



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

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From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings,

The recent defeat of the Mayo Senior Football team by just one point by victorious Dublin was a great blow to a county that has not won an All Ireland Football Championship since 1951. It was not at all surprising then and entirely predictable that talk quickly turned once again to the dreaded Mayo curse which precludes Mayo winning an All-Ireland until all the 1951 team have passed to their eternal reward. Just two members of the victorious 1951 squad are still alive today, Dr Padraic Carney (USA) and Paddy Prendergast (Kerry). Curse or no curse, we wish these great men even longer life. Such sports curses are commonly found where inexplicable failure to win particular sport titles is attributed to supernatural influence. Maybe when one considers the fact that Dublin can choose from half the Irish population (over 2 million people) when selecting their panel, compared to Mayo's 110,000 population, puts it all into proper context, and makes us realise how wonderful and lucky Mayo (and also Kerry) has been to be there so often in Croke Park on All Ireland day in recent times, and to have almost won on the day. Fair Play Mayo! Roll on 2018!

As the flu season approaches it is tremendously important that we all understand that the annual flu can and does kill people. This need not happen if people get themselves the influenza vaccination by injection at this time. We are warned a bad flu is on the way from Australia. Adults there over 80 years and children aged 5 to 9 years have been the most affected by this flu which is twice as prevalent as the year before. Those at high risk of the most severe and life threatening effects from the flu include people 65 years and older and those with chronic illness of any age. Anyone with chronic disease from any cause, including respiratory disease such as asthma, chronic heart conditions, diabetes, the immune suppressed from cancer or other causes, including medical treatments, should all be vaccinated against the flu. Diabetics, obese people, carers, nursing home residents, people affected by Down's Syndrome, pregnant women, all should be vaccinated at this time. Remember, God helps those who help themselves, and that means not missing out on the flu jab. Your life may well depend on it!

So long for now,

Dr. Jerry Cowley - Chairman

Staying connected – Launch of the Global Irish Diaspora Directory

Following on from commitments at the second Global Irish Civic Forum in May, Minister of State for the Diaspora, Ciarán Cannon TD, recently launched the first edition of the Global Irish Diaspora Directory. The Diaspora Directory includes the details of Irish community welfare, culture and heritage and networking groups in 34 countries.

In total there are 360 organisations listed in the Directory, comprising all organisations that have been funded in the last five years by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Emigrant Support Programme. In addition, any organisation that was represented at the 2015 or 2017 Global Irish Civic Forum is also included in the Directory.

In launching the Directory, Minister Cannon said, "This is a great initiative which has been developed to meet a real desire among our diaspora to connect better with home and with each other around the world." Ultimately the purpose of this Diaspora Directory is to help Irish Diaspora organisations improve their communications and collaboration with each other, and to assist people looking to reach out to Irish organisations abroad".

The Directory is available to download from; <https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/staying-in-touch/diaspora-directory/>

Frequently Asked Question

Q. I am living in London and applying for my first Irish passport. It says the form needs to be witnessed by a Garda. This is not an option here, who else can witness the application?

A. Witnessing in Great Britain/Worldwide; A member of one of the professions listed below can witness your passport application form as long as they are satisfied as to your identify and that your four photos are a true likeness of you. Bring along additional identification as the witness has discretion to request this.

- Police Officer;
- Member of Clergy;
- Medical Doctor, Nurse, Pharmacist, Dentist, Vet;
- Lawyer, Solicitor and Legal Executives (registered with the law society or Institute of Legal Executives);
- Bank Official (this includes building societies, credit unions, postmasters and sub-postmasters);
- Elected Public Representative (this includes members of Parliament & County Councillors);
- Justice of the Peace, Notary Public, Commissioner for Oaths, Peace Commissioner;
- Social Worker; Teacher, Lecturer; Accountant.

You must: Sign Section 8 of the form in the presence of the witness. Everyone aged seven and over must sign their own form

The witness must: Complete Section 9 of the form, including a work landline phone number, (not a mobile phone number)

- Insert the form number from Section 9 on the back of two of your four photos
- Sign and stamp the back of those two photos
- If your witness does not have an official stamp then please ensure they sign and date the back of the photographs and include the 8-digit form number and sign and date Section 9 of the application form. A business card can additionally be enclosed if there is no official stamp available.

Remember!

- 1.** Your application form is only valid for six months from the date your witness signs Section 9.
- 2.** This information is **not applicable** to passport applications renewed online

Housing Opportunity – Co. Mayo



Our near neighbours at **St. Brendan's Village in Mulranny, Co. Mayo** have a number of one-bedroom properties available. Maximum weekly rent is €79. St. Brendan's Village is a sheltered housing scheme designed for older/disabled people who can live independently. The village offers secure affordable tenancies in a community setting, with additional support services on-site.

While preference will be given to Safe Home applicants originally from Co. Mayo or those with strong family links to the county, applicants from other counties may also apply. Qualifying applicants who are registered and approved by Mayo County Council can apply for assistance with their rent. Those who are not on the Council list will have to meet the full rent costs from their own income. **Please contact the Safe Home office for more information**

Fundraising Idea! Worldwide Online Lottery

Since our inception in 2001, Safe Home Ireland has been very fortunate and thankful, to be recipients of annual funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (via the Emigrant Support Programme).

We are committed to exploring all other possible avenues to raise additional funds that will assist us in continuing to provide the level of services that we currently offer as well as responding to new areas of need. This is particularly the case for our front-line outreach services that are so vital to returned Irish emigrants and those who are still in the decision making process abroad.

We are currently exploring the idea of running a worldwide Online Lotto. It is a big undertaking so we are asking our readers to let us know what they think about the idea and whether it is something that you/anyone you know would be willing to support.

We really would welcome your feedback on this, via email to: info@safehomeireland.com

or by contacting the Safe Home office by phone (please see details on page 1).

Important!

Change in Irish immigration policy for people applying for permission as the de facto partner of an Irish citizen

The Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service have just announced that from 1st September 2017, they have changed their policy for how long de facto partners need to have lived together (co-habited) before applying for permission.

There is **now a minimum requirement of 2 years proof of living together** before applying for permission

For more information, please see the official link

<http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/immigration-updates>

Thanks to **Crosscare Migrant Project (www.migrantproject.ie)** for alerting us to this and spreading the word far and wide via social media.

Public Services Card (PSC) Ireland – the continuing saga.....

We covered some information about the Public Services Card (PSC) in last month's issue. The PSC was first introduced in Ireland in 2012 on a pilot basis. The idea was that it would help the holder to access a range of public services in Ireland easily. Applicants are required to attend designated welfare/Intreo offices in their region to register for the card face to face. Identity details are fully authenticated so that the holder does not have to give the same information to multiple organisations.

There has been some controversy recently as to whether or not the PSC is compulsory in order to apply for a range of welfare benefits and other public services.

The PSC is currently a requirement to access the following public services in Ireland:

- Social Welfare Services, including Child Benefit and Treatment Benefits.
- First time adult passport applicants.
- Replacements of lost, stolen or damaged passports issued prior to January 2005.
- Citizenship applications.
- Driver Theory Test.
- Revenue services, and any public service mechanism accessed online.

In a move to try and clarify the situation recently, Social Protection Minister Regina Doherty has compared getting a PSC to having a driving license, saying that there is no legislation stating a driver "must have a driving licence but you can't drive a car without having a driving licence. This is exactly the same... There's no legislation to say that you have to have a Public Services Card and we certainly aren't going to make anybody have it, but in order to access particularly very high value public services, it's mandatory, or it's a requirement to be able to access those services".

There have also been concerns about possible breach of data protection surrounding the use of the card and information sharing across various Government Departments. In this regard, the Data Protection Commissioner has called on the Government to provide more transparency to people on the further roll-out of the PSC

We have had some queries from Irish Pension holders abroad asking if they must register for the PSC in order to continue their entitlement to the State Pension (Contributory). **NO** is the firm answer to that one..... for now, at least!

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



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DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND