

10.11 Hospitality Occupations

Figure 10.11 Annual Average Employment (2024) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2019-2024)



*The numbers employed as catering/bar managers were too small to report in 2024

Overall employment	177,900
Share of total workforce	6.0%
Main sectors of employment	86% - Accommodation & food 7% - Health
Employment growth	+12,500 between 2019 and 2024 +1.5% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce)

2024	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Hospitality managers	52%	85%	[34%]	71%	[45%]	92	✓
Chefs & cooks	42%	78%	[16%]	55%	48%	2,234	✓
Catering & bar managers	...	...	...	...	...		✓
Kitchen & catering assistants	63%	45%	[11%]	65%	28%	1	
Waiters & waitresses	71%	[30%]	...	73%	...	2	✓
Bar staff	[38%]	...	...	92%	...	1	
Housekeepers & caretakers, etc.	[92%]	...	...	...	...		
Overall total	56%	54%	14%	68%	31%	2,330	

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

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment growth was below average for this occupational group, although employment has grown steadily since 2022, having seen significant falls during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this group represented 6% of the total workforce, it accounted for 13% of recent job hires and 11% of recent job leavers, indicating a high level of job churn (most likely related to a high share of students working in hospitality occupations such as waiters, bar staff and kitchen assistants). Over a third (34%) of those employed were aged 15-24 years, considerably higher than the national average. The share of non-Irish citizens, at 32%, was also above average, with over 2,300 new employment permits and almost 800 renewal permits issued in 2024, primarily for chefs.

The Programme for Government 2025¹ acknowledges the increased cost pressures for SMEs including those in the hospitality sector, and along with proposed changes to VAT and PRSI rates there are plans to expand courses in tourism and hospitality. The latest Central Bank Bulletin² asserts that personal consumption is expected to grow, albeit at a more modest rate, due to rising real wages and stable employment levels, which should have a positive impact on demand for hospitality occupations, although a fall in tourist numbers would likely have a negative effect.

Occupation	Economic summary
Hospitality managers	After rebounding in 2022, employment levels have remained relatively unchanged for hospitality managers since. Just over half of those employed were female and just under a half held third level qualifications. The share of those employed aged 55 and over and the share of non-Irish citizens were both above the national average. New employment permits issued were primarily for restaurant and duty managers, and the majority of posts advertised on DSP Jobs Ireland related to restaurant managers. There was a small number of mentions of difficulty in recruiting for restaurant managers and middle managers in the Recruitment Agency Survey. Given the lack of employment growth in recent years for this occupation, it is difficult to determine the extent to which there is a lack of suitably qualified personnel for these roles or whether retention is a larger issue for this occupation.
Chefs & cooks Skills shortage: Chefs	Although the employment growth was below average over the five-year period for chefs, there has been annual growth since 2022. However, the number of recent job hires in 2024 far exceeded employment growth indicating that job churn is occurring. Almost half (45%) of those employed were non-Irish citizens, the second highest share after food operatives. Over 2,200 new employment permits were issued and 750 renewals (both were primarily for chef de partie roles). There was a high volume of posts notified on DSP Jobs Ireland for chefs (again, primarily chef de partie) and most online job adverts for this group related to chefs. Skills for Growth data indicates difficulties in attracting learners to relevant courses, which in turn affects the supply from the education/training system, which saw a decline in the number of FET and 3 rd level awards made in 2023 (to 665 awards), down from 777 awards in 2019. In addition, a relatively high volume of persons in the DSP Jobseeker data in December 2024 were previously employed in jobs in food preparation trades. Failte Ireland tourism careers labour market research (November 2024) shows that recruitment and retention challenges amongst employers have eased for the third year in a row although chefs remain the most difficult position to fill. ³ Although retention remains a challenge, the supply of chefs from the education and training system does not appear to be sufficient to meet demand and shortages are likely to persist.

¹ [Programme for Government 2025 - Securing Ireland's Future](#)

² [Quarterly Bulletin Q2 2025 | Central Bank of Ireland](#)

³ www.failteireland.ie/SUMMARY-REPORT-Careers-Surveys-2024.pdf

Catering & bar managers	Employment numbers were too small for a detailed analysis for this occupation although the Recruitment Agency Survey indicated difficulty in filling vacancies for bar and events managers and posts notified in the DSP Jobs Ireland data related mainly to food and beverage and bar managers.
Kitchen & catering assistants	Employment has grown annually for this occupation since 2021 with particularly strong growth since 2023 of 9,500 persons. Despite the strong employment growth, the number of recent job hires far exceeded growth (the second highest after sales assistants), indicating that job churn is a factor for this occupation. Almost two thirds of those employed were female and over half worked part-time. Over a third employed were non-Irish citizens. There was a relatively large volume of vacancy posts in the DSP Jobs Ireland data for roles including food service assistants, kitchen assistants/porters, crew members and baristas.
Waiters & waitresses	Following a recovery in employment since the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers employed fell slightly in the previous two years with 2024 employment remaining below 2019 levels. Along with bar staff, this occupation had the highest share of persons employed in part-time roles, and the highest shares aged 15-24 years (60% for waiters/waitresses). There was also a substantial number of recent job hires, likely a reflection of a high share of students taking up short-term employment in these roles.
Bar staff	Employment returned to pre-COVID-19 levels in 2023 but declined again in 2024, by 1,400 persons. Despite the decline in employment, there was a high volume of recent job hires indicating job churn. Bar staff had the highest share of persons employed aged 15-24 years, and along with waiters/waitresses, had the highest share of persons working part-time. Almost two-thirds of persons employed were male, the highest share across all hospitality occupations.
Housekeepers	Employment numbers in this occupation were too small for any detailed analysis.