



From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings,

As we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916 our newly elected Dail representatives are working to cobble together a government in the aftermath of the recent general election. 1916 was a most significant happening in our history which was followed by the bitter civil war. We are still affected politically by that event which has polarised us into two opposite sides depending on which side your family forbearers were on at that difficult time.

But all that has changed since the recent general election where the outcome is different to any other. After years of domination by the two major parties and in particular by Fianna Fail, it seems that if any new government is formed, it will be a minority government. This would be made up of independent TD's and smaller parties and needing the support of both major political parties and led by either Fine Gael or Fianna Fail.

It's an exciting time for the Independent TD's (and smaller parties) who are being actively courted for their support by the two major parties. They have their lists of individual demands for their particular constituency at the ready, as well as policy suggestions to be incorporated into the new programme for government to improve matters nationally. Some of these Independents may well secure a junior or senior ministry as the negotiated price for their support of the new regime. A balance of power situation is the "golden fleece" for any Independent TD and a powerful opportunity to deliver to their individual constituency.

This was the case for the late Tony Gregory, TD who delivered millions of euro for his impoverished north inner city constituency, and for the late Jackie Healy Rae, whose two sons were elected to Dail Éireann on the strength of what the former TD delivered to Kerry while he was in Dail Éireann. The 'elephant in the room' is the reluctance of the two main parties to join together to form a stable government, and the reluctance of Sinn Fein to be part of any new government at this time. This state of affairs it seems is the final act in a drama which started with our civil war where the two major civil war parties are the dying embers of that upheaval. Nothing will ever be the same again.

The terror of Paris has spread to Belgium and already 31 people have died and 270 were injured when three suicide bombers struck in the busy airport. At home the horror of the Donegal tragedy where five people were drowned when an Audi Q7 went into the water off the Buncrana pier has shocked everyone. Yet tragedy is a part of our life as ever. Indeed the recent revelation that 50,000 Famine Irish people were deported back to Ireland at that time from New England USA shows that man's inhumanity to man knew no bounds even then. As we approach Easter we can only pray for those affected by recent tragedies. There is a lot to be thankful for with the longer days and the blooming daffodils and hopes of a long pleasant summer. We know that tolerance and compassion for our fellow man will prevail and many great advances will be made for the better of humanity.

So long for now and Happy Easter, **Dr Jerry Cowley - Chairman**

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Safe Home office hours:

Monday–Thursday:
9am-5pm

Friday: 9am-4pm

The new UK State Pension will be a regular payment from the government that you can claim if you reach State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016.

Eligibility: You will be able to claim the new State Pension if you are eligible and are:

- a man born on or after 6 April 1951
- a woman born on or after 6 April 1953

If you reach State Pension age before 6 April 2016, you'll get the State Pension under the current scheme instead.

You can still get a State Pension if you have other income like a personal pension or a workplace pension.

How much you can get?

The full new State Pension will be £155.65 per week. Your National Insurance record is used to calculate your new State Pension. You will usually need 10 qualifying years to get any new State Pension.

The amount you get can be higher or lower depending on your National Insurance record. It will only be higher if you have over a certain amount of Additional State Pension. **Note!** You may have to pay tax on your State Pension.

The earliest you can get the new State Pension is when you reach State Pension age, which is 66 years of age.

You will usually need at least 10 qualifying years on your National Insurance record to get any State Pension. However, they don't have to be 10 qualifying years in a row. This means for 10 years at least one or more of the following applied to you:

- you were working and paid National Insurance contributions
- you were getting National Insurance credits, eg for unemployment, sickness or as a parent or carer
- you were paying voluntary National Insurance contributions

If you have lived or worked abroad you may still be able to get some new State Pension. You may also qualify if you have paid married women's or widow's reduced rate contributions.

How to claim:

Please Note! You will not get your new State Pension automatically - **you have to claim it.** You should get a letter from the Department of Work & Pensions 4 months before your State Pension age, telling you what to do. If you do not receive this letter, contact the Pension Centre.

There are 4 ways to claim:

- - Online: www.gov.uk/claim-state-pension-online
- -Over the phone: Telephone: 0800 731 7898 (Mon to Fri, 8am to 6pm)
- - By contacting your local Pension Centre
- - From abroad, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man:
- Tel: +44 (0) 191 218 7777 (Mon to Fri, 8am to 6pm)

If you live near an Irish Welfare & Advice Centre, staff there will be happy to give you additional information /help you with the claim.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)

Q. I have a CSCS Card in the UK. It is valid here until 2020. I am now thinking about returning to Ireland. Can you tell me if my CSCS card would be acceptable to construction firms in Ireland or would I have to apply for an equivalent card or scheme in Ireland?

A. The CSCS Health and Safety Card from the UK is not viewed as an equivalent to the Irish Safe Pass Card. You would need to gain a Safe Pass card in order to work on Irish construction sites. Further information on Safe Pass, the application process and cost involved can be obtained by contacting: Solas – The further Education & Training Authority, **Tel:** 00353 1 533 2500

Email: info@solas.ie or follow this link: <http://www.fas.ie/en/Training/Employee+Training/Safe+Pass/>

Q. Joan will shortly be moving from Florida to Tooreen, Co. Mayo. She contacted us to ask, “**where can I get additional information about bringing my cat home with me?**”

A. The importation of pets into Ireland has always been strictly controlled to ensure that diseases such as rabies are not introduced. For full details on bring a pet into Ireland, please contact: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Animal Health & Welfare Division, Dublin

Tel: +353 (0)1 607 2862

Email: livetrade@agriculture.gov.ie

Q. What are the guidelines regarding claiming an EU Pension?

A. If you live in Ireland and have not yet reached age 65, but have reached the age of eligibility for EU Pension in another EEA country you have worked in, you should claim your EU pension from another EEA country through the **Department of Social Protection, Social Welfare Services, College Road, Sligo.**

You can only* use form **EUP 65** to make your claim. This can be downloaded from: **www.welfare.ie** or obtained by texting FORM EUP65 followed by your name and address, to 51909. (standard text rates apply)

***EXCEPTION:** if you are 65 years of age or over, you should use form **SPC1** instead. This is available from www.welfare.ie or in writing from: **Department of Social Protection, Social Welfare Services, College Road, Sligo.**

People Residing outside Ireland: If you live outside the Republic of Ireland (in an EEA Country), you should apply for EU Pension to the pension institution in your country of residence.

If you do not live in an EEA country, you must apply for EU Pension to the pension institution in the EEA country in which you were last insurably employed.

Caranua Information Event – Manchester, Saturday 9th April

Caranua is an independent Irish State Body set up to help people who, as children, experienced abuse in residential institutions in Ireland and have received settlements, Redress Board or Court awards.

They offer support, information, advice and advocacy to survivors. They can help survivors to get the services they are entitled to and improve access to those services. They also work to build awareness of the effects of institutional abuse and in Ireland will work public services to improve their capacity to understand, recognise and address the particular needs of survivors arising from their adverse childhood experiences.

Caranua information event: Caranua will host an information event on Saturday 9th April in Manchester that will provide information on how we can support survivors of Irish institutional abuse.

Do you want more information on Caranua?

Do you need help filling out a form?

Event Details: Saturday 9th of April at The MacDonald Manchester Hotel, London Road, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2PG. The hotel's phone number is 0344 879 9088

There is no entry fee, and you can come at any time from 10.30am, until the event closes at 1pm.

This is not a conference, and will not have speakers, but will instead provide an opportunity for people to talk to Caranua staff, and for Caranua to answer any questions you may have. If you have any questions please call the Caranua Freephone number 0808 234 1303 or email info@caranua.ie

For additional information on Caranua, please see: www.carauna.ie

Please pass this information onto anyone who might be interested!

A message from Bernard in Victoria, Australia

I left Dublin in January 1952 and have lived in Melbourne ever since with periodic visits to Ireland. I have been connected with the Irish community here since arriving and served on many committees. I am a presenter on the Irish programme on radio station 3ZZZ FM where we broadcast from 11.00am to 12.00 noon every Saturday and from 6.00pm to 7.00 pm on Sundays.

These programmes can be picked up on www.3zzz.com.au for about a week after the programme has aired.

I have just been made a life member of the Celtic Club in Melbourne - Australia's oldest Irish club

Safe Home is supported by the Emigrant Support Programme via:



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA NA hÉIREANN
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND