

May 2026 – Issue 283

## contact

### Office:

098 36036 (from Ireland)

+ 353 98 36036 (from abroad)

### Mobile:

+ 353 86 059 4538

(Text/WhatsApp)

### Website:

[www.safehomeireland.com](http://www.safehomeireland.com)

### Email:

[info@safehomeireland.com](mailto: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

**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

Firstly, I am delighted to announce that Uachtarán na hÉireann / President of Ireland Catherine Connolly has agreed to become the sole **Patron of Safe Home Ireland**. President Connolly's long-standing commitment to social justice, human rights, and equality reflects the core values of Safe Home Ireland and our work supporting returning Irish emigrants and the wider Irish diaspora.

We look forward to her patronage over the next seven years and to the Tilley Lamp continuing to shine from an upstairs window at Áras an Uachtaráin, a powerful symbol representing hope, home, and the enduring connection between Ireland and its diaspora and their descendants, around the world. It serves as a reminder that no matter how far people travel, the light of home continues to guide them back to their homeland. For anyone seeking information on returning to Ireland, please refer to our [website](#)

In May, we published our 2025 **Annual Review**, which outlines the highlights and impact of our work over the past year. Throughout the year, we carried out 5,528 day-to-day interventions, including information provision, outreach support, housing assistance, and collaboration with Irish welfare and community organisations in Ireland and abroad.

Demand for our services continued to grow, with new contacts increasing by 51%. Of these, 21% were from US-based clients (up from 14% the previous year), highlighting the sustained and growing need for our work both in the USA and globally. The report also highlights our wider work in networking, policy engagement, outreach, and fundraising to sustain our services. You can read the full report [HERE](#)

One last reminder for our annual **Fundraising Challenge** to walk the National Famine Way, which will take place this coming weekend (23rd and 24th May). Walkers will follow a relay-style format across nine stages along the Royal Canal. On Saturday, 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, all participants will come together for the final stage, walking from Tarmonbarry (meeting at Keenans Hotel) 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 and will also hold a short Homecoming Concert on our arrival in Strokestown. Registration fee is €30 - see [HERE](#). If you are unable to take part but would still like to support Safe Home Ireland, you can make a donation via GoFundMe [HERE](#)

Finally, I look forward to travelling to the **US** next month and meeting with our colleagues and friends working with Irish communities in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. More details will be shared on our social media and via the Irish Centres in all locations. Please also contact our office if you would like more information and details of our schedule

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

---

## Global Irish Civic Forum / Irelands new Diaspora Strategy

We were pleased to attend the [Global Irish Civic Forum](#), which brought together individuals and organisations working with the Irish diaspora around the world to share ideas and discuss issues of common concern. This year's Forum took place in Croke Park on 30<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May under the theme "*Strengthening Communities & Deepening Ties – Pobail á Neartú & Naisc á nDoimhniú*". A diverse range of groups and individuals took part, sharing experiences, insights and perspectives through excellent panel discussions, breakout sessions, and extensive networking opportunities (see full programme [HERE](#)). It was poignant to have [Uachtarán hÉireann / President of Ireland Catherine Connolly](#) address the Forum, and to have the [Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Neale Richmond](#) in attendance throughout.

The forum also served as the launch of Ireland's third [Diaspora Strategy \(2026-2030\)](#) by Minister, Neale Richmond TD. The Strategy reaffirms the Government's commitment to deepening ties and bonds between Ireland and the Irish abroad over the next five years. It is based on 9 months of consultations across 27 cities in 17 countries, alongside the first ever Global Irish Survey that received more than 10,000 responses from individuals and organisations worldwide. This work was led by Kingsley Aikins and Martin Russell of the Diaspora Institute.

We were particularly interested to note that over 75% of survey respondents either wish to return to Ireland or are unsure and considering a return. This highlights the scale of *potential* return migration and underlines the importance of effective supports and resources going forward. It also has significant implications for Safe Home Ireland and other organisations supporting returnees in responding to future demand.

The Strategy adopts a broad definition of the diaspora, encompassing Irish citizens abroad, people of Irish ancestry, and individuals with a strong affinity to Ireland. It confirms continued Government investment in diaspora engagement through the [Emigrant Support Programme \(ESP\)](#), with increased resources for welfare, cultural, and community organisations overseas. The Strategy sets out 23 commitments across five key threads:

- Wellbeing and Advocacy
- Identity and Culture
- Connection and Contribution
- Departure and Return
- Sharing our Experience

**Further information and the full strategy document are available [HERE](#).**

We would like to acknowledge and thank the staff of the Irish Abroad Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for organising such an informative and engaging Civic Forum, and look forward to working with the Department and all relevant agencies on the implementation of the new Diaspora Strategy through the forthcoming Action Plan.

---

---

## Renting in the Private Market in Ireland – New Rule Changes

If you are planning a move or returning home to Ireland and intend to rent privately, the new rules regarding private rental tenancies (from 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2026) are likely to be relevant to you.

**Rent Increases;** The old Rent Pressure Zone system has been replaced by a national rent control system, which now applies across the country.

**What this means in practice;** In summary, for most private tenancies, rent can now only increase once every 12 months and by the lower of:

- 2%, or
- The rate of inflation (Consumer Price Index / CPI)

These measures are intended to give renters more certainty when budgeting for housing costs.

**Existing tenants and new tenants;** If a tenancy existed before 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2026, transitional rules may apply. New tenancies created after that date generally follow the updated national system.

**Rent review notices;** Landlords must now follow formal notice rules when reviewing rent charges and, in many cases, notices must also be copied to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB). If the correct procedures are not followed, a rent review may be invalid.

**For more detailed information, please see;**

[Residential Tenancies Board \(RTB\) Rent Rules Guide](#)

[Citizens Information – Renting Changes from March 2026](#)

These new measures were introduced to give tenants greater certainty around rent levels and charges.

HOWEVER, in the broader sense, Ireland's private rental market remains extremely competitive, with demand far exceeding supply in most areas.

**Ending a tenancy / notice periods;** separately, new rules also apply where a landlord seeks to end a tenancy. Notice periods usually depend on how long the tenant has lived in the property and the reason for termination. Tenants should always check that any notice received is valid and follows current legal requirements. **For more information, please see:** [RTB Notice of Termination Information](#)

**It is always advisable to check your rights before signing a lease, agreeing to a rent review, or responding to a notice of termination.**

---

---

## Carer's Support Grant (CSG) – Ireland

The **Carer's Support Grant** is an annual payment for people providing full-time care to someone who needs ongoing support due to age, illness or disability.

Many returning emigrants return to care for an older or disabled relative. If this may apply to you, it is worth researching what supports are available in advance. Supports for Carers including the CSG depend on timing and other qualifying criteria

The Carer's Support Grant is €2,000 for each person being cared for. The grant is paid once a year, usually on the first Thursday in June.

The CSG is automatically paid to people receiving **Carer's Allowance, Carer's Benefit** or **Domiciliary Care Allowance**.

If you **are not** receiving one of the above payments, you may still be eligible if you:

- are aged 16 or over
- ordinarily live in Ireland
- provide full-time care
- have been caring for at least six months, including the first Thursday in June
- live with the person you care for, or can be contacted quickly if needed.

**For more information, please see;**

- [Carer's Support Grant – Gov.ie](#)
- For an overview of payments and supports available for carers in Ireland, please see [Family Carers Ireland](#)

---

## Outreach to London

In the first week of May, our Outreach and Advocacy Officer, Karen Bollen, travelled to London for a week of agency visits and outreach appointments.

Karen began her outreach in the [London Irish Centre](#), where she gave a presentation on returning to Ireland and facilitated one to one appointments. Karen spoke about the general topics that are involved with planning a return to Ireland, such as housing, healthcare and benefits and provided more detailed information to individuals.

The next day, Karen visited the new drop in service of [Brent Irish Advisory Service](#) along with their Wednesday lunch club in the Engine Room in Tottenham Hale. Karen spoke to the BIAS team about working together to provide support to service users and mingled with the attendees of the lunch club.

On Thursday, Karen was warmly received by the attendees of the lunch club hosted by the [Irish Elderly Advice Network](#). Karen gave a brief presentation on the services that are provided by Safe Home Ireland and spoke to people individually about their queries.

Karen's visit concluded on Friday by attending [Ashford Place](#), where she reconnected with staff and service users that had previously been in contact with Safe Home.

---

Overall it was a very busy and productive week. A big thank you to the London Irish Centre, Brent Irish Advisory Services, Irish Elderly Advice Network and Ashford Place, it is always great to reconnect and we hope to be back soon again!

---

### **Irish U.S. Driver's License Exchange Committee Report Launch**



On April 28, the [Irish U.S. Driver's License Exchange Committee](#) (pictured above), which we co-chair, published and presented a new report in the AV Room in Leinster House, setting out three key recommendations. The Committee is calling on the Minister for Transport and the Road Safety Authority (RSA) to: (a) allow the reinstatement of expired Irish driving licences for people who hold a valid licence from another country, (b) enable unilateral as well as reciprocal foreign licence recognition, as is already the case in other EU countries, and (c) prioritise licence exchange agreements with U.S. states that already have reciprocal arrangements with other EU countries.

Following the launch, a series of meetings with Ministers, TDs, Senators, and extensive media engagement continued throughout the month, with updates shared on the Committee's LinkedIn page [HERE](#) and the full report available [HERE](#).

The Committee continues to support Ireland's [Programme for Government](#) commitments on progressing reciprocal agreements with key states (with high Irish populations), including New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. While this work is progressing, it remains a slow and time-consuming process due to its complexity. In this context, our report's recommendations offer an alternative, less burdensome approach to help address this and reduce the administrative challenges faced by many people returning or moving to Ireland.

We were also delighted to have so many [Committee members](#) from both the U.S. and Ireland in attendance, many of whom travelled from the U.S. to participate in the Global Irish Civic Forum and Diaspora Strategy launch at Croke Park later that week. The Committee continues to meet monthly and we will continue to keep you updated on progress.

---