



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

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Welcome from our CEO

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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 to our April Newsletter and another busy month for us here at Safe Home!

We are well under-way with preparations for our upcoming annual **Fundraising Challenge**, to walk [The National Famine Way](#). The Walk will take place over the weekend of May 24th-25th, following a relay-style format across nine stages spanning Dublin, Kildare, Meath, West-Meath, Longford and Roscommon along the Royal Canal. Each group will walk one stage, of approximately 20km on Saturday, May 24th, setting off at 10am from the designated starting point(s). We will launch the walk at [EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum](#) in Dublin's Docklands on Saturday 24th May at 10am. On Sunday, May 25th, all participants will walk together for the final stage from Tarmonbarry to [Strokestown Park](#) Co. Roscommon, where our Ambassador [Seán Keane](#) will hold a short Homecoming Concert on arrival in Strokestown. There is a once-off registration fee of €30 for the walk (inclusive of Eventbrite fees) which also included a t-shirt and hat! Sign up on Eventbrite [HERE](#). If you are unable to walk but would still like to support Safe Home, you can sponsor a walker or make a donation via GoFundMe [HERE](#)



We are excited to announce that we are in the early stages of developing a long-awaited **new website**. We anticipate the new website will go live in early June. We don't foresee any issues, but if there are any small hiccups along the way, we would appreciate your patience. We will share more updates in our May Newsletter!

We continue to work hard to advocate for **reciprocity on Irish/US driving licence exchanges**, [alongside partners in the U.S. and Ireland](#). While progress has been slow, we are encouraged that the [2025 Programme for Government](#), has committed to addressing this barrier — both for Irish emigrants returning from the U.S. and for Irish licence holders moving to the U.S. We will keep you updated regularly. In the meantime, if you are in a position to assist or support this work or are directly affected by this barrier, we would love to hear from you. To follow progress, sign-up or share the campaign, please see [HERE](#)

Until next month, take care and have a great month ahead from the staff, board & Friends of Safe Home Ireland



Frequently Asked Question – Social Housing Options – Already returned home

My dad has recently returned to Ireland, having spent over 30 years living and working in San Francisco. He is currently staying with me, as a short-term measure but is interested in securing independent accommodation for himself.

Q. Can he apply for housing via Safe Home Ireland?

A. As your dad is already back in Ireland, he would not meet the criteria to apply for housing under the scheme that we facilitate here at Safe Home Ireland.

Safe Home Ireland does not manage or build any housing at all ourselves. There is a limited scheme in place that allows us to assist qualifying older Irish born emigrants, **who are still resident abroad**, to get registered/approved on the relevant Council housing list here in Ireland. This is so that they can be considered for Housing Association schemes for older people in the future.

Once someone is already resident here in Ireland (including recently returned emigrants), and is looking to apply for any form of social housing support, they must apply to the relevant Council in order to have their housing needs assessed.

However, please tell your dad not to be too disappointed. The reality is that our clients do not have priority for housing. People already resident in Ireland will have access to more social housing supports, than those applying from abroad. You can read more about applying for social housing from within Ireland [HERE](#)

It would be important for your dad to start the application process with the Council. If you want to let me know where he is based, I can send on the Council housing form for him

Although we may not be of much assistance in terms of sourcing housing for your dad, [please do get back in touch with us](#) if he needs any help in other areas (e.g. paperwork/applying for benefits & entitlements). **We have an outreach service that might be helpful to him around all of this.**



'Sheltered' Housing in Ireland

The term sheltered housing here in Ireland is often broadly used to cover housing schemes for older people. The terminology is changing now and sheltered housing is now more commonly referred to as Age Friendly housing. Thankfully, due to population /ageing demographics, age-friendly properties and the benefits for tenants and communities do seem to be highlighted more in recent times. Hopefully all of this will lead to increased housing provision for older people in the future.

As it currently stands, Housing Association developments can offer varying degrees of day to day support:

- Some offer no support at all and are simply a housing option for all older tenants (e.g. over 65yrs)
- Some may offer additional services like meals on wheels or transport links.

However, as a general rule, Sheltered/Age Friendly housing tends to be geared at older people who can live independently or with minimum support.



For those who may need extra daily support, they would have to be assessed separately by the HSE (Health Service Executive) to establish their care needs and may be granted a level of 'home help'.

In general, most Housing Associations receive government funding for capital/building costs, drawn down through the local Council. This means that Councils have the primary 'say' when it comes to allocating tenancies and they put forward prospective tenants who have been approved on the Council housing waiting list.

There are only a small number of private Housing Associations operating in the Irish market. This means that for people who do not meet the social housing criteria (e.g. home owners) for approval on the Council housing waiting lists, options will be limited.

Safe Home Ireland does not manage or build any housing ourselves. However, we can assist qualifying older Irish born emigrants to get registered on the relevant Council housing waiting list so that they can be considered for Housing Association vacancies down the line. Please see [HERE](#) for additional information on that process.



Returning to Ireland – Financial relocation support in place if returning to work in certain health care sectors for the Health Service Executive (HSE)

Moving to a different country can be costly. To help alleviate some of the initial costs for flights and accommodation, there is financial support available via to certain candidates via the HSE International Recruitment Relocation Package.

Please see [HERE](#) for additional information and how to apply.

Note! Our colleagues at the Citizens Information Service (Citizens information Board) also have a range of other useful resources under their Returning to Ireland section will be of interest to other returning professionals,

For example, please see [HERE](#) for a guide with targeted information for returning construction workers.



Challenging Times in the housing sector in Ireland

Ireland is currently experiencing major challenges in the housing sector, affecting both social housing waiting times and access to affordable properties in the private rental market.

As Safe Home Ireland continues to support Irish emigrants returning home, we want to provide you with realistic information to help you plan effectively.

Understanding Social Housing Timelines

The current housing situation in Ireland means that waiting times for secure social housing tenancies (Council or Housing Association properties) can extend well beyond 5 years, particularly in larger towns and cities



The social housing allocation process – how this works

Safe Home Ireland operates as a facilitator when it comes to the social housing application process. As mentioned above, we do not manage or build any housing ourselves, nor do we have any direct role when it comes to the allocation of social housing vacancies.

However, we can assist qualifying applicants (still resident abroad) to obtain Council approval. The nominations for vacancies that arise are then handled exclusively by the relevant Council. They can put-forward applicants for consideration based on established allocation policies and priorities.

When considering applicants, Councils can take a range of factors into account, including;

- Type of vacancy (e.g, age-friendly or family-type units)
- Applicant's areas of preference (3 selections allowed)
- Applicant's age and health considerations
- Individual circumstances, including current housing situation
- Compassionate grounds
- Length of time on the Council housing waiting list

Councils in Ireland do not provide estimated waiting times for how long applicants may expect to wait before being offered secure accommodation. Some Councils do provide housing applicants with information regarding their "place on the list", however, this is no real indication of how long the waiting time may be.

The current housing shortage has also affected the private rental sector in several ways to include:

- Reduced availability of long-term rental properties
- Increased rental costs throughout the country
- Greater competition for available units

These challenges in the private rental market create a 'knock-on' effect in increasing social housing waiting lists, as more and more people end up having to seek social housing support.

How can we help; For anyone considering returning/moving to Ireland and more specifically, for those who may need to apply for social housing assistance, the most important advice we can give is to research and plan early and don't be put off by all that is involved. You can also link in with Irish welfare agencies both here in Ireland and abroad, to assist you.

[Safe Home Ireland is here to support and guide you throughout the social housing application process.](#) Ensuring that your application gets approved on the council housing will position you for consideration when appropriate housing becomes available.

Hopefully, in time, [our outreach officers will be available to guide you further](#) once you have successfully secured housing and are ready for the big move home!

