



Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows placed in Ireland

EPIET:Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)

EUPHEM: Public Health Laboratory Health Services Executive (PHL-HSE)

Dublin

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Please note:

This is a living document. If you find any information to be incorrect or out of date, or there is anything you wish to add, please amend the guide (and date it accordingly) and send the new version to your cohort representative for uploading onto the EAN country guides website. Thank you.

EPIET/EUPHEM

Country Guide to Dublin, Ireland

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Note: information related to the COVID-19 pandemic has been added in blue ink. These might not be relevant after the pandemic.

EPIET fellows are placed in the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) while EUPHEM fellows are in the Public Health Laboratory Health Services Executive (PHL-HSE). These are two different organisations, but both belong to Ireland's Health Services (HSE). As an EU-track EPIET/EUPHEM fellow, moving to another country will be your first task. You will receive help and advice from your future colleagues in Ireland, but you will have to take care of every aspect of your move yourself.

1. Before departure

The majority of things has to be done after arrival. HPSC/PHL will give you plenty of time to sort all these things out during working hours and colleagues will be there to help. The official languages in Ireland are English and Irish but English is the one mostly used.

A lot of information on Ireland can be found online on various websites and blogs.

Examples:

<http://www.justlanded.com/english/Ireland/>

<https://dublin.ie/>

Information regarding Irish public service:

<http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/>

1.1 Visa

EU citizens do not need a visa. People from other countries do need a visa.

1.2 Removal

Claims for removal expenses are going through HPSC/PHL: This means that you will need to contact your supervisor who will direct you to the person responsible for your removal expenses. HPSC/PHL will ask you to complete a form with your expenses and provide receipts for your flight ticket to Dublin and the cost of the removal company. After you submit the documents, it takes almost 2 months to get reimbursed. Please discuss the details with your supervisor as soon as possible. Your accommodation until you find a permanent place is not included in removal expenses, so it's a good idea to find permanent accommodations as soon as possible.

1.3 Finances

At the beginning of the fellowship you will have a lot of expenses (flight tickets, removal, deposit for renting a flat, etc.) and your first salary might be delayed due to the administrative task of setting you up on payroll. It is wise to have a couple of thousand euros in your bank account at the start of the fellowship to help with cash flow (3,000-7,000€ depending on where you move from and the type of flat your intent to rent).

2. The Office

Please note, there are plans to move HPSC due to space issues. This will probably happen in 2021.

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre, where EPIETs are based is located at 25-27 Middle Gardiner Street, Dublin 1. It is 15 minutes walking from the main train station (Connolly Station). The city centre is also at walking distance (15-20 minutes).

As an EPIET, during pandemic times you might be asked to work from home. If you work from home you will receive a work laptop. Apart from pandemic times remote working is not possible for an extended period of time.

Your desk should be ready when you arrive with a computer connected to internet and access to public folders. MS and EU track EPIET fellows sit in the same office together with an EPIET alumni.

Administrative procedures to follow upon arrival:

- Get a fob (to access HPSC building and security control)
- Contact IT department to install software that you may need on the computer
- Contact IT to set up a professional email address and your desk phone
- Contact ID to request an encrypted USB stick (generally working with Windows as OS)
- Set up an account for the Library (online)

There is no canteen in HPSC but there are small kitchenettes on each floor where you can get/prepare tea/coffee at any time. For lunch, you can bring some food or take away at one of the shops around the institute (sandwiches, small salads, soups). There is a kitchen on the third floor with two microwave machines, dishes and cutlery. The usual social meeting is the coffee break, every morning at 11 am in the kitchen. It is a nice opportunity to sit down, chat with colleagues and debrief news. For EPIETs it's a good idea to go to the coffee break, so you can get to know your colleagues.

In HPSC you have a flexi timetable which means that you need to clock in and clock out using an electronic system when you come and leave the office. If you have worked more hours, you can take one day per month of flexi leave. Also, you are entitled of 27 days per year of annual leave (from April till March). Flexi clock is temporarily suspended during pandemic times.

Target hours for EPIET are 37 hours per week (7:24 per day). You can start anytime between 7:30 and 10:00am and can finish anytime between 4:00 and 7:30pm. Lunch is a minimum of 30 minutes and must be taken between 12:30 and 2:30pm. In HPSC there are two kitchens & a lunch room with a fridge, microwave and coffee machines, dishes and cutlery where you can prepare tea/coffee at any time. For lunch, you can bring some food from home or take away but there is no canteen in the building.

The Public Health Laboratory is located at the Cherry Orchard Hospital complex in Ballyfermot, Dublin 10, on the far west side of Dublin city. As a EUPHEM fellow you will have an office and receive a work laptop/desktop computer. [During COVID-19 pandemic it might be possible to attend the training modules from home.](#) Apart from that, you are expected to work on site.

You are entitled to 27 days per year of annual leave. Target hours for EUPHEM fellows are 37 hours per week. A normal working day is from 9:00am to 5:00pm but there will be people in the laboratory working in shifts from 8:00am to 8:00pm.

Lunch is a minimum of 30 minutes and is usually taken between 12:30 and 2:30pm. There is a kitchen & lunch room at the PHL with a fridge, microwave and coffee machines, dishes and cutlery where you can prepare tea/coffee at any time. For lunch, you can bring some food from home or take away from the supermarket near the hospital (Lidl). There is also a canteen at the complex where you can get a full meal or sandwiches.

Both in HPSC and PHL the tea break is 20 min, usually taken from 10:45am to 11:30 am in the kitchen. It is a very nice opportunity to sit down, chat with colleagues and debrief news. Especially in the first few months it's a good idea to go to the kitchen around 11am for tea/coffee so you have a chance to get to know everyone.

Regarding your pension scheme, in HPSC you are not covered. Please talk to your HR person for more information.

3. Personal Public Service Number (PPS number)

The Personal Public Service Number (PPS number) is a unique reference number that helps you access social welfare benefits, public services and information in Ireland. You need this to open a bank account and start receiving your salary. To receive a PPS you will need to provide a proof of address e.g. with a utility bill with an Irish address. You could use lease agreement or a bill from your internet provider. Please see [here](#) for more details. The closest office to HPSC where you can issue your PPS number is in [Parnell Street](#). **It must book an appointment online, through the following link <https://www.mywelfare.ie/>.**

After you submit all your documents, it usually takes about 2 weeks to receive your PPS number. You can even book the appointment online before you get to Dublin.

Due to the pandemic the waiting time for your PPS number might be much longer, it could take up to 2 months. If face to face appointments are not possible you might have to request the PPS in e-mail.

After you receive your PPS you will have to register for [myAccount](#) in Revenue, where your tax is managed. Please do this in a timely manner to avoid entering the emergency tax scheme (salary taxed at 40%).

4. Living in Dublin

a. Housing

To find a place to live in Dublin can be hard. Options to stay while looking for permanent accommodation is airbnb (www.airbnb.com) or hostels. You can choose from a variety of rooms and apartments rented out from local hosts. Also, you might contact people from HPSC/PHL and let them know about the type of accommodation you look for in case they have anything in mind.

Renting in Dublin

Prepare for prices of 600 to 1000 euros for a room in a shared apartment. To rent your own flat will cost something between 1200-2500 per month depending on the area and the size of the house.

Know what is included in your rent because there are additional charges for:

- Electricity
- Gas
- TV, Internet

Please note:

- It is common to ask 2 months of rent in deposit!!
- There is no definite first come, first serve policy. Landlords/Flatmates like to meet their prospective tenants and then make a choice. However, they have so many potential tenants to choose from that it is advisable to contact them as soon as you see something that you like (it could be gone the same evening during peak times). The selection process is a bit like a job interview.
- You might call or e-mail people that will never get back to you. Don't get disappointed! The demand is so high that they receive a lot of calls and e-mails from people looking for a house/room and you need to chase them to arrange a viewing.
- You will be asked for landlord recommendations, try to prepare some, even from different countries. You could ask for a professional recommendations in HPSC/PHL in advance.

There are many websites where you might be able to find housing. Be aware that you often have to pay a fee. Usually, when you rent a room with a landlord, you will not have to pay any agent fees but always clarify that in advance, especially if you are looking to rent a whole property.

Dublin is divided in 2 parts: The North part (postcode with odd numbers) and the South part (postcodes with even numbers). As HPSC is situated in Dublin 1, some nice areas to look for accommodation are:

- Dublin 1 is very central and is a mix of new buildings, especially in IFSC (the financial area) and very old place, some area are not very safe.
- Dublin 2 (although it is an expensive area). Another area with a lot of new flats is the Grand Canal Dock (Dublin 2) which is very close to the centre and to work.
- Dublin 3 (Clontarf is nice and close to the HPSC by bus. There are new block of flats where you can look for a flatshare).
- Dublin 7 (Smithfield is a nice area and can be cheaper).
- Dublin 4, 5, 6 and 8 can also be another option but vary depending on availability and on how easy is to commute to work. The EPIET and EUPHEM fellow from Cohort 2019 and Cohort 2020 lived in Rathmines, in the postal district of Dublin 6. This is a very nice area a few kilometres south of the city centre, with an international community and lots of nice restaurants/bars. HPSC is not too far from this area. To get to PHL from this area you can take the 18 bus (takes 50 min from Rathmines Gardai Station to Cherry Orchard Hospital) or a combination of any bus line going to the city centre (14,15, 65, 83,140 to Dame St.) and then get the 40.

Note: For EUPHEM fellows place at PHL it is advisable to look for accommodation closer to the city centre and not near the PHL, since Ballyfermot is not a “nice area” to live.

Websites:

<http://www.daft.ie/dublin/houses-for-rent/> (this is the most popular website)

<http://www.rent.ie/>

<http://www.property.ie/property-to-let/dublin/>

<http://www.let.ie/>

<http://www.myhome.ie/rentals/dublin/house-to-rent>

Be careful not to get scammed, when you look for an apartment without an agent! There are people renting out flats that don't exist. The typical story is that the apartment seems too good to be true (too big for the price). The owner often tells you that he is in the UK (or abroad) and is using a phone that might not be Irish. The owner typically tells you to pay a deposit before you've seen the apartment, 'so that he knows you are serious about renting the apartment' or needs you to make a deposit to send you the keys by mail since he/she is living abroad. Often the owner also wants to know your personal details like passport number etc. The story can sound very realistic and may include a (non-existing) rental agency. Therefore, never pay anything before you've seen the apartment!

Have a daily look at the adverts in the websites because every day there are new options. Ask HR at HPSC/PHL to provide you a reference letter, stating the duration of your contract, this should help you in taking some advantages and arrange a viewing.

b. Transportation

Bicycling

Bicycling is big in Dublin, especially in the summer. Bicycles can be bought new in bicycle stores that can be found everywhere in the city or you can look online and buy a second-hand bike. You can also use the Just Eat Dublin-bike a shared short-term bike. Slots with bikes are spread all over the city.

Become familiar with the bicycling rules because they might be different from what you are used to in your home country, especially at crossings. And be aware that in Ireland people drive on the left side!

Public transport

You can choose between buses, the Luas (tram) and the train. Currently there is no Metro system in Dublin.

Bus: <http://www.dublinbus.ie/>

Luas: <https://www.luas.ie/>

Train: <http://www.irishrail.ie/>

Buying tickets:

- The best way of using public transportation is having a Leap card. This is a card which you can either top up and pay as you go or you can purchase weekly/monthly/annual tickets for all types of public transportation. See [here](#) for more details.

- The city is divided in zones, and the fare you have to pay depends on the number of zones you are travelling through. The flat rate is 2.50€ for 2021.
- Tickets can be purchased from machines at the luas or train stations and on the bus from the driver. Please note that you should bring coins if you plan to buy tickets from the bus driver (on the bus you need to have the exact change!). You can also purchase and top up the card in some stores (i.e. Centra) and if you have a cell phone with NFC you can download the app “Leap Top Up”.

Bus tracking:

- There is an app called “Real-time Ireland” that allows you to track buses on real-time and can help you find bus stops near you.

Getting to the HPSC office:

You can easily reach the HPSC by public transport.

- Luas: The closest stops are Parnell Street (Green line) and Abbey Street (Red line)
- Train: Closest stop is Connolly Station
- Bus: There are various stops depending on the bus at Parnell Street, O’Connell Street and Talbot Street

Getting to PHL

To get to PHL you can take the 18, 40 and 76 bus lines that stop right at Cherry Orchard Hospital, where PHL is located.

Getting a car:

Owning and running a car in Ireland can be expensive. There are several taxes you will have to pay if you want to buy a car in Ireland and parking in inner city Dublin can be difficult. There are no available parking spaces in HPSC.

GoCar, a car sharing company could be a good solution if you only need a car once in a while.

c. Money, credit cards, banks and pension

The currency in the Republic of Ireland is Euros. Most credit cards are accepted in Ireland although you pay an additional fee. Cash dispensers can be found everywhere, and bank cards, including the ones with a Visa/Maestro logo, work in these machines. Try to always have some cash with you because you cannot pay everywhere by card.

Opening a bank account

To open a bank account you need to present your PPS number, payslip and documentation for your address in Ireland. This varies between banks but the PPS number is required everywhere.

Most banks in Ireland are closed on Saturdays and Sundays, but may be open longer on one day a week.

Main banks in Ireland:

Ulster bank: <http://digital.ulsterbank.ie/>

Bank of Ireland: <https://www.bankofireland.com/>

Allied Irish Banks: <http://personal.aib.ie/>

Permanent tsb: <https://www.permanenttsb.ie/>

Permanent tsb has been recommended by some as they have good customer service. KBC has probably the lowest fees, but they have very limited customer service.

Note: Try to open your bank account as soon as possible and forward the bank details to HPSC in order to receive your paycheck in a timely fashion.

d. Insurances

Public health insurance

Everyone residing in Ireland has the right to health insurance services as well as hospital assistance. The services are not free and you have to pay for your visit to your GP/hospital.

It is good to have your European health insurance card in case you need it. You might want to consider a private insurance (e.g. specifically for expats) to cover in case you think it is essential.

Other insurances

The ECDC recommends that you obtain additional insurance including: travel, disability, work liability, etc. Many of the former EPIET Fellows have recommended ExpatPlus. (<https://www.expatsplus.com/English/international-healthcare-medical-insurance-for-expats.htm>).

Health Services

You have to register with a GP. You are free to choose a GP, but they are not obliged to take you on. Average cost for GP visit is 50-70 Euros.

You get one free check up with a dentist every year. You can ring the dentist of your choosing once you have a PPS number and they can check if you are eligible for free.

Moving to Ireland with a family

There is no public early childhood care in Ireland, but you can get a discount if you pay taxes in Ireland. The Irish childcare rates are dependent on the type of childcare you choose, the number of hours and the level of staff training in that facility.

Finding work in Ireland for members of your family might be difficult. It's a good idea for them to start applying for jobs before arriving and to send their CV to many places.

e. Telephone

You can either get a pay-as-you-go SIM card or have a contact with one of the telephone companies. For the last, you might need to have an Irish bank account, so it is better to get a pay-as-you-go SIM card in the beginning. These can be obtained virtually everywhere – supermarkets, minimarkets and in kiosks.

There are many providers – check the Internet, ask your colleagues for help and any offers.

- Meteor.ie
- Vodafone
- Tesco Mobile
- Three
- GoMo
- O2
- <http://www.lycamobile.ie/en/> (Lycamobile offers cheap international calls and also a service “feel like home” when you travel abroad where you make and receive calls like you are in Ireland.

f. Internet

There are many providers – check the Internet for any offers, and feel free to ask your colleagues for help. Keep in mind that price will be related to bandwidth so the more you pay the faster the connection.

One of the biggest providers is

Virgin Media

g. Language courses

You will have to ask in HPSC/PHL if there is funding provided by ECDC for language courses as the language of the country is English. If there is funding it will have to go for Irish language courses. You will not need Irish language knowledge for your everyday work life.

h. Furniture and household goods

For furniture you can always go to IKEA (<http://www.ikea.com/ie/en/>) or look at Gumtree (<http://www.gumtree.ie/>) or Donedeal.ie for second hand offers. In case you rent a room in a flatshare, possibly it will be furnished.

i. Supermarkets / Shops

There are a number of supermarkets in Ireland which vary in price and availability of goods. Generally, food quality is good in all supermarkets. The cheapest have the most limited choice. Opening times and your local store can be found on their website. Most shops are open on Sundays!

There are various choices of supermarkets in Dublin:

- Hard discount (e.g. Lidl, Aldi...)
- Traditional (e.g. Tesco, Dunnes, Fresh, Supervalue...)
- Small shops opened until late and where you can find products or snacks to go (Spar, Londis...)
- Mark & Spencer
- Fine food store where you can find international products or upscale food-to-go (e.g. Fallon & Byrnes, Sheridan – specialised in cheese)

Various companies propose to shop online with at home delivery (convenient if you do not have a car).

There are various markets in Dublin and surroundings, for instance:

- Temple bar square (every Saturday)
- Dun Laoghaire (every Sunday)
- Merrion Square
- Howth
- Pearse Street, etc.

Always have with you a plastic bag when going to a supermarket because in Ireland they are not provided for free.

Street shops and shopping centers

There are two main places for shopping in Dublin: Henry Street (in the north side) and Grafton Street (in the south side). Both are full of high street and upmarket shops, department stores and nearby shopping centers.

j. Sport

- Biking and running are most probably the most common sport activities practiced in Ireland, amongst others. This is possible as the summer is cool and the winters are not too cold to run outside. Also, most part of Dublin has very good air quality. Several possibilities exist for biking as there are specific bike paths in Dublin. For runners, there is a great diversity of sport clubs that offer the possibility to train. [Parkrun](#) is a good example, they organise free, weekly, timed, community running all over the world, which is a fun way to get exercise and meet new people. There are also several marathons and other community running events trough the year.
- If walking/hiking is one of your favourite activities - a good mean to discover Ireland and its nature is to organise hiking trips in the countryside. Generally, Ireland is a fantastic place for hikers, as the countryside is beautiful and can be reached fast especially by car. You can find groups on Facebook or using the application MeetUp that organise such trips.
Some good hiking groups and websites to discover hiking trails
<https://anoige.ie/membership/hiking-programme/>
<https://www.irishtrails.ie/>
- If training in a fitness club is the way you like to practice sport, there are many fitness clubs offering a wide diversity of activities (tennis, swimming, climbing etc). One of cheapest gyms is FLYEFIT (<http://www.flyefit.ie/>). Iconic Health Clubs (<https://iconichealthclubs.ie/>) is a good place to exercise as well and there are many yoga/pilates studios across the city.

k. Leisure

There is indeed a lot to see and do in Dublin, but here are just a few starting points:

Museums

www.nationalgallery.ie

www.hughlane.ie

chesterbeatty.ie

Cinema

www.irishfilm.ie – The Irish Film Institute is a favorite of art loving EPIET fellows: a lovely small cinema with very good film selection and a restaurant.

www.cineworld.ie

<http://www.imccinemas.ie/home.asp?venue=savoy>

<https://stellacinemas.ie/>

Theatre

www.abbeytheatre.ie

www.gaietytheatre.ie

www.grandcanaltheatre.ie

<https://www.nch.ie/Online/>

www.olympia.ie

<https://bordgaisenergytheatre.ie/>

General websites

<http://www.visitdublin.com/>

<http://www.dublinks.com/>

www.visitireland.com

www.discoverireland.ie

More tips for leisure activities

Using the Dart lines to visit small coastal towns is a great way to spend the weekends.

Concerts and Festivals are very frequent in Ireland, keep an eye out for them.

Yellow pages and Maps: www.goldenpages.ie

Newspapers: www.irishtimes.com, www.independent.ie, www.herald.ie, www.nni.ie

A few last useful points:

Salary corrections: Please enquire with the Fellowship Programme Office at ECDC if you need to know the correction factor for salaries in your host countries. These can change and the most up to date information should be available from the Programme Office. Be aware that the correction factor applied to your salary might not be from the year you are starting, but from 2 years before. Net salary for C2020: 2589.40€.

Language classes: Claiming money back for language classes can become complicated for budget reason – if you are planning to claim back money, please talk to your host site to find out how they have budgeted this and talk to them about when you are planning to take classes and what the expected costs will be. Please do this at the beginning of your fellowship and ask the coordinator team at the intro course for a description of the funding allocations, as the rules are written in the contract between ECDC and host site, but it's not explained in the director's decision.

Parental leave benefits: Please note that you are employed under the respective rules of your host country, and this may have an impact on parental leave benefits if you have not worked in the country beforehand. This is something to look into if it may affect you during your fellowship, as ECDC cannot change the local laws on parental leave.

It is not easy to adapt to a new culture, and after an initial “enthusiastic” phase (which may last from weeks to months according to the person) almost EVERYBODY will then pass through a phase when you “reject” the new country/culture (“I want to go home”), followed by a positive phase again. In the “rejection” phase things can be quite hard (compounded by the fact that everything is in another language). It is important to know that these psychological phenomena are normal and they are part of the experience. Try to remember:

“It is not worse, it is not better, it is just different”.

Wikipedia gives a good explanation of this psychological phenomenon, and some way to overcome it http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shock