



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

Charity No: 20049119
Company Reg No: 351678

WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

September has been another busy and exciting month at Safe Home Ireland!

To begin with, we are delighted to announce that we have been selected by the Irish Abroad Unit at The Department of Foreign Affairs to receive multi-annual funding with effect from 1st July 2023 (to 2026). The Department have continuously supported our work since inception in 2000, via annual grant allocations. However multi-annual funding gives the organisation some comfort as well as being a welcome 'vote of confidence' in our service and our strong and trusted relationship in working with/for the Irish Community worldwide with the Department.

Each year we have to make up a funding shortfall to ensure the continuation of our current core services, so this necessitates additional fundraising efforts and initiatives. This year we will be producing a Safe Home Ireland Inspirational Calendar, which will be available to purchase next month. Also, our Ambassador, Seán Keane, will perform a concert in the Dublin docklands on Sunday 19th November (6pm) in the beautiful Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Tickets, priced at €25, are now on sale on Eventbrite - click [HERE](#) for tickets.

Noreen Mulrine (Outreach & Advocacy Officer) and I have just returned from London, where we carried out a number of in-person meetings and home visits to our housing applicants across London and Luton. We also visited and met colleagues in BIAS, The London Irish Centre and The Irish Elderly Advice Network. We held Moving to Ireland Information Clinics in partnership with Luton Irish Forum and The Passage Day Centre in central London. We also had a stall at The Irish in Britain Community Health Event at the London Irish Centre and met with the Consular team at the Embassy of Ireland, Great Britain. It was a busy but very productive week and it was great to meet so many partners and to witness the wonderful work carried out by Irish welfare services, all supported via the Emigrant Support Programme.

Finally, we were also delighted to attend BIAS (Brent Irish Advisory Service) 45th anniversary in the Embassy of Ireland, Great Britain on 27th September. BIAS can be proud of its legacy in supporting and advocating for Irish the community as well as the development of many projects over the years, including - Innisfree Housing Association in 1985 and The Traveller Movement in 1999. This milestone was special for me as I worked in BIAS for over 15 years, firstly as the Irish Community Social Worker and then as its Director. Congratulations to BIAS and here's to another 45 years!

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





Returning to Ireland – Transfer of Pensions and Benefits

“Will my current income transfer with me?” This is one of the most frequently asked questions we get from people considering moving/returning to Ireland.

The answer “it depends!”.

As a general guide, any pension or benefit where the claimant has made sufficient contributions during their working life tends to transfer if they return to Ireland permanently. HOWEVER, we always advise people to check out with their current welfare provider abroad and, where possible, to also ask for confirmation in writing whether or not their entitlement will continue if they leave the country to return to Ireland.

Confirmation in writing regarding your current entitlements abroad and whether or not they will continue when you return to Ireland permanently is very important. This information is normally requested as part of any social welfare claim in Ireland and also forms part of the assessment process when applying for a medical card here.

Checking with welfare services abroad

If you live in the UK, you can check out about the transfer of various UK benefits [HERE](#). For information that is specific to the transfer of the UK State Pension, please see [HERE](#)

If you live in the USA and want to find out what the situation is regarding on-going entitlement to social security if you move to Ireland, you can find out information [HERE](#)

If you live in Australia, to find out the rules regarding receiving an Australian Pension if living in Ireland permanently, contact your Centrelink Office or see [HERE](#)

Note! Be aware that pension rates for residents and non-residents may differ.

Remember! If you are not computer-literate or online, and would like help in checking out your own individual circumstances, you can always contact your nearest Irish Welfare and Advice service abroad and they will be happy to assist you. Alternatively contact our office and we will guide you as best we can.



Fuel Allowance – Ireland

The Fuel Allowance scheme is a means tested payment to assist pensioners and other long-term social welfare recipients (residing in Ireland) with their winter heating costs. Only one Fuel Allowance is payable per household. Applicants do not need to reapply for Fuel Allowance each year, as long as their circumstances have not changed, they will receive the payment automatically.

The payment is made at the weekly rate of €33 or if preferred, by way of two instalment payments. The payment is paid annually for 28 weeks, starting from late September to April.

As part of Budget 2023, new means testing measures were introduced for people over 70.

Under the new measures, a single person Over 70 can have income of €500 per week while a couple can have income of €1,000 per week. In addition, the amount of savings disregarded in the Over 70s Mean Test has been increased from €20,000 to €50,000.

In the case of a couple where one person is under 70 and one person is over 70, they will be assessed under the Over 70s Means Test criteria.

The weekly means threshold for those aged under 70 has also been increased by €80 per week, from €120 to €200 above the weekly rate of State Pension Contributory.

Frequently Asked Question: I am a pensioner who has recently returned to Ireland. I have a UK State Pension and a works pension.

Q. Do I have to be in receipt of an Irish Pension to qualify for the Fuel Allowance here in Ireland?

A. No, you may still qualify for the Fuel Allowance in Ireland, based on your UK Pension entitlement, **IF** you meet relevant means testing criteria.

Note! The Irish Fuel Allowance is **not paid** to people living abroad in receipt of the Irish State Contributory Pension.

For more information on the Fuel Allowance, full qualifying conditions and how to apply, please see [HERE](#) or contact the office that pays your primary social welfare pension/benefit.



GP Visit Cards – Ireland

A GP visit card covers the cost of visits to your GP including access to GP 'out of hours' services. Blood tests to diagnose or monitor a condition are also covered by the Visit Card.

You must be ordinarily resident in Ireland to apply for a GP visit card. 'Ordinarily resident' means that you are living in Ireland and intend to live here for at least one year.

You will qualify for a GP visit card with **without an income means test if you are:**

- Aged under 8 (previously only available to children under 6).
- Aged over 70
- Getting Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance, at full or half-rate


If you are aged **under 70, you will have to meet means testing criteria** to qualify for a GP visit card.

Note! The allowable income limits for GP visit cards are greater than for the Medical Card - if you do not qualify for a Medical Card, you may still qualify for the GP visit card.

Recent changes to GP visit card income limits: The weekly income limit for the GP visit card increased on 11 September 2023 and will increase again on 13 November.

If you recently returned to Ireland and were previously turned down for a GP visit card due to being over the means testing guidelines, it may be worth reapplying again now under the new guidelines.

For more information on the GP visit scheme, allowable income limits and how to apply, please see [HERE](#)





Renewing an expired Irish Driving Licence

If your Irish Driver's Licence has expired within the past 10 years, you can still renew it without having to re-sit your test. A Public Service Card (PSC) is required for online renewals **but not** if you are attending an NDLS Centre in person / renewing via the paper application process.

People returning to Ireland/having recently returned may not have a PSC, so please see the guidance notes below about renewing in person, issued by the National Drivers Licence Service (NDLS);

You can apply in person at any of the 34 NDLS centres nationwide but you must first book an appointment

To apply in person at an NDLS centre you will need the following:

- Your current or most recent driving licence. If your licence has been lost, stolen or damaged you must also bring valid photo ID with you
- Proof of your personal public services number (PPSN).
- Fully completed medical report form dated within one month, if required in your case.
- Proof of your address dated within the last six months
- Proof that you are normally resident in Ireland if your place of birth and nationality are outside the EU/EEA
- Application fee of €55. **If you are aged 70 years or over you are exempt from paying the fee.**

For more information on licence renewal, please see [HERE](#)

For licence queries, **email:** lqueries@rsa.ie