



Emigrant Support Service

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**Thinking of returning or
moving to Ireland?**

Get in touch



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings,

It's that time of year again when the days are getting longer and spring is in the air. Yet an icy chill is upon us from Siberia bringing an unexpected round of winter colds

Isn't it amazing that no matter how ingenious we are in producing so many wonderful vaccines the viruses can eventually get around them and so many of us still get ill. There is no room for complacency in the battle for better health and 100% effective vaccines.

Without doubt there is no hope of a grand plan of a world where no one gets ill. That is what life is all about - taking the rough with the smooth and bearing up to the challenge.

'Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought' was a line in a poem 'Ode to a Skylark' by Percy Bysshe Shelley that always reverberated with me in summing up the bitter sweet of life. How can we know joy unless we have experienced sadness?

How can we die unless those humble bacteria eventually overcome our best antibiotics? How can we witness great courage unless people of all ages with disabilities and all sorts of illnesses and conditions are lovingly cherished and looked after by a caring family member and society? How well we do all of that caring is the tally stick of our value as individuals and a society.

In advance of St. Patrick's Day, it's great to see Irish communities at home and across the globe making their preparations for their individual celebrations. Hopefully, the sun will shine on your parade wherever you happen to find yourself on that special day.

From all of us here at Safe Home Ireland,

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh



So long for now,

Dr. Jerry Cowley, Chairman

Housing Opportunity, Co. Mayo

Tooreen Voluntary Housing (close to Ballyhaunis and Knock) in **Co. Mayo** has a 2 bedroom property available. Applicants must be 65yrs+. The scheme is set in a very rural location so it is likely to be most suitable for people who can drive.



While priority will be given to applicants originally from Co. Mayo, they will also consider Safe Home applicants from other counties. For additional information, please contact the Safe Home office.

Get your 'thinking caps'on! Ideas sought for a set of commemorative stamps celebrating Ireland's diaspora.

Ireland's national postal service, An Post, is currently preparing a list of subjects from which the 2020 Programme of Special and Commemorative postage stamps will be chosen. Each year An Post produces a programme of special and commemorative stamps on behalf of the Irish Government. The programme comprises of around 30 such stamps covering up to 13 different topics.

The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade is now seeking input from Irish communities worldwide for stamp suggestions which celebrate and reflect the contribution of Irish emigrants or represent their contribution globally. Ideally the topic or suggestion should adhere to the following criteria:

- Celebrate significant events, organisations or anniversaries of famous Irish people or topics, both locally and internationally, preference should be given to the 50th, 100th, 200th year anniversaries;
- Reflect noteworthy aspects of Irish emigrant life, or contribution to the US, Britain, Australia etc.;
- Reflect the Irish contribution to world affairs;
- Topics that have popular and commercial appeal or are somehow representative of Irish life abroad;
- Irish involvement in major events in their host country;
- Reflect the diversity of the Irish diaspora and in particular minority groups within the Irish diaspora.

If you have any ideas for these stamps, contact the office below with a brief outline of your suggestions; The Irish Abroad Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, Iveagh House, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 or email: globalirishhub@dfa.ie

Mind Yourself is on the move in London

Mind Yourself is a charity that supports and promotes the health and wellbeing of Irish people in London. The charity helps people to improve or maintain their physical or mental health. They do so by providing a range of support services, including one-to-one support (information, advice and advocacy), accompaniment to health-related appointments and group activities. To access their services, you can refer yourself or you can refer a friend, family member or a client if you are a professional.

