

PRESS RELEASE
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Ireland welcomes a new kind of travel company

Independent travel agency Travel Counsellors PLC is hoping to bring a whole new way of booking holidays to Ireland now that it has been granted its licence to trade in the Republic.

Travel Counsellors has over 490 agents throughout the UK – who are all equipped with the latest technology to enable them to work from home. It believes it can bring the same successful formula to Ireland now that it has been awarded its Travel Agents' Licence with the Commission for Aviation Regulation.

A number of agents in the Republic have already expressed an interest in joining the company and Travel Counsellors believes the Irish market is more than ready for this new way of selling holidays which is based on combining market-leading technology with the best possible levels of customer service and attention to detail.

Booking through a home-based Travel Counsellor offers customers a number of benefits compared to booking with a conventional high street agent. Its agents have an average 20 years experience, and as the majority were either previously managers or deputy managers of high street agencies they have a wealth of experience to draw on when advising customers on their travel plans. And because Travel Counsellors' agents work from home they are also available at a time to suit their clients – including during the evening and at weekends. Sixty per cent of the company's agents regularly visit clients at home to discuss their travel plans in more detail.

For Ireland's travel agents with the necessary skills, enthusiasm and experience, Travel Counsellors also offers a number of benefits. In a survey of Travel Counsellors' agents conducted last month 86% said their work/ life balance had improved since joining the company and 74% rated their job satisfaction as high. Head office takes care of all administration issues, freeing its agents to focus on offering customers the best possible levels of travel advice and service.

Travel Counsellors managing director Steve Byrne said: "Over 60% of our bookings come from repeat business – a sign of just how highly our customers value the service they receive. We believe there is demand in Ireland for the levels of personal travel advice and attention to detail that our travel counsellors can provide."

Customers wishing to find out details of their nearest Travel Counsellor should call 0044 1204 536031 or visit the website www.travelcounsellors.com.

Travel agents interested in finding out more about Travel Counsellors who have at least four years travel experience in the past five can contact Travel Counsellors recruitment executive Cathy Oldfield on 0044 1204 536037 or email cathy.oldfield@travelcounsellors.com

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EDITOR'S NOTES: Travel Counsellors PLC is one of the UK's largest independent travel agencies with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 312004) of £128 million, a 32% increase year on year. Founded by chairman David Speakman in 1994 it currently has over 490 travel agents nationwide who work from home with the support of nearly 100 staff at the company's head office in Bolton, Greater Manchester. Travel Counsellors prides itself on the exceptional levels of personal service it offers its clients, a fact that was recognised in 2003 when it received the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise. As well as its Personal Travel Counsellors, the company has specialist telesales, cruise and business travel divisions. It also has a sister company, Recruitment Counsellors, established in March 2003.

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