



Emigrant Support Service

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CONTACT US:

Safe Home Ireland
St Brendan's Village
Mulranny, Westport
Co. Mayo, Ireland.

Tel: 098 36036

(from Ireland)

00 353 98 36036 (UK)

011 353 98 36036 (USA)

Website:

www.safehomeireland.com

Email:

info@safehomeireland.com



Safe Home office hours:

Monday–Thursday:
9am–5pm

Friday: 9am–4pm

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

Get in touch



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



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From the Chairman's Desk

As we edge closer to Brexit on March 29 the implications of a possible “no-deal” scenario are a source of great speculation and worry for Ireland north and south.

In the event of such an unwelcome situation our government have been proactive in announcing a raft of proposed legislative provisions geared to ensure continuity of the status quo and so the smoothest possible transition into a post Brexit scenario. It has recently a list of some of the laws that will need to be changed here to ensure continuity of various services and rights between Ireland and the UK in the case of a no-deal Brexit.

The General Scheme of the Miscellaneous Provisions (Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 29 March 2019) Bill deals with many different areas of Irish society and how it connects with Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, including citizens' rights, transport, taxation and security cooperation, among others.

Ireland had a unique relationship with the UK due to the Common Travel Area, which allows for the free movement of people across countries and affords rights to Irish and UK citizens separate from broader EU rights. Both Ireland and the UK are committed to ensuring the Good Friday Agreement and the Northern Ireland Peace Process are fully protected.

Impressive work has been done in identifying the many arrangements already in place which need to be retained post a no deal Brexit to allow life go on as before. For instance, part of the proposed legislation will allow for the on-going of existing arrangements relating to the provision of healthcare between Ireland the UK.

It covers education matters such as ensuring student maintenance grants for eligible Irish students going to study in the UK and visa versa. It allows for the continued payment of 21 social protection benefits, including payments such as pensions, illness benefits and child benefit. The bill covers a wide range of other areas such as providing a statutory basis for cross border rail and bus services and the protection of the Single Electricity Market in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

The government has said that it hopes to have the Bill passed through the Oireachtas before 29 March. We will cover more on all of this in future issues. In the meantime, the full Bill can be found via: www.dfa.ie/brexit

For now, there are still uncertain times ahead in the UK parliament, with the talk of even another referendum on Brexit as an eventual outcome, or more likely, an extension of time being sought through article 50 so that matters can be further clarified... interesting and important times ahead for all of us.

So long for now- Dr. Jerry Cowley (Chairman)



Feedback on our services

Whether you are involved in an agency abroad, a client of Safe Home or just someone with an interest in the work that we do, we are asking that you get in touch with us to give your opinion and feedback.

What do you feel we do well, what can we do even better?

Your input will help us shape our service and help those who avail of our service in the future. **Please contact the Safe Home office or complete and return our feedback form, via our website:**

<http://www.safehomeireland.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Feedback-Form.pdf>

FREE information session on returning to Ireland for Irish agencies/ non-profits in London

Date: Thursday 14th February 2019

Location: The London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

Time: 11am to 4pm

Register at <https://bit.ly/2CZcT8l>

With the number of Irish people returning from abroad increasing, we believe it is important to work to ensure Irish emigrants are offered a continuum of support as they make their way back to Ireland from around the world, including from the United Kingdom.

That's why we've teamed up with Crosscare Migrant Project, The London Irish Centre and Irish in Britain to offer a FREE Returning to Ireland focused information session this February!

The aim of this session is to provide practical information to help front line workers to support Irish emigrants considering a return to Ireland from the UK. It also offers a great opportunity to network with fellow groups working in the sector.

Facilitated by Sarah Owen of Crosscare Migrant Project and Karen McHugh from Safe Home Ireland, the session is open to any non-profit organisations in London providing welfare support to Irish emigrants, as well as recipients of Emigrant Support Programme funding and member organisations of the Irish in Britain.

Topics will include:

- Access to Social Welfare Payments
- Eligibility for Social Housing
- Healthcare on return
- Access to Nursing Home care
- Making a planned return
- Homelessness and returning in crisis
- Making referrals to Crosscare Migrant Project and Safe Home Ireland

Places are limited so please register your attendance early at:

<https://bit.ly/2CZcT8l>

We look forward to seeing you on the day!

Free online counselling sessions for recently returned Irish emigrants

Helplink online counselling service have partnered with Safe Home Ireland, Crosscare Migrant Project and the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) to offer our respective clients up to 6 free online counselling sessions.

To apply for this service, **returnees must be back in Ireland less than 3 months.**

If you would like to avail of this culturally sensitive emotional support, **please contact the Safe Home office to register your interest.**

For more information on the full range of services offered by the Galway based organisation, Helplink, please see: www.helplink.ie

Tel: +353 9175 9887

Email: helplinksupport@helplink.ie

Drink Driving Laws Ireland

Changes in legislation, effective since 26 October 2018, mean that drivers who previously got 3 penalty points for certain drink driving offences will now be disqualified from driving for 3 months instead.

It is an offence to drive in a public place if the level of alcohol in your blood, breath or urine is above the prescribed alcohol limit. There are different alcohol limits for new drivers and experienced drivers. New drivers are drivers with learner permits or drivers who have held a driving licence for 2 years or less, or people without a valid licence or permit.

The recent legislation changes the additional penalty for experienced drivers found with the lowest levels of alcohol in their system. Previously, experienced drivers found with these levels of alcohol would be fined €200, and get an additional penalty of 3 penalty points. Now, these drivers will get the same €200 fine, but will also be disqualified from driving for 3 months.

Entitlement to emergency health services if visiting Ireland – read more here.....

If you are a national of a member state of the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland and you are travelling or staying temporarily in Ireland, you are entitled to receive medical care if you become ill or have an accident. These services are provided free of charge through the public health system on production of a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

There is a reciprocal agreement on medical treatment for temporary visitors between Ireland and Australia. Under this agreement Australian visitors to Ireland will receive emergency public hospital treatment subject to the small nominal charges which apply to persons ordinarily resident in Ireland who are non-medical card holders. They will also be eligible for assistance towards the cost of prescribed drugs on the same basis as persons ordinarily resident in Ireland. Similarly, Irish visitors to Australia will receive emergency services and assistance towards the cost of prescribed drugs and medicines on the same basis as persons ordinarily resident in Australia. Australia already has such agreements with a number of countries.

If you are on a temporary visit to Ireland and are **not** covered under EU regulations, you will have to pay the cost of attendance at an Accident and Emergency Department. If you are not a national of an EU/EEA member state, or from Switzerland or Australia, you may also be charged the full economic cost of any further treatment, including medical care in an acute hospital. Therefore, taking out private medical travel insurance before travelling is recommended.

Private Health Insurance in Ireland - Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I will be returning to Ireland shortly and am looking into taking on private health insurance. Can you tell me **(i)** what/f any waiting periods apply? and **(ii)** what is the story regarding existing medical conditions?

A (i) When you take out health insurance in Ireland **for the first time**, you may have to serve waiting periods before you are fully covered, but accident and injury will be covered immediately. The maximum waiting periods are:

Accident and injuries..... No waiting period

Illnesses that start after you join..... 26 weeks

Illnesses that existed 6 months prior to joining 5 years

Maternity related claims..... 52 weeks **Note! Infants** born to policyholders will not serve a waiting period if they are added to a policy within 13 weeks of their date of birth.

Once you serve these waiting periods you will not have to serve them again if you switch to another insurer, as long as you haven't had a break in cover of more than 13 weeks.

If you switch insurers while you are serving new customer waiting periods, the amount of time served with the first insurer will be taken into account and you will finish off your waiting periods with the new insurer. You will only have to serve additional waiting periods if you switch to a plan with higher benefits.

A (ii) From 1st May 2015, a **'Pre-existing condition'** was defined as "an ailment, illness or condition, where, on the basis of medical advice, the signs or symptoms of that ailment, illness or condition existed at any time in the period of 6 months ending on the day on which the person became insured under the contract".

Effective from 1st May 2015, the maximum waiting period for pre-existing conditions is 5 years. So, for example, if you have diabetes, the insurance company can refuse to provide you with any cover for diabetes for the specified period but must cover you for any other/new illnesses once the initial waiting period has expired.

For independent information on private health insurance companies operating in the Irish market and price comparisons on policies, please contact;

The Health Insurance Authority (www.hia.ie) **Tel:** +353 (0)1 406 0080

Email: info@hia.ie

Reduction in prescription charges for people aged 70yrs+; from €2 per item prescribed to €1.50 per item and changes in the **Drugs Payment Scheme limits**, from €134 to €124 monthly. Although initially reported as coming into effect from 1st January 2019, these will not now be implemented until 1st April 2019. We will report further on both of these areas over the coming months.

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