

information







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contact 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 Ireland, St. Brendan's Village, Mulranny, Co. Mayo F28 A386

Safe Home office hours:

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



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Welcome from our CEO

Welcome to the May edition of our E-Bulletin. I want to begin by expressing our deepest appreciation to everyone who participated in and supported our annual The National Famine Way walk last weekend! This year, the 167km route from EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin Docklands to Strokestown Park House and National Famine Museum, Co. Roscommon was completed over two days. Despite a few showers, the spirits and turnout were incredible, with participants joining from across Ireland - from Belfast, Galway, Limerick, Leitrim, Clare, Laois, Carlow, Kildare, Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo and Dublin. We were really so grateful for their presence. Our Ambassador, Seán Keane led the walk on the Sunday! A special thanks goes to UTS Technologies, our generous merchandise sponsor, and to the amazing team at Strokestown Park for the warm welcome at the finish line. Your support helped make this year's walk truly meaningful and memorable. Our GoFundMe page remains open if you would like to contribute to our ongoing work.

Earlier in the month we took part in the quarterly **Returning to Ireland (RTI) forum**, alongside our colleagues from <u>Crosscare Irish Diaspora Support Project</u>, <u>The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas</u> and <u>Citizens Information</u>. Thank you to Crosscare IDSP for taking the lead and for facilitating a great peer learning session focused on 'Access to Homeless Services and Local Connection', led by Noel Neelan from Crosscare Housing and Welfare Information. This inter-agency collaboration ensures that we offer a co-ordinated and seamless service to the Irish diaspora, those who are considering returning to Ireland and those who have already made the move back home.

We also participated remotely at the first <u>Asturias Forum on Return and Talent Attraction</u> in Spain. The Forum brought together experts and stakeholders to discuss activities related to diaspora return policies and talent attraction models. We shared the Safe Home model and Ireland's approach to diaspora engagement and support. It was a privilege to be one of only two international panellists, alongside a representative from New Zealand.

Looking ahead, our **Outreach & Advocacy Officers will travel to London i**n June. They will visit some of our housing applicants across the city, visit Irish Centres to meet with staff and facilitate some moving/returning to Ireland information sessions. Further information will be shared on our social media channels, If you or someone you know would like to meet with our team while in London, please get in touch with us directly.

For the latest news and updates, be sure to stay connected with us on social media

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

Assisted Decision-Making (ADM) in the Republic of Ireland

Assisted decision-making in Ireland is governed by the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015. The Act came into effect on April 26, 2023, and is all about supporting decision-making and maximising a person's capacity to make decisions.

It is a rights-based framework to support people who may face challenges making decisions due to intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries, mental health conditions, or dementia. ADM recognises and upholds each individual's autonomy and dignity, ensuring decisions are made in line with their will and preferences.

Key Principles of the Act

- Presumption of Capacity; Every adult is presumed to have the capacity to make their own decisions unless proven otherwise.
- Decision-Specific and Time-Specific Capacity; Capacity is assessed based on the specific decision that needs to be made, recognising that a person's ability to decide may vary depending on the issue or over time.
- Support rather than substitution; The Act promotes assisting people in making decisions, rather than making decisions for them, wherever possible.

Decision Support Arrangements

The Act covers five formal decision support arrangements, tailored to a person's level of capacity and need:

-Decision-Making Assistance Agreement

Allows a person to appoint someone to help them gather information, understand it, and communicate their decision.

-Co-Decision-Making Agreement

A trusted individual shares decision-making responsibilities with the person. Both parties must agree together on the specified decisions.

-Decision-Making Representation Order

If a person is found to lack capacity to make certain decisions, a court may appoint a Decision-Making Representative to act on their behalf in those specific areas.

Areas specific to advance/future planning;

-Advance Healthcare Directive

A legally binding document that allows individuals to state their healthcare preferences in advance, in case they become unable to make or communicate those decisions in the future.

-Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA)

Allows a person to legally appoint someone to make personal welfare and/or financial decisions on their behalf if they lose capacity in the future.

Q: Can a family member living outside Ireland apply to become a Decision-Making Representative for a relative living in Ireland?

A: Yes, certain family members can apply.

The decision-making framework is based on where the person who needs support, known as the 'Relevant Person' lives. Where the family member/applicant resides is not a consideration.

A family member living outside the State may apply if any of the following <u>applies to the</u> **Relevant Person:**

- They currently live in Ireland.
- They are carrying on a business in Ireland. OR
- They have resided in Ireland at any point in the three years prior to the application.

The application for a *Decision-Making Representation Order* must be made through the Circuit Court in the county where the Relevant Person is living, carrying on business, or last lived within the past three years.

Oversight: The Role of the Decision Support Service (DSS)

The Decision Support Service (DSS) was established under the Mental Health Commission to ensure the proper implementation of the Act. The DSS is responsible for:

- Registering all decision support arrangements.
- Supervising decision supporters and maintaining relevant oversight.
- Investigating complaints and safeguarding the rights of those who need support.

The Assisted Decision-Making process can be an emotional and complex area for the 'relevant person' and their loved ones to navigate. For further information or to access support, contact the Decision Support Service (DSS) via;

Tel: +353 1 211 9750

Email: queries@decisionsupportservice.ie
Web: www.decisionsupportservice.ie

A comprehensive range of additional information is also available via the HSE website HERE

Note! If you are concerned about a relative living abroad who may need help with decision-making, <u>Irish welfare and advice agencies in that country</u> may be able to provide guidance on relevant local systems. <u>Contact the Safe Home office</u> if you need assistance in locating relevant services abroad.

Supports for Carers

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a weekly **means-tested** payment for people providing full-time care to someone who needs support due to age, illness, or disability.

See **HERE** for more information on Carer's Allowance.

Important note! Applicants must satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) – for more information on HRC, please see <u>HERE</u> or <u>Contact the Safe Home office</u>

Returning/moving to Ireland as a family carer

If you have recently returned or plan to come home to take up a caring role, it is very important to be aware that meeting Habitual Residence Conditions (HRC) is a vital part of the assessment process for Carer's Allowance. This can often prove tricky, particularly where family members may be coming to care for a relative, but due to the nature of an illness/condition may be unsure about the duration of their caring role. Therefore, in these instances, applicants may not be in a position to provide adequate supporting documentation to show that they have cut their ties abroad.

Note! If you do not qualify for Carer's Allowance, you could still qualify for a once-off payment via the Carer's Support Grant, if you meet the relevant qualifying conditions. Please see below for more information on the Carer's Support Grant.

Carer's Support Grant (CSG)

This is a <u>non-means-tested</u> annual payment automatically paid in June to eligible full-time carers, even if they are not receiving other carer payments. Applicants <u>are not</u> required to meet Habitual Residency Conditions for the CSG.

Carer's Support Grant Increase: From June 2025, the Carer's Support Grant will increase to €2,000, up from the current €1,850.

The grant is paid automatically to those in receipt of Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit, or Domiciliary Care Allowance. It is also available to other full-time carers who meet the qualifying conditions.

See **HERE** for more information on the Carer's Support Grant.

Carer's Benefit

This is a short-term payment based on PRSI contributions, available to those taking temporary leave from employment to provide full-time care.

See **HERE** for more information on the Carer's Benefit

For more information or to apply for Carer's supports, contact: The Carer's Section of the Department of Social Protection; Tel: + 353 43 334 0000

Email: carersallowance@welfare.ie

Additional information and resources for carers are also available via: Family Carers Ireland

Safe Home Housing Applicants - Important Reminder!

The Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) process is how Councils here update their housing list. Many Councils are currently carrying out these assessments.

If you have already been approved on a Council housing waiting list in Ireland and wish to be considered/nominated by the Council for any social housing options in the future, **ALWAYS** reply to any correspondence that you receive from the Council. Failure to do so may mean that your social housing application could be closed.

Normally, under HNA, Councils seek confirmation that the applicant wishes to remain on the housing list; that their circumstances have not changed since their initial application was processed and to request up to date proof of income /benefits and rent statements.

For Safe Home housing applicants who have heard from the Council but are unsure how to proceed, please do <u>contact us</u> and we will guide/assist you with this.

A Few Photos from our National Famine Way Walk 24th & 25th May 2025

The Long Road Home - Ag Siúl le Chéile







