



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &  
INFORMATION



OUTREACH  
VISITS



HOUSING  
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

May 2019 – Issue 211

### CONTACT US:

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### Safe Home office hours:

Monday–Thursday:  
9am-5pm

Friday: 9am-4pm

**Thinking of returning or  
moving to Ireland?**

**Get in touch**

### From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings

It's been an exciting few days with the 'topsy-turvey' results of local and European elections with the inevitable losers as well as noteworthy winners. It all adds fuel to the fire of Irish national blood sport which is politics!

The so called mid-term elections are always different with an opportunity for people to think (and vote) more laterally. The "Green Wave" which has hit all of Europe has created a greater public awareness of the need for remedial action on climate change. This was helped too by the publicity generated from climate change demonstrations, lead mainly by young people and especially the well-known Swedish activist, Greta Thunberg. Traditional parties have suffered all across Europe as a result.

Some things never change! Some people had suggested the burned down Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris should be rebuilt with a rooftop garden and made even more spectacular with a spire of light. Traditionalists have won the day with the restoration bill now passed ensuring the iconic cathedral be restored to exactly as it was before the fire on April 15th.

Roll on more excitement with a likely snap General Election in November to sort out the inevitable by-elections needed to replace TDs gone to Europe.

So long for now,

Dr Jerry Cowley  
Chairman.



### **Housing opportunity for Safe Home housing applicants**

A Housing Association in **Banada, Co. Sligo** (close to Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo and Charlestown, Co. Mayo) has two 2 bed room properties available. There is a limited transport system in place and the scheme is set in a rural location so it may be most suitable for people who can drive or those with family living in the area. There is a no pets policy in place in this scheme.

While priority will be given to applicants originally from/with strong connections to the area, the Housing Association will also consider applicants from other counties. Maximum weekly rent is €73. **Important note!** Applicants who are not approved on the Sligo County Council housing list will have to meet the full rent costs from their own means.

### **Frequently Asked Question; Entitlement to Irish Contributory Pension**

**Q.** I lived and worked in Ireland for a number of years. Can I get a forecast of what my Irish State Pension (Contributory) entitlement will be once I reach retirement age?

**A.** The Irish Pension services do not provide information on possible future State pension entitlements, or comment on individual pension planning enquiries

To assist you in calculating what your future State pension entitlements may be, the Pension services recommended that, along with obtaining details of your social insurance record, you read the detailed information on the eligibility conditions and current payment rates for the Irish State Pension (Contributory) on [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

If you wish to access a copy of your Irish Social Insurance Contributions, the statements are now available online. In order to access your statement, you will need to create a [MyGovID](https://www.gov.ie/en/how-to-access-mygovid/) account online. For this, you will be required to provide an email address and some personal information. MyGovID is a secure online account that will enable you to access a broad range of Government services online.

Once you create a Basic MyGovID account, you can request your contribution statement to be posted to the address on file. A printed copy will be sent to your postal address, provided that the PPSN, Date of Birth and address you provide satisfy an automated matching process as against the relevant details held by the Department.

**If you do not have the option to use the online facility** to request a statement can contact the Pension services customer service team for assistance, **Tel: (00 353) 1471 5898**. The customer service team is available to assist from 9am to 5pm; and is also open during lunchtime.

For general queries on the State Pension contributory), please **Tel: (00353) 71 915 7100**

## **Police Checks/Garda Clearance requirement by social housing providers in Ireland**

**For Safe Home housing applicants;** We are once again highlighting the fact that most Local Authorities and social housing providers in Ireland will require prospective tenants to have Police/Garda clearance (or the equivalent, depending on the country you are currently living in).

These checks can often take some time to be carried out. For example; In the UK, the relevant clearance is known as a Subject Access Request (S.A.R). There is no charge for the S.A.R, applications, whether online or by post, take up to 30 days to be processed.

When you submit a S.A.R application you will need to include copies (not originals) of at least two different documents which confirm your identity, current address and signature. These could be:

- A passport or driving licence which shows your date of birth and signature
- A utility bill, bank, mortgage or credit card statement which is dated within the last six months and which shows your current address

More information on UK Subject Access Requests, including the application form can be obtained via: **[www.acro.police.uk](http://www.acro.police.uk)**

To request an application form; **Tel:** 02380 47 9920

**Email:** [customer.services@acro.pnn.police.uk](mailto:customer.services@acro.pnn.police.uk)

Applications can be made online or by post

Some people, those who may have worked /volunteered in roles where they were involved with children or vulnerable adults may already have the required clearance. If you do, it is important that you send a copy to us here at Safe Home to include with your housing file.

**Important Note!** In our experience of dealing with Housing Associations throughout the country, particularly in most recent times, only applicants who have ALL of the required paperwork in order will be considered for vacancies that arise.

We understand that some applicants may have difficulty in applying for the required checks so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries whatsoever. If you live close to an Irish Welfare & Advice Centre abroad, they too will be happy to offer assistance.

## **Travelling to Ireland by Ferry- Are passports required?**

Irish and British citizens do not strictly require a passport to travel between the two countries. However, some form of photographic identification is normally required. **If the UK leaves the EU with no deal, the Common Travel Area (CTA) arrangements are protected. It is therefore anticipated that the above conditions will continue to apply.**

Some examples of acceptable identification when travelling by ferry;

Passport; Driving Licence; European identity Card; Bank cards; Photo ID (school or college); Utility Bills; Birth Certificate

**Important Notes!** What is accepted as valid forms of identification may vary from company to company, so it is wise to check in advance with the ferry company when making your booking/before travelling. Remember too that the name on your passport must match the name on your booking, otherwise you may not be able to travel and your insurance may be invalid.

-All other nationalities except Irish or British citizens will require passports, and they should also check with the relevant embassy before travelling as they may need a visa.

## Housing Association regulations regarding pets

Many Safe Home applicants have a much loved cat or dog and they could not even consider coming home without their beloved companion. Unfortunately, some Housing Associations that we deal with operate a strict No Pets Policy. This usually applies to schemes of apartments in urban areas, rather than houses in the countryside.

However, **in all cases**, we advise applicants who have a pet to make enquiries in advance of arranging a viewing or accepting an offer of housing, to confirm the situation for you and your trusty companion.

## Compensation and Redress schemes and the Irish welfare means testing system;

People who have received certain types of compensation are not required to have that income assessed in the means test for all social assistance schemes in Ireland. Some examples of compensation schemes that are not assessed;

Compensation for people who have contracted Hepatitis C  
Compensation via the Residential Institutions Redress Board  
Compensation to persons who have disabilities caused by Thalidomide  
Awards paid to women following the publication of the Magdalen Commission Report  
Payments awarded by the Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board  
Payments awarded under the Symphysiotomy ex Gratia Scheme  
Payments awarded under the Lourdes Hospital Redress Scheme 2007  
Payments made by the Northern Ireland Victim and Survivor Service (VSS) in accordance with the Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

### Important Note!

Anyone living outside of Ireland who has received compensation from any of the above schemes should make enquiries with financial advisers /welfare services in their country of residence to establish how the awards may affect welfare applications in that jurisdiction. If awards are invested in Special Needs Trust Funds, this can mean that they are exempt from tax /welfare assessment process.

## Returning to Ireland Information Clinic – Luton

In partnership with the Luton Irish Forum, Safe Home Ireland will host an information clinic on returning to Ireland on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June. Topics covered will include; housing, health care, rights and welfare entitlements in Ireland and more....

The event will take place from **2pm-4pm on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June** at The Luton Irish Forum, Kathleen Connolly House, 102 Hitchin Road, Luton LU2 0ES. The event is free and open to members of the public who may be considering moving/returning to Ireland in the future. To register your interest to attend, contact the Luton Irish Forum **via email:** [info@lutonirishforum.org](mailto:info@lutonirishforum.org) or **Tel:** 01582 720 447

Safe Home Ireland is supported by the Emigrant Support Programme via:



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