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SAFE HOME IRELAND
DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE

AUG 2026 – Issue 285

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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****Welcome from our CEO**

Welcome to our August Newsletter! I hope you all had a lovely summer and got time to have some rest and relaxation too! We have been fortunate this year in Ireland to have fabulous weather, although the prolonged warm and dry conditions have also brought challenges, including the extension of the hosepipe ban to the end of September, in some parts of the country. Climate change continues to have a significant impact around the world, and I hope that wherever you, our readers, are based, you have not been too adversely affected by the increase in temperatures, wildfires or other extreme weather events.

I was pleased to attend the launch of **'Look Back to Look Forward: 50 Years of the Irish in Britain'** at Queen's University Belfast, on 28th July as part of the University's Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann Fringe programme. The exhibition celebrates the history, achievements and contribution of the Irish community in Britain over the past 50 years, sharing powerful personal stories of migration, community, culture and activism. Having already toured London, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Dublin, the exhibition is now also available as a [digital experience](#), allowing these important stories to be shared with an even wider audience.

Speaking of [Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2026](#)... it was a phenomenal success for Belfast, attracting almost 1.65 million visitors to the city centre between 2nd and 9th August, more than double the original expectations and making it the biggest Fleadh yet in Ireland. As you probably know, the **Fleadh** is the world's biggest celebration of Irish music, song, dance and language and this year more than 5,000 competitors from 22 countries took part in over 200 competitions! Belfast will host the Fleadh again in 2027 so be sure to book early and save the date: Sunday 1st to Sunday 8th August 2027!

I was also delighted to meet with Patricia Carey, **Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse**, earlier this month to explore areas of mutual work, and to discuss some of the key issues affecting the survivors we work with. It was a good opportunity to share perspectives and consider how we can continue to work collaboratively to support survivors and ensure that their voices and experiences remain central to the work being undertaken on their behalf. For more information about the work of the Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse, including details of the various redress schemes, please visit www.specialadvocate.ie. See feature later in our Newsletter too.

Finally, the **Diaspora Directory** has been updated and provides information on Irish welfare organisations and communities around the world. The Directory covers a wide range of areas, including business, culture, sport, history, community support and community networking. To explore the Directory and find out more see: <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-diaspora/global-irish-diaspora-directory/>

Government of Ireland
Emigrant Support Programme
An Bólaí Ceartáil Éireannacha agus Taidilí
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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

If you are returning to Ireland and may need to apply for social welfare supports, it is important to be aware of the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC).

In summary, the Habitual Residence Condition is to determine if the applicant has cut ties abroad and has sufficient ties to /in Ireland, and an intention to remain here.

The HRC does not have any bearing on a person's right to reside in the State, rather it applies to qualifying criteria for most means-tested social welfare payments. **It also applies to Child Benefit.**

While Irish citizens have an automatic right to live in Ireland, they will still need to show that they are habitually resident in the State before qualifying for social welfare supports.

When assessing an application, the Department of Social Protection considers a number of factors, including the length and purpose of time spent abroad, the reasons for returning to Ireland, employment history, family circumstances, and where a person's main centre of interest is located (for example, having close family in the area, an address/home in Ireland etc).

Evidence that shows the applicant has cut ties with the country they left is also generally required as part of the assessment; for example; sold a property/given up a tenancy, booked one-way travel, shipped goods, closed bank accounts, transferred or cancelled benefits. Returning emigrants can strengthen their application by providing documentation that demonstrates their links to Ireland. This might include evidence of accommodation, employment or job-seeking activities, school enrolments for children, bank accounts, utility bills, or other documents showing that Ireland has become their main place of residence.

It is important to note that each application is assessed on its own merits. **There is no fixed period that a person must live in Ireland before they can satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition.** Instead, decisions are based on the overall circumstances of the applicant and the evidence available.

Anyone planning a return to Ireland should familiarise themselves with the Habitual Residence Condition before applying for social welfare supports. **Seeking advice early and gathering relevant documentation can help avoid delays and ensure that applications will be processed as smoothly as possible.**

For broader information regarding HRC, please see [HERE](#)

If you or anyone you may know have any questions in relation to helpful documents you should gather before returning to Ireland, **you can contact Safe Home Ireland through the contact form on our website, by email to: info@safehomeireland.com or by phone on +353 98 36036.**

Increase to the income disregards for Carer's Allowance

If you have returned to Ireland to care for a loved one and were previously refused Carer's Allowance on income grounds, please be aware that allowable income limits were increased from 1st of July this year. Please see [HERE](#) for additional information

Information on the range of supports available to Carers can be found [HERE](#)

Support for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse

In March of this year the Irish government introduced a new scheme, for survivors of Industrial Schools or Reformatories in the Republic of Ireland, who received payment from the Residential Institutional Redress Board in the mid 2000s. This entitles people to make a claim for a Health Support Payment of €3,000*, an educational well-being payment of €600 a year for 10 years, or an education payment to support with further education ranging from €500 to €2000 per year depending on the type of education.

To apply, applicants should fill out the [Confirmation of Eligibility](#) form. You do not have to describe your experiences to qualify for supports under the Act, and survivors who received redress previously will only need to confirm their identity, by submitting photographic identification, a recent utility bill and proof of their IBAN and BIC/Swift code, which can be found on a bank statement.

We understand it can be frustrating for survivors who are not eligible. Regardless of whether these supports are available to you, if you or someone you know would like free confidential support as a result of institutional abuse, please don't hesitate to reach out to Fréa Renewing Roots.

*Applicants who have received a Health Support payment from the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme or Health Support from the Magdalen Laundries Restorative Justice Payment Scheme cannot receive the €3,000 Health payment.

For free, confidential support for people living in Britain please contact Sean on the London Irish Centre Survivors Integrated Service FREEPHONE number 0800 519 5519 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 10am – 4pm or Patrick at Fréa Renewing Roots on 07432 138 682.

For people living in other parts of Britain, many of the Irish Centres will have specific support services in place for survivors, for example, *Irish in Britain* have compiled a listing of these services. See [HERE](#) for more information.

For services in other locations worldwide, contact the nearest Irish Centre and they can advise on what supports are available. For a listing of Irish Centres globally, please see the Diaspora Directory [HERE](#)

Note! If you are not online, please contact the Safe Home office directly and we will be happy to provide further information.

Accessing your Irish Pension Contribution statements from abroad

You can request a [Contribution Statement online](#) but you will first have to set up a basic MyGovID account with welfare services (Department of Social Protection)

To set up a basic MyGovID account, please see [HERE](#)

OR

If you have difficulty accessing/registering for the online portal from overseas, you can request a statement of your contribution history from the Department of Social Protection directly via:

Contribution Statement / PRSI Records Section

Email: contributionstatement@welfare.ie

Tel from abroad: +353 1 471 5898

Postal address: Client Eligibility Services
Department of Social Protection, McCarter's Road, Buncrana, Co. Donegal, Ireland

Note! You will need to provide details of your [Irish Insurance Number \(PPSN\)](#) in both instances.

Passport requirements for travel between Ireland & Britain – IMPORTANT UPDATE

From **Monday 28th September 2026**, passengers travelling on certain ferry routes between Ireland and Britain will be required to present a **valid passport** before boarding.

The new requirement, introduced in line with UK Border Force requirements, applies to all passengers, including Irish and British citizens, children and adults. **Other forms of photo identification, such as driving licences and national identity cards, will no longer be accepted on the affected routes.**

For **Stena Line**, the new requirement applies to passengers travelling between Dublin and Holyhead, and Rosslare and Fishguard. **Irish Ferries** has confirmed that passengers travelling between the Republic of Ireland and Britain on its Dublin–Holyhead and Rosslare–Pembroke routes will also need to present a valid passport or, for Irish citizens, an Irish passport card. Both said customers with existing bookings will be notified to support them during the change of operations.

The requirement applies regardless of age or nationality, so families travelling with children should ensure that every passenger has the required documentation before travelling.

If you are planning to travel by ferry after this date, we recommend checking that your passport is in date and that you have the correct documentation for everyone travelling with you.

Note: This requirement is also in place for most airlines. However, if you are in any doubt about the documentation required for your journey, we recommend checking directly with your ferry operator or airline before travelling.
