

Key Labour Market Indicators¹ Q2 2025	South West	State
Population (0+ years)	783,500	5,458,200
Population by education level (25-64 years)		
FET (NFQ 4-6)	15%	13%
Third level	56%	57%
Working age population (15-64 years)	514,000	3,597,400
Labour force participation rate (15 years +)	66.8%	66.4%
Males	71.6%	71.6%
Females	62.1%	61.3%
Employment (15 years +)	412,800	2,818,100
% Total national employment	15%	100%
Employment growth (Q2 2024-Q2 2025)	4.0%	2.3%
Males	6.1%	3.0%
Females	1.8%	1.5%
Employment change (Q2 2024-Q2 2025)	16,000	63,900
Males	12,500	43,700
Females	3,500	20,200
Unemployment rate	4.4%	4.8%
Share of workforce working from home (sometimes or usually)	33.9%	35.9%

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

¹ The LFS data presented in this report is either extracted from the CSO's PxStat Open Data Statistical Database or is based on an analysis of strictly controlled Research Microdata Files provided by the CSO. The CSO does not take any responsibility for the views expressed or the outputs generated from this research.

Employment by occupation in the South West Region

More than two fifths of employment in Q2 2025 was in high skilled occupations.
A further two fifths (39%) was in medium skilled occupations.

Figure 1. Employment (000s) by occupation and skill level (Q2 2024-Q2 2025)

Skill Level	Occupation	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025
High	Professionals	104.2	99.6	96.5	98.4	99.0
	Associate prof	44.7	47.4	45.0	41.1	41.0
	Managers	30.9	31.1	33.4	34.4	33.9
Medium	Skilled trades	50.8	51.4	54.3	57.2	57.2
	Admin	35.0	34.7	38.1	37.8	38.9
	Caring services	29.5	30.6	31.8	32.9	32.8
	Sales	28.0	30.1	30.2	29.1	31.5
Lower	Elementary	38.7	45.5	44.9	38.5	41.3
	Operative	33.2	30.0	28.7	32.6	35.4

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data; excludes not stated

Table 1. Employment change by occupation (Q2 2024-Q2 2025)

Occupation skill level	Occupation	South West		State
		Change	% Change	% Change
High	Managers	3,000	10%	4%
	Professionals	-5,200	-5%	5%
	Assoc. prof	-3,700	-8%	-2%
	Total	-5,900	-3%	3%
Medium	Admin	3,900	11%	2%
	Caring services	3,300	11%	3%
	Skilled trades	6,400	13%	4%
	Sales	3,500	13%	1%
	Total	17,100	12%	3%
Lower	Operative	2,200	7%	1%
	Elementary	2,600	7%	1%
	Total	4,800	7%	1%

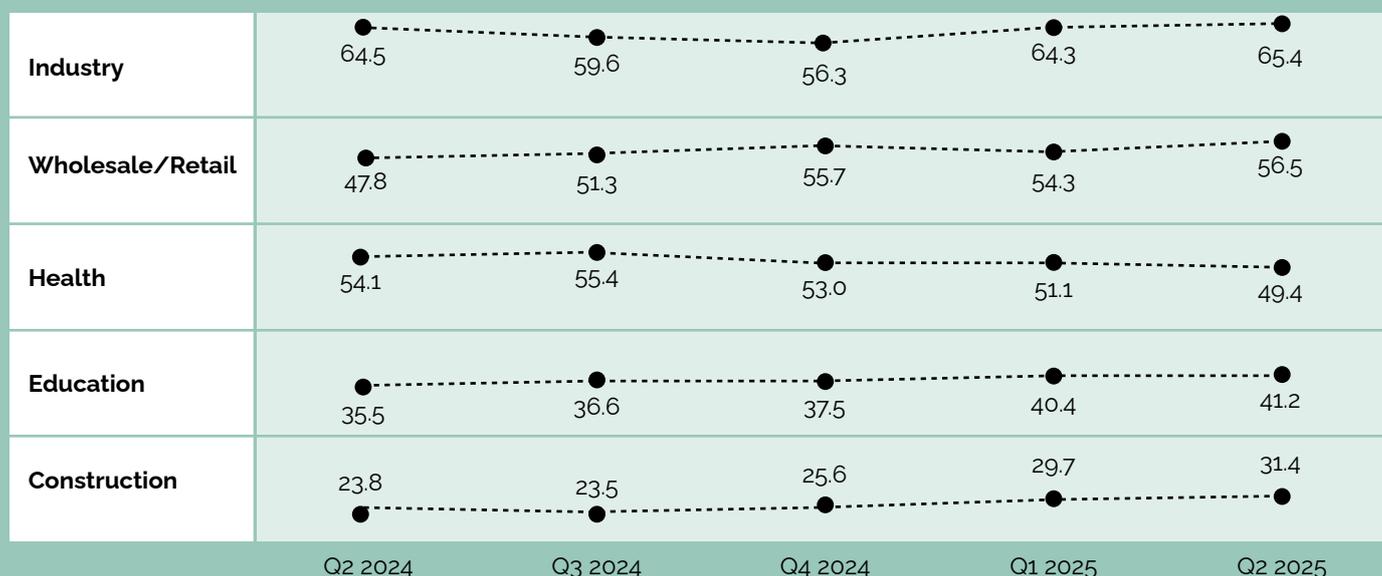
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data; excludes not stated

