



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

September 2021 – Issue 235

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**Thinking of returning or
moving to Ireland?
Get in touch!**

Safe Home Programme CLG
trading as Safe Home Ireland
Charity No: 20049119
Company Reg No: 351678

Welcome from our CEO – Karen Mc Hugh

Welcome to our September Newsletter! We hope you all had a nice summer and pending on where in the world you are based, that you were able to meet up with family/friends over the holidays and perhaps for some, you were able to travel home to Ireland?

While we all know that the pandemic is far from over, there has been a gradual easing of restrictions here in Ireland and we are adapting to a new 'normal' way of living. We know the situation is very different in other parts of the world with strict lockdowns still in place and our thoughts are with you and we hope that you will be able to travel home soon again.

We continue to mark our 21st Anniversary and this October we are embarking on a fitness challenge with Galway based, [Inspire Fitness](#)! The challenge will be to complete 100km in 31 days and participants can walk, run, swim, dance, skip or even clean to raise vital funds for our work. We would love you to join us and for those who complete the challenge you will be in with a chance to win some CD's from our Ambassador, [Seán Keane](#)! See our [Go Fund Me page](#) for more detail and a [short video by one of our Directors, Ann Roddy](#), who is spearheading this challenge with Inspire Fitness! If you would like to take part, please do contact our office or Inspire Fitness!

We continue to seek submissions for our [Every Picture Tells a Story](#) that we featured in our August Newsletter. We intend to collate a memory board for an exhibition later this year as part of our 21st Anniversary celebrations. Please do get in touch with us if you would like to get involved – we would love to hear from you!

Thank you to all who responded to our [Planned Giving](#) appeal that we featured last month too and if you would like more information or to get involved please do contact our office too!

In September, we welcomed **Johnny B. Broderick** to our small team! Johnny B. will be working to advance our profile at a local, national and global level! You will be hearing more from him and about some of our exciting initiatives over the coming months too.

We were delighted to be featured on [Saturday Irish Radio Canada](#) (Ceol agus Craic show) on 25th September. Thank you to presenters Ken from Sligo and Mark from Laois for giving us the platform to tell listeners around Canada more about our work. You can listen back [HERE](#).

Finally, we encourage you all to keep in touch with us on all our social media channels for regular updates on our work. Also, if you are thinking about moving or returning to Ireland, or know someone who is, please do get in touch with us and we can provide accurate information and guidance to assist in the decision-making process. See [HERE](#) a very short video that gives an overview of our work/services.

Until next month, take care, stay safe and keep in touch from Karen and all the staff and board of Safe Home Ireland





Important information for anyone returning/moving to Ireland

Since 1st May 2015, most people over the age of 34 who take out private health insurance in Ireland for the first time are hit with loadings on their premium. The loadings are applied at a rate of **2 per cent a year for each year** that an individual is over the age of 34. The loading can be considerable, depending on your age and if you have never held private health insurance in the past.

Returning emigrants can avoid the loadings **IF they buy private health insurance within nine months of their return.** However, **this will also depend on when exactly they left Ireland, and when they returned.** Anyone who left Ireland after May 1, 2015, and who has since returned home, might escape or avoid the full force of the loadings - depending on when they returned home. People who left after May 1st 2015, who then returned before November 1st, 2018, and who never had private health insurance before, can expect to face full loadings. However, people who left after May 1st, 2015 and who returned on or after November 1st, 2018 can get a credit for the time spent outside Ireland - **as long as they buy private health insurance within nine months of their return.**

The legislation around this health insurance loadings system is currently under review and may change, so our advice is to check out your situation in relation to loadings in advance of a move. **The Health Insurance Authority (HIA)** is the statutory regulator of the private health insurance market in Ireland. The Authority also provides information regarding their rights and health insurance plans and benefits.

For more information, see The Health Insurance Authority [HERE](#). or **Tel: +353 (0)1 406 0080**. It can be confusing to try and compare 'like with like' policies across the different providers, so it may also be helpful to seek the advice of a health insurance broker to advise you on the best plan to suit your individual /family circumstances.

Frequently Asked Question: Private Health Insurance and Waiting Periods

Except in cases of accident or injury, I understand that there are initial 'waiting periods' involved in terms of cover when taking out health insurance cover for the first time.

Q. If I take out my policy in advance of moving to Ireland, can I avoid waiting periods?

A. In order to have valid private health insurance cover in Ireland, people must prove that they have residency here for at least 6 months of the year. Different companies may require differing documentation to prove this. **Note!** Waiting periods will differ from initial waiting when it comes to cover for pre-existing conditions

Access to Category 2 limited health care in the public health system

It is important to note that under the Irish public health system, once someone is deemed to be *ordinarily resident* in the State, they can still have free access to some public health care services in the system here, even without a Medical Card or private health insurance.

