



SAFE HOME IRELAND
DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE

Strategic Plan

2023-2028

Summary





Introduction

Safe Home Ireland (Safe Home) is a not-for-profit Irish charity¹ with a global remit. The organisation was set up in 2000 to facilitate the desire for qualifying² older Irish born emigrants abroad to return to their homeland. After much advocacy and publicity at that time, Safe Home succeeded in highlighting their circumstances and this recognition was reflected in the granting of the Amendment to the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) in November 2001. The Amendment gave qualifying Irish born emigrants a realistic chance of realising their dream of returning home to Ireland by allowing them to be considered for social housing back in their native areas. This recognition continues to this day, primarily facilitated by Local Authorities and Housing Associations throughout the country.

Over the years, Safe Home has evolved from simply facilitating a housing option for older Irish born emigrants. It now provides a targeted range of services to Irish emigrants abroad, regardless of age or circumstances, who desire to return home, as well as supporting those who have recently made the journey back home

Since inception, Safe Home has directly assisted over 2,281 (31st December 2023) 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 have also supported 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.

This Strategic Plan (plan) is a road map for Safe Home over the next 5 years and the priorities identified and the subsequent actions undertaken are in support of Safe Home's vision, mission and values.

All of this is possible through the financial support from the Irish Government, Emigrant Support Programme, via the Department of Foreign Affairs, without which the Charity would not function. With core funding for the organisation now on a multi-annual basis, the organisation can now use this Plan as a basis for ongoing development and fundraising. We are also thankful to all other project funders, donors and our regular and planned givers who have continued to support Safe Home over the years.

We are honoured and proud to have the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, as our **Patron** since 2012 and previous presidents (Mary Robinson and Mary McAleese) were also Patrons.

Seán Keane became our first **Ambassador** in May 2021. Seán is a household name to many, coming from a family with a long and rich tradition of music, song and dance in Co. Galway. Seán continues to advance the profile of Safe Home at home and abroad and has led many fundraising concerts and events for the charity.

Friends of Safe Home was set up in January 2022 to enhance, and advance, the profile of Safe Home through different networks and events at home and abroad, thus ensuring that those who may need our help know who we are, what we do and how to contact us. The Friends also identify and help organise charity fundraising events and activities, ensuring that Safe Home Ireland can continue to offer relevant services to people returning or moving to Ireland, particularly those who are most in need, now and in the future.

¹ Registered Charity No: 20049119

² Qualifying Criteria: Older Irish born emigrants, aged 57 years or older; Living in rented accommodation abroad; Unable to provide accommodation from their own income/means on their return to Ireland; Capable of independent living.

Our Vision, Mission, and Values



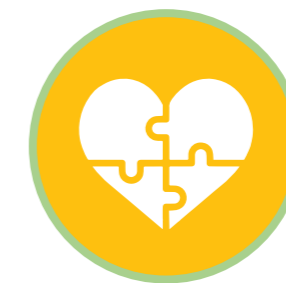
OUR MISSION

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



OUR VISION

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



OUR 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 Services

Resettlement and reintegration programme

- Exploring appropriate accommodation with security of tenure in Ireland
- Facilitating service-linking e.g., health/medical care and psycho-social services, income generation, social protection, care services, transport, recreation services, life-long learning, volunteering
- Strengthening local community links in new community or returnee community
- Providing tailored one to one support around post-arrival needs as a sense of displacement for returnee

Individual assistance programmes

- Provide information to individuals and families on necessary administrative, legal, economic, access to rights, social and cultural considerations to inform decision-making on return to Ireland.
- Develop tailored contacts and information on relevant supports in the returnee's destination community to ensure easier access on return.
- Provide individual support to potential returnees in advance of making final decision to return home to Ireland

Case management

- Commitment to one-to-one home visits to deal with information gaps about range of legal, administrative, economic, social and cultural experiences of living in Ireland, review reintegration process and deal with ongoing support needs.
- To promote integration and support returnees through referrals to relevant service providers as appropriate after initial settling in period

Pre-return outreach and engagement programme

- With Irish abroad via phone, website, social media, video conferencing and community facing events abroad.
- With family members in Ireland and abroad e.g., UK, USA, Europe, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Asia
- With partners organisations and targeted service providers working with Irish people abroad
- With wider diaspora through social, community and media networks

Evaluation, advocacy, and policy liaison

- Building evidence to identify benefits, challenges, and impacts of service.
- Using evidence base to critically inform Safe Home service development; to advocate for wider service or policy change when needed and to maintain relationships with service and policy stakeholders and funders.

Strategic Objectives and Actions

During this Plan, we will focus on the following four strategic objectives.

1. To explore housing options for returning Irish persons in crisis/challenging circumstances abroad.
2. To support the Integration and Inclusion of returning Irish to feel socially included and to enjoy well-being on their transition back to community life in Ireland.
3. To support Irish abroad to make informed choices about returning to Ireland.
4. To ensure the development and sustainability of the organisation.

Objective 1

Explore housing options for returning Irish emigrants in vulnerable/challenging circumstances abroad.