- The share of South West regional employment in high-skilled occupations was below the national average (46%). With 173,900 persons in Q2 2025, **employment in high skilled occupations fell** (by 5,900 persons) compared to Q2 2024.
- At 39%, the share in **medium skilled occupations in the South West region** was higher than the national average (37%), and three percentage points higher than in Q2 2024 (when it was 36%). Of the 6,400 additional workers in skilled trades occupations, 2,500 were farmers.
- Persons employed in **lower skilled occupations** in the South West accounted for 19% of total employment (76,700 workers) in Q2 2025, up from a 17% share in Q2 2024.

Sectoral Employment in the South West Region

In Q2 2025, nearly 60% of employment was in the top five sectors, broadly in line with quarter 2 2024.

Figure 2. Top 5 sectors of employment (000s), Q2 2024-Q2 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 2. Employment change by sector: top 5 sectors (Q2 2024-Q2 2025)

Top 5 Sectors	South West %		State %	
	Change	%	Change	%
Industry	900	1%	200	2%
Wholesale & retail	8,700	18%	1,700	2%
Health	-4,700	-9%	-1,700	4%
Education	5,700	16%	1,700	4%
Construction	7,600	32%	13,700	18%

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Outside the Top 5 Sectors

The largest absolute increase was for

- ▲ Transport (4,700)
- ▲ Agriculture (1,900)
- ▲ Accom/food & finance (1,100 each)

The largest absolute falls were for

- ▼ Professional services (-3,900)
- ▼ Other NACE* (-2,900)
- ▼ ICT (-2,400)

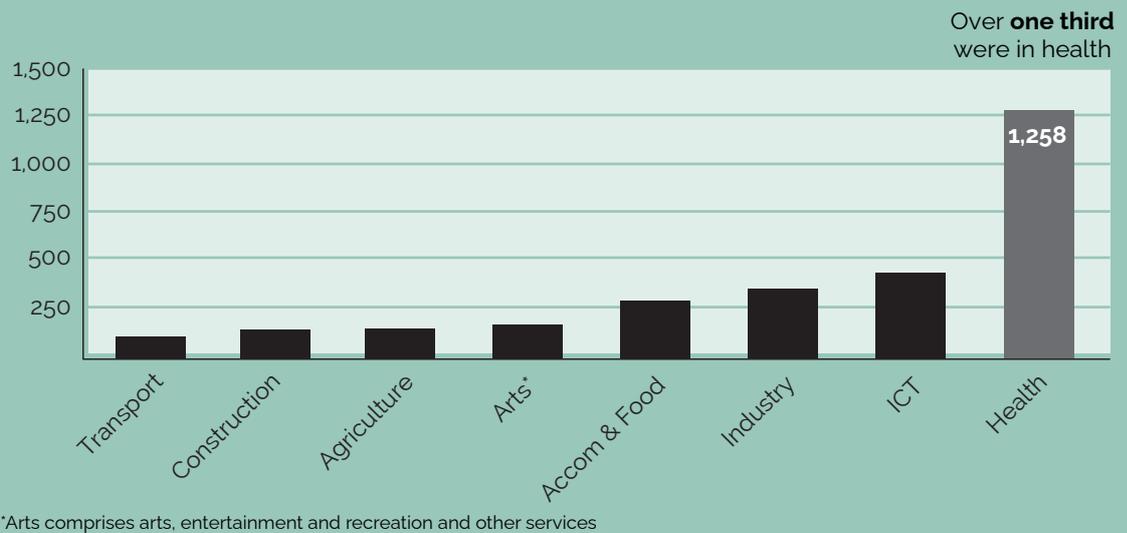
*Other NACE comprises arts & entertainment, personal services (e.g. hairdressing) etc.

Employment Permits in the South West Region

3,280

new employment permits were issued in 2024, making up 10% of the national total.

Figure 3. Top 8 sectors for new employment permits, South West (2024)



The top 5 occupations* accounted for 53% of new permits (South-West 2024)



678
Nurses



283
Chefs



282
ICT professionals



277
Doctors



232
Healthcare assistants

Source: DETE

Other job titles included farm assistants (e.g. dairy, pig), HGV/car mechanics, engineers (e.g. process, design, electrical), meat processing operatives, welders/fabricators, and HGV drivers.

