

Sept '25 – Issue 276

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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



## Welcome from CEO

Welcome to our September Newsletter! I am pleased to share lots of positive news and developments this month! Firstly, we are delighted to unveil our new website: [www.safehomeireland.com](http://www.safehomeireland.com). We'd love to hear your feedback as we work to advance our presence, get the word out about our services, and continue improving our website

On 22nd September, we hosted a special event at [EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum](#) to mark both the launch of our new website and the 25th anniversary of Safe Home Ireland. It was also a rare and valuable opportunity for our entire team: Staff, Board, Ambassador, Life President, and Friends, to come together in person, something that seldom happens as we are a fully remote charity, based across Ireland and Britain. In the morning we had a thought-provoking session, with our team, led by [Dr. Martin Russell of \*Diaspora Insights\*](#), followed by input from [Carmichael](#) (a leading specialist training and support body for nonprofits in Ireland), who will be assisting us in reviewing our organisational and operating model going forward. In the afternoon we heard from a wide range of speakers and contributors, and were warmly welcomed by Aileesh Carew of EPIC, who are so supportive of Safe Home, and had testimonials from the [Irish Australian Support & Resource Bureau](#) and [Ashford Place](#) (Britain). We were delighted to have Mary Swanton, from the Irish [Pastoral Centre in Boston](#), US attend in person and speak about our partnership supporting Irish diaspora in the US and more specifically in the Boston area. We are thankful to Jim Hennesy from the [Emigrant Support Programme of the Department of Foreign Affairs](#) and Trade and Conor Lawlor and Aisling Behan, [Consular Services](#) for their contributions on the day and continuous support of Safe Home Ireland. Our Patron, Michael D. Higgins, The President of Ireland, was unable to attend but he sent a very special message for the event.

We would like to extend sincere thanks to Seán Brogan of [UTS Technologies](#), who sponsored our website and are a key supporter of our work; also to the talented web design team, Adrian and Gabriela, of [Growth Digital Marketing](#), who worked so patiently and thoughtfully with us over the past few months. Thank you to everyone that attended on the day, both in-person and virtually.



Finally, we are pleased to share encouraging progress on the **US–Irish Driver's License Exchange Campaign**, which we co-chair. Ireland's Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien TD, has formally written to the Governor of New York to request consideration of a reciprocal driving license agreement with Ireland. New York was selected as the *first State* given its large Irish population, and this marks an important step toward wider reciprocal agreements. The Road Safety Authority (RSA), Ireland, is now examining the feasibility of entering into such agreements but before moving forward, it must ensure that New York's licensing and testing systems are comparable with those in Ireland. We will continue to keep you informed in our newsletters. In the meantime, you can subscribe directly for campaign updates at [www.irishlicenseexchange.com](http://www.irishlicenseexchange.com)

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

## Building modern Britain? A major museum project wants to hear from you!

Post-War Britain was built on the Herculean efforts of Irish construction workers employed on roads, tunnels, bridges and more. Nowhere symbolises this better than Reading and Berkshire in the South East, with major developments such as the M4 motorway and Heathrow Airport. Yet we know more about the lives of those responsible for Stonehenge, built thousands of years earlier and that lies just over an hour away from Reading, than we do about those behind the monuments to modern Berkshire constructed less than 70 years ago.

A project by Reading Museum aims to plug this gap in our understanding. The Museum is eager to learn more about the lives and work of those who built Berkshire and worked locally, for an exhibition about Irish workers planned for 2027.

If you worked in construction in Reading and/or Berkshire, or if you worked in another sector locally such as transport or the NHS - or know somebody who did - then Reading Museum's researchers would love to hear from you.

**Please drop them an email at the following address to open the conversation:**  
[gavin@blendedpast.com](mailto:gavin@blendedpast.com)

## Frequently Asked Question – Moving to the North of Ireland

**Q: Can I apply for social housing in the North, via Safe Home Ireland?**

**A: No.** The housing scheme facilitated by Safe Home Ireland is only applicable to the Republic of Ireland. The North of Ireland is governed by different laws and regulations.