Under a new partnership arrangement with the London Irish Centre in Camden, from March 2018, Mind Yourself services will be based at the London Irish Centre (50-52, Camden Square, London NW1 9XB)

On Monday 12th March (3.30-5.30pm), Mind Yourself will host a final event at their current base at the Old Fire Station address to mark St Patrick's Day. For great music, food and refreshments, you are invited to drop by the Old Fire Station, 84 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

If you do plan to attend, please RSVP Mind Yourself by Tel: 020 7697 4753 or email: info@mind-yourself.org.uk

Assistance with completing the Driver Theory Test in Ireland

I have returned to Ireland from the USA and am aware that I can drive here for up to 1 year on my U.S driving licence. I now have the Public Service Card and am looking into the process of applying for an Irish licence at the moment. I see that one of the first steps is to complete the Driver Theory Test (DTT). This worries me somewhat as I have some literacy problems.

Q. Is there any assistance that I can avail of to help me in completing the theory test?

A. The RSA Driver Theory Test service have confirmed that there is special assistance available for test category AM (Motorcycles & Mopeds) and BW (Cars, Tractors & Work Vehicles). This comes in differing formats; extra time, a voiceover with extra time, or a reader and extra time. Many candidates requiring special assistance find that the voiceover and extra time is sufficient to complete the test, as this allows the candidate to hear the questions and answers while allowing the candidate extra time to complete the test.

However, there is also the option to take the test with a reader and extra time which involves a member of staff sitting with the candidate and reading the questions.

Note! Questions cannot be explained and no advice can be given regarding the test content.

To apply for a test with extra time, a voiceover and extra time, or a reader and extra time, the DTT will require a completed application form and evidence of the need for assistance, either a report or letter from an approved driving instructor, educational establishment, a member of the medical profession or an employer on letter headed paper. This should include the applicant's details, such as name, home address, date of birth and PPS number. The report/ letter, together with the completed theory test application form and relevant fee should be sent to: **Driver Theory Test, P.O. Box 15, Dundalk, Co. Louth.**

Notes! More information and DTT application forms can be found via: www.theorytest.ie or via **email to:** theorytesthelp@prometric.com or **by calling;** 1890 606 106 (Lo-call rate)
The fee for category AM and BW vehicles is €45

If you are a foreign national who is the spouse or civil partner of an Irish citizen, you may be able to become an Irish citizen if you meet certain conditions (please see rules below).

Foreign nationals married to or in a civil partnership with Irish citizens can apply for citizenship through naturalisation. The application process is the same as for foreign nationals who are not the spouses or civil partners of Irish citizens but there are more favourable residence requirements. The Minister for Justice and Equality has discretion to grant or refuse your application. Applications (via Form 8) must be made via the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service: www.inis.gov.ie

Rules: If you are the spouse or civil partner of an Irish citizen who is applying for Irish citizenship, you must meet the following conditions:

- You must be married to or in a recognised civil partnership with the Irish citizen for at least 3 years
- You must have had a period of 1 year's continuous *reckonable residence** - see below - in the island of Ireland immediately before the date of your application, and during the 4 years preceding that, have had a total reckonable residence in the island of Ireland amounting to 2 years. Altogether you must have a total of 3 years reckonable residence out of the last 5 years.
- Your marriage or civil partnership must be recognised as valid under Irish law
- You and your spouse or civil partner must be living together as a married couple or civil partners
- You must be of full age, good character and intend to continue to live on the island of Ireland
- You must have made a declaration of fidelity to the nation and loyalty to the State.

*You must show that you built up enough reckonable residence in the State to be granted citizenship, specifically:

- 1825 or 1826 days of reckonable residence based on your accumulated permission stamps
- This includes 365 or 366 days (1 year) of **continuous residence** immediately before the date you apply

Costs involved: The upfront and non-refundable fee for an application for naturalisation is €175. When the certificate of naturalisation is issued you pay a fee of €950.

For more information, please **Email:** citizenshipinfo@justice.ie or **Phone:** +353 (0)62 32500

Brexit: The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Ireland have recently launched a dedicated website giving details of progress and on-going negotiations in relation to Brexit. The site also provides information on research and analysis, as well as access to key negotiation documents.

Check out the website via: <https://www.dfa.ie/brexit/>

You can also sign up to receive up-dates via the Brexit Newsletter.

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