

APPOINTMENTS

How far would you go to get a job?

One in five Irish workers willingly commutes more than 90 minutes to work, writes Gabrielle Monaghan

Think your commute is tough? Spare a thought for the extreme commuters. This doesn't mean sky diving or rollerskating down the motorway to work, but it refers to those staff who travel more than three hours a day to get to and from the office.

The long commute has become a symptom of the lengths to which we will go to secure work in an ailing economy. The average Irish worker spends almost an hour a day commuting, with one in five travelling for an hour and half, according to a survey by office provider Regus.

A smaller but growing proportion travel more than 90 minutes each way, often taking cheap flights to the UK and Europe to do so.

The term "extreme commuting" was coined in *Microtrends: The Small Forces Behind Tomorrow's Big Changes*, written by Mark Penn, a former adviser to Hillary and Bill Clinton. The Washington Post once dubbed Penn "the most important man you've never heard of".

Fergal Brosnan, director of Berkeley Recruitment in Cork, has seen how senior Irish professionals have become more willing to sacrifice daily family life in return for a well-paid career.

"I recently flew to Belgium on a Monday with a plane load of Irish guys and, when I flew back on

Thursday evening, 80% of the same people were on the plane," he said.

"We've placed a lot of engineers and life science experts in jobs in Belgium who commute every week, because their kids are in schools in Ireland or they don't want to move.

"It's better than not having a job and staying at home all day. We also have people working in oil and gas in the Middle East for 10 to 12 weeks at a time and coming home for two weeks to see partners and kids."

Ronan Colleran, the managing director of Accreate, an executive search firm, is seeking 25 banking professionals in Ireland to commute the 40-minute flight to, or live in, the Isle of Man, where Barclays Wealth is hiring for its credit operations.

"We are now at the tipping point where senior banking professionals have decided that they are willing to move further for their career," he said. "The negative impact of increased taxation in Ireland... has been the final nail in coffin."

The daily grind of commuting was a feature of the boom, especially from so-called dormitory towns such as Celbridge and Naas, Co Kildare, and Gorey, Co Wexford. In return for leaving for Dublin at dawn — often putting their children in creches for up to 12 hours a day — these commuters could have decent pay, job security and a comfortable home they could afford. By the start

of the recession, the residents of Dublin's commuter belt were spending a full week every year in their cars or on public transport, research by the Labour party found.

But the reasons for extreme commuting are not as positive now. The affordable home in Longford marketed during the boom as "within commuting distance from Dublin" is now in negative equity, curbing the flexibility of workers to sell up and move to where there is work.

"There is a huge willingness to travel now because of negative equity, the career restrictions in the Irish market, and the amount of opportunities further afield," said Ann O'Mahony, the operations director at recruitment firm Morgan McKinley. "A few years ago, people wouldn't cross the road for a job."

The 350 jobseekers who travelled from all over Ireland last week for an interview at the five-star Castlemaryr hotel in Co Cork would have to be prepared to move there rather than commute, believes Brosnan.

"You can't afford to commute from Limerick to Cork for the minimum wage, or even close to it," he said.

Rising fuel prices because of political upheaval in oil-producing countries in North Africa and the Middle East mean the average Irish motorist spends €225 a month on petrol, based on driving 12,000 miles a year at 30 miles a gallon, compared with a monthly bill of €142.50 in January 2009, claims AA Roadwatch.

Commuters are increasingly taking the bus to save money on travel, says Andrew McLindon, a spokesman for Bus Eireann.

The annual cost of petrol for trips between Kells and Dublin, for

example, stands at €4,377, excluding parking and toll charges, servicing, repairs, and oil and tyre changes. Commuting by bus on a weekly ticket costs almost half that, with further reductions for workers who sign up to the tax saver scheme.

Donal Clancy, a lecturer in digital marketing at Dublin City University, opted for commuting by train when he and his family moved to Thurles last year.

"It would now cost €60 for a tank of petrol to make that journey but on a commuter train ticket, it's reasonable," said Clancy.

Transport costs should not be the only consideration for a would-be commuter, according to research by economists Bruno S Frey and Alois Stutzer of the University of Zurich. They say most extreme commuters presume that the burden is worth it because they overestimate the rewards — whether it be prestige, a better home, salary or school. But, in what they dubbed the "the commuting paradox", commuters are, on average, much less satisfied with their lives than non-commuters because they have fewer social connections, hobbies and worse health.

A commuter who travels one hour, one way, would have to make 40% more than his current salary to be as fully satisfied with his life as a non-commuter, according to the economists.

The Regus report concluded that commuters were often exhausted and stressed by the time they arrived at work, which undermined productivity, prompting the authors to call for Irish employers to offer more flexible working options and allow employees to work from home



Some commuters travel by plane to work. 'It's better than not having a job,' says Fergal Brosnan

in certain instances. Indeed, many employers found themselves doing just that in the past 12 months, when the big freeze of last winter and the Icelandic volcano eruption stranded many workers and left them relying on technology.

As a digital expert, Clancy hopes that more companies will come to

realise that it is not where their employees are that matters, but rather what they do.

"As long as I'm connected to the internet, I can be productive," said Clancy.

"I consider driving to be lost time, because I can work on the train and we live in a society where your desk

can be wherever your laptop is. The expectation of employers for workers to be physically present between 9am and 5pm dates back to the industrial revolution, when people worked the hours of natural light.

"I'd argue that employers need to be a bit more clever than that."

IMI
Irish Management Institute



HENLEY
UNIVERSITY OF READING

The Henley MBA



Association of MBAs



EQUIS ACCREDITED

Lead from the start with the Henley MBA, the highest ranked MBA in Ireland, presented at the IMI - the only Irish Business School ranked by the Financial Times globally for the provision of executive education.

Closing date for applications is 19th August 2011

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

visit www.imi.ie/henleymba or contact the team directly at 1800 22 33 88 or email: programmeadvisors@imi.ie

www.imi.ie/henleymba



THE ADELAIDE & MEATH HOSPITAL, DUBLIN

INCORPORATING THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The Adelaide and Meath Hospital, Dublin Incorporating the National Children's Hospital (AMNCH) has a unique heritage in caring for generations of patients. A milestone development in Ireland's hospital service, it was the largest healthcare project ever undertaken by the state. With 600 beds and almost 2,500 people employed, the hospital provides a National Urology Centre, a Regional Dialysis Centre and a Regional Orthopaedic Trauma Centre. It is one of the two main teaching hospitals of Trinity College Dublin.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Reporting to the board, the Chief Executive of AMNCH will have overall responsibility for the management and performance of the hospital, including meeting statutory requirements, achieving performance targets, securing continuous improvement and providing high quality and effective services within a clear financial framework. Assuming responsibility at a time of significant transformation in the sector and at the hospital, he/she will see the complexities faced as challenges and opportunities for the organisation and will have the ability, in conjunction with the board, to build and develop the strategies necessary to meet the needs of all stakeholders. Stakeholders include patients, staff, the community, regulatory authorities and the Department of Health.

Candidates, proven healthcare management professionals, will have demonstrated the ability to lead an organisation at a time of tremendous transition and will have a solid history of delivering sustainable and high quality patient care and services. He/she will exude integrity and authority and will naturally instill credibility and confidence in all stakeholders.

This is a key appointment and requires well-honed influencing skills coupled with a track record of leadership and management within a complex healthcare environment. Organisationally adept with strategic vision and energy, candidates must be outstanding communicators, with the ability to engage, influence and inspire at all levels. Core competencies will include exceptional strategic thinking, innovation, organisational sensitivity and leadership.

Please write or email, enclosing a Curriculum Vitae and quoting reference number 68962, explaining how you meet the responsibilities of the role as outlined above to: MERC Partners, 11/12 Richview Office Park, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. Tel: 01 2066700 Email: info@merc.ie Web: www.merc.ie

merc
PARTNERS

EXECUTIVE SEARCH • EXECUTIVE SELECTION • EXECUTIVE COACHING • NON EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS • INTERIM MANAGEMENT

Experienced Driver, Delivery/Sales Person.

Good communicator, proven track record in satisfying clients and requiring new business.

Reliable and hard working, good geographical knowledge of the Country, North and South. Excellent reference. Clean C licence.

Available immediately

Tel: 086 7331923