



January 2024 – Issue 257

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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

Welcome to the January edition of our Newsletter. We would like to thank everyone who sent in Christmas cards and New Year wishes to us over the festive season and I would like to take this opportunity wish all of our readers a healthy and happy 2024. We also wish to extend our appreciation to everyone who purchased our 2024 Calendar. There are still some copies available to purchase from our website, alternatively contact our office and we will post to you.

We are looking forward to walking the [The National Famine Way](#) again in May this year. The National Famine Way is a unique and historic trail that traces the footsteps of the 1,490 famine emigrants who had to leave Ireland in 1847. The walk will leave from [EPIC](#) The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin's Docklands on Saturday 11th May and will take 'the Long Road Home' (165km), and conclude on Sunday 19th May at [Strokestown Park House and National Famine Museum](#), Co. Roscommon. Registration is now opened on [Eventbrite](#) and once registered, we will send out a Walk Pack and more information on the route. We are delighted to announce that [Sean Fleming, TD, Minister of State with special responsibility for International Development and Diaspora](#) will be launching our Fundraising Challenge on **Wednesday 10th April in EPIC Irish Emigration Museum.**

We would like to thank singer/songwriters, [Ger O Donnell](#) and [Trevor Sexton](#) for organising a Concert on Friday 2nd February in 'The Forge at The Players Club, Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare, to support our work. Our Ambassador, [Seán Keane](#), will be making a guest appearance too. The Concert promises to be a great event and has been SOLD OUT since before Christmas.

Finally - It is with great sadness that we inform you that **Máirín Higgins**, our very dear friend, and former and first CEO of Safe Home Ireland, passed away peacefully on 15th December 2023. Máirín joined Safe Home in 2001, when Safe Home was just in its infancy. As the child of emigrant parents herself (both originating from Co. Mayo), and reared in Birmingham, Máirín knew only too well the sacrifices made by the forced generations of Irish emigrants that Safe Home set out to assist.

Máirín spent 13 years at the helm of Safe Home and fought hard and with great passion to ensure that older Irish emigrants seeking to return home could be helped to do so in a structured way. Máirín's legacy continues to this day, and we are forever grateful for her dedication and work in helping to shape what Safe Home Ireland has become. Máirín will always be fondly remembered by all of us at Safe Home Ireland.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.

Free Travel in Ireland – Some Frequently Asked Questions

(i) I am an Irish born pensioner (aged 68), living in the UK. Myself and my wife own our home here in Luton and we are very lucky to have our adult children and grandchildren living in the area. We also have a holiday home in Co. Kerry. Although we live in Luton, now that we are both retired, we spend a lot of time at our home in Kerry.

Q. Are we entitled to Free Travel?

A. **No**, part of the qualifying criteria for Free Travel is that applicants must be **permanently resident** in Ireland.

(ii) I have recently returned home to Ireland. I applied for and was awarded Free Travel. I received the formal award letter from the Dept. of Social Protection recently. However, the letter advises that I should apply for and complete the registration process for a Public Service Card (PSC). I could not get an appointment for the PSC registration for over 2 weeks, so it's likely to be at least 3 weeks before my PSC comes through.

Q. Can I use the award letter from Dept. of Social Protection to travel for free on public transport while I'm waiting for the PSC to come through.

A. **No**, transport providers in Ireland can only accept the Public Service Card with FT-P (Free Travel Pass) listed on it to indicate that Free Travel Scheme. Note! Listings on the card will differ if Free Travel awarded includes a spouse/companion.

See more on Free Travel in Ireland (including info on Smart Pass for the North of Ireland) [HERE](#)

What is a Public Service Card (PSC)?

If you apply for, or are currently getting a social welfare payment (including Child Benefit) in Ireland, you will be asked to register for your Public Services Card.

The PSC will be used to verify your identity when accessing social welfare and a range of other public services in Ireland. The steps involved in the PSC registration process serves to protect against identity theft when accessing these services.

You must be resident in Ireland to complete the registration process and a PSC will only be issued to an Irish address.

If you do not have a PSC, you will not be able to apply for or register for a range of public services **online** (e.g. renewal of Irish driver's licence; social welfare online applications)

You can read more about the Public Service Card registration process [HERE](#)

To use some online public services in Ireland, you will need to create a MyGovID account

There are two types of MyGovID accounts:

- Basic accounts
- Verified accounts

For a basic account, you just need an email address to register. Once set up, this will allow access some Government services, like:

- Booking an appointment to get a [PPS number](#)
- Requesting a record of your PRSI contributions
- Checking if you are eligible for dental and optical services under the [Treatment Benefit Scheme](#)
- Applying for a jobseeker's payment
- Applying for jobs on [JobsIreland.ie](#)

Read more on MyGovID process, see [HERE](#)

Appointing an Agent – Irish Pension holders

If you are resident in Ireland and would like to arrange for a family member/trusted friend pick up your pension at the Post Office for you, you will need to contact the Pension Services Office in Sligo and ask for a form to '**Appoint an Agent**'.

If you are living abroad and receiving an Irish Contributory Pension – this pension can only be paid into a bank account **in your name**

OR

Into an account **where you are a named joint signatory.**

Any instruction to change your payment method (per guidelines above), must be made in writing and with relevant supporting documentation to the Pension Services Office in Sligo

Contact the Pension Office in Sligo – see [HERE](#)

Note! Contact details relating to all Irish Social Welfare Services can be found, [HERE](#)

Becoming an appointee for someone claiming UK benefits

You can apply for the right to deal with the benefits of someone who cannot manage their own affairs because they're mentally incapable or severely disabled. Only one appointee can act on behalf of someone who is entitled to benefits (the claimant) from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

An appointee can be:

an individual, for example a friend or relative

an organisation or representative of an organisation, for example a solicitor or local council

Appointee's responsibilities

As an appointee you're responsible for making and maintaining any benefit claims. You must:

- sign the benefit claim form
- tell the benefit office about any changes which affect how much the claimant gets
- spend the benefit (which is paid directly to you) in the claimant's best interests
- tell the benefit office if you stop being the appointee, for example the claimant can now manage their own affairs
- If the benefit is overpaid, depending on the circumstances, you could be held responsible.

Applying to become an appointee – this depends on the office issuing the benefit in question;

Attendance Allowance - contact the Attendance Allowance helpline at the [Disability Service Centre](#)

Disability Living Allowance - contact the Disability Living Allowance helpline at the [Disability Service Centre](#)

State Pension - contact the [Pension Service](#)

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) - contact the [PIP new claims line](#)

All other benefits - contact [Jobcentre Plus](#)

For full information, please see [HERE](#)

Irish Widow/Widower's Contributory Pension-Recent Supreme Court Ruling

Under social welfare legislation in Ireland, amongst other qualifying criteria only those surviving partners who had been married or in a civil partnership are deemed to be eligible to receive a widow/widower's contributory pension.

However, on Monday January 22nd 2024, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of a gentleman, who while not married, had been in a twenty-year relationship with his late partner at the time of her untimely death in 2021. The couple have three children. Given their background and circumstances, the gentleman in question made an application for a widower's pension. The application was subsequently turned down, on the grounds that the couple had never married nor entered a civil partnership.

The outcome from this Supreme court decision may see future changes on who will be eligible for this pension.

For more details on Widows/Widowers Contributory Pension please check this link
<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/apply-for-widowers-contributory-pension/>

Do I need an Irish Insurance Number – PPSN, to apply for an Irish Passport?

NO, a PPSN is **not a requirement** in order to apply for a passport. If requested as part of the application process and you do have one, you can give details, otherwise, leave blank.

For information on applying for an Irish passport, please see [HERE](#)

We are here to help!

If you would like more information about the services provided by Safe Home Ireland, please do contact us.

We can provide tailored information and guidance that is specific to every situation. Everybody's circumstances are different, and we will be happy to discuss your individual needs, concerns and options about moving to Ireland.

If you or a family member have recently returned home and need some help with the paperwork involved in getting back into 'the system' here again, our Outreach service may be of interest /benefit to you. If required, one of our Outreach Officers can make a 'face to face' /home visit appointment to meet with you

If you wish to provide a contact phone number or email, we would be happy to contact you directly.

Safe Home Office mobile for calls, text/WhatsApp messaging; **Tel:** +353 86 059 4538; **Web Contact form**, please see [HERE](#)

