



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

Welcome from our CEO – Karen McHugh

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

Get in touch

It has been a long and challenging few months for us all and we are cautiously looking forward to coming out of lockdown and evolving to some sort of new normality. Little did we know in March of this year that the whole would come to a standstill because of COVID-19 and that we would have to put on hold or cancel many aspects of both our professional and personal lives.

We have all missed the face-to-face contact, the hugs, meeting friends, visits home by family members, cancelled weddings and other celebratory occasions, not being able to visit our relatives/friends in residential setting or attend the funeral of a loved one. We cannot underestimate the impact of each of these very important occasions, but what have we learned and what can we take from this experience as we now adjust to this 'new reality'?

COVID-19 has taught us that despite being apart, staying connected and coming together, albeit in different ways, is critically important to our emotional well-being. We have witnessed many examples of communities right across the world, coming together for the common good to ensure that no one was forgotten, left behind or feeling alone.

Safe Home was also able to play our part in connecting communities and ensuring those aboard were kept informed. In conjunction with our partners here in Ireland to include [Crosscare Migrant Project](#), [Citizen Information](#) and [Helplink](#) we co-facilitated four online 'Returning to Ireland during the pandemic' Information Sessions for organisations working with Irish abroad. Thank you to Irish Agencies abroad, including [Coalition of Irish Immigration Centres, USA](#), [Irish in Britain](#), [Irish Radio Canada](#) and [Irish Embassy Australia](#) for hosting the sessions.

We also held two Facebook live concerts in May and are grateful to the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, and the Minister with Responsibility for Diaspora, Ciarán Cannon, for opening our first Concert on 2nd May 2020 with outstanding performances – see [HERE](#) for link to full concert and [HERE](#) for link to pre-concert. Thank you to Seán Keane and Mike Hanrahan who were the lead acts in our second concert on 30th May – see [HERE](#) for link to full concert and [HERE](#) to link to pre-concert. We also wish to thank you all for tuning in and for the generous donations to support our appeal to help those 'coming home in crisis'. We are indebted to all the other artists from all around Ireland and right across the globe who gave so generously of their time and with such kindness, compassion and eagerness to support and connect with Irish abroad and particularly those most vulnerable. It was an honour to have you perform for Safe Home Ireland.

Regrettably, due to COVID-19, we had to suspend our home visiting and outreach services to people who recently returned home and to our housing applicants throughout the UK. We also had to cancel our planned Returning to Ireland (RTI) Information clinics in the UK. As we enter the phase 4 of the Roadmap of Opening Ireland, starting from Monday 29th of June, we are hoping to be able to resume our outreach work within Ireland. We will of course have to take measures when meeting people to ensure that our staff and clients are all safe and protected under public health guidelines. For now, our home visits to Safe Home housing applicants throughout the UK will have to remain 'on hold' but we will be keeping this under constant review and will report on any changes as soon as we can. **Take care, stay safe and keep in touch from Karen and all the Staff & Board of Safe Home Ireland**

Thinking of returning /moving to Ireland? Come prepared

Below are some examples of documentation to bring home with you that should help ease your transition into 'the system' in Ireland.

- Personal documentation: Birth Certificates, Marriage Certificate, Divorce Papers, Passport, Driving licence
- Back up documentation regarding any medical conditions and list of medications/current prescription
- Name & address of last employer and National Insurance/Social Security number
- Recent pay slips and equivalent of latest P60 and P45
- Up to date income statements from your pension/s provider (State and work related)
- Most recent rent /mortgage statement
- Proof to show you have given up your tenancy/sold your home abroad
- Proof to show that you have cancelled any assistance with rent supports abroad (e.g. Housing Benefit in the UK)
- Proof to show you have stopped any non-transferable welfare or social security payments
- 6 months back bank statements **and** where possible, closing statement/s
- Where possible, proof to show you have closed your bank, post office account/s abroad, unless there are reasons that it needs to remain opened (e.g. to honour direct debit payments; you may be expecting payments to be lodged into the account abroad; you may have an outstanding loan or debt on the account)
- NHS or similar Health Card
- If taking a car: Drivers Licence, registration, insurance details and any documents associated with ownership
- Car Insurance: documentary evidence of a validated 'no claims history' from your car insurance company abroad (Car insurance for returning emigrants/people who have no driving history in Ireland can be very expensive. The advice is to shop around for the best value)

- If you do not already have an active bank account open in Ireland, it can take some time to get the relevant paperwork in place to allow you to open an account when you move here.

-Due to Criminal Justice Legislation (regarding the prevention of money laundering) banks are required to seek proof of residency in Ireland before a customer can open an account here (normally, at least 1 utility bill in the customer's own name at an Irish address), it is not possible to open a resident bank account in Ireland in advance of moving here.

Please contact the Safe Home office if you have additional queries in relation to opening accounts.

- If you intend for a trusted friend/family member to assist you in tying up loose ends for you before/after you move, be aware that because of data protection guidelines you will need to give you express written consent to the relevant bodies so that they can act on your behalf, in your absence (e.g. utility companies/financial institutions/welfare services)

Important Note!

