the de facto partner of an Irish citizen?

- 1) The first step is entering Ireland (if you do not already live here)
- 2) The second step is registering with the Garda National Immigration Bureau
- 3) The third step is applying for residency based on your relationship. You should apply **in writing** to:
De Facto Partner Residence Permission Application,
Residence Division Unit 1
Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service
13/14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2

As an Irish citizen, do I have a legal entitlement to have my non-EEA family members join me in Ireland?

No, there is no automatic entitlement under Irish law for an Irish citizen to have their non-EEA de facto partner to join them in Ireland. If the non-EEA person is already resident in Ireland on a different immigration status, there is also no legal entitlement to residency based on de facto partnership with an Irish citizen. However, applications for residency based on a de facto relationship with an Irish citizen can be granted provided certain conditions are fulfilled. These conditions are explained in this factsheet.

Detailed information on applying for residency in Ireland as the de facto partner of an Irish citizen can also be found at www.inis.gov.ie

A) What do I need to do before coming to Ireland?

To begin with, you should check if you need a visa to enter Ireland. This will depend on whether you are a citizen of a non- visa required country or a citizen of a visa- required country.

Use the following link to find out if you require a visa to enter Ireland:

www.dfa.ie/travel/visas/visas-for-ireland/

I don't need a visa:

If you do not need an entry visa for Ireland then you do not have to make any official application before arriving. You will however be subject to immigration control on your arrival in Ireland.

You should inform the Immigration officer at the airport/point of entry into Ireland of your intention to apply for residency based on your de facto partnership with an Irish citizen.

You should bring documentation providing a full account of your relationship history and proof of your finances with you. Dated documentary evidence of having lived together for at least two years will be required. If your Irish de facto partner is accompanying you they should go with you to the non-EU passport control/immigration counter. The Immigration Officer at the airport usually issues a temporary entrance clearance stamp in your passport. **Continue to page 10 for the next steps.**

I need a visa

If you are visa required you will need to apply for a visa to enter Ireland. This can only be done from abroad.

How do I apply for this visa?

All visa applications for Ireland are made online. The online form can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Join%20Family>

The type of visa you should apply for is a **long stay, single- entry (D) visa**.

The third question on the online visa application asks the reason for your travel to Ireland. You should select the **Join Family (Irish nat.)(de facto partner)** option. It is important to make clear that the purpose of your visa application is to join your Irish de facto partner in Ireland.

When applying for this type of visa you do not need to fill in the proposed date for leaving Ireland only the proposed entry date.

If you are in Ireland on a C (tourist) visa an application based on being the de facto partner of an Irish citizen will not be accepted.

Where do I send my Visa Application?

Once you have completed your online application form, this should be printed out and there is a declaration that you should sign and date. This application form will give you information on where your application should be sent. This is usually the nearest Embassy or Consulate to where you are currently resident. **The Embassy/Consulate must receive this form and supporting documentation within 30 days of submitting the online application.**

The online application form will generate your visa reference number which you can use to check the progress of your application. Visa decisions are published on the INIS website. You can check this here: www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Visa%20Decisions

Ireland does not have Embassies/ Consulates in all countries and so the visa application may need to be sent to an Embassy in another country or to the visa office in Ireland. It is useful to also check the website of the Embassy you are sending your visa application to as they may have some specific requirements/guidelines.

Ireland uses Visa Processing Centres (VFS Global) to process visa applications from a number of locations- currently China, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan and Peru. These centres have additional requirements and will require you to make an appointment and present in person to the nearest VFS processing centre to submit your application and documents. Biometrics may also be required. Further information can be found via the following link: www.vfsglobalirelandvisa.com/

What documents do I need to submit along with my visa application?