Companies with recent job announcements in the region

Numbers of jobs announced	
Merck	200
Waterman Tecsar Engineering	100
Acuity	100
DNV	80
Business Platforms	75
Tricentis	50
Canto	50
eps Group	32
Corrib Oil	30



IDA job creation pipeline in the South West region

1,783

jobs announced in 2024*, accounting for 13% of the total; most were for roles across ICT, high-tech manufacturing, or professional services.

Table 3. IDA jobs announced in the South West region, 2024

Occupation	Jobs announced
Professionals, of which	1,095
Science & engineering (e.g. R&D, QC/QA, production)	537
Business (e.g. project mgrs, business analysts/researchers)	196
ICT professionals	362
Associate professionals, of which	439
Business (e.g. health & safety, legal, financial, sales dev)	249
Science, eng & IT (e.g. lab tech/production tech)	190
Managers	76
Operatives	69
Admin & secretarial	62
Skilled trades (maintenance/fabrication)	18
Sales	13
Elementary	11
Total	1,783

Source: IDA
*Jobs committed by IDA client companies over the next 3-5 years

Unemployment* in the South West Region

Figure 4. Unemployment rate (%) – Q2 2019-Q2 2025



Numbers unemployed
Q2 2025

18,900

Change from Q2 2024

200
unemployed persons

UE rate Q2 2025

4.4%

Change in UE rate
from Q2 2024

-0.1 percentage points

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
*Refers to persons aged 15-74 years

Live Register – South West Region, October 2025

Of the 19,257 persons on the Live Register in the South West region in October 2025,



had been on the register for a year or longer



were aged 25-44 years

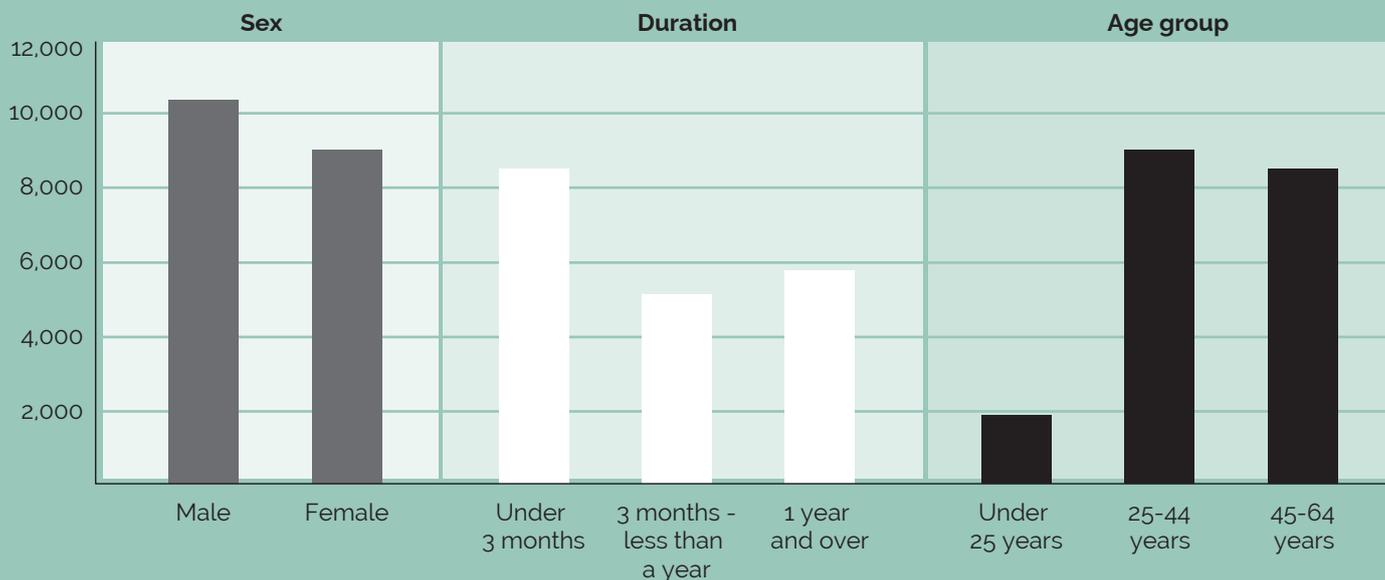


at 10,227 males outnumbered females



71% were in Co. Cork

Figure 5. Number of persons on Live Register (Oct 2025), South West region



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (Live Register) data

Overall Comments: South West Region

- **Industry made up 16% of total regional employment** in the South West, the second highest share observed nationally (after the West region) and well above the 12% State average (Q2 2025).
- Over the period Q2 2024-Q2 2025,
 - » **employment** in the South West region **grew by 16,000 persons, the second largest absolute increase** in employment (after the West region) nationally.
 - » the South West was one of only two regions where **health** sector employment numbers declined (the other was the Mid-West).
- » this region was also one of only two regions (the other being the South East) where employment in high skilled occupations fell.
- At 30%, the share of persons in the South West **on the Live Register for a year** or more was lower than the national average (32%) and the **lowest observed across all regions.**