



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

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Safe Home office hours:

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

Get in touch

From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings.,

It's amazing how humankind does not learn from past events and keeps falling in to the same discriminatory behaviour. Our history is one of mass emigration in the face of tyranny and famine with millions of us being driven out of our county to roam the world seeking refuge. Yet history keeps repeating itself and one thinks that a people, such as the Irish in particular, should know better than to be discriminating in any way against accommodating modern day asylum seekers.

Was it not our forbearers who faced discrimination as economic migrants with notices such as "No blacks or Irish need apply"? The coffin ships of the dying Irish have become the bodies of the drowned tens of thousands of men, women and children washed up on Mediterranean shores fleeing similar tyranny in their own country.

The Berlin wall succeeded in cruelly dividing families, neighbours and friends for 28 years before it was torn down just 30 years ago last month. Respectable neighbourhoods harboured extermination camps in Nazi Germany while life went on as normal around them. Atrocities continue to occur in the world despite modern civilisation insisting there is no place for such tyranny. Yet the Berlin wall did come down through peaceful revolution.

Climate change is being faced up to by similar peaceful protests. This planet belongs to all of us and we have a duty to be vigilant as regards its welfare and the welfare of those who inhabit it. As we move towards the season of Christmas and family time let us all try harder to be more charitable to each other and think of how we can make life easier for our fellow man, (and woman!)

From all of us here, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy and successful new year. Don't forget to keep an eye on your older neighbour.

So long for now,

Dr Jerry Cowley

Chairman – Safe Home Ireland

Are you living in Ireland and using a UK/NI Driving licence?

The EU has agreed a further Brexit extension that will see the UK set to leave the EU on 31 January 2020. If the UK **leave without a deal** a UK/NI driving licence held by an Irish resident will not be valid to drive on in Ireland. Because of this uncertainty the advice of the Road Safety Authority is that holders of such licences resident here should take immediate steps to exchange their UK/NI licence for an Irish one.

If the UK leaves the EU with a deal, then under the arrangements currently being considered, UK/NI driving licences will continue to be valid in the same way as they are today up to 31 December 2020 - this date is the end of the transition period.

If you do not submit your original UK/NI licence with your exchange application the NDLS will be unable to validate your application without significant delays. In the absence of alternative arrangements with the UK, you MAY have to apply for a learner permit if you wish to continue to drive in Ireland. It may also have implications for your insurance cover after this date.

To exchange your licence you must complete a licence application form and present this in person with, the correct fee, proof of your Irish address and your UK licence at any NDLS centre. You can make an appointment in advance online at www.ndls.ie to attend any of the 36 NDLS centres. They also offer a walk-in service, but be advised there can be significant waiting times for those without appointments.

Frequently Asked Questions– Exchanging a UK drivers licence

I am buying a property in Ireland and want to transfer my UK driving license to an Irish one. I should have my Irish Insurance Number (PPSN) number within the next couple of weeks.

Q: Can I use my address in the UK with the PPSN number to successfully exchange the licence or will I need proof of address in Ireland?

A: No, you will need to apply in person at any NDLS office to exchange your UK licence for an Irish Licence **AND** you will need to submit proof of your Irish address. More information on the licence exchange system is available via www.ndls.ie

The third year of the Back for Business initiative is now open for registration, until 7th January 2020. Back for Business is a Government supported scheme aimed at fostering and supporting entrepreneurial activity among returned emigrants or those planning to return to live in Ireland in the near future.

The six-month part time development programme is aimed at assisting participants to start and develop a business. It addresses the challenges that all early stage entrepreneurs face with a particular focus on the additional barriers and challenges faced by those who have been out of the country for some time. This can often result in their local knowledge, contact base and professional and personal networks being less developed than those of typical entrepreneurs.

Back for Business is based on a model of peer support, entrepreneurs supporting entrepreneurs. Volunteer Lead Entrepreneurs will make their time available to facilitate round tables and to share their experience of starting and growing a business. This approach is well proven as being effective in bringing about increased motivation and confidence among entrepreneurs and having a positive impact on their enterprise development. If you have any questions, please Tel (+353) 1 8450770 or **email:** info@backforbusiness.com

To register online, see; <https://www.backforbusiness.com/register-your-interest/>

Difficulties in registering with a G.P

I have recently returned to Ireland and wish to apply for a Medical Card. As part of that process, I need to sign up to a G.P and they must stamp the Medical Card form to show I am accepted at their practice. However, I have now tried 3 different G.Ps in the area and all have stated that they are full/not accepting any new patients.

I have been told that I can still go ahead with my Medical Card application and that the Health Service Executive will have to appoint a G.P for me if I am approved.

Q: Do I have to provide proof in writing from the G.Ps that I have tried already that they cannot accept me?

A: The HSE have confirmed that you do not need you to provide written proof of refusal from the G.Ps themselves. However, you will need to provide the names and addresses of the GPs that you have tried, unsuccessfully, when submitting your Medical Card application

The website of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) is moving to new single Government Site

From **Monday, 2 December 2019**, the website of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP, formerly available via: www.welfare.ie) will be moving to a new single Government of Ireland website called Gov.ie

Information on all 89 welfare schemes and services will be easier to find and easier to understand. Contact details for various services and offices, information on opening hours and locations will be easier to access. The move follows a Government Decision in late 2017 to make information on the range of Government services available in one place in an easy to read and easy to navigate platform.

Note! It is anticipated that all content from the DEASP will be available on Gov.ie by Spring 2020.

Fuel Allowance – Ireland

Fuel Allowance is a payment under the National Fuel Scheme to help with the cost of heating your home during the winter months. It is paid to people who are dependent on long-term social welfare payments and who are unable to provide for their own heating needs. Only one Fuel Allowance is paid to a household.

Fuel Allowance is generally paid with the relevant social welfare payment on the same day. People can choose to get Fuel Allowance paid weekly or to get the total allowance paid in 2 lump sums. Fuel Allowance is paid for 28 weeks of the year; the 2019-2020 Fuel Allowance season began on 30 September 2019. The current weekly rate of payment is €22.50. An increase of €2 weekly was announced recently in the budget.

The increase will come into effect from January 2020, bringing the weekly payment to €24.50 per week. For more information, people should contact the social welfare section that deals with their weekly welfare payment.

Providing feedback to the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland

If you wish to make a comment, give feedback on a service or make a complaint to the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland in relation to yourself, on behalf of a relative or vulnerable person, there are a number of avenues that you can take;

- Tell the people caring for you/your relative
- Fill in the online feedback form, available to download **via www.hse.ie**
- Email the HSE at: **yoursay@hse.ie**.
- Fill out the paper feedback form available at HSE facilities. (The feedback form is available in 9 languages).
- Call the HSE from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. TEL: + 353 45 880 400
- Call HSELive on 1850 241 850 from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm on Saturday. Call +353 41 685 0300 (from abroad).

If you're not able to give feedback yourself, ask a relative, carer or advocate to do this for you.

If you need to report a concern about a vulnerable adult in the care of the HSE, you can contact the confidential recipient service; The Office of the Confidential Recipient for Vulnerable Persons, Training Services Centre, Dooradoyle, Limerick

Tel: + 353 61 585603 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5.30pm **Email:** leigh.gath@crhealth.ie

Housing opportunities for Safe Home housing applicants; Donegal & Limerick

Please contact the Safe Home office for more information



Radharc na Cille – Carrigart, Co. Donegal

Cluid Housing Association has a one-bedroom ground floor apartment available in their scheme in Carrigart. Carrigart village is set in the North West of Co. Donegal (approx 23 miles from Letterkenny).

Applicants **must be** registered and approved on the Donegal County Council housing list in order to be considered for this scheme. Rents are set on an individual basis, depending on each tenant's income



A Housing Association in **Doon, Co. Limerick** has a one bedroom property available. Doon is a small village with a daily bus service to Limerick City. The maximum weekly rent is €80. However, tenants on low incomes, who are registered and approved on the Limerick County Council housing list may qualify for help with the rent costs.

Applicants **must be** registered and approved on the Limerick County Council housing list in order to be considered for this scheme.

Subject Access Requests – Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection

If you have made a welfare application to the DEASP in Ireland and wish to access a copy of information held about you on the Department files, you can make a Subject Access Request. A Subject Access Request Form can be downloaded via:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Subject-Access-Request-Guidelines.aspx> on the DEASP website.

The completed form can then be emailed to **SARS@welfare.ie** or posted to:

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection,

SARS Unit, Shannon Lodge, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim

In order to verify your identity, requests for personal data must be accompanied by proof of your identity, including a photocopy of your passport or driving licence or Public Services Card.

Requests for personal data should also include:

Your name, PPS number, and postal address;

Your signature and the date of the request;

If you are applying on behalf of another person, then a signed authority from the individual is required; Any other details which may help to locate the information which is the subject of your request.

The Department's Data Protection Policy is available at www.welfare.ie/dataprotection

Dental treatment in Ireland – for Medical Card Holders

The Health Service Executive (HSE) provides some free dental treatment to certain citizens through the public health service. Services are provided by dentists employed by Local Health Offices in your area and by private dentists who have contracts with the HSE to provide certain services.

If you do not qualify for HSE services, then you may be treated by a private dental practitioner. Dentists must display private fees in a place where patients can view them before consultation. A single fee must apply for some procedures while the fees for others may be shown as a range, with a minimum and maximum clearly stated. Where a range of fees applies, it is not permitted to set a minimum price only.

The Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) provides access to dental treatment for adult medical card holders (aged 16 or over). Medical card holders are entitled to a free dental examination in each calendar year, as well as any extractions that are required. One first-stage endodontic (root canal) treatment is also available each year for teeth at the front of the mouth.

Two fillings are covered in each calendar year. For a filling on a tooth that has already been filled in the last 5 years, the claim form must detail why it is clinically necessary to repeat the filling.

Denture repairs, the control of haemorrhage and the issuing of prescriptions will be covered where the dentist is satisfied as to the clinical need. All other treatments, including providing dentures, require the prior approval of the local HSE dental surgeon.



A light in the window

One of the most famous lights in Ireland is the light that shines from an upstairs window at Áras an Uachtaráin. Visible from the main road through the Phoenix Park, the light is a symbolic beacon, lighting the way for Irish emigrants and their descendants, welcoming them to their homeland.

First placed there by President Mary Robinson, the light builds on an old Irish tradition of placing a light in the window to guide the way of strangers in the night.

The original light now shines in the library in Ballina, Mrs. Robinson's home town, and was replaced by a Tilley lamp donated to President McAleese on the day of her inauguration. President Michael D. Higgins decided to continue the tradition, and the light still shines.

President Higgins has put the theme of Migration at the heart of his work and many of his speeches, and the events he has hosted or attended focus on issues related to the topics of the Diaspora, Homelessness, Refugees and Solidarity.

Out and about during 2019



Minister Ciaran Cannon, Karen Mc Hugh, Dr. Jerry Cowley, Chairman, Safe Home Ireland, at Diaspora Consultation Session in Co. Mayo



Jane McCulloch, Consul General Scotland, Karen Mc Hugh Safe Home Ireland



Noelette Hanley, Luton Irish Forum, Noreen Mulrine & Karen Mc Hugh, Safe Home



Karen Mc Hugh, Safe Home Ireland, Ashley Harmon, London Irish Centre; Judith Orr, Irish in Britain; Sarah Owen & Ellen McCarthy, Crosscare



Brian Hanley and staff from Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas with Karen Mc Hugh, Safe Home Ireland at Consular Staff Training Day



Nicholas O'Brien, Ireland's Ambassador to Germany with Dr. Jerry Cowley, Chair, Safe Home Ireland

Christmas holiday arrangements

The Safe Home office will be closed from 4pm on Friday 20th December and will re-open on Monday 6th January 2020 at 9am



Safe Home staff meeting

From left, Mary Ann Fadian, Karen McHugh, Noreen Mulrine & Brenda Fleming



*Nollaig Shona agus athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir
From the Safe Home Ireland Board members & staff*



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



Ao Roinn Gnóthaí Éachtaracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Safe Home Programme CLG trading as Safe Home Ireland

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