Actions:

- Identify how to strengthen the evidence base of the specific housing/accommodation needs of returning emigrants in crisis or challenging circumstances.
- Carry out research on supported housing options available to returning emigrants on a county-by-county basis.
- Engage with relevant government agencies, housing providers, and stakeholders to explore potential housing solutions and to advocate for our client groups.
- Consolidate and expand a housing/accommodation referrals service to achieve at least 13 nominations by the end of 2028 with local authorities and explore similar arrangements with other housing/accommodation/care providers.

Objective 2

Support returned emigrants to feel socially included and enjoy well-being on their transition back to Ireland.

Actions:

- Provide individualised support on access to rights tailored to the specific needs of each returned emigrant.
- Support the emotional needs of returned emigrants, particularly those with acute/high level needs through (a). referrals to appropriate services e.g., counselling and trauma support services and informal counselling and (b). consolidate and expand the Returned Emigrants Network.
- Facilitate connections and networking opportunities for returned emigrants to help build social connections and facilitate their integration.
- Facilitate the expansion of a Returned Emigrants Network.
- Collaborate with local community organisations and service providers to assist with access to essential services and resources.
- Conduct regular evaluations and feedback sessions to continuously improve the returnee experience.



Objective 3

Support Irish people abroad to make informed choices about returning to Ireland.

Actions:

- Monitor changes in international and domestic legislation and practice to ensure information provision is current and timely.
- Engage in interagency work to strengthen staff knowledge and expertise on pre-departure information for staff of welfare agencies to include UK, Europe, USA, Australia, Canada, Asia etc.. on returning to Ireland.
- Identify gaps in information and develop new resources to address those gaps.
- Review partnerships with relevant organisations and agencies abroad to disseminate information and promote Safe Home Ireland's services.
- Review www.safehomeireland.com to improve accessibility of online resources for relevant audiences in Ireland and abroad.
- Organise webinars and workshops to provide information to Irish people abroad about the practical considerations and challenges of returning to Ireland

Objective 4

Ensure the development and sustainability of the organisation.

Actions:

- Long-term sustainability and implementation of the Strategy will require sufficient resources. To secure these, ongoing fundraising strategies will be developed to maintain financing over the 5-year Strategy.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the organisation's funding sources with a view to explore new funding opportunities.
- Develop a fundraising strategy and implement targeted fundraising campaigns.
- Strengthen relationships with existing funders and explore potential partnerships with new funders.
- Advance marketing and communications for Safe Home to engage more actively with political and policy stakeholders to strengthen the public understanding of the social inclusion needs of returned emigrants.
- Regularly review and update policies and procedures to ensure good governance, compliance and transparency.
- Annually meet compliance requirements of the law and regulators.
- Strengthen the research capacity of the organisation to support us to identify lessons from practice that can inform policy development on returned emigrants and social inclusion including the Returning Irish Forum and the returning to Ireland section for the Citizens Information, The Inter Departmental Committee, The Housing Strategic Policy Committees at a local level, Housing for All & successors.
- Consolidate performance measurement systems, Board development and staff development and retention support.

Stakeholder Engagement

Our stakeholders will play a crucial role in the successful implementation of our strategic plan. We are committed to engaging with them in a meaningful and transparent manner. Here's how we plan to do this:

Board of Directors:

- Regular board meetings to discuss progress, challenges, and strategic decisions.
- Detailed reports on our activities, outcomes, and financial situation.
- Opportunities and events for board members to visit our services and meet with staff and clients.
- Annual operational programme and annual budget for following year to be approved in Q4 each year for approval

Service Users:

- Regular surveys and feedback forms to understand their needs and experiences.
- User forums or focus groups to discuss specific issues or ideas.
- Regular updates on our progress and changes to our services via newsletters, social media, and our website.

Staff:

- Regular team meetings and one-on-one check-ins to discuss progress, challenges, and ideas.
- Training and development opportunities related to the strategic plan.
- An open-door policy for staff to share their thoughts and suggestions.

External Stakeholders (e.g., funding bodies, partners, government agencies, voluntary and community bodies):

- Regular meetings and updates to discuss progress, challenges, and opportunities for collaboration.
- Invitations to events, forums, or workshops related to our work.
- Detailed reports on our activities, outcomes, and impact.

Friends:

- Regular Friends meetings to discuss progress, challenges, and ideas for events and activities
- Invitations to events and activities related to our work
- Invitations to meetings related to our work with staff, board and other relevant stakeholders

Ambassador:

- Regular briefing meetings with our current Ambassador, Seán Keane, and any future Ambassadors on the work of Safe Home to ensure Ambassador(s) can effectively represent the Charity
- Invitations to meet with staff, board and clients and others relation to our work

Patron:

- Briefing papers and planned meetings with our current Patron, The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, on the work of Safe home to support the diaspora and those who desire to return home.

THANK YOU

Safe Home Ireland are grateful to all those who contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan including our Staff, Board, Friends, Ambassador, Service Users and External Stakeholders in Ireland and abroad. Our sincere appreciation to The Department of Foreign Affairs, Emigrant Support Programme, for continued support since our inception in 2000, and to all other Sponsors and Donors who now support our work.

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much"

Helen Keller



SAFE HOME IRELAND
DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE

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Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs