



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

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

Safe Home Programme CLG
trading as Safe Home Ireland



Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme

Welcome From Our CEO

Welcome to our March Newsletter! We hope you had a wonderful St. Patrick’s Day and had a chance to join in some festivities to mark our National Day! There was much jubilation when the Irish Rugby team secured the first ever Men’s and U20’s Grand Slam on St. Patrick’s weekend. It was also the first Six Nations title since 2018 and the fourth Grand Slam! Roll on to the World Cup in September!

We were pleased to meet with so many people at our recent **Moving to Ireland Information Clinics** in London and would like to thank our friends and colleagues at the [London Irish Centre](#) and [Irish Elderly Advice Network](#) for partnering with us and looking after us so well. We also had the pleasure of meeting with staff members from [The Passage](#) and the [Survivors Service](#). They all do great work with our emigrants abroad, and particularly those who are most vulnerable. Thank you also to all those who attended our clinics and to those whom we visited over the week.

We would like to draw your attention to an upcoming **Fundraising Walk** that will be led by one of our Directors, Ann Roddy. Ann will be embarking on [The National Famine Way](#), which is a 165km walking and cycling trail. It commemorates the heart-breaking walk of forced emigration which took place in 1847 at the height of the famine. The Walk begins at [Strokestown Park House and National Famine Museum](#), Co. Roscommon, and continues through six counties to [EPIC](#), The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin’s Docklands. The walk will leave Strokestown on Friday 26th May and arrive at EPIC on Monday 4th June. If you would like to join us (if only for a few km’s or to wave us on our journey!), or perhaps do the walk virtually, please do get in touch. **Also**, we would welcome you to sponsor Ann and others, to raise much needed funds for our work. We will provide a further update in our April Newsletter so watch this space!

We are looking forward to attending the [2023 Global Irish Civic Forum](#) next month and meeting many of our colleagues and friends who work with our diaspora abroad. The Forum, the third of its kind, will take place over two days in Dublin and its theme is “Together Again – Le Chéile Arís”. The event will be an opportunity to discuss key issues affecting Irish abroad including the implementation of the government’s Diaspora Strategy 2020-2025, extension of voting rights, the government’s Emigrant Support Programme, enhanced supports for returning emigrants, youth engagement and the legacy of Covid. We will report back in our next Newsletter!

Finally, **Friends of Safe Home Ireland** continue to support our work and are in the early stages of organising two **fundraising Concerts** with our Ambassador, Seán Keane, one of which will feature harmony folk group **Tully**. Further information and locations will be provided in the coming months too!

**Until next month, Beannachtaí na Cásca daoibh go léir from the
Board, Staff & Friends of Safe Home Ireland**



Hospital charges in the public health system – Ireland

In-patient charges; The Irish Cabinet is set to sign off on the Health (Amendment) Bill 2023, this will abolish statutory public hospital inpatient charges; currently €80 per day, capped at a maximum of €800 in any calendar year.

The new legislation will mean that people will no longer be charged when accessing public inpatient care in Irish public hospitals. The removal of the charges was announced as part of Budget 2023, and is set to be in place by the end of April 2023.

The above will relate to people who are 'ordinarily resident' in the State.

If you are coming to live in Ireland or returning here to live, you must satisfy the Health Service Executive (HSE) that you are ordinarily resident. To be considered ordinarily resident you must be able to demonstrate that you have been living in Ireland for at least a year OR that you intend to live here for at least one year.

Hospital out-patient/A&E charges will still remain in place for relevant categories; for those without GP referral letters and non-medical card holders.

You can get a broader outline on Hospital Charges in Ireland [HERE](#)

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is it possible to pay voluntary contributions in the Irish system to ensure I will qualify for a State Pension when I retire?

A. It is possible to make voluntary contributions towards the State Contributory Pension in Ireland, however this is dependent on meeting specific criteria.

Anyone seeking admittance as a voluntary contributor must;

- apply to pay voluntary contributions within 60 months of the end of the year in which they last paid compulsory PRSI from employment / self-employment, or were awarded a credited PRSI contribution, and
- they must have at least 520 paid PRSI contributions from either employment / self-employment prior to application

If living abroad: both of the above entry criteria can still be satisfied by contributions paid in the UK (even post-Brexit), or in another EU/EEA Member State.

For example, if an individual emigrated in 1980 with just 104 PRSI contributions [2 years] paid in Ireland, but they since worked in Germany for at least 416 social insurance contribution weeks [8 years]. They would be accepted as meeting the second condition outlined above.

Similarly, if the same individual ceased paying social insurance in Germany within the past 60 months, their cessation date in Germany can be used for entry purposes as a voluntary contributor in Ireland, i.e., they would not be denied an entry opportunity because they last paid PRSI in this State in 1980.

Mindful of all of the above, anyone interested in becoming a voluntary contributor is advised to apply as soon as possible. An information leaflet and application form for the Voluntary Contributions Scheme are available [HERE](#).

The area of contributions can be a complex one. If you are unsure of your own situation, individual queries can be made directly to the Department via email to: volcons@welfare.ie

Returning to Ireland with your pet cat or dog – From Britain

If you travel from Britain (not including Northern Ireland) with a pet (cat or dog), you must follow the new regulations introduced post-Brexit. These regulations apply even if your pet is returning to Ireland from Britain and was born and raised in Ireland.

In summary, if bringing your pet to Ireland from UK (excluding Northern Ireland), you must;

- Ensure your pet is microchipped.
- Have a **valid** EU pet passport OR a health certificate issued by a UK official vet. A health certificate is required before each entry into the EU. (Pet owners are advised to retain any GB-issued EU pet passport, as it may contain important information about vaccinations, treatments, etc.)
- Ensure that the pet is vaccinated against rabies – pets must be at least 12 weeks old before they can be vaccinated. Wait 21 days after the primary vaccination before travel
- Have a tapeworm treatment (for dogs). Dogs travelling from, or returning from, Britain to Ireland will require treatment against tapeworm by a veterinarian 24 to 120 hours (1 to 5 days) before arrival in Ireland. If travelling with a passport issued in Ireland, this treatment may be entered into the pet passport by a UK vet.

For more guidance on bringing a pet into Ireland from the UK, EU or any other country, people should seek advice from their own vet before making travel plans. Further information including conditions if returning from outside of the UK/EU countries, can also be found [HERE](#) or by contacting the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine via **Tel: + 353 1 607 2827** or **Email: livetrade@agriculture.gov.ie**

Important Note!

For Safe Home Ireland housing applicants, please remember to let us know if you have a much loved four-legged friend that you wish to bring home with you. Regrettably, a number of the Housing Association schemes that we have access to operate a No Pets Policy. These tend to be mainly in urban areas and apartment style living, but it is still very sad that these limitations are in place, particularly where prospective tenants have a small house dog or cat. However, once we are aware of your circumstances, we will try our best to research suitable pet-friendly accommodation, where that is available.

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Making Voluntary Contributions for a UK State Pension – UPDATE

Last month in our Newsletter we covered a feature on making voluntary contributions for a UK State Pension and would like to inform that the deadline has been extended to 31st July. For more information on these new changes, including guidance for people resident outside of the UK, please see [HERE](#)