If you think that you may have to apply for any means tested welfare payment or social housing supports when you move to Ireland, please ensure that you review the above list carefully.

Particularly in relation to any documentation that will help to demonstrate that you have severed your ties abroad.

This will be of benefit to you in meeting the **Habitual Residence Condition (HRC)**, which forms a vital part of the assessment criteria for certain welfare payments in Ireland. More information on the HRC can be found via: www.welfare.ie

Reopening Ireland after COVID 19 – Where we are at

A recent announcement regarding the Irish Government's **Roadmap for reopening Society and Business** saw most of what was due to come into effect in phase 4 of the Roadmap accelerated to Phase 3, starting from Monday 29th of June. The revised Roadmap will now have 4 phases, instead of 5. Below is a summary of what we can expect from 29th June.

Sport: All sporting activity can resume. Individual sporting organisations will decide how best to proceed. Close physical contact sports, such as rugby and boxing, can also resume. Gyms, yoga, pilates and dance studios can reopen (effective cleaning and social distancing measures must be adhered to).

Culture/recreation: Theatres, music venues, concert halls and cinemas can reopen, with social distancing measures in place. Indoor recreational venues, such as bowling alleys and bingo halls, can also reopen, as can leisure centres and swimming pools

Drinking and eating out: Bars (with or without restaurant licences, as long as they serve food) can reopen with table service only and various other restrictions including the serving of a "substantial" meal.

Tourism: Hotels, hostels, caravan parks, galleries and museums can re-open

Businesses/services: All categories of retail outlets can reopen. Wellbeing services, for example chiropractic, massage therapy, acupuncture, can also reopen and driving schools will be back in business.

Travel: All restrictions on travelling **within Ireland** will be lifted. Tourist travel to offshore islands may resume. There is no date set yet for when people to be allowed travel abroad again.

Public transport: The advice around this is to use public transport for essential journeys only, to wear face coverings and avoid peak-time travel.

Private transport: Tour, event and private bus use, and vehicle hire, will recommence.

Hair salons/barbers/beauticians: Salons are allowed to reopen from 29th of June.

Funerals, Weddings/large gatherings: People can gather in groups of 50 indoors and 100 outdoors until 20 July. All going well, numbers are set to increase thereafter.

Religious services: People can attend services at places of worship from 29 June, with physical distancing measures in place and a maximum of 50 people

Childcare: Crèches, childminders and preschools will open for children of all workers who need childcare to return to work.

Arriving in Ireland from abroad

The 14 day self-isolation requested for most people coming into Ireland currently remains in place until the 9th of July. Completing the Passenger Locator Form (PLF) is still mandatory for everyone coming into the country. Please contact the Safe Home office for more information in relation to the PLF.

These guidelines are under constant review so it is worth checking out the situation with your travel operator in advance, depending on when you intend to travel.

Changes to rent support for those experiencing domestic violence in Ireland

Earlier this month, the Minister for Social Protection announced changes that will make it easier for victims of domestic violence to access rent supports, via Rent Supplement.

Under the new rules, victims of domestic violence can get **immediate access** to Rent Supplement for a three month period to ensure that they are not prevented from leaving their home because of financial concerns. The usual means test will not apply for this three month period. The process will work based on referrals from Tusla-funded services; referrals from An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive (HSE) will also be possible.

After the three-month period, a further three-month extension may be provided, subject to the usual rent supplement means assessment.

After six months, if the tenant has a long term housing need, they can apply to their local housing authority for social housing supports and, if eligible, will be able to access the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP).

Frequently Asked Question

Q. I need to apply for a copy of my Irish birth cert. Everyone seems to be directing me to apply online but I am not computer literate. **How can I get the certificate in the old-fashioned way?**

A: You can write to the **General Register Office, Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co Roscommon, F42 VX53** and they will post you out the relevant application form. Alternatively, you can ring the General Register office via **Tel: +353 906632900**

They can provide contact details for the local civil register office if you prefer to access your cert from there.

Note! Local registration offices are closed to the public at the moment due to the COVID-19 situation.

The cost of the birth cert is €20. If you can prove (with a letter from the Department of Social Protection) that you require the cert for social welfare purposes, the cost is €1. Where relevant, applications will incur an additional charge to cover postage.

Note on applying for certificates via email or online; To apply for a certificate or copy by email, send your request via **email to: gro@groireland.ie**

The Civil Registration Service operates the official website **www.certificates.ie** for members of the public who wish to purchase certificates of birth, death, marriage, adoption, civil partnership or stillbirth online. Enquiries regarding applications made to this service should be made to the HSE, **Tel: 00353 (0)1 8638200 OR** via email to: **certificates@hse.ie**

Returned to Ireland and in need of support? If you/anyone you know has recently **returned home to Ireland** and could do with some support, please do get in touch with us for advice/information or to arrange an appointment.

For anyone **living outside of Ireland** who may need support, please remember that there are great Irish welfare & advice Centres dotted around the world that you can link in. If you need contact details for the Irish Centre/other relevant services closest to you, please do get in touch with us here at Safe Home.



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme
An Bhoim Gnídhar Eacnamaíochta agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade