



July 2020

A chara, we hope that all is well for you & yours, wherever in the world you are in these challenging times.

As the holiday season is now in full swing here in Mayo, we want to remind you that Safe Home Ireland remains 'open for business'. We are continuing to work in conjunction with individuals and agencies at home and abroad to provide services for Irish emigrants worldwide, who may be thinking of returning home, as well as those who have recently made that journey. Outlined below, is a flavour of the supports and services that we currently provide;

Anyone who has recently returned to Ireland or may be contemplating doing so, or has family members that fit into that category, can contact our office by phone or email and we can provide information on a whole range of areas, including welfare, healthcare, housing, COVID-19 & more.

The easing of some restrictions means that our outreach service to returnees throughout the 26 counties, to assist with applications for benefits, entitlements, housing and healthcare has resumed. This support service is operating in line within the strict public health guidelines and best practice, which ensures maximum protection for Safe Home staff and clients. To make an appointment for an outreach visit, please contact our office.

In line with public health advice, our home visits to Safe Home housing applicants throughout the UK remain suspended. We are keeping this under constant review, and hope in time, to be 'on the road again', however, we are unable to give any timescale for now. In the meantime, we are contacting all of our housing applicants to check in on them in these challenging times, as well as carry out a review of their application.

We are available to any Safe Home housing applicant who may wish to get in touch with us for a more in-depth discussion about the progress of their application, or those who have questions about how returning to Ireland may affect them, in terms of transfer of current benefits and entitlement to health care and welfare here on return.

If you or anyone you know abroad is feeling isolated or vulnerable, please get in touch with us or the nearest Irish Welfare & Advice Agency (some may still be closed to the public but can still be contacted via phone/email). If you cannot find details of the nearest Irish Centre/other relevant support services to where you are, please ring or email us.

If you or anyone you know abroad needs to or is finding it difficult to make travel arrangements to get home at this time, we urge you to contact the Irish Embassy/Consulate in your area (some may still be closed to the public but continue to offer email and telephone support). If you cannot find the details, please ring or email us.

In this COVID19 environment, guidelines and public health advice is ever-changing, so it can be difficult to make plans, particularly when it comes down to travel arrangements. For people returning or moving to Ireland who may have queries about current travel guidelines, we can give an overview of that information.

Finally, for ANYONE feeling overwhelmed, anxious or lonely during this time, give us a call, with your contact phone number and we can ring you back for a chat. It is important that you stay connected during this time, especially if you are self-isolated or living alone.

Best wishes & take care, from the CEO, Board & Staff of Safe Home Ireland



COVID-19 and Re-Opening Ireland – where we are at.....

Most shops, business', pubs serving food, restaurants, hotels and other service industries in Ireland opened on 29th June (phase 3). However, phase 4 of Ireland's Roadmap for reopening society and business that was due to commence on 20th July has been paused. It is now set to commence on the 10th of August, subject to government approval and public health advice. If this goes ahead, pubs, bars, hotel bars (not serving food) nightclubs and casinos should be allowed to re-open and gatherings of up to 100 people indoors and 500 outdoors should hopefully also be allowed.

As it stands, other measures and restrictions are regularly being updated, sometimes from week-to-week. Some of the existing announcements refer to measures that will be mandatory (with legislation to back them up), while others relate to guidelines or advice, rather than 'rules' that will be enforced. Below are some of the key areas that may be of interest.

Arriving in Ireland; Apart from some very limited exceptions, everyone arriving in Ireland, regardless of what country they come from is required **by law** to fill in a Passenger Locator Form (PLF). This form logs details like phone numbers and the address the person intends to reside during their stay. If a person provides false or misleading information (e.g. wrong name/address) or if they fail to alert Gardai that they have moved accommodation during the 14 days after their arrival, they could face a €2,500 fine or a prison term of up to six months. Plans are afoot to make the PLF electronic, to assist with contact tracing and contact to ensure that people are complying with the regulations.

The Irish government recently published a '**green list**' of countries that it is safe to travel to. Countries included in that are; San Marino, Gibraltar, Monaco, Latvia, Slovakia, Greenland, Greece, Lithuania, Cyprus, Slovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Malta, Finland, Norway and Italy. However, the public health advice is still **NOT to travel outside of Ireland at all**, unless for essential reasons. Visitors /people returning from countries on the green list will not be expected to restrict their movements for 14 days after they arrive. The list will be reviewed every two weeks, so the situation may change depending on changes in the level of disease in those countries.

For people arriving into Ireland from any non-green list countries; While it is not mandatory for people in this category (including returning Irish citizens) to self-isolate or restrict their movements for 14 days, in the interest of public health, the strong advice and constant government messaging is for them to do so and we reiterate this strong advice. For full information on government current travel advice , please see; <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/>

Face Coverings; It is mandatory, and enforceable by law in Ireland, to wear a mask is on public transport. A change has been announced to make wearing a face covering in shops mandatory and this will become enforceable by law very shortly. However, most retailers have already started enforcing the wearing of face coverings (as of Monday 24th July). There are exemptions in place for people who cannot wear face coverings due to a physical/mental disability.

Gatherings indoors and outdoors; Under current public health guidelines, the numbers in a gathering inside a house should be capped at 10 people, from a maximum of four households. For events taking place in venues which allow for distancing, the maximum number is set at 50 people. People who are planning special events, like weddings, will be keeping a close eye and ear on the 10th of August, when all going well, the plan to allow that number increase to 100 will go ahead.

Re-opening of schools; Plans are under-way to re-open schools fully at the end of August. In a reflection of the impact of the restrictions of the 'COVID world' has had on everyone, it appears that even children seem to be looking forward to this!