



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &  
INFORMATION



OUTREACH  
VISITS



HOUSING  
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

February 2020 – Issue 218

## From the Chairman's Desk

### CONTACT US:

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(from Ireland)

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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**

Greetings,

What a small but troubled world we live in at this time. While climate change is being blamed for the terrible flooding from the river Shannon, the Coronavirus(COVID-19) threat looms larger than ever with 150 cases and three deaths now closer to home in Italy.

Like so many other European countries after their general elections this State is now struggling to form a government in the aftermath of the national poll. Add to the aforementioned the fallout from Brexit and you have a recipe for further political uncertainty to come. Yet such is life and ongoing change is part and parcel of what living in this world is all about.

Infections will come and go and scientists will use their ingenuity once again to rise to the challenge of developing more specific antiviral treatments and antibiotics and vaccines the same as we developed them before to conquer the common flu and novel bacterial infections such as caused Legionella.

In light of all of this, we should remember a few simple steps guaranteed to keep us safer such as getting the annual flu vaccine and washing our hands regularly and properly. In time we will no doubt have the COVID-19 vaccine in our armory as well. In the meantime, it will help greatly if we are more vigilant about isolating ourselves if we develop respiratory symptoms such as cough and fever and stomach symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhea, and avoiding others with such symptoms. Seeking prompt medical help for worrying respiratory symptoms such as shortness of breath will ensure complications are treated at an early stage. And don't forget to look in on that elderly neighbour. Their life might well depend on it! So long for now.

**Dr Jerry Cowley**  
**Chairman**

## Applying for an Irish Contributory Pension from abroad – Frequently Asked Questions

I am reaching pension age and am currently resident outside of Ireland. I lived and worked in Ireland for many years before emigrating. I now want to apply for the Irish State Pension (Contributory) but I cannot remember my Irish Insurance number (it might be an old RSI number).

**Q.** (i) Can you tell me how to I could find details of my PPS number before I send in the application? and (ii) I would also like to know if I can apply for the pension online?

**A.** (i) If you lived and worked in Ireland after 1979, you may already have a valid Insurance /PPS number in the system here. You can check this out by contacting the office below.

**In writing:** Client Identity Services, Shannon Lodge, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim, Éire

**Tel:** 00353 71 967 2616

Following the recorded message, select option 1 to get through to the PPS/Client Identity Services.

**Important Note!** Don't worry if you don't have a PPSN, you can still go ahead and submit your pension application. A PPS number will be allocated to you as part of the application process.

**(ii)** It is not possible to apply online for either any of the pension schemes. Hard copy applications must be submitted in writing to: Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, Pension Services Office, College Road, Sligo, Éire.

### Bits and pieces re Brexit

The UK left the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. There will be no immediate changes for citizens and businesses. A transition period will last until 31 December 2020.

Information from the **Health Service Executive (HSE)** in Ireland during the transition period:

- EU rules and regulations will continue to apply to the UK
- the UK will remain part of the EU's Single Market and Customs Union
- the EU and the UK will start negotiations on a new future relationship agreement

If you have questions about the impact of Brexit on the health service, you can email: [brexit@hse.ie](mailto:brexit@hse.ie)

### Residency and the Common Travel Area; What is the position now for Irish citizens in the UK and of British citizens in Ireland?

The Common Travel Area allows Irish and British citizens to move freely and reside in either jurisdiction. They also enjoy associated rights and entitlements. The Government of Ireland and the UK Government have committed to maintaining the Common Travel Area in all circumstances.

**I was born in Northern Ireland. Will a UK exit mean that I am no longer entitled to Irish citizenship or an Irish passport?** The UK exit from the EU does not change anything about entitlement to Irish citizenship. The essential legal position remains as follows:

- If you were born on the island of Ireland before 1 January 2005, you are entitled to be an Irish citizen.
- If you were born on the island of Ireland on or after 1 January 2005, your right to Irish citizenship depends on your parents' citizenship at the time of your birth and the residency history of at least one of your parents before your birth.

Safe Home Ireland will continue to report on the implications/changes relating to Brexit in future issues, as the situation unfolds.

## Carers Support Grant (CSG) – Ireland

From time to time we are contacted by people who have returned to Ireland on a temporary basis to care for an older /disabled relative, to enquire if they may be entitled to Carers Allowance here.

There are a number of qualifying conditions attached to Carer's Allowance in Ireland (including means testing and meeting habitual residency requirements). Where the carer cannot provide proof to show that they have severed their ties abroad, and that they are back in Ireland on a permanent basis, their Carers Allowance application is normally declined on habitual residency grounds. However, people in this situation may be able to get some support by applying for the Carers Support Grant (formerly known as the Respite Care Grant).

**The Carer's Support Grant** of €1,700 is paid once each year, usually on the first Thursday in June, for each person being cared for. It is not taxable, means tested or subject to habitual residence conditions. The applicant does not have to be in receipt of Carers Allowance/Benefit in order to qualify for the CSG.

- **The carer** must be living with or in a position to provide fulltime care and attention to the person in need of care.
- The carer must be at least 16 and ordinarily resident in the state
- The carer must be caring for the person for at least 6 months, up to and including the 1st Thursday in June, the payment day of the grant

**The person being cared for** must be so incapacitated as to require fulltime care and attention. Requiring fulltime care and attention means he or she is so incapacitated as to need continuous supervision to avoid danger to him or her or constant supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day in concern with normal bodily functions.

Qualification for the Carer's Support Grant is primarily based on a medical assessment of the person needing care. With permission from the person needing care, their G.P. completes a Medical Report that forms part of the CSG1 form. When completing the application form, it can also be useful to include extra information to back up the need for fulltime care and attention. This information can include reports from public health nurses, doctors, therapists or consultant.

### When to apply;

People can apply for a Carer's Support Grant for any given year from April of that year until 31 December of the following year.

For example: Applications for 2020 can be made at any time from April 2020 up until 31 December 2021.

From January 2020, people in receipt of Carers payments are allowed to work or take part in an education or training course for up to 18.5 hours per week (previously 15 hours in 2019)

### Where to apply;

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Carer's Support Grant Section, PO Box 10085, Dublin 2

For more information, **Tel:** (01) 673 2222

CSG application can be downloaded via;  
<https://www.welfare.ie/en/pdf/CSG1.pdf>

Application forms are also available via local welfare/Intreo and Citizens Information Offices

## NYC Care - A new Programme for access to Health Care in New York

NYC Care is a new health care access programme that guarantees low-cost and no-cost services to New Yorkers who do not qualify for or cannot afford health insurance. NYC Care guarantees health care for New Yorkers, **regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.**

With NYC Care, you can:

- Get a unique membership card to access health care at NYC Health + Hospitals patient care locations across the city
- Choose your own primary care provider
- Receive preventive care like vaccinations, routine screenings and mammograms to stay healthy
- Get access to mental health support and substance abuse services
- Get your first appointment in two weeks or less
- Talk to customer service representatives who speak your language and can help you day or night
- Get access to low-cost prescription medications day or night
- Get support from a primary care team that also includes nurses, medical assistants, social workers, pharmacists, and nutritionists
- Afford quality health care. There are no membership fees, monthly fees, or premiums. Your cost to receive health care is based on your family size and income

**Eligibility:** You must have been living in New York City for six months or longer; must not qualify for any health insurance plan available in New York State **and** must not be able to afford health insurance based on government guidelines. If approved, you will receive a **membership card** that is unique to you and shows your fees for health care services. Ensure you carry this card with you when visiting your primary care provider or if getting health care services at any NYC Health + Hospitals patient care location

**For more information,** contact the NYC Care team in confidence, **Tel: 1646 692 2273**

**Or** contact our colleagues at; Emerald Isle Immigration Center, **email:** [liliana@eiic.org](mailto:liliana@eiic.org)

**Tel:** (718) 324-7741 Queens Office, or (718) 324-3039 Bronx office

### Housing opportunity for Safe Home applicants – Co. Kerry

A Housing Association in Castleisland, Co. Kerry has a one-bedroom apartment available. The unit is part of a scheme of 4 newly constructed apartments, finished to a high standard. The scheme is set in a central location, close to services and amenities. Interested parties **must be** registered and approved on the Kerry County Council housing list. Maximum weekly rent is €73, tenants on low income may qualify for some assistance with rent costs. **For more information,** please contact the Safe Home office, as soon as possible.

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



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DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND