



Emigrant Support Service



ADVICE &
INFORMATION



OUTREACH
VISITS



HOUSING
ASSISTANCE



CONNECT

From the Chairman's Desk

April 2019 – Issue 210

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

Get in touch

What a difference a month can bring! In this troubled world of ours the only certainty is that tragic events will continue to be brought about by extremists of one kind or another. The Easter suicide bombings in Sri Lanka churches and hotels have already claimed 359 lives and are said to be the work of Islamic extremists, and in retaliation for the New Zealand mosque attacks on March 15 in which 50 people died, caused by a so-called white supremacist.

Closer to home the popular 29-year-old journalist Lyra McKee was murdered during street disturbances in Derry last week. The dissident extremist group "New IRA" have claimed responsibility for the murder stating that the young woman had been guilty of standing beside "enemy forces." Lyra had been a strong advocate for the LGBT community, minority and social inclusion issues in her life and she was but a child when the Good Friday Agreement came in to force 21 years ago, with the object of uniting people for peace. Her tragic death has brought the focus back to the ongoing failure of the political establishment in the north of our country to resolve matters since then. The socio-economic consequences are there to be seen in Derry, with the emergence of yet another extremist movement opposed to peace. Perhaps her death will not be in vain if political stalemate in that troubled province can be successfully transformed to positive progress.

There's a frequent advertisement on the TV for a popular supermarket chain extolling the value of Irish beef, while on the other hand An Taisce is in our schools promoting the benefits of a less meat and less dairy diet, much to the annoyance of the IFA. While it's hard to beat the taste of a nice juicy Irish beef steak, evidence from the medical literature would support a balanced diet with less red meat rather than more in our daily diets so as to avoid cancer of the bowel.

What ever happened to moderation which is about the avoidance of excess or extremes, especially in one's behaviour or political opinions, according to the popular dictionary? What a wonderful and tolerant world we would have if we had more moderation in our behaviour and in our political and religious beliefs. An odd glass of red wine is no doubt good for your heart (and soul) but that benefit is soon lost with more than one glass a day. An odd glass of a well-known black beer would be likewise beneficial no doubt, and was reputed to have been prescribed daily to anaemic postpartum mothers in Dublin maternity hospitals in days gone by, but there are better cures then and now for anaemia. Still, I'm sure they don't taste quite the same!

So long for now,

Dr Jerry Cowley- Chairman

Transferring U.S Social Security payments to Ireland

If you have not arranged for the transfer of your payments, in advance, you can do so when you arrive in Ireland by contacting the Dublin Federal Benefits Unit (FBU) using any of following;

Online: Initial enquiries can be made via the FBU enquiry form on the US Embassy website; <https://ie.usembassy.gov/>

(they aim to respond to online queries within 3 working days).

Tel: +353-1-668-8777 (Ext 2112) - Monday–Thursday between 8:30 am and 12:30 pm

In writing: The Federal Benefits Unit, U.S. Embassy, 42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Ireland

Call in person: If necessary, you can visit the FBU at the U.S Embassy, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Monday-Thursday between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon

When contacting the FBU, to up-date details of your address in Ireland and where you would like your payment paid, you will need to have your passport to hand and also provide the following;

- Your Social Security number;
- Your full name and contact telephone number
- Your new address, including post code;
- Name and address of your bank;
- Bank details, including; IBAN Number, Bank BIC Number and type of account i.e. checking or savings

The staff at the FBU can help you complete the **SSA-21** Form (Supplement to Claim of Person outside the United States) over the phone or in person.

The SSA-21 is available to download via: <https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-21.pdf>

Important information for EU citizens, in their first 3 months of residence in Ireland

Where an EU citizen, who is not a worker, self-employed person or a person who retains such status and members of his or her family, arrives in Ireland, **they will generally* not qualify** for **any payment** under the Social Welfare Acts in their first 3 months of residence.

*However, there is an exception to this in relation to 'once-off' Emergency/Urgent Needs payments (administered under Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme).

An Exceptional Needs Payment is a single payment to help meet essential, once-off, exceptional expenditure, which a person could not reasonably be expected to meet out of their weekly income. For example, the payment can be for bedding or cooking utensils for someone setting up a home for the first time, visiting relatives in hospital or prison, funeral costs or for clothing in exceptional circumstances. You may be eligible for an Exceptional Needs Payment if:

- You are living in the State
- You satisfy a means test - ALL income, capital and property, except your home, is assessed

For more information on all SWA schemes, please see; www.welfare.ie or contact your local social welfare/Intreo office.

Note! Applicants for 'once-off' payments, such as Exceptional/urgent needs payments do **not** have to meet habitual residency requirements.

Have your say..... Ireland's Diaspora Policy – Public Consultation Process

The Minister of State for the Diaspora and International Development, Ciarán Cannon, T.D., recently launched a public consultation process to inform the Government's new Diaspora policy. It is important that as many voices as possible are heard, from partner organisations and community bodies to individual members of the public at home and abroad. All who hold a view on the future of our diaspora policy are encouraged to participate.

Areas that the consultation process seeks to address; How do we continue to connect with people who feel a connection to Ireland? How can we support and strengthen the connections with established Irish communities abroad? How are Irish communities changing? How will they want to connect with us? Who are the people that we want to connect with and how do we maintain our relevance to them?

A series of open consultations will be hosted by Government Ministers over the coming months as follows: (Note! The first consultation event took place in Galway on 15th April);

20 May – Donegal, Minister of State; Ciarán Cannon

27 May – Cork, Tánaiste, Simon Coveney and Minister of State Ciarán Cannon

8 July – Mayo, Minister of State Ciarán Cannon

For more information and to register for any of these events, please login via:

<https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/consultations/>

Alternatively, you can send an email submission via the contact form on: www.dfa.ie (see section on Global Irish Consultations) OR in writing to: The Irish Abroad Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Iveagh House, 80 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 D02 VY53

Frequently Asked Questions – Working while in receipt of Irish Benefits

State Pension (Non Contributory): I am a fit and active 67 year old. I am still working in New York and hope to continue to do so (part-time) when I move back home to Sligo later this year.

Q. What would I be allowed to earn, without it affecting any claim I make for the Irish Non Contributory Pension?

A. The first €200 of net weekly income (income after tax and PRSI) from employment is not taken into account in the means testing for the Non Contributory Pension.

Disability Allowance: I will have to claim Disability Allowance on return to Ireland. However, the nature of my disability means that I can carry out some level of work.

Q. How would income earned from employment affect my benefit?

A. The first €120 of net weekly earnings from employment/self-employment of a rehabilitative nature is not taken into account, together with half of any additional earnings up to €350 per week. All earnings over €350 weekly will be taken into account in the means assessment process.

Carer's Allowance: Myself and my husband have recently returned to Ireland. My primary reason for moving back home is to care for my elderly parents. My husband has found a job locally.

Q. Can you tell me how my husband's income would affect my claim for Carer's Allowance?

A. €665 of your combined gross weekly income is not taken into account in the means testing process. Where relevant, PRSI, union dues, superannuation (pension contributions) and travel expenses can also be deducted thereafter. For a couple, the combined gross weekly balance (of anything over €665, less any of the above deductions) is then halved to give the carer's weekly means.

FREE information session on returning to Ireland for non-profit organisations in Liverpool/ surrounding areas who provide welfare support to Irish emigrants.

Crosscare Migrant Project, Safe Home Ireland, Irish Community Care and Irish in Britain have teamed up to offer a free Returning to Ireland focused information session in Liverpool in May. The session will be facilitated by Sarah Owen of Crosscare Migrant Project and Karen McHugh of Safe Home Ireland

The aim of this session is to share information on the practicalities of returning to Ireland to help front line workers supporting Irish emigrants in Britain considering a move back to the Republic of Ireland. It also offers a great opportunity to network with fellow groups working in the sector.

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

The session will take place on **23rd May from 11am – 4pm** at **the Liverpool Irish Centre, 6 Boundary Lane, Liverpool, L6 5JG**

Early booking is essential as capacity is limited to 30 people!

Register online: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/information-session-on-returning-to-ireland-tickets-58280496534>

In-patient Hospital Charges in Ireland

Everyone who is 'ordinarily resident' in Ireland and certain visitors are entitled to a range of health services, either free of charge, or at reduced cost. However, if you need to attend a public hospital or stay overnight in hospital as a public patient (and do not fall within any of the categories outlined below); you may be liable for Hospital Charges.

The charge for hospital inpatient/day services is €80 per day (up to a maximum of €800 in any 12 month period), regardless of how many public hospitals you are admitted to in that period. You should keep all receipts (in case you need to request a refund or cancel an invoice). **Note!** In cases of excessive hardship, a Health Service Executive (HSE) Area office may provide the services free of charge. Enquiries in relation to assistance for 'hardship' cases should be made directly to the hospital in question or the relevant HSE area office.

The charges for hospital inpatient/day services **do not** apply to the following groups:

- Medical card holders
- People receiving treatment for prescribed infectious diseases
- People who are subject to "long stay" charges
- Children referred for treatment from child health clinics and school board examinations
- People who are entitled to hospital services because of EU Regulations
- Women receiving maternity services

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



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DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND