

**April 2026 – Issue 282**

**Welcome from our CEO**

Welcome to our April Newsletter and the welcome return of some lovely sunshine across Ireland!

## contact

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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 with us!

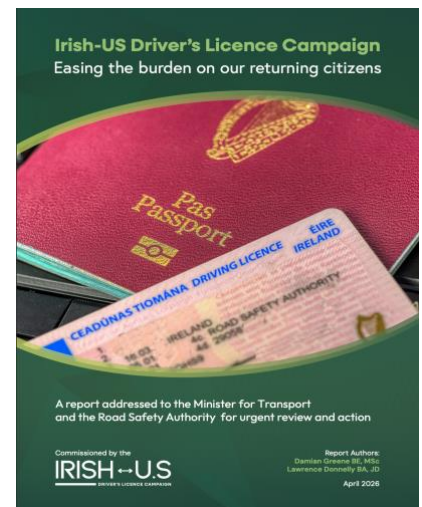
Safe Home Programme CLG  
trading as Safe Home Ireland  
Charity No: 20049119  
Company Reg No: 351678

### follow us



Our **Returned Emigrants Network (REN)** held another successful hybrid meeting this month, with members joining both in person in Portlaoise, Co. Laois and online from across Ireland and the US. Members present highlighted challenges regarding lack of recognition of qualifications, exchanging US driver's licences, transferring funds, and navigating other aspects of reintegration. Looking ahead, members agreed that the next REN meeting takes place online and will feature a guest speaker focusing on financial and tax matters for returnees. More details will be shared soon, but for now, please **save the date: 30th May**.

As Co-chair and a founding member of the [Irish-US Drivers Licence Exchange Campaign](#) we are proud to mark an important milestone this week. The Committee have launched a new [Report](#) that could end the stressful and often complex process of obtaining an Irish driving licence for returning citizens (and Irish moving to the US). This collaborative campaign brings together prominent individuals and partner organisations from both the United States and Ireland, united by a shared commitment to supporting the Global Irish community.



The Report includes an extensive review of current Irish and EU legislation, and of Irish Statutory Instruments related to driver's licence exchange. We have developed a series of proposals, consistent with Irish and EU law, to use the experience and current practices of other EU countries to develop less burdensome approaches to facilitating driver's license exchange for our returning citizens. **Members of the Committee are due to present the findings to TDs and Senators in Leinster House on Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.** We look forward to progressing this important work and advocating for meaningful change and will keep you update on progress over the coming weeks and months.

We will be attending the [Global Irish Civic Forum](#) on 30<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May at Croke Park. This will be a valuable opportunity to connect with colleagues from Irish welfare organisations across Ireland and abroad, to share experiences and discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the Irish abroad. The Forum will also mark the launch of the Government new Diaspora Strategy.

Finally, we are also looking forward to attending a Coffee Morning hosted by [Crosscare Irish Diaspora Support Project](#) on 29<sup>th</sup> April at their offices in Dublin (10am–12 noon). This will be a great opportunity to visit their offices, meet the team, and connect face-to-face with representatives from Irish organisations from around the world. Advance registration is required, so please register your attendance [HERE](#).

Until next month, take care and have a great month ahead from everyone at Safe Home Ireland

## Save the date – London Calling!

Our Outreach and Advocacy Officer, Karen Bollen, will be visiting London from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May

- On **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May**, Karen will facilitate an Information Clinic in partnership with the [London Irish Centre](#) in Camden. She will also be available to facilitate one-to-one appointments. To book an appointment, please contact the London Irish Centre directly – see contact details on poster.
- On **Wednesday the 6<sup>th</sup> May**, Karen will be visiting the *Engine Room in Tottenham Hale* to meet with [Brent Irish Advisory Service](#) staff and attendees of the Wednesday Lunch Club.
- The next visit will be to [The Irish Elderly Advice Network](#) on **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May**, where Karen will give a brief presentation and attend lunch before facilitating individual appointments.
- The final visit of the week will be on **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May**, when Karen will visit [Ashford Place](#) to meet with attendees and facilitate individual appointments.

The poster features a green and white color scheme. At the top, the text 'Thinking of returning or moving to Ireland?' is written in a large, bold, green font. Below this, it states 'London Irish Centre in partnership with Safe Home Ireland will host a FREE Information Clinic'. The date and time are 'Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 10am - 1pm'. A dark green banner at the bottom contains contact information: 'For more information or book appointment contact: +442079162222 or +448002006022'. Logos for 'SAFE HOME IRELAND DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE', 'LONDON IRISH CENTRE', and the 'Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme' are also present. A stylized map of Ireland is on the right side.

We are very grateful to the Irish agencies for helping us promote our work and connect with Irish people in the UK to offer our supports. We are very much looking forward to our visit and hope to see you there! If you would like to make an appointment to see Karen, contact the Centres named above directly.

## Outreach to Manchester and Merseyside in April

Outreach Officers Karen and Noreen travelled to the North West of England, where they had the pleasure of visiting Irish Community Care Merseyside on April 13<sup>th</sup>, followed by Irish Community Care Manchester on April 14<sup>th</sup>. They also visited the 'Tuesday Club' at St Mary's in Manchester

It was a great experience meeting the staff of all the services who were all so friendly and welcoming. They took the time to talk to us about their work, learn about the work of Safe Home and to discuss the ways we can all support each other and most importantly support our clients together.

It was so impressive to learn of the vast amount of work carried out in the North West by relatively small but dedicated staff teams.

Thank you all to everyone we met and we look forward to meeting you all and working closely together into the future

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## The Magdalen Restorative Justice Payment Scheme

This scheme enables people who were in one of 12 Magdalen Laundries or 14 adjoining institutions to receive a payment from the Irish government in recognition of the work that they carried out.

A list of these institutions can be found [here](#).

Payments start from €11,500 for women who were in an institution for less than 3 months. Payments are capped at €100,000 for women who were in an institution for 10 years or more.

Women who are entitled to this payment can also receive a weekly payment of €120 if under 66 and up to the equivalent of the State Contributory pension €289.30. Women living outside the Republic of Ireland can also receive help with health costs through the Redress Reimbursement Scheme 2015.

In order to apply for the scheme you will need to complete an application and submit it to the Department for Children, Equality and Disability.

Applications forms and further information on the process can be found [here](#)

If based in the UK, you require any support in completing this application or on the scheme please contact:

Patrick – Tel: 07432138682 or email [renewingroots@frea.org.uk](mailto:renewingroots@frea.org.uk)

**Note!** please include a phone number in your email, as replies from this address sometimes go to junk mail folders.

For more information, please visit the Fréa Renewing Roots [website](#)

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## Irish Passport Application – Frequently Asked Question

**Q.** What if I have no civil birth cert for applying for Irish passport, can I use church records (Baptismal cert) instead?

**A.** Church records are only accepted in very limited circumstances = **only when it is impossible to obtain civil documentation**, for example:

- Pre-1864 births, deaths, and Catholic marriages in Ireland, where civil registration did not exist or is incomplete.
- A civil record never existed or cannot be located, following a search via the General Register office - in this scenario, it is helpful to get an **official 'no trace'** letter from the GRO offices.

In the above cases, **certified** church records may be used. However, they are not accepted as 'stand-alone' evidence.

For queries specific to individual circumstances, including advice in relation to additional supporting documentation required if no civil record exists, it is best to log a case directly with the Passport Service Customer Service Hub:

<https://www.ireland.ie/en/dfa/passports/contact-us/#customer-service-hub>

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## Treatment Benefit Scheme – Ireland

If you are living in Ireland/ have recently returned to live in Ireland and require any of the following:

- Dental benefit
- Optical benefit
- Hearing aids
- Hair piece or wig

You may qualify for some level of financial contribution, under the Treatment Benefit Scheme.

This scheme is operated by the Department of Social Protection and is available to insured workers, the self-employed and retired people who have the required number of **PRSI contributions**.

You can read more about the scheme: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-social-protection/services/treatment-benefit-scheme/>

**Important Note!** Ensure to contact your treatment provider to check if they are registered under this scheme, **before proceeding** with any treatment.

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## Release of 1926 Census Records – Republic of Ireland

Records for the 1926 Census were released recently by the National Archives of Ireland. This is the first census return to become publicly available since the 1911 Census.

The 1926 Census covers the population of the Republic of Ireland on the night of 18th April 1926. It includes details such as names, ages, occupations, religion, marital status, county of birth, and ability to speak Irish.

The full census is now available online and can be accessed free of charge through the National Archives website. It represents an important resource for historical and genealogical research, particularly for those tracing family history in Ireland

For more information/search the records, see: <https://nationalarchives.ie/>

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## Just 4 weeks to go until our annual Fundraising Challenge to walk the [National Famine Way](#)

Preparations are well underway for this year's event, which will take place over the weekend of **May 23rd and 24th**. Walkers will follow a relay-style format across nine stages, journeying along the Royal Canal through Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Westmeath, Longford, and Roscommon.

On **Saturday, May 23rd**, each group will walk one stage of approximately 20km, setting off at 10am from designated starting points. We will officially launch the Walk that morning at [EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum](#) in Dublin's Docklands.

On **Sunday, May 24th**, all participants will come together for the final stage, walking from Tarmonbarry to [The National Famine Museum, Strokestown Park Co. Roscommon](#). We are delighted that our Ambassador, [Seán Keane](#), will join us to lead the walk on the Sunday

The registration fee is **€30** (inclusive of Eventbrite fees), which includes a t-shirt and hat.

👉 **Sign up via Eventbrite [HERE](#)**

👉 If you are unable to take part but would still like to support Safe Home Ireland, you can:

- Sponsor a walker, or
- Make a donation via GoFundMe [HERE](#)

**The Long Road Home...  
Ag Siúl le Chéile**

Our Fundraising Walk for Safe Home Ireland will begin at EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin's Docklands, and finish at The National Famine Museum in Strokestown, Co. Roscommon.

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May - Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

Registration **€30**  
Join us for an hour, a day or be part of this 2-day challenge!

**25**  
SAFE HOME IRELAND

1 EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum  
2 Clonsilla Train Station  
3 Kildock Harbour  
4 Moyvalley - Furey's Bar  
5 Killucan - Nanny Quinn's Bar  
6 Mullingar Harbour  
7 Ballynacarrigy Harbour  
8 Ballymahon - Longford Bridge  
9 Tarmonbarry - Keenan's Hotel & Bar  
↓ Strokestown Park House | The National Famine Museum

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May Stages 1 to 8**  
**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May Stage 9**

The National Famine Way is a 165km trail that traces the footsteps of the 1,490 famine emigrants who left Strokestown in 1847. It commemorates the heart-breaking walk of forced emigration from Ireland.

Logos: NATIONAL Famine Museum, EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, Irish Heritage Trust, Government of Ireland, Department of Tourism, Charity Number: 20049119, Company Number: 251614

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**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May - Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May**

Registration **€30**  
Join us for part or all of a stage, you choose!  
All stages start at 10am  
9 stages to choose from

**SAFE HOME IRELAND**  
DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE

Scan for more details and to register  
Your support is vital for us to continue providing essential services to those thinking of returning to Ireland.

**Walking The National Famine Way**  
The National Famine Way is a 165km trail that traces the footsteps of the 1,490 famine emigrants who left Strokestown in 1847.

Logos: NATIONAL Famine Museum, THE NATIONAL Famine Museum, EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, Irish Heritage Trust, Government of Ireland, Department of Tourism, Charity Number: 20049119, Company Number: 251614