For anyone researching returning or moving to the North of Ireland, click on the links below for helpful resources:

- [Moving back to Northern Ireland from abroad](#)
- [AGE NI Advice Service – Returning after living abroad](#)
- [Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Guide to applying for housing from outside of Northern Ireland](#)
- [Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations](#)
- [NI Direct – Guidance on finding housing support online](#)

## Launch of 'Irish in Motion' – USA

The [Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers](#) in the U.S recently launched, *Irish in Motion*. This is a new initiative to ensure Irish immigrants and their families have access to trusted information, legal resources, and a strong community of support tailored to the Irish experience in the U.S. *Irish in Motion* is intended to help people make informed choices, grounded in accuracy and care, whether recently arrived in the U.S or settled for years.

With immigration enforcement on the rise, and while this may only affect a portion of the Irish community, it is more important than ever to understand rights and take proactive steps. A series of practical guides have already been developed, with more to follow.

**For more information and details of your local Irish Centre in the U.S. see [HERE](#)**

### **GP Visit Cards – Ireland**

**Did you know?** If you have recently returned to Ireland and your application for a Medical Card has been turned down on income grounds, the Health Service Executive (HSE) will automatically assess your application for a GP Visit Card.

**You do not need to submit a separate application for the GP Visit Card.**

You can learn more about GP Visit Cards, household expenditure that can be disregarded in means testing as well as the current allowable income limits [HERE](#)

#### **Notes!**

- People in receipt of Carer's Benefit or Carer's Allowance, anyone aged 70yrs or over and children under 8yrs, once 'ordinarily resident' in Ireland, are automatically entitled to a GP Visit Card, **regardless of income.** *Please note that an application must still be made in order to receive the card.*
- The HSE guidance on being considered 'Ordinarily Resident' for access to health services in Ireland is as follows; "'Ordinarily resident' means that you are living here and intend to live here for at least one year".

### **Changes re Free Travel for over-70s, permanently resident in Ireland**

From 1st September 2025, the Free Travel Scheme in Ireland was expanded to **automatically** include a companion travel pass for anyone aged 70 or over.

#### Eligibility:

**All Free Travel pass holders aged 70+** will receive the FT+C (Free Travel plus Companion) entitlement. This allows a companion (aged 16 or older) to travel with them for free on public transport.

#### How It Will Be Issued:

- If your current Free Travel Card / Public Services Card (PSC) expired after 31 August 2025, there is no need to do anything, a new card with the companion entitlement **will be automatically** sent to you.
- If you are over 70 years of age and your PSC is not due to expire for some time, Department staff have advised that new cards will be re-issued in stages. However, if you need to have a companion with you when you travel, contact the Free Travel Section directly and they can help to speed up the process for you.

**For more information,** Free Travel Section – Department of Social Protection  
**Phone:** 071 915 7100 or 0818 200 400  
**Email:** [freetravelqueries@welfare.ie](mailto:freetravelqueries@welfare.ie)

## Christmas Concert

We are delighted to announce details of our **Christmas Concert**, which promises to be even bigger and better this year. The Concert will take place on **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December (6pm)** at the beautiful [St. Andrew's Parish Church](#), Westland Row, Dublin 2. We are incredibly grateful to parishioners of Dublin's South Inner City Parishes and in particular to their Administrator Fr. Alan Hilliard, for his ongoing support of Safe Home Ireland. This Concert not only raises vital funds to support our work with returning Irish emigrants but also helps to raise awareness and advance our profile.

Our ever-supportive Ambassador, [Seán Keane](#), will be joined by the [Timahoe Male Choir](#) who are blazing a trail of their own, including a performance on the main stage at [Electric Picnic](#) this year. We are also excited to welcome special guest [Kate Dineen](#), a talented singer-songwriter from Kerry and now living in Dublin.



Tickets are now available on Eventbrite [HERE](#) and we look forward to seeing many of you there!

**OR** contact the Safe Home Office

## Our 2026 Calendar - On sale NOW!



For pricing (incl p&p) and to order online, click the relevant link below;

- Post within [Ireland](#)
- Post to [UK/Europe](#)
- Post to [USA/Canada](#)
- Post to [Australia/Worldwide](#)

**OR** contact the Safe Home Office

Our 2026 fundraising Calendar is now on sale, featuring scenic photographs from across Ireland, highlighting the beauty of our homeland and reinforcing the connection to home for those abroad and those considering returning. All images featured have been kindly donated by the contributors named and accompanying each image are original reflections by our very own, Johnny B Broderick!

This Calendar has been made possible thanks to the generous support of the sponsors mentioned each month, to whom we are most grateful. A special word of thanks to our key

corporate partner, [UTS Technologies](#), who generously cover the printing costs of the Calendar, enabling us to maximise the funds raised for our work.

