



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,

There was a most interesting documentary on TG4 in the past week about Irish Pubs. This was a repeat as I had the great pleasure to have seen the particular program before. It was no less fascinating viewing the second time round, especially as I had recollected visiting a number of these same watering holes myself on occasion in times gone by. These included Brennan's of Bundoran, Leonard's of Lahardane in Mayo, and John B. Keane's of Listowel. Here we saw so much history on display and a reminder of the way we were as many of these establishments had refused to change one iota with time. Even the snugs were intact, and the grocery shop-still to the side. Just this week on the Irish Times Abroad there's an article "London's Irish Pubs: all the lonely people, where they go to belong" by Niamh Linehan. It has the byline "Many bars served as a form of time capsule, preserving a slice of home long since gone." It's no wonder Irish Pubs have been such a successful product to market, creating an industry in themselves all over the world offering a guaranteed "Cead Mile Failte" to all and sundry.

I well remember over the years visiting Irish pubs in the UK and meeting many older emigrants there who regarded it as their own sitting room where they could enjoy their off time or spend some leisure time in their retirement. This was where they could meet their fellow country-man or woman, and enjoy a pint, have a meal, and hear show band music. The pub was so many other things for our emigrants besides being a release from loneliness. It was their labour-exchange of sorts before social media, and where they sought heat. The alternative was a cold bedsit. Many of these Irish pubs have modernised, and older emigrants will still frequent them. The IT article sums it up well; "One thing that hasn't changed in London, regardless of year or era, is that it's a very easy place to be lonely. And people don't want to be lonely".

As we come to crunch time for Brexit, tensions are mounting with Theresa May's position as PM looking increasingly untenable. This is in contrast to the Irish Government's position which reflects control, stability and the upmost decorum, together with strong backing from the EU. With an estimated one million people on the streets of London in the last few days looking for a second referendum, and some extension of time for the UK on the cards, the Brexit game is far from over. Let's hope for everyone's sake that greater wisdom prevails and we have a soft landing after all.

So long for now, **Dr Jerry Cowley (Chairman)**

Thinking of returning / moving to Ireland? Come prepared

Below are some examples of documentation to bring home with you that should help ease your transition into 'the system' in Ireland.

- Personal documentation: Birth Certificates, Marriage Cert, Divorce Papers, Passport, Driving licence
- Back up documentation regarding any medical conditions and list of medications/current prescription
- Name & address of last employer and National Insurance/Social Security number
- Recent pay slips, equivalent of latest P60 and P45
- Up to date income statements from your pension/s provider (State and work related)
- Most recent rent /mortgage statement
- Proof to show you have given up your tenancy /sold your home abroad
- Proof to show that you have cancelled any assistance with rent supports abroad (e.g. Housing Benefit in the UK)
- Proof to show you have stopped any non-transferable welfare or social security payments
- 6 months back bank statements **and** where possible, closing statement/s
- Proof to show you have closed your bank, post office account/s abroad*

***Note!** This can be difficult for a number of reasons;

- If you do not already have an active bank account open in Ireland, it can take some time to get the relevant paperwork in place to allow you to open an account when you move here.

-Due to Criminal Justice Legislation (regarding the prevention of money laundering) banks are required to seek proof of residency in Ireland before a customer can open an account here (normally, at least 1 utility bill in the customer's own name at an Irish address), it is not possible to open a resident bank account in Ireland in advance of moving here. Therefore, funds from abroad cannot be transferred and accounts closed in advance

- You may be expecting payments to be lodged into the account abroad
- You may have an outstanding loan or debt on the account

- NHS or similar Health Card
- If you intend for a trusted friend/family member to assist you in tying up loose ends for you before/after you move, be aware that because of data protection guidelines you will need to give you express written consent to the relevant bodies so that they can act on your behalf, in your absence (e.g. utility companies/financial institutions/welfare services)
- If taking a car: Drivers Licence, registration, insurance details and any documents associated with ownership
- Car Insurance: documentary evidence of a validated 'no claims history' from your car insurance company abroad*

Note!* Car insurance for returning emigrants/people who have no driving history in Ireland can be very expensive. The advice is to shop around for the best value

Important Note!

If you think that you may have to apply for any means tested welfare payment or social housing supports when you move to Ireland, please ensure that you review the above list carefully.

Particularly in relation to any documentation that will help to demonstrate that you have severed your ties abroad.

This will be of benefit to you in meeting the **Habitual Residence Condition (HRC)**, which forms a vital part of the assessment criteria for certain welfare payments in Ireland. More information on the HRC can be found via: **www.welfare.ie**

Calling the 'Galway Tribal Diaspora'!

Are you originally from Galway but now living outside of Ireland?

If so, Dúchas na Gaillimhe – Galway Civic Trust would like to hear from you. This Galway based heritage organisation has launched an initiative entitled 'The Galway Tribal Diaspora Project' which aims to collect and record the stories of former Galway residents who have gone on to carve out life stories beyond Irish shores.

The Galway Diaspora Project seeks to compile pen-portraits of people who previously lived in Galway but have moved away from Ireland in order to establish new lives, careers or opportunities. For centuries Galway people have immigrated to locations all around the world for a variety of reasons and these people have made an immense contribution to the countries they have settled in. This project seeks to gather the stories of our present day emigrants and record their unique individual circumstances. There are particular locations such as the UK and the United States where Galway people have travelled to and they want to hear from as many of these emigrants as possible.

The project will form the basis of an on-line exhibition and will hopefully chart and celebrate the broad range of global locations in which the Galway emigrants live and work. The project Coordinator Michael Quinn is putting a call out to ex-Galway residents from all walks of life to contact them from wherever they are in the world and share their stories for the benefit of present and future generations. He says, "we will do all the work in terms of writing their story up but we need Galway people to get in touch with us first! Stories are starting to flow in to us already and I would encourage people to have a look at these on our dedicated website – www.galwaytribe.com or on [facebook.com/tribaldiaspora](https://www.facebook.com/tribaldiaspora)

So if you, or anyone you know, fits the Tribal Diaspora bill, please contact;

The Galway Tribal Diaspora Project via: **Email:** diaspora@galwaycivictrust.ie

You can also contact project co-ordinator Michael Quinn **by phone on** 00 353 91-564946 /00 353 876466625.

Budget changes coming into effect from 1st April (health related):

- **Under the Drugs Payment Scheme**, people who do not have a medical card currently pay a maximum of €134 in a calendar month for approved prescribed drugs, medicines and certain appliances for use by themselves/their family in that month. From 1 April 2019, the maximum payable each month will be reduced to €124.
- **Prescription charges for people aged 70yrs+;** The prescription charge payable for people aged 70yrs+ is currently €2 per item prescribed, up to a maximum of €20 in any calendar month. This is being reduced to €1.50 per item prescribed – the monthly limit per household will also decrease to €15.
- People who are not eligible for a medical card in Ireland may qualify for a **G.P visit card** (the allowable income levels for the G.P card are set at a higher level than for the Medical Card). The G.P visit card allows you to visit a participating family doctor (GP) for free and it also covers visits to GP 'out of hours' services. The GP visit card does not cover hospital charges or prescribed medications (blood tests to diagnose conditions are covered). The allowable income limits for the G.P visit card scheme will increase by 10% from 1st April

Budget changes – welfare related, from March 2019

From the week beginning 25th March 2019, the following changes came into effect; The maximum rate of all **weekly social welfare payments** increased by €5 per week with proportional increases for qualified adults and people on reduced rates of payment.

People aged 25 and under who are getting a **reduced rate of Jobseeker's Allowance** have been awarded the full €5 increase.

The weekly **rate for a qualified child** increased by €2.20 from €31.80 to €34 for children under 12 years of age. It increased by €5.20 from €31.80 to €37 for children aged 12 years and over.

Daily Expenses Allowance (formerly called a **Direct Provision Allowance**) weekly rate increased from €21.60 to €29.80 for children and €38.80 for adults

Provision of interpretive and translation services by Welfare Service in Ireland

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection Customer Charter and Action Plan 2016 – 2018 sets out the Department's commitments to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all customers.

Specific commitments are included relating to the provision of interpretive and translation services and the provision of information in alternative formats such as Braille or Audio. **In this regard, the following services are available to customers where required;**

- A translation service for documents required in relation to a claim.
- A language interpretive service provided by 3-way phone conversation.
- A face to face service, where an accredited language interpreter attends in person, to facilitate customer/staff interaction.
- A Sign Language Interpreter to facilitate customer/staff interaction.
- Written information or application forms in Braille, Audio or large print.

If you require any of the services outlined above, please contact your nearest social welfare/Intreo office or the office dealing with your specific claim. The staff will assist you in accessing the required service.

Frequently Asked Question – Transfer of skills from abroad

Q. I am an auto mechanic trained in Canada, will my qualifications obtained here, transfer to Ireland if I move back home

A. You can login to the Quality and Qualifications Ireland website, **www.qqi.ie**, you will find a listing of qualifications recognised from Canada. If your current qualifications do not appear in the search listings, you should proceed to complete the queries section on the site and the QQI should issue you with a response.

For direct email queries to QQI, please see here; <https://qhelp.qqi.ie/>
If you have difficulties online, here are the full contact details for Q.Q.I:

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
26/27 Denzille Lane, Dublin 2, D02 P266, Ireland, **TEL: +353 1 9058100**

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



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