



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

From the Chairman's Desk

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Greetings,

As you read this newsletter, Mayo (we humbly pray) may well have ended the 65 year wait for Sam Maguire to come to Mayo by beating Dublin in the replay of All Ireland Senior Football Final.

If Old Moore's Almanac is correct then 2016 will be the year when we will have witnessed Mayo Senior football history, and the so-called 'Mayo curse' will be finally broken. When the possible becomes patently impossible then it is logical that the supernatural will fill the vacuum of ignorance to explain what is almost beyond explanation.

A greater Mayo ritual (if that is possible) than attending senior football finals is going to funerals (an activity so beloved of many politicians). It is perfectly understandable then (to some people) that the reason Mayo has not won the All Ireland Senior Championship title since 1951 has to do with a priest's curse. The All Ireland Mayo champions of 1951 were apparently on their lap of honour when they stumbled upon a local funeral in Foxford. The curse was supposedly set by the priest who was indignant that the victorious Mayo Team of 1951 did not stop and pay their respects. It was so ordained that Mayo would not win an All Ireland title until every member of that Mayo 1951 team was deceased.

The 'curse' took on a whole new dimension in the first All Ireland outing as Mayo almost succeeded in scoring three 'own goals' (for fear two wasn't bad enough!)

So time will tell just as time will tell whether Hilary Clinton will 'Trump' Donald to win the US Presidential election. After Brexit in the UK anything is possible.

I cannot wait. Up Mayo wherever you go!

So long for now,

Dr Jerry Cowley, Chairman



Free online Counselling Service for Irish emigrants living in Australia.

Saturday 10th of September saw the launch of Cabhrú, a new online counselling service for Irish emigrants living in Australia. Cabhrú (meaning help or support in Irish) is operated by Helplink.ie, a national non-profit organisation which has been providing phone and online counselling to clients in Ireland for the past five years. Clients will be able to avail of up to six free appointments over Skype with a qualified Irish counsellor.

Cabhrú can assist you if you are dealing with any of the following: Feeling unhappy, feeling low, being constantly worried, not sleeping, feeling stressed out and/or anxious, behaviour problems, anger issues, feeling sad, difficulty dealing with a death, being bullied/cyber bullied, feeling confused, drinking too much, addiction problems, problems with eating, not feeling good about yourself or lacking in confidence

How to apply?

If you believe you are eligible for an appointment you use the contact form online:

<http://www.helplink.ie/cabhru/contact/>

or email **helplinksupport@helplink.ie** with the word *Cabhrú* in the subject line.

Administration staff will then ask you a couple of questions in return about where you are located and which day/time suits you best. You will then receive an email providing you with all the details you need to know about how to start your first appointment.

When are the appointments available?

Online counselling appointments are provided 7 days a week, under the Cabhrú service. Appointments are provided between 8 am and 2 pm Irish time in order for people in Australia to have appointments in the evening time (give or take an hour depending on the time zone appointments are between 3 pm and 9 pm from Australia).

Western Standard Time (WST) 3 pm to 9 pm

Central Standard Time (CST) 5 pm to 9 pm

Eastern Standard Time (EST) 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Note: during the Australian summer time these times may vary slightly due to daylight savings

Helplink.ie hopes to expand the Cabhrú service to other countries with significant Irish populations, such as Canada, the US and United Arab Emirates in the future.

Important Note!

Cabhrú is not a crisis service. People in need of immediate help or seriously contemplating suicide should contact existing helplines across Australia, details online via:

<http://www.suicide.org/hotlines/international/australia-suicide-hotlines.html>

OR attend their local A&E; OR Dial '000' for emergency assistance in Australia.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I am in receipt of a Widows State Pension from the UK. Is pension considered a qualifying payment if I want to apply for a Medical Card under EU Regulations on my return to Ireland?

A. Yes, a Widows State Pension **IS** considered a qualifying pension.

Qualifying for a Medical Card under EU regulations means that individuals who move to Ireland and fulfill certain criteria can qualify for a Medical Card even if their income exceeds means testing guidelines **IF** they meet the following conditions;

- They must be in receipt of a State Pension from a qualifying EU member state
- They must NOT be employed or self employed in Ireland
- They must NOT be in receipt of any pension/benefit from the Irish State (E.G a part- Irish Contributory Pension).

