



SAFE HOME IRELAND
DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

October 2023 – Issue 254

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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 to our October Newsletter.

We are looking forward to a busy few months ahead! **Firstly**, to a candle-lit concert on Sunday 19th November (6pm) with our Ambassador, Seán Keane, in the beautiful [Immaculate Heart of Mary Church](#) in the Dublin docklands. Tickets are priced at €25 and are on sale on Eventbrite - click [HERE](#) for tickets. As One, a restaurant next door to the Church, will be opened for pre-concert dinner and drinks too – please contact As One directly – click [HERE](#) for bookings.

An Evening of Music & Song
in aid of Safe Home Ireland

Sunday 19th November 2023
Doors: 5pm; Concert: 6pm

Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
City Quay, Dublin, D02 A090

SEÁN KEANE
Irish traditional tenor

Pre-Concert Dinner/Drinks
As One, 13-18 City Quay, Dublin 2
Web: www.asone.ie; **Tel:** 01 430 4371
NOTE: Reservations from 2:45pm. Last sitting 6:45pm.
Advance booking essential.

Tickets: €25

Safe Home Ireland is a charity and works with the Irish diaspora. All our support and assistance is provided free of charge and is subject to a small annual fundraising levy. We are grateful for the support and help of those who have assisted us.

Safe Home Ireland, 10, Brinsford College
Dublin 2, Co. Dublin D02 A090
Web: www.safehomeireland.com; Tel: 098 36036

Secondly, we are excited to announce that we will be launching Safe Home Ireland 2024 Calendar, which will contain inspirational quotes as well as stunning Irish scenery imagery. We wish to thank our regular donors and sponsors from our weekly Friday Friendship social media posts, which we started during Covid. Copies of this Calendar will be available at our above event as well as from our website from 19th November. We can post to any part of the world, and they will be an ideal Christmas gift!

Thirdly, we are delighted to announce that we will be walking [The National Famine Way](#), again in 2024 (11th to 19th May). In May 2023 we had our first 'Long Road Home' fundraising walk along the National Famine Way from Dublin to Strokestown. We will be leaving from [EPIC](#), The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin's Docklands on Saturday 11th May and arriving at the [Strokestown Park House and National Famine Museum](#), Co. Roscommon Sunday 19th May. 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. More info to follow next month!

We wish you all have a very happy Halloween, wherever in the world you are located. Also, don't forget to turn your clocks back an hour on Saturday 28th October (in Daylight Saving Zones/Countries only)!

**Until December, take care from the Board, Staff & Friends of
Safe Home Ireland**





Frequently Asked Questions – Healthcare in Ireland

I have recently returned home from the UK. I am 69 years old and have a UK State Pension and a private/ 'works' pension. I also have a part-Irish pension, all of which combined, put me over the limit to qualify for a Medical Card on income grounds.

Q. Is there anything I can apply for to help with healthcare costs?

A.

(i) You may qualify for a [G.P Visit Card](#) as the allowable income limits for the G.P Card are set at a higher level.

Notes!


- Once you reach 70 years of age, you will qualify for the G.P Visit Card here, regardless of what income you have.
- The allowable income limits to qualify for the full [Medical Card](#) also go up significantly once someone reaches 70.


(ii) You can also apply for the [Drugs Payment Card](#). Under the Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) you or your family will not pay more than €80 each calendar month for:

- approved prescribed drugs and medicines
- rental costs for a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine
- rental costs for oxygen

(iii) Depending on circumstances, some people may qualify for the [Long Term Illness Scheme](#). Under this scheme, people suffering from certain medical conditions can get drugs, medicines and appliances relating to their condition free of charge.

(iv) If you have significant health conditions and the cost of medication and treatment would cause you undue financial hardship, it may be worth looking into applying for a [Discretionary Medical Card](#). The Discretionary Card can generally only be applied for once a Medical Card application has already been rejected on income grounds.





Returning to Ireland – Registering with a GP

There is a shortage of doctors in general practice in many areas in Ireland at present. In cities, GPs are finding it difficult to cope with the level of demand. While in rural areas, it can be difficult to recruit GPs, leading to shortages and delays. This can cause a big issue for people moving home, where GP practices state that they are either “not taking on new patients” or are operating a waiting list system for new patients.

For GP visit card/Medical Card applicants who run into the difficulties as outlined above, if they can give details of 3 GPs/practices that they have tried and failed to register with, the HSE will have to allocate a GP for them.

For private patients seeking to register with a GP when they move here, there is no assistance in terms of the HSE allocating a GP, it will be a case of ‘shopping around’.

Some tips! In advance of your move, it may be worthwhile asking family/friends to check availability on GP lists in the area you intend moving to.

If you can get a prescription of your medications to ‘tide you over’ while waiting to register with a GP here, that may be no harm.


Some GP practices do offer a ‘walk in’ service so this is worth exploring too.


For more information on any of the above, see; www.hse.ie OR Tel: + **353 1240 87 87**



Returning to Ireland – Transfer of qualifications obtained abroad.

Professional bodies such as [The Teaching Council](#) and [The Nursing and Midwifery Board](#) can offer advice in relation to people in these ‘fields’. Others can research information regarding the transfer of skills/qualifications via the Quality and Qualification service, see [THIS](#) guide. If you cannot find information that is relevant to you, you can raise a direct query with the Quality and Qualification service [HERE](#)





Budget 2024 – Ireland

The annual Budget was announced here in Ireland on 10th of October 2023.

Full details, covering all areas impacted can be found [HERE](#)

Below is a summary of some of the main social welfare related changes.

Increase in social welfare weekly payments

The maximum rate of all weekly social welfare payments will increase by €12 with proportional increases for qualified adults and people on reduced rates of payment. **When?** Increases will come into effect from January 2024

Once-off payments for Winter - 2023

- People in receipt of Fuel Allowance will receive a once-off payment of €300 **When?** In the week beginning 20th of November 2023
- A Double payment of Child Benefit for each child will be paid. **When?** On the 5th of December 2023
- Anyone in receipt of the Living Alone Allowance will get a once-off payment of €200. **When?** In the week beginning 27th of November 2023
- A once-off payment of €400 will be paid to people in receipt of Disability Allowance, Invalidity Pension and Blind Pension. **When?** In the week beginning 20th of November 2023
- Anyone in receipt of the Carer's Support Grant will receive a once-off payment of €400. **When?** In the week beginning 27th of November 2023

Social Welfare Payments and the Christmas Bonus

Anyone in receipt of a qualifying social welfare payment will receive a double payment via the 'Christmas Bonus'. **When?** In the week beginning 4th of December 2023

Social Welfare once-off double week in January 2024

A once-off double week for all weekly qualifying social welfare payments will be paid in the week beginning **29th January 2024**. People who have already qualified for the Christmas Bonus will still qualify for this once-off double week.

