



SAFE HOME IRELAND
EMIGRANT SUPPORT SERVICE



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

May 2022 – Issue 242

Welcome from our CEO

Welcome to our May Newsletter and the beginning of the summer season here in Ireland! While the weather is not very favourable so far, we remain optimistic for a lovely sunny summer season ahead!

Thank you to all those who attended and supported our 'Home to Mayo' event in Mulranny Park Hotel on 2nd May. We had a wonderful day comprising a walk on the Greenway, a talk on emigration and a concert by our Ambassador, Seán Keane. This month we also had a lovely evening in The Ardhowen Theatre, Enniskillen, for a concert with our Ambassador and Tully, a folk group from Fermanagh. This is the first fundraising event led by Friends of Safe Home Ireland and we are most thankful to our Friends for all their work and support.

As you will read later on, we are resuming our outreach and information clinics in England in June after a gap of over two years due to Covid restrictions. We are really looking forward to meeting many of our colleagues and friends in Irish advice and cultural centres as well as those who are seeking to return home to Ireland. Our first in-person Returning to Ireland Information Clinic will take place on 12th July in partnership with Luton Irish Forum. More information to follow on this clinic and others in the coming months too. If you would like us to hold a clinic in any other part of the world please do get in touch and we will be very happy to make arrangements for that.

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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

Celebrating Safe Home Ireland - 21 in 22!

Due to the Covid restrictions throughout 2021 we were unable to formally mark and celebrate our 21 years of supporting people to move home, so in association with Friends of Safe Home Ireland, our Celebration will take place in the Tullamore Court Hotel, Co. Offaly on December 1st 2022. Seán Keane, our Ambassador, will perform a concert for everyone attending this celebration. You can secure a FREE ticket by joining our planned giving campaign, for as little as 5 euro per month, through planned donation. This event will be a wonderful opportunity to see and hear about the many people who have achieved their dream of returning to Ireland. We will be providing more information as well as details of other ticket options on this unique event in the coming months!



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Rann Ceilidh Eanáire
Department of Foreign Affairs

**Until next month, take care, stay safe and keep in touch from Karen,
the Staff, Board and Friends of Safe Home Ireland**

Disabled Person's Parking Permit – Ireland

The parking permit is known as the Disabled Person's Parking Card or Permit and the EU Parking Card for People with disabilities. You can apply for the Permit to allow you to park in disabled parking spaces in Ireland and the EU if you are a person with severe restricted mobility or are certified as blind.

The Permit is available if you are a driver or passenger of a vehicle. It is valid for 2 years from the issue date and costs €35.

The Permit scheme is administered in Ireland by the Disabled Drivers Association of Ireland (DDAI) and the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). You can apply online to the IWA or the DDAI. They will ask you some questions to check if you qualify and then send you an application form by email or post.

Qualifying Criteria; You can apply for a card if you are a person with severe restricted mobility or are certified as blind.

You will need one of the following;

- To have your medical practitioner or consultant certify that you meet the medical and mobility criteria.
- Hold a Primary Medical Certificate. If so, you will automatically qualify, but you still need to apply for the card.
- Be certified blind by The National Council of the Blind a GP, Ophthalmologist or Optician. You will still need to apply for the card.

For further information or to apply, contact;

Disabled Drivers Association, Ballindine, Claremorris, Co. Mayo, Ireland

Tel: +353 94 936 4054

Email: info@ddai.ie

Web: www.ddai.ie

Frequently Asked Question: Disabled Parking Permit

I am the holder of a UK Blue Badge that allows me to park in designated spaces for disabled people.

Q. Can you tell me if I can use my Blue Badge when holidaying in Ireland?

A. UK Blue Badges and Australian and New Zealand Disability Parking Permits can be used on the island of Ireland.

For people who have an EU Parking Permit for People with Disabilities, this can be used in any vehicle in which they are travelling.

RTÉ Archives – capturing and preserving the past

RTÉ Archives are responsible for collecting, preserving and making accessible the creative and documentary output of the national broadcaster in Ireland.

Combining hundreds of thousands of hours of moving image and sound recordings together with significant collections of photographs, manuscripts and administrative documents, RTÉ Archives contain a unique record of Irish life.

The Archives website; <https://www.rte.ie/archives/> may be of interest to our readers who are online, or anyone involved with Irish clubs or groups abroad who wish to give their members a 'wander down memory lane', of Irish life through the years.

If you have any questions or feedback about the Archives site or any content you think may be of interest to them, you can get in touch by emailing: archives@rte.ie



Home visits to Safe Home housing applicants throughout the UK

As part of Safe Home Ireland's housing application process, Safe Home Outreach Officers endeavour to carry out home visits with our UK based applicants. Ideally we would like to meet with our clients regardless of their location, but unfortunately we do not have access to funding/staffing levels that would allow us to carry out visits to Safe Home clients further afield.

Safe Home does not have any staff based in the UK, however, prior to the Covid Pandemic our staff travelled to various cities throughout the UK a number of times each year to carry out home visits. During those trips, where possible, we also tried to link in with Irish welfare and support agencies as well as co-facilitating Moving to Ireland Information Clinics.

Due to the public health and travel restrictions in place since the onset of Covid in March 2020, our home visits to clients in the UK have been suspended. However, as the world now cautiously emerges from the worries and angst of Covid, **we are happy to announce that we will be resuming our trips across the water** – starting with visits in the North of England, in early June and to London mid-June. We are currently contacting housing applicants directly to arrange appointments.

We appreciate that many people are still understandably concerned and nervous about the virus, particularly those who may be medically vulnerable. We want to reassure all of our clients that we will be taking every precaution before and during visits to ensure that our applicants and our staff will be safe and comfortable.

However, it is also very important for us to stress that we fully understand that having visitors to their home is something that not everyone is quite ready for yet - we are happy to reschedule or defer visits if an applicant or their family has any concerns whatsoever.

Our Housing Applicants will sometimes query why a home visit is necessary.... we carry out the visits for a number of reasons, some of those are listed below;

Safe Home does not own or manage any properties of our own, we work with local authorities and Housing Associations in order to secure housing for our applicants. Many of these housing bodies request that we personally meet with our clients before they will consider them for any vacancies which may arise.

Sometimes deciding to return to Ireland can be based on a range of emotions, such as moving to be closer to family and friends, while this is extremely important we want to ensure that our clients have a clear insight into the broader practicalities involved and all aspects of returning to Ireland. For example, does any current income transfer? What about entitlements in Ireland? What about health/medical matters? The cost of living in Ireland etc.

Home visits give our housing applicants an opportunity to ask any questions and discuss any issues that may be concerning them about a move to Ireland in the relaxed setting of their own homes.

Moving home is not for everyone, so having a chance to have a face to face conversation often helps people to reach the decision that is best for them, whether that is moving back home or choosing to stay on in their adopted country.

A word of caution! – Car hire costs in Ireland - For those who may be planning a trip to Ireland and hoping to hire a car, it's worth doing your research early. The cost of car hire really has skyrocketed here compared to pre-pandemic levels. This is thought to be due to the shortage of car fleets available in the car rental market. For some people, relatives here can include them on their insurance policies as named drivers for the duration of their stay, at little or no cost. Of course, this isn't an option that everyone may have open to them. Sadly, Shank's Mare or a High Nelly may end up being the more affordable alternative in a lot of cases!

Postcard from Abroad



Martin was my eldest brother, and he was someone I looked up to all my life, he had an adventurous spirit and was a dreamer. We grew up in Waterford and when Mattie (as we called him) was in Tramore beach when he was a child he saw horses been ridden along the sand, he was hooked. With much cajoling from our mother he finished the leaving cert in 1979 but was in America long before the results came out. We had an Uncle in Yonkers and Mattie headed there with the intention of getting a job for the summer. Well, that's what our parents thought. Mattie had other plans. He spent a few weeks working on building sites until he found his way to Saratoga and horse country in upstate New York.

He talked his way into working with horses and that is where he stayed. His vacations were not to home but to Texas to work as a cattle trailer for the movement of the large herds. This too, influenced in childhood from watching cowboy films on a black and white television, Mattie always wanted to be John Wayne and sleep beneath the Texas skies and eat beans warmed from the campsite fire. He did this many times in his life and fulfilled many a childhood dream.

I followed Mattie to New York, and I found the city life was for me. We shared many dinners, and he would bring me to the races every year as our treat. Mattie never stopped dreaming and unfortunately, he didn't get to fulfil two important dreams. One was to go see the Grand National in Aintree and the other was to come home to die. Covid has a lot to answer for in just simple things like that.

Mattie had finally made up his mind to do both in 2020. He had made contact with an organisation to return to Ireland and decided to settle near our home in Waterford. I initially did not think he was serious, because of Covid he postponed his planned trip to Ireland. He wasn't feeling well and thought he had contacted Covid, he wasn't one to going to the doctor and decided whatever was making him feel unwell would pass. By the time he went to hospital the untreated cancer in his body had spread all over and unfortunately Mattie passed before his final wishes were achieved.

When I went through his belongings after his death, I saw his plans for moving home and there in a bundle of private papers was a ticket for the Grand National for April 2022. I broke down with regret and angry that I did not support him more to get back home. With Covid I did not have much contact with him in the last two years and therefore did not realise how serious he was about going home. Because of having no Green Card, when Mom and Dad died he did not travel and after that, for a good while, maybe he had felt there was no reason for him to go home.

I suppose what this has taught me is that people have dreams and going home to Ireland to retire could be one of them. If you know someone in that position, then please listen and support them to achieve their wish. Linking them in with organisations like Irish Centers abroad and Safe Home Ireland will give them great support with the practicalities of all that the 'big move' involves. I wish every day that I could have done it for Mattie. We plan to bring his ashes back to Waterford and a little to Bushv Creek in Texas too.

Irish Government Electricity Allowance – 2022

In order to assist householders with the escalating cost of utility bills, the Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Scheme was signed into law on March 2nd 2022. This scheme will give a Government Electricity Allowance to all Domestic Electricity Customers in Ireland. The allowance will show on bills as a credit of €176.22. (ex VAT).

The credit will be channelled automatically through ESB networks to all the energy suppliers, who will then pass on the discount to customers. The universal (non-means tested) payment will be made to all domestic electricity accounts, including pay as you go customers. The credit **must** be applied to all customers between **1st April 2022 and 30th June 2022**.