



SAFE HOME IRELAND

DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE

2023 Year in Review



Safe Home Ireland (Safe Home) is a not-for-profit Irish charity with a global remit.

The organisation was set up in 2000 to facilitate the desire for qualifying older Irish born emigrants abroad to return to their homeland. Since inception, Safe Home has directly assisted 2,281 Irish born people to secure accommodation in Ireland. This has been achieved with the support of local authorities and other housing providers across the 26 counties.

Safe Home now provides a targeted range of services to Irish emigrants abroad, regardless of age or circumstances, who desire to return home and also supports countless others who have returned independently, by providing holistic and person centred support on their return. For the majority, their return was a positive lifelong dream and could not have been fulfilled without Safe Home intervention and support.



The Long Road Home - Fundraising Walk



Our ambassador Seán Keane in concert, City Quay Church, Dublin



The Long Road Home walkers starting out at EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin's Docklands



The Long Road Home walkers at the finishing point at The National Famine Museum in Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon

Safe Home Ireland, St. Brendan's Village,
Mulranny, Co. Mayo F28 A386
Web: www.safehomeireland.com
Email: info@safehomeireland.com
Tel: + 353 98 36036 / + 353 86 059 4538

Charity Number - 20049119

Funded by

Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Our Work



Direct Support

Our direct support service provides information, advocacy and outreach supports to people before, during and after the moving process. We carried out 137 outreach appointments to support people on their transition back to Ireland and we carried out 48 home visits and meetings with our housing applicants across England

We facilitated **10** Returning to Ireland Information Clinics in partnership with Irish and other welfare centres abroad. The sessions covered a range of topics including, making a planned return and all that is involved, moving home with children, retiring in Ireland, information on health, housing, and more. We also held many in-person and virtual meetings with staff at Irish Welfare Agencies in England, USA and Australia concerning Irish citizens abroad who

are considering moving/returning to Ireland. The sessions were very useful for information sharing, peer-to-peer learning about our respective services and organisations and inter-agency referrals, thus avoiding duplication of services. We continued to work closely with Consular Services in Ireland and abroad to provide general information, guidance as well as support with direct referrals for Irish citizens who had to return home in challenging/vulnerable circumstances.


We responded to **507** information requests during the year and processed **69** new housing applications. Accommodation was secured for **40** people this year and for **2,281** people since our inception. We continue to work in close partnership with housing providers nationwide. We continued to advocate for at least one 'age friendly' property to be allocated to a qualifying Safe Home housing applicant in each Local Authority catchment area.

Networking & Representation



Advancing our profile nationally and globally remained a key priority in 2023 to ensure that potential applicants/returnees are aware of our services and supports. We continued to work closely with our partners here in Ireland (Crosscare Irish Diaspora Service, Citizens Information Board and Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas), as part of Returning to Ireland Forum.

The forum meets quarterly and discusses collaborative projects, emerging trends and key issues for returning emigrants and how collectively we can assist those considering moving/returning to Ireland, particularly those who may be returning in challenging situations.

We commenced discussions with NGO's  across Europe, who work with returning citizens in their respective countries to explore mutual areas of work and interest. The long term objective of this collaborative work across Europe is to share models of good practice, lesson learning and establishing how we can partner effectively to ensure smooth returns of returning citizens.

We carried out several media interviews and were featured in many print articles during the year. We featured in a documentary ('where the heart is') covering the foundation, services and support provided by Safe Home which had its first airing on Mid-West Radio in late 2023. It is planned to roll the documentary out to other media channels in 2024.

Governance & Compliance



In 2023 Safe Home Board undertook a review and planning process to capture trends, analysis, lessons, and insights which informs the organisations new five-year Strategic Plan from 2023 to 2028, which is planned to be launched in March 2024.

The Board continued to meet bi-monthly with various sub-committees meeting separately. We continued to work on maintaining compliance with our relevant statutory obligations.

We reported on full compliance with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) Governance Code, for the third year. Annual returns were completed in relation to lobbying, CRA Annual Reporting and Approved Housing Bodies Monitoring protocols.

We were selected for an independent external audit with Mazars by our Funders, the Department of Foreign Affairs this year. We were pleased to have received a positive audit report.

Fundraising & Development

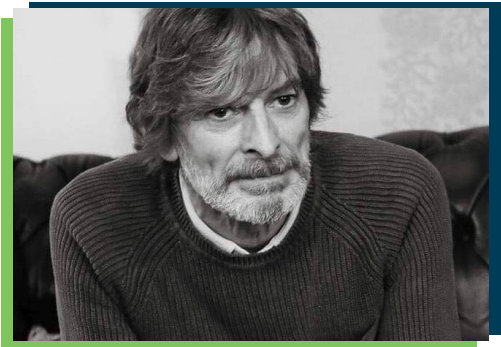


We were delighted to be the first Irish based Charity to be selected by the Department of Foreign Affairs for multi-annual funding, commencing July 2023. This is a huge boost and vote of confidence in our work which we anticipate will assist us in attracting new sponsors and donors.

