## 10.9 Other Craft Occupations n.e.c.

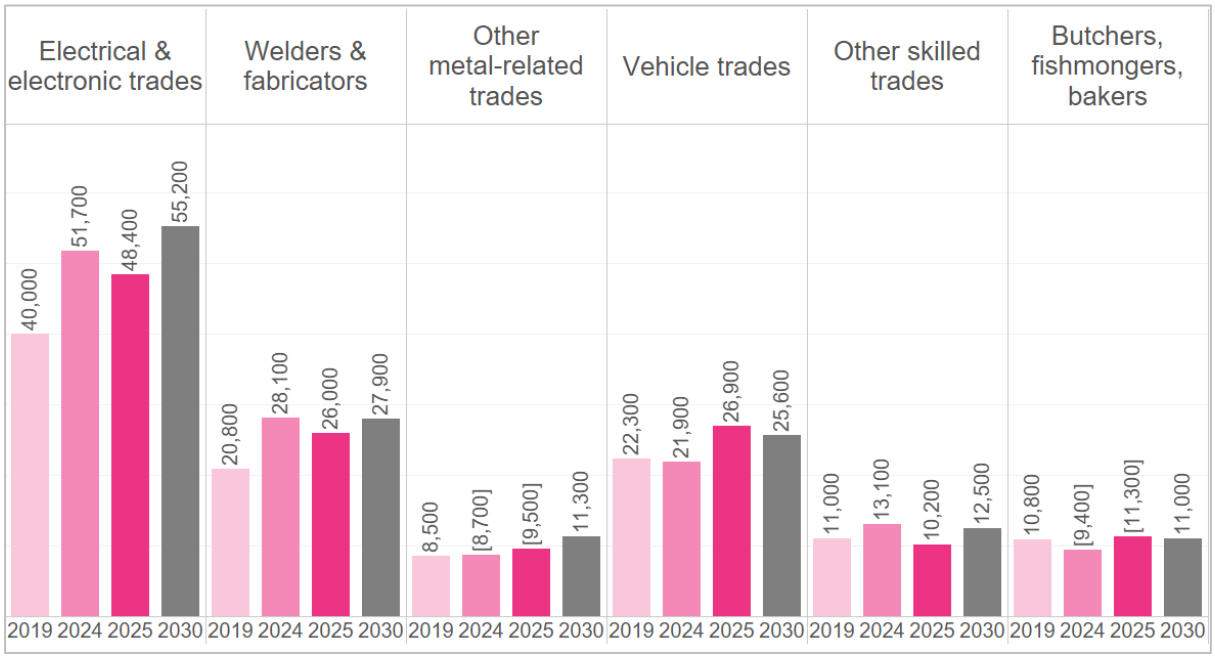
| | |
|---|---|
| **Overall employment** | 132,300 |
| **Share of total workforce** | 5.0% |
| **Main sectors of employment** | 39% - Industry<br>23% - Construction<br>18% - Wholesale & retail |
| **Employment growth** | +18,900 between 2019 and 2025<br>+2.6% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce)<br>-0.5% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce)<br>Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **1.6%** |
| **Key skills identified in OJAs** | teamwork, adaptability, attend to detail, quality standards, provide information, maintenance operations, mechanics, manage quality, technical drawings, engine components |

**Overview**: Annual average employment growth for this occupation was below the national average over the period 2019-2025. Although industry employs the highest share of those working in these occupations, nearly a quarter work in construction, underlining the importance of these skills to the construction sector.

**Opportunities and challenges**: The lack of sector-specific employment for these occupations means the skills are in demand across the economy; as a result, employers from different sectors must compete for the same set of skills. On average there have been over 1,000 new apprenticeship registrations a year over the period 2021-2025 for roles lined to other craft occupations.

**Outlook:** While annual average employment growth between 2019-2025 was below average (with an additional 18,900 persons employed), annual average employment growth is projected to be above average annually to 2030 (1.6%). Growth is projected to be driven primarily by increased demand in the construction sector but increased demand is also expected for these occupations in industry and wholesale/retail. At a detailed occupational level, the largest employment growth is projected for electrical/electronic trades, followed by welders, both of which are key for construction and the green agenda.

Figure 10.9 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)




Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data; Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution

Table 10.9 Labour Market Profile of Other Craft Occupations

| | Annual average growth | | Quarter 4 2025 | | | | | 2025 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2019-2025 | 2025-2030f | % Female | % Full-time | % Age 55 yrs + | % Irish citizens | % Third level grads | No. of new emp. permits | RAS |
| Welders & fabricators | 3.8% | 1.4% | .. | 96% | .. | 72% | .. | 627 | ✓ |
| Other metal-related trades | [1.9%] | 3.5% | .. | [96%] | .. | [78%] | .. | 260 | |
| Vehicle trades | 3.2% | -1.0% | .. | 92% | .. | 73% | .. | 718 | ✓ |
| Electrical & electronic trades etc. | 3.2% | 2.7% | .. | 96% | [15%] | 84% | 32% | 241 | ✓ |
| Other skilled trades | -1.2% | 4.2% | .. | [81%] | .. | [84%] | .. | 14 | |
| Butchers, fishmongers, bakers etc. | [0.8%] | -0.5% | .. | [86%] | .. | .. | .. | 119 | |
| **Overall total** | **2.6%** | **1.6%** | **[9%]** | **93%** | **17%** | **75%** | **25%** | **1,979** | |

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis ( .. ) denotes numbers too small to report

**Welders and fabricators**

Over the period 2019-2025, employment levels for this occupation fluctuated somewhat, but although employment fell in 2025, it was 25% higher than 2019 levels. Over half of employment for this occupation was in industry and the share of non-Irish citizens, at 28%, was above the national average and an increase on the preceding year (19%).

Demand is evident in the Recruitment Agency Survey (TIG/ARC welders), Skills for Growth (TIG, MIG, Orbital welders, maintenance fitters), the high volume of DSP Jobs Ireland adverts (welders/fabricators and maintenance fitters) and a slight increase in the number of new employment permits issued (welders, fabricators, maintenance fitters). The demand for welders in particular relates to niche areas, especially for those with experience and/or specialist skills in robotic welding and those who can programme, operate and maintain automated welding equipment.

The apprenticeship system is an important source of skills for this occupation and while new registration numbers remain strong (since 2021, there have been on average 272 new apprenticeship registrations a year for metal fabrication and 197 per year for maintenance fitting (M.A,M.F)), continued growth will be needed to meet demand.

The decline in employment levels for this occupation contrasts with continued evidence of strong recruitment activity and even difficulties, suggesting that the fall in employment may reflect short-term, cyclical changes within the relevant sectors rather than a weakening of demand. The skills in demand for these occupations are increasingly specialised (e.g. for high-tech manufacturing vs construction), with evidence of demand for digital skills (including CNC) and health & safety knowledge in addition to technical skills, reflecting the ongoing technological and regulatory changes associated with this occupation. In addition, the development of Ireland's off-shore energy capacity is expected to lead to a continued demand for welders in the coming years.[1]

Demand for this occupation is expected to be sustained in the medium term, driven in part by planned projects in off-shore energy, manufacturing (e.g. precision engineering, life sciences and med-tech) and construction (commercial in particular) and shortages are expected to continue.

**Skills shortages:** Welders, metal fabricators, maintenance fitters

**Other metal-related trades**

Although employment growth for this occupation was below the national average for the period 2019-2025, employment grew between 2024-2025, with further, stronger than average employment growth of 3.5% on average annually projected to 2030.

While there is some evidence of demand, primarily in the number of new employment permits (sheet metal workers, CNC programmers/operators, pipefitters and concrete moulders), difficult-to-fill mentions were confined to Skills for Growth data (CNC operators, with skills in CAD, tooling and quality control).

This is a small occupation with demand likely to stem from activities across a wide range of segments within industry and construction in particular. Although they are distinct occupations, there is a considerable and increasing degree of overlap in the skills of other metal-related trades (e.g. CNC operator, sheet metal workers) and welders and fabricators, thus making it difficult to establish the extent to which shortages are occurring, but the evidence of ongoing demand for CNC operators as well as CNC skills in other, related occupations, points to recruitment issues that are likely to be sustained given the projected growth, driven by the modern manufacturing segment as well as anticipated growth in the construction sector in the years to come.

**Skills shortages:** Inconclusive for CNC programmers

**Vehicle trades**

Annual average employment growth (3.2%) for this occupation was in line with the national average, driven by particularly strong growth between 2024 and 2025 (+5,000 workers). More than a quarter (27%) of those employed were non-Irish citizens.

[1] https://www.skillnetireland.ie/uploads/attachments/Building_Our_Potential-Ireland's_Offshore_Wind_Skills_and_Talent_Needs_Jan_2024.pdf

Evidence of demand was limited to the number of new employment permits issued (HGV/car mechanics, vehicle technicians, vehicle roadworthiness testers, panel beaters/spray painters) and in a small number of difficult-to-fill vacancy data (motor/diagnostic technician).

The FET apprenticeship system is an important source of skills for these occupations. The number of awards made for motor and HGV mechanics declined in 2024 and are unlikely to increase in the medium term given recent falls in the number of new apprenticeship registrations for these occupations. In contrast, there were increases in both the number of awards and new apprenticeship registrations for aircraft mechanics.

While no shortages have been identified for hits occupation, the technological changes, particularly the shift from internal combustion engines to electric vehicles will require a significant amount of upskilling among mechanics.

**Electrical & electronic trades etc.**

At 3.2%, annual average employment growth for this occupation was broadly in line with the national average over the period 2019-2025, and although employment fell in the year to 2025 (3,300 fewer workers), the numbers employed are projected to grow strongly (at 2.7% per annum) in the coming years. Approximately one half of electricians were employed in the construction sector, with a further quarter in industry.

There is a high share (25%) of younger workers (aged less than 25 years), a possible reflection of recurring recruitment campaigns by utilities companies (e.g. ESB, Gas Networks Ireland) for apprentice electricians in recent years: there were 3,133 new electrical apprenticeship registrations in 2025, which was nearly two thirds (61%) more than in 2019.

There was a high volume of recent job hires for this occupation, indicating that job churn is occurring. Nonetheless, other sources point to a strong demand for electricians: there were frequent difficult-to-fill mentions in Skills for Growth and to a lesser extent the Recruitment Agency Survey, particularly in construction, life sciences manufacturing and utilities (e.g. electricity); new employment permits issued in 2025 related to lineworkers (including overhead), electricians and telecommunications field technicians.

While no shortages were identified at present, demand is expected to continue to be driven by planned increases in a range of activities: housebuilding and retrofitting, infrastructure development (e.g. EV charging, grid, renewable energy), as well as ongoing demand in manufacturing and data centre operations, which require specialist automation, electrical installation and maintenance skills.

**Other skilled trades**

This occupation is mostly comprised of those working in textile and garment trades, printing trades, furniture makers, florists, among others. Employment growth over the period 2019-2025 was negative (-1.3%), with employment levels dropping particularly sharply (2,900 fewer workers) between 2024 and 2025. While a small number of new employment permits were issued for furniture makers, tailors, and upholsterers in 2025, there was no other evidence of unmet demand for this occupation.

**Butchers, fishmongers, bakers etc.**

Employment levels for this occupation have remained broadly unchanged over the period 2019-2025, with annual average employment growth well below average. Evidence of demand was limited to a number of new employment permits issued for meat deboners, bakers and butchers. While new apprentice registrations have declined in recent years, and with just 19 registrations in 2025, attractiveness of the role is likely to be one of the key factors relating to issues in sourcing suitable candidates.