



SAFE HOME IRELAND
EMIGRANT SUPPORT SERVICE



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

January 2022 – Issue 238

Welcome from our CEO

CONTACT US:



Safe Home Ireland
St Brendan's Village
Mulranny, Westport
Co. Mayo, Ireland



Office:

098 36036 (from Ireland)
+353 98 36036 (from abroad)



Mobile:

+ 353 86 059 4538
(Text/WhatsApp)



Website:

www.safehomeireland.com



Email:

info@safehomeireland.com



Safe Home office hours:

Monday to Thursday:

9.00am to 5.00pm

Friday:

9.00am to 4.00pm

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 to our January Newsletter and thank you for all the lovely Christmas cards, messages and New Year well wishes. While it seems like an eternity ago now, we are extremely grateful for your kindness and support and would like to wish you all a very happy, healthy, and safe 2022.

We are pleased to be reporting on the **easing of most Covid restrictions** here in Ireland, after almost two years of strict measures and lockdowns. While limited restrictions still apply, we are cautiously resuming to a 'new normal' and learning to live with Covid, again. We know the pandemic is far from over and we must continue to be vigilant, however, we remain hopeful for positive times ahead. Restrictions relating to international travel still apply and for anyone planning to travel to Ireland, so if be sure to check what regulations are in place if you're booking a trip. We know the situation is different in other countries around the world, with varying levels of restrictions but we hope that 2022 will see the end of this pandemic for us all.

A **new bank holiday** in Ireland was recently announced and this year will fall on the day after St. Patrick's Day, which will mean a double bank holiday that week (17th and 18th March). The 18th March will be a national Day of Remembrance and Recognition, held in memory of all those who lost their lives during the Covid pandemic and to recognise all those who worked on the frontline.

From 2023 onwards the **new bank holiday** will fall on **St. Brigid's Day (Lá Fhéile Bríde)** to mark the many astounding achievements of women in Irish society as well as challenges Irish women faced over the years. To mark St Brigid's Day this year, **To Be Irish** have featured a programme of over 75 online and in person events around the globe and across Ireland celebrating leadership, creativity, and the talent of women from Tuesday 1st of February.

We were delighted to receive a small grant from the Community Foundation for Ireland to assist us conduct an **impact assessment of our work** over the past 21 years. We hope to carry out some interviews with key stakeholders, including people who returned over the 21 year period as well as a range of our partners both at home and abroad. We will be reaching out over the coming months but if you would like to get involved please do contact our office.

We are at the early stages of planning virtual **Returning to Ireland Information Clinics** and if any person or agency would like us to facilitate a clinic, please do get in touch with our office. We are also planning some other events and activities and will have further updates for you next month!

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



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme

AN tSúil Fúilte Ceilteacha
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

"Ní neart go cur le chéile - There's no strength without unity"

The School's Folklore Collection

The Schools' Scheme of 1937-38 represented one of the greatest drives ever undertaken in the field of folklore collecting. Almost 100,000 children, aged eleven to fourteen, in 5,000 primary schools were involved in seeking out and setting down for posterity material dealing with a wide range of Irish folk tradition. This investigation embraced folk tales and folk legends, riddles and proverbs, songs, customs, and beliefs. Games and pastimes as well as descriptions of traditional work practices and crafts (e.g., the manufacture of homemade toys) and many other topics were covered.

The children collected this material mainly from their parents and grandparents and other older members of the community or school district. The result of the Schools' Scheme was the 'Schools Manuscripts Collection', a body of material which extends to more than 500,000 manuscript pages. The collection features material in English and in Irish and covers schools in each of the 26 counties (it did not extend to Northern Ireland).

The main manuscript collection is now available online on Dúchas website [HERE](#) where material can be searched by school, topic, or participant. If you are interested in seeing if a family member took part in this project, you can search for their names under 'people' or you can check the participants listed for the relevant national school. The returns from each county are also available under licence on microfilm in most of the respective county libraries. The full Schools' Folklore Collection, including individual children's copybooks, is now preserved in the Folklore Collection at University College Dublin (UCD).

Ulster Bank leaving the Irish Market

Towards the end of 2021, Ulster Bank announced that they will be exiting the Irish market. If you /someone you know has an account with Ulster Bank and are wondering what you should do, here is a quick overview released by the bank;

"Beginning in early 2022, on a rolling basis, we will start to give current and deposit account customers formal letters of notice of up to six months, to choose a new bank; move to that bank; and close their Ulster Bank accounts. There is no action required by you at this time. We will communicate directly with you via email and / or letter to provide advance notice of any changes or actions required. However, we are actively helping customers who wish to review their banking options. When you are ready to take action, we are ready to help. Please call us on 0818 211 461 or, alternatively, you can call into any of our branches". For more information see Ulster Bank website [HERE](#)

Rent Supplement for Victims of Domestic Violence

In November 2021, the Irish Minister for Social Protection announced that **victims of domestic violence are to be granted easier access to rent supplement on a permanent basis.**

The measure, brought in initially as a result of increased rates of domestic violence during the Pandemic, ensures that victims of domestic violence can continue to get immediate access to rent supplement for a three-month period, thus helping to ensure that victims are not prevented from leaving their home because of financial concerns.

The usual rent supplement means test will not apply for this three-month period. After the initial 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), a social housing support provided by Local Authorities.

Contact our office if you would like more information or for contact details of support networks in your area (in Ireland or abroad). If **you are in danger, contact [Women's Aid](#) 24hr National Freephone Helpline on 1800 341 900 (Ireland)**

Back for Business Scheme re-opens

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 scheme is a 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.

Who can apply? returned emigrants who have lived abroad for at least a year and have returned to Ireland in the last three years, or for emigrants currently living abroad who are planning to return to Ireland in the near future.

Suitable applicants will be (i) those who have recently started a new business in Ireland, or (ii) those who are well advanced in their plans to start a business and have moved well beyond the concept stage or (iii) they are becoming/have become entrepreneurs through the acquisition of an existing business. If the business is newly established, it will not have generated sales before 2019.

To find out more/to register your interest in the scheme, visit [Back for Business](#) Once registered, a link to the application form will then be sent on to you.

Frequently Asked Question: Renewing an Irish Driver's licence

I am currently living in the UK, I have an Irish driver's licence that is set for renewal over the coming months. I would like to renew it online but it seems I cannot do this from abroad as I don't have a PSC (Public Service Card).

Q. Can you please help me to find out if there is any other way that I can renew the licence?

A. In order to apply for/renew an Irish driving licence, an applicant must ordinarily reside in Ireland. Ireland has an exchange agreement in place with the UK (as well as a range of other recognised states*). The Irish RSA (Road Safety Authority) advises that you should contact the DVLA (UK licensing authority) to ascertain the documents required to obtain a UK driving licence. Then if you return to live in Ireland at a future date, you can make an application to exchange the UK licence for an Irish one.

NOTE: See National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) [HERE](#) for list of recognised states.

Public Services Card (PSC) – Ireland

A Public Services Card (PSC) is a card issued to help access a range of public services online in a safe and easy way. It is usually issued to people living in Ireland when they are allocated a Personal Public Service (PPS) number, which everyone in Ireland needs in order to access social welfare benefits, public services and certain information.

Registration for a PSC takes place in a 'face to face' registration process. Non-residents **can not** apply for a PSC. Applicants must attend in person, providing a range of back-up documentation to prove their identity and proof of address in Ireland. Once someone has a PSC, they can set up a MyGovID verified account which will allow them to apply for a range of public services online.

However, holding a PSC is not mandatory across all services – it normally only applies where online access is the preferred option. See [HERE](#) for more information on PSC Ireland.





Postcard from Abroad



I had an uncle who worked for a charity that supported people in Cape Town during apartheid, that was my first contact with South Africa. After college I took a year out to travel and visit my Uncle and that was back in 1995 when I was 21 and in my head I had so many plans. Staying in Cape Town for 16 years was never in those plans, but sometimes the journey takes you on a different path and that's what happened to me.

Falling in love and getting married to a local lady was not on the 'to do' list either but again it seemed so natural, and we now have three beautiful children. We decided a while back that it would be a safer option for us to return to Ireland, a changed Ireland, and hopefully one more accepting of mixed-race marriages and a more welcoming society for mixed race children in the education system. There is so much to consider in a move like this, so many questions and most of all so many fears. Procrastination and fear have already delayed the process along with that the uncertainty of the pandemic, the children are getting older and developing friendships and roots. Parents always want what is best for their children and we are no different, we want them to have a good education and a solid future without fear in a stable environment that treats them with respect and equality. It will be a massive change for my wife too, leaving her parents and siblings, not easy leaving a close-knit community even if it fraught with difficulties. It is so important that we have everything in order for a smooth transition. Finding a place to live will be the priority, schools, jobs for ourselves, PPS numbers, passports, driving licences, sometimes it is so overwhelming to even think about it, but we know in our hearts it is the right thing to do.

Our goal now is that we will be back in Ireland by the end of 2022. One of my contacts in the Irish embassy has put me in touch with Safe Home Ireland to help us through the paperwork and procedures to become resident in Ireland. Leaving Ireland in 1995 seems so long ago, carefree and full of energy, ready to change the world, and now the challenges of what lies ahead is full of wearisome procedures and processes, while managing our responsibility as parents and partners. Kipling wrote "if you can keep your head when all around are losing theirs and blaming it on you" could be how the next year pans out so I suppose the motto for the next year is Respect the Process.

With love from Cape Town xx



Feedback on our Services..... we want to hear from you!

Whether you are involved in an agency abroad, a client of Safe Home or just someone with an interest in the work that we do, we are asking that you get in touch with us to give your opinion and feedback. What do you feel we do well, what can we do even better?

Your input will help us shape our service and help those who avail of our service in the future. **Please contact our office directly, by email/phone or complete and return our [feedback form](#), via our website.**



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme

As An tSeirbhís Tacaíochta
Do Mhúinteoirí Éireannacha