

Living in Northern Ireland

The World's Best Kept Secret



"I've always maintained that Northern Ireland is the world's best kept secret, both in the character of its people and its scenery,"

Liam Neeson



Giant's Causeway, Antrim, Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is a friendly and sociable country with a lot to offer. In fact, in recent years the Office of National Statistics rated Northern Ireland as the happiest place to live in the UK!

That's down to many factors including the beautiful scenery, low cost of living and great employment opportunities as well as our optimistic view on life, all of which make it a fantastic place to live. There is an abundance of public parks, as well as countless beaches and forests. Northern Ireland's capital city is currently thriving in an era of tremendous regeneration with an abundance of award winning restaurants and bars across the city as well as tourist attractions including the recently constructed Titanic Belfast Centre, which had recently been crowned 'world's best tourist attraction' at the World Travel Awards.

Within a short drive from Belfast you are nearby to any number of attractions, from the legendary Giant's Causeway to the scenic Lakelands of Fermanagh, Walls of Derry, the stunningly beautiful Mountains of Mourne, the golden beaches of the North Coast and the green Glens of Antrim.

Explore the great outdoors and you will find dramatic coastlines, castles, mountains, lakes, some of the best golf courses in the world, superb fishing, water sports, walking trails, scenic drives and historical landmarks.



Downhill Beach with view of Mussenden Temple, Causeway Coast, County Antrim, Northern Ireland

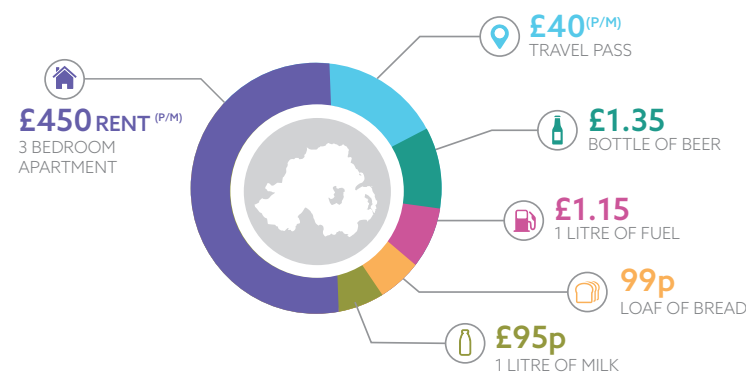


Northern Ireland Today

- Ideally situated between mainland Europe and the United States
- Population 1.8 million
- Capital city - Belfast
- Three airports – daily flights to UK and European destinations
- Under two hours by road from Belfast to Dublin- the capital city of the Republic of Ireland
- Modern road and rail network
- The highest availability of super-fast broadband in the UK
- 100 gigabyte per second telecoms link between Northern Ireland, Europe and North America

Cost of Living

Northern Ireland's population enjoys a low cost of living on many of life's key expenses for example property prices in Northern Ireland remain well below those in other UK locations and in the Republic of Ireland.



Economy

With millions being invested in regeneration, our towns and cities are thriving and in light of new industries being created, our economy has a new lease of life. There is a new cultural vitality, pride and optimism. Instead of emigrating, our brightest graduates are staying. Tourism is growing at an unprecedented rate too, with visitors discovering our hospitality, humour, beautiful scenery and quality of life.

Building on the region's rich industrial heritage Northern Ireland's economy continues to perform well in the current economic climate. The unemployment rate currently stands at 6.9%, slightly above the UK average, but below the Republic of Ireland and EU averages. Outside of London, Northern Ireland is the leading UK region for attracting inward investment; in fact Belfast is the world's top destination city for financial services technologies investments. The success of such inward investment has led to over 800 international companies employing in excess of 75,000 people. In addition, expenditure on research and development and levels of entrepreneurship are also on the rise.

Northern Ireland's excellent business credentials are supported by a strong and resilient infrastructure. The region has the highest availability of superfast broadband in the UK and there are almost 30 daily flights to London and a daily direct connection to New York. Belfast is only one hour from London by air and two hours from Dublin by rail and road.

Education System

Northern Ireland boasts the best academic performance in the UK with over 60% of school leavers going on to university or college. Whether you are thinking about raising a family, or considering extending your own personal qualifications, Northern Ireland offers fantastic educational opportunities.

Northern Ireland's education system is also among the best performing in Europe. According to a recent major survey, Northern Ireland is the best performing education system for primary maths in Europe, and the sixth best in the world. For primary reading it is the second best in Europe and 75% of school leavers go to further and higher education. Supporting these academic achievements are two world leading universities, Queen's University of Belfast and Ulster University – as well as an extensive network of further education colleges which provide vocational and academic training for those seeking to broaden their skills.

Northern Ireland is highly regarded for its research and development accomplishments within multiple fields, with Almac at the heart of these achievements. As well as pharmaceuticals, Northern Ireland continues to lead the way in numerous areas such as, astrophysics, software development and aerospace.



Points of Interest

Healthcare

Being part of the UK ensures that residents in Northern Ireland have access to the National Health Service. This service provides free healthcare to all EU citizens. Registering with a local doctor is simple as long as you bring your European Health Insurance Card. This card will provide you with full access to local support or more serious attention at one of the many hospitals in Northern Ireland.

As well as the free services offered by the NHS, Northern Ireland also offers excellent standards of private healthcare. Facilities are available at the Ulster Independent Clinic, Kingsbridge Hospital or Hillsborough Private Clinic.

In addition to this, everyone at Almac can avail of the Westfield Healthcare benefit which reimburses the cost of dental treatment, optical care and professional therapy treatments. Upgrade options and family cover are also available at an additional cost.



Famous People

Northern Ireland wouldn't be the same without its colourful combination of characters. For such a small country we have a lot of famous people who have made an impact all across the world. To name but a few we have on the big screen a big presence led by Liam Neeson, Jamie Dornan, Kenneth Branagh, Stephen Rea, James Nesbitt, Roma Downey and Sam Neill, also playwrights Martin Lynch and Marie Jones.

Sport

Sport is important in the lives of many Northern Irish people with many Irish sportsmen and women enjoying international stature – including football legends George Best, Harry Gregg, Pat Jennings and Martin O'Neill, golfing champions Rory McIlroy, Graeme McDowell and Darren Clark, Formula One driver Eddie Irvine, snooker world champions Alex Higgins and Dennis Taylor and Olympic gold medalist Mary Peters.

The Arts

Northern Ireland has produced a wealth of world renowned writers, among them Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney, C.S Lewis, Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett, playwright Brian Friel and screenwriter Brian Moore.

In recent years Northern Ireland's film industry has enjoyed tremendous success as the base for a host of large-scale productions including HBO's Game of Thrones, Dracula Untold and the BBC drama series 'The Fall.' Northern Ireland is now regarded as a "sleeping giant" for film production says HBO executive Jay Roewe, due in part to it's scenic rural locations and highly skilled talent pool.

Music

Northern Ireland has given the world a wealth of musical talent having produced such greats as Van Morrison, Gary Moore, James Galway, Phil Coulter, Brian Kennedy, The Undertones, Ash, Stiff Little Fingers and Snow Patrol.

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