There is no 'special' form to apply for a Medical Card under EU regulations. Applicants complete the standard Medical Card Application form (as applicable for under /over 70 yrs). These forms are available at most Health Centres/G.P surgeries or available to download via www.hse.ie

There is no definitive 'line' as yet as to how Brexit may affect EU Medical Card applications for those in receipt of UK State Pensions. On contacting the HSE (Health Service Executive) Information line recently, we were told that "For people moving from the UK, we anticipate this will continue as there is a reciprocal arrangement between Ireland and UK that pre-dates entry into the EU". However, we set a cautionary here! There is no firm decision on this as yet. We will report on any up-dates as more definite information becomes available

Q. I returned to Ireland some years ago, I now wish to apply for my UK state pension, however I have lost my National Insurance number. How can I locate it?

A. As a UK citizen you will normally be sent a National Insurance (NI) number, which looks something like AB123456C, just before your 16th birthday or if you are not a UK citizen you apply for the number when you begin to work in the country.

You can find your National Insurance number on your payslip, P60, or letters about tax, pensions and benefits. If you still can't find it, you can either:

- Fill in the on-screen form from the [HMRC](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) website (www.hmrc.gov.uk), then print and post it to HM Revenue and Customs at the address below.

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

- Or, you can or call the National Insurance enquiries helpline on 0300 200 3500 (lines are open 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) and answer some questions (you'll need to fill in form CA5403 if you can't answer the questions, they will post this form to you)

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) won't tell you your National Insurance number over the phone - they'll post it to you. This process can take up to six weeks. If you have any difficulty with this or completing the form you can contact us on 098 36036 or drop into the nearest Citizens Information Centre.

Reflections from clients:

"Everything has changed. I was handed over a batch of forms to complete. "bring them back to me on Tuesday", he said, as cool as you like. I wouldn't have managed them at all without the help of the young lady from Safe Home. There's so much to take in when you move. Ok, it's coming home but everything has changed, changed so much". **Joe returned to Co. Kerry, from Luton.**

"I wouldn't have had a clue where to start. When I first moved here, I thought the place was huge. It is only a one bed place but compared to the one room bed-sit I had in London, it was like a castle to me. It's great to have my own front door and all my bits and pieces 'round me. It's all thanks to Safe Home, without their help, I wouldn't have had a clue where to start. I would love to get a little dog for company but they might not allow it here, I'll have to see how it goes I suppose". **Patrick returned to Co. Mayo from London**

Water Charges in Ireland – what's the story?

Domestic water charges were introduced in 2015 for homes that are connected to a public water supply or to public wastewater services. Irish Water, the national water utility, administers the water charges.

The Water Services (Amendment) Act 2016 became law in July 2016.

This Act has: **Suspended domestic water charges for 9 months, from 1 July 2016 to 31 March 2017**, with no charging or billing of domestic customers during that period.

An expert commission has been established to make recommendations on a sustainable long-term funding model for domestic water and wastewater services. An Oireachtas committee will then consider these recommendations and develop its own final recommendations. The Oireachtas is expected to vote on these final recommendations by end March 2017.

The 9-month period of suspension may be extended if the Oireachtas committee requests more time to complete its work or if the Government needs more time to consider the Oireachtas committee's recommendations..... watch this space!

Staying connected

For articles of interest to the Irish Diaspora, sign up to the Global Irish newsletter (issued every 4-6 weeks via the Irish Abroad Unit): Copy and paste the link below into your browser to sign up:

<https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/staying-in-touch/newsletter/>

Safe Home Office opening hours: Monday to Thursday: 9am – 5pm Fridays: 9am – 4pm

If you wish to speak to someone in person, don't forget to check out the time difference from wherever you are in the world to correspond with our opening hours. Alternatively, feel free to email us at any time, giving your contact telephone number. We can then either, email you back or we will check out the time differences from this side and ring you back at a suitable time.

Safe Home Ireland is supported by the Emigrant Support Programme via:



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA NA HÉIREANN
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND