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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 our March Newsletter – its hard to believe it is Easter week already! Where has the year gone to so far!

Thank you to everyone who attended (in-person and online) our Strategic Plan launch and Seminar, which we hosted in conjunction with The Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, Institute for Lifecourse and Society (ILAS) of the University of Galway, on Wednesday 27th March. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the speakers, panellists and moderators and to Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage who launched our Strategic Plan. A number of issues, questions and barriers to return were raised by attendees who are still living abroad that include: lack of/or challenges with recognition of qualifications gained abroad; barriers around Drivers Licence exchange, particularly for Irish returning from USA; lack of recognition and support of carers who return home temporarily to care for elderly relatives; supported accommodation for people who return with support/complex needs. We have committed to following up on some of the issues raised and will report back in the coming weeks and months. The session was recorded so if you missed it, contact our office and we can send the recording.

Our **Strategic Plan** and **2023 Annual Review** were both launched at the event and will be available on our website shortly. If you would like a hard copy, please contact our office and we can post to you.



We are busy preparing for our upcoming **Fundraising Challenge**, to walk The National Famine Way (from 11th-19th of May) from Dublin to Roscommon. We will be holding a launch event on **10th April** in [EPIC Irish Emigration Museum](#), Dublin and are delighted to have The Minister with responsibility for Diaspora, Seán Fleming TD, and our Ambassador, Séan Keane launch this event as well as our other partners at EPIC, Strokestown Park and The National Famine Way. Please see [Eventbrite](#) to register to walk with us – the fee is only €30.

Finally ... we hope you all have a lovely Easter and remember (pending on where you live!) to put your clocks forward one hour on Sunday 31st March!

Until next month, take care from the Board, Staff, Friends & Ambassador of Safe Home Ireland and have wonderful St. Patrick's Day



The Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme

This scheme is to provide financial payments and an enhanced medical card or *health support payment* to defined groups in acknowledgement of circumstances experienced while resident in Mother and Baby and County Home Institutions.

* The health support payment (valued at €3,000), in lieu of the enhanced medical card, will be issued to qualifying applicants outside of Ireland only*

Who can apply; To be eligible for benefits under the Payment Scheme you will need to have spent a certain amount of time in one (or more) of the institutions listed on the [Institutions Covered by the Scheme](#) page.

If you have received a court settlement in respect of the circumstances experienced and relating to the same time period in the institution or institutions being applied for, **you will not be eligible** to apply for a general payment or work-related payment. However, you may still be eligible for health supports.

The level of the financial payment will depend on the amount of time spent in one of the institutions. Further information on the payment rates for general and work-related payments is available [here](#) .

Further information on the eligibility criteria for each of the benefits is outlined below.

General payment eligibility

You are eligible for a general payment if you were in one of the institutions listed [HERE](#) ;

- for at least one night, as a mother, for reasons relating to your pregnancy, or the birth or care of your child

or

- for at least 180 days, as a child.

For more detailed information on the scheme, including qualifying criteria, application forms and process, please see [HERE](#)

The scheme opened for applications earlier this month. Applications can be made via the online portal [HERE](#)

OR request a hard copy of the application. Completed application forms and supporting paperwork should be returned to;

Payment Scheme Office, P.O Box 13668, Waterford, Ireland

Anyone with individual queries on the scheme can contact the Payment Scheme Office directly, [HERE](#)

Accessing Support

Counselling and administrative supports are available to assist applicants/their representatives through this process. **Please see [HERE](#) for information on the range of services available.**

Note! this includes details of agencies in the UK, USA and further afield who have dedicated staff members who can help.



The School's Folklore Collection

The Schools' Scheme of 1937-38 represented one of the greatest drives ever undertaken in the field of folklore collecting. Almost 100,000 children, aged eleven to fourteen, in 5,000 primary schools were involved in seeking out and setting down for posterity material dealing with a wide range of Irish folk tradition. This investigation embraced folk tales and folk legends, riddles and proverbs, songs, customs and beliefs. Games and pastimes as well as descriptions of traditional work practices and crafts (e.g. the manufacture of homemade toys) and many other topics were covered.

The children collected this material mainly from their parents and grandparents and other older members of the community or school district. The result of the Schools' Scheme was the 'Schools Manuscripts Collection', a body of material which extends to more than 500,000 manuscript pages. The collection features material in English and in Irish and covers schools in each of the 26 counties (it did not extend to Northern Ireland).

The main manuscript collection is now available online [HERE](#)

The material can be searched by school, topic, or participant. If you are interested in seeing if a family member took part in this project, you can search for their names under 'people' or you can check the participants listed for the relevant national school.

The returns from each county are also available under licence on microfilm in most of the respective county libraries. The full Schools' Folklore Collection, including individual children's copybooks, is now preserved in the Folklore Collection at University College Dublin (UCD).

For more information or to get copies of manuscripts, tel: +353 1 716 8216 or email: bealoideas@ucd.ie See also: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes>

'Easter Times'

"Long ago, twenty hens was as much as was in any house, and very few eggs were given to the people to ate. But when Easter Sunday came around, there was some egg ateing going on. Spoons were scarce, bog-deal spoons were made for the day. They were cut straight then, and about an inch wide at first, then made a little hollow at the bowl. They were very good, but a little rough and lasted until the following year.

All the eggs were boiled in a skillet and, every wan of the family got two or more if they could manage them. Each person scraped a hollow in a big pratie, big enough to hould an egg an this was used as an egg-cup, you could see some of them holden the egg in the left hand while he was ating. you would not see such a harty male now, as the good ould holy people had on this great Sunday and everyone was full of news after coming from Mass in the ould Church"

Extract from manuscript - Belcarra N.S: The Schools' Collection, Volume 0094, Page 494;
data © National Folklore Collection, UCD

Working while in receipt of a social welfare payment in Ireland

There are certain conditions and welfare payments where qualifying applicants can take up employment/part-time employment and still retain all or some of their welfare entitlements.

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



Q. If I return to Ireland and do not qualify for a Medical Card under means testing, are there other avenues may be open to me?

A. Depending on individual circumstances, the options below may apply;

Qualifying under EU Regulations – If someone returns to Ireland and is in receipt of a qualifying EU (or UK) **State Pension**, and they are not employed or self-employed in Ireland or in receipt of any welfare payment here, even if their income exceeds the means testing level for the Medical Card, they can still qualify for a Medical Card under EU Regulations.

GP Visit Card – The allowable income limits for a GP visit card are set at a higher level than the Medical Card limits. For more information, please see [HERE](#)

Drugs Payment Scheme - You can apply for a Drugs Payment Scheme (DPS) card if you or your family pay more than **€80 a month** for approved prescribed drugs and medicines and in some cases rental of equipment. For full information on the DPS, please see [HERE](#)

Long Term Illness Scheme - Under the Long-Term Illness Scheme (LTIS), people suffering from a specific range of illness' can get some drugs, medicines and medical appliances for free. For more information, please see [HERE](#).

Discretionary Medical Card – If turned down for a Medical Card on income grounds and you have a medical condition/s and medical expenses that are causing you undue financial hardship, you may qualify for a discretionary medical card. See more information [HERE](#).

Please Note!

- For people aged 70 years+ who are 'ordinarily resident' in Ireland, they will qualify for a GP visit card, regardless of what income they may have.

'Ordinarily resident' means that you are living here and intend to live here for at least one year.

- For the full Medical Card, the allowable income levels for those aged 70yrs+ are raised significantly. **For more information, please see [HERE](#)**

**Translation Interpretive and Sign Language Supports
Department of Social Protection (social welfare services) – Ireland**

The Department of Social Protection recognises that translation and Interpretation services play a key role in supporting applicants in their engagement with the department. These services are provided free of charge to customers and are outlined in the Department's [Customer Charter and Action Plan](#). They include:

- the translation of documents, such as written information or application forms
- a language interpreter (in person, phone or video)
- an Irish Sign Language interpreter (in person or video)
- written information or application forms in Braille, Audio or Large Print.
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If you/anyone you know may need to access these services, please contact your [nearest Intreo Centre/social welfare office](#) or the office dealing with your claim.