

February 2025 – Issue 269

Welcome from our CEO

Welcome to the February edition of our Newsletter.

CONTACT US:



Safe Home Ireland
St Brendan's Village
Mulranny, Westport,
Co. Mayo, F28 A386
Ireland



Office:

098 36036 (from Ireland)
+353 98 36036 (from
abroad)



Mobile:

+ 353 86 059 4538
(Text/WhatsApp)



Website:

www.safehomeireland.com



Email:

info@safehomeireland.com

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

It has been another busy month here at Safe Home! Highlights include the launch of the U.S.-Irish driver's licence exchange campaign, participation in the Interdepartmental Committee on Diaspora, and attending our first in-person European project meeting in Dublin.


Safe Home, in collaboration with [individuals and organisations from the U.S. and Ireland](#), launched a campaign on 5th February to secure the reciprocal exchange of U.S.-Irish Drivers Licence. Referenced in the [2025 Programme for Government](#), this initiative aims to remove barriers faced by returning Irish citizens and U.S. citizens by establishing reciprocity agreements with key U.S. states, including Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, Massachusetts, Illinois, California, and New Jersey. Subscribe to our [mailing list](#) to stay informed about the latest updates and progress. By signing up you will also have the opportunity to support the campaign, such as signing letters of endorsement or reaching out to local politicians to help advance the campaign.

We were pleased to attend the first Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on Diaspora Affairs, the first of 2025, chaired by Minister of State [Neale Richmond TD](#), (Minister with special responsibility for International Development and Diaspora). This meeting provided an opportunity to highlight key issues affecting the Irish diaspora, including our U.S.-Irish Drivers Licence Campaign, concerns about undocumented Irish in the U.S.; and to discuss broader challenges and barriers faced by returning Irish citizens.

Last December, we announced participation in our first European (Erasmus+) project together with a number of not-for-profit organisations across Europe and with our Irish based colleagues at [Crosscare Irish Diaspora Support Project](#). We were excited that the Project held its first in-person meeting in Dublin this month (25th to 27th February) at [EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum](#). Key speakers included representatives from the [Department of Foreign Affairs \(DFA\)](#), [Emigrant Support Programme](#), [Consular Services](#), [EURES](#), [Back for Business](#), and EPIC Irish Emigration Museum. The project aims to support organisations in facilitating intra-European mobility, developing best practices, strengthening networks, and promoting inclusion within diaspora communities.

Finally, we are looking forward to walking [The National Famine Way](#) again in May. 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. 2025 will be our third year doing this walk – this time with a new approach! More details and registration will be shared in our March Newsletter, but for now, please save the weekend of May 24th-25th.

Until next month, Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh go léir. Enjoy the St. Patrick's Day celebrations wherever in the world you are located, from the staff, board & Friends of Safe Home Ireland



Message from the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse to Irish Agencies in Britain

Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse, Fiona Ryan, is launching a new campaign to raise awareness among Northern Ireland victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse about their entitlements to access support, services, and financial redress compensation.

The Commissioner is particularly keen to engage with organisations at community level who may be in contact with victims and survivors living in Britain. They wish to reach as many Northern Ireland victims and survivors and their families as possible to ensure that they have the information they need to make informed choices about their entitlements.

The Office of the Commissioner has prepared resources including posters and leaflets which it can circulate to organisations to share with their members, as appropriate.

If your organisation would be willing to display/share the material, please email the Office of the Commissioner at: info@cosica-ni.org and they will arrange delivery



Ordering a copy of your Irish Birth Certificate


For information on obtaining a copy of your Irish Birth Cert, by post, online or over the phone via the relevant regional Civil Registration Office, please see the guidance and contact information, [HERE](#)

Note! The link also provides information on ordering a range of other certs, death/marriage etc.



Applying for an Irish Passport – First time applications

For information on applying for an Irish Passport for the first time, including guidance if applying from abroad, please see [HERE](#)





Making Voluntary Contributions – Irish State Pension Contributory

With the deadline fast approaching that allows people who previously worked in the UK to make up a short-fall in their UK State Pension contributions, (**5th April 2025** – to find out more, please see [HERE](#)), we have had some queries in relation to making contributions to the Irish State Pension.

