



Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows placed in Ireland

EPIET: Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)

EUPHEM: Public Health Laboratory (PHL)

Dublin

Last updated: February 2022

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 If you find any information to be incorrect or out of date, or there is anything you wish to add, please amend the guide (and date it accordingly) and send the new version to your cohort representative for uploading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 restrictions are lifted.

EPIET fellows are placed in the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) while EUPHEM fellows are placed in the Public Health Laboratory (PHL). These are two different training sites and authorities, but both belong to the Irish Health Service Executive (HSE).

Before departure

As an EU track EPIET/EUPHEM fellow, moving to another country is your first task. Exciting times ahead of you but the beginning can also be a bit overwhelming. You will receive help and advice from your future colleagues in Ireland, but you will need to take care of every aspect of your move yourself.

The majority of things needs to be done after arriving in Ireland. HPSC/PHL will give you plenty of time to sort all these things out during working hours, and colleagues will be there to support you. 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 the Irish public service can be found on this informative website:

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

Visa

EU citizens do not need a visa. Citizens from other countries outside the EU would need to apply for a visa.

Removal

Reimbursement of removal expenses are claimed through HPSC/PHL: This means that you will need to contact your supervisor who will direct you to the person responsible for reimbursing 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 submitting the documents, it may take a few weeks to get reimbursed. Please discuss the details with the responsible person as soon as possible. Getting in contact with the responsible in ECDC through the generic fellowship mailbox may also be useful in terms of clarifying the coverage, deadlines, etc. Temporary accommodation until you find a permanent place is not included in the removal expenses, so it is a good idea to start looking for permanent accommodation as soon as possible to lower your expenses upon arrival in Ireland.

Finances

At the beginning of the fellowship you will have a lot of expenses (flight tickets, removal of goods, temporary accommodation, deposit for renting a flat, etc.) and your first salary may be delayed due to the administrative task of setting you up on payroll. It is advisable 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 you intent to rent).

The Office

HPSC

Please note, that there are plans to move HPSC due to space issues. This might happen during 2022. The HPSC, where EPIET fellows are based is currently located at 25-27 Middle Gardiner Street, Dublin 1. It is 15 minutes' walk from the main train station (Connolly Station). The city centre is also within walking distance (15-20 minutes). [As an EPIET, during pandemic times you might be asked to work from home, and you will receive a work laptop for this purpose. 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
- Contact IT to set up a professional email address and your desk phone (if not already done)
- Contact IT 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 prepare tea/coffee at any time. For lunch, you can bring food or take away from one of the cafes close by (sandwiches, small salads, soups). There is a kitchen on the third floor with two microwaves, 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 is a good idea to go to the coffee break, so you can get to know your colleagues.

Target working hours for EPIETs are 37 hours per week (7:24 per day). You can start anytime between 7:30 and 10:00am and 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 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. [Flexi clock is temporarily suspended during pandemic times.](#)

PHL

PHL 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 pandemic times, it might be possible to attend the training modules from home. Apart from that, you are expected to work on site.](#)

Regarding your pension scheme, make sure that your site has asked funding from ECDC for your pension contributions. Please talk to your HR contact person for more information.

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 number, you need to provide a proof of address e.g. with a utility bill with an Irish address. You could e.g. use your 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](#). **You 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 longer – it could take up to two months. Face-to-face appointments have been suspended in periods, in which you can request the PPS number electronically.](#)

After receiving your PPS, you should to register for [myAccount](#) in Revenue, where your tax is managed. Please do this in a timely manner to avoid entering or to reduce the time on the Irish emergency tax scheme (salary taxed at 40%).

Living in Dublin

Housing

As with any other capital, finding 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 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. Renting your own flat will cost something between 1200-2500 per month depending on the area and the size.

Pay attention to what is included in your rent because there are usually additional charges for:

- Electricity
- Gas
- TV, Internet

Please note that:

- It is common to ask two 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. They have many potential tenants to choose from, and therefore it is advisable to get in contact as soon as you notice an advertisement

of something interesting (it could be gone within the same day 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. In addition, HPSC/PHL can provide you with a professional recommendation in advance so good idea to ask for this when you start your house hunt.

There are many websites where you might be able to find housing. Be aware that you sometimes 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 older buildings. Some parts might not seem very safe or well-maintained but at the same time, it is an area in rapid development – generally, pay attention to the surroundings when you go for viewings and ask your colleagues for advice. The fellow from cohort 2021 lived in lively Capel Street and loved it.
- Dublin 2: although it is an expensive area. Another area with a lot of new flats is the Grand Canal Dock which is very close to the city centre and to work.
- Dublin 3: Clontarf is nice and close to the HPSC by bus. There are new blocks 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 is also good options but vary depending on availability and on how easy it 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 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 either. To get to PHL from this area, you can take bus 18 (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 on bus 40.

Note: For EUPHEM fellows placed 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 for house hunting:

<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 have seen the apartment!

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

Transportation

Bicycling

Bicycling is big in Dublin, especially in the summer. Bicycles can be bought new or used in bicycle stores that can be found everywhere in the city or you can look online (e.g. on Marketplace) for 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 HPSC

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 Connelly 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, is a good solution if you only need a car once in a while if you e.g. want to explore the area outside Dublin.

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 probably has 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.

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.expatplus.com/English/international-healthcare-medical-insurance-for-expats.htm>).

Health Services

If you wish to register with a GP, [this website](#) may be useful to gain an overview of the selection in your area. 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 the free check.

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 not be so easy. It's a good idea for them to start applying for jobs before arriving and to send their CV to many places.

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.

Telephone

You can either get a pay-as-you-go SIM card or a contract with one of the telephone companies. For the last, you sometimes need to have an Irish bank account, so you may need 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.

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

Language courses

You can 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 you will have to go for Irish language courses. You will not need Irish language knowledge for your everyday work life. Other types of language courses, like advanced or academic English, is not covered by the programme.

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. If you rent a room in a flatshare, it is very often furnished and well-equipped.

Supermarkets / Shops

Supermarkets

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, Supervalu...)
- 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.

Hint! Always have a plastic bag with you 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.

Sport

Biking and running are some of the most common sport activities practiced in Ireland, amongst others, 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 sports 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/>

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/>). West Wood (<https://westwood.ie/>) and Iconic Health Clubs (<https://iconichealthclubs.ie/>) are good (but more expensive alternatives. There are also many yoga/pilates studios across the city.

Leisure

There is lots to see and do in Dublin. Here are just a few starting points:

City parks

Phoenix park: one of the largest urban parks in Europe is definitely worth many visits when you wish to go for a walk/run/bicycling in beautiful surroundings. You can rent a bike at the Parkgate St entrance. If you are lucky, you will spot deer!

St. Stephen's Green and Merrion Square Park: in the city centre.

Herbert Park: in the South part of Dublin is also cute and has a Sunday food market.

Museums

www.nationalgallery.ie

<https://www.dublincastle.ie/>

www.hughlane.ie

chesterbeatty.ie

<https://imma.ie/>

There are also plenty of smaller galleries or art shops (e.g. <https://jamartfactory.com/>) to explore. Entrance to many museums in Ireland is free of charge so that's something to take advantage of.

Free walking tours is frequently organized – so check e.g. the app MeetUp or [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/) for events.

Cinemas

www.irishfilm.ie – The Irish Film Institute is a favorite of art loving 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/>

<https://lighthousecinema.ie/>

Theatres

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.dublins.com/>

www.visitireland.com

www.discoverireland.ie

Days trips in surrounding Dublin

Using the Dart lines to visit small coastal towns is a great way to spend the weekends. Take a day-trip to Howth or Bray/Greystones for the beautiful cliff walks, or to Dún Laoghaire for a Sunday stroll and food market.

More tips for leisure activities

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

Membership of public libraries is free for everyone, both local libraries and e-contents.

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 the year of the last agreement between ECDC and the training site. Net salary for C2020+2021: 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.

Final words

It is not always 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