SAFE HOME IRELAND
DIASPORA SUPPORT SERVICE

information housing
outreach connect

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Thinking of returning or moving to Ireland?
Get in touch with us!

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

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Emigrant Support Programme

Welcome from our CEO

It has been a really busy month of networking, travelling, attending meetings and representing Safe Home Ireland both in Ireland and abroad. Firstly, I was delighted to attend the annual London Irish Centre **Health Fayre**, which is always a fantastic opportunity to network with staff at the Centre, meet a range of allied health service providers from across Camden and the wider London area, and connect with people who are in the process of, or considering, moving or returning to Ireland. This year's event was particularly poignant given the upcoming closure of the Centre for major renovation works. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with staff in the new temporary locations next year and to returning to the new revamped London Irish Centre when it opens.

During the month, I also had the honour of representing and presenting Safe Home at the **Barka Foundation for Mutual Help** (Fundacja Pomocy Wzajemnej Barka) Study Visit and International Seminar in Poznań, Poland. This invitation arose from our shared membership of ERMiNe (European Return and Migration Network). My presentation outlined the 'Irish model' of diaspora support and engagement, highlighting the work of our key partners in Ireland and the Irish Government's distinctive approach to diaspora engagement through the Emigrant Support Programme and Ireland's Diaspora Strategy 2026–2030. It was a pleasure to share the platform with Dr Martin Russell of The Diaspora Institute, alongside so many other speakers and contributors, including representatives of Barka International, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Consular Service as well as Michał Wybiral, Secretary, Consul of the Republic of Poland, Head of the Consular and Polish Diaspora Section, consular assistance in Dublin. A heartfelt thank you to Ewa, Andrew and Julie, fellow ERMiNe members, for inviting Safe Home to participate, and to everyone involved for the warm welcome and wonderful Polish hospitality. As this visit was particularly meaningful for Safe Home, we will share a dedicated reflection on our visit to Barka in our next newsletter.

A sincere thank you to the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) for organising and inviting our staff to participate in information-sharing sessions with the Traveller Counselling Service and the Offaly Traveller Movement's Traveller Suicide Bereavement Liaison Service. Both sessions were really informative and provided a unique opportunity to learn more about each other's services, referral procedures and areas of expertise and how we can strengthen collaboration going forward.

Finally, I am delighted to announce our **Annual Christmas Concert** with Ambassador **Seán Keane** and guests, is taking place on Sunday, 6 December 2026, at St. Peter's Church of Ireland, **Portlaoise**, Co. Laois. Also, that our **2027 Calendar** is now available to purchase from our website. Please see the separate sections below for further details on concert tickets and calendar orders.

Until next month, Slán agus Beannacht, and Happy Halloween from all the team at Safe Home Ireland

Budget 2027 – A Summary - Social Welfare Changes

Budget 2027 was announced on the 6th of October 2026. It included increases to State Pensions and a range of other social welfare payments as well as extra support with fuel costs. Some measures will take effect in January 2027, while others are due later in the year.

From January 2027, the maximum personal rate of the State Pension and most weekly social welfare payments will increase by €10 per week.

The new maximum State Pension rates will be:
State Pension (Contributory): €309.30 per week for people under 80, rising to €319.30 for those aged 80 and over. For the Contributory Pension, you will have to have sufficient social insurance contributions to qualify**.
**Note! Periods of work abroad may help with a pension claim under international social security agreements (e.g. UK, Canada, US)

State Pension (Non-Contributory): €298 per week for people under 80, rising to €308 for those aged 80 and over.
For the Irish State Pension (Non-Contributory), the amount you receive will depend on your income means testing and other qualifying criteria.

From early January 2027, **Fuel Allowance** will increase by €5 to €43 per week.
The allowable income limit for a single applicant, aged 66 or over, will increase from €534 to €641 per week. Fuel Allowance is a seasonal payment and is subject to qualifying conditions. The higher income limit may help some pensioners who did not qualify before, but eligibility is not automatic.

The weekly **Living Alone Increase** will increase by €3 per week, bringing it to €25, from January 2027.