The Rules; In summary, to be eligible to make voluntary contributions to your Irish State Pension, you must:

- Have at least **520 PRSI** contributions paid under compulsory insurance in either employment or self-employment
- Apply to make your voluntary contribution within 60 months (5 years) of the end of the last completed tax year (contribution year) during which you last paid compulsory insurance or you were last awarded a credited contribution. (Since February 2017, the time limit for making voluntary contributions was extended from 12 months to 60 months.)
- Agree to pay voluntary contributions from the start of the contribution week that follows the week in which you leave compulsory insurance

You cannot get a forecast of your Irish State Pension. However, you can request a statement that will outline your Irish Contributions, please see [HERE](#) for additional information.



Pro- Rata Irish Pension – Combining social insurance contributions from abroad

If you do not qualify for the Irish State Pension (Contributory) based on your Irish social insurance alone and you have periods of insurance in another EU country or Bilateral Agreement country, then you may qualify for a pro-rata pension using your combined social insurance records.

This pension is based on a combination of full-rate Irish social insurance contributions and reckonable social insurance in EU countries or a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement. The pension is a pro-rata payment based on the proportion of Irish social insurance contributions to the total number of contributions paid and/or credited, that is, Irish and other insurance combined. **A range of qualifying conditions apply, for detailed information, please see [HERE](#)**



Changes to Irish Social Welfare Rates – January 2025

A range of social welfare payment increases announced in Budget 2025 came into effect in Ireland last month.

For a full overview of current rates of payment, please see [HERE](#)



Reminder! Returning to Ireland Information Clinic - London

We are looking forward to travelling to London again next month! We will be facilitating a *Moving to Ireland Information Clinic* in partnership with [London Irish Centre](#) on Wednesday **19th March (10.30am-12pm)** for those considering a move to Ireland.

Two Safe Home Officers will also be available to offer a limited number of one-to-one appointments after the Clinic.

To attend or book an appointment, please contact the London Irish Centre via email to: community@londonirishcentre.org or Tel: 0207 916 2222.

A promotional poster for an information session. At the top, there is a decorative green scalloped border. The main text is centered and reads: "Thinking about Moving or Returning to Ireland? London Irish Centre in partnership with Safe Home Ireland will host a FREE Information Session". Below this, the date and time are given: "Wednesday 19th March 2025 - 10.30am to 12.00pm" and the location: "at London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB". A note says "Follow up one-to-one appointments can be offered from 12pm". Contact information includes a phone icon with "020 7916 2222" and an email icon with "community@londonirishcentre.org". At the bottom, there are logos for Safe Home Ireland, London Irish Centre, and the Government of Ireland. A footer bar contains the address: "Safe Home Ireland, St. Brendans Village, Mulranny, Co Mayo, F28 A386" and contact details: "Tel: +353 98 36036 / +353 86 059 4538; Email: info@safehomeireland.com; Web: www.safehomeireland.com".

Thinking about Moving or Returning to Ireland?
London Irish Centre in partnership with Safe Home Ireland
will host a FREE Information Session

Wednesday 19th March 2025 - 10.30am to 12.00pm
at London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB

Follow up one-to-one appointments can be offered from 12pm

For more information, to register attendance or to book one-to-one appointment, please contact
London Irish Centre:  **020 7916 2222**
 **community@londonirishcentre.org**

 **SAFE HOME IRELAND**
DASPCRA SUPPORT SERVICE

 **LONDON IRISH CENTRE**

 **25**
SAFE HOME IRELAND
DASPCRA SUPPORT SERVICE

 **Government of Ireland**
Emigrant Support Programme

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

We hope to meet with as many people as possible during our trip to London. We will also be carrying out home visits to some of our housing applicants across London and meeting colleagues in other Irish Welfare Centres, so we will be 'flat out'!

Providing feedback on our services

Whether you are involved in an agency abroad, a client of Safe Home or just someone with an interest in the work that we do, we are interested to hear from you with opinions and feedback.

What do you feel we do well, what can we do even better?

Your input will help us shape our service and help those who avail of our service in the future. **Please contact the Safe Home office directly via email: info@safehomeireland.com**