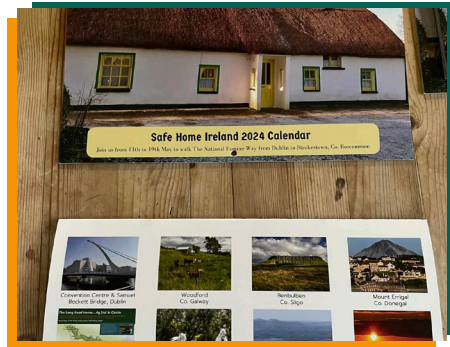
Our Ambassador, **Seán Keane**, continued to promote Safe Home at concerts across venues in Ireland and abroad by talking about his role and the work of Safe Home. Many members of his audiences have relatives living abroad and previously were not aware of our existence.

‘Friends of Safe Home’ introduced many new sponsors and potential collaborators during the year to support our work. They also supported our 2023 fundraising challenges which included;

- our 2023 Friday Friendship Diary which contained original poetry. This was a first for Safe Home Ireland and each Friday had its own sponsor to whom we are most thankful.
- our National Famine Way Walk in May, from Dublin to Roscommon on the Royal Canal, with the support of EPIC Irish Emigration Museum, The National Famine Way and Strokestown Park House;
- our annual Fundraising Concert in City Quay Church, Dublin with our Ambassador Seán Keane in November where we also launched the Safe Home Ireland 2024 Calendar.



Our Ambassador, Seán Keane



Safe Home Ireland 2024 Calendar



Friday Friendship 2023 Diary

Our Team



Directors	Nova Fariss (Chairperson)	Teresa Cowley
	Michael Joe Ginnelly (Treasurer)	Joan O’Flynn
	Ann Roddy (Secretary)	Niall Foley
	Patricia Codyre	
Staff	Karen Mc Hugh – (CEO)	
	Mary Ann Fadian – Co-ordinator	Johnny B. Broderick – Information & Communications Officer
	Brenda Fleming and Noreen Mulrine – Outreach & Advocacy Officers	
Friends	Diarmuid McAuliffe	Peter Grogan
	Loretta Gordon	Stephen Graham
	Pauline Gallagher	Ann Lawler
Patron	Michael D. Higgins, The President of Ireland	
Ambassador	Seán Keane, Singer	
Life President	Dr. Jerry Cowley	

Snapshot of our work and impact in 2023

Total Interventions

5493

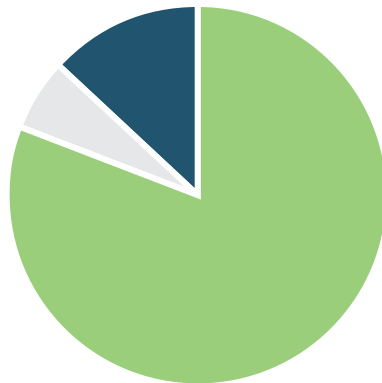


Information



We support Irish people while still abroad, to make informed choices about returning to Ireland.

This includes home visits to Safe Home housing applicants (UK only); Information Clinics on Moving to Ireland for Irish abroad as well as peer-support sessions with Irish and other Welfare Agencies abroad



New contacts/
information requests

507



Outreach



We assist returning Irish emigrants to feel socially included on their transition back in Ireland by providing person-centred and holistic outreach support on accessing services and rights

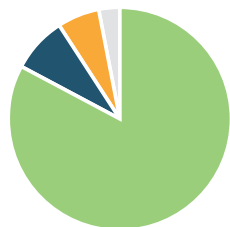
	Outreach Appointments (Ireland)	137
	UK Home visits/ outreach (UK)	48
	Returning to Ireland Information Clinics	10

Housing

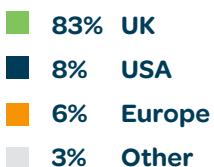


We explore housing options throughout Ireland, for qualifying older Irish born emigrants abroad in vulnerable/challenging circumstances.

This is done primarily in partnership with Local Authorities and Housing Associations throughout Ireland



Housing applicants



	Active Housing Applications	339
	Accommodation secured	40
	New Applicants	69
	Total Accommodation secured since 2000	2,281

Connect



We offer a connection to home for those who remain abroad.

We do this via our monthly e-bulletin, our social media platforms and our Returning to Ireland Information Clinics.

	People in contact	846
	E-Bulletin / Newsletter circulation	1,820
	Social Media	5,896

Web: www.safehomeireland.com
 Email: info@safehomeireland.com
 Tel: + 353 98 36036 / + 353 86 059 4538

@safehomeprogramme
 @Safehomeireland

Vision



Our vision is that any Irish person living abroad who wishes to live in Ireland can do so with dignity and respect.

Mission



Our mission is to support Irish people abroad, particularly those who are in crisis and challenging circumstances, to transition and settle in community life in Ireland.

Values



Compassionate We commit to act with empathy to provide practical and professional support to people and organisations.

Inclusive We work to ensure that our service is non-judgemental and is underpinned by equality and human rights.

Partnership We are committed to working in partnership with stakeholders in Ireland and abroad.

Accountable We uphold and promote the principles of good governance and integrity through transparency, effectiveness and sound leadership.

Our Work in Action



Case Study: Tony



How it started

Tony, a gentleman in his 70's, was referred to our service via the Consular staff at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Following an accident in Spain, Tony found himself in a crisis situation, as he was not entitled to access free health care in the Spanish system.

Tony came from the west of Ireland originally but had moved to the USA in 1966, at 20 years of age. He lived and worked in Boston all of his working life until his retirement. In recent years, after the isolation of the Covid pandemic, and with no longer having a network of work colleagues to rely on, Tony's thoughts turned more and more to Ireland and to coming home.

In October 2023, he decided that he would move to Spain for the winter months. He had a friend living there and the plan was to enjoy the sunshine and a more affordable lifestyle and head for the west of Ireland in the Spring.

As is often the case in life, the best laid plans don't always pan out! Following a fall, Tony was left with severe pain and without access to affordable medical care in Spain.

How we helped

Once the Irish Embassy staff put us in touch with Tony, he felt confident to make plans to return home. While Tony was able to fund his travel costs from his US work pensions, he was frail and returning in vulnerable circumstances, so a Safe Home Outreach Officer picked him up from the airport when he arrived back in Ireland. Arrangements had been made in advance for Tony to attend for a medical appointment.

He ended up spending a week in hospital. During this time, Safe Home staff were able to get his PPSN, apply for a Medical Card and submit an application for social housing support to the Council in his home county. A referral was also made to the social work team in the housing section. When he was discharged from hospital, Tony attended an appointment with the emergency housing team at the local Council.

The Outcome

Within 2 weeks of his return to Ireland, Tony had his PPSN, been approved for his Medical Card and was in receipt of social housing support. He is thankfully recovering well, and is safe and warm in emergency B&B accommodation for the short-term. Safe Home staff will continue to engage with him and work with housing providers to explore more suitable long-term housing for the future.

Tony is looking forward to building a new life back in Ireland and told us

“everything happens for a reason ... it's not exactly the way I planned it, but I'm home.”

Case Study: Peter and Catherine



How it started

Peter and Catherine moved to the UK in 1988 with a view to begin new careers to seek work. Sadly shortly after, Peter developed life changing health conditions and Catherine became his carer. The couple did not have any family in the UK, so as they got older, they began to explore options on how to return home to their home county where they both have lots of family and friends.

How we helped

A relative referred the couple to Safe Home Ireland we then began the process of helping them apply to and get approved by the Local Authority in their native county. A Safe Home Outreach officer visited them at their home in the UK to go through the realities of all that a move home would entail. Because of Peter's complex health needs it was important that certain measures had to be in place

before he could travel to Ireland, such as immediate access to a GP and medication.

The outcome

Early in 2023 the couple were delighted to be offered a two-bed house by the Local Authority in the town where they both grew up. They are now settled at home. With the support of one of our outreach officers, the couple have medical cards, pensions and Catherine is in receipt of carers allowance.

Initially when we broached the subject of applying for a carers allowance Catherine was astounded, she had just assumed she would not be eligible. In November she was surprised and delighted to receive the letter informing her she was awarded the payment. The couple are now settling in well to their new life in their new home in Ireland.

Case Study: James



How it started

James moved to the UK to work in construction as a young man. In 2008, he suffered a heart attack which along with chronic arthritis left him unable to work, aged only in his fifties he was devastated. He quickly realised that when he couldn't work there was nothing left for him in London. As he was only in receipt of a small disability payment he could no longer save towards buying a home in Ireland which had always been his dream. He didn't have any family in England but was very close to his siblings in the west of Ireland.

How we helped

James learned of Safe Home Ireland through Ashford Place, an Irish support service in London, they assisted him to make an application to our service. Safe Home then helped him apply to be assessed by his local County council. Our staff kept him informed of the process via telephone calls and one outreach visit to his home in London. Happily, in the summer of 2023 he was offered a tenancy with a housing association in his native area which he was delighted to accept. When

he moved in home, he faced some obstacles and months of uncertainty because he was unable to find a GP with capacity to take him on as a patient. He was unable to afford his medication and without a GP there were difficulties in finalising his application for Disability Allowance.

However, despite these challenges, James responded to each hurdle with

“Well, at least I am at home.”

Our outreach worker along with some very patient and supportive social welfare staff (in the community welfare and disability allowance departments) were able get him access to supplementary welfare allowance, a furniture grant and later disability allowance and he was eventually allocated a doctor by the HSE

The outcome

James is now settled at home, is secure financially, has access to a doctor and medical care, he is surrounded by his extended family and so happy to finally be at home in his home town.