Note! Older people who are living alone and in receipt of an Irish State Pension (Contributory) **outside of Ireland** can apply for the Living Alone Allowance. Contact the Pension Services Office in Sligo for additional information: **Tel:** 00353 71 915 7100; **Email**: **statepensions@welfare.ie**

A new annual Cost of Disability Payment of €500 will be introduced for eligible adults receiving long-term disability payments. The first payment is expected in the first quarter of 2027. The payment is intended to help with the extra costs faced by people living with a disability. Eligibility will depend on the qualifying payment and other criteria.
We will report further on this as details are published.

Changes to Carer's Allowance
From July 2027, the income disregard for Carer's Allowance will increase to:
€1,150 per week for a single person, up from €1,000.
€2,300 per week for a couple, up from €2,000.
Carer's Allowance remains subject to income means testing and a range of other qualifying conditions.

Useful Information from the office of The Special Advocate for Survivors

The role of the Special Advocate for Survivors is to ensure that the views of Survivors and Affected Persons are central to the delivery of the State's response to the legacy of institutional trauma and forced family separation. Patricia Carey, Special Advocate for Survivors, and her team, focus on ensuring a strong and amplified voice for those affected by institutional abuse and forced family separation.

For more information about the office of the Special Advocate, visit: www.specialadvocate.ie
Phone: +353 1 511 7660
To join the Mailing List, to receive updates about their work and our quarterly newsletter, sign up here: Special Advocate Mailing List

To listen to **'Voices of Courage'** podcast series with Survivors, visit: Voices of Courage podcast

Birth Information and Tracing
You can apply for your birth and early-life information, apply for a tracing service, and register or update your preferences on the Contact Preference Register via Birth Information and Tracing. These services are provided by the Adoption Authority of Ireland and Tusla.
For more information visit: Access to birth and early life information is changing - Birth Information & Tracing

Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Act 2025
For information about the supports available, who can apply, application forms and contact details, visit Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse
Phone: +353 90 648 3625
Email: survivorsupports@education.gov.ie

Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme
For information about who can apply, how to apply, the institutions covered by the scheme and contact details, visit: Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme
Phone: +353 1 522 9992
Email: info@paymentscheme.ie

The Magdalene Restorative Justice Ex-Gratia Scheme
For information about the background of the scheme and how to apply, visit
The Magdalen Restorative Justice Ex-Gratia Scheme
Phone: +353 87 165 6460
Email: MRJScheme@dcde.gov.ie

Snapshot of our work! Our recent outreach to London and Luton

As part of our Outreach and Advocacy Service, Safe Home Ireland continues to engage and connect with Irish organisations abroad as well as housing applicants. Our Outreach and Advocacy Officers Karen Bollen and Noreen Mulrine have recently visited London and Luton, where they had the privilege of meeting with Safe Home housing applicants and attend many of the Irish services.

Karen visited Irish Community Services, Bexleyheath where she attended the lunch club and Bingo and spoke to staff and service users. We want to extend a special thank you to Shauna Mulligan, who will be stepping down from her role as Executive Director. Shauna has always made Safe Home feel welcome and has connected many clients with our services, and we wish her all the best for her future endeavours.

Karen also visited Southwark Irish Pensioners Project, where she had the opportunity to speak to the team and exchange information about the services that are being provided. It was great to connect and we look forward to visiting again soon.

Noreen visited the Brent Irish Advisory Service's Active Ageing Club in Dollis Hill, where she spoke to staff and service users and gave a presentation on the work of Safe Home.

Karen and Noreen attended the London Irish Centre, Camden together, where they shared information with staff, and facilitated one to one appointments for clients. Noreen then attended Ashford Place, where she spoke to service users individually and met with staff at the Centre.

Karen visited Luton Irish Forum where she attended the Tea and Chat morning and gave a brief explanation of the services Safe Home Ireland provides and had individual conversations with service users afterwards.

On the same day, Noreen attended The Irish Elderly Advice Network, where she spoke to staff and service users and provided more information on our services; she also attended the UK office of Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO), where she met with staff and exchanged information about referrals and partnership working going forward.

We want to express our gratitude and appreciation for all of the Irish organisations we have visited, and who have always been a very valued partner to Safe Home in supporting Irish citizens abroad. We would not be able to do what we do without you all, and we are looking forward to continuing working together in partnership going forward.



Frequently Asked Question – How can I trace my UK National Insurance number?

Q. If you previously lived or worked in the UK and do not know/cannot find your National Insurance (NI) number, there are a number of avenues you can try to trace it;

1. Check your old records first - your NI number may be on documents you already have;

- Old payslips or your P60 (end-of-year tax certificate).
- Letters from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) about tax or National Insurance.
- Letters about your UK State Pension or other benefits.

2. Find your number online

The quickest way to find your NI number is usually through your HMRC Personal Tax Account or the official HMRC app.

- Visit GOV.UK – Find your National Insurance number
- Follow the instructions to access your number.
- If you can sign in, you can view your number and download a letter confirming it.

Note! You may need to verify your identity. If you live in Ireland and have trouble accessing the online service, try the telephone or postal options below.

3. By Phone - can I phone HMRC from Ireland?

Yes. You can contact HMRC's National Insurance helpline for help tracing your number.

- HMRC National Insurance enquiries (within UK - Tel 0845 915 7006)
- From Ireland, Tel: **00 44 191 203 7010**
- Opening hours: Monday to Friday, 8am–6pm UK time, excluding bank holidays.

Have your full name, date of birth, current address and any previous UK addresses ready. It may also help if you can provide details of former employers and the dates you worked in the UK.

Note! HMRC will not give you your NI number over the phone. If they can trace it, they will send written confirmation by post, usually within 10 working days.

4. By post, by completing CA5403 form (downloadable HERE)

OR Visit GOV.UK – Get your National Insurance number by post.

Complete the online form CA5403, and print it off. Sign the declaration and include the identity documents requested.

Once you have completed the CA5403, as per above, the form and supporting documents should be posted to:

HM Revenue and Customs, National Insurance contributions and Employers Office BX9 1AN United Kingdom

Christmas Concert 2026



Tickets and further information are available on Eventbrite **HERE**.

We are delighted to announce our **Annual Christmas Concert** with our wonderful Ambassador Seán Keane, which will take place on **Sunday, 6 December 2026**, at **St. Peter's Church of Ireland, Portlaoise, Co. Laois**.

Seán will be joined by special guests, including The Timahoe Male Choir**,** who performed at our 2025 Christmas Concert. Known for their energetic and inclusive performances of traditional and contemporary songs, the choir regularly performs at community and charity events in Ireland and abroad. Also performing will be the Laois Community Choir, established by Music Generation Laois in 2024. With over 100 members of all ages, the choir celebrates the joy of singing, friendship and community through its weekly rehearsals. Completing the line-up is Just Alice**,** a rising Irish singer-songwriter who blends folk, Americana and country influences, bringing heartfelt emotion to every performance.

St. Peter's Church of Ireland is one of Portlaoise's oldest surviving buildings, dating back to around 1556, when the town was known as Maryborough. This historic setting provides a fitting backdrop for an evening of music, community and Christmas spirit, all in support of Safe Home Ireland.

2027 Calendar



Also, our **2027 Calendar** is now available to purchase through our website, featuring beautiful scenic photographs from across Ireland. We extend our sincere gratitude to all our photography contributors for generously donating their images, with original reflections accompanying each photograph by our very own Johnny B. Broderick. We are also grateful to all the sponsors featured throughout the calendar for their generous support, with special thanks to the Bonnington Hotel Dublin & Leisure Centre for sponsoring the printing of this year's calendar.

To view pricing, including postage, and place your order online, please select the relevant link below:

- **Ireland:** Order here
- **UK/Europe:** Order here
- **USA/Canada:** Order here
- **Australia/Worldwide:** Order here

Returned Emigrants Network



We would like to thank everyone who attended our **Returned Emigrants Network** meeting on 17th October, which featured *Healthcare on return to Ireland.* Further to questions raised at the meeting and from advance survey, we prepared a short factsheet on Healthcare in Ireland. If you would like a copy please contact our office.

Returning to Ireland after many years of living abroad can be both rewarding and challenging and the Network is intended to provide a space for returnees to share experiences, highlight the supports that have helped them, and discuss any challenges faced on return. Insights from these meetings help inform our ongoing policy and advocacy work to improve supports for people thinking about returning/moving to Ireland.

Our next meeting will take place online on **Saturday 28th November (2pm).** If you wish to attend, you can **join online, via Zoom HERE** or contact our office for the link to attend.

The topic for our next session will be ***Social Protection: Eligibility & Rights***