



CEO Welcome

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Safe Home office hours:

Monday to Thursday:
9.00am to 5.00pm
Friday:
9.00am to 4.00pm

**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

Firstly, on behalf of the Safe Home Ireland team, I would like to congratulate **Seán Ballantyne** who completed the [Dublin Marathon](#) on Sunday 27th October (in 4 hours, 3 minutes!), in support of Safe Home Ireland – what an achievement on his first ever marathon! We also want to extend our sincere appreciation to all Seán's family and friends for their incredible support and to [Boyle Athletic Club](#) and [UTS Technologies](#). Seán returned home to Sligo, from Luton in January 2024. He left Sligo a single man in 1986 and some 36 years later in 2024 returned home with his family! Seán now cares full time for his adult son, Liam, since he returned home. We urge you to read Seán's story of leaving Ireland and returning home once more - see [HERE](#).

We would like to thank everyone who attended, both online and in person, the launch of Safe Home Ireland's **Returned Emigrants Network** on Saturday 12th October. We were delighted [Seán Fleming](#), Minister of State Department of Foreign Affairs (International Development and Diaspora), launched the Network and our sincere appreciation to staff of [The Irish Abroad Unit](#) and colleagues at [Crosscare Irish Diaspora Support Project](#) for attending too (on a Saturday!). Some key issues and challenges affecting returning Irish were highlighted, including but not limited to challenges with recognition of qualifications from abroad, no reciprocal arrangements re exchange of Irish/US Drivers Licences and general challenges around increased levels of bureaucracy. Our next meeting will be hybrid (online & in-person) and take place on **Saturday 16th November** (2pm) in Portlaoise Co. Laois; see [Eventbrite](#) to book free tickets to attend virtually. We will then set out the roadmap for the network and plan meetings in other locations around Ireland.

We are super excited about our **annual fundraising concert** with our Ambassador, [Seán Keane](#), at [City Quay Church](#) in Dublin city centre on Sunday 1st December. The concert will be the earlier time of 5pm to accommodate people from outside of Dublin who want to travel home due to the high cost of hotel accommodation in the capital. Tickets available via [Eventbrite](#). Our 2025 Calendar will also be for sale on the night – see our website or contact our office if you would like to order yours!



Finally, we are delighted to announce that one of our UK based housing applicants, Paddy Touhy, who is a Dublin born artist, has privately commissioned a number of paintings to both raise funds for and to raise the profile of Safe Home Ireland. The unique paintings will be on display at the Concert on 1st December for sale. We encourage you to [contact our office](#) if you would like more info/to make an offer! We will provide more info via a separate e-bulletin in early November! Follow Paddy on [Instagram](#) for details of his incredible artwork.

Until next month, Slán agus Beannacht, from all the team at Safe Home Ireland



Considering Returning to Ireland from Abroad?

Our colleagues at the [Citizens Information Board](#) have developed a range of very useful resources on www.citizensinforamtion.ie that are targeted specifically at people returning/moving to Ireland.

Based on the fact that circumstances and protocols can differ, depending where in the world someone may be returning from, the '[Returning to Ireland](#)' information section has been further broken down to cover return from a range of different countries, including;

USA
Australia
New Zealand
England
Canada

Please see [HERE](#) for more information.

If you wish to provide feedback in relation to any of this information or make suggestions about what else you think would be helpful to see included around a planned return to Ireland, **please complete the survey** [HERE](#)



HSE (Health Service Executive) – Ireland – National Social Inclusion Service

If you have a family member who is struggling, or if you have recently returned/moved to Ireland or are planning to do so in the future, you may be interested to learn about this service.

The HSE Social Inclusion service aims to reduce inequalities in health and improve access to mainstream and targeted health services for vulnerable and excluded groups in Ireland.

HSE Social Inclusion provides a range of services to support the following issues/vulnerable groups:

- [addiction](#)
- [homelessness](#)
- [intercultural health](#) (including protection applicants, refugees and migrants)
- [Irish Travellers and Roma](#)
- [LGBTI](#) (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) and
- [domestic, sexual and gender-based violence](#).

You can contact The National Social Inclusion Office, Tel: 00353 1 778 5168

OR

Email: socialinclusion@hse.ie





Returning to Ireland – Registering with a GP/Doctor

There is a shortage of GP's in general practice in many areas in Ireland at present. In cities, GPs are finding it difficult to cope with the level of demand. While in rural areas, it can be difficult to recruit GPs, leading to shortages and delays. This can cause a big issue for people moving home, where GP practices state that they are either "not taking on new patients" or are operating a waiting list system for new patients.

For GP Visit Card/Medical Card applicants who run into the difficulties as outlined above, if they can give details of 3 GPs/practices that they have tried and failed to register with, the HSE will have to allocate a GP for them.

For private patients seeking to register with a GP when they move here, there is **no assistance** in terms of the HSE allocating a GP, it will be a case of 'shopping around'.

Some GP practices do offer a 'walk in' service so this is worth exploring too

Some tips! In advance of your move, it may be worthwhile asking family/friends to check availability on GP lists in the area you intend moving to.

We would advise returnees to get 3 to 6 months' supply of medications to 'tide you over' while waiting to register with a GP here.

The HSE (Health Service Executive) has provided extra guidance, including a listing of GPs registered to accept Medical Card/GP Visit Card patients. **Please see [HERE](#) for additional information.**

For more information on any of the above, see; www.hse.ie OR Tel: + **353 1240 87 87**



Frequently Asked Question- Applying for an Irish Contributory Pension, from USA

I lived and worked in Ireland for a number of years. I now live permanently in the USA and will be 65 shortly. **Q. When should I apply for my Irish Contributory Pension?**

A. In terms of timescale, the guidelines from the Department of Social Protection here in Ireland re applying for the Irish Contributory Pension are as set out as follows;

- If resident in Ireland, apply 3 months before reaching pension age
- **If living abroad, apply via the pension service (in the country of residence) 6 months before reaching pension age**

When applying from abroad, it's a good idea to follow up on your application after a month or so, just to ensure the application has been received and is going through the correct channels both in your country of residence and in the Pension Services Office in Sligo

For more information on the Irish State Pension Contributory, please see [HERE](#)

The Pension Services Office in Sligo can be contacted via Tel: 00 353 71 9157100
Email: state.con@welfare.ie



Budget 2025 – Ireland

The annual Budget was announced in Ireland on Tuesday 1st of October 2024.

Measures relating to Pensioners – A summary

€12 increase in most weekly social welfare payments from **January 2025**. There will be proportionate increases for qualified adults and people getting a reduced rate

The amount not taken into account by the Dept. of Social Protection (social welfare) if selling a home to move into care will increase to €337,500 **from January 2025** for those who get [State Pension \(Non-contributory\)](#) , or [Disability Allowance](#) or [Blind Pension](#)

The means test weekly income disregard for [Fuel Allowance](#) extended to those aged 66 and over **from January 2025** - €524 (single person) and €1,048 (couple) meaning more people will qualify for this support

[Free Travel Scheme](#) Companion Pass for all those aged over 70 from **September 2025**

€300 cost of living lump sum payment to all households getting [Fuel Allowance](#) to be paid in **November 2024**

€200 cost of living lump sum payment to people who are getting a [Living Alone Increase](#) to be paid in **November 2024**

October cost of living bonus for pensioners – double welfare payment

Christmas bonus (double welfare payment) to be paid in **December 2024**

Full details, covering all areas impacted by Budget 2025 can be found [HERE](#)

Returning to Ireland Information Clinic – Luton, England

Finally, we are looking forward to travelling to London again in November! We will be facilitating a *Moving to Ireland Information Clinic* in partnership with [Luton Irish Forum](#) on 29th November. If you would like to attend, please contact Luton Irish Forum directly via **Email:** info@lutonirishforum.org or **Tel:** 01582 720447. We will also be carrying out in-person meetings and home visits to some of our housing applicants across London and meeting colleagues in other Irish Welfare Centres.

Thinking about Moving/Returning to Ireland?
Luton Irish Forum in partnership with Safe Home Ireland will host a **FREE Information Clinic**
Option to attend online or in-person

Friday 29th November 2024 - 11am to 12pm
Follow up one-to-one in person & online meetings can be offered from 12.30pm

For more information, to get the online link and/or book appointment contact: **01582 720447**
info@lutonirishforum.org

Luton Irish Forum, Kathleen Connolly House
102 Hitchin Rd, Luton, LU2 0ES

SAFE HOME IRELAND
LUTON IRISH FORUM

Staff Recruitment

Finally, it is with sadness that we announce that Brenda Fleming, Outreach and Advocacy Officer at Safe Home will be retiring on 31st December 2024. Brenda joined Safe Home in 2002 and for most of her career she worked with Irish diaspora, in Birmingham initially and when she returned home to Ireland with Safe Home. Brenda has worked with thousands of our diaspora over the past 22 years and her compassion, dedication and commitment was exceptional.

With Brenda's upcoming departure we are now seeking a new person to take over this role. The successful candidate will work closely with other staff and in particular with our other Outreach and Advocacy Officer who is based in the west of Ireland. This is a full-time position with significant travel within allocated region (Leinster or Munster regions preferably) and also a level of travel outside of Ireland, primarily to the UK.

Closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday 22nd November 2024 (by 5pm)**

Interviews will be held the week commencing **2nd December 2024**

Expected Start date – Monday 13th January 2025

See [HERE](#) for more information and application details.

The poster features a green background with a white megaphone icon on the left. To the right, three speech bubbles in orange, blue, and green contain the text 'JOIN OUR TEAM'. Below this is the Safe Home Ireland logo, which includes a circular emblem with a tree and the text 'SAFE HOME IRELAND DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE'. A white search bar contains the text 'Outreach & Advocacy Officer' and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, a laptop icon with 'APPLY' on its screen is followed by a black arrow pointing to the right. To the right of the arrow, the text reads: 'Closing date for receipt of applications: 5pm on Friday 22nd November 2024' and 'Interviews will be held week commencing 2nd December 2024'. At the bottom, a white box contains the text: 'See: <https://bit.ly/48rG1C4> for more info/application details' and 'For an informal chat about the role, contact Karen McHugh, CEO at karen@safehomeireland.com'. The footer of the poster, on a yellow background, provides the address: 'Safe Home Ireland, St. Brendan's Village, Mulranny, Westport, Co. Mayo, F21 A3DE', the website 'Website: www.safehomeireland.com', and the contact numbers 'County No. 20748123 Company No. 202278'.

See: <https://bit.ly/48rG1C4> for more info/application details
For an informal chat about the role, contact Karen McHugh, CEO at karen@safehomeireland.com

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