

Welcome from our CEO

Welcome to the March edition of our Newsletter. We hope you all had a lovely St. Patrick's Day, whether you celebrated here in Ireland or abroad.

I was delighted to attend the launch of *Sing Our Own Song: End-of-Life Care and the Irish Community in Britain* on 25th February at the [Embassy of Ireland, London, Great Britain](#). It was also great to reconnect and network with so many colleagues and friends from across the country, all committed to supporting the Irish diaspora. The Irish End-of-Life-Care Project, facilitated by [Irish in Britain](#) and [Innisfree Housing Association](#) aims to develop a community informed response to improve practice in enabling dignified and responsive end-of-life care for individuals and their families. It highlights the need for trauma-informed, community-led, and culturally sensitive approaches to end-of-life care, including recognition of Irish customs and mourning practices. It also identifies gaps in culturally competent care and highlights gaps affecting marginalised groups within the Irish community. The report is available to read online or download in PDF format [HERE](#)

This month, our Outreach Officer, Noreen Mulrine, travelled to Birmingham and Coventry, meeting with Irish Centre staff and volunteers as well as individuals who are considering moving or returning to Ireland. It was great to see first-hand the wide range of supports and services provided by [Birmingham Irish Association](#), [Coventry Irish Society](#) and [Sandwell Irish Society](#) in supporting our diaspora. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone for the hospitality and warm welcome we received. We look forward to travelling to Liverpool and Manchester next month, London in May and the United States in June. Please contact our office if you would like more information or to arrange to meet with a Safe Home officer in locations listed.

We are looking forward to walking [The National Famine Way](#) again this May, from [EPIC -The Irish Emigration Museum](#) Dublin, to [Strokestown Park House and National Famine Museum](#), Co Roscommon along the Royal Canal. The Walk will take place over the weekend of May 23rd to 24th, following a relay-style format across eight stages spanning Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Westmeath, Longford and Roscommon. On Saturday, May 23rd, groups will set off to walk one stage each (approximately 20km per stage). Then on Sunday, May 24th, all participants will walk together from Tarmonbarry to Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon. There is a once-off registration fee of €30 (inclusive of Eventbrite fees) which also includes a t-shirt and hat. Please see [Eventbrite](#) for more information and registration details. If you are unable to walk but would still like to support Safe Home Ireland, you can sponsor a walker or make a donation via GoFundMe [HERE](#)

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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




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 23rd May - Sunday 24th May 2026
The National Famine Way is a 165km trail that traces the footsteps of the 1,430 famine emigrants who left Strokestown in 1847. It commemorates the heart-breaking walk of forced emigration from Ireland.

Thinking of returning to Ireland - Is it for me? Part 2

In our last issue we posed a number of questions to people who were thinking of returning to live in Ireland after a period abroad. We recognised that, in some cases, this can be a very difficult decision to reach on an emotional level. There are so many considerations to take into account; family, friends, lifestyle, work and ties to one's homeland versus the adopted home. In every situation, there are both losses and gains.

This month we focus on some practical questions to consider. We will also highlight important documents you should bring with you, should you decide to return to Ireland, to help make the transition as seamless as possible.

- If your plan is to **work** when you return, are there suitable job opportunities in the area you plan to move to? Are there Employment Agencies you can register with and apply in advance?
- If you plan to **start your own business**, will this be possible? Is there a need for your business in the county you return to, do you know which agencies to approach for support?
- If you have **qualifications** from study in another country, will they be recognised in Ireland?
- If you are returning with **children**, have you researched local schools and colleges? Do they have places available? Have you considered child care options and costs?
- Are you planning to **buy or rent a home**? Have you researched property prices and rental availability? If you plan to bring furniture, have you factored in removal costs?
- If you may need **social housing** support do you know how to access this and how the procedure works?
- What are the **supports and services** like in the area you plan to return to? Are they adequate for your requirements? For example, if you do not own a car, is public transport available?
- If you own a **vehicle**, are you planning to bring it with you? Will there be costs involved in importing it into Ireland? If you have a [driving licence from another country](#) will it be recognised in Ireland?
- Do you or anyone moving with you have specific [healthcare](#) needs? If yes, can relevant services be easily accessed in the part of Ireland you are returning to?
- If you are planning to **retire in Ireland**, will your current pension transfer with you?
- If you are not an Irish citizen, or if you are returning with [a non-Irish spouse or de-facto partner](#), do you have the necessary permission to reside in Ireland? Have you checked the residency and visa requirements that may apply?

Please find below a list of examples of **important documents to bring with you**, depending on your individual circumstances.

- Personal documentation – birth cert, marriage cert, divorce papers
- Back-up documentation regarding any medical conditions and where relevant, take home a 3-6 month supply of prescribed medication if possible;
- Name and address of last employer and social security number;
- Payslips, and if in receipt of a social welfare payment, proof of same;
- Where applicable, proof that property abroad has been sold or a tenancy has ended;
- Car insurance documents showing your 'no claims' history;
- If taking car; driver's licence and documents to prove ownership;
- 6 months' statements from all financial institutions where you hold or have held accounts, even those you may have closed prior to the move - a closing statement would be very helpful

This is a *guide* only and *not* an exhaustive list. We hope that some of these questions and details of documents required will help you make an informed decision about returning to Ireland. If you would like to discuss your particular situation in more detail or have any queries, please do [contact us](#).

Important Note! For anyone who may need to apply for a means-tested Social Welfare payment or Child Benefit on arrival in Ireland, **it will be very important** to have a good paper trail of documentary evidence to show that you have (a) cut ties abroad and (b) that you can demonstrate your connections to/in Ireland and your intention to remain here. This is to meet the Habitual Residency Condition (HRC), specifically in relation to certain social welfare payments in Ireland. See [HERE](#) for more information on the HRC.

Pension/Benefit Annual Letters of Entitlement Department for Work & Pensions (UK)

If you receive a UK State Pension or other benefits from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), you should receive your annual entitlement letter soon (some of you may already have it).

This letter shows:

- Your pension/benefit rate in 2025
- Any increase due from April 2026

Please keep this letter somewhere safe and easy to find.

These statements are often needed for applications in Ireland, such as:

- Local Authority housing applications
- Medical Card applications
- Social Welfare supports

If you are planning to return to Ireland in 2026, it is particularly important to have your most recent annual statement ready.

It can take several weeks for replacement letters to arrive in the Republic of Ireland. Various applications (per above) cannot progress until the latest statement is provided, so having it to hand can prevent delays and ease transition back into 'the system' here in Ireland.

We strongly recommend that everyone (**wherever you live**) keeps their most recent annual pension/ benefit statements in a safe place and ensures they can access them easily if requested.

Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse – Ireland

The Irish government has recently approved the delivery of a package of ongoing supports to survivors of abuse in residential institutions such as industrial schools and reformatories.

The package includes health, education and advocacy supports, and other initiatives in areas such as housing, funeral costs and certification relating to detention in a relevant institution.

For more information, including eligibility criteria for the various measures, please see the dedicated website [HERE](#)

The website will be updated as further information on the various supports become available or are implemented.

If you would like to receive updates on the supports, please
email: survivorsupports@education.gov.ie to be added to the mailing list.

For further information, please contact Survivor Supports:

In writing: Survivor Supports, Department of Education and Youth, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Westmeath, N37 X659

Tel: +353 (0) 90 6483625

Email: survivorsupports@education.gov.ie

Information for Northern Ireland victims and survivors of Historical Institutional child abuse in the North and elsewhere

We were contacted recently by the [Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Child Abuse, Northern Ireland \(COSICA NI\)](#), who is promoting an awareness campaign on the specialist supports and services available to survivors.

- If you experienced abuse as a child under 18 years while resident in an institution in Northern Ireland (such as a children's home, training school or borstal) between 1922 and 1955, you may be eligible to apply for specialist supports and services.
- Specialist supports and services, including physical and mental health supports are available to Northern Ireland victims and survivors of non-recent/historical institutional child abuse, where they live in Northern Ireland or elsewhere.

If this may apply to you, anyone you may know, you can contact the [Commission](#) directly as follows:

COSICA NI, 5th Floor South, Queen's Court, 56-66 Upper Queen Street, Belfast, BT1 6FD

Tel: 028 9054 4985 (+ 44 28 9054 4985 if dialling internationally)

Email: info@cosica-ni.org

Website: www.cosica-ni.org

Philomena's Law: Information for survivors of Ireland's Mother & Baby & County Homes – Britain

Last month the British Government announced it will implement [Philomena's Law](#), ensuring that compensation paid to survivors of Ireland's Mother and Baby and County Homes will not affect their means-tested benefits in Britain.

The commitment was announced on 13th March at the UK–Ireland Summit in Cork, following a campaign led by Liam Conlon, MP, with a cross-party backing of more than 100 MP's, and the [Irish in Britain](#).

For further information and support around [Philomena's Law](#), and the [Payment Scheme](#), contact [London Irish Centre National Response Freephone Line](#) on **0800 519 5519**.

The Response Line is open 10am – 4pm every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and can help with signposting towards suitable emotional support and/or specialist counselling, for all former residents of Mother and Baby Institutions.

Safe Home Ireland Returned Emigrants Network (REN)

Our next Returned Emigrants Network (REN) meeting will take place on **Saturday, 18th April** at **Portlaoise Parish Centre, Dublin Rd, Portlaoise R32 FH67**, with an option to join online.

REN provides a space for returnees to connect, share experiences, and discuss both the positives and challenges of returning to Ireland.

You can register to attend via Eventbrite [HERE](#), and we will send the virtual link to those who are unable to attend in person.