*To be considered Ordinarily Resident in Ireland, the Health Service Executive (HSE) must be satisfied that you have been living in Ireland for a year or more or show that it is your intention to live here for at least a year.



Applying for or renewing your Irish Passport? – Give yourself plenty of time!

Now that travel restrictions have eased in most parts of the world, there has been a huge rise in the number of people applying for/renewing their Irish passports. This, coupled with the lock downs and working from home policy, has led to a large back-log of passport applications in the system. Therefore, to avoid disappointment, it is important that you give yourself plenty of time to apply for or renew your passport. Applying online is the most efficient way of applying for passports. You can find out more about applying for your Irish passports, including an outline of 'turn-around times' [HERE](#).

Urgent Passport/Rapid Renewal Service: In the case of an emergency situation (e.g. the death or serious illness of a family member, or for emergency medical treatment of the applicant), a passport can be issued on the day applied for. For more on this, please see [HERE](#).

A Pilot Rapid Renewal service has also been introduced from 27th September in the Passport Office in Knockmaun House, 42-47 Mount Street Lower, Dublin 2. Where possible and by appointment only, this service will facilitate the renewal of a passport for an Adult or Child Travelling in less than 3 working days. This service is available only through the Dublin office for now. The Urgent Appointment Service will resume in the Cork Passport Office on 22nd October, subject to further easing of restrictions on social distancing. A first time Adult or Child applicant cannot avail of this service.

If you wish to make an appointment for the Rapid Renewal Passport Service book online or **Tel:** +353 1 671 1633. **Opening Hours:** 9:00am-4:30pm, Monday to Friday.



Important Notice! For Safe Home Housing Applicants

Keeping your Council housing application 'live'

Councils throughout Ireland are currently carrying out their annual reviews to order to update their records on numbers wishing to avail of social housing supports. As part of this process, Councils may be sending out forms for people on their housing list to complete.

Some Safe Home housing applicants have already received these forms and are unsure what they should do. When there are vacancies in Housing Association schemes, they normally revert to the Council's housing waiting list for suitable candidates. **It is therefore very important to complete and return the review forms.** In doing so, you will be indicating your on-going desire to be considered for Housing Association schemes back in Ireland. In cases where circumstances have changed since your Council application was processed, it is important to include up to date information e.g. most recent proof of income/benefits/rent statement etc.

If you have received a form from a Council in Ireland, **don't panic!** Give us a call and we can talk you through it over the phone or contact your nearest Irish Welfare/Advice Centre for assistance. If you have received a form from a Council in Ireland, **don't panic!** Give us a call and we can talk you through it over the phone or contact your nearest Irish Welfare/Advice Centre for assistance.



Covid-19 Update - Passenger locator Form (PLF)

Although there has been significant easing of travel and other Covid19 related restrictions, passengers arriving into Ireland are still required to complete a PLF within 72 hours of their planned arrival into the country. The form can only be completed online, see [HERE](#).

We have had contact from some Irish abroad who now wish to travel home to see family and friends in Ireland for the first time since March 2020. However, they are daunted by all that is involved, nervous about the PLF application process or cannot manage the online system at all. We advise people where they can do so, to link in with their nearest Irish welfare & advice services abroad to get some assistance with the PLF application and to ensure they have all other relevant paperwork ready before their planned journey.

If you are getting help with the PLF application, you should ensure that you **have the following information 'to hand'**, so that it can be completed easily and quickly;

- Mobile phone number that you will be using when in Ireland
- Email address
- Address of where you will be staying in Ireland
- Passport details of passengers aged 18yrs+ and unaccompanied minors, aged 12yrs+
- Details of how you travelled in Ireland (flight/ferry)
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Note! If for any reason there is a change of address from what was initially listed on the PLF, passengers should email: passengerlocatorform@plf.ie to up-date these details.

Ireland and the easing of Covid 19 related restrictions – A quick overview

From 1st September, 100% capacity is now allowed on all public transport. However, passengers must continue to wear face coverings, unless they are exempt.

From 6th September, there is 60% capacity allowed at indoor events (conferences, exhibitions, bingo halls etc). 75% capacity is allowed for outdoor gatherings; 50% capacity is allowed for religious services.

From 20th September, a phased return to the workplace began. Outdoor and indoor group activities have recommenced (sports, dance classes etc.)

Note! the guidelines above only apply to those who are fully vaccinated or have recovered from C19. Restrictions still apply for those who are not fully vaccinated/unvaccinated.

The requirement for Mandatory Hotel Quarantine for some people entering the State has now officially ended.

Further announcements are set for **22nd of October**, when it is expected, all going well (!!) that Ireland will do away with any remaining restrictions and move towards advice and personal responsibility. For people worldwide, the scars and the loss that the pandemic brought will remain in our psyche for a long long time. However, we are all looking forward now with positivity to having some semblance of our old lives back, le cúnamh Dé.