You should provide documents to show your identity

- Fully completed and signed application form
- Two passport photographs not more than six months old signed and dated with the visa reference number printed on the back
- Your original passport in date for at least twelve months
- Full photocopies of any old/expired passports
- Full photocopy of your de facto partner's Irish passport
- If your Irish de facto partner is resident in a country other than Ireland at the time of application you should provide a clear copy of their passport showing evidence of their residency in the country in which they are living
- Your civil partnership/ registered partnership certificate (if applicable)

You should provide documents to show your relationship history including at least two years cohabitation. This can include:

- A history of your relationship including how and when you met each other and when you began your relationship
- Dated documentary evidence of living together continuously over a period of two years. For example:
 - Official letters – e.g., letters from Revenue or other government services
 - Utility bills to the same address in both names (or different bills in each name)
 - Joint tenancy agreements
- Dated evidence of financial inter-dependence on each other. For example:
 - Money transfer receipts
 - Joint bank or savings accounts
 - Joint purchases, joint assets or loans
 - A six month bank statements for you and for your partner
- Evidence of your relationship. These can include letters, emails, phone records, phone contact, screenshots of facebook, skype records, Viber or WhatsApp records to cover a period of at least two years
- Evidence of time you have spent together as a couple including dated photographs, photographs with family and friends, air tickets, hotel bookings, wedding invitations and so on
- If you and your Irish de facto partner intend to marry in Ireland you should provide details of when and where the marriage will take place- this would be outlined on documents from the Registrar's office

You should provide documents to show your dependency as a couple:

- Documents to show any other sources of income you have, your living costs and any other family members living in your country of current residence
- Any documents relating to any health issue if relevant

You should provide documents to show your finances:

The INIS guideline policy for family reunification states the following:

An Irish citizen, in order to sponsor an immediate family member, must not have been totally or predominantly reliant on benefits from the Irish State for a continuous period in excess of 2 years immediately prior to the application and must over the three year period prior to application have earned a cumulative gross income over and above any State benefits of not less than €40k.

The documents you can provide to demonstrate you and your Irish de facto partner's finances will depend on whether your Irish partner is living in Ireland or living outside of Ireland:

If your Irish de facto partner is living in Ireland:

- P60s for the three years immediately prior to your application
- Three recent pay slips
- A letter from employer stating employment, duration of employment and current salary level/ employment contract
- A detailed statement of bank accounts covering a six month period immediately prior to your application for you and for your Irish de facto partner

If your Irish de facto partner is living outside of Ireland:

- Evidence of employment in your country of residence
- A letter from employer stating employment, duration of employment and salary level
- Recent pay slips
- A detailed statement of bank accounts covering a six month period for you and your Irish de facto partner
- Evidence that you and your Irish de facto partner can financially support yourselves in Ireland

You should include supporting letters of application and invitation:

- These documents should be supported by a signed letter of application from you including:
 - Your full contact details
 - Outlining your reasons for coming to Ireland
 - A signed letter of invitation from your de facto partner outlining their circumstances and inviting you to join them in Ireland.

What if we have Non-EEA children who we wish to join us in Ireland?

You will need to apply for an individual visa for each Non-EEA family member. If your visas are granted your children will not be required to register their residency in Ireland with the GNIB until they turn sixteen. For each child under 18 you will need to include the following documents with the visa application:

- Birth certificate or adoption order
- In the case of a child from a previous marriage or relationship, evidence that you have been given full custody and access rights to your child i.e. a court order
- In the case of a child from a previous marriage or relationship, where the other parent has some custody or access rights, a sworn affidavit by that parent consenting to your child being removed from their home country and a copy of the passport bio page of the other parent clearly showing their signature.

How long will it take to process my application?

The guideline processing time is **6 months**.

Is there anything else I need to know?

- If you submit a document that is not in English, it must be accompanied by a full translation. Each translated document must contain: confirmation from the translator that it is an accurate translation of the original document, the date of the translation, the translator's full name and signature and the translators contact details.
- You do not need to provide evidence of medical insurance with your application. However, the Visa Officer may request it before making a decision on your application.
- If you have ever been refused a visa in the past for any country you must provide details- the original letter issued to you by the authorities of that country should be provided with your application. Non-disclosure of previous visa refusals may result in your visa application being refused.

What if my visa application is refused?

If your visa application is refused you may appeal this decision within two months of the date of the refusal letter. If your visa application is refused you will receive a letter outlining the reasons for refusal. Your appeal should address these reasons and provide extra supporting documents if possible. Your visa refusal letter will state where your appeal should be sent. Further information can be found here:

www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Visa%20Appeals

B) What do I need to do after I arrive in Ireland?

After you arrive in Ireland you need to make a written application for residency on the basis of your relationship with an Irish national to the INIS at the following address:

De Facto Partner Residence Permission Application
Residence Division- Unit 1
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
13-14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2

How do I make this application?

There is no application form to make your application. There are important elements to include in your application. Crosscare Migrant Project recommends writing a cover letter requesting Stamp 4 residency. This type of residency will entitle you to live and work in Ireland without an employment permit.

What information should this cover letter include?

This cover letter should include a history of your relationship **showing that you have been living together for at least two years**. You should include details of how and when you met each other and when your relationship began. Details of your current circumstances, finances and employment should also be included. Some useful points to consider when writing this application include:

- **You are required to provide dated documentary evidence that you have been living together for at least two years** immediately prior to the date of the application
- If you are not living together at the time of the application you must show that there are 'compelling humanitarian reasons' why you are not living together
- For the purposes of demonstrating your relationship for this application it is not sufficient to only have visited your partner during the two year period

- You and your Irish partner must be living in Ireland or intend to live in Ireland, and you must intend to live together permanently
- You and your Irish partner must be able to support yourselves and your dependents without any help from public funds/social welfare: The INIS guideline policy for family reunification states the following:

An Irish citizen, in order to sponsor an immediate family member, must not have been totally or predominantly reliant on benefits from the Irish State for a continuous period in excess of 2 years immediately prior to the application and must over the three year period prior to application have earned a cumulative gross income over and above any State benefits of not less than €40k.

- If you and your Irish partner were in a relationship before you turned 18 years old, this period of time will not be counted as part of your two year relationship

What documents should I include with this application?

You should provide documents to show your identity

- Full photocopy of your national passport
- Full copy of your Irish de facto partner's Irish passport
- Full photocopies of any old/expired passports
- Your civil partnership/ registered partnership certificate (if applicable)
- A police clearance from every country you have lived in over the last 5 years

You should provide documents to show your relationship history including at least two years cohabitation. This can include:

- Dated documentary evidence of living together continuously over a period of two years e.g. official/revenue letters, utility bills, joint tenancy agreements. You should provide all of your bills since you started living together, and this should cover a period of at least two years. If you cannot provide utility bills in both your names you should explain why this is the case

- Dated evidence of financial inter-dependence on each other e.g. transfer receipts, joint accounts, joint purchases, joint assets or loans
- A six month bank statements for you and for your partner
- Evidence of your relationship: this could be letters, emails, phone records, phone contact, screenshots of facebook, skype records, Viber or WhatsApp records to cover a period of at least two years
- Evidence of time you have spent together as a couple including dated photographs. These photos can be from events and parties you attended together, holidays you took together, with other family members or with friends. The photos should be from the start of your relationship until the present day.
- Letters from your friends and family regarding your relationship
- Copies of flight details/tickets from trips you have taken together
- Cards you have given to each other on special occasions
- Party/wedding invitations you have received as a couple
- Any other documentation to prove you are living together and have been together as a couple for at least 2 years.

You should provide documents to show your dependency as a couple:

- Documents to show any other sources of income you have, your living costs and any other family members living in your country of current residence
- Any documents relating to any health issue if relevant

You should provide documents to show your finances:

The INIS guideline policy for family reunification states the following:

An Irish citizen, in order to sponsor an immediate family member, must not have been totally or predominantly reliant on benefits from the Irish State for a continuous period in excess of 2 years immediately prior to the application and must over the three year period prior to application have earned a cumulative gross income over and above any State benefits of not less than €40k.

The documents you can provide to demonstrate you and your Irish de facto partner's finances will depend on whether your Irish partner is living in Ireland or living outside of Ireland:

- A six month bank statement for you and for your Irish de facto partner. If you have a joint bank account you should include a recent statement as well. The bank statement should show shared living expenses, for example proof of income from wages coming into the account and direct debit payment for utility bills
- Proof of employment for you and your Irish de facto partner for the three years immediately prior to your application
- Three recent pay slips
- A letter from you/ your partner's employer stating your employment, the duration of your employment and current salary level/ employment contract
- Proof of medical insurance cover

Will I be given temporary permission while my application is being processed?

No, you will not be provided with a temporary stamp during this time. While you are waiting for your application to be processed you will not be entitled to work.

How long will it take for the application to be processed?

The **guideline processing time for these applications is 6 months.**

What immigration permission will I receive?

If your application is successful INIS will issue you with a letter granting you your permission and outlining the conditions of your residency. One of the conditions is that you register with GNIB. You and your Irish de facto partner should attend with this letter, your passports and proof of joint address as soon as possible to GNIB to register your permission. The immigration permission granted to you should be a Stamp 4 which allows you to live and work in Ireland without the need for an employment permit.

C) How do I renew my residency in Ireland?

Your stamp 4 permission will usually be valid for a one year. In order to stay in Ireland, you will need to periodically renew this permission before it expires.

My residency is due for renewal. What do I need to do?

You should always ensure that your residency status is kept up to date.

If you are living in Dublin you should go with your Irish de facto partner to the GNIB offices located at 13/14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2

If you are living outside of Dublin you should go with your Irish de facto partner to the local Garda District Headquarters where there will be an Immigration Officer.

You should bring with you your original passports, proof of your joint address and the letter from INIS granting your permission. It is important to check this letter as it will state how and when you should renew your residency permission based on your Irish de facto partner.

My residency is due for renewal. My circumstances have changed:

What should I do if my relationship with my Irish de facto partner has broken down?

You will need to inform the local Immigration Officer if you are separated from your Irish de facto partner. They may tell you to write to the De Facto Partner Residence Permission at INIS to request renewal of your Stamp 4.

There is no entitlement to retain your residency in cases of separation from your Irish de facto partner. In this situation each application for residency renewal is dealt with on a case by case basis. You should provide details outlining your circumstances.

You should outline the circumstances surrounding your separation in order for the renewal of your registration/permission to remain in the State to be considered. You should include copies of your national passport containing your registration stamp and GNIB card as well as any other relevant documentation.

What should I do if my Irish de facto partner has died?

You will need to inform your local Immigration Officer of your de facto partner's death. You may be directed to apply in writing for renewal of your Stamp 4 to the De Facto Partner Residence Permission or to General Immigration Division at INIS.

I am in an abusive relationship. I am worried about my residency which is due for renewal. What should I do?

You can contact a support organisation for people in violent or abusive relationships. If you are a woman you can contact your local women's domestic service – for a full list of women's domestic violence support organisations see: www.safeireland.ie. If you are a man you can contact Amen. *See Appendix 1 – Contact Organisations.*

A domestic violence support organisation will provide you with practical and emotional support, information and advocacy.

You can report any physical or sexual attacks by your partner to the Gardaí (police) and/or seek a civil protection order from the courts. A domestic violence support organisation can also give you information on this.

If you have been physically hurt you should go to a doctor or hospital to ensure your injuries are treated and documented.

You will need to inform the local Immigration Officer of the situation. You may be required to make a written application to De Facto Partner Residence Permission Application section of the INIS outlining your circumstances and requesting independent residency status.

If you have experienced domestic abuse, bereavement or a separation and need help to renew your immigration permission, please feel free to call us on 01 873 2844 or email migrantproject@crosscare.ie. Our service is confidential and free and we will be able to meet or speak with you and help you apply to the Department of Justice for renewal.

Useful Contact Organisations

Crosscare Migrant Project

1 Cathedral Street
Dublin 1
Tel: +353 1 873 2844
Fax: +353 1 872 7002
Email: migrantproject@crosscare.ie
Web: www.migrantproject.ie

Garda National Immigration Bureau

13/14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2
Tel: +353 1 666 9100
Email: gnib_dv@garda.ie
Web: www.garda.ie

Visa Office

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service
13-14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2
Email: visamail@justice.ie

Amen

St. Anne's Resource Centre
Railway Street
Navan
Co. Meath
Tel: +353 4 69023718
Email: info@amen.ie
Web: www.amen.ie

De Facto Partner Residence

Permission Application
Residence Division-Unit 1
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration
Service
13-14 Burgh Quay
Dublin 2
Email: INISdefacto@justice.ie

Department of Foreign Affairs

80 St Stephens Green
Dublin 2
[Tel:+353 1 478 0822](tel:+35314780822)
LoCall:1890 426 700
Web: www.dfa.ie

Safe Ireland

Unit 5 Centre Court
Blyry Business Park
Co. Westmeath
Tel: +353 9 064 79078
Email: office@safeireland.ie
Web: www.safeireland.ie