



Welcome From Our CEO

February 2023 – Issue 248

Welcome to our February Newsletter! Spring is in the air; flowers are blooming and there is a 'grand stretch in the evenings'!

We are looking forward to our first (of 2023) in-person **Returning to Ireland Information Clinic**, which we will host in partnership with the [London Irish Centre](#) on Monday 13th March. Our Information clinics cover a range of topics including, making a planned return and all that is involved, moving home with children, retiring in Ireland, information on health, housing, and more. We will also be offering appointments to those who might want to discuss their situation in more detail and in private. See below for more information/bookings.

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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

Thinking about Moving or Returning to Ireland?
Safe Home Ireland in partnership with London Irish Centre will host a
FREE Information & Appointments Clinic

Monday 13th March 2023
11am to 1pm - Information Clinic
2pm to 4pm - One-to-one appointments
at London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB

For more information & bookings contact **London Irish Centre**
Tel: 0207 916 2222; Email: info@londonirishcentre.org

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This month we were pleased to meet in-person (and hybrid) with our colleagues at [Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas](#), Crosscare [Irish Diaspora Support Project](#) and [Citizens Information Board](#) to discuss collaborative projects and how collectively we can assist those considering moving/returning to Ireland. We encourage you to check out their respective websites/social media channels for more information on their services, supports and impact.

After a gap of three years, the Irish Government has announced its biggest ever **St Patrick's Day** Programme. In all, 36 representatives of the State will visit 74 cities in 44 countries. St Patrick's Day offers an opportunity to promote Ireland abroad and is an important part of the Government's 'Global Ireland' strategy which seeks to promote Ireland as an outstanding location to live, visit, work, invest in, trade with, and study.

We have just launched our [2022 Annual Review](#) and while there was a slight decrease the number of Safe Home clients who returned to Ireland in 2022, we welcomed home and directly supported 45 people, some who returned in crisis or challenging situations. We supported countless others via our telephone information service and advocacy supports, both here in Ireland and abroad. We encourage you to read our Review on our website to learn more about our impact in 2022. If you would like a hard copy, do get in touch and we can post one to you.

Until next month, Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh go léir & enjoy the celebrations wherever in the world you are located ... from the staff, board & Friends of Safe Home Ireland

Making Voluntary Contributions for a UK State Pension FINAL REMINDER FOR UPCOMING DEADLINE

If you worked in the UK for three years or more, are aged under 67 and paid national insurance contributions, you may be entitled to a UK state pension. To qualify for a UK state pension, you must have a *minimum of 10 qualifying years* on your National Insurance record.

You may have gaps in your UK National Insurance record if you did not pay National Insurance or did not get National Insurance credits. This could be because you were:

- employed but had low earnings;
- unemployed and were not claiming benefit;
- self-employed but did not pay contributions because of small profits;
- living or working outside the UK.

Gaps can mean you will not have enough years of National Insurance contributions to either:

- get the full [State Pension](#) (sometimes called 'qualifying years')
- qualify for some benefits

Up to now, there were means in place where eligible people could make voluntary contributions (by 5th April each year) to make up the gap in their National Insurance records.

NOTE: This all changes after 5 April 2023 - you have until then to pay voluntary contributions to make up for gaps between tax years April 2006 and April 2016. After this people will only then be able to pay for voluntary contributions for the past 6 years
NOTE: 6 years may not be enough to qualify for a new State Pension if you have fewer than [4 qualifying years on your National Insurance record](#).

[Check your National Insurance record](#) to find out:

- if you have any gaps
- if you're eligible to pay voluntary contributions
- how much it will cost
- You may also be eligible for [National Insurance credits](#) if you claim benefits because you cannot work, are unemployed or caring for someone full time.

For more information on these new changes, including guidance for people resident outside of the UK, please see [HERE](#)

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Living in Ireland – Cost of Living Measures

On 21st February 2023 the Irish Government announced a range of **cost of living measures** to support families, business and most vulnerable. Full statement and outline of qualifying categories and proposed payments [HERE](#)

Oral History Study – Call for Participants

Volunteers are being sought to participate in an oral history study into the lives and experiences of Irish LGBTQ+ emigrants to London. This study is being undertaken by Daniel Gallen, as part of a Master's thesis with the University of Galway history department. Individuals who are part of the LGBTQ+ community and who emigrated from anywhere in Ireland or Northern Ireland between the years of 1967 and 1993 to live/work in London for any amount of time are sought for this study. See below for more information on how to participate.



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Irish in Britain 50th Anniversary Heritage Project – Are you interested?

Irish in Britain, formerly the Federation of Irish Societies, is the national membership body for Irish community organisations in Britain and marks its 50 anniversary this year.

Its 50th Anniversary Heritage Project will celebrate the work of the [Irish in Britain \(IIB\)](#) member organisations and the enormous contribution made by the Irish community to Britain over the past 50 years.

IIB will be running training sessions for volunteers to record oral histories in their communities and the project will culminate in a road show exhibition, plus an online exhibition, in November this year. **If you would like to be part of the project as a volunteer or interviewee or suggest someone the heritage team could talk to, please email: 50@irishinbritain.org**

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An Post Ireland – postal address point service

An Post has set-up an [address point service](#), which gives people living in temporary accommodation in Ireland and homeless people a personal postal address and mail collection point. You can use the address to access services that they may be difficult or impossible to get without an address, for example, to set-up a bank account, apply for jobs, register to vote or arrange medical appointments. You can also use the address to keep in touch with family and friends.

You must register online for the free [address point service](#). You provide your name, select your local post office, and then your personal address is generated. The address has no

reference to the post office but is completely personal. You can collect your post from your selected post office by showing photo identification.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Dental Care in Ireland

Q. Will I be entitled to free dental care when I return to live in Ireland?

A. There is limited access to free dental care for Medical Card holders in Ireland. There is also access to some free treatment for those who may qualify under the [Dental Treatment Benefit Scheme](#) (based on their Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions from employment). For full information on Dental services in the public system, please see [HERE](#)

2. Transfer of US Social Security Payments to Ireland

Q. I am receiving Social Security benefits in US and will shortly be returning to Ireland. How do I report my new residence address to Social Security?

A. You should do so via the [Federal Benefits Unit](#) where you can complete their **online form**, providing the following information;

- a. Your full name;
- b. Your Social Security number;
- c. Your new address including postal code;
- d. Your telephone number(s) where you can be reached during business hours;

As you are moving from the U.S, to organise the transfer of your Social Security payment, you will also need to provide a completed Form SSA-21 (download pdf [HERE](#)), Supplement to Claim of Person outside the United States.

If you wish to provide details of your bank account in Ireland for transfer of funds, this can also be actioned via **online form** by providing the following;

- a. Your full name;
 - b. Your Social Security number;
 - c. Name and address of your bank;
 - d. Bank IBAN Number
 - e. Bank BIC Number
 - f. Specify type of account i.e. checking or savings;
 - g. Your telephone number(s) where you can be reached during business hours
- For more information, please contact: [The Federal Benefits Unit](#).

[Irish welfare & advice services in the US](#) can also offer assistance

Remember! IF you think that you may need to apply for any welfare, housing supports or a medical card when you move to Ireland, it is important to bring a good paper trail of up to date documentation with you that shows your current benefits/income/savings status. This will make the transition into 'the system' here easier and quicker for you.

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Help to Buy Scheme

In Budget 2023, it was announced that the **Help to Buy scheme** will be extended until end of December 2024. The Help to Buy (HTB) Scheme helps first-time buyers purchase a newly-built house or apartment. It also applies to once-off self-build homes. It only applies to properties that cost €500,000 or less.

The scheme gives qualifying applicants a refund of the income tax and Deposit Interest Retention Tax (DIRT) they have paid in Ireland over the previous 4 tax years.

We have had queries asking if returning emigrants who are first-time buyers can qualify for the HTB scheme. Below is the response from the Revenue Commissioners;

The HTB refund is based on the tax paid in the years available under the HTB scheme (2019-2022). If tax has not been paid in Ireland in any of these years, you cannot qualify for a refund under the HTB scheme.

However, if you work in the current year (2023) you can make a HTB application next year (2024), you may be entitled to a refund under the scheme at that stage. The HTB is an online only process.

The Revenue Commissioners have provided a summary on the HTB scheme for applicants, available [HERE](#)

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Social Insurance Contributions ('stamps') – Ireland

As people living abroad who have worked and paid contributions in Ireland in the past near pension age here (66yrs), they may wish to access a statement of their contributions history to establish whether or not they have any entitlement to a [Contributory Irish State Pension](#).

There are various ways that you can request a record of your social insurance contributions:

Online: IF you have verified **MyGovID** account

By post: PRSI Records Department of Social Protection, McCarter's Road, Ardaravan, Buncrana, Donegal, Ireland

Via email: CSTGeneralQueries@welfare.ie

If contacting the records section via post/email, please include as much as the info listed below as you can:

- Your Irish Personal Public Service (PPS) number (not always possible/available!)
- Your full name
- Your birth surname (if different)
- Your mother's birth surname
- Your date of birth
- Your current postal address (please scan or take a photo of a proof of that address and send it to this e-mail address. A utility bill, bank statement or official government letter, not more than 3 months old is required)
- Your address in Ireland, if different
- The names of two of your Irish employers.

PRSI Records Tel: (00 353) 1 471 5898 (when prompted, select option 4).

For more information on social insurance contributions in the Irish system, please see [HERE](#)

