



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

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From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings,

What an unsettled world we live in with refugees on the move from war zones in the Middle East seeking a better life in Europe. These unfortunate people are all too often exploited by unscrupulous traffickers and more often than not end up in detention centres not fit for human habitation, that is if they survive at all to reach Europe and a new beginning.

Our undocumented Irish citizens in the USA, estimated to number around 50,000 people, are also seeking a new life. They too may end up in detention centres such as Atlanta as so called illegal aliens, in chains, awaiting deportation. At least that is what President Trump has in store for each and every one of them if they are unlucky enough to be caught.

Even when they return home, they will face more problems. As is the case with any returning emigrant, even with a clean driving licence from another country, they will be required to re sit a driving and theory test along with 12 lessons when they return home. Even while our emigrants are abroad they are unable to renew their Irish driving licence as they are now required to do so in person. This is but one of the many issues facing our undocumented fellow- Irish citizens in the USA as they struggle to cope with the nightmare which is unfortunately only just beginning for them.

Safe Home as an emigrant support service is willing to offer every support including advice to our undocumented Irish citizens abroad. Already many contacts have been made and meetings have taken place to ensure Safe Home are proactive in providing support and guidance to all our emigrants, whether they intend to stay abroad, or wish to return home. We are here to help.

So long for now,

Dr. Jerry Cowley, Chairman



Frequently Asked Question

I am moving to Ireland shortly. I understand that there is a National Car Testing (NCT) system in place, can you give me some details on this process?

From 2000 onwards, all cars 4 years and over that are registered in Ireland must go through the NCT. Vehicles that pass the test will have to undergo repeat tests every 2 years. Since June 2011, cars over 10 years old are tested each year. Since 28 July 2014, you can submit your vehicle voluntarily for the test any time before the test due date and receive an NCT certificate which is valid for 1 or 2 years (depending on the age of the car) from the date of the test. You must bring your vehicle registration/licensing certificate with you to the test centre. You are also required to produce your driving licence or passport as identification.

Exemptions from NCT: Vehicles registered before 1 January 1980 are not required to be tested.

Cars permanently based on islands that are not connected to the mainland by road do not have to be tested. **Vehicles imported from Northern Ireland and abroad:** Vehicles imported to Ireland from outside the State (including Northern Ireland) must also go through the NCT once the vehicle is 4 years old or more. **This applies even if the vehicle previously received a UK (MOT) or any other vehicle test abroad.** If the imported vehicle is already 4 years old or more when imported, it must go through the NCT immediately

RTÉ Television are making a documentary on the undocumented Irish in the USA. RTÉ want to interview people who are undocumented about the reality of their situation. They would like to hear the difficulties undocumented face, from being unable to travel back to Ireland and worrying about the future. Filming starts in America this March. President Trump's campaign promises have become a reality and undocumented immigrants in the USA face the greatest uncertainty they have in decades.

If you would like to share your story, please email anita.ward@rte.ie
All emails will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Information Days/Clinics in Birmingham and Coventry:

As part of Birmingham's St Patrick's Day celebrations a Safe Home Outreach Officer, Brenda Fleming will be available in a number of locations as follows:

- **Sunday 12th March** - Information Stall at the Emerald Village, Birmingham (all day)
- **Tuesday 14th March** – Irish Centre in Dibgeth (12-2pm) drop-in advice clinic
- **Friday 17th March** – St. Mary's Guildhall, Coventry (11am-3pm) drop-in advice clinic

Views on Brexit

Thank you to Yvonne (London) for contacting us with her views on Brexit. Yvonne disagrees that the Brexit vote was all about "the growing intolerance to immigrants". Yvonne says, "the Referendum result was to do with many more issues, including not to have to live by the 'Rules and Dictates' from Brussels. Yes, there may be a few people using the excuse of Brexit to offend but they are in the minority. What is essential is that countries work together for the greater good of all and as Ireland is our nearest island, I expect that we shall continue to be good neighbours".

Housing Opportunities



A Housing Association in **Banada, Co. Sligo** (close to Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo and Charlestown, Co. Mayo) has a 2 bed room property available.

There is a limited transport system in place and the scheme is set in a rural location so it may be most suitable for people who can drive or those with family living in the area. There is a no pets policy in place in this scheme.

Maximum weekly rent is €73

Our near neighbours at **St. Brendan's Village in Mulranny, Co. Mayo** have a one-bedroom property available.

Maximum weekly rent is €79



In both cases, preference will be given to Safe Home applicants originally from the relevant counties or those with strong family links in Sligo/Mayo. However, applicants from other counties may also apply.

People who are registered and approved by the relevant Council (Sligo County Council re Banada and Mayo County Council re St. Brendan's) can apply for assistance with their rent. Those who are not on the relevant Council housing list will have to meet the full rent costs from their own income.

Please contact the Safe Home office for more information on both schemes.

A quick up-date on some of the Budget changes announced in October 2016

Under the **Rent Allowance scheme, the personal contribution to weekly rent costs has been reduced for people in certain categories;** For people aged from 18-24yrs who are receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) of €100 per week, their contribution has been reduced from €30 per week to €20. For those who are receiving a JSA payment of €144 and €160 per week, their contribution will now be €20 per week (reduced from €30).

Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for a period of 12 weeks when the person being cared for moves permanently into residential care.

The above changes came into effect on **1st January 2017.**

From March 2017, weekly social welfare payments will increase by €5 per week. However, there will only be proportional increases for qualified adults (e.g. spouse/partner) and those on reduced rates of payment (e.g. people aged 25 yrs and younger who are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance). Please see page 4 for more details on social welfare rates applicable from 1st March.

Also due to take effect from March 2017 are the reduction in Prescription Charges. For people over 70 years of age, their contribution will be reduced from €2.50 per item prescribed to €2 per item. The monthly maximum prescription charge spend per household will also be reduced for people in this age category, from €25 to €20

