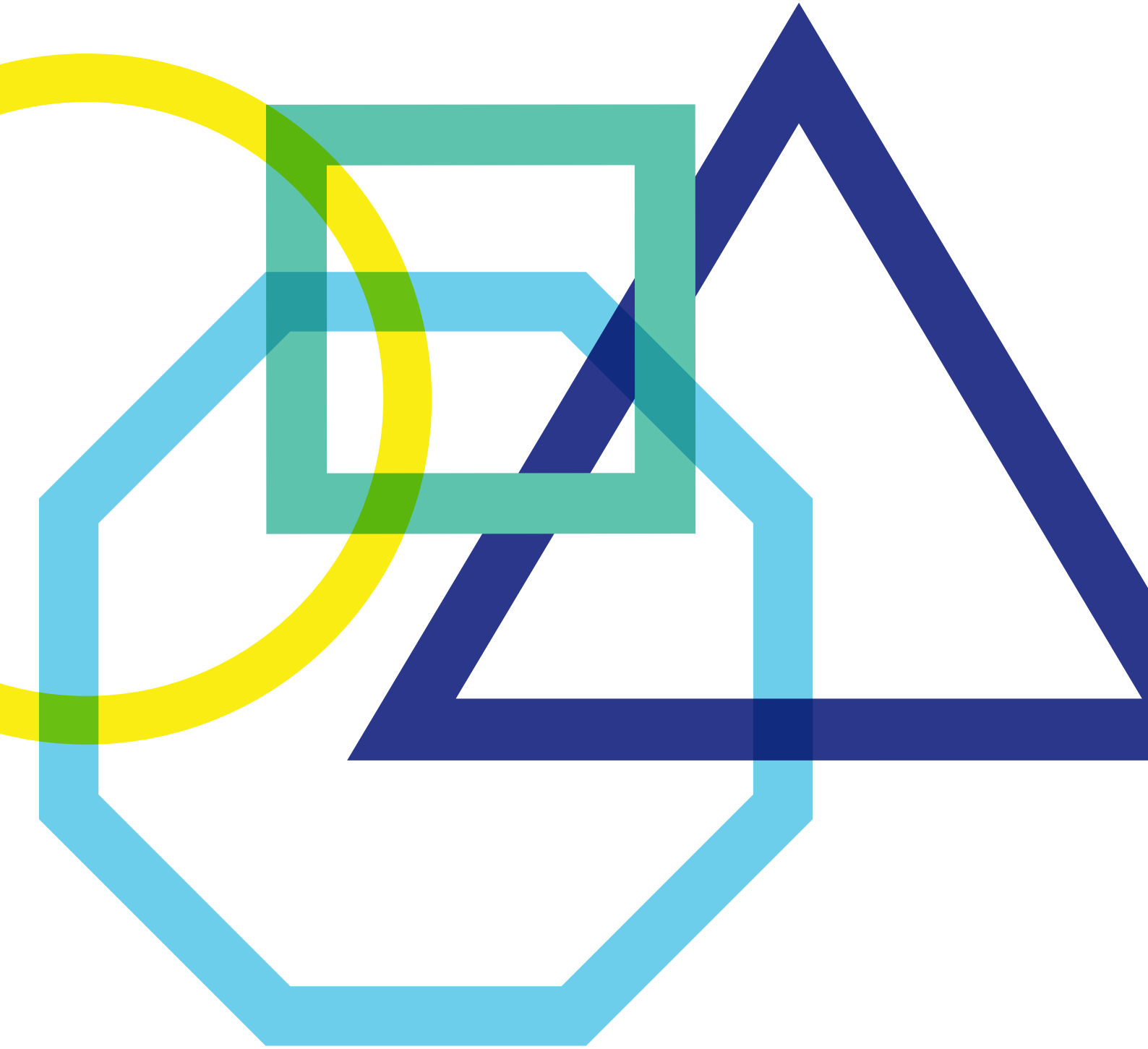
National Skills Bulletin 2026



SOLAS An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna Further Education and Training Authority

Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland

National Skills Bulletin 2026

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Foreword

The National Skills Bulletin 2026 is the 22nd edition in a series of reports produced annually by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS. For more than two decades, these reports have provided a trusted evidence base on skills demand across occupations in Ireland, supporting informed decision-making in workforce development, education and training, labour market activation, career guidance and migration policy.

Against an increasingly complex global backdrop, this year's Bulletin highlights the resilience of Ireland's labour market. Overall employment has remained broadly stable, although performance varies across sectors and occupations, with some continuing to expand while others experience decline. Unemployment has risen slightly from the exceptionally low levels recorded in recent years but remains close to historic lows.

The findings also underscore the continued transformation of Ireland's economy towards a more highly educated and skilled workforce. Third-level graduates account for a growing share of employment, reflecting the increasing demand for advanced skills across the economy. At the same time, international talent remains critical to Ireland's success, with non-Irish workers making an important contribution across a wide range of sectors, occupations and skill levels.

The analysis points to the growing value of human-centred skills alongside technical expertise. Communication, adaptability, problem-solving, leadership and other interpersonal capabilities continue to feature strongly across many occupations. In an era characterised by rapid technological change, particularly with the increasing adoption of artificial intelligence, these skills will play an essential role in supporting productivity, innovation and organisational effectiveness.

This year's Bulletin also marks an important step forward in the development of Ireland's labour market intelligence capability. Following recommendations from the OECD, the SLMRU has developed an employment projections model that provides a new resource for analysing future employment trends and labour market demand. The forecasts generated through this model strengthen the evidence base for skills needs anticipation and will form a key component of the emerging National Skills Observatory. Combined with the broad range of labour market intelligence presented throughout this report, these forecasts will support more effective planning and policy development in response to economic, technological and societal change.

While uncertainty remains a defining feature of the global environment, driven by geopolitical developments, technological disruption, demographic change and the transition to a more sustainable economy, the longer-term outlook for employment in Ireland remains positive. Employment is expected to continue growing in the years ahead, creating opportunities for school leavers, graduates, jobseekers, career changers and those seeking to upskill or reskill throughout their working lives.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many individuals and organisations whose expertise, insights and data have contributed to this year's Bulletin. Drawing on collaboration across government, education and training, enterprise, research, and international partner organisations, this collective effort has strengthened the analysis presented here. Such collaboration remains essential to ensuring that Ireland has the labour market intelligence needed to make informed decisions and plan effectively for the future.



James Lawless, TD
Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

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Executive Summary

The National Skills Bulletin 2026 is the 22nd in an annual series of reports produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS. The Bulletin provides an overview of the Irish labour market at occupational level, with the aim of assisting policy formulation in the areas of employment, education/training, and immigration (particularly the sourcing of skills which are in short supply in the Irish and EU labour market from the EEA). It also aims to inform career guidance advisors, students and other individuals making career and educational choices.

Snapshot of the labour market in 2025

Despite a slowdown in employment growth in the year to 2025 compared to the immediate post-pandemic years, Ireland's labour market continued to prove resilient in 2025, with employment and labour force participation reaching record levels, and unemployment remaining low.

In 2025

Labour Force	• 2.95 million persons were in the labour force (annual average), up 2.5% (74,400 extra persons) compared to 2024 • the labour force participation rate (annual average) reached 66.1%, up from 65.8% in 2024
Employment	• 2.82 million were in employment, up 2.2% (60,200 extra persons) on 2024 levels • the employment rate (persons aged 15-64 years) was 74.6% compared to 74.5% in 2024
Unemployment	• there were just over 137,000 unemployed persons, 14,200 more (10.3%) than in 2024, although remaining well below levels observed during the 2008 financial crisis • the unemployment rate was 4.7%, up from 4.3% in 2024, but below the pre-covid level of 5.0%.

When compared to quarter 4 2024,

Full-time	• most of the growth in employment in Ireland in the year to quarter 4 2025 was due to increases in the number of persons in full-time employment (+54,700 persons)
Older age cohort	• Ireland's workforce continued to shift towards older age cohorts: employment of workers aged 55 years and over grew by 6% and accounted for more than half the total year-on-year growth in Ireland's workforce
Non-Irish	• more than four fifths of total employment growth was due to increases in the number of non-Irish citizens in employment
Sex	• females have seen the larger increases in unemployment (both numbers and rates), although males retained the larger share.

Macro-economic context

Despite an uncertain global economy and rising energy prices, Ireland's economy has seen increases in both modified domestic demand (MDD) and employment levels in recent years. Although employment growth has slowed, the Central Bank forecast further growth to 2028. [insert ref] Ireland's primary challenges, according to the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2026, include global economic and political uncertainty, Ireland's cost competitiveness and the impact of AI.[1]

In quarter 4 2025,

- the industry and health sectors recorded the highest **actual hours worked** per week, at 12.1 and 11.5 million hours respectively; the lowest actual hours worked were in the administrative and support services sector at 2.8 million hours
- the ICT sector accounted for the highest **average weekly earnings** (at €1,700), joint highest **average hourly earnings** with the education sector (at €45) and the joint highest **average weekly paid hours** with industry (at 38 hours)
- In the year since quarter 4 2024, the ICT sector had amongst the **lowest growth in average hourly earnings** (at €0.30); construction was the only sector to see **a fall in hourly earnings** in the one year period. There was no overall change in **average weekly paid hours** for all economic sectors, with growth only occurring in five sectors (with the largest growth for the financial activities sector at 1.2 hours).

Employment by sector

Despite the overall growth of 2.2% in employment levels between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, there was considerable variation across sectors, with notable declines for ICT (-7%), administration/support services (-6%), and professional services (-4%), among others, but stronger than average increases for construction (9%), transport (8%), education (8%), and industry (7%). Sectors with the largest shares of

- **older** workers were agriculture and transport
- **males** were construction, agriculture, transport, and ICT
- **full-time** workers were ICT, industry, PAD, and finance
- **non-Irish** were accommodation/food, ICT, health, and industry
- **third level qualification holders** were finance, professional services, ICT, and education
- workers in **high skilled roles** were ICT and professional services.

Employment by broad occupational group

In quarter 4 2025, professionals had the highest level of employment, at 738,200 persons, followed by associate professionals (349,800). Combined, the high skilled occupations (professionals, associate professionals and managers) accounted for over 1.35 million persons or 48% of the total national workforce.

Professionals had the highest absolute increase (+66,000 persons or +10%) in employment numbers between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025. while managerial occupations had the greatest relative growth (+12% or +28,100 persons). In contrast, there were declines across four occupations, with the largest absolute fall in administrative occupations (-24,000 persons or -8%).

[1] Central Bank of Ireland, Quarterly Bulletin, Q2 2026

Employment by region

With 841,900 persons in quarter 4 2025, the Dublin region had the largest number of persons employed, accounting for almost 30% of Ireland's workforce. This was followed by the South West (414,400 workers) and Mid-East regions (407,000 workers), which combined made up a further 29% of the total national employment.

In the year to quarter 4 2025, employment grew in all but three regions, namely the Mid-West, the South East, and the Mid-East. The Dublin region, followed by the Midland region, had the largest absolute increases in employment nationally, at 19,300 and 16,100 extra workers respectively. Combined, these two regions alone made up nearly 63% of the total employment growth observed nationally

Unemployment

In quarter 4 2025,

- 128,300 persons aged 15–74 were unemployed, corresponding to an unemployment rate of 4.4%, a rise of 12,200 (or 10.5%) more unemployed persons compared to quarter 4 2024.
- 36,100 persons were classified as long-term unemployed (unemployment duration of one year or more), an increase of 7,900 persons (28%) from quarter 4 2024, with males accounting for all of the increase.
- Youth unemployment (ages 15–24) stood at 35,100 persons, an increase of just 100 persons since quarter 4 2024, while the unemployment rate of 9.8% for this age cohort fell by 0.1 percentage points over the period.

Recent Job Hires/Leavers and Transitions

In 2025, approximately 1.24 million transitions occurred in the Irish labour market, with movements occurring between employment, unemployment and inactivity. The largest volume of transitions occurred between employment and economic inactivity with students accounting for a significant share of these movements. Since 2024, the number of transitions increased marginally; the increase in transitions between employment and unemployment (in both directions) were offset by a decrease in the volume of movements occurring between employment and economic inactivity.

The number of recent job hires have remained unchanged in recent years. In 2025, almost half of new hires held third level qualifications, the largest shares of new hires were in the wholesale and retail and accommodation and food sectors, and in elementary and professional occupations. Younger age cohorts accounted for the largest share of recent hirings; those aged 20-29 years with third level qualifications saw strong growth in recent job hires since 2024, particularly in skilled occupations. Between 2024 and 2025, there was an increase in the number of recent job leavers driven by those entering unemployment. In 2025, those leaving the workforce and entering unemployment were mainly aged 25-54 years and leaving for labour market reasons, while those entering economic activity were mainly young (e.g. leaving for education reasons) and older workers (e.g. leaving for family reasons, illness or retirement).

Employment permits

Just over 24,200 new employment permits were issued in 2025, a decrease of 27% on the previous year. The decrease primarily relates to a fall in the number of permits issued for the health, ICT, agriculture, finance and industry sectors. Despite the declines in 2025, the health and ICT sectors combined accounted for almost two fifths (39%); professional occupations accounted for half (50%) of total new permits issued. A half of all new permits issued in 2025 were for positions in Dublin.

Vacancy data

Data from the CSO (job vacancy rate), Indeed (volume of job postings), and LinkedIn (ratio of job postings to job seekers) all point to a stabilisation in job vacancies/postings since the peak levels observed in 2022 and that the labour market at the end of 2025 was slightly tighter than immediately before the pandemic; nonetheless, more recent data from Indeed and LinkedIn point to a further easing of labour market tightness in early 2026.

As evidenced in online job advert data from WIH/Cedefop and from Skills for Growth (Regional Skills Fora) data, there continues a strong need for transversal skills (e.g. working efficiently, willingness to learn), digital skills (e.g. data analysis, using digital tools) and personal skills (e.g. communication, teamwork) across a range of occupational skill levels.

Summary of occupational outlooks and shortages

Science & Engineering

Science and engineering occupations have experienced strong employment growth in recent years, with demand partly driven by the continued growth of high-value sub-sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and research and development (R&D), which have performed well in recent years. However, employers face persistent recruitment difficulties, alongside a need to upskill the existing workforce in response to technological, regulatory, and industrial change. Advances in artificial intelligence are likely to reshape how work is carried out, with productivity gains expected to outweigh displacement effects, but increasing the need for workers to adapt to new tools and work processes. Additional opportunities continue to emerge from the green transition, while evolving regulatory, compliance, and quality requirements will continue to raise the demand for specialised technical expertise.

Employment growth is expected to continue to 2030, with above average growth for these occupations. This growth is projected to be driven primarily by the foreign-owned manufacturing sector. Within the occupations in this group, the strongest growth is projected for production managers.

Shortages

- Scientists: chemical, R&D
- Engineers:
  - mechanical, electrical, automation, and EHS
  - quality control/assurance, process, design, and manufacturing
- Engineering technicians: maintenance, electrical, and mechanical

ICT	Despite some fluctuations in employment in the ICT sector where two-thirds of employment is concentrated, this occupational group has seen overall employment gains annually over the six-year period, although 60% of the growth occurred between 2019 and 2021. These occupations have been identified as being particularly exposed to AI; all of employment in these roles was considered either significantly or moderately exposed to GenAI.[2] Since quarter 1 2025, those employed in significantly exposed ICT roles saw employment gains to quarter 1 2026 while those moderately exposed experienced declines. SOLAS employment projections are for slightly above average employment growth for this group at 1.5%, primarily in the ICT sector. Job creation in projects approved in IDA-supported companies highlight sustained demand for a range of these occupations, particularly in manufacturing and ICT. **Shortages** Software developers/engineers Network, security and data engineers, solutions architects
Business & Financial	The business and financial group of occupations is one of the largest economy-wide, representing more than a tenth of total employment in Ireland. While annual average employment growth was well above average between 2019 and 2025 (at 6.3%), further growth to the year 2030 is projected to be below average, due primarily to automation and AI. Strong growth in some occupations (e.g. financial analysts) is projected to be offset by declines in financial administrative roles which have been highlighted as particularly vulnerable to both AI and digital technology advancements.
Healthcare	Employment growth was above average for healthcare occupations both in the most recent year and the six-year annual average. There is a high reliance on a migrant workforce to fill gaps, particularly for nurses and doctors. Our growing and ageing population will be key drivers of demand for the healthcare workforce in the coming years although productivity gains will also be needed to alleviate the increased demand for skills in this area. Employment is projected to have an above average growth rate to 2030, with nurses and medical practitioners especially expected to drive this growth. **Shortages:** Medical practitioners, Occupational therapists, Nurses **Inconclusive:** Other healthcare professionals (e.g. dentists, pharmacists and radiographers)

[2] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming).

Education	Employment growth was above average for healthcare occupations both in the most recent year and the six-year annual average. There is a high reliance on a migrant workforce to fill gaps, particularly for nurses and doctors. Our growing and ageing population will be key drivers of demand for the healthcare workforce in the coming years although productivity gains will also be needed to alleviate the increased demand for skills in this area. Employment is projected to have an above average growth rate to 2030, with nurses and medical practitioners especially expected to drive this growth. **Shortages:** Subject specific secondary teachers
Social & Care	At 3.4%, annual average employment growth for social and care occupations was in line with the national average over the period 2019-2025, although growth between 2024 and 2025 was even higher at 5.1%. Ireland's demographic profile is shifting, and demand for social and care related occupations is being driven by an increasing population, as well as a growing number and share of older people. At the same time, greater labour market participation could offset, at least in part, a potential fall in demand for childcare related roles brought about by declining numbers of births. Future growth to 2030 is projected to be more modest than that seen in recent years, at 0.8% on average annually. **Shortages:** Healthcare assistants **Labour shortage:** Home care workers **Inconclusive:** Social workers
Legal & Security	Employment growth over the period 2019-2025 was below the national average for these occupations. Although there has been a shift towards a greater female share working in these occupations (which grew from 25% to 31% in the year to 2024), employment in these occupations continues to be male dominated. Demand will be in part driven by the current Programme for Government, which outlined a commitment to fund the recruitment of 5,000 Gardai across the five-year term of Government (on average, 1,000 a year. This occupational group has seen little employment growth in recent years with projected growth expected to be below average. Employment declines are projected for security-related roles, with minor gains for other protective services (which includes army, prison services).

Construction	Despite a below average employment growth rate over the six-year period from 2019-2025, construction occupations saw strong employment growth in the year since 2024. Much of the growth occurred for professional occupations, with little or no overall growth for skilled trades. The SOLAS occupational projections indicate that construction occupations will grow by 19,600 persons to 2030. While most of the growth is projected to be driven by the construction sector, construction occupations employed in professional services (e.g. architects and civil engineers) are also projected to grow. In terms of detailed occupations, strong growth is projected for carpenters, other construction trades, civil engineers, and plumbers. **Shortages:** Civil engineers & construction project managers, quantity surveyors **Potential Future Shortages:** Plumbers, carpenters **Inconclusive:** BIM/CAD technicians, scaffolders
Other Craft	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. 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. 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. **Shortages:** Welders, metal fabricators, maintenance fitters **Inconclusive:** CNC programmers
Agriculture & Animal Care	Employment growth for this occupational group was below average over the six-year period since 2019, with a fall in employment of 3,300 persons since 2024. Employment growth is projected to be below average over the forecast period to 2030. The older age profile of farmers is one of the contributing factors for this with a decline in the number of farmers expected to be offset to some extent by increases in employment in elementary agricultural occupations.

Hospitality	Employment levels declined since 2024 by almost 4,000 persons overall, although there were gains and losses across occupations within this group over that time. This occupational group accounted for 12% of recent job hires and 12% of recent job leavers (see Section 7) indicating that a high level of job churn occurred in 2025 particularly related to hospitality roles with a high share working part-time (e.g. waiters). Approximately 60% of employment in this occupational group in 2025 was in three occupations, namely kitchen assistants, waiters and bar staff. These occupations are characterised by a high level of churn, a high share working part-time and a young profile, with 37% aged 15-24 years. Employment is projected to grow in line with the national average to 2030 with the decline in the number of waiters employed projected to be offset somewhat by increases for chefs and kitchen assistants. The cost of doing business, consumer sentiment and tourism levels will likely be key factors determining the demand for these skills in the coming years.
Arts, Sports & Tourism	Overall employment growth for this occupational group has been modest in the six-year period since 2019, despite strong relative growth since 2024. Over 20% of employment in this occupational group is considered either significantly or moderately exposed to GenAI;[3] the extent to which this represents opportunities or challenges (or both) is as yet unknown and likely to be occupation specific. Employment growth in these roles is expected to be below average and will be determined to some extent by the level of consumer spending in the economy; a constrained economy could impact growth, particularly for sports, fitness and tourism-related roles.
Transport & Logistics	Annual average employment growth for transport and logistics occupations was lower than the national average for the five-year period to 2025. Given the high volume of recent job hires and the older age profile of those employed in this occupation, it appears that job openings are arising due to job churn as well as replacement demand. Despite the lower-than-average growth, demand remains evident and the upskilling of the existing workforce will also likely be required in order to adapt to changes in driving (e.g. eco-driving skills, new engine technologies (EV, hydrogen), environmental legislation and policies). Employment is projected to grow at 2.1% on average annually, nearly twice the rate for overall employment, with growth concentrated in mobile machine driver and transport/logistics manager occupations. **Shortages:** HGV drivers, bus/coach drivers **Inconclusive:** Stock control, transport & distribution administrative occupations

[3] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming).

Administrative & Secretarial	Annual average employment growth in this occupation was below average over the six-year period 2019-2025; growth was driven by government administrative and other administrator occupations, with little or no growth in the remaining occupations within this group. This occupational group has one of the highest shares of employment in roles considered exposed to GenAI;[4] a third were considered highly exposed with a further half either significantly or moderately exposed. Highly exposed occupations are associated with a low task variability making them more highly susceptible to tasks being replaced by AI, with the broader digitalisation of tasks already having an impact on employment growth in these jobs. Overall employment growth is forecast to be low to 2030 for this occupational group although this may mask more significant changes across particular occupations depending on the sector of employment.
Sales, Marketing, & Customer Service	Although the annual average employment growth rate for this occupational group was approximately half that of the national average, it is a large group and added nearly 28,000 workers between 2019 and 2025. The slower than average employment growth for this occupational group was due largely to declines in the number of persons working in these roles in the ICT sector. The demand for sales related skills is not, however, confined to sales and customer service occupations, with employers frequently identifying upskilling needs in sales, marketing (especially digital), and relationship management (business and client) for those already working in a range of other occupations (e.g. engineers and technicians, HGV drivers, hospitality occupations etc.) in order to develop business and drive commercial growth. Employment growth is expected to continue to be below average over the forecast period to 2030.
Operative & Elementary	Overall employment levels have seen little change in recent years for this occupational group, with employment growth for food operatives offsetting declines for other operatives or elementary occupations. Future growth is projected to be primarily related to domestic industrial enterprises and those employed as food operatives, followed by cleaners. Over a quarter of those working in this occupation held third level qualifications, and while this share was below the national average, it points to an element of over-qualification for some roles as operative and elementary occupations typically do not require higher levels of education.

[4] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming.

Introduction

The National Skills Bulletin 2026 is the twenty second in an annual series of reports produced by the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) in SOLAS. The Bulletin provides an overview of the Irish labour market at occupational level, with the aim of assisting policy formulation in the areas of employment, education/training, and immigration (particularly the sourcing of skills which are in short supply in the Irish and EU labour market from the EEA). It also aims to inform career guidance advisors, students and other individuals making career and educational choices.

The Bulletin draws on a range of data sources relevant to Ireland's labour market. The main data source is the CSO's Labour Force Survey (LFS)[5] which provides detailed employment numbers, including by occupation. The LFS, which replaced the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) in Quarter 3 2017, has undergone a number of revisions in recent years:

- data from the intercensal period (2017-2022) was adjusted in line with findings from Census 2022.
- changes to the LFS questionnaire were introduced in line with new IESS (Integration of European Social Statistics) regulations for the Labour Force Survey in quarter 1 2021, with the addition of new questions and the removal of certain questions.

As a result, the LFS numbers (e.g. employment, unemployment, overall population, etc) in both this edition of National Skills Bulletin and the 2024 edition will differ from the numbers reported in earlier National Skills Bulletins.

In addition, following processing and compilation issues identified in relation to the LFS data for quarter 3 and quarter 4 2025, data for these quarters were formally updated by the CSO in May 2026 and again in September 2026, after compilation of most chapters in this report. For the most part, the changes amounted to less than 500 persons, and do not change the interpretation of the analysis; however, for larger changes (e.g. citizenship, detailed occupations) the numbers have been updated to provide the most accurate interpretation of the labour market for these variables.

Occupation-related data

Section 10 provides a detailed analysis of trends and outlooks at occupational level. Occupations are classified using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2010). In cases where the number of persons employed in an occupation is too small to allow for meaningful statistical analysis, two or more occupations were merged to form an occupational group.

In 2024, the SLMRU conducted a review of how occupations were grouped. The revised occupations included in each occupational group are available in the Appendix. As a result of these changes, along with revised employment data from the CSO for 2017-2022 (as detailed above), the composition of some occupational groups in the Bulletins since 2024 is not identical to earlier years.

[5] 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 Central Statistics Office (CSO). The CSO does not take any responsibility for the views expressed or the outputs generated from this research.

Each occupation is examined in terms of the following:

- **employment level and recent employment trends**; the analysis is based on the data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Labour Force Survey; when interpreting the employment data, the following should be borne in mind:
    - the employment level for each occupation is expressed as an annual average (i.e. the average of four quarters in a calendar year)
    - the trend analysis covers the six-year period 2019-2025, unless otherwise specified; growth over this period is calculated in terms of the annualised growth rate, sometimes referred to as the 'average annual growth rate' for ease of reading (although the two terms are not technically identical)
- **an employment profile (e.g. age, sex, citizenship, employment type and education level)**; the analysis is based on the LFS data for quarter 4 2025
- **vacancies advertised** through the Department of Social Protection's (DSP) Jobs Ireland vacancy portal (i.e. the Public Employment Service (PES)) and the Ireland subset of the Web Intelligence Hub (Eurostat/CEDEFOP) Online Job Adverts database in 2025; this year's analysis also includes data on online job postings from LinkedIn[6]
- the level of **difficulty in filling vacancies**; the analysis is based on data from the SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey conducted in November 2025, from skills audits conducted by Regional Skills Fora, and insights from Enterprise Ireland's client skills data (2025).

In addition, the outlooks for occupational employment have been informed by a number of other reports, both SLMRU publications (i.e. Occupational Projections for Ireland 2026-2030 and GenAI and Ireland's Workforce[7] and others (e.g. EGFSN), as well as data on potential future job creation provided by the Industrial Development Agency (IDA).

The unemployment rate by detailed occupation continues to be excluded from the analysis in this edition of the Bulletin as the number of persons unemployed in 2025 who stated their previous occupation was too small to report.

The National Skills Bulletin 2026 is structured as follows:

Section 1: sets the Irish labour market within the context of recent trends and developments in the macroeconomy, and presents an overview of the economic and employment outlook for Ireland

Section 2: examines trends in key labour market indicators (employment, unemployment and the labour force) and the composition of national employment (sex, age, citizenship, education etc.)

Section 3: examines employment trends in economic sectors (quarter 4 2025 is compared with the same period in 2019 and 2024)

Section 4: analyses employment trends by broad occupational group (i.e. employment growth and the composition of employment) up to quarter 4 2025

Section 5: provides an overview of the labour market at regional level up to quarter 4 2025

Section 6: examines recent trends in Irish unemployment (levels and rates) and details the characteristics of the unemployed population (i.e. sex, age, educational attainment, nationality, occupation and sector) up to quarter 4 2025

[6] The SLMRU is grateful to LinkedIn for the provision of a custom data set based on job and candidate postings.
[7] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming).

Section 7: presents an analysis of labour market transitions between unemployment, employment and economic inactivity, an analysis of recent job hires and job leavers in terms of age, education level, sector and occupation in 2025

Section 8: examines the inflow of labour from non-EEA countries through the various employment permit schemes up to 2025

Section 9: provides an overview of trends in online job advert data through a range of sources, including LinkedIn, Indeed's Hiring Lab, the DSP Jobs Ireland vacancy portal and the Ireland subset of the Web Intelligence Hub – Online Job Adverts (WIH-OHA) data in 2025; it also reports the findings of the November 2025 SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey on difficult-to fill vacancies and on the CSO vacancy rate by sector

Section 10: provides labour market indicators for 100 occupations presented in 16 occupational groups and provides an outlook for each occupation.

Section 1 Macroeconomic Context

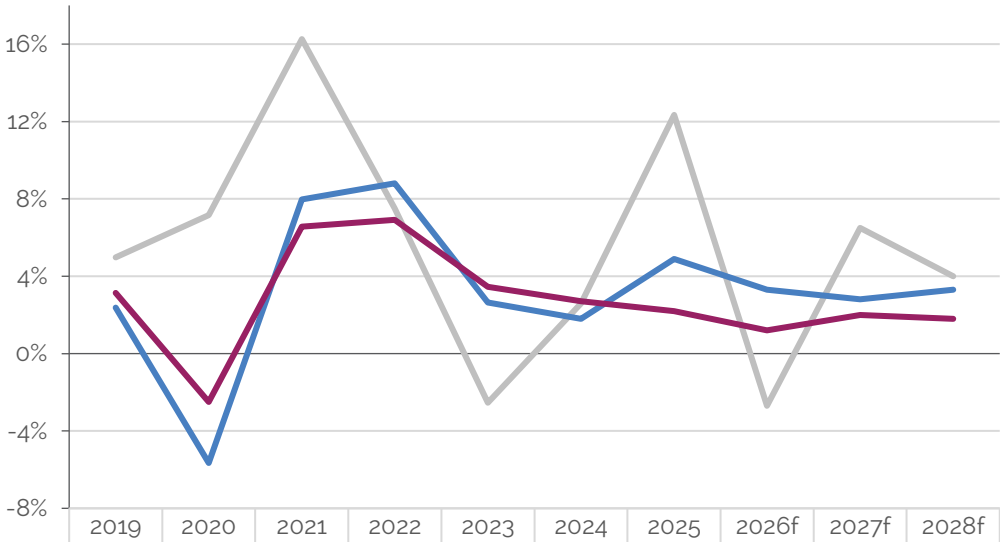
1.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of Ireland's economic performance in 2025 and examines the macroeconomic outlook, at both a national and international level, with the intention of identifying current and potential opportunities and risks facing Ireland's labour market.

1.2 Economic performance

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of recent trends in Ireland's economic performance which particularly highlights the volatility of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure. The fluctuation in GDP in Ireland is driven by activities in foreign-owned multinational enterprises (MNEs) and is not considered a meaningful measure to gauge the state of the economy or labour market in Ireland. Instead, modified domestic demand (MDD) is used here as it is considered a more accurate measure of activity in the Irish economy. Both MDD and employment have tracked reasonably closely in recent years although in 2025, MDD saw a 4.9% increase compared to just 2.2% employment growth. Forecasts from the Central Bank indicate that both employment and MDD will continue to grow out to 2028, although more modestly for employment growth.[8] MNE-related investments are expected to be a key driver of this growth, somewhat offsetting weaker consumer spending. The Department of Finance forecasts for MDD growth over this period are broadly in line, with 3.0% and 3.1% for 2027 and 2028 respectively (compared to 2.8% and 3.3% for the Central Bank) but more conservative for employment growth (1.4% for 2027 and 1.2% for 2028 compared to 2.0% and 1.8% for the Central Bank).[9]

Figure 1.1 GDP*, Modified Domestic Demand* (MDD) & Employment, Annual Change (%), 2019-2025, Forecast 2026-2028



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026f	2027f	2028f
GDP	5.0%	7.2%	16.3%	7.5%	-2.5%	2.6%	12.3%	-2.7%	6.5%	4.0%
MDD	2.4%	-5.7%	8.0%	8.8%	2.6%	1.8%	4.9%	3.3%	2.8%	3.3%
Employment	3.1%	-2.5%	6.6%	6.9%	3.4%	2.7%	2.2%	1.2%	2.0%	1.8%

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data, Central Bank Quarterly Bulletin, Q2 2026
*Constant Market Prices, chain linked annually and referenced to year 2022

[8] Central Bank of Ireland, Quarterly Bulletin, Q2 2026
[9] Annual Progress Report 2026

Foreign-owned enterprises

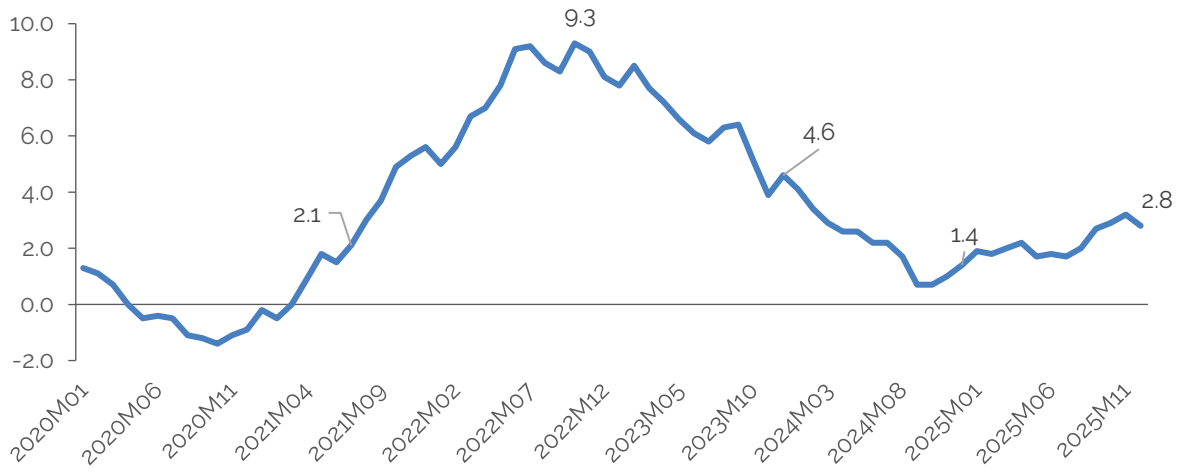
A number of sectors in Ireland are dominated by foreign-owned multinational enterprises (MNEs) including pharma/chemical production, computer, electronic and optical device manufacturing, medical instrument production and information and communication.[10] Activity in MNEs can have a significant impact on GDP figures (as seen in Figure 1.1) without having an (immediate) impact on employment. Given the global economic uncertainty that surround many of these sectors, they have the potential to pose a risk to future growth in Ireland's labour market. Based on CSO National Accounts data, MNE sectors accounted for half of gross value added (GVA) in Ireland in 2025, having grown from a 41% share in 2019, with GVA almost doubling over this time period.[11] All other sectors have seen continuous growth since 2019, albeit at a lower level than the MNE sectors.

A recent article by the Central Bank indicates that pharma employment is more embedded in the Irish economy compared to ICT employment.[12] However, risks remain for both, particularly given the concentration of US-owned MNEs and the potential disruptions with tariffs. A contraction in employment in these sectors could lead to a reduction in overall average wages, having knock-on effects on personal consumption levels.

Inflation

In the period following the COVID-19 pandemic, Ireland experienced an elevated level of inflation, peaking at 9.3% in October 2022 (Figure 1.2). After this, the rate of inflation declined, dipping to a low of 0.7% in October 2024. The rate has been above 2% since August 2025 with elevated inflation rates continuing into 2026 (with latest data showing a rate of 3.6% in June 2026).[13] The Central Bank forecasts an inflation rate of 3.5% in 2026, falling to 2.0% by 2028.[14] An elevated level of inflation could impact on consumer spending and the cost of doing business, particularly effecting services sectors such as retail and hospitality.

Figure 1.2 Annual Rate of Change (%) in Consumer Prices Index (CPI), 2020-2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

[10] Foreign and Domestic GVA Quarterly National Accounts Quarter 1 2026 Final - Central Statistics Office

[11] Based on CSO National Accounts (constant prices): PXStat NAO18

[12] https://www.centralbank.ie/publication/quarterly-bulletins/quarterly-bulletin-q2-2026#Box-B-MNEs-and-the-Irish-labour-market--A-Tale-of-Two-Sectors-2e866d78-9acd-4f6a-9c48-89da8d954416

[13] Based on CSO PXstat CPM20

[14] Based on Central Bank of Ireland, Quarterly Bulletin, Q2 2026; the Central Bank report on Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) which differs from CPI in the exclusion of mortgage interest.

1.3 Enterprise sector

In 2025, the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) reported that their 1,800+ client companies employed over 310,000 persons, a 1.5% increase on the previous year, with 323 investments expected to result in the creation of over 15,000 jobs.[15]

For indigenous firms, Enterprise Ireland (EI) reported a net gain of 2,938 persons employed in their client companies in 2025 with a total of 232,425 persons employed in EI-backed companies.[16] Employment gains were particularly strong outside the Dublin region, with the Midlands seeing the largest relative growth, at 3.9%.

1.4 Competitiveness

In the latest IMD World Competitiveness Ranking 2026, Ireland retained 7th position, with Singapore moving to the top ranked country among 63 countries benchmarked.[17] Although Ireland's ranking remains below its 2nd place position in 2023, it is the highest ranked euro area country. Since 2025, Ireland has seen an increase in ranking for economic performance from 9th to 2nd place and for business efficiency from 11th to 5th place, while the ranking for infrastructure fell from 17th to 19th place. The IMD state that challenges in 2026 for Ireland include global economic and political uncertainty, Ireland's cost competitiveness and the impact of AI. The National Competitiveness and Productivity Council (NCPC) note that Ireland's highly skilled workforce is considered one of the key elements that underpins its competitiveness performance and that the recent Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity will be required to ensure Ireland remains competitive in an ever-evolving global landscape.[18] In their recent Competitiveness Challenge report, the NCPC make a number of recommendations across a range of areas including energy security, the cost of doing business, public sector reform and using AI to the benefit of the labour market.[19] The 2024 Draghi report on EU competitiveness also provides key recommendations for increasing competitiveness across EU countries with promoting skills and quality jobs a key enabler of this.[20]

1.5 Hours worked and earnings

Actual hours worked

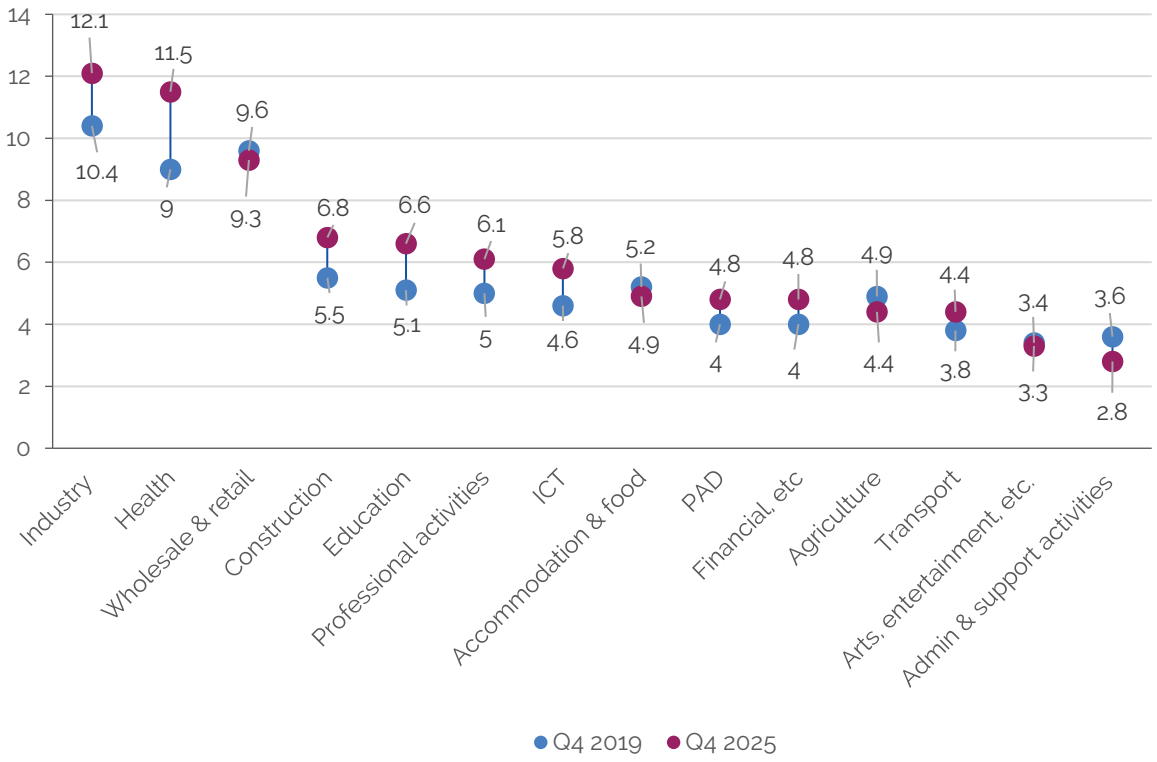
In quarter 4 2025, industry and health were the sectors which recorded the highest actual hours worked per week, at 12.1 and 11.5 million hours respectively, followed by the wholesale and retail sector at 9.3 million hours (Figure 1.3). The lowest actual hours worked in quarter 4 2025 were in the administrative and support services sector at 2.8 million hours.

Between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, actual hours worked in the economy grew by 9.9 million hours. The largest growth over the time period occurred in the health, industry and education sectors, increasing by 2.5, 1.7 and 1.5 million hours respectively. Declines in actual hours worked occurred across five sectors, namely administrative and support services (-0.8m hours), agriculture (-0.5m hours), wholesale & retail (-0.3m hours), accommodation and food (-0.3m hours), and arts, entertainment and other services (-0.1m hours). For the most part, increases

[15] IDA Ireland Annual Report 2025 Results | IDA Ireland
[16] enterprise-ireland-annual-report-2025-en-202032.pdf
[17] https://www.imd.org/centers/wcc/world-competitiveness-center/rankings/world-competitiveness-ranking/
[18] NCPC Bulletin 2026
[19] irelands-competitiveness-challenge-2026_final.pdf
[20] European Commission (2024). The Draghi report on EU competitiveness

in actual hours worked were reflected in increases in employment over the same time period, with industry and health the sectors with the largest absolute employment gains since quarter 4 2019; in addition, the fall in employment in administrative and support services were reflected in a fall in actual hours worked. For a number of sectors, including wholesale and retail and accommodation and food, there was a decline in actual hours worked despite an increase in employment, reflecting the higher share in part-time employment in these sectors.

Figure 1.3 Actual Hours Worked Per Week (Millions), Quarter 4 2019 & Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Average weekly paid hours and weekly/hourly earnings

In quarter 4 2025, the ICT sector accounted for the highest average weekly earnings (at €1,700), joint highest average hourly earnings with the education sector (at €45) and the joint highest average weekly paid hours with industry (at 38 hours) (Figure 1.4). The accommodation and food services sector had both the lowest average weekly earnings (at €474) and average hourly earnings (at €18), with the second lowest average weekly paid hours, after the education sector.

Figure 1.4 Average Weekly Paid Hours, Hourly & Weekly Earnings, Quarter 4 2025

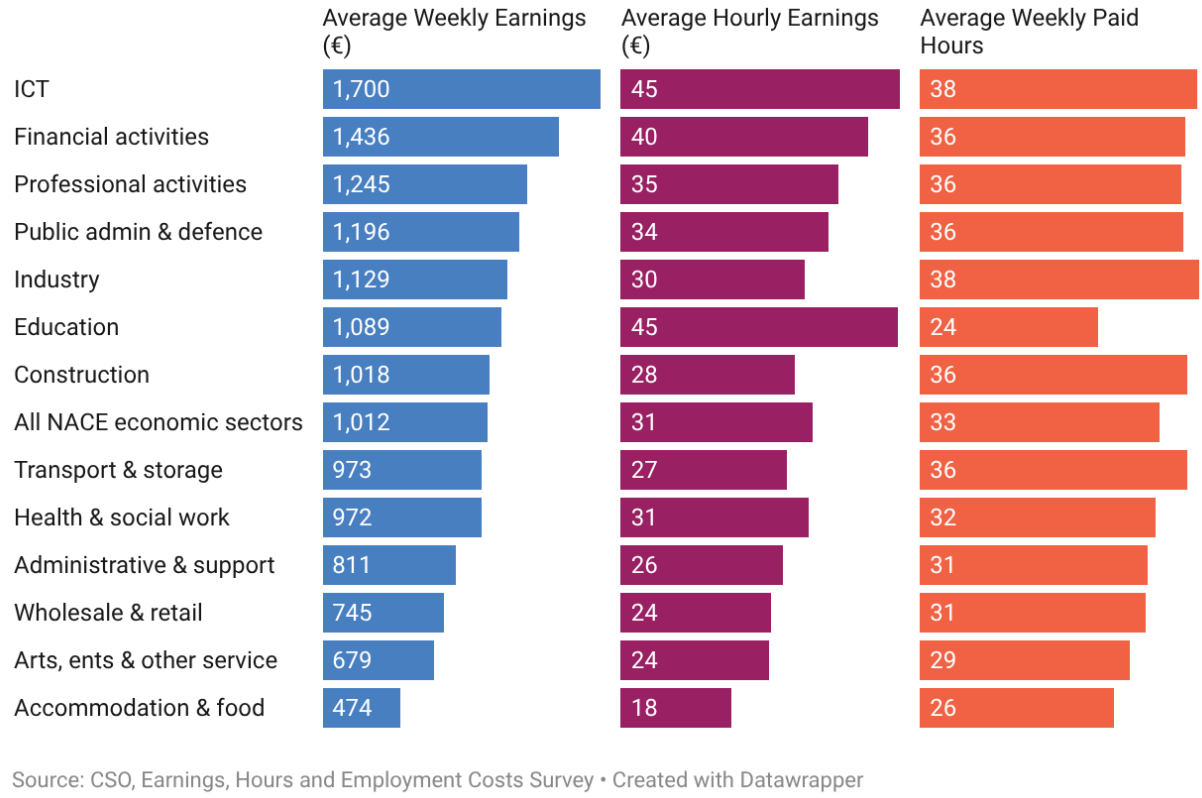
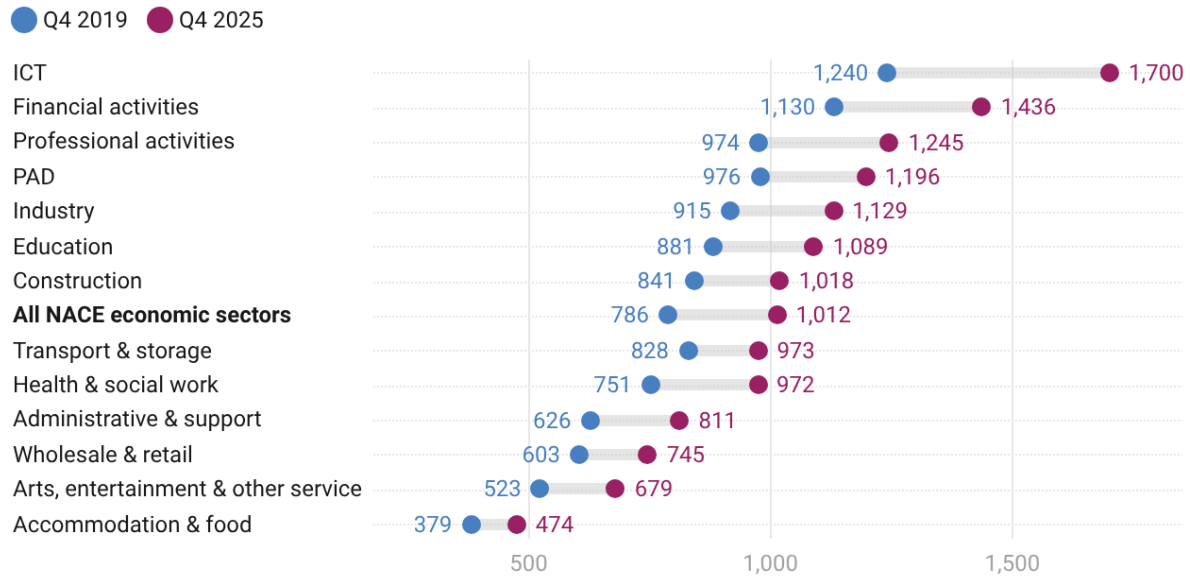


Figure 1.5 details how average weekly earnings have grown since quarter 4 2019. All sectors saw growth in average weekly earnings over the period to quarter 4 2025, with an average growth of €226. The growth in the ICT sector was far stronger (+€460), followed by financial activities (+€306) and professional activities (+€271). The accommodation and food sector had the smallest absolute growth over this period at €95.

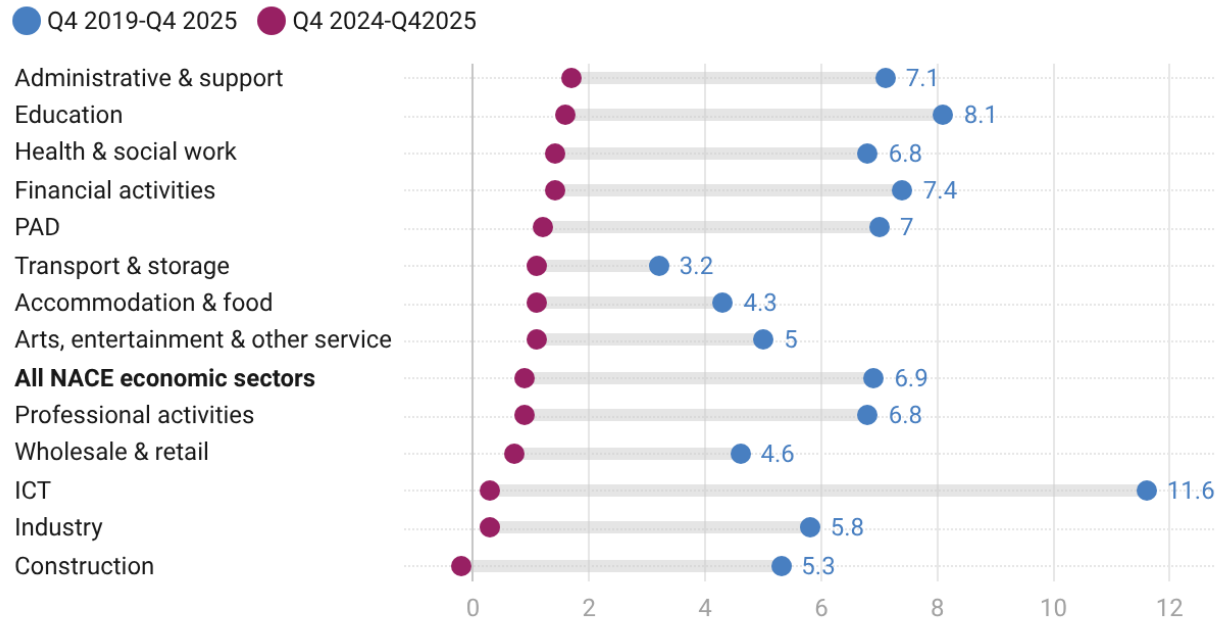
The ICT sector also experienced the largest growth in average hourly earnings between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, of €11.60, far exceeding the growth for all economic sectors of €6.90 (Figure 1.6). However, the ICT sector also had one of the lowest growth in average hourly earnings in the year since quarter 4 2024 (at €0.30). Construction was the only sector to see a fall in hourly earnings in the one year period, while the largest growth was for the administrative and support services sector (at €1.70).

Figure 1.5 Average Weekly Earnings by Sector (€), Q4 2019 - Q4 2025



Source: CSO, Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 1.6 Change in Average Hourly Earnings by Sector (€)

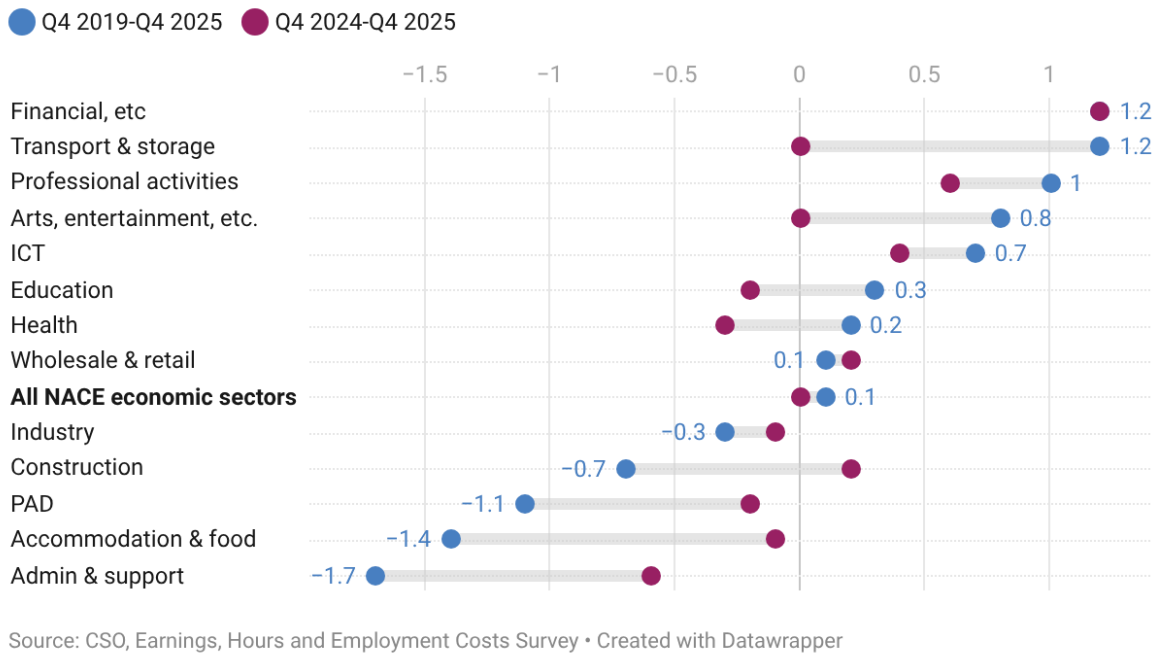


Source: CSO, Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, the number of average weekly paid hours saw only marginal growth for all economic sectors, with declines occurring for a number of sectors including administrative and support services, accommodation and food, public administration and defence (PAD), construction, and industry (Figure 1.7). The financial activities and transport sectors saw the largest growth over this time period, of 1.2 hours each.

There was no overall change in average weekly paid hours for all economic sectors in the year since quarter 4 2024, with growth only occurring in five sectors (with the largest growth for the financial activities sector at 1.2 hours). The largest decline in average weekly paid hours over this period was for the administrative and support services sector, at -0.6 hours.

Figure 1.7 Change in Average Weekly Paid Hours by Sector

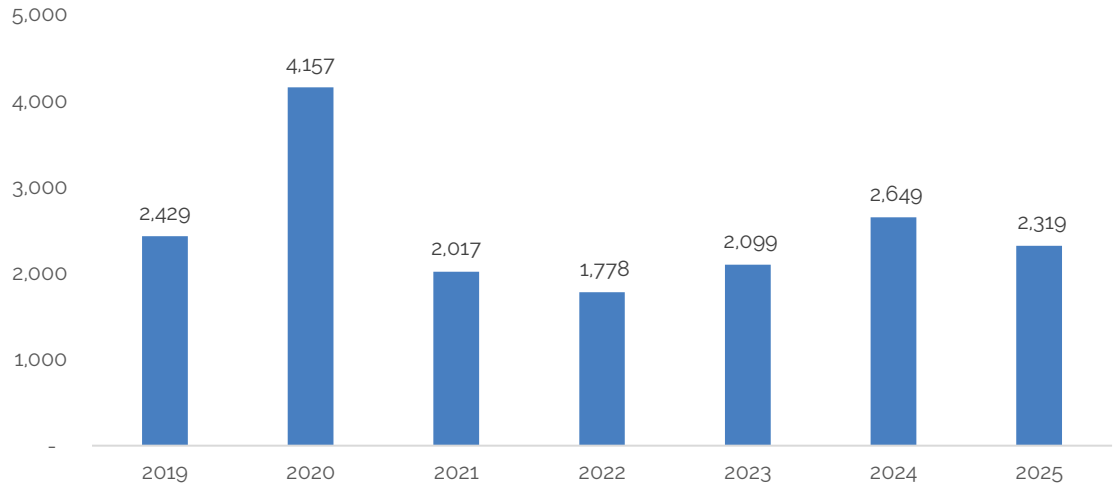


Source: CSO, Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey • Created with Datawrapper

1.6 Redundancies

With the exception of 2020, when the number of applications for redundancies surged as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, the number of redundancy applications have been below 3,000 each year since 2019. In 2025, 2,319 redundancy applications were received, a fall of 330 on the previous year.

Figure 1.8 Applications Received Under the Redundancy Payment Scheme, 2019-2025

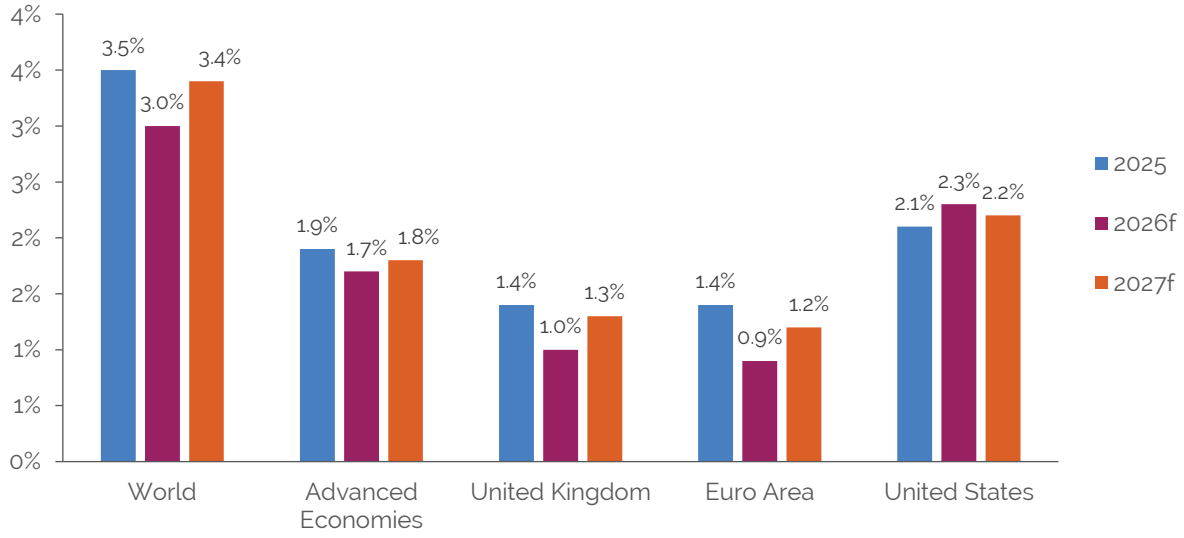


Source: Department of Social Protection

1.7 Global and national outlook

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Outlook (updated in July 2026) forecasts a continued growth in the world economy out to 2027 despite continued global uncertainty relating to political and technological change. The growth to 2027 is more modest for advanced economies (1.8%); the United Kingdom (1.3%) and the Euro area (1.2%), but all are higher than the growth projected for 2026. In contrast, the United States growth forecast of 2.2% is marginally lower than for 2026 (2.3%). The forecast growth for Ireland (not illustrated in the graph and relates to the April issue) of 2.4% in 2027 exceeds the projected growth for the Euro area over the same time period.

Figure 1.9 World Economic Outlook Projections (Real GDP, Annual Percentage Change), 2024-2027f



Source: International Monetary Fund

Section 2 Labour Market Overview

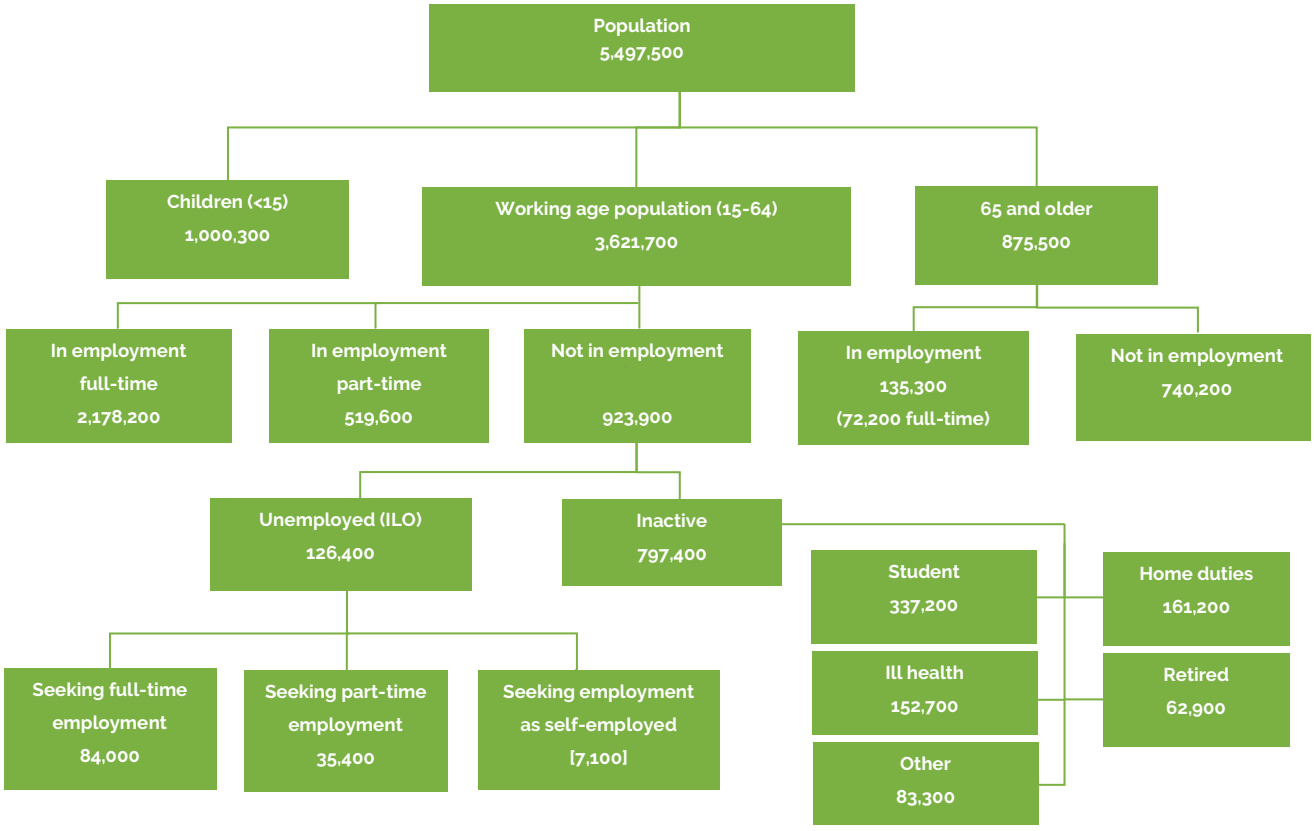
This section presents an overview of Ireland's labour market, looking first at how the active and inactive population was distributed in quarter 4 2025.[21] This is followed by analysis of employment composition by sex, age, educational attainment, and employment type, among other variables.

2.1 Population: Labour Market Status

In quarter 4 2025, Ireland's estimated population was nearly 5.5 million persons. Of these children (aged <15 years) accounted for just over 1 million, the working age cohort (persons aged 15-64 years), for over 3.6 million, and older people (aged 65 years and over), for 875,500. When compared to both quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2024, the number of children fell (by 15,500 and 6,300 respectively), while there were increases in the working age (up by 53,900 persons and 357,300 persons) and older populations (up 159,800 and 28,900 persons).

In relative terms, the strongest growth was in the older age cohort, where the population grew by 3.4% when compared to quarter 4 2024 and by 22.3% when compared to quarter 4 2019, well above the averages of 1.4% and 10.0% for the total population.

Figure 2.1 Population by Labour Market Status (ILO defined), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data; Note: Discrepancies are due to rounding.

[21] Note: data reported in this section is based on the original quarter 4 2025 Labour Force Survey release; while this data has been revised since then, the differences are small (less than 500 persons) and do not impact on the analysis.

In quarter 4 2025,

- of the 3.62 million persons of working age (15-64 years), nearly 2.7 million were **in employment,** 1.8% more than in quarter 4 2024 (+47,600 persons) and 18.1% more than in quarter 4 2019 (+413,200 persons)
- of total employment in the working age cohort (15-64 years), nearly 2.18 million persons were in full-time employment, an increase of 46,300 persons compared to quarter 4 2024; more than half a million persons (519,600 workers) were in part-time employment, almost unchanged from one year earlier (+1,300 persons, or +0.3%)
- of those aged 65 years and over, 135,300 were in employment, an increase of 7% (or 9,100 additional persons) compared to quarter 4 2024. Just over one half of older workers (53%) were employed full-time (representing 72,200 persons).

In quarter 4 2025, of the **923,900 persons aged 15-64 years (working age population) who were not in employment**, 797,400 were economically inactive (i.e. outside the labour force), with the remaining 126,400 being unemployed.

- When compared to quarter 4 2024, the number of persons not in employment grew slightly (by 0.7%, or 6,300 additional persons), due entirely to an increase in unemployment levels (+9.8%, or 11,300 additional unemployed) since the number of persons in this age group who were economically inactive fell slightly (by 0.6%, or 5,200 fewer people).
- In contrast, when compared to quarter 4 2019, the total number of persons in the working age population who were not in employment fell by 5.7% (55,900 fewer persons), due mainly to a decline in the number of inactive individuals (-71,700, or -8.2%); the number of unemployed persons increased over the six-year period by 15,700 persons (+14.2%).

Of the **797,400 persons aged 15-64 years who were not in the labour force** (i.e. neither in nor seeking employment),

- 337,200 were students, almost unchanged from quarter 4 2024, but 10,600 more (+3.1%) compared to quarter 4 2019
- there were 161,200 engaged in domestic duties, slightly more than in quarter 4 2024 (+3,100 persons, or +1.3%) but considerably lower than in quarter 4 2019 (73,700 fewer persons, or -46.6%)
- 152,700 persons were inactive due to ill-health, 10.2% lower than in quarter 4 2024 (15,700 fewer persons), but broadly similar to that observed in quarter 4 2019 (just 600 fewer persons
- 62,900 were retired, fewer than in either quarter 4 2024 (-1,300, or -2.0%) or quarter 4 2019 (-2,800, or -4.4%)
- 83,300 persons were inactive for other reasons, 2,000 (-2.5%) fewer than in quarter 4 2024, but 4,800 (+6.1%) more than in quarter 4 2019
    - of persons inactive for other reasons [11,200] were discouraged workers, up from an estimated [7,000] workers in quarter 4 2024 and from [6,200] in quarter 4 2019, although the numbers are small and should be interpreted with caution
    - a further 14,900 persons were available but not seeking work, which was almost unchanged compared to quarter 4 2024 (-200 persons) but 5,500 fewer persons compared to quarter 4 2019.

Dependency and Inactivity Rates

Table 2.1 shows the dependency and inactivity rates for quarter 4 2019, quarter 4 2024, and quarter 4 2025.

- The **total age dependency rate** (youth and older age) was 51.8%, almost the same as in quarter 4 2024 (51.9%) but slightly lower than the 53.0% observed in quarter 4 2019.
    - The **youth dependency rate** fell to 27.6% in quarter 4 2025, which was lower than in both quarter 4 2024 (28.2%) and quarter 4 2019 (31.1%).
    - In contrast, the **old-age dependency** rate reached 24.2% in quarter 4 2025, a slightly increase (0.4 percentage points) compared to quarter 4 2024, and up 2.2 percentage points compared to quarter 4 2019.
- The **total inactivity rate declined to 22%** in quarter 4 2025, down from 22.5% in quarter 4 2024 and from 26.6% in quarter 4 2019.
- The **economic dependency ratio** was 1.17, almost unchanged compared to one year earlier (1.14), but slightly higher than in quarter 4 2019 (0.99).

Table 2.1 Dependency and Inactivity Rates, Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024 and Quarter 4 2025

	Q4 2019	Q4 2024	Q4 2025
Total dependency rate (0-14 and 65+)	53.0%	51.9%	51.8%
Youth dependency rate (0-14)	31.1%	28.2%	27.6%
Old age dependency rate (65+)	21.9%	23.7%	24.2%
Inactivity rate (15-64)	26.6%	22.5%	22.0%
Economic dependency ratio	0.99	1.14	1.17

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

2.2 Labour Market Trends

This section examines key labour market trends including the expected changes for the next few years based on projections from the Central Bank of Ireland. The focus is on labour force, employment and unemployment levels and rates; an outline of population migration trends is also provided.

Labour force, employment and unemployment levels

In 2025, the annual average number of persons (aged 15 years+) in Ireland's labour force reached over 2.95 million persons (Figure 2.2). Of these, nearly 2.82 million were in employment and just over 137,000 persons were unemployed. The sizes of Ireland's labour and work forces grew strongly in the years following the pandemic, with growth of 20.2% (496,700 extra persons) and 20.6% (481,700 extra persons) in the labour force and workforce respectively when compared to 2019. Although growth slowed somewhat between 2024 and 2025, numbers nonetheless increased by 2.5% (74,400 extra persons) and 2.2% (60,200 extra persons) respectively. The Central Bank projects further, more modest increases in the coming years, with the labour force expected to reach over 3.12 million persons and the workforce expected to reach approximately 2.9 million persons by the year 2028.

There were 137,200 unemployed persons in Ireland in 2025 (annual average). While this level remains well below those associated with the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath, unemployment levels in Ireland increased by 10.3% (14,200 extra unemployed) compared to 2024

and by 12.3% (15,000 extra unemployed) compared to 2019. Further increase in unemployment numbers are anticipated by the Central Bank, with numbers expected to reach 162,000 by 2028.

Figure 2.2 Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment (Annual Average, 000s), 2007-2025, and 2026f-2028f



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data and Central Bank of Ireland Quarterly Bulletin (Q2 2026)

Ireland's labour force participation and employment rates reached their highest levels to date in 2025 (Table 2.2): approximately two thirds (66.1%) of all persons aged 15 years and over participated in the labour force in 2025 (i.e. either had a job or were actively seeking and available for work); at the same time, nearly three quarters of those aged 15-64 years were in employment. Unemployment levels have fluctuated somewhat – increasing with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, but declining thereafter until 2025, when the rate increased slightly to 4.7%. Nonetheless, the unemployment rate in 2025 remained below the pre-Covid level of 5.0%.

Table 2.2 Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment Rates, 2019-2025 (Annual Average)

	Labour force participation rate (15+)	Employment rate (15-64 years)	Unemployment rate (15-74 years)
2019	62.2%	69.3%	5.0%
2020	60.1%	66.5%	5.9%
2021	64.4%	69.8%	6.2%
2022	64.9%	73.3%	4.5%
2023	65.5%	74.0%	4.3%
2024	65.8%	74.5%	4.3%
2025	66.1%	74.6%	4.7%

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Migration Estimates

In 2025, there were approximately 110,600 immigrants and 62,500 emigrants, resulting in a total net migration of 48,100 persons (Table 2.3). This represents a fall of nearly a fifth (19%, or 11,600 fewer people) on the preceding year. There were declines in both inward migration (12%, or 14,700 fewer immigrants to Ireland) and outward migration (5%, or 3,100 fewer emigrants) when compared to 2025. Despite the decreases observed in both 2024 and 2025, net migration in Ireland remains considerably higher than either pre-COVID (2019) or 2017 levels.

Table 2.3 Inward, Outward and Net Migration (000s), 2017-2026

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Inward	95.3	96	97.1	95.6	74.1	107.8	141.6	149.2	125.3	110.6
Outward	56.1	51.6	53.1	50.9	52.3	56.1	64	69.9	65.6	62.5
Net migration	**39.2**	**44.4**	**44**	**44.7**	**21.8**	**51.7**	**77.7**	**79.3**	**59.7**	**48.1**

Source: CSO Annual Population Estimates

Migration by sex

In 2026, 58% of total net migration was for males, the second highest share (after 2025, when it was 61%) observed over the ten-year period. Although net migration fell for both males and females between 2025 and 2026, the decline for males was stronger (-23%, or 8,600 fewer persons) compared to 3,000 fewer females (-13%). Over the period 2017-2026, net migration was higher for females in 2017 and again for the period 2020-2023.

Table 2.4 Net Migration by Sex (000s), 2017-2026

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Male	17.7	23.3	22.1	21.5	10.8	19.6	35.1	41.3	36.6	28.0
Female	21.4	21.1	21.9	23.2	11.0	32.1	42.6	38	23.1	20.1

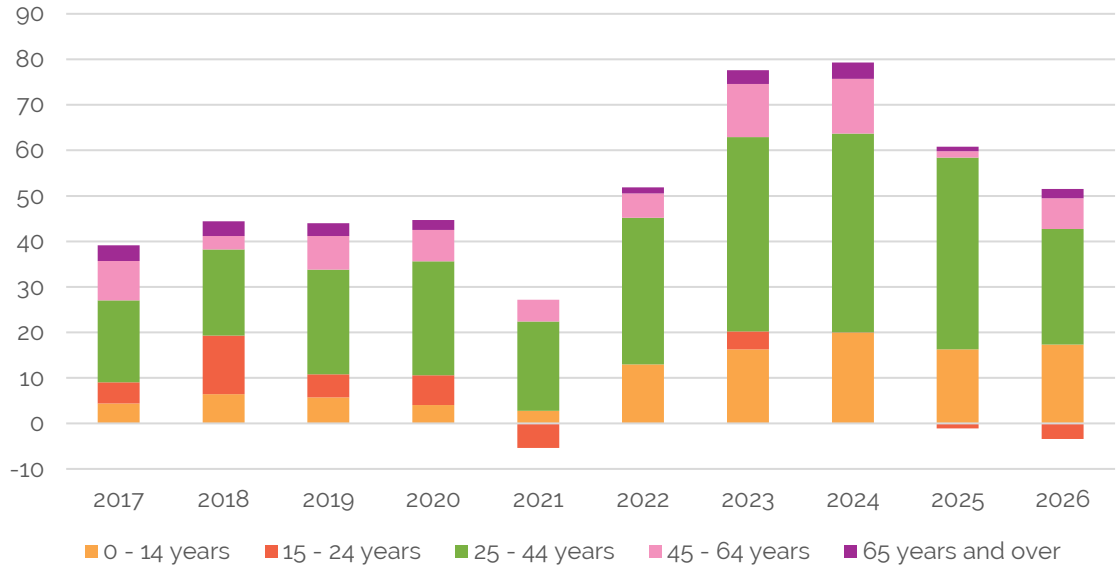
Source: CSO Annual Population Estimates

Migration by age group

Figure 2.3 shows net migration to Ireland by age group. More than half (nearly 53%) of total net migration in 2026 was aged between 25 and 44 years, down from 71% in 2025 and the lowest level since 2018 (when 42.6% where in this age group). Children (aged 14 years or under) made up more than a third (36%), up from 27% in 2025 and by far the highest share observed over the ten-year period 2017-2026.

Nonetheless, although they accounted for the largest share of net migration every year, the total fall in net migration observed between 2025 and 2026 was due to a declines in the 25-44-year-old cohorts (-16,700 fewer migrants), and to a lesser extent increased net outward migration amongst 15-24-year-olds (2,300 more outward compared to the preceding year).

Figure 2.3 Net Migration (000s) by Age Group, 2017-2026

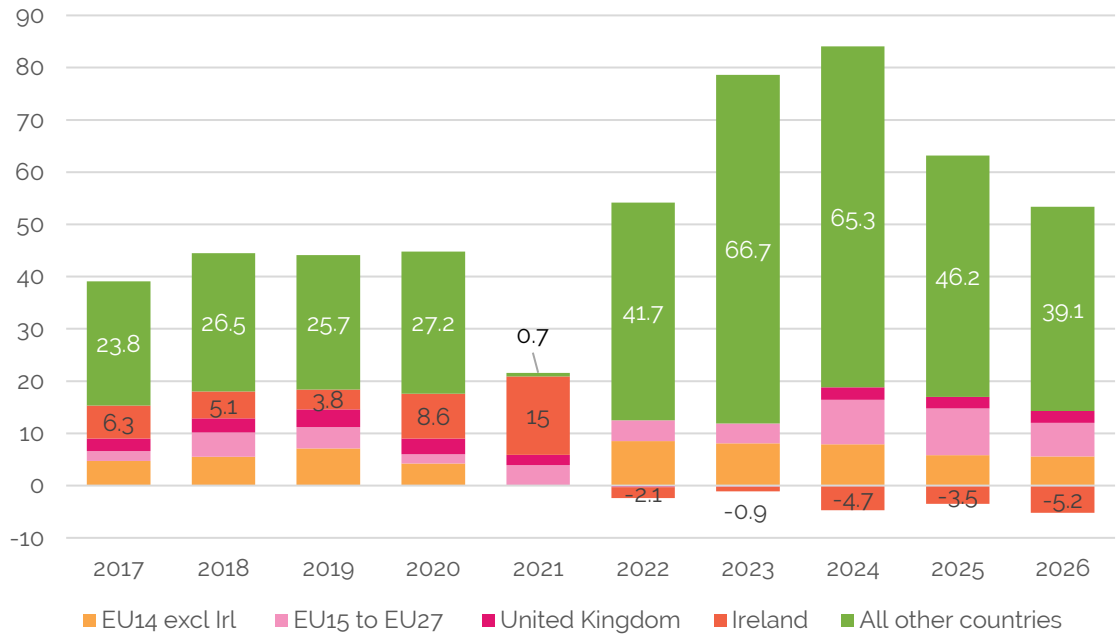


Source: CSO Annual Population Estimates

Net migration by citizenship

Of the estimated 48,100 net migrants to Ireland in 2026, 39,100 were citizens of countries other than the EU or the UK (i.e. the all other countries category illustrated in Figure 2.4), the lowest level seen over the last five years. Citizen of the EU (excluding Ireland) made up a combined total of 12,000, down from 14,800 in 2025. Net migration of Irish citizens was negative, at -5,200 made up of 30,200 returning Irish citizens but 35,400 departing Irish.

Figure 2.4 Net migration (000s) 2017-2026



Source: CSO Annual Population Estimates

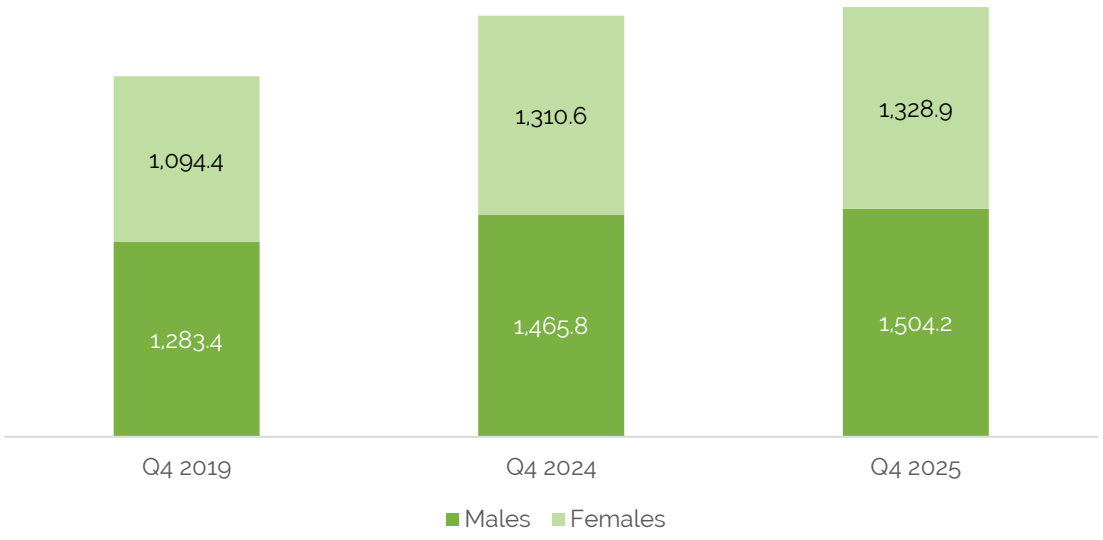
2.3 Employment composition

This section looks at the composition of employment in Ireland in quarter 4 2025, and compares it with the same quarter in 2019 and 2024.

Employment by sex

In quarter 4 2025, males accounted for 53.1% of total employment, making up approximately 1.5 million persons (Figure 2.5). The gender balance in employment has shifted considerably in the six years since quarter 4 2019. Employment grew for both males and females, but the increases observed for females were stronger: between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, there were 234,500 additional females in employment (+21.4%) compared to 220,800 additional males (+17.2%). Nonetheless, between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, employment growth was slower for females than for males, with 18,300 (1.4%) and 38,400 (2.6%) additional workers respectively.

Figure 2.5 Employment by Sex (000s), Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024 & Quarter 4 2025

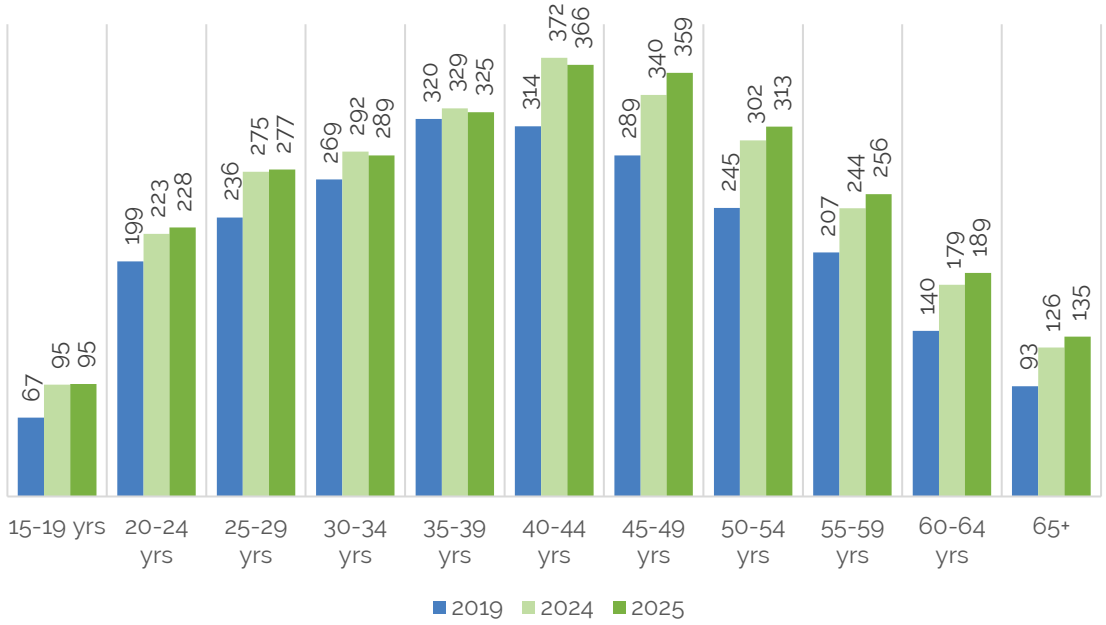


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Employment by age group

Employment in Ireland is concentrated in the prime working age cohort (25-54 years), which accounted for over two thirds (68%) of total employment (nearly 1.93 million persons) in quarter 4 2025 (Figure 2.6). Younger cohorts accounted for a much smaller share, with 15-24-year-olds making up 11% (or 323,200 persons). In contrast, **more than one in five workers in quarter 4 2025 was aged 50 years or older**, accounting for 894,000 persons in employment.

Figure 2.6 Employment by Age Group (000s), Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024 & Quarter 4 2025

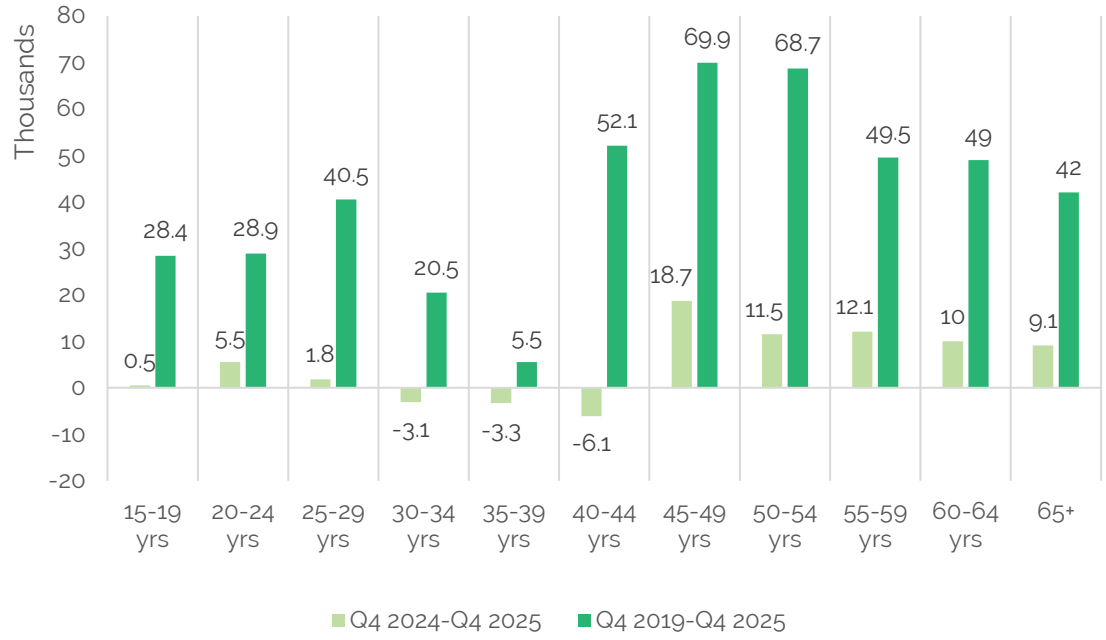


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Ireland's workforce is aging (Figure 2.7). Although employment grew in all age cohorts in the six years to quarter 4 2025, more than two fifths of total employment growth over that period was concentrated in the 40-54-year-old age cohorts, resulting in 190,700 additional workers combined. The number of older workers also increased strongly, with growth of nearly a third (32%, or 140,500 additional persons) in the number of workers aged 55 years or older.

Over the one-year period, quarter 4 2024-quarter 4 2025, employment numbers declined for those aged 30-34 years (-3,100 workers), 35-39 years (-3,300 workers), and 40-44 years (-6,100 workers). Employment rose in all remaining age groups, with **workers aged 55 years and over alone accounting for more than half the total year-on-year growth (+31,200, +6%) in Ireland's workforce).**

Figure 2.7 Employment Change by Age Group, Q4 2024-Q4 2025 & Q4 2019-Q4 2025

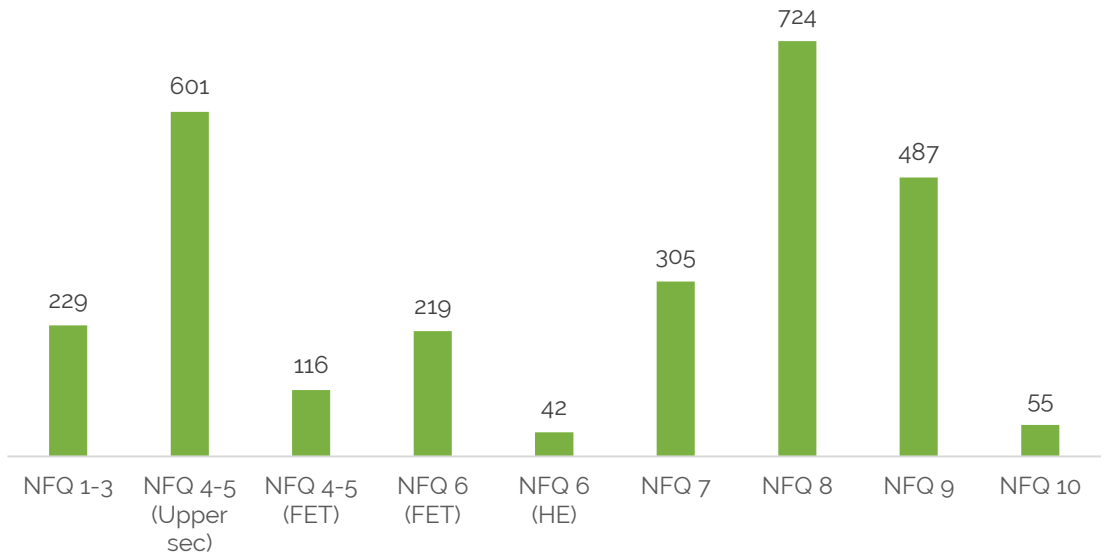


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Employment by education (NFQ) level

Figure 2.8 shows the distribution of employment by National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level. In quarter 4 2025, Level 8 qualification holders, with 724,400 workers, accounted for more than a quarter (26.1%) of all employment (excluding not stated), with postgraduate qualification holders, at levels 9 and 10, making up a further 541,400 workers (just under 20%). Leaving Certificate (or equivalent) holders, which spans NFQ levels 4 and 5, made up the second largest educational attainment group, with 601,300 workers (nearly 22% of the total workforce).

Figure 2.8 Employment by NFQ Education Level (000s)*, Quarter 4 2025

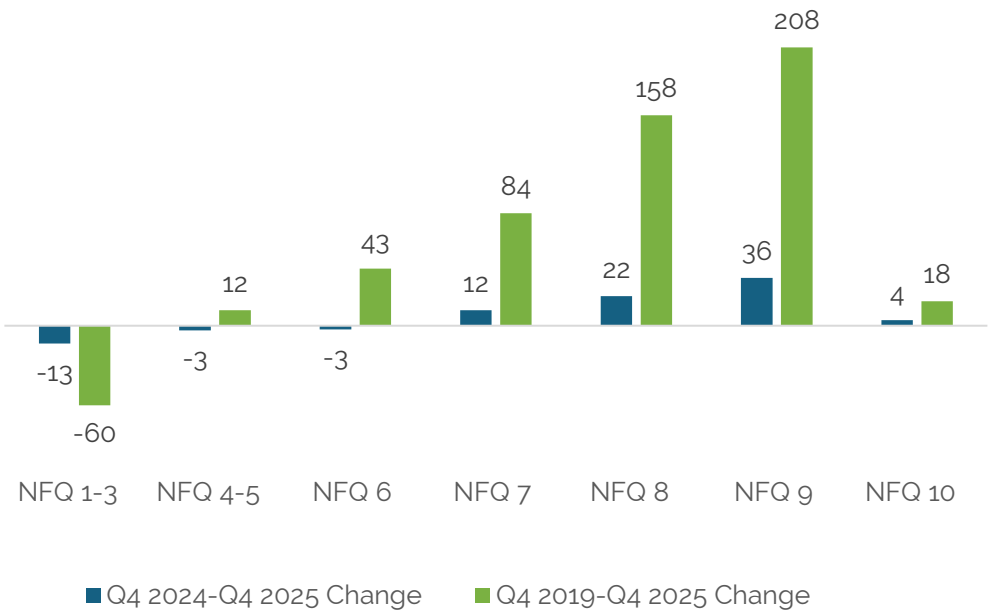


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
*Excludes instances where the NFQ level was not stated.

The education attainment profile of the workforce **continued to shift towards higher levels of the NFQ** in quarter 4 2025 compared to both quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2024 (Figure 2.9). Nearly half of total employment growth that occurred over the six-year period quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025, and nearly three quarters of the growth that occurred in the one-year period quarter 4 2024-quarter 4 2025, was **due to growth in the number of workers with qualifications at levels 9 or 10** (representing 226,800 and 40,200 additional workers respectively).

Over the same period, the number of persons in employment holding at most level 3 qualifications (e.g. Junior Certificate) fell strongly (59,500 fewer workers when compared to quarter 4 2019 and 13,300 fewer workers compared to quarter 4 2024); these declines reflect a fall in the number of people in the overall population at this NFQ level.[22]

Figure 2.9 Employment Change by NFQ Level (000s)*, Q4 2024-Q4 2025 & Q4 2019-Q4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
*Excludes not stated

Employment by type (full-time/part-time)

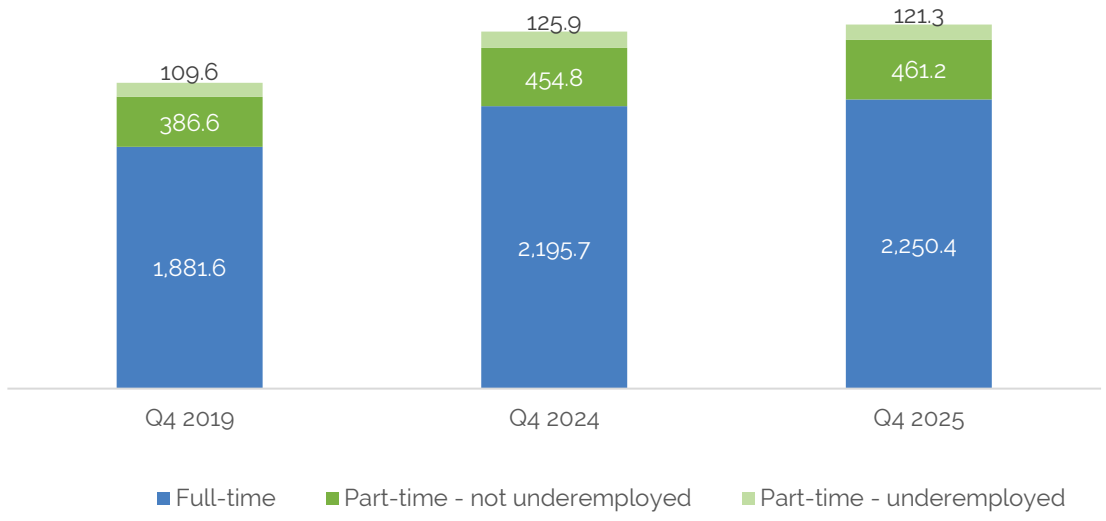
In quarter 4 2025, just over one fifth of total employment was part-time, representing 582,500 persons (Figure 2.10). Most of the growth in employment in Ireland in the year to quarter 4 2025 was due to increases in the number of persons in full-time employment (+54,700 persons), as there was only a slight increase (+1,800 persons (almost all males), or +0.3%) in those working part-time. In contrast, when compared to quarter 4 2019, there were strong increases in both full-time employment (+20%, or 368,800 extra workers) and part-time employment (+17%, or 86,300 extra workers).

At 461,200 persons in quarter 4 2025, most persons (79%) in part-time employment were *not* underemployed. Growth in the total number of part-time employed persons in the year to quarter 4 2025 was driven entirely by increases in the number of persons who were *not* underemployed (+6,400, or 1.4%), as there were declines in the numbers part-time underemployed (-4,600, or -3.7%). When compared to quarter 4 2019, however, there were increases in the numbers of both

[22] Education Profile of Adults in Ireland 2025 (SOLAS 2026).

part-time employment types: the number of persons who were part-time underemployed grew by 11,700 (+11%), although the growth in part-time *not* underemployed was stronger, at 74,600 (+19%).

Figure 2.10 Employment (000s) by Type (Full-time/Part-time), Q4 2019, Q4 2024 & Q4 2025



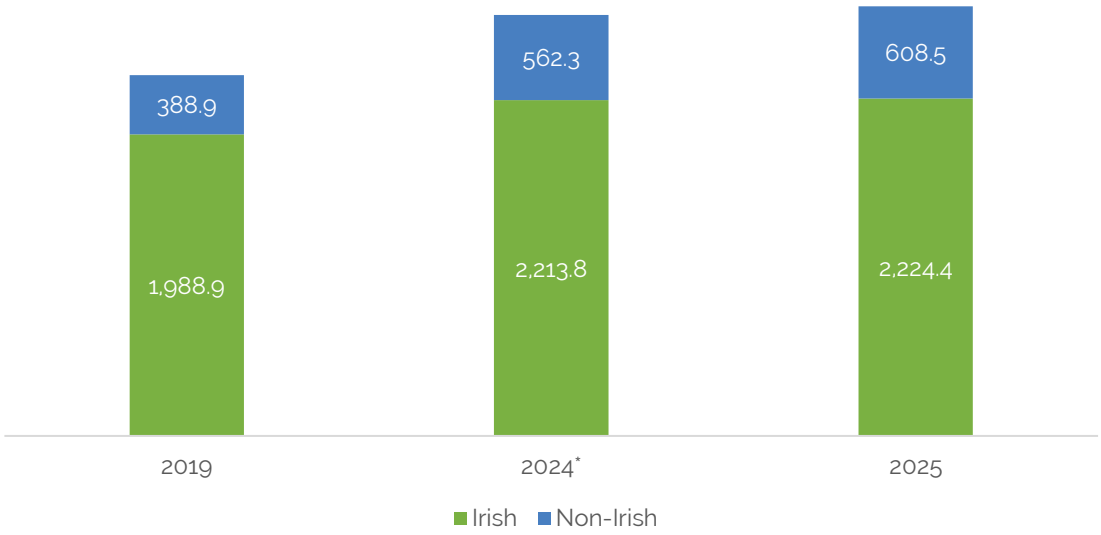
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Employment by citizenship

Of the 2.8 million persons in employment in Ireland in quarter 4 2025, more than 21% (608,500) were non-Irish citizens, up from over 16% in quarter 4 2019 and from 20.3% in quarter 4 2024 (Figure 2.11). Growth in total employment numbers in Ireland in the year to quarter 4 2025 was largely driven by an increase in the number of non-Irish citizens in employment; in absolute terms, **the rise in non-Irish citizens, at 46,200 additional persons (8%) was more than four times that of Irish citizens** (10,600 additional persons in employment, +0.5%). In fact, non-Irish citizens accounted for over four fifths (81%) of employment growth in Ireland between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025.

When compared to quarter 4 2019, the number of non-Irish citizens in employment increased by more than a half (56%, or 219,600 additional workers) while the number of Irish citizens grew by 12% (235,500 additional workers).

Figure 2.11 Employment (000s) by Citizenship, Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024 & Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
*Excludes a small number for whom citizenship was not-stated.

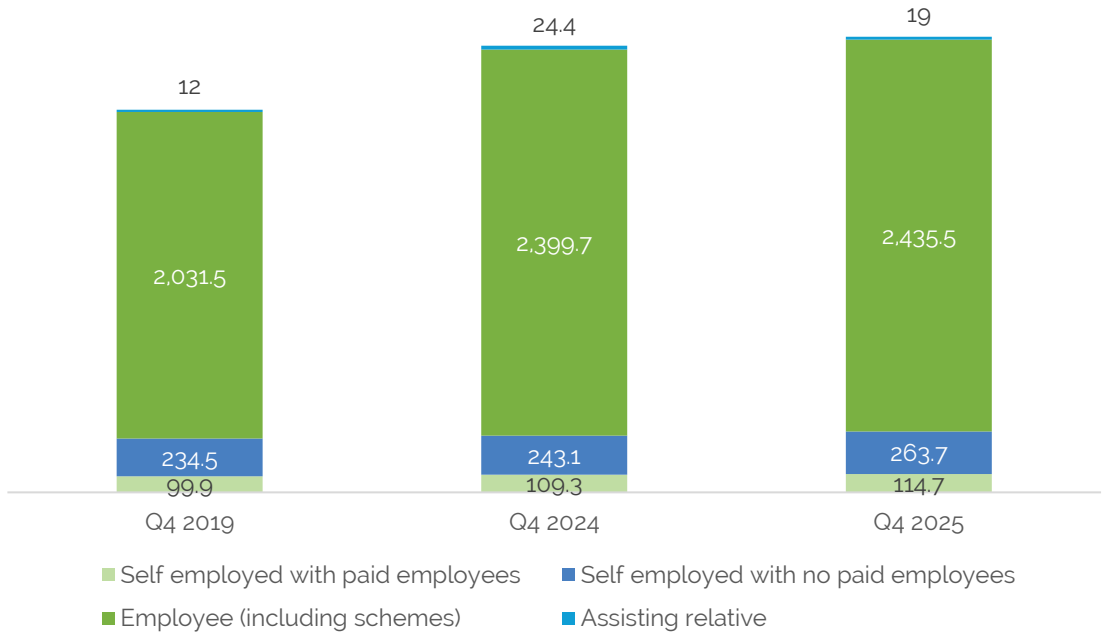
Employment by professional status (employee/self-employed)

More than four fifths (86%) of workers in Ireland (approximately 2.4 million persons in quarter 4 2025) are **employees**, a share that is broadly unchanged when compared to quarter 4 2024 but slightly higher than the 85% observed in quarter 4 2019 (Figure 2.12).

Self-employed workers (with or without paid employees) accounted for over 13% of total employment (slightly more than the 12.7% observed in quarter 4 2024, but slightly less than in quarter 4 2019 when self-employed workers made up 14.1% of total employment). Of 378,400 self-employed in quarter 4 2025, most (70%, or 263,700 persons) had no paid employees, with the remining 30% (114,700) being self-employed *with* paid employees. When compared to quarter 4 2024, approximately one half (46%) of total employment growth in Ireland was due to an increase in the number of self-employed workers.

Those assisting relatives made up the smallest share, at less than 1%. This was the only employment type to decline in the year to quarter 4 2025, although when compared to quarter 4 2019, there were 7,000 extra workers.

Figure 2.12 Employment (000s) by Professional Status, Q4 2019, Q4 2024 & Q4 2025



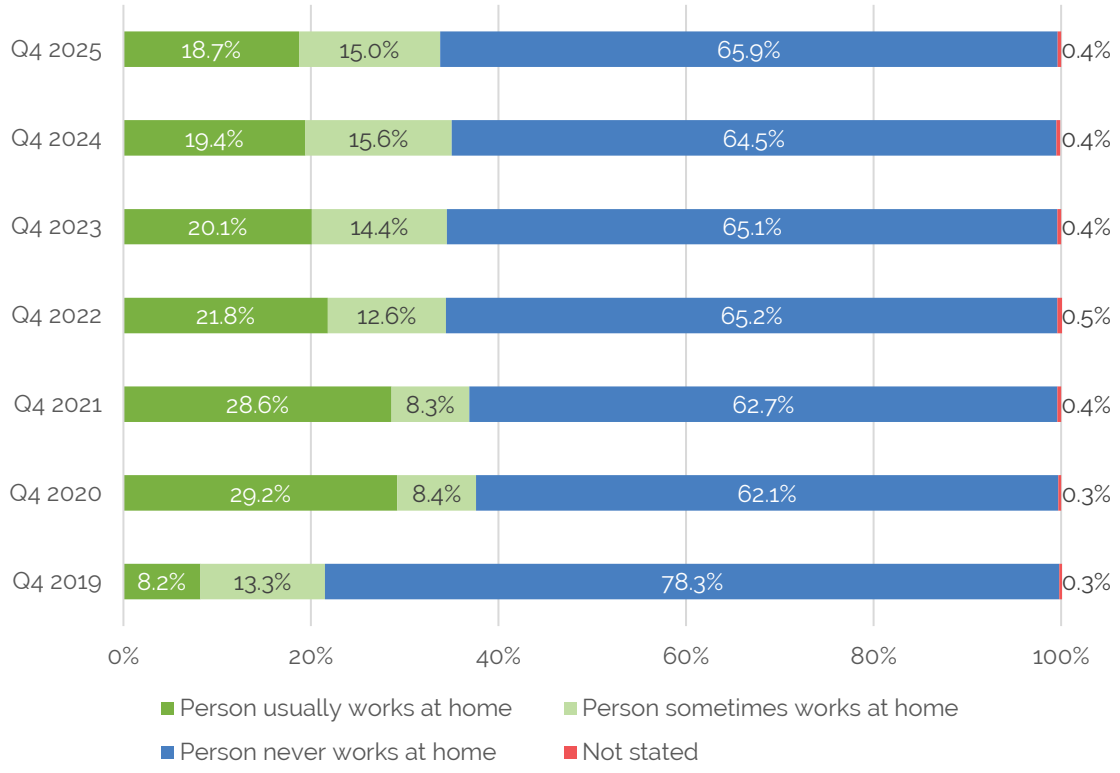
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Employment by working from home status

In quarter 4 2025, nearly one million workers (956,600 persons) worked either usually or sometimes from home, representing one third (33.8%) of total employment (Figure 2.13). This was an increase on the share observed immediately before the pandemic, where 21.5% of total employment worked from home (either usually or sometimes), but a decline on all other intervening years, where the share was between 34.4% (Q4 2022) and 37.6% (Q4 2020). In absolute terms, the number of people working from home (either usually or sometimes) fell in the year to quarter 4 2025, with 16,100 fewer workers (-1.7%), while the number who never worked from home grew, with 74,200 additional workers (+4%).

When compared to quarter 4 2019, there were more than half a million (510,700) additional persons in employment who worked from home (either usually or sometimes), an increase of 87%. Most of this increase was in the number of people who usually worked from home, with 336,000 additional workers, well over double the quarter 4 2019 level (of 194,600 workers). The increase in the numbers sometimes working from home was smaller, with 109,900 extra workers, an increase of a third compared to pre-Covid levels (316,100 in quarter 4 2019). As a result, the number of those usually working from home outnumbered the numbers sometimes working from home in quarter 4 2025, a reversal of the quarter 4 2019 situation.

Figure 2.13 Employed Persons Usually, Sometimes, or Never Working from Home (%), Q4 2019-Q4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

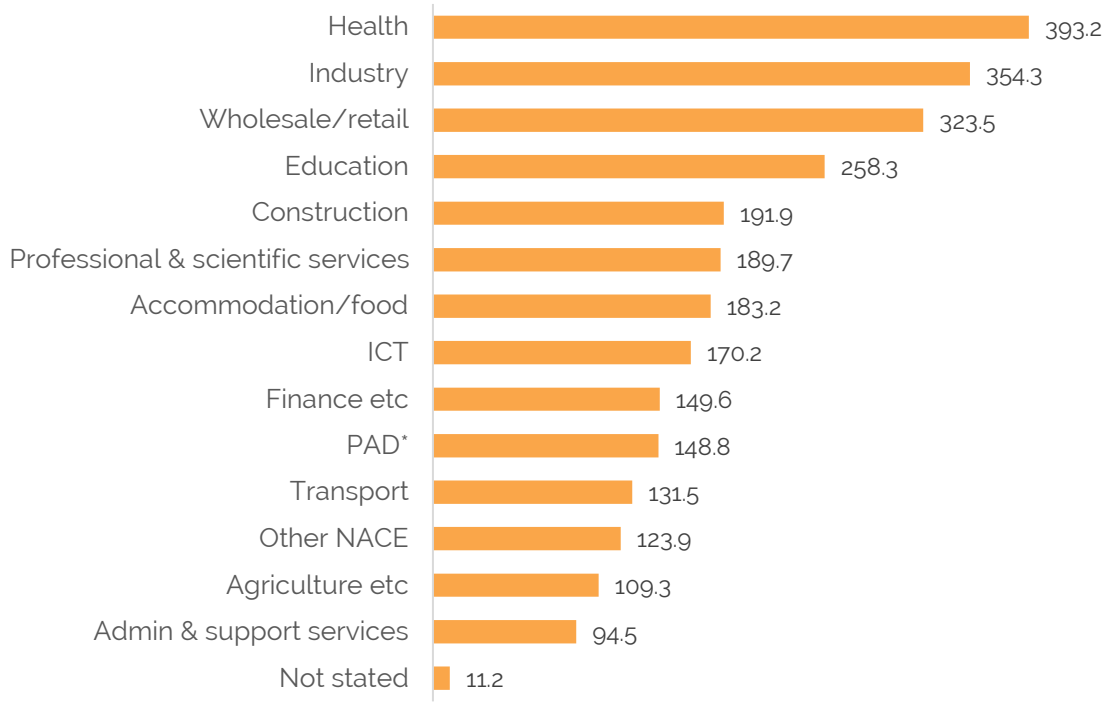
Section 3 Employment by Sector

This section analyses Ireland's workforce at sectoral level, presenting the sectors in which Ireland's 2.83 million persons were employed in quarter 4 2025.[23] The number of persons in employment in Ireland grew by nearly a fifth (19%) in quarter 4 2025 compared to the same quarter in 2019, and despite declines associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, employment has continued to grow since then. Employment growth in the year to quarter 4 2025 was 2.0%, although this varied across sectors as will be shown in this Section.

Section 3.1 Employment by sector

Figure 3.1 presents national employment by broad economic sector (NACE Rev 2). In quarter 4 2025, the top three sectors, in terms of numbers of persons employed were the health, industry, and wholesale/retail sectors. Combined these three sectors made up over 1.07 million people, representing 38% of total employment in Ireland.

Figure 3.1 Employment by Sector (000s), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

Note: Other NACE includes arts, entertainment & recreation, other service activities (e.g. repair of goods), etc.
PAD stands for Public Administration and Defence and includes compulsory social security.

[23] Note: the data reported in this section is based on the original quarter 4 2025 Labour Force Survey release; while this data has been revised since then, the differences are small (less than 500 persons) and do not impact on the analysis. The data relating to employment by citizenship is based on data extracted in July 2026.

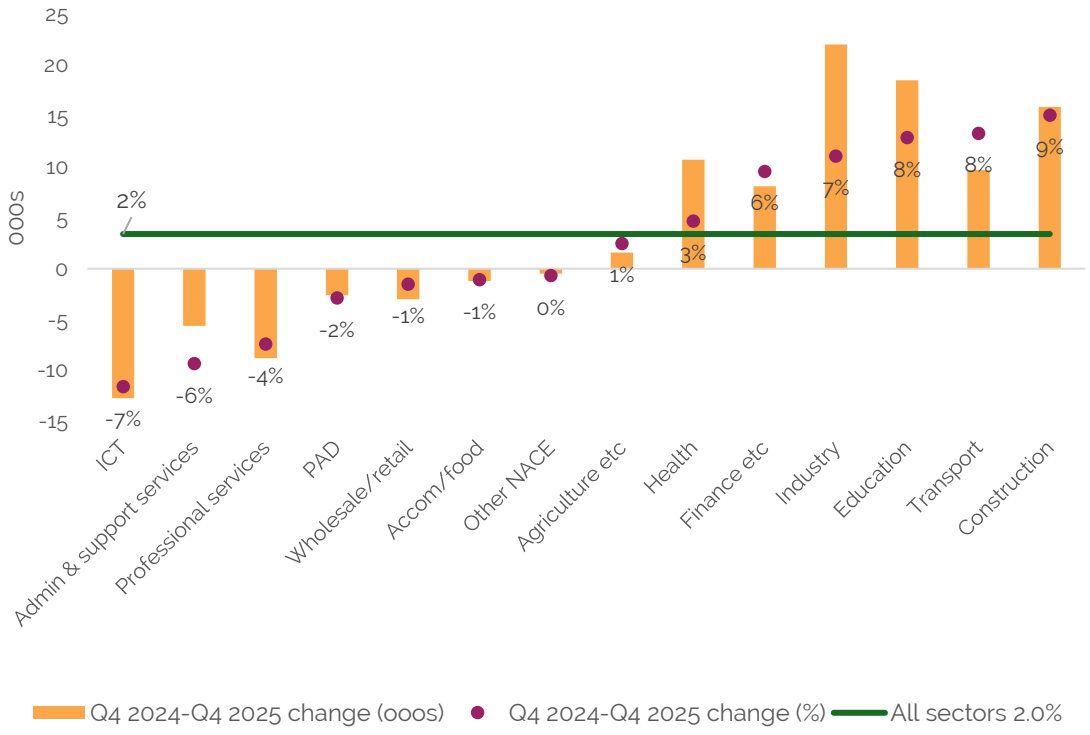
Section 3.2 Employment growth by sector

One-year employment change: quarter 4 2024-quarter 4 2025

Over the period quarter 4 2024-quarter 4 2025, employment grew in seven of the 14 economic sectors (Figure 3.2). The largest relative growth was for the construction sector, at 9% (representing 15,900 additional persons), while the largest absolute growth was for industry (22,000 additional persons), followed by education (18,500 extra workers).

In contrast, in both relative and absolute terms, the ICT sector had the largest year-on-year decline in employment, with a 7% fall (representing 12,700 fewer workers) in the number of persons employed. The decline in the professional services sector, at 4%, resulted in 8,800 fewer workers, and although the decline in admin/support services (e.g. cleaning, security guarding services) was relatively higher (at 6%), it amounted to just 5,600 fewer workers.

Figure 3.2 Employment Change (000s and %), Quarter 4 2024-Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

Excludes instances where the sector of employment was not stated.

Six-year employment change: quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025

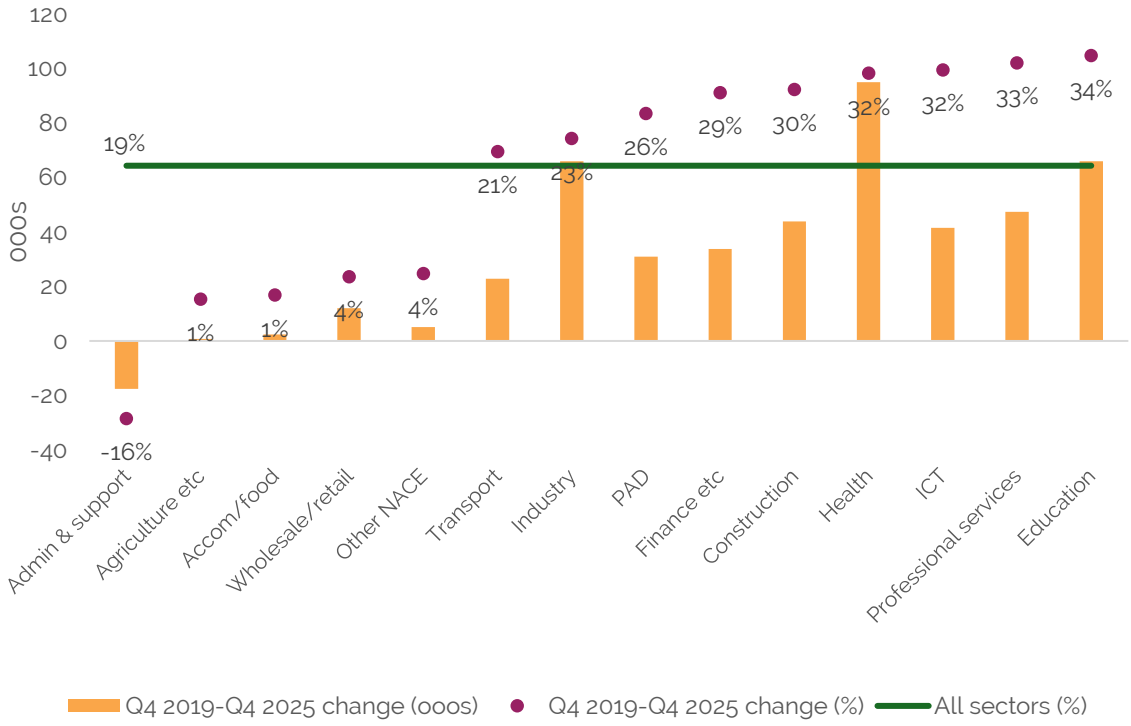
Employment in almost all sectors grew over the period quarter 2019-quarter 4 2025 (Figure 3.3), with the strongest growth, in relative terms, for the education (34.3%), professional services (33.3%), and ICT (32.3%) sectors. In terms of numbers, however, the health sector had by far the largest increase in employment levels over the six-year period, with an additional 95,100 persons employed – more than twice the absolute increase observed in professional services (47,400), ICT (+41,600 persons), or construction (+43,900). The second largest absolute increase was in the education and industry sectors, which each grew by 66,000 additional persons. Combined, sectors which employ mostly public sector/civil service workers (i.e. health, education, and public

administration/defence (PAD)) accounted for more than two fifths (42%) of the 455,300 additional workforce in Ireland over the period quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025.

Employment in agriculture remained almost unchanged over this period, with just 800 additional workers (0.7%), while the administration and support services sector (e.g. cleaning or security guarding services), was the only sector to experience a decline (17,600 fewer workers - a drop of nearly 16%).

It is also worth noting that in addition to the decline in administration and support services, the growth in other sectors most impacted by the economic restrictions associated with COVID 19 (accommodation/food (+1%), wholesale/retail (+4%), and other NACE (e.g. hairdressing, entertainment) (+4%) was well below the national average (19%).

Figure 3.3 Employment Change (000s and %), Quarter 4 2019-Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

Excludes instances where the sector of employment was not stated.

Section 3.3 Employment profile by economic sub-sector

This section provides an overview of the employment composition of each sector in terms of its main segments (including employment change) and workforce profile (share of males, older workers, non-Irish workers, full-time employment, high skilled occupations,[24] and third level qualification holders). Sectoral employment projections for the period 2025-2030, based on a recent SLMRU report,[25] are also included.

[24] High skilled occupations refers to those employed in manager, professional, or associate professional roles.
[25] Occupational Projections for Ireland 2026-2030 (SOLAS)

3.3.1 Agriculture

Figure 3.4 Employment (000s) in Agriculture by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

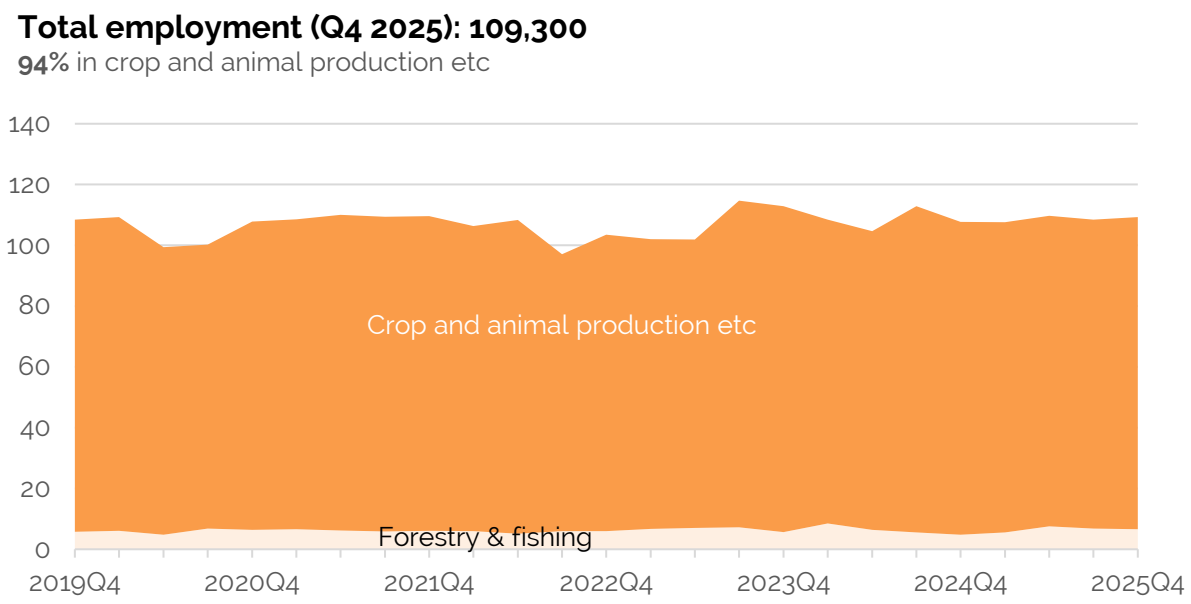


Table 3.1 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Agriculture

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	109,300	1,600	1.5%	800	0.7%
Main segments					
Forestry and fishing	6,600	1,800	37.5%	800	13.8%
Crop and animal production, etc	102,700	-200	-0.2%	No	change

Table 3.2 Employment Profile: Agriculture

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	83.4%	-1.3 pp	-3.3 pp
% Non-Irish	16.6%	1.2 pp	3.4 pp
% Third level	27%	5 pp	11.0 pp
% Full-time	73.3%	-2.6 pp	-9.6 pp
% High skilled occupations	[6.7%]	[-0.7 pp]	[1.8 pp]
% Aged 55 years or more	53.7%	1.8 pp	9.4 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
Numbers in square brackets [ ] are based on small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 3.3 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Agriculture

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	108,800	115,300	1.2%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario	108,800	106,000	-0.5%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Agriculture employment is dominated by segments related to crop and animal production, which accounted for 94% of total sectoral employment in quarter 4 2025. Employment remained broadly unchanged when compared to both quarter 4 2024 (just 200 fewer employed) and quarter 4 2019 (no change). As such, the growth in agriculture overall stems from changes in the forestry and fishing segment, which grew by 1,800 and 800 workers compared to quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2019 respectively.

In quarter 4 2025, employment in this sector

- was **overwhelmingly male** (83.4%), the second largest share of males across all sectors (after construction)
- had the **largest share of workers who were aged 55 years or older** (53.7%) across all economic sectors; furthermore, the agriculture workforce is aging, with the share of older workers having grown 9.4 percentage points compared to quarter 4 2019.
- had **the third smallest share (16.6%) of non-Irish workers**; only the public administration and defence (PAD) and education sectors had smaller shares of non-Irish workers.

Due to the nature of the sector, agriculture had the smallest share of persons engaged in high skilled occupations, with less than [7%] in quarter 4 2025. (75% were engaged in medium skilled occupations, typically as farmers). At the same time, over a quarter of persons employed in agriculture held third level qualifications, resulting in a gap of 20 percentage points - one of the largest qualification-occupation mismatches at this skill level economy-wide.

Employment in agriculture is projected to be between 106,000 and 115,300 by 2030, depending on the scenario, with annual average growth rates of -0.5% and 1.2% respectively. The decline in employment under the baseline scenario is associated with productivity gains stemming from modern farming methods, particularly in the latter part of the forecast period, and the impact of the older age profile of farmers (who will likely exit the workforce) over the forecast period.

Note: numbers in square brackets are based on small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution.

3.3.2 Industry

Figure 3.5 Employment (000s) in Industry by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

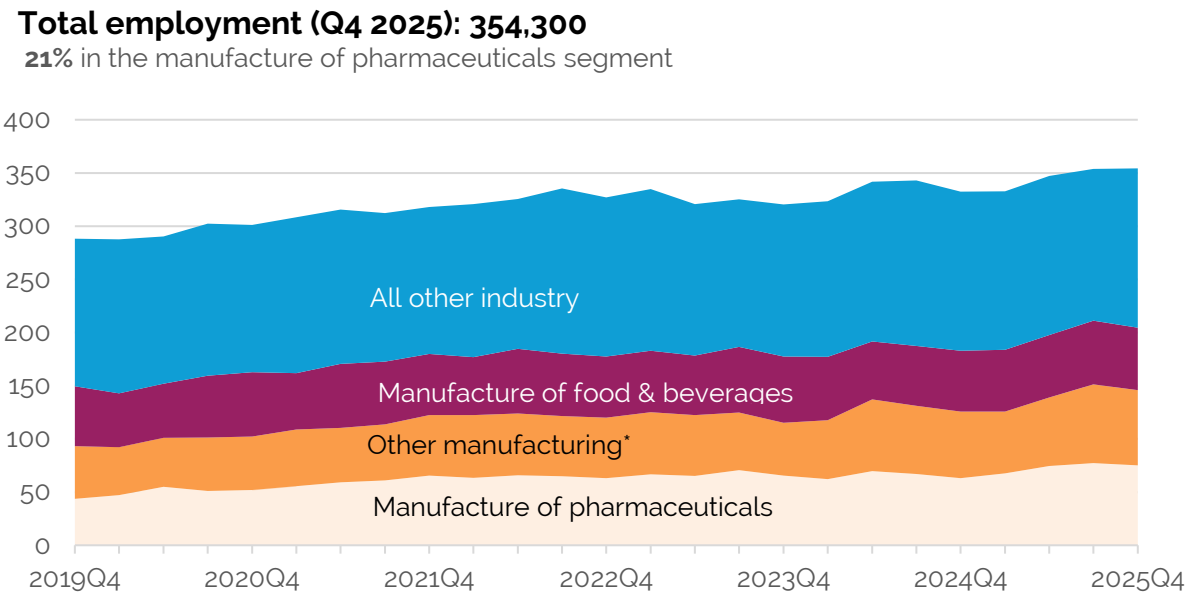


Table 3.4 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Industry

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	354,300	22,000	6.6%	66,000	22.9%
Main segments					
Pharmaceuticals manufacturing	75,200	12,000	19.0%	31,500	72.1%
Other manufacturing*	70,700	8,100	12.9%	21,100	42.5%
Food & beverage manufacturing	58,500	1,400	2.5%	2,300	4.1%

Table 3.5 Employment Profile: Industry

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	68.3%	0.3 pp	-2.8 pp
% Non-Irish	25.3%	2.3 pp	6.5 pp
% Third level	52.6%	-0.7 pp	9.4 pp
% Full-time	93.2%	1.3 pp	-0.2 pp
% High skilled occupations	44.6%	1.2 pp	9.5 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	18.2%	2.1 pp	3.6 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
*The manufacture of medical & dental instruments & supplies is estimated to make up 75% of total employment in the 'Other Manufacturing' segment (Census 2022).

Table 3.6 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Industry

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	347,000	371,600	1.4%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario	347,000	379,300	1.8%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Employment growth in this sector in the year to quarter 4 2025 (+22,000 workers) was driven primarily by **12,000 additional workers in pharmaceuticals** and **8,100 additional workers in other manufacturing (inc medical supplies). A decline in the utilities segment** (8,000 fewer workers, or -18.7%) masks increases in employment in this segment in the latter half of 2024 that were not sustained into 2025. Nonetheless employment in utilities in quarter 4 2025, at 34,700 persons, remains 42% higher than in quarter 4 2019 (10,000 additional workers).

High-tech sectors (pharmaceuticals and computers/electronic devices) accounted for 94,700 workers in quarter 4 2025, up from 85,200 (+11%) and 65,400 (+45%) compared to quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2019 respectively. It is worth noting that high tech manufacturing is a significant feature of employment in Ireland and made up 3.3% of total employment on average annually in 2025, three times the EU average (1.1%), and the highest across all EU countries (Eurostat).

In quarter 4 2025,

- more than **two thirds of** workers in this sector **were male** (68.3%)
- **a quarter were non-Irish**, up from less than a fifth six years earlier in quarter 4 2019
- the vast **majority (over 93%) worked full-time**, the second highest share economy-wide after the ICT sector.
- The share of older workers, at 18.2% was below the national average (20.5%)

Nearly 45% of persons working in industry were in high skilled occupations, and 52.6% held third level qualifications, both above the national average. These shares result in a **qualifications mismatch rate at this skill level** of 8 percentage points (pps)**, slightly below the national average** (9 pps).

The outlook for this sector remains strong, with annual average growth rates for the period 2025-2030 projected to be above average (1.1%), regardless of the scenario: total employment for the industry sector is projected to be between 371,600 and 379,300 by the year 2030.

3.3.3 Construction

Figure 3.6 Employment (000s) in Construction by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

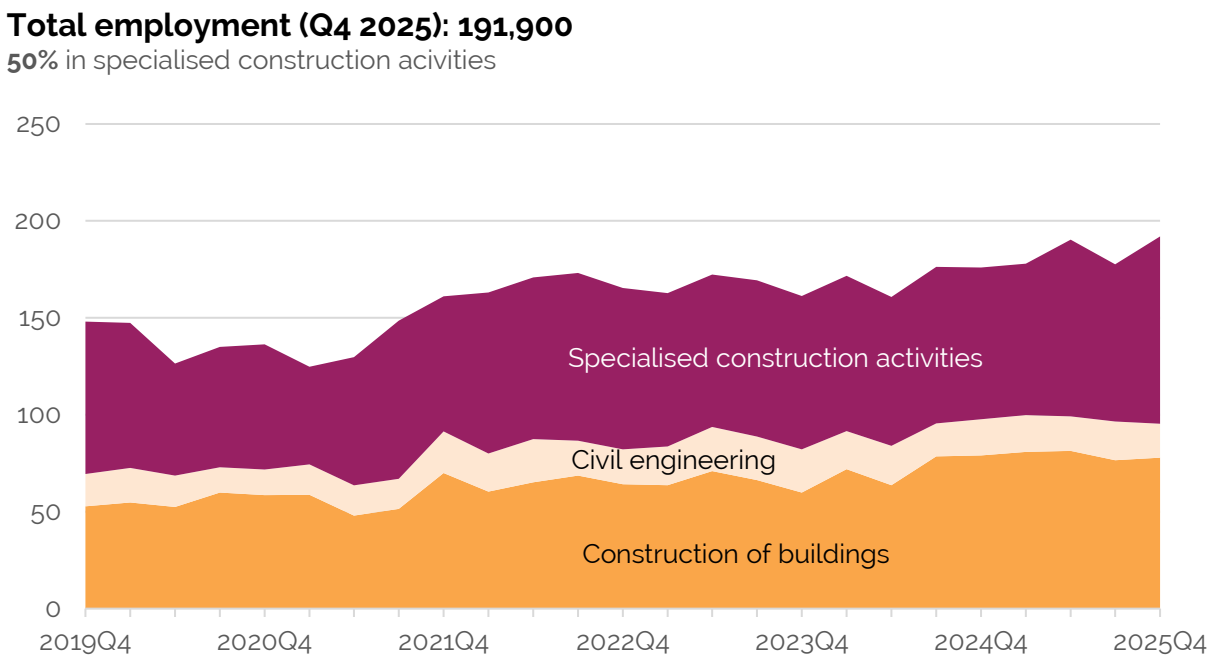


Table 3.7 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Construction

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	191,900	15,900	9.0%	43,900	29.7%
Main segments					
Construction of buildings	77,800	-1,200	-1.5%	25,000	47.4%
Civil engineering	17,500	-1,200	-6.4%	900	5.4%
Specialised const. activities	96,700	18,400	23.5%	18,100	23.0%
Construction type					
New housing dev/renovations	114,800	10,700	10.3%	NA	NA

Table 3.8 Employment Profile: Construction

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	90.2%	+0.4 pp	-1.3 pp
% Non-Irish	20.0%	+2.5 pp	+7.0 pp
% Third level	29.5%	3.2 pp	8.7 pp
% Full-time	90.9%	-1.5 pp	-2.2 pp
% High skilled occupations	24.9%	+5.6 pp	+7.1 pp
% Aged 55 yrs or more	19.2%	No change	2.1 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data (inc PxStat Table QLF 52)

Table 3.9 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Construction

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	184,400	207,900	2.4%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		212,900	2.9%
Construction Scenario		229,800	4.5%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.
Construction Scenario: a 10% increase in modified domestic demand in the construction sector across the forecast period was applied to reflect the possible increased investment likely to be required to address demand relating to housing, infrastructure and climate-related activities.

Analysis & outlook

Approximately one half of total construction sector employment in quarter 4 2025 was in the specialised construction activities segment, up from 44% in quarter 4 2024 but down from 53% in quarter 4 2019. While employment levels grew in each of the three segments over the six-year period quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2026, the increase in total sectoral employment that occurred between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025 was **due entirely to an increase in the numbers employed in specialised construction activities** (+18,400, or 23.5%), as there were declines (1,200 fewer workers each) in the remaining two segments.

In quarter 4 2025**, approximately 114,800 persons were employed mainly on new housing developments/renovations**, up 10% on the year before and 31% compared to quarter 4 2023.[26]

Employment in this sector in quarter 4 2025

- was dominated by **male** workers (90.2%), with the share of females growing by just 1.3 percentage points compared to quarter 4 2019; the share of males in this sector was the highest observed economy-wide
- was **mostly full-time**, at 90.9%, well above the national average (76.3%).

The share of **non-Irish workers**, at 20.0% in quarter 4 2025, was in line with the national average (21.3%), although their share has been growing in recent years (up from 17.5% in quarter 4 2024 and 13.0% in quarter 4 2019.

This sector has seen a considerable **shift in the skills profile of workers** since quarter 4 2019, with a 7.1 pp increase in the share working in high skilled occupations (reaching 24.9% in quarter 4 2025) and an 8.7 pp increase in the share with third level qualifications (reaching 29.5% in quarter 4 2025). Despite this shift, however, these shares are well below the national averages (47.8% and 56.8% for high skilled and third level qualifications, respectively).

Employment growth over the forecast period 2025-2030 is projected to be between 2.4% and 2.9% on average annually, well above the average across all sectors (1.1%). Employment levels are expected to reach between 216,300 and 227,000 persons by 2030. With increased investment in this sector, (Construction scenario), employment levels are projected to grow more strongly, increasing by 4.5% on average annually, to reach 229,800 persons by 2030.

[26] CSO LFS Table QLF 52 (Type of construction employment). Data available for Q4 2023-Q4 2025 only.

3.3.4 Wholesale & retail

Figure 3.7 Employment (000s) in Wholesale & Retail by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

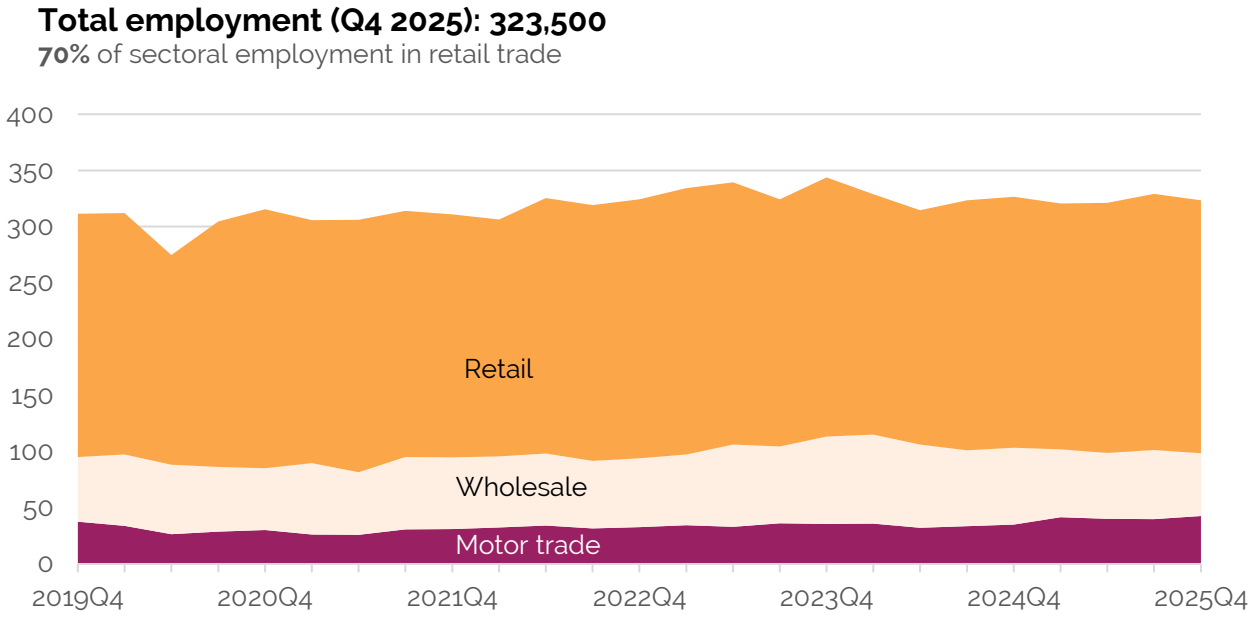


Table 3.10 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Wholesale & Retail

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Absolute	%	6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025 Absolute	%
Total employed	323,500	-3,000	-0.9%	12,000	+3.9%
Main segments					
Motor trades	42,600	7,500	21.4%	4,900	13.0%
Wholesale trade	55,800	-12,400	-18.2%	-1,600	-2.8%
Retail trade	225,100	1,800	-0.9%	8,700	4.0%

Table 3.11 Employment Profile: Wholesale and Retail

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	52.6%	1.5 pp	1.1 pp
% Non-Irish	20.5%	-0.3 pp	4.3 pp
% Third level	33.0%	-0.2 pp	6.4 pp
% Full-time	64.3%	-0.5 pp	-2.3 pp
% High skilled occupations	28.7%	-1.0 pp	2.5 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	18.2%	1.3 pp	2.4 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.12 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Wholesale & Retail

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	323,700	342,800	1.4%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		330,900	0.4%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Nearly three quarters (70%) of total employment in this sector was in the retail segment, and while employment in retail grew slightly in the year to quarter 4 2025, the decline in the wholesale segment was much larger, with 12,500 fewer workers, resulting in an overall decline for the sector.

Part-time employment is a key feature of this sector, making up well over a third (35.7%) of total employment. Despite the decline in overall employment in the sector in the year to quarter 4 2025, part-time employment remained broadly unchanged (400 extra workers); and while overall employment grew (by 12,000 persons) **over the six-year period, quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025, the increase was driven mainly by part-time employment** (11,300 extra part-time workers compared to just 700 extra full-time workers).

Approximately one fifth of employment **was non-Irish**, which is in line with the national average. Over one half (52.6%) of employment was **male**, also in line with the national average (52.8%), making this sector one of the closest to gender-balanced economy-wide (along with professional services (0.2 pp gap), finance (0.9 pp gap), PAD (2.4 pp gap).

The share of employment in **high skilled occupations** shifted over the six-year period, going from 26.2% to 28.7%. The change in the share was larger, however, with third level qualifications growing from 26.5% to 33.0% over the same period. As a result, the mismatch between the share in high skilled occupations and those with third level qualifications has grown from almost zero to more than four percentage points. Nonetheless, despite the increase, this remains one of the smallest gaps across all sectors.

Under the Baseline scenario, employment in the wholesale and retail sector is projected to grow by 1.4% on average annually, slightly above the national average of 1.1%. However, under the Adjusted Productivity scenario, employment growth is expected to be much lower, at 0.4% on average annually. Depending on the scenario, employment in this sector is projected to be between 330,900 (adjusted productivity) and 342,800 (baseline) by the year 2030.

3.3.5 Transport

Figure 3.8 Employment (000s) in Transport by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

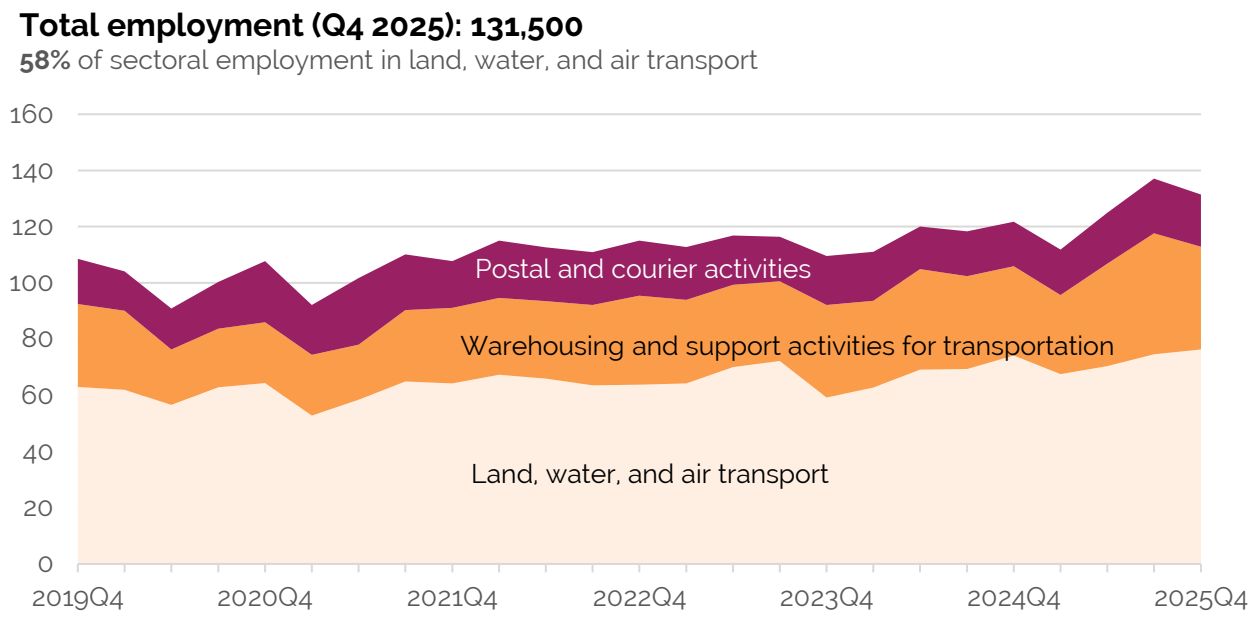


Table 3.13 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Transport

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	131,500	9,700	8.0%	22,900	21.1%
Main segments					
Land, water and air transport	76,300	2,200	3.0%	13,300	21.1%
Warehousing etc	36,600	4,800	15.1%	7,100	24.1%
Postal and courier activities	18,600	2,700	17.0%	2,500	15.5%

Table 3.14 Employment Profile: Transport

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	77.8%	-3.2 pp	-3.6 pp
% Non-Irish	20.8%	1.7 pp	5.9 pp
% Third level	33.6%	1.2 pp	7.6 pp
% Full-time	83.5%	0.3 pp	0.2 pp
% High skilled occupations	18.7%	-3.5 pp	4.4 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	30.1%	1.9 pp	3.6 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.15 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Transport

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	126,300	134,100	1.2%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		133,900	1.2%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Of those employed in transport in quarter 4 2025, more than half (58%) were in land, water & air transport, with a further 28% in warehousing related activities. When compared to both quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2019, there were increases in each of the three segments, with warehousing activities alone accounting for nearly a third of the total increase when compared to quarter 4 2024 and nearly a half of the total increase when compared to quarter 4 2019.

Despite a small shift towards higher shares of females in this sector, males continued to dominate employment, making up well over three quarters of total employment in quarter 4 2025; only the construction and agriculture sectors had higher shares.

At 20.8% in quarter 4 2025, **the share of non-Irish workers is almost in line with the national average (21.5%),** although the share has increased by nearly six percentage points compared to quarter 4 2019.

Workers in this sector tend to **have a lower skills profile** compared to other sectors with just less than a fifth working in high skilled occupations (compared to 48% nationally) and one third holding third level qualifications (compared to 56% nationally). Nonetheless, the 15 percentage point gap between the share in high skilled occupation and third level qualification holders suggests a certain amount of over-qualification in the sector,

Employment projections estimate that employment growth in this sector over the period 2025-2030 will be in line with total employment growth of 1.2% on average annually. Depending on the scenario, employment levels are expected to reach between 133,900 (Adjusted Productivity) and 134,100 (Baseline) persons by 2030.

3.3.6 Accommodation and food services

Figure 3.9 Employment (000s) in Accommodation/Food by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

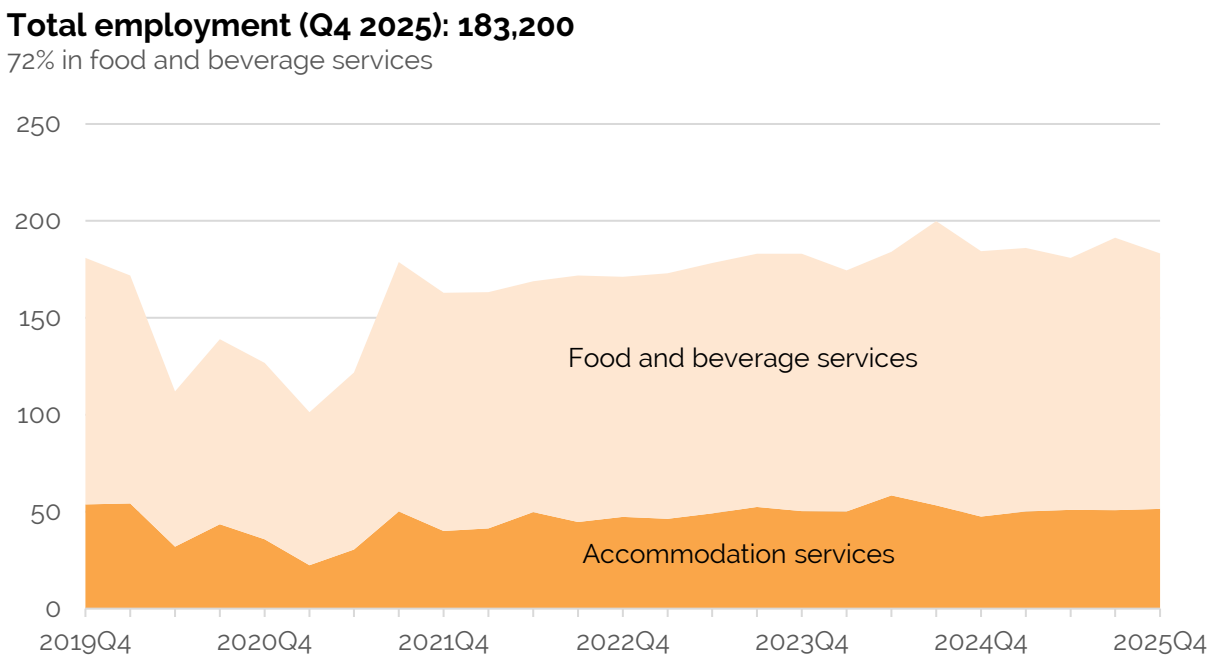


Table 3.16 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Accommodation/Food

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	183,200	-1,200	-0.7%	2,400	1.3%
Main segments					
Accommodation	51,500	4,000	8.4%	-2,300	-4.3%
Food and beverage services	131,700	-5,200	-3.8%	4,600	3.6%

Table 3.17 Employment Profile: Accommodation/Food

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr Q4
% Male	46.2%	-1.7 pp	0.7 pp
% Non-Irish	35.0%	2.3 pp	6.4 pp
% Third level	33.5%	0.8 pp	5.8 pp
% Full-time	57.8%	1.0 pp	-0.2 pp
% High skilled occupations	17.6%	1.2 pp	2.4 pp
% Aged 55 yrs or more	10.0%	-1.6 pp	-0.5 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Table 3.18 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Accommodation & Food

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	185,400	192,900	0.8%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		192,100	0.7%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Although employment levels in this sector overall have exceeded their pre-COVID levels, employment declined slightly in the year to quarter 4 2025. Employment in the food/beverages segment was the driver of the six-year growth, but this segment was also behind the decline in the year to quarter 4 2025.

In quarter 4 2025, this sector had

- the **second lowest share of full-time workers** across all sectors, at 57.8%; only the other NACE sector (e.g. hairdressing, entertainment etc) had a lower share
- one of the **lowest shares of older workers** (10%, about half the rate observed nationally)
- the **highest share of non-Irish workers** economy-wide, at one third (35.0%) of employment, well above the national average of 21.5%.

Although **less than a fifth (17.6%) were in high skilled occupations**, nearly twice that share (33.5%) held third level qualifications, resulting in the third largest qualifications gap at this skills level across all sectors (15.9 pp).

At just 0.8% or 0.7% (depending on the scenario) on average annually, employment growth for this sector is projected to be lower than average (1.1% on average annually) for the period 2025-2030. Employment levels are expected to be between 192,100 and 192,900 by the year 2030.

3.3.7 ICT

Figure 3.10 Employment (000s) in ICT by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

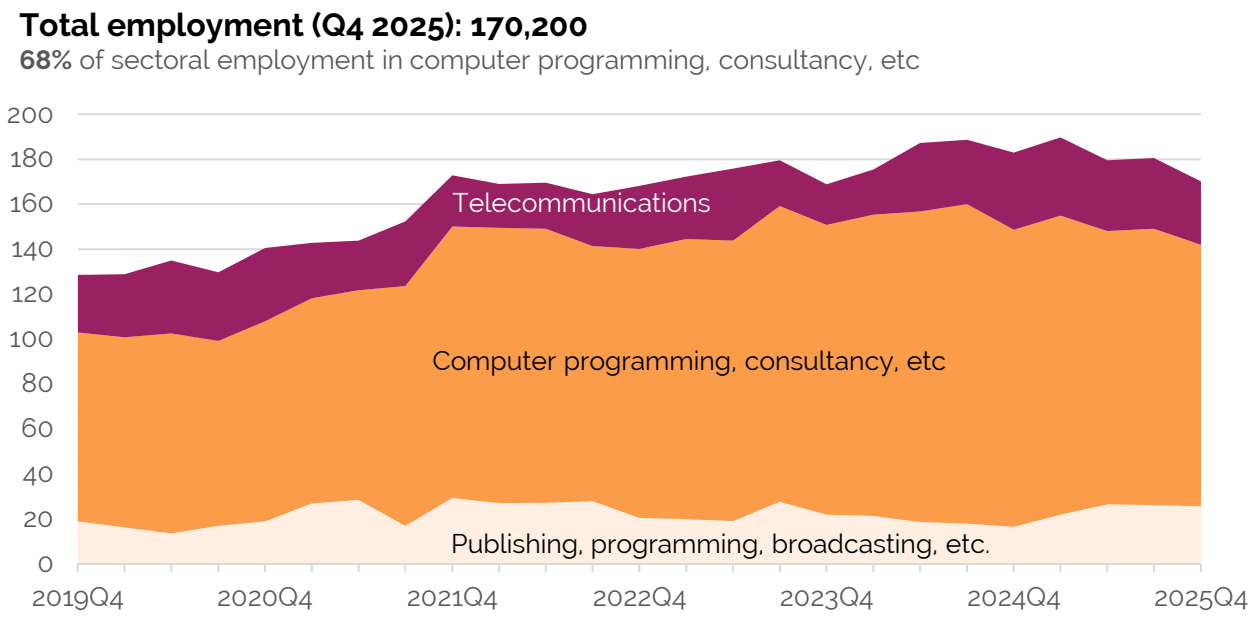


Table 3.19 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: ICT

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	170,200	-12,700	-6.9%	41,600	32.4%
Main segments					
Publishing, programming, etc	25,600	9,100	55.2%	6,600	34.7%
Computer programming etc	116,300	-15,800	-12.0%	32,400	38.6%
Telecommunications etc	28,300	-6,000	-17.5%	2,600	10.1%

Table 3.20 Employment Profile: ICT

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	70.2%	4.9 pp	0.2 pp
% Non-Irish	34.6%	-0.2 pp	1.4 pp
% Third level	84.3%	-0.2 pp	2.3 pp
% Full-time	94.1%	0.8 pp	-0.1 pp
% High skilled occupations	88.7%	5.0 pp	8.6 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	11.8%	-0.7 pp	3.0 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.21 Employment Projections (2025-2030): ICT

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	180,000	192,800	1.4%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		194,200	1.5%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

In absolute numbers, **the ICT sector had the largest fall in employment across all economic sectors** in the year to quarter 4 2025, with 12,700 fewer workers, **due entirely to a drop in the number of females** (-12,700, while the number of males employed in the sector remained unchanged).

Despite strong employment growth for both the computer programming and telecommunications segments over the six-year period quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025, employment levels declined strongly for these segments (by 12% and 17%) in the year to quarter 4 2025; these declines were not enough to offset the 55% increase in the publishing segment over the same one-year period.

In quarter 4 2025, this sector had

- one of the **youngest workforces** economy-wide, with just 11.8% being aged 55 years or over in quarter 4 2025, although this share has grown from nearly 9% in quarter 4 2019
- the **second largest share of non-Irish** workers, at 34.6%; only accommodation and food had a higher share at 35.0%; of the total decline (12,700 persons) in employment in the year to quarter 4 2025, 4,700 were non-Irish citizens
- the **largest share of full-time workers** of any sector, at 94.1%
- amongst the **most highly skilled** (nearly 89% were in high skilled occupations) and **highly educated** (84.3% held third level qualifications) workers across most sectors; this was the only sector where the share of high skilled workers was greater than the share of workers holding third level qualifications.

Employment projections for the ICT sector anticipate stronger than average growth, regardless of the scenario. Employment is expected to grow by between 1.4% and 1.5% on average annually over the period 2025-2030, which is higher than the average across all sectors of 1.1%. By 2030, employment levels in the ICT sector are projected to reach between 192,800 (Baseline scenario) and 194,200 (Adjusted Productivity scenario) persons.

3.3.8 Finance

Figure 3.11 Employment (000s) in Finance by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

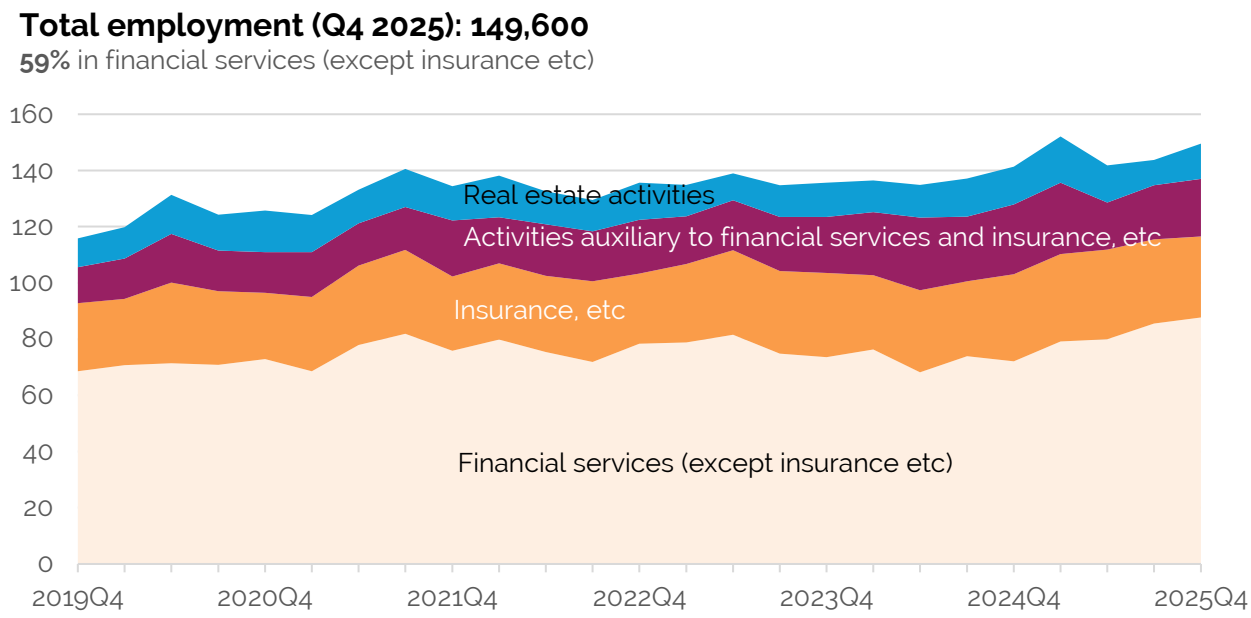


Table 3.22 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Finance

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Absolute	%	6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025 Absolute	%
Total employed	149,600	8,100	5.7%	33,800	29.2%
Main segments					
Financial services, exc insurance	87,700	15,600	21.6%	19,100	27.8%
Insurance	28,800	-2,200	-7.1%	4,600	19.0%
Auxiliary financial/insurance activities	20,500	-4,300	-17.3%	7,700	60.2%
Real estate activities	12,600	-900	-6.7%	2,400	23.5%

Table 3.23 Employment Profile: Finance

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	50.9%	1.1 pp	No change
% Non-Irish	19.3%	0.7 pp	6.9 pp
% Third level	85.3%	3.2 pp	11.0 pp
% Full-time	91.8%	-0.2 pp	1.9 pp
% High skilled occupations	75.5%	7.3 pp	12.1 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	15.8%	-0.1 pp	4.4 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.24 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Finance

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	146,800	156,700	1.3%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		156,000	1.2%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

The financial services segment (e.g. banking) was **the only segment in this sector to experience employment growth in the year to quarter 4 2025**, with 15,600 extra workers, although the decline in real estate activities was small, with just 900 fewer workers. When compared to quarter 4 2019, however, there were increases in all segments.

In quarter 4 2025,

- employment in this sector was **almost gender balanced**, with 50.9% of total employment being male, broadly similar to earlier years
- **most** workers were engaged **full-time,** at 91.8%
- this sector had a slightly lower-than-average share of **non-Irish workers**, at 19.3%
- the **share of older workers (aged 55 years and above) was the third lowest** across all sectors, at 15.8%, compared to 20.5% on average nationally.
- the share with **third level qualifications**, at 85.3%, was higher than that observed in any other sector, and well above the national average of (56.8%).

This sector has also undergone **one of the largest shifts towards employment in high skilled occupations,** with the share employed in managerial, professional or associate professional roles growing by 12.1 percentage points (39,600 extra workers) in the six years since quarter 4 2019 to reach nearly 76%. The number of medium skilled workers (e.g. administrative or sales occupations), in contrast, fell by 12% over the same six-year period. Nonetheless, the 10 percentage-point gap between the shares of third level qualification holders and those engaged in high skilled occupation in this sector suggests there remains a certain amount of skills under-utilisation.

The annual average growth rate for the finance sector is projected to be slightly above average (1.1%), with growth of 1.3% or 1.2% per annum under the Baseline and Adjusted Productivity scenarios respectively over the period 2025-2030. Employment levels are expected to increase to between 156,000 (Baseline) and 156,700 (Adjusted Productivity) persons by the year 2030.

3.3.9 Professional, scientific & technical activities

Figure 3.12 Employment (000s) in Professional Services Activities etc by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

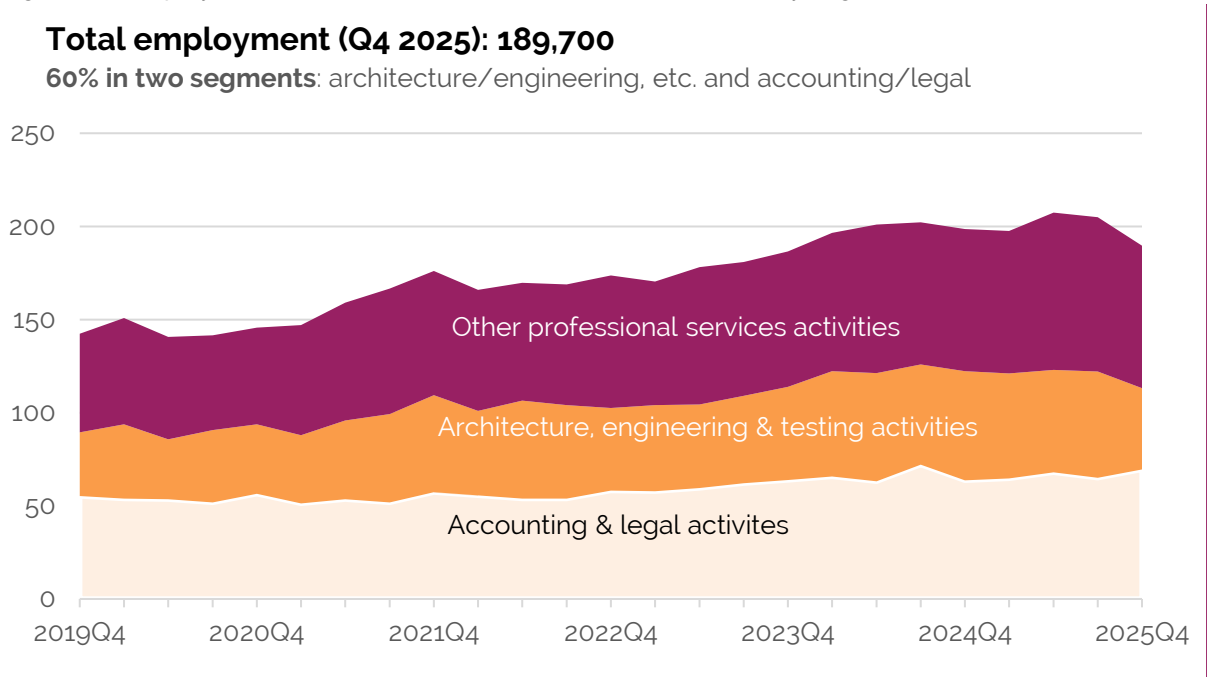


Table 3.25 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Professional Services Activities

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Absolute	%	6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025 Absolute	%
Total employed	189,800	-8,800	-4%	47,400	+33%
Main segments					
Legal & accounting	69,500	5,900	9.3%	14,200	25.7%
Architectural & engineering etc	43,700	-15,000	-25.6%	9,500	27.8%
Other (including vet, R&D)	61,600	700	1.2%	22,700	58.4%

Table 3.26 Employment Profile: Professional Services Activities

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	49.8%	-3 pp	-3.7 pp
% Non-Irish	18.2%	-2.9 pp	1.7 pp
% Third level	84.9%	3.5 pp	6.4 pp
% Full-time	85.0%	-1.4 pp	-1.8 pp
% High skilled occupations	82.7%	7.0 pp	8.2 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	20.1%	2.1 pp	4.7 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO LFS data

Table 3.27 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Professional Services Activities

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	199,000	215,600	1.5%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		212,300	1.2%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

The 4% fall in employment between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025 was due mostly to **a decline in architectural/engineering etc activities** (15,000 fewer workers); employment in other segments of this sector either grew or remained broadly unchanged.

Workers in this sector are **increasingly highly skilled**: despite the overall decline in employment in this sector in the year to quarter 4 2025, the number of persons working in **high skilled roles grew by 6,600** (4.2%); at the same time there was a decline of 13,000 persons in medium skilled occupations (e.g. administrative, sales, or skilled trades occupations). As a result, there was a shift in the share of high skilled occupations in total sectoral employment to 82.7%, up from 75.7% in quarter 4 2024.

Persons employed in this sector are also **amongst the most highly qualified nationally**, with well over four fifths (84.9%) holding third level qualifications, the second largest share after the finance sector.

Employment in the sector was evenly distributed between males and females in Q4 2025; this marks a shift compared to earlier years, and was largely related to a **10% (10,400 fewer workers) decline in the number of males** employed in the year to quarter 4 2025; female employment actually grew slightly, by 1,600 persons, over the same period.

Employment projections estimate that employment will grow by between 1.2% (Adjusted Productivity scenario) and 1.5% (Baseline scenario) per annum between 2025 and 2030, with employment levels expected to reach between 212,300 and 215,600 persons by 2030 under the Adjusted Productivity and Baseline scenarios respectively.

3.3.10 Administration and support services

Figure 3.13 Employment (000s) in Administration & Support Services by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

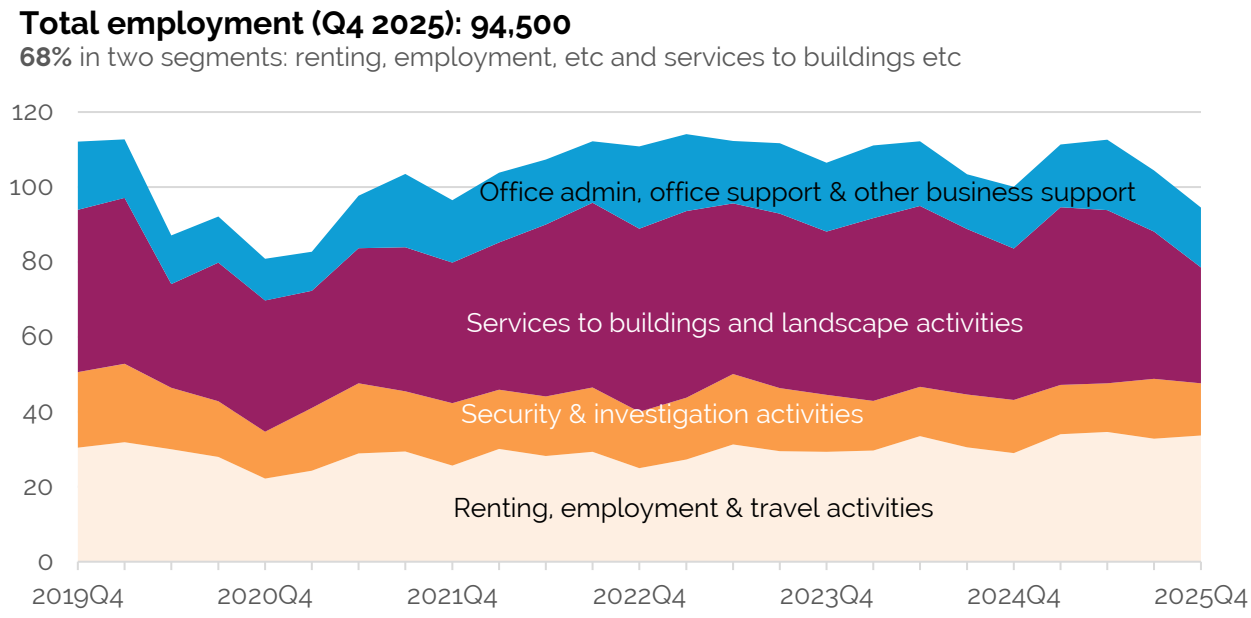


Table 3.28 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Administration & Support Services

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	94,500	-5,600	-5.6%	-17,600	-15.7%
Main segments					
Renting, employment and travel	33,700	4,700	16.2%	3,300	10.9%
Security and investigation activities	13,900	-300	-2.1%	-6,300	-31.2%
Services to buildings & landscape	30,900	-9,500	-23.5%	-12,400	-28.6%
Office admin/support, etc.	16,000	-500	-3.0%	-2,200	-12.1%

Table 3.29 Employment Profile: Administration & Support Services

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	55.0%	-4.1 pp	-4.7 pp
% Non-Irish	24.9%	-1.7 pp	-0.6 pp
% Third level	45.4%	0.8 pp	5.8 pp
% Full-time	71.7%	1.7 pp	-0.5 pp
% High skilled occupations	30.7%	1.6 pp	10.1 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	22.8%	0.5 pp	1.6 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.30 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Administration & Support Services

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	105,700	113,100	1.40%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		109,100	0.60%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

This was the only sector for which employment declined in quarter 4 2025 compared to pre-Covid levels in quarter 4 2019. Most of the decline in this sector was due to a fall in employment in the services to buildings segment (e.g. cleaning or security guarding services).

The decline in the year to quarter 4 2025 was driven primarily by falls in the 25-54-age cohort, although the number of older workers also fell slightly (-800 people); in contrast, there was an increase in the number of younger workers, although these numbers are based on a small sample size and should be interpreted with caution (+2,900 workers aged 15-24 years).

The share of workers employed **full-time**, at 71.7%, was below the national average of 76.3%, and one of the smallest economy-wide (after the wholesale/retail, accommodation/food, and other NACE activities sectors).

This sector also had **one of the lowest skills profiles across all sectors**, with just 30% working in high skilled occupations. Nonetheless, nearly one half (45%) held third level qualifications; the gap between those in high skilled occupations and those with third level, at 14.7 percentage points, was amongst the widest economy wide and points to issues with qualifications mismatch amongst the admin/support sector workforce.

Nonetheless, despite the decline in overall employment levels in this sector in the six years since quarter 4 2019, **the number of high skilled and highly qualified workers actually grew** (by 5,900 and 5,400 persons respectively).

Under the Baseline scenario, employment growth for this sector is projected to be 1.4% on average annually, slightly above the national average (1.1% on average annually), with employment expected to reach 113,100 persons by 2030. However, growth is expected to be below average under the Adjusted Productivity scenario, at 0.6% on average annually, reaching just 109,100 persons employed by 2030.

3.3.11 Other NACE activities

Figure 3.14 Employment (000s) in Other NACE Acvitivies by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

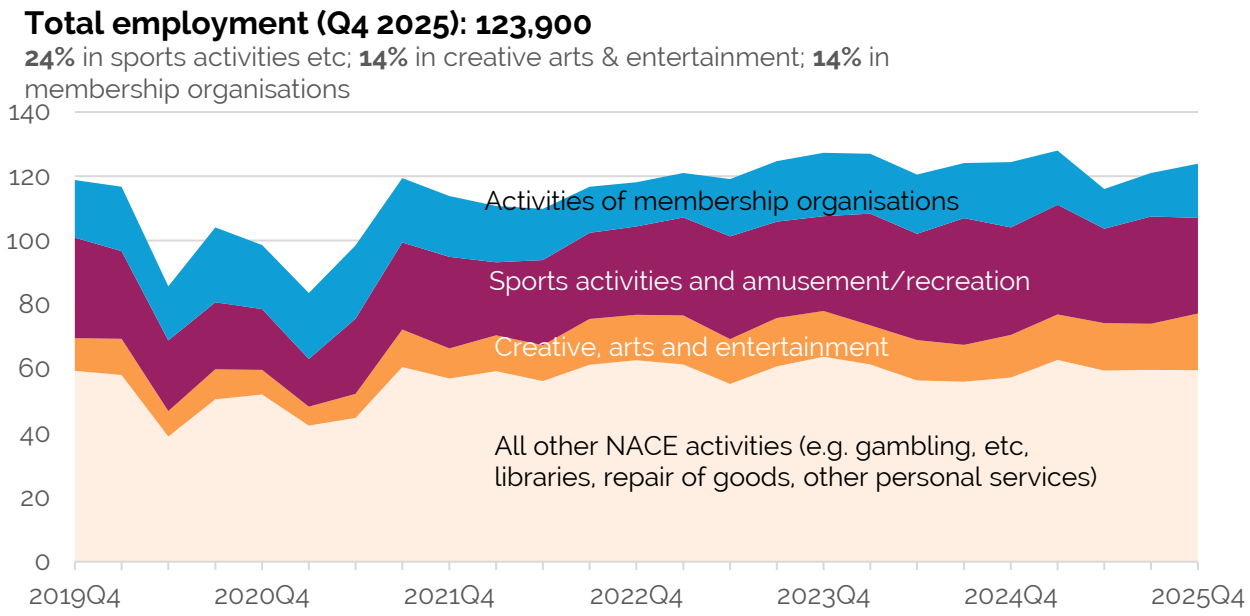


Table 3.31 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Other NACE Activites

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	123,900	-500	-0.4%	5,100	4.3%
Main segments					
All other NACE activities	59,600	2,300	4.0%	200	0.3%
Creative, arts & entertainment	17,700	4,400	33.1%	7,500	73.5%
Sports, amusement & recreation	29,800	-3,700	-11.0%	-1,500	-4.8%
Activities of membership organisations	16,800	-3,500	-17.2%	-1,100	-6.1%

Table 3.32 Employment Profile: Other NACE Activites

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	43.3%	-2.9 pp	2.0 pp
% Non-Irish	18.1%	-0.5 pp	2.9 pp
% Third level	47.0%	1.9 pp	9.0 pp
% Full-time	57.0%	-1.1 pp	-4.9 pp
% High skilled occupations	42.6%	1.3 pp	7.7 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	21.1%	-0.3 pp	No change

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.33 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Other NACE Activities[27]

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	122,200	127,300	0.8%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		127,600	0.9%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Although employment remained almost unchanged in the year to quarter 4 2025, it was 4.3% higher than in quarter 4 2019, driven almost entirely by an increase in the numbers working in the creative, arts & entertainment activities segment.

In quarter 4 2025, this sector had

- one of the lowest shares of **males** employed, at 43.3% - only education and health had lower shares.
- the lowest share of persons engaged **full-time**, at 57.0%; when compared to both quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2024, the share of full-time workers declined slightly; in fact the increases in overall employment levels for this sector were **driven entirely by increases in part-time employment** of 8,000 extra workers compared to quarter 4 2019 and 1,300 extra workers when compared to quarter 4 2024.
- a below average share of non-Irish workers (18.1% compared to 21.5%); nonetheless, when compared to quarter 4 2019, non-Irish workers accounted for well over four fifths (4,400 extra people) of the total employment growth in the sector over the six-year period.
- a share of older workers at 21.1% that was almost in line with the national average (20.5%).

The gap between the share working in high skilled occupations (42.6%) and those with third level qualifications (47.0%) was amongst the smallest across all sectors, at just over 4 percentage points, well below the national average of 9 percentage points.

Employment growth for this sector is projected to be weaker than the average across all sectors, regardless of the scenario considered. Under the Baseline scenario, employment is expected to reach 127,300 persons by 2030 (with an annual average growth rate of 0.8%, compared to 1.1% for the total national workforce) The increases under the Adjusted Productivity scenario are expected to be similar, reaching 127,600 persons by 2030, with an annual average growth rate of 0.9%.

[27] In the Occupational Projections report, this sector is termed Arts, entertainment and other services, but refers to the same segments (NACE R to U) examined in this chapter under 'other NACE activities'

3.3.12 Health & social work

Figure 3.15 Employment (000s) in Health and Social Work by Segment, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

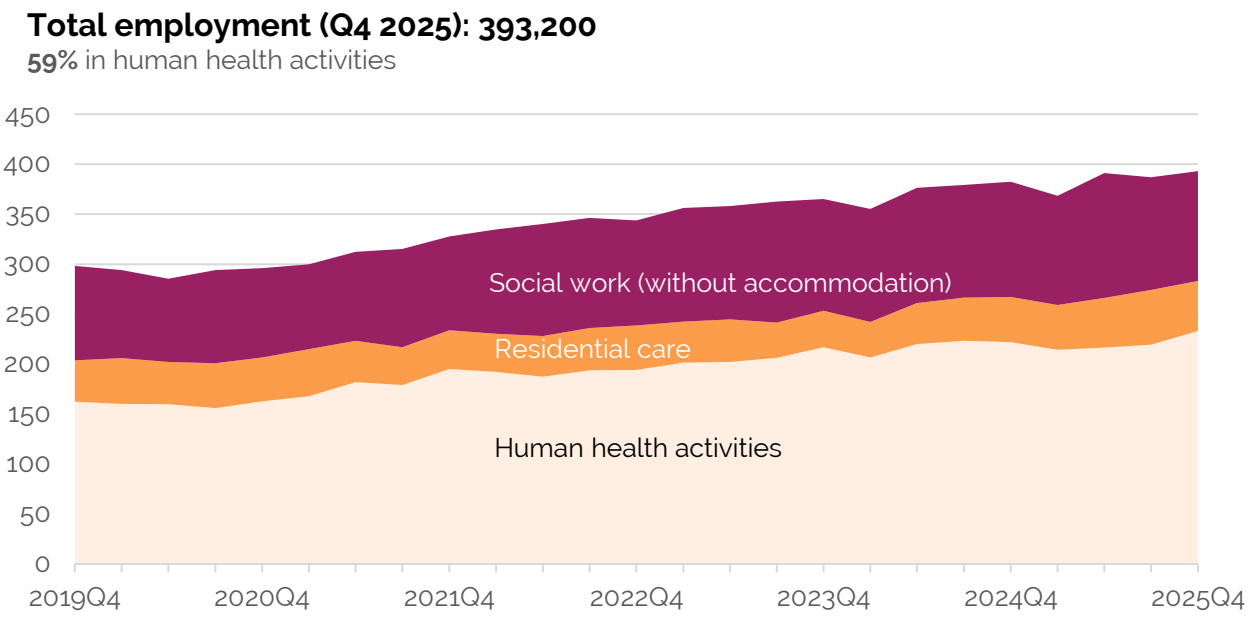


Table 3.34 Employment & Employment Change by Main Segments: Health and Social Work

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed	393,200	10,700	2.8%	95,100	31.9%
Main segments					
Human health activities	233,300	11,200	5.0%	71,000	43.8%
Residential care activities	49,800	4,600	10.2%	8,500	20.6%
Social work activities	110,000	-5,300	-4.6%	15,500	16.4%

Table 3.35 Employment Profile: Health & Social Work

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	24.1%	0.7 pp	2.8 pp
% Non-Irish	25.8%	4.8 pp	11.7 pp
% Third level	68.6%	0.9 pp	6.7 pp
% Full-time	74.7%	-0.2 pp	-2.5 pp
% High skilled occupations	54.0%	2.2 pp	3.3 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	21.9%	1.7 pp	0.6 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.36 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Health & Social Work

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	384,900	400,000	0.8%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		407,500	1.1%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Employment growth in this sector overall masks a decline of 5,300 persons (-4.6%) in the number of persons in the social work segment in the year to quarter 4 2025; at the same time employment grew strongly in the remaining two segments. When compared to quarter 4 2019, employment levels grew in each of the three segments, with the strongest growth (71,000 extra persons) in the health sector.

In quarter 4 2025, the health & social work sector

- had the **lowest share of males** employed across any sector: employment in this sector is dominated by females, with males accounting for 24.1% in quarter 4 2025.
- had one of the largest shares of **non-Irish workers**, at 25.8% (only the accommodation/food and ICT sectors had higher shares), well above the national average of 21.5%).

The number of persons working in **high skilled roles** has grown strongly since quarter 4 2019 (+40%, or 61,200 extra people) and quarter 4 2024 (+9%, or 14,300 additional workers); in fact, all of the growth in the year to quarter 4 2025 was due to increases in the numbers in high skilled roles, as those in medium and lower skilled occupations fell slightly.

At 14.7 percentage points (pp), the gap between the share of employment in high skilled roles (54%) and the share with third level qualifications (68.6%) was higher than average (9.0 pp).

Employment projections estimate growth either slightly below the national average (0.8% on average annually) or at the national average (1.1% on average annually) over the period 2025-2030, with employment expected to reach between 400,000 (Baseline scenario) and 407,500 (Adjusted Productivity scenario by the year 2030.

Despite the comparatively low annual average growth rates (relative to some other sectors), in absolute terms, under the Adjusted Productivity scenario, the health and social work sector is expected to add the third largest number of persons to the workforce by 2030, with 22,000 additional persons (only industry and construction are projected to add higher numbers under this scenario).

3.3.13 Education

Figure 3.16 Employment (000s) in Education, Q4 2019-Q4 2025

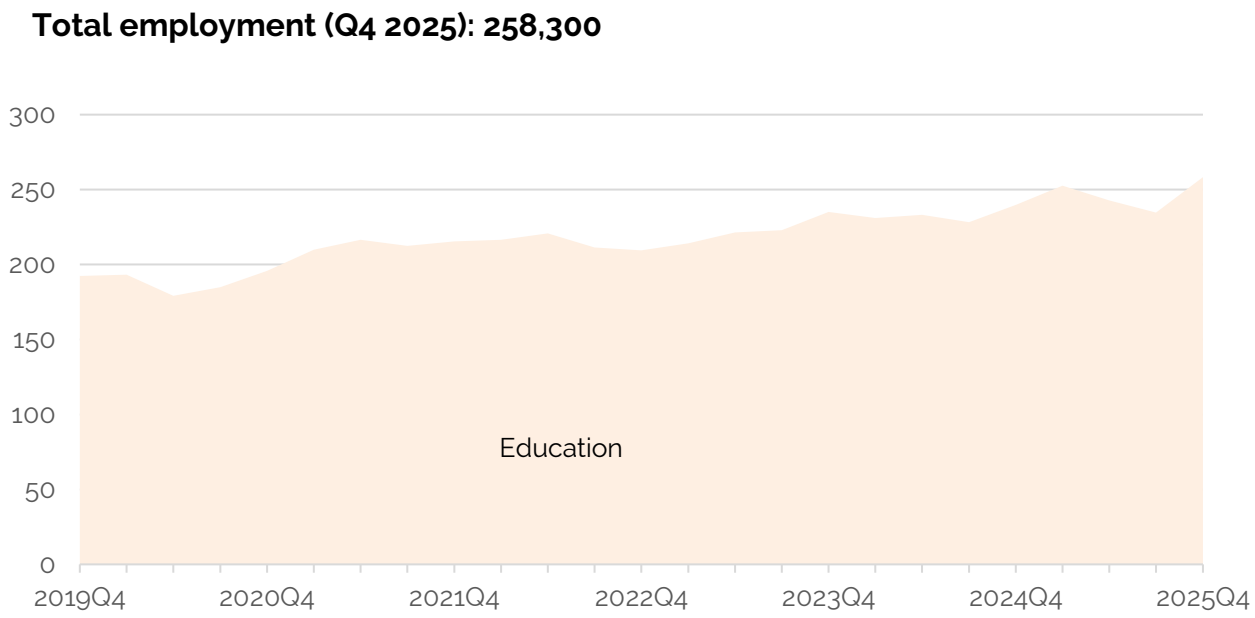


Table 3.37 Employment & Employment change: Education

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed in education	258,300	18,500	7.7%	66,000	34.3%

Table 3.38 Employment Profile: Education

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	25.1%	-1.3 pp	-3.0 pp
% Non-Irish	10.8%	0.9 pp	2.3 pp
% Third level	84.2%	3.5 pp	4.4 pp
% Full-time	78.9%	2.3 pp	0.6 pp
% High skilled occupations	78.9%	4.6 pp	4.6 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	19.9%	-1.6 pp	-0.8 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 3.39 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Education

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	247,000	256,900	0.8%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		267,000	1.6%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

The education sector had the **second largest absolute increase in employment levels** across all sectors when compared to both quarter 4 2019 (+66,000 workers) and quarter 4 2024 (+18,500), accounting for 33% and 14% of total national employment growth over the six-year and one-year time periods.

In quarter 4 2025, the shares of **older workers**, at 19.9%, and those in **full-time employment** (78.9%) were almost in line with the national averages (20.5% and 76.3% respectively); the share of **non-Irish workers**, in contrast, at 10.8%, was well below average (21.5%) and the second lowest economy-wide, after public administration and defence (PAD).

Employment in the education is **dominated by females**, with males accounting for 25.1% of the total in quarter4 2025, down compared to both quarter 4 2024 (-1.3 percentage points) and quarter 4 2025 (-3 percentage points). Furthermore, the increases in education sector employment were driven by females, with females making up more than four fifths (55,300 extra workers) of the total increase in employment compared to quarter 4 2019, and in excess of 90% (16,900 extra) of the total increase compared to quarter 4 2025.

Persons working in education are **increasingly highly qualified**, with the share of third level graduates growing from 79.8% in quarter 4 2019 and 80.7% in quarter 4 2024 to reach 84.2% in quarter 4 2025. Similarly, the share working in high skilled occupations grew from 75.3% in quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2024 to 78.9% in quarter 4 2025; this is **the third highest share of high skilled occupational employment** across all sectors.

Employment levels are expected to increase further to 256,900 or 267,000 persons by 2030, depending on the scenario, reflecting annual average growth rates of 0.8% (Baseline scenario) and 1.6% (Adjusted Productivity scenario).

3.3.14 Public administration & defence; compulsory social security (PAD)

Figure 3.17 Employment (000s) in Public Administration & Defence (PAD) Q4 2019-Q4 2025

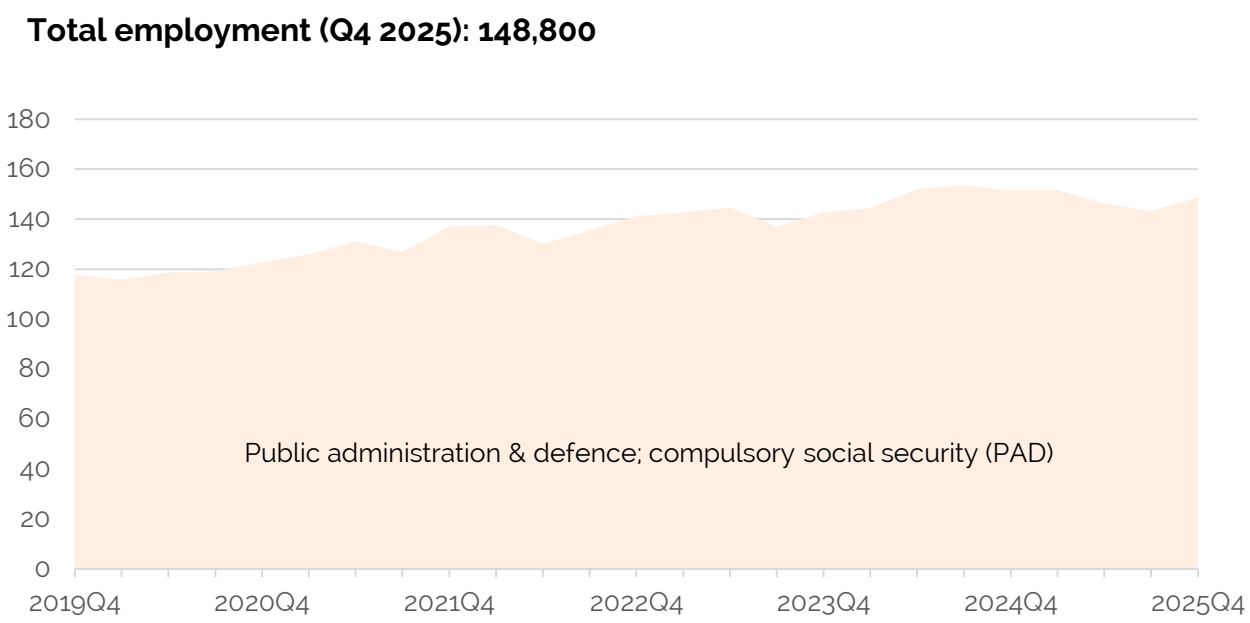


Table 3.40 Employment & Employment Change: Public Administration & Defence (PAD)

	Q4 2025	1 yr change Q4 2024-Q4 2025		6 yr change Q4 2019-Q4 2025	
		Absolute	%	Absolute	%
Total employed in PAD	148,800	-2,600	-1.7%	31,000	26.3%

Table 3.41 Employment Profile: Public Administration & Defence (PAD)

	Q4 2025	Percentage point change 1yr (Q4)	Percentage point change 6yr (Q4)
% Male	52.4%	6.5 pp	4.9 pp
% Non-Irish	[6.5%]	[-0.3 pp]	*
% Third level	70.2%	2.4 pp	9.5 pp
% Full-time	92.4%	0.7 pp	2.0 pp
% High skilled occupations	48.3%	-1.5 pp	-5.7 pp
% Aged 55 years or more	24.1%	0.8 pp	-0.4 pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
Numbers in square brackets are based on small sample values and should be interpreted with caution;
*Numbers too small to report.

Table. 3.42 Employment Projections (2025-2030): Public Administration & Defence (PAD)

	Annual Average 2025	2030 Forecast Employment	2025-2030 Annual Average Growth % Forecast
Baseline Scenario	147,500	153,800	0.8%
Productivity Adjusted Scenario		152,200	0.6%

Baseline Scenario: productivity projections are kept constant at 2024 levels (regardless of previous fluctuations).
Productivity Adjusted Scenario: a number of assumptions are made for each of the 38 sectors in the model based on historical trends and the potential productivity gains due to factors such as increased automation, AI and digitalisation.

Analysis & outlook

Despite a slight decline of 1.7% in the year to quarter 4 2025, employment levels in this sector grew by 26.3% when compared to quarter 4 2019. The fall in employment between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025 was due entirely to a fall of 11,000 (-13.5%) in the number of females; at the same time the number of males increased (by 8,400, or +12.1%). As a result, **males outnumbered females in quarter 4 2025.**

Most persons (92.4%) in public administration and defence are **employed full-time**, one of the highest shares nationally after ICT and industry. All of the increase in employment observed over the six-year period quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025 was due to increases in full-time employment. The numbers in part-time employment remained unchanged.

The share of **older workers** in this sector was amongst the highest nationally, which, at 24.1%, was the third highest after agriculture and transport. And despite the slight decline in total employment in this sector in the year to quarter 4 2025, the number of older workers actually grew (albeit very slightly, with just 600 additional workers).

Employment in public administration and defence was **dominated by Irish workers**, with non-Irish workers making up less than [7%] of total employment in the sector in quarter 4 2025, the smallest share observed across any sector. (Numbers in square brackets are based on small values and should be interpreted with caution.)

At nearly 22 percentage points, this sector had t**he largest gap between the share working in high skilled occupations (48.3%) and the share with third level qualifications (70%)** pointing to a potential to better harness the skills of the workforce in this sector.

Under both the Baseline and Adjusted Productivity scenarios, annual average growth over the period 2025-2030 is expected to be below the national average (1.1%), with growth rates of 0.8% (Baseline) and 0.6% (Adjusted Productivity) on average annually. Employment levels therefore are projected to increase to between 152,200 and 153,800 by the year 2030.

3.3.15 Sector profile: summary

Table 3.43 Profile of Employment by Sector (%), Quarter 4 2025

Sector	55 yrs+	Full-time	Male	Non-Irish	High skilled occupations*	3rd Level	Occupation vs Qual gap
Agriculture	53.7%	73.3%	83.4%	16.6%	[6.7%]	27.0%	20.3 pp
Industry	18.2%	93.2%	68.3%	25.3%	44.6%	52.6%	8.0 pp
Construction	19.2%	90.9%	90.2%	20.0%	24.9%	29.5%	4.6 pp
Wholesale/retail	18.2%	64.3%	52.6%	20.5%	28.7%	33.0%	4.3 pp
Transport	30.1%	83.5%	77.8%	20.8%	18.7%	33.6%	14.9 pp
Accommodation /food	10.0%	57.8%	46.2%	35.0%	17.6%	33.5%	15.9 pp
ICT	11.8%	94.1%	70.2%	34.6%	88.7%	84.3%	-4.4 pp
Finance	15.8%	91.8%	50.9%	19.3%	75.5%	85.3%	9.8 pp
Professional services	20.1%	85.0%	49.8%	18.2%	82.7%	84.9%	2.2 pp
Administration & support services	22.8%	71.7%	55.0%	24.9%	30.7%	45.4%	14.7 pp
PAD (Public Administration & Defence)	24.1%	92.4%	52.4%	[6.5%]	48.3%	70.0%	21.7 pp
Education	19.9%	78.9%	25.1%	10.8%	78.9%	84.2%	5 pp
Health & social work	21.9%	74.7%	24.1%	25.8%	54.0%	68.6%	14.6 pp
Other NACE	21.1%	57.0%	43.3%	18.1%	42.6%	47.0%	4.4 pp
Total	**20.5%**	**76.3%**	**52.8%**	**21.5%**	**47.8%**	**56.8%**	**9.0** pp

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

* Refers to those working in manager, professional, and associate professional roles.

[ ] numbers in square brackets are based on small values and should be interpreted with caution.

As shown in Table 3.43 above, sectors with the largest shares of

- **older** workers were agriculture and transport
- **males** were construction, agriculture, transport, and ICT
- **full-time** workers were ICT, industry, PAD, and finance
- **non-Irish** were accommodation/food, ICT, health, and industry
- **third level qualification holders** were finance, professional services, ICT, and education
- workers in **high skilled roles** were ICT and professional services.

Sectors with the smallest shares of

- **older** workers were accommodation/food, ICT, and finance
- **males** were health and education
- **full-time** workers were other NACE and accommodation/food
- **non-Irish** were PAD and education
- **third level qualification holders** were agriculture and construction
- workers in **high skilled roles** were agriculture, accommodation/food, transport, and construction.

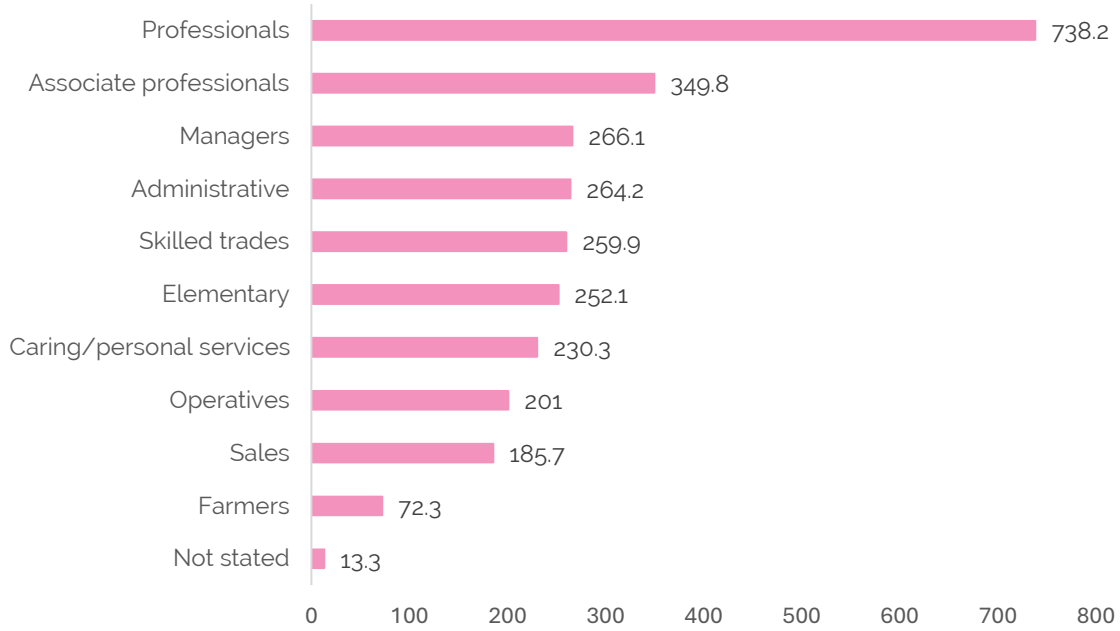
Section 4 Employment by Broad Occupation

This section examines employment by broad occupation across several labour market indicators.[28] Throughout this section, farmers are presented as an occupation separately from other skilled trades.

4.1 Employment by occupation

Figure 4.1 presents employment in Ireland in quarter 4 2025 by broad occupation. In quarter 4 2025, professionals had the highest level of employment, at 738,200 persons followed by associate professionals (349,800). Combined, the high skilled occupations (professionals, associate professionals and managers) accounted for over 1.35 million persons or 48% of the total national workforce. Administrative occupations, skilled trades and elementary occupations each accounted for 9% of the workforce with 264,200, 259,900 and 252,100 persons respectively. The number of farmers (72,300) represented nearly 3%.

Figure 4.1 Employment by Broad Occupational Group (000s), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data

4.2 Employment growth

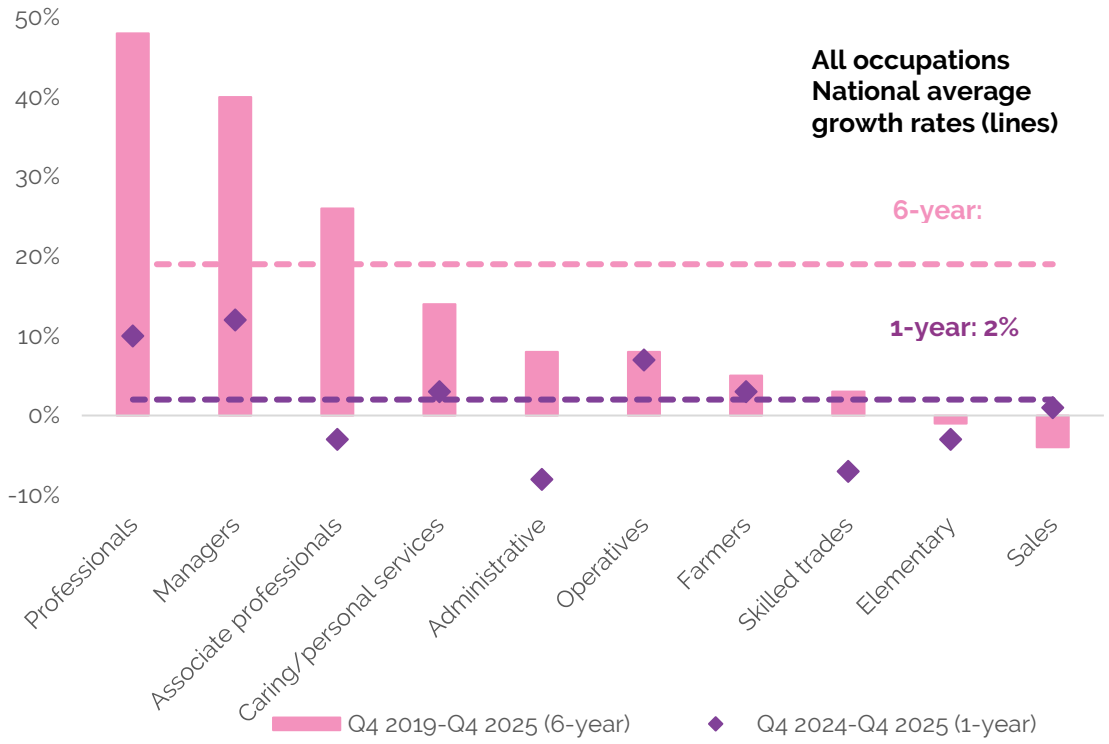
Figure 4.2 presents employment growth by broad occupational group, examining the one-year and six-year occupational growth rates to explore employment trends over time.

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, employment growth was 2% (56,700 additional persons) across all occupational groups. Professionals had the highest absolute increase (+66,000 persons or +10%). while managerial occupations had the greatest relative growth (+12% or +28,100 persons). In contrast, there were declines across four occupations, with the largest absolute fall in

[28] Note: the data reported in this section is based on the original quarter 4 2025 Labour Force Survey release; while this data has been revised since then, the differences are small (less than 500 persons) and do not impact on the analysis.

administrative occupations (-24,000 persons or -8%). followed by skilled trades (-18,900 persons or -7%). While there was an increase in employment in sales occupations, at nearly 1% (+1,300 persons), it was below average (2%).
Over the six-year period, quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025, employment numbers grew by 19% (national average). In absolute terms, the highest increases were recorded for professionals (+238,200 persons or +48%), followed by managers (+76,100 persons or +40%) and associate professionals (+73,200 persons or +26%). Employment declined in two occupations, with the largest fall in sales (8,500 fewer persons or -4%) followed by elementary occupations (-2,900 persons or -1%). With the exception of the high skilled occupations of professionals, managers and associate professionals, employment growth was below the +19% average for all remaining occupations over the six-year period.

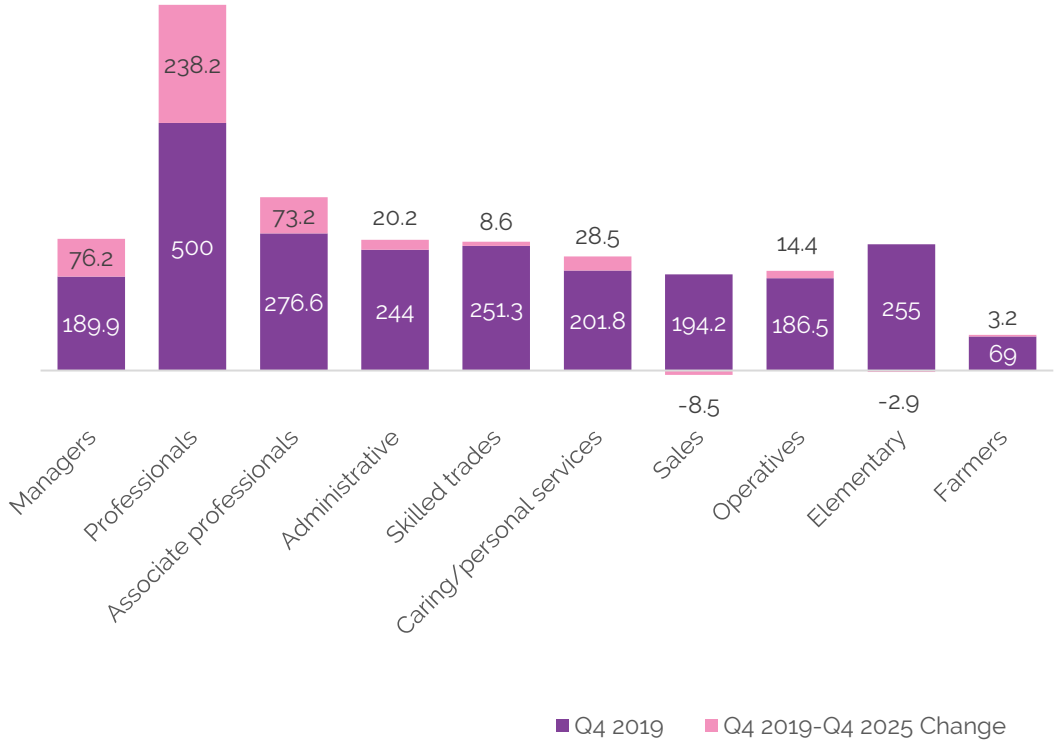
Figure 4.2 Employment Growth by Broad Occupational Group (%), Q4 2019-Q4 2025 & Q4 2024-Q4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
Excludes not stated

It is worth noting the considerable shift towards higher skilled occupations that has occurred in Ireland's workforce in recent years. Figure 4.3 shows employment by occupation in quarter 4 2019 and the additional (or fewer, in the case of sales and elementary occupations) workers for quarter 4 2025. In fact, more than four fifths (85%) of the total increase in employment since quarter 4 2019 was due to the increase in the numbers employed in higher skilled occupations. As a result, the share of total employment in higher skilled occupations rose from 41% in quarter 4 2019 to 48% in quarter 4 2025.

Figure 4.3 Employment (000s) by Occupation, Q4 2019 and Q4 2019-Q4 2025 Change (000s)



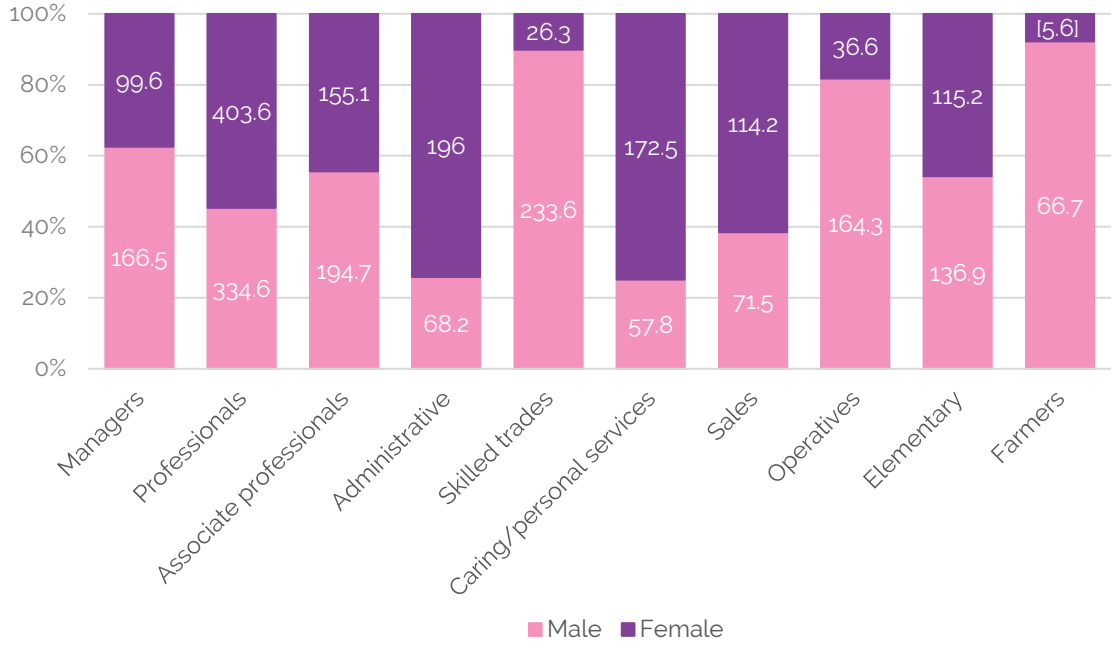
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
Excludes not stated

4.3 Employment by sex and age

Sex

Employment by sex for broad occupations in quarter 4 2025 is presented in Figure 4.4. Although females made up just under half (47%) of all employment, they accounted for three quarters of employment amongst caring/personal services (75%) and administrative occupations (74%). In contrast, males accounted for 9 out of 10 farmers (92%) and skilled trades workers (90%), while 8 out of 10 operatives (82%) were male. The employment of males and females was closest to being evenly distributed for elementary (46% female) and professional (55% female) occupations. In absolute terms, the highest number of females were employed in professional (403,600 persons, which was 69,000 higher than males) and administrative (196,000) occupations, while the highest number of males were employed in professional (334,600) and skilled trades (233,600) occupations.

Figure 4.4 Employment by Sex and Broad Occupational Group (000s), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
Excludes not stated
Numbers in square brackets are based on small numbers and should be interpreted with caution

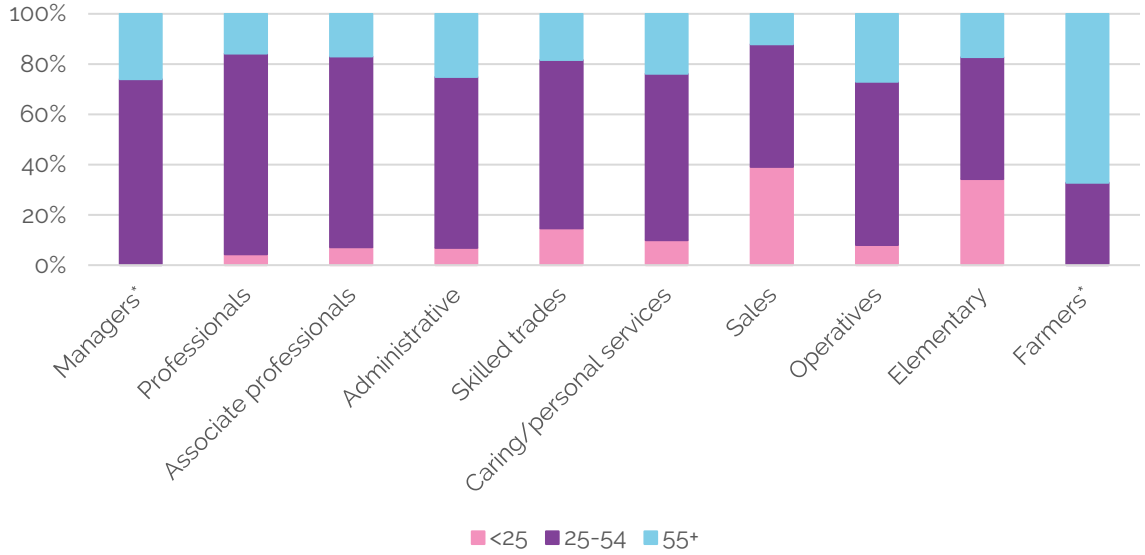
In the year to quarter 4 2025, the largest absolute increase for both males and females were in professional occupations, with an additional 27,400 males and 38,600 extra females employed over the year. The largest absolute decline for males occurred in skilled trades (-13,600 persons or -5%), while administrative occupations was the biggest fall in employment for females (-23,900 persons or -11%). The number of males and females employed in caring/personal services roles went up by 3,300 persons for both sexes, while the increase in female operatives (+7,200) was higher than that for males (+5,700) over the year.

When compared to quarter 4 2019, the largest absolute increase in employment for males was for professionals (+106,200 persons), an occupation which also had the biggest increase for females (+132,000 persons). Over the six-year period, the number of males declined in two occupational groups; elementary (-8,500 persons) and sales (-2,700 persons). Sales was the only occupation where the number of females fell (-5,800 persons), while skilled trades remained almost unchanged with 400 fewer females. Of some note was the increase in females working in highly skilled occupations (professionals, managers and associate professionals combined), which at 206,700 additional persons exceeded the increase in males in these occupations (+180,900 persons), over this time.

Age

Figure 4.5 presents the age distribution of employment by broad occupational group. In quarter 4 2025, with the exception of farmers, employment in all occupational groups was highest in the 25-54-year age cohort. Sales and elementary occupations had the youngest age profile, with more than one third of individuals employed aged 15-24 years (39% and 34% respectively), and lower than average shares aged 55 years or over. Farmers had by far the oldest age profile, with 64% aged 55 years or over.

Figure 4.5 Employment by Age and Broad Occupational Group (%), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
Excludes not stated
*The numbers of managers and farmers aged under 25 were too low to report.

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, the number of employed **15-24-year-olds** went up slightly by 1%. This was largely due to an increase in skilled trades (+18%) and sales (+6%), which resulted in 5,800 and 4,000 extra young workers respectively. This was the only age group where employment in skilled trades increased over this time. Employment declined for younger workers in three occupations, with the largest fall in administrative roles (-6,300 persons or -26%) followed by caring/personal services (-3,600 persons or -14%) and operatives (-1,200 persons or -7%). When compared to quarter 4 2019, the number of employed young people increased by 21% (more than the 19% rise for all age groups), with the largest absolute increases for elementary occupations (+15,100 persons) followed by skilled trades (+14,600 persons) and sales (+12,700 persons); when combined these three occupations accounted for nearly 78% of the total rise in youth employment over the six years. The only occupation where employment of young workers fell was in caring/personal services (-5,400 persons or -19%) while administrative occupations remained unchanged (-200 persons).

Looking at employment trends amongst **25-54-year-olds**, there was an increase of 1% over the one-year period, quarter 4 2024-quarter 4 2025, which is less than the 2% growth across all age groups. The growth was largely attributable to an 8% rise in professional occupations (+44,500 persons). In addition, the number employed in managerial occupations rose (+25,800 persons) and operatives (+7,700 persons) occupations. In contrast, there were declines in most of the remaining occupations for this age group; with the largest absolute fall for both associate professionals and skilled trades, each with 17,300 fewer persons. Over the six-year period, employment went up by 15% for this age group, which was slightly lower than the 19% average across all age groups, with the largest absolute increases in professionals (+184,500 persons) and managerial roles (+53,700 persons); however by contrast, employment fell in five occupations especially in sales (-22,100 persons) and elementary occupations (-20,300 persons).

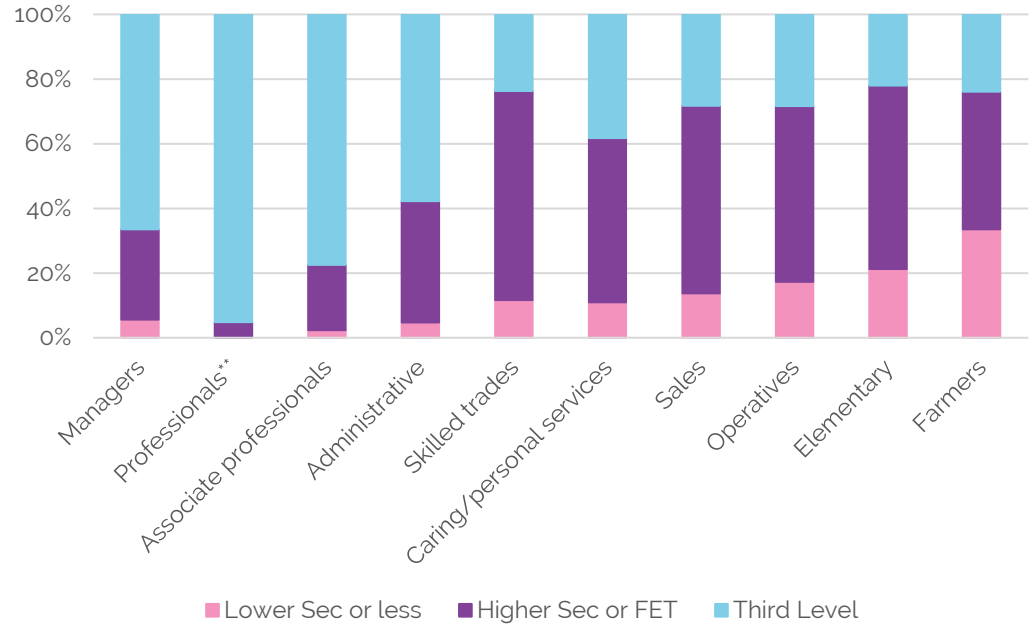
In the year to quarter 4 2025, there was an increase of nearly 6% in employed individuals aged **55 years and older**, which was three times greater than the 2% increase across all age groups, the largest absolute increase being for professional occupations (+18,400 persons), followed by caring/personal services (+7,900 persons). The number of farmers in this age group also went up

by 5% (+2,400 persons). In contrast, there were declines in employment in this age group for skilled trades (-7,300 persons) (which also had the largest relative decline at 13%), and administrative occupations (-5,400 persons). Compared to quarter 4 2019, the number of employed persons aged 55 years and older went up by 32% in quarter 4 2025, which exceeded the growth rate across all age groups (+19%), and was largely due to an increase in highly skilled occupations, namely professional (+46,000 persons), managerial (+21,900 persons) and associate professional (+21,400 persons) occupations, which combined accounted for 64% of the total increase in employment amongst older workers over the six-year period. Of note, this was the only age group where employment increased in all occupations over this time.

4.4 Employment by education

Figure 4.6 presents the educational distribution of employment for each occupational group in quarter 4 2025. Excluding the not stated categories, over half (58%) of Ireland's workforce held third level qualifications (up from 57% one year previously), but the share was considerably higher for professionals (95%), associate professionals (76%) and managers (67%). Occupations with the greatest shares of higher secondary/FET qualification holders were skilled trades (65%), sales (58%) and elementary (57%) occupations. Farmers had the lowest education attainment, with 34% holding lower secondary or less, followed by elementary (21%) and operatives (17%), much higher than the national average (8%).

Figure 4.6 Employment by Education* and Broad Occupational Group (%), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
*Excludes those who did not state their level of education.
**The number of professionals with lower secondary or less level of education attainment was too low to report.

In the year to quarter 4 2025, the largest absolute increase in employment for those with **third level** qualifications was in professional occupations (+65,300 persons) followed by managers (+17,100); there was a decline in two occupations: skilled trades (-18,800 persons) and administrative (-11,700 persons). Where individuals had **higher secondary/FET** qualifications, employment went up across several occupational groups, in particular managerial roles (+9,700 persons) and operatives (+8,700 persons); however, there were declines in four occupations

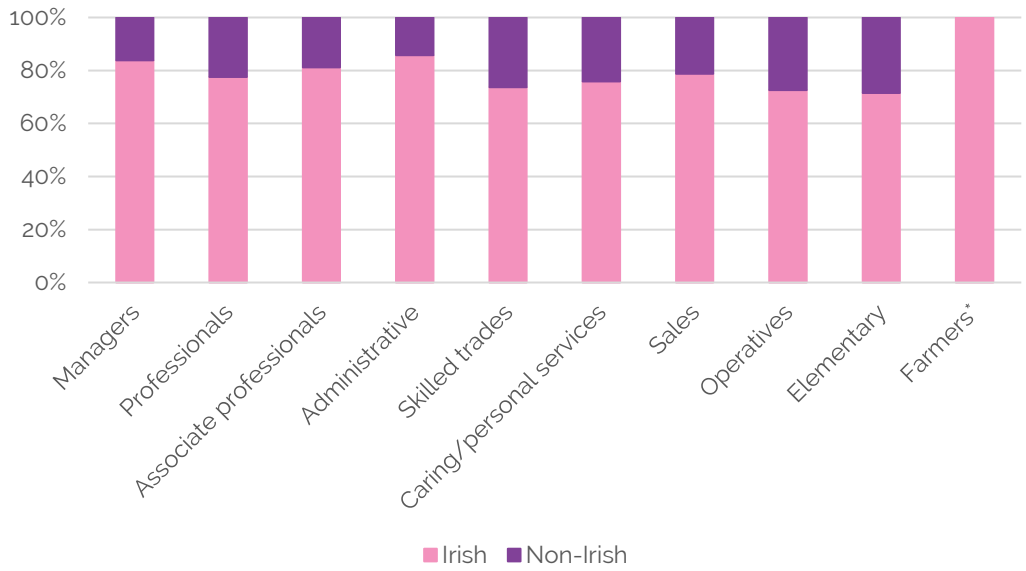
(administrative, elementary, associate professional and caring/personal services), which exceeded the gains giving an overall decline of 8,600 fewer persons in employment at this level. Amongst those with at most **lower secondary** qualifications, there were increases in some occupations, most notably caring/personal services (+2,300 persons); however there were declines across five occupations resulting in an overall fall in employment of 14,500 people.

Compared to quarter 4 2019, employment amongst **third level graduates** grew across all occupations, with the largest absolute increase for professionals (+228,300 persons). In relation to those with **higher secondary/FET** qualifications, the number employed went up by 5% (+42,700 persons), and there were increases for most occupations except administrative (-9,500 persons), sales (-5,400 persons) and elementary (-1,200 persons), with the largest absolute increase for skilled trades (+17,300 persons). In contrast, the number of employed persons who held at most **lower secondary** education declined (-61,300 persons), with the largest absolute falls for skilled trades (-13,700 persons), operatives (-13,300 persons) and farmers (-12,200 persons) over the six-year period.

4.5 Employment by citizenship

In quarter 4 2025, the share of employment by citizenship across all occupations (including the occupation not stated category) was 78.5% Irish (2,224,400 persons) and 21.5% non-Irish (608,500 persons). The distribution of employment in broad occupational groups by citizenship is presented in Figure 4.7. In quarter 4 2025, at nearly 29%, elementary workers had the highest share of non-Irish citizens. In contrast, apart from farmers (where the number of non-Irish citizens was too small to report), administrative occupations had the lowest share of non-Irish citizens, with 14%.

Figure 4.7 Employment by Citizenship and Broad Occupational Group (%). Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
*Number of non-Irish farmers was too low to report
Excludes not stated

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, for Irish citizens, the largest absolute growth occurred in professional occupations (+42,300 persons) followed by managerial (+21,500 persons) occupations. For non-Irish citizens, the highest increase was also for professionals (+24,300 persons) followed by operative (+11,500 persons) occupations. The number of Irish citizens

declined across five occupations, with the largest absolute fall in skilled trades (-27.000 persons), (which in contrast increased for non-Irish citizens (+8,300 persons)), followed by administrative occupations (-18,000 persons). Employment fell in three occupations for non-Irish citizens, with the largest absolute fall in associate professionals (-8,800 persons), while employment by Irish citizens in this occupation also declined (-3,600 persons).

Over the six-year period, professional occupations accounted for the highest increase in employment amongst both Irish (+156,200 persons) and non-Irish citizens (+82,200 persons). However, the number of Irish citizens declined in sales (13,400 fewer persons), elementary (11,300 fewer persons), skilled trades (-11,200 persons), and operative occupations (-4,100 persons). In contrast, employment of non-Irish citizens increased across all occupations including those which saw a decline for Irish citizens (except farmers, where numbers are too small to report).

4.6 Employment status

Self-employed/employee

In quarter 4 2025, the share of self-employed and employed workers across all occupational groups was 13% and 86% respectively, with 1% assisting relatives. Figure 4.8 presents employment in broad occupational groups by employment status. In quarter 4 2025, the majority of workers across all occupations were employees, with the exception of farmers where 92% (or 63,600 persons) were self-employed.[29] After farmers, managers and skilled trades occupations had the highest share of workers who were self-employed (at 30% and 22% respectively).

Figure 4.8 Employment by Employment Status* and Broad Occupational Group (%), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
*Excludes those assisting relatives, on employment schemes and did not state an employment status
**Number of self-employed in sales were too low to report

Over the period quarter 4 2024 to quarter 4 2025, the number of self-employed went up by 7.4% (+25,800 persons), excluding not stated, with managerial occupations accounting for the largest share of this increase (at 41% or +10,700 persons). By comparison, the number of employees rose by just over 1% (+35,200 persons) over the year, with the greatest absolute increase for professionals (+59,600 persons). In relation to employees, there were also increases in managers

[29] The share of farmers who were employees is based on small numbers and should be interpreted with caution.

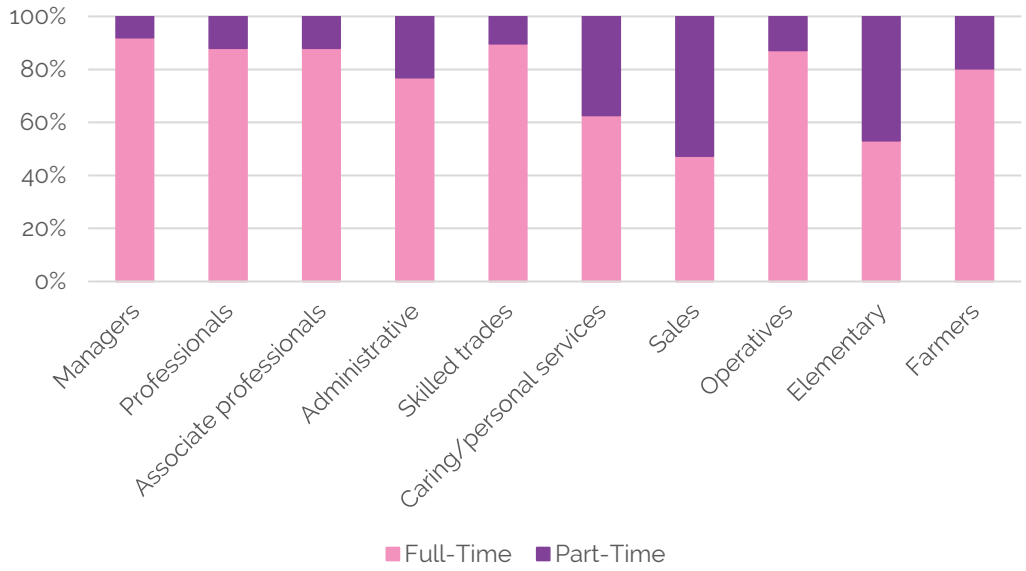
(+19,000 persons) and operatives (+14,400 persons), while there were declines in administrative (-22,100 persons), skilled trades (-17,900 persons) and associate professional (-17,500 persons) occupations. For the self-employed, the numbers in professional, associate professional and farmers went up by 6,900, 5,300 and 4,200 persons respectively, while there were declines for operatives (-1,600 persons).

Between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, the largest absolute rises for employees were in professional occupations (+219,800 persons or +49%), which represented over half (54%) of the total increase for this group over the six years. Looking at the self-employed, the largest absolute increases were also recorded for professionals (+17,800 or +35%), followed by associate professionals (+8,800 persons or +26%). Over the six-year period, employment went up across most occupations for the self-employed, with the exception of operatives (which fell by 1,900 persons); similarly, the number of employees grew for most occupations, with the exception of those in elementary occupations (-8,700 persons) and sales (-7,900 persons).

Full-time/part-time

Figure 4.9 presents the breakdown of employment in broad occupational groups by full-time and part-time work status. In quarter 4 2025, most workers across all occupational groups were in full-time employment (79%). Occupations with the highest shares of full-time workers were managers (92%), skilled trades (90%), professional and associate professional occupations, both at 88%; the lowest share of full-time workers were in sales occupations, where less than one half (47%) were working full-time, followed by elementary (53%) and caring/personal services (63%) occupations.

Figure 4.9 Full-Time and Part-Time Employment by Occupational Group (%), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO data
Excludes not stated

In the year to quarter 4 2025, for those employed full-time, the largest absolute increases were for professionals (+54,800 followed by managers (+28,100 persons). Similarly, the highest growing occupational groups for part-time employed individuals were professionals (+11,200 persons) and sales (+7,700 persons). There were also a few variations in the occupations that experienced a decline in employment amongst the two groups; the largest fall for full-time workers was for skilled trades (-15,600 persons), while the largest fall for part-time employed was for administrative (-11,200 persons) occupations.

Over the six-year period, the relative increase in employment was slightly higher for those working full-time (20%) compared to part-time (17%). In relation to part-time workers, there was an increase in all occupational groups (except for administrative with 4,100 fewer workers), in particular professionals (+23,500 persons), sales (+15,100 persons) and caring/personal services (+14,900 persons). The number of full-time workers increased across most occupational groups, especially amongst professionals (+214,600 persons), although there were falls in sales (-23,600 persons), elementary (-9,100 persons) and farming (-4,700 persons).

Section 5 Regional Labour Markets

This section presents an overview of the labour market in each of Ireland's eight NUTS 3 administrative regions. [30] Key labour market indicators are provided, including labour force participation rates, employment (e.g. sex, age, education, citizenship, occupation, sector), and unemployment.

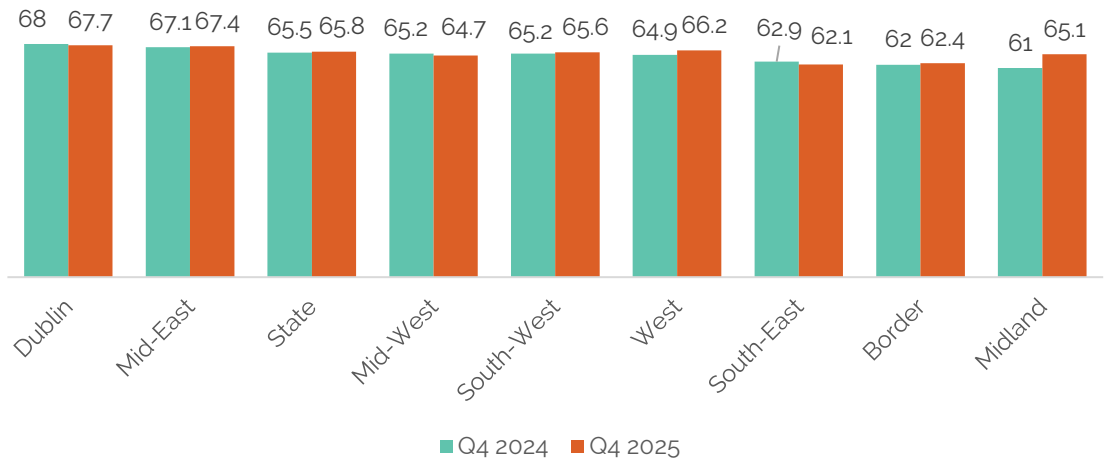
5.1 Labour Force Participation by Region

Figure 5.1 shows the labour force participation rates by region in quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025. In quarter 4 2025, the rates were above the State average of 65.8% for three regions: Dublin (67.7%), Mid-East (67.4%) and West (66.2%). Rates in all other regions were lower, albeit only slightly so for the South West (65.6%) and Midland regions (65.1%). The lowest participation rates were in the South East and Border regions at 62.1% and 62.4% respectively.

When compared to quarter 4 2024, the change in the labour force participation rate amounted to less than half a percentage point for most regions, except the Midland (where participation grew by 4.1 pp) and West regions (where participation went up 1.3 pp), along with the South East (where participation declined by 0.8 pp).

Over the six-year period, quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025, the labour force participation rate grew for all regions, particularly for the Mid-West region, with a 6.6 percentage point (pp) increase (twice the pp growth observed nationally at +3.3 pp), as well as the Midland region (+5.7 pp).

Figure 5.1 Labour Force Participation Rate (%) by Region, Quarter 4 2024 and Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

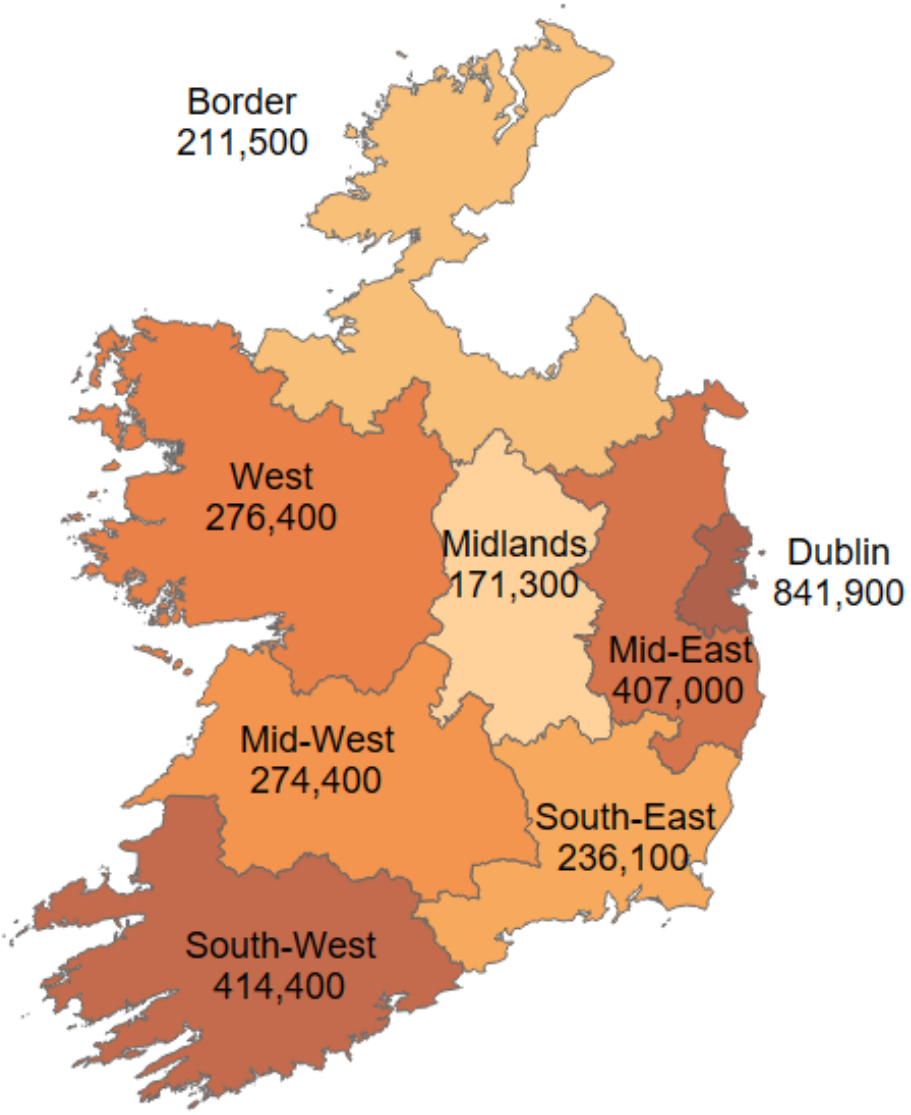
5.2 Employment and Employment Growth

With 841,900 persons in quarter 4 2025, the Dublin region had the largest number of persons employed, accounting for almost 30% of Ireland's workforce (Figure 5.2). This was followed by the South West (414,400 workers) and Mid-East regions (407,000 workers), which combined made up

[30] Note: the data reported in this section is based on the original quarter 4 2025 Labour Force Survey release; while this data has been revised since then, the differences are small (less than 500 persons) and do not impact on the analysis. The data relating to employment by citizenship is based on data extracted in July 2026.

a further 29% of total national employment. The Midland region had the smallest workforce, with 171,300 workers.

Figure 5.2 Employment by Region, Quarter 4 2025



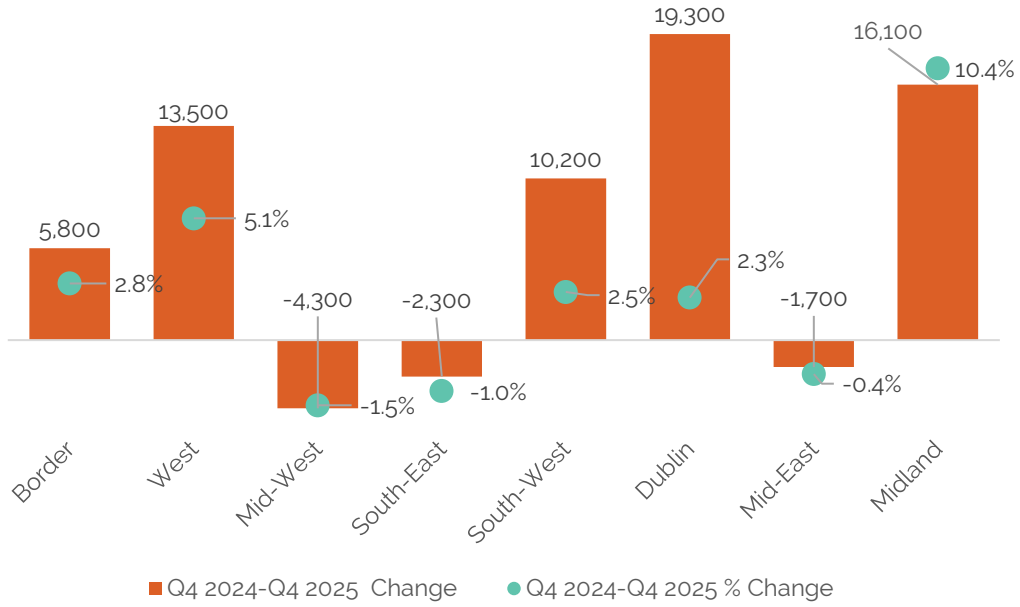
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Employment Change: 1-Year (Quarter 4 2024-Quarter 4 2025)

The absolute and relative changes in employment by region in the year to quarter 4 2025 are shown in Figure 5.3. Employment grew in all but three regions, namely the Mid-West, which had 4,300 fewer workers, the South East with a decline of 2,300 workers and the Mid-East, which had 1,700 fewer workers. Dublin, followed by the Midland region, had the largest absolute increases in employment nationally, at 19,300 and 16,100 extra workers respectively. Combined, these two regions alone made up nearly 63% of the total employment growth observed nationally.

In relative terms, the Midland region had by far the highest relative growth over the period quarter 4 2024-quarter 4 2025, which at 10.4% was more than five times that of the State average (2%).

Figure 5.3 One-Year Employment Change by Region, Quarter 4 2024-Quarter 4 2025

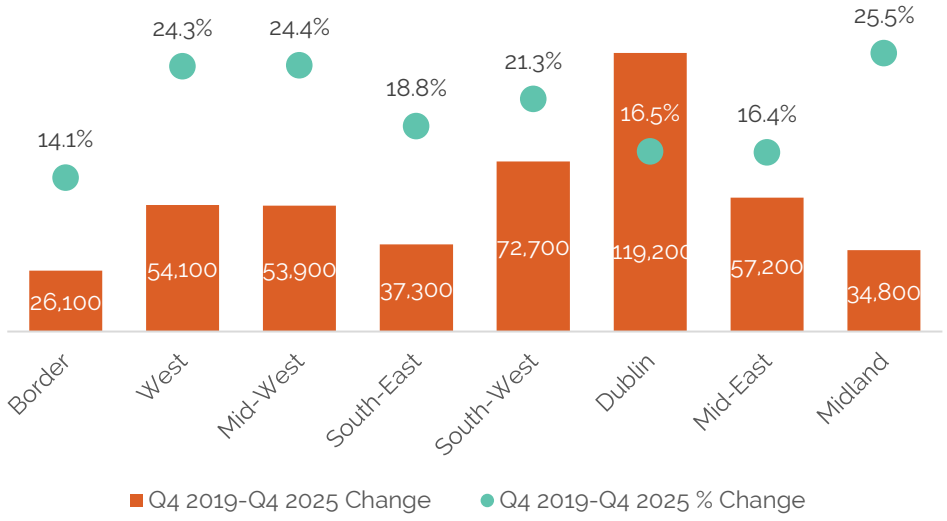


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Employment Change: 6-Year (Quarter 4 2019-Quarter 4 2025)

Over the six-year period, quarter 4 2019-quarter 4 2025, the number of persons employed increased in all regions (Figure 5.4). Dublin, followed by the South West region, had the largest absolute increases, with 119,200 and 72,700 additional workers, respectively. At 25.5%, the Midland region had the largest relative growth, well above the national average of 19%, with nearly half (46%) of this growth occurring in the year since quarter 4 2024. The Mid-West and West also had above average growth, at 24% each, as well as the South West, at 21%.

Figure 5.4 Six-Year Employment Change by Region, Quarter 4 2019-Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data.

5.3 Regional Employment by Sex

At 48.2% and 47.6% respectively, the Mid-West and Dublin regions had the highest shares of regional employment that were female in quarter 4 2025 (Table 5.1). The South West region's share (47.1%) was just above the national average (46.9%), while all remaining regions had lower than average shares, with the lowest of all in the Border region, at 45.5%.

When compared to quarter 4 2024, employment increased for females in all but the South East (-3,500 persons) and Mid-East (-900 persons) regions, and for males in all but the Mid-West (-5,000 persons) and Mid-East (also -900 persons, the same result as for females) regions in quarter 4 2025. The number of additional females in employment was greater than the number of additional males for the West and South West. In the Border region, employment was relatively unchanged for females (+100 persons) but increased for males (+5,700 persons) over the year. In Dublin, females accounted for just 6% (1,200 additional persons) of total employment growth.

Table 5.1 Share of Females in Regional Employment, Quarter 4 2025 and Employment Change by Sex, Quarter 4 2024-Quarter 4 2025

	Q4 2025	Q4 2024-Q4 2025 change	
Region	**% Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Border	45.5%	5,700	100
West	46.3%	6,300	7,300
Mid-West	48.2%	-5,000	700
South-East	46.6%	1,200	-3,500
South-West	47.1%	4,900	5,300
Dublin	47.6%	18,100	1,200
Mid-East	45.9%	-900	-900
Midland	46.4%	8,000	8,000
State	**46.9%**	**38,300**	**18,200**

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

5.4 Regional Employment by Age

Regional workforces with the **highest shares of younger workers** (aged <25 years) in quarter 4 2025 were the South East (13.6%) and the West (13.1%) (Table 5.2). Dublin had the smallest share of younger workers, at 9.2%.

At 17.1%, Dublin also had the smallest share of persons in its workforce who were **aged 55 years and over**, which was well below the national average of 20.5%. In contrast, the Border region had the highest share of older workers, at 23.6%.

Compared to one year earlier, the number of **15-24-year-olds in employment went up in all but three regions**, with the largest absolute increase of 5,000 young workers in both the South West and West regions. At the same time, the number of younger workers declined in the Mid-West (-4,200), Dublin (-4,100) and Mid-East (-1,100) regions. **The number of older workers grew in most regions**, with the exception of the South East (-2,600) and Mid-West (-700) regions, while Dublin had the highest absolute increase (+14,800) followed by the Midlands (+5,100) over the year.

Table 5.2 Share of Workers Aged <25 Yrs and 55+ Yrs by Region, Q4 2025 and Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change

	Q4 2025 (%)		Q4 2024-Q4 2025 change	
Region	**<25 years**	**55+ years**	**<25 years**	**55+ years**
Border	12.3%	23.6%	2,300	3,500
West	13.1%	22.7%	5,000	4,700
Mid-West	11.4%	22.2%	-4,200	-700
South-East	13.6%	20.2%	500	-2,600
South-West	12.0%	21.4%	5,000	2,200
Dublin	9.2%	17.1%	-4,100	14,800
Mid-East	12.5%	21.8%	-1,100	4,100
Midland	11.7%	21.6%	2,800	5,100
State	**11.4%**	**20.5%**	**6,200**	**31,100**

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

5.5 Regional Employment by Educational Attainment Level

With the exception of the Border and Midland regions, more than half of the workforces in most regions held third level qualifications in quarter 4 2025 (Table 5.3), with the share rising to over two thirds (69.9%) in the Dublin region. At the other end of the qualifications scale, just 5.5% of persons in employment in the Dublin region held, at most, NFQ 3 qualifications in quarter 4 2025; the share was more than twice that in the Border (15.0%) and Midland (12.2%) regions.

When compared to quarter 4 2024, there were increases in the number of third level qualification holders in employment in most regions, except the Border (-9,200 persons) and Mid-East (-3,200 persons) regions. Over the same period, there were declines in the number of workers at NFQ level 1-3 for most regions; only three regions saw an increase: Border (+4,900 persons), Midland (+2,700 persons) and the West (+2,100 persons). Not shown in the table below is the fact that the number of FET qualifications holders in employment increased strongly in the Border region (+6,300 workers, or 24%), ahead of the Mid-East region (+5,100, or 10%) and the West region (+1,000, or 3.2%), which were the only other regions where the number of employed persons with FET qualifications increased.

Table 5.3 Share of Workers with NFQ 1-3 and NFQ 6 (HE)+ by Region, Q4 2025 and Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change

	Q4 2025 (%)		Q4 2024-Q4 2025 change	
Region	**NFQ 3 or less**	**3rd level (NFQ 6+)**	**NFQ 3 or less**	**3rd level (NFQ 6+)**
Border	15.0%	46.0%	4,900	-9,200
West	9.5%	53.4%	2,100	1,400
Mid-West	8.1%	58.3%	-6,500	6,700
South-East	9.7%	51.8%	-5,500	4,100
South-West	8.0%	54.6%	-1,900	7,800
Dublin	5.5%	69.9%	-4,300	56,600
Mid-East	7.3%	54.7%	-4,900	-3,200
Midland	12.2%	47.2%	2,700	10,800
State	**8.2%**	**58.1%**	**-13,400**	**75,000**

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data. Excludes data where NFQ level was not stated.

5.6 Regional Employment by Citizenship

Table 5.4 shows the share of employment that was comprised of Irish citizens in quarter 4 2025, which stood at 78.5% across the State. The share of Irish citizens in regional workforces was highest in the Border (84.4%) followed by the South East (83.8%) regions, and lowest in Dublin (70.7%), the only region where it was below the national average.

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, the number of employed Irish citizens increased in most regions (especially in the Midland region with 16,500 additional persons), with the exception of the Mid-West (-17,400 persons) and South East (-11,300 persons) regions, both of which were partially offset by a rise in employed non-Irish citizens (+13,100 persons and +9,000 persons respectively). The number of employed non-Irish citizens went up in most regions over the year except for the Mid-East (-1,700 persons) and Midland (which remained almost the same, with just 200 fewer persons) regions.

Table 5.4 Share of Workers by Citizenship and Region, Q4 2025 and Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change

	Q4 2025	Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change	
Region	% Irish	Irish	Non-Irish
Border	84.4%	2,400	3,300
West	79.3%	200	13,400
Mid-West	81.6%	-17,400	13,100
South East	83.8%	-11,300	9,000
South West	81.0%	5,400	4,800
Dublin	70.7%	14,700	4,700
Mid-East	83.3%	0	-1,700
Midland	79.0%	16,500	-200
State	**78.5%**	**10,500**	**46,400**

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

5.7 Regional Employment by Work Status

Table 5.5 shows the share of regional workforces who were employed full-time, as well as the absolute change observed in the year to quarter 4 2025 in full-time and part-time employment. In quarter 4 2025, 79.4% of employed persons in Ireland were in full-time employment. The share was higher than the national average in the Dublin (83.1%), Midland (81.4%), and Mid-East regions (80.3%), and lowest in the West, at 75.0%.

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, with the exception of the South East and Mid-West regions, the number of full-time employed persons increased; the largest absolute increases were in Dublin (+23,200 persons), South West (+15,100 persons) and the Midland (+12,700 persons) regions, which combined made up 93% of the total increase (+51,000) in full-time employment in Ireland over this period.

In contrast, the number of persons in part-time employment fell in five of Ireland's eight regions, with increases observed in the West (+10,700 persons, of whom 9,600 were female), Midland (+3,300) and South East (+1,300) regions being sufficient to offset falls in other regions to result in a national increase in part-time employment (+1,800 persons).

Table 5.5 Share of Workers by Part/Full-Time Status and Region, Q4 2025 and Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change

	Q4 2025	Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change	
Region	% Full-Time	Full-Time	Part-Time
Border	77.4%	6,500	-600
West	75.0%	2,900	10,700
Mid-West	78.5%	-2,800	-1,500
South East	76.0%	-3,700	1,300
South West	76.8%	15,100	-4,900
Dublin	83.1%	23,200	-3,900
Mid-East	80.3%	900	-2,600
Midland	81.4%	12,700	3,300
State	**79.4%**	**54,800**	**1,800**

Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

5.8 Regional Employment by Professional Status

In quarter 4 2025, the share of employees in regional labour markets ranged from 83.8% in the West region to 89.6% in Dublin (Table 5.6). In absolute terms, the Midland region, because it is the smallest workforce across all regions, had the smallest number of employees (146,800 persons), although its share of employees (86.4%) was almost equal to the national average (86.5%).

When compared to quarter 4 2024, the number of employees grew in nearly all regions (except the Mid-East, Mid-West and South East regions, where it declined by 10,700, 5,400 and 1,700 persons respectively). With 12,700 extra employees, the largest year-on-year increase was for the Midland region, which made up over one third (35%) of the total increase in employee numbers over the one-year period. The number of self-employed persons grew in all regions, with the largest increase in the Mid-East (+9,600) followed by the Dublin (+8,100) region.

Table 5.6 Share of Workers by Professional Status and Region, Q4 2025 and Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change

	Q4 2025	Q4 2024-Q4 2025 Change	
Region	% Employee	Employee	Self-employed
Border	85.3%	6,200	500
West	83.8%	12,400	800
Mid-West	85.4%	-5,400	1,900
South East	84.5%	-1,700	300
South West	85.4%	11,100	1,000
Dublin	89.6%	11,300	8,100
Mid-East	86.0%	-10,700	9,600
Midland	86.4%	12,700	3,900
State	**86.5%**	**35,900**	**26,100**

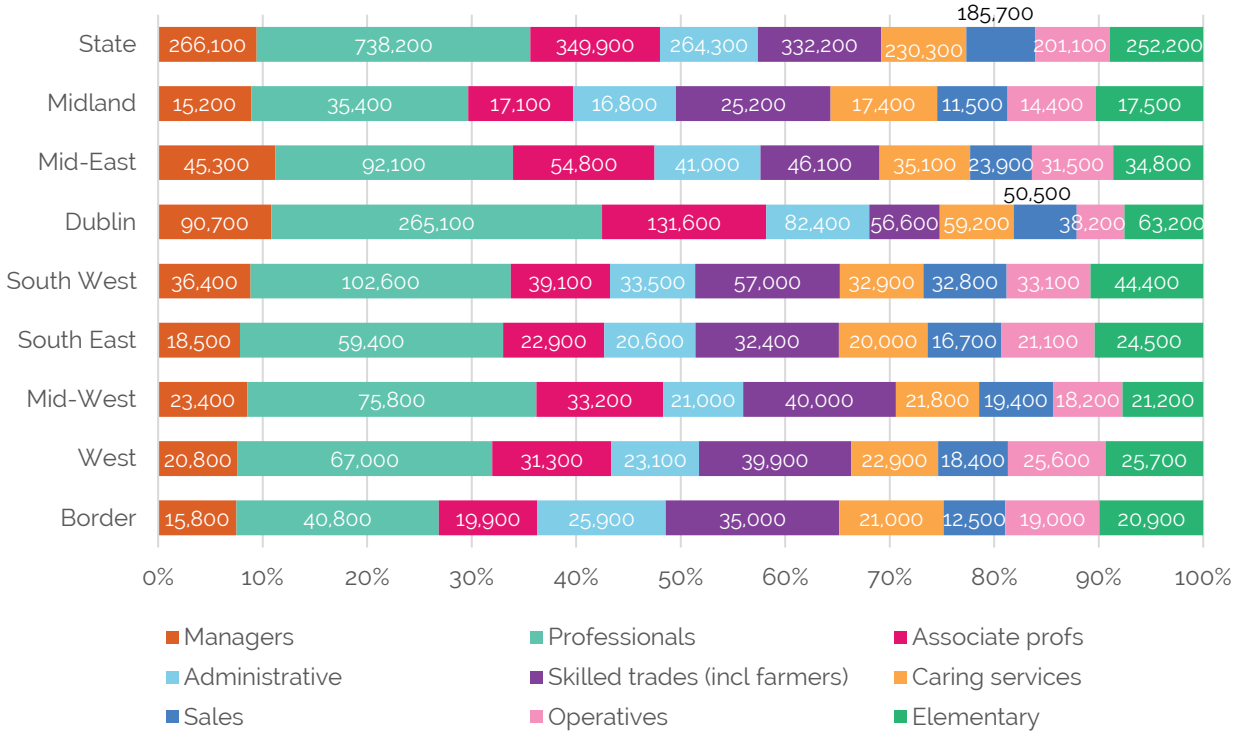
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

5.9 Regional Employment by Occupation

Figure 5.5 shows the occupational composition of each region's workforce in quarter 4 2025. Key points to note include

- **professionals** were the largest occupational group in each region. While just over one quarter (26%) of total national employment was in professional occupations, this share varied from 19% in the Border region to 32% in the Dublin region.
- with the exception of the Dublin and Mid-East regions, **skilled trades (including farmers)** were the second largest occupational group, comprising at least 14% of total regional employment in many regions, rising to 17% in the Border region. Nonetheless, Dublin, where skilled trades accounted for just 7% of total regional employment, had the second highest absolute number of workers in this occupation at 56,600 persons (after the South West with 57,000 persons).
- at 16% and 14%, respectively, Dublin and the Mid-East regions had the highest share of employed persons working in **associate professional occupations** – above the national average of 12%.
- the share of **elementary** workers was above the State average (9%) in four regions, being highest in the South West (11%), followed by the South East, Midland and Border regions (all 10%).
- the share of employment in **sales** occupations was broadly similar across regions, with, at most, a one percentage point difference from the national average of 7%.
- although Dublin had the lowest share of those employed in **caring services** at 7% (just below the 8% national average), it had the highest number of workers in this occupation across all regions (59,200 persons).
- the Border region had the highest share of **administrative** workers (12%) followed by the Mid-East, Midland and Dublin regions (each 10%), all higher than the 9% national average.

Figure 5.5 Regional Employment by Occupation, Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
Excludes instances where occupation was not stated.

Compared to quarter 4 2024, the largest relative increases in quarter 4 2025 were for

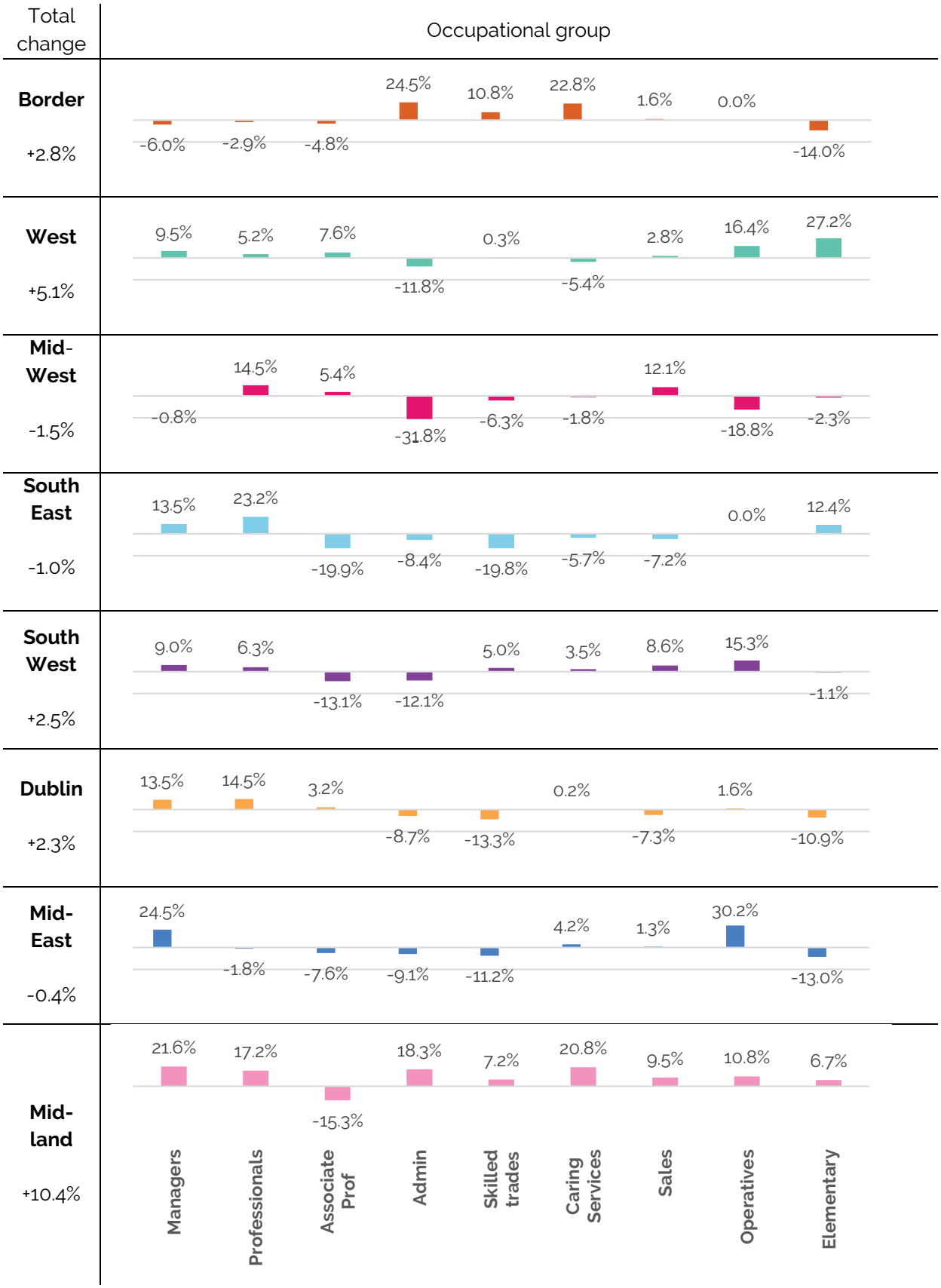
- **operatives in the Mid-East** (+30.2%), which represented an additional 7,300 workers in the region (Figure 5.6).
- **elementary occupations in the West** region (+27.2%) accounting for 5,500 additional workers.

By comparison, the largest absolute increase was in the number of **professionals in the Dublin region** (+33,600 workers or +14.5%).

In the year to quarter 4 2025, the largest relative declines were for

- **administrative occupations in the Mid-West** region (-31.8%), which also had the largest absolute fall across all occupations and regions with 9,800 fewer workers
- **associate professionals in the South East** (-19.9%) which fell by 5,700 workers
- **skilled trades in the South East** (-19.8%), which also had the second largest absolute decrease with 8,000 fewer workers.

Figure 5.6 Change (%) in Regional Employment by Occupation, Quarter 4 2024-Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

5.10 Regional Employment by Sector

Figure 5.7 shows the distribution of regional employment by sector in quarter 4 2025.

- With the exception of the Dublin region, the sectors with the largest shares of regional employment were **health, industry and wholesale/retail**, although the rank order varied slightly. Combined these three sectors made up 38% of total national employment (see Section 3, Figure 3.1), with the share rising to 44% in both the West and Mid-West regions.
- The fourth largest sector of employment in most regions was **education** with the exception of Dublin (see below) and the Mid-East region (where the fourth largest sector was construction).
- Sectoral employment in **the Dublin region differed** from that of all other regions, with the top sectors, along with health (13.8%) and wholesale/retail (9.4%), being **ICT (10.8%), professional services (8.9%), and finance (9.1%)**. Education, the next largest sector, accounted for 8.0% of employment. Dublin had the lowest share of regional employment in industry, at 7.6% (around half the share observed in most other regions except the Mid-East and South East).

When compared to quarter 4 2024, key changes included the following:

- The largest absolute increase in employment in the **health sector** were in the Dublin region (+10,200 persons) followed by the Mid-East (+5,800 persons), while there were declines in the South East (-4,800), South West (-3,800) and the Border (-2,300) regions.
- The **accommodation/food** sector had the largest absolute decline in employment in the Dublin region with 12,700 fewer persons working; it also fell in the Mid-West (-5,000 persons) and Border (-1,500 persons), while it went up in other regions especially the South East (+6,900 persons), remaining the same in the Mid-East (-100 persons).
- Employment in **industry** grew in all regions except the South East (3,600 fewer employed) and the Mid-East (500 fewer persons) regions, with the largest increase in the South West (+7,400 persons) followed by the West (+6,900 persons) regions; combined these two regions alone accounted for nearly two thirds of the total increase in this sector.
- **Construction** employment numbers increased in most regions with the largest rise in Dublin (+6,000 persons) followed by the South West (+3,900 persons), while it was broadly unchanged in the Mid-West (-400 persons) and the South East (-200 persons).
- **Wholesale/retail** sectoral employment fell in three regions, especially in Dublin (-4,400 persons), along with the Mid-East (-2,300 persons) and the South East (-1,600 persons); it remained almost unchanged in the Midland and Border regions, but rose in other regions, in particular the Mid-West (+3,100 persons).
- **ICT** sectoral employment fell in all but two regions – Dublin (where it grew by 2,500 workers) and the South East region (+1,000 persons)
- Employment in **administrative & support services** fell in four regions, with the largest decline in the South East (-6,600 persons); by contrast it went up in the Border (+4,800 persons), Dublin (+1,800 persons) and the West (+1,600) regions, while remaining unchanged in the Midland region.
- Employment grew in the **education** sector across six regions, while it fell in the West (-2,100 persons) and Mid-East (-1,400 persons) regions.
- **Professional activities** employment declined across five regions, with the largest fall in the Mid-East region (-7,700 persons), although there were increases in South East (+4,100 persons) and Dublin (+2,900 persons) regions.

Figure 5.7 Regional Employment by Sector (%), Quarter 4 2025

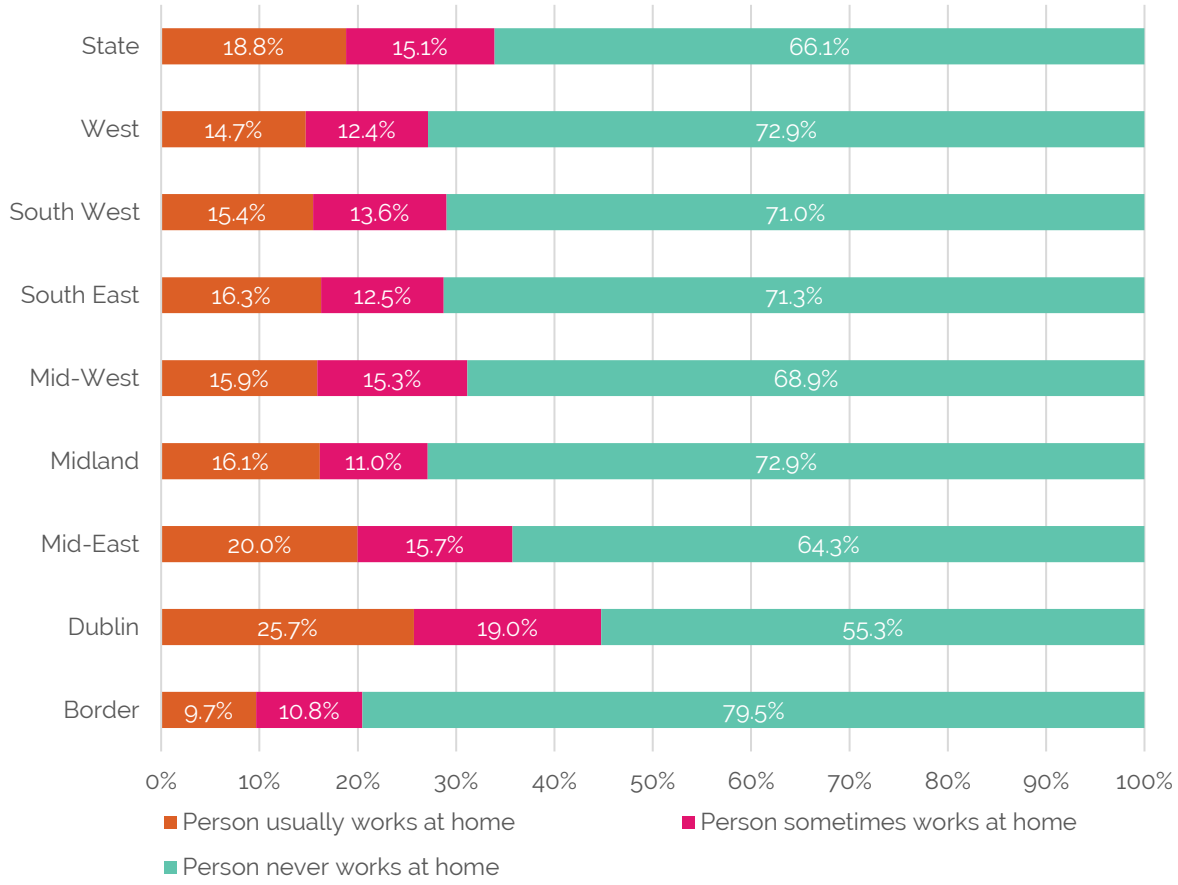


Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data.
Numbers employed were too small to report in agriculture in the Dublin region, ICT in the Border and Midland regions, finance in the Midland region and admin & support in the South East and Midland regions.

5.11 Regional Employment by Working from Home Status

In quarter 4 2025, the share of workers who usually or sometimes worked from home was higher than the national average (33.9%) in two regions: Dublin (44.7%) and the Mid-East (35.7%), while being below this across all other regions (Figure 5.8). The highest number of employed persons either usually or sometimes working from home was recorded in Dublin, at 375,600 persons, which contrasts with 43,200 persons (or 20.5%) in the Border region — the lowest number and the lowest overall share across all regions.

Figure 5.8 Employed Persons Usually, Sometimes, or Never Working from Home by Region (%), Q4 2025



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

When compared to quarter 4 2024, the proportion of persons who either usually or sometimes worked from home fell in all regions (except Dublin and the South East), with the largest percentage point (pp) declines in the Border (-4.8 pp) and West (-5 pp) regions. In most of these regions, this decrease was driven by greater declines in the share of persons who *usually* worked at home rather than those who *sometimes* worked at home (except in the Midland and Mid-West regions). In absolute terms, the largest decline in persons who worked at home (usually or sometimes) was in the South West (-10,500 persons), followed by the West (-9,600 persons) and Border (-8,700 persons) regions. This contrasted with an increase of 17,800 persons who worked at home (usually or sometimes) in the Dublin region over the year.

5.12 Regional Unemployment

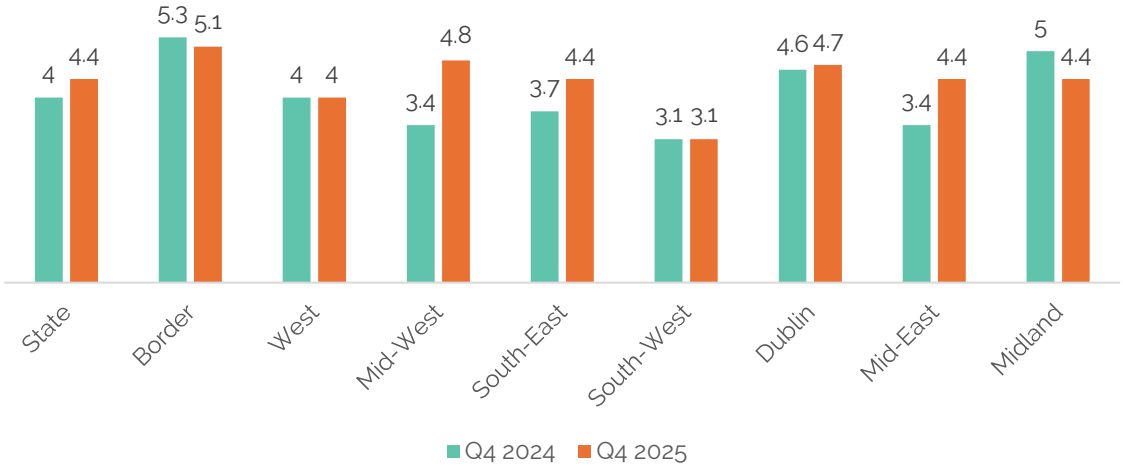
Unemployment rates

In quarter 4 2025, the highest unemployment rate was in the Border region at 5.1% followed by the Mid-West at 4.8%, while the lowest was in the South West region at 3.1% (Figure 5.9).

When compared to one year earlier in quarter 4 2024, changes in the unemployment rate for most regions were generally small (less than one percentage point (pp)) except the Mid-West and Mid-East regions, which rose by 1.4 pp and 1 pp respectively. Over the year, unemployment rates increased in four regions (Mid-West, Mid-East, South East and Dublin), while they declined in the

Midland and Border regions (by 0.6 and 0.2 percentage points respectively) and remained unchanged in the West and South West regions.

Figure 5.9 Unemployment Rates (%) by Region, Quarter 4 2024 and Quarter 4 2025



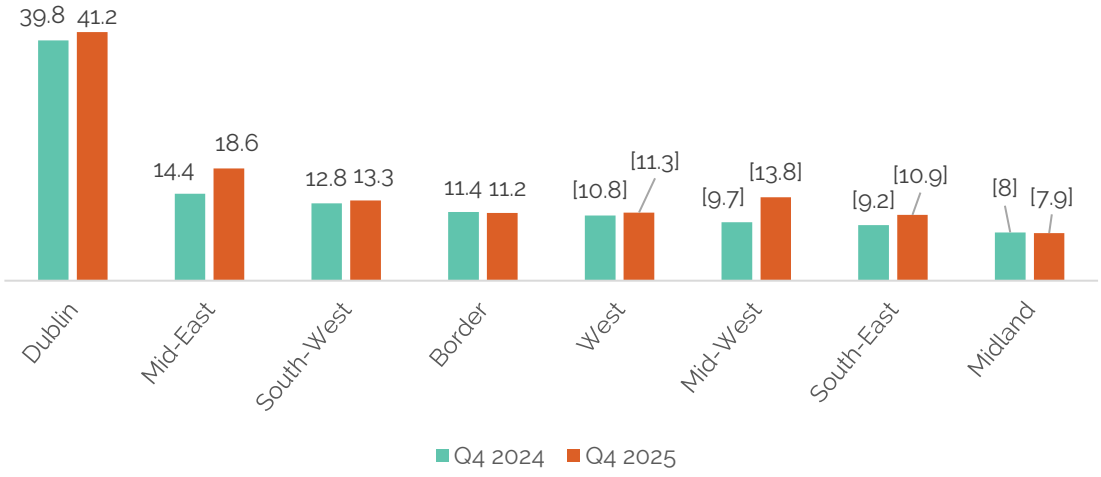
Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Unemployment levels

Just under one third (32%) of total unemployment in Ireland was in the Dublin region, with 41,200 unemployed persons in quarter 4 2025 (Figure 5.10). The Midland region had the smallest number of unemployed persons at [7,900], although the unemployment rate was the same as the national average (see Figure 5.9 above).

When compared to quarter 4 2024, the number of unemployed persons increased in almost all regions, except the Border and Midland regions which both fell slightly by 200 and 100 persons respectively (Figure 5.10). In line with the earlier findings on the unemployment rate, the highest increase in the number of unemployed persons was in the Mid-East and Mid-West regions, with an additional 4,200 and 4,100 unemployed persons respectively.

Figure 5.10 Number of Unemployed Persons (000s) by Region, Quarter 4 2024 and Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU analysis of CSO (LFS) data
Numbers in square brackets are based on small numbers and should be interpreted with caution

Section 6 Unemployment

6.1 Introduction

This section presents an overview of persons aged 15–74 years who were unemployed in quarter 4 2025, compared with the same quarter in 2024 and 2019.[31] The analysis, based on data from the CSO's Labour Force Survey, includes breakdowns by sex, age, citizenship, previous sector and occupation (where relevant), and education.

6.2 Key Findings

In quarter 4 2025,

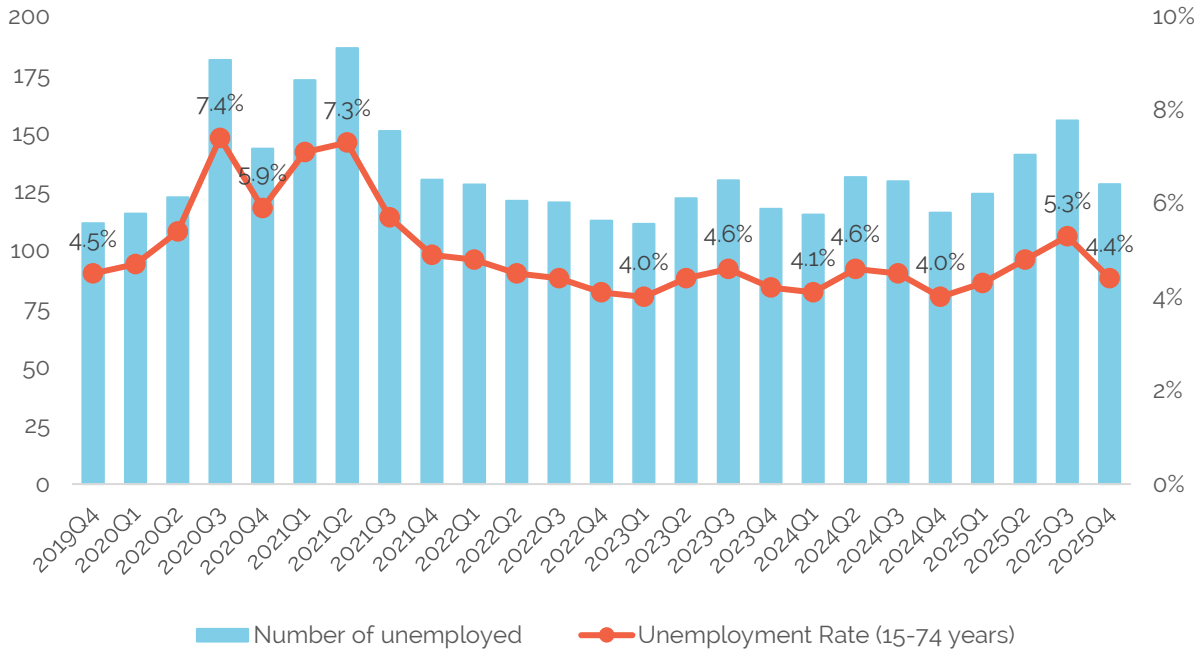
- 128,300 persons aged 15–74 were unemployed, corresponding to an unemployment rate of 4.4%, a rise of 12,200 (or 10.5%) more unemployed persons compared to quarter 4 2024,
- 36,100 persons were classified as long-term unemployed (unemployment duration of one year or more), an increase of 7,900 persons (28%) from quarter 4 2024, with males accounting for all of the increase.
- Youth unemployment (ages 15–24) stood at 35,100 persons, an increase of just 100 persons since quarter 4 2024, while the unemployment rate of 9.8% for this age cohort fell by 0.1 percentage points over the period.

6.3 Unemployment and Unemployment Rates

Between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, unemployment levels and rates varied visibly (Figure 6.1). Between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 3 2020, unemployment levels in Ireland increased substantially, from 111,600 persons to 181,400 persons, while rates increased by 2.9 percentage points, largely as a result of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A notable drop was evident from quarter 2 2021 onwards, with unemployment declining to 111,300 persons by quarter 1 2023, effectively returning to the levels observed in 2019. The unemployment levels fluctuated thereafter, with 128,300 persons unemployed in quarter 4 2025, and an unemployment rate of 4.4%. As the labour force has expanded over time, the unemployment rate may remain similar even where the number of unemployed persons increases.

[31] Note: the data reported in this section is based on the original quarter 4 2025 Labour Force Survey release; while this data has been revised since then, the differences are small (less than 500 persons) and do not impact on the analysis. The data relating to employment by citizenship is based on data extracted in July 2026.

Figure 6.1 Unemployment Levels (000s) and Unemployment Rates (%), Quarter 4 2019–Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Table 6.1 details changes in the long-term unemployment rate, the broad unemployment measure, the youth unemployment rate, and the NEET rate (the share of 15–24-year-olds who were not in employment, education or training) for quarter 4 of each year from 2019 to 2025.

The long-term unemployment rate (i.e. those unemployed for one year or more) for quarter 4 2025 was 1.2%, 0.2 percentage points higher than the rate in quarter 4 2024, but still 0.4 percentage points lower than in quarter 4 2019 (Table 6.1). In quarter 4 2025, 36,200 persons were classified as long-term unemployed, an increase of 8,000 persons (or 28.4%) compared to quarter 4 2024, but still 2,600 persons fewer than in quarter 4 2019. Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, long-term unemployment as a share of total unemployment rose from 24% to 28%.

The broad unemployment measure, which includes both unemployed and part-time underemployed persons, stood at 8.5% in quarter 4 2025, almost unchanged from the rate in quarter 4 2024, and down from 8.9% in quarter 4 2019.

The youth unemployment rate (i.e. persons aged 15–24) was 9.8%, 0.1 percentage point lower than in quarter 4 2024 (9.9%) but 0.2 percentage points higher than in quarter 4 2019 (9.6%). In absolute terms, youth unemployment remained unchanged in quarter 4 2025, with 35,000 persons aged 15–24 years unemployed, the same level as in quarter 4 2024. This marks an increase of 6,800 persons (24.1%) compared with the same quarter in 2019, when 28,200 youths were unemployed.

In quarter 4 2025, the NEET rate increased to 6.3%, up from 5.5% in quarter 4 2024, but remained below the quarter 4 2019 level of 8.7%.

Table 6.1 Other Unemployment Indicators, Quarter 4 2019–Quarter 4 2025

	Long term UE rate (%) (15-74)	Broad UE rate (%) (15-74)	Youth UE rate (%) (15-24)	NEET* rate (%) (15-24)
Q4 2019	1.6	8.9	9.6	8.7
Q4 2020	1.5	9.9	14.3	9.8
Q4 2021	1.7	9.0	10.2	5.7
Q4 2022	1.3	7.9	9.1	6.7
Q4 2023	1.1	9.1	9.4	5.0
Q4 2024	1.0	8.4	9.9	5.5
Q4 2025	1.2	8.5	9.8	6.3

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

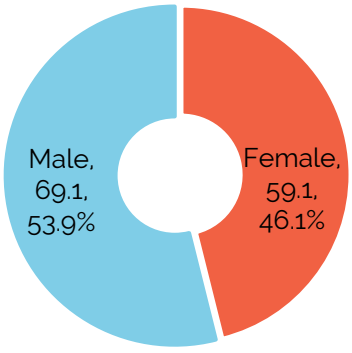
Note: Not in employment, education or training, ILO defined; there is a discrepancy between ILO and PES (self-declared principal economic status) measure of participation in education with the former used in the NEET rate potentially overstating the non-participation in the case of Ireland.

In quarter 4 2025, two-thirds of unemployed persons were seeking full-time work (66.3%), which was broadly in line with quarter 4 2024 (64.9%). Relative to quarter 4 2019, the proportion of unemployed persons seeking full-time work decreased by 5.4 percentage points.

6.4 Unemployment by Sex

Figure 6.2 displays the number of unemployed persons by sex. In quarter 4 2025, the majority of unemployed persons were male (54%, or 69,100 persons), while females accounted for 46% (59,100 persons). Compared to the same quarter in 2024, the share of males decreased by 2.1 percentage points, despite an increase in the absolute number of unemployed males (+ 6.3%, or 4,100 additional persons). The number of unemployed females in quarter 4 2025 increased by 15.7% (8,000 persons) relative to quarter 4 2024. While overall unemployment levels in quarter 4 2025 exceeded those observed in quarter 4 2019, the sex composition remained largely unchanged, with 6,200 more unemployed males and 10,300 unemployed females.

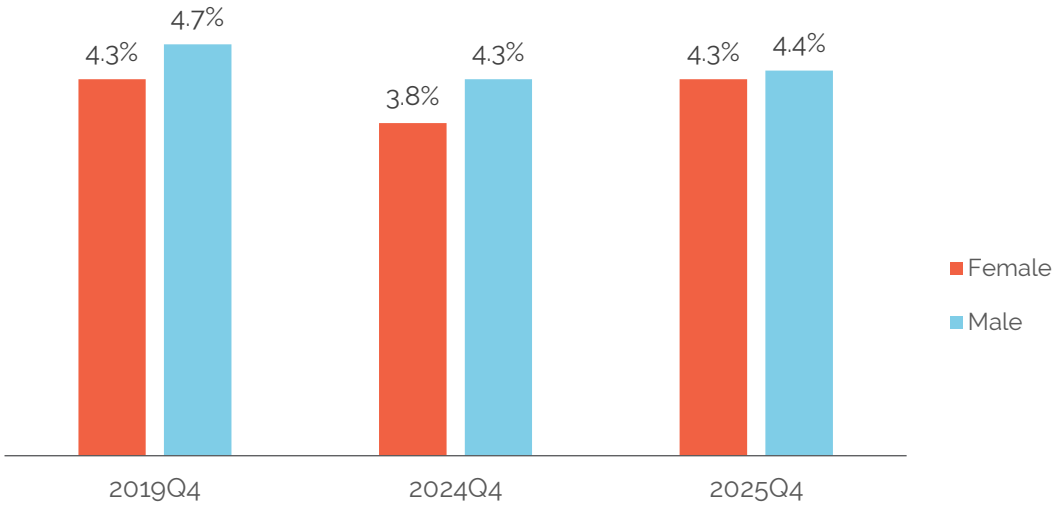
Figure 6.2 Unemployment by Sex (000s, %), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

As shown in Figure 6.3, unemployment rates by sex in quarter 4 2025 were largely similar to those recorded in both quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2019. Compared to quarter 4 2024, the rate for females rose by 0.5 percentage points to 4.3%, while the rate for males increased by 0.1 percentage point to 4.4%. When compared to quarter 4 2019, the unemployment rate in quarter 4 2025 remained unchanged for females and decreased by 0.3 percentage points for males.

Figure 6.3 Unemployment Rate by Sex (%), Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024, and Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

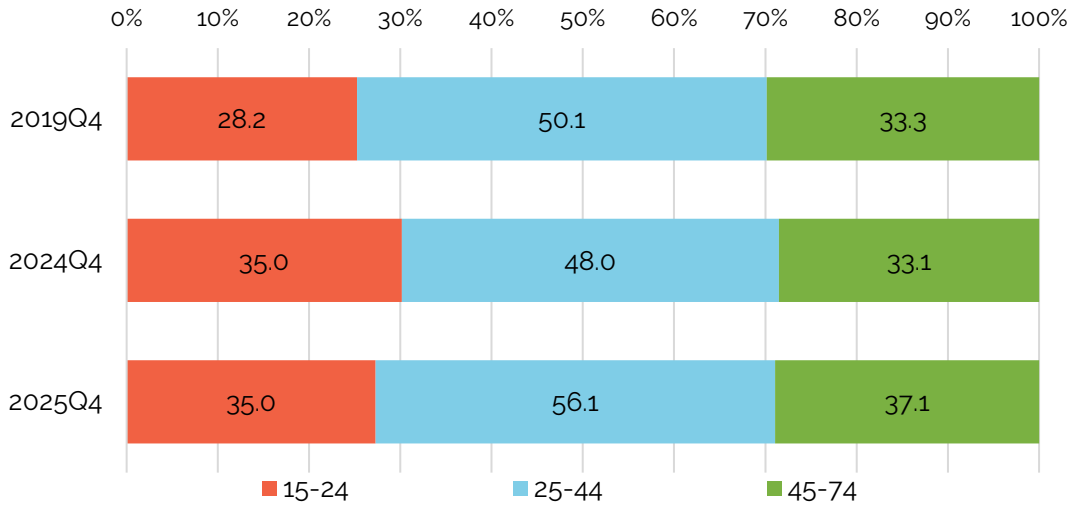
In quarter 4 2025, 22,200 males were classified as long-term unemployed, compared with 14,000 females. Relative to quarter 4 2024, the number of long-term unemployed males increased by 8,000 (from 14,200), while the number of long-term unemployed females remained unchanged. When compared with quarter 4 2019, the number of long-term unemployed females was lower in quarter 4 2025 (by 1,800 persons (11.4%)), while the number of long-term unemployed males remained broadly in line with the quarter 4 2019 level (23,000).

6.5 Unemployment by Age

Unemployment by age group is presented in Figure 6.4. Persons aged 25-44 years represented the largest proportion of unemployed persons in quarter 4 2025, accounting for 43.8% (56.,100 persons), while those aged 15-24 years and 45-74 years accounted for 27.3% (35,000 persons) and 28.9% (37,100 persons), respectively.

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, unemployment levels were unchanged for those aged 15–24 years and increased for both other age groups. Among those aged 25-44 years, unemployment increased by 16.9% (or 8,100 persons), and by 12.1% (or 4,000 persons) for those aged 45-74 years. Compared to quarter 4 2019, unemployment in quarter 4 2025 was higher for all three age groups.

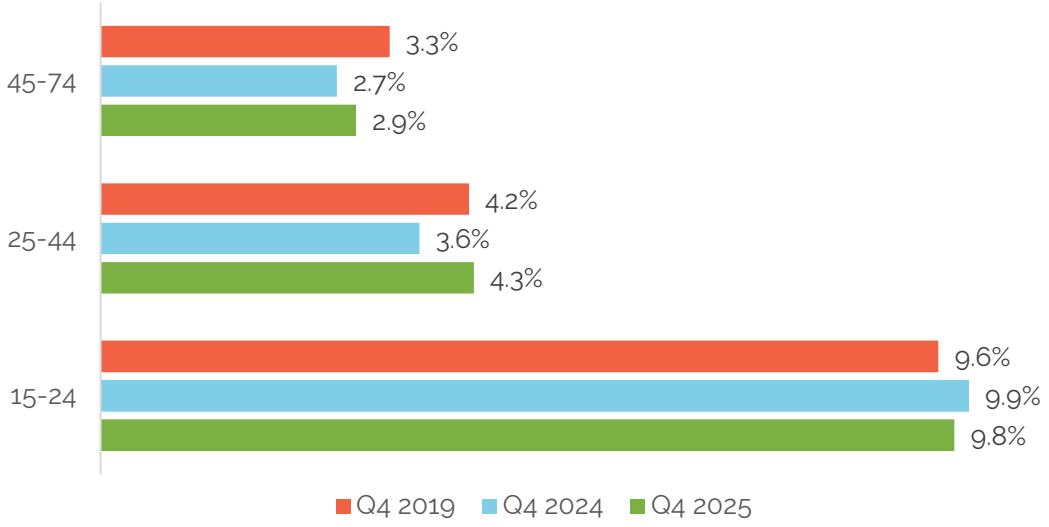
Figure 6.4 Unemployment by Age (000s, %), Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024, and Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, the unemployment rate decreased (albeit very slightly) only for the 15-24-year-old group, with the other groups recording a rise, with the largest increase for 25-44-year-olds. (Figure 6.5). In quarter 4 2025, the youth unemployment rate was 9.8%, a small decrease compared with quarter 4 2024, but slightly above the level recorded in quarter 4 2019 (9.6%). The unemployment rate for those aged 25-44 years rose by 0.7 percentage points between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025 and was 0.1 percentage point higher than in quarter 4 2019. For the 45–74-year age group in quarter 4 2025, the rate increased by 0.2 percentage point compared to same quarter of 2024 and was 0.4 percentage points below its level in quarter 4 2019.

Figure 6.5 Unemployment Rate by Age (%), Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024, and Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

In quarter 4 2025, 36,200 persons were classified as long-term unemployed, with levels differing across age groups. Of these, 17,200 were aged 25–44 years, 11,200 were aged 45–74 years, and 7,700 were aged 15–24 years. Compared with quarter 4 2024, those aged 25–44 years had the

largest increase in the number of long-term unemployed (+4,300 persons). Relative to quarter 4 2019, long-term unemployment was higher among those aged 15–24 years (up 2,200 persons, from 5,500), slightly lower among those aged 25–44 years (down 600 persons, from 17,800), and lower among those aged 45–74 years (down 4,300 persons, from 15,500).

Youth Unemployment in Focus

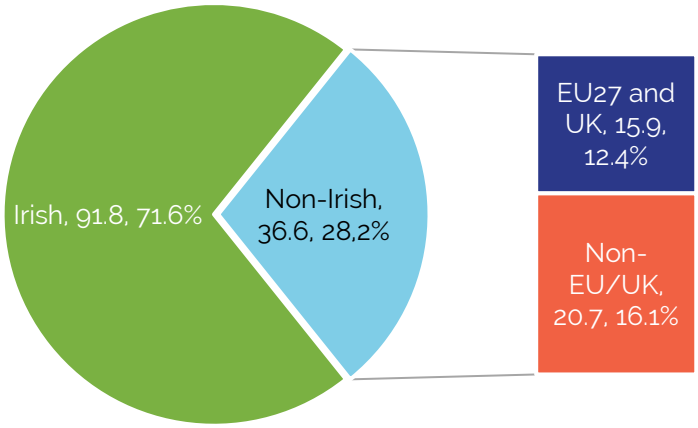
- Across the period from quarter 4 2019 to quarter 4 2025, persons aged 15-24 years consistently recorded a higher unemployment rate than the other age groups.
- This age group also has the lowest share of persons with employment experience other than occasional work across all age groups (37%).
- Nearly half of the unemployed age 15-24 years self-reported as students, even though they were classified (ILO definitions) as unemployed.

6.6 Unemployment by Citizenship

Figure 6.6 presents the distribution of unemployment by citizenship. In quarter 4 2025, of those classified as unemployed, 91,800 were Irish and 36,700 were non-Irish citizens, accounting for nearly 72% and nearly 29%respectively. Within the non-Irish unemployed population, 15,900 persons (12.4% of all unemployed) were EU27 or UK nationals, while 20,700 (16.1%) were nationals of other countries.

Compared with quarter 4 2024, the number of unemployed Irish citizens rose by 6,700 persons (or 8%) while the share remained almost unchanged. At the same time, the number of non-Irish unemployed persons increased by 5,500 persons (up 18%). The largest increase amongst non-Irish citizens was recorded among non-EU/UK unemployed persons, which rose by 3,700 persons (or 19.8%), while the number of unemployed EU27/UK citizens increased by 1,800 persons (or 13.0%).

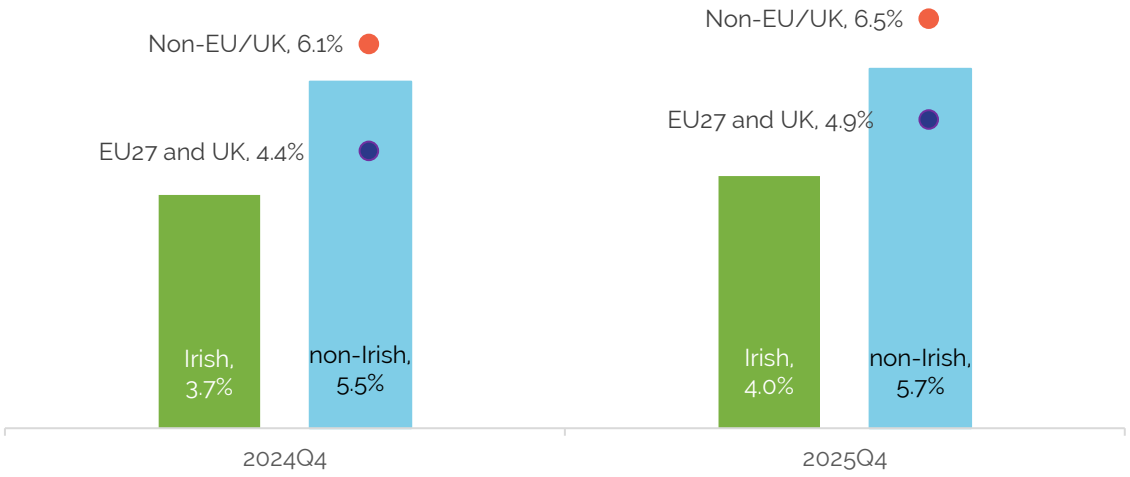
Figure 6.6 Unemployment by Citizenship (000s, %), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Figure 6.7 presents unemployment rates for Irish and non-Irish citizens in quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025. In quarter 4 2025, the unemployment rate stood at 4.0% for Irish citizens, compared to 5.7% for non-Irish citizens. Within the non-Irish population, the unemployment rate was 4.9% for EU27 and UK nationals, rising to 6.5% among nationals of other countries. Compared to quarter 4 2024, the unemployment rate increased for both groups: by 0.3 percentage points for Irish citizens, and by 0.2 percentage points for non-Irish citizens. Within the non-Irish population, unemployment rates increased by less than half a percentage point for both EU27/UK nationals and nationals of other countries.

Figure 6.7 Unemployment Rate by Citizenship (%), Quarter 4 2024–Quarter 4 2025



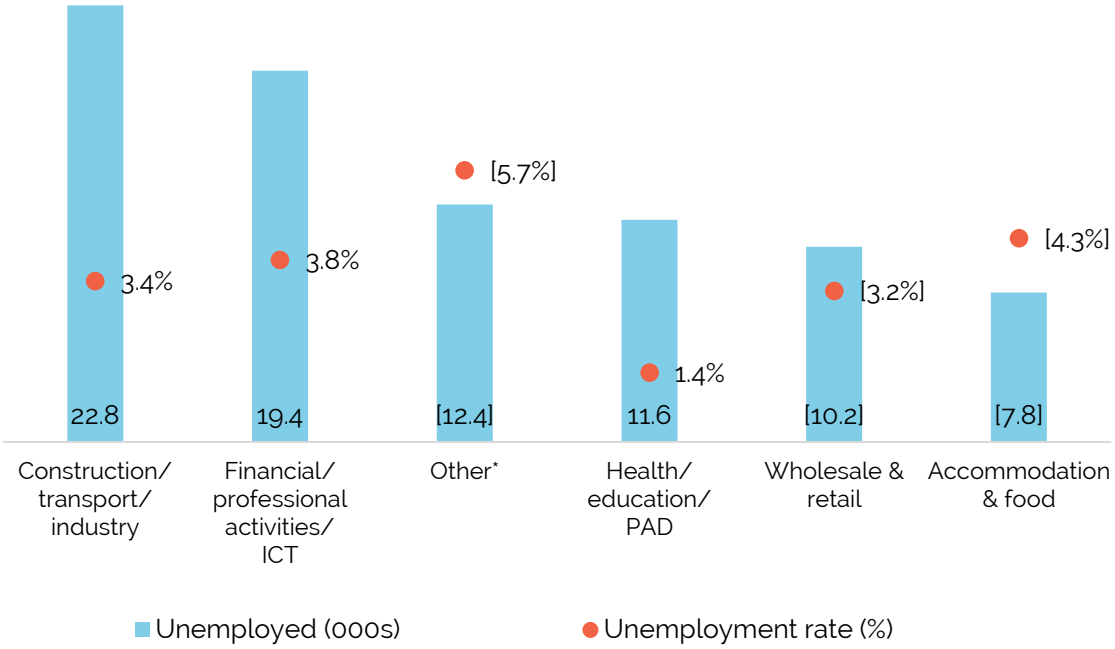
Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

6.7 Unemployment by Sector

Figure 6.8 presents the unemployment levels and rates by sector, excluding those who did not state a previous sector of employment (44,000 persons). As unemployment numbers have declined since 2021, several sectors have been grouped to facilitate reporting.

In quarter 4 2025, the highest number of unemployed persons had previously worked in construction, transport or industry (a combined total of 22,800 persons). This was followed by 19,400 persons who were previously employed in financial, professional activities or ICT. There were also 11,600 unemployed persons previously employed in combined health, education, or public administration and defence sectors; this group had, as in the previous year, the lowest unemployment rate (1.4%). The highest unemployment rate was among those who were previously employed in other (administrative support services, agriculture, arts, entertainment and other services and other sectors) and the accommodation and food sector, though those rates are based on small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution.

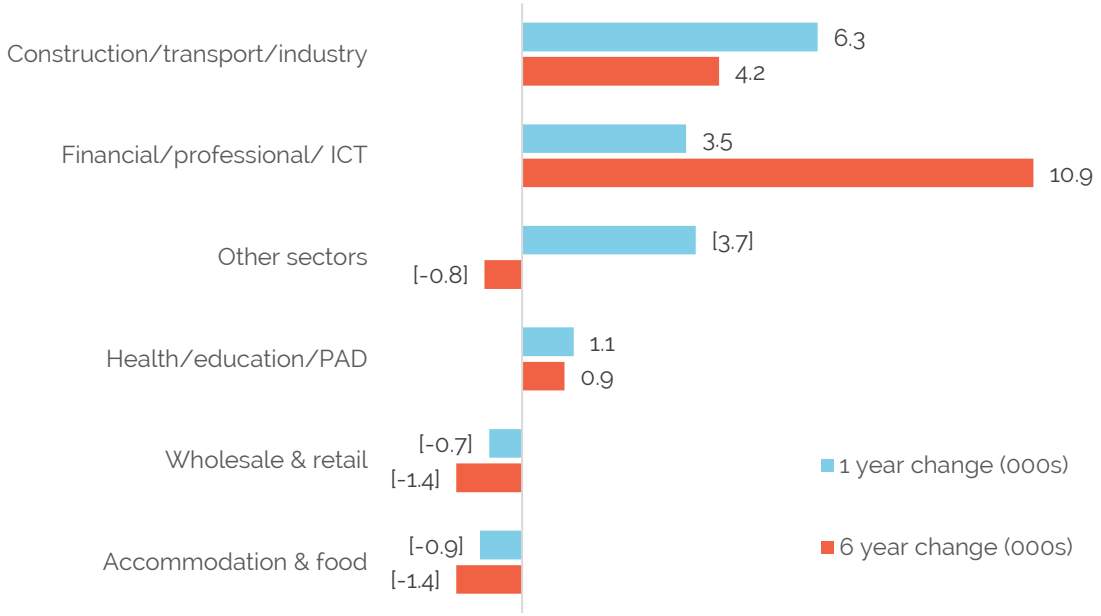
Figure 6.8 Unemployment by Sector (000s, %), Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data
Note: Other includes administrative support services, agriculture, arts, entertainment and other services and other sectors but excludes not stated
Numbers in square brackets are based on small sample sizes and should be treated with caution.

Unemployment levels showed varying patterns across sectors between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025. Slight declines occurred for those previously employed in the accommodation and food and wholesale and retail sectors, yet this is based on small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution. All other listed sectors recorded increases in the number of unemployed individuals. Those previously employed in construction, transport or industry recorded the largest increase in unemployment, rising by 6,300 persons (or 38.2%). Unemployment among those formerly working in financial, professional activities or ICT sectors increased by 3,500 persons (or 22.0%), while those from the health, education or PAD sectors experienced an increase of 1,100 persons (or 10.5%).
When quarter 4 2025 is compared with quarter 4 2019, the largest increase in unemployment was among those previously employed in financial, professional activities or ICT sectors, where unemployment levels more than doubled, rising by 128.2% (an additional 10,900 persons). This was followed by construction, transport or industry, where unemployment increased by 22.6% (an additional 4,200 unemployed persons). Over the same period, unemployment among those previously employed in accommodation and food, and wholesale and retail sectors, declined in both groups by 1,400 persons (15.2% and 12.1%, respectively).

Figure 6.9 Unemployment Change by Sector (000s), Quarter 4 2024-Quarter 4 2025 and Quarter 4 2019-Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Note: Other sectors includes administrative support services, agriculture, arts, entertainment and other services and other sectors but excludes where the sector was not stated

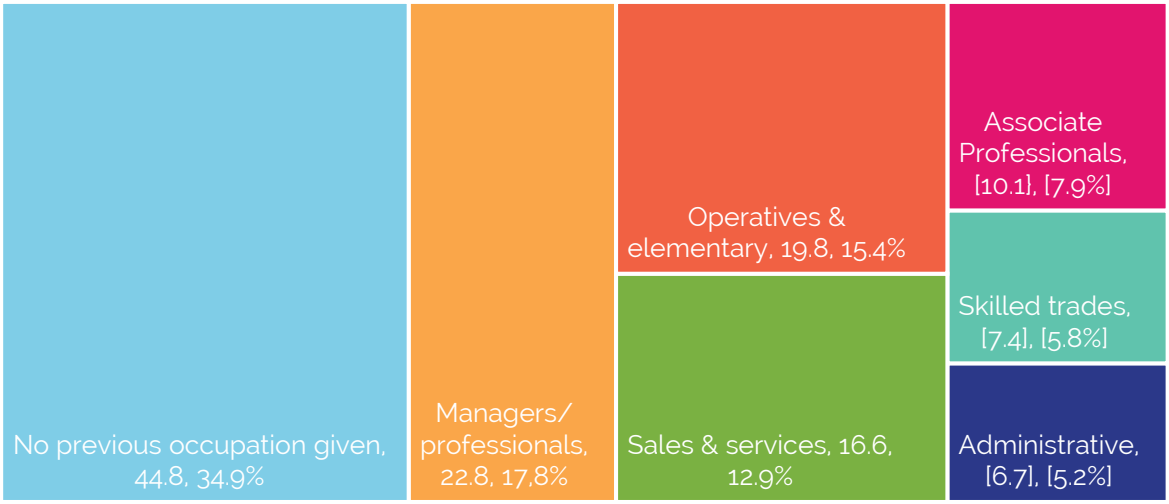
Numbers in square brackets are based on small sample sizes and should be treated with caution.

6.8 Unemployment by Occupation

Figure 6.10 describes the distribution of unemployment by broad occupation, with some grouped due to small numbers. In quarter 4 2025, persons who had not stated a previous occupation (e.g. first-time job seekers or those re-entering the labour force) accounted for 34.9% of all unemployed persons. Among those who had reported a previous occupation, the largest share had previously been employed in managerial or professional occupations (17.8%), followed by persons formerly employed in operative or elementary roles (15.4%).

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, the number of unemployed persons increased among those previously employed in managerial or professional occupations (up 6,800 persons or 42.5%), operatives and elementary jobs (up 5,400 persons or 37.5%), and sales and services occupations (up 3,200 persons or 23.9%). A decrease was recorded only among those previously employed in skilled trades, associate professional roles and persons who had not stated a previous occupation.

Figure 6.10 Unemployment by Previous Occupation (000s and Share (%)) Quarter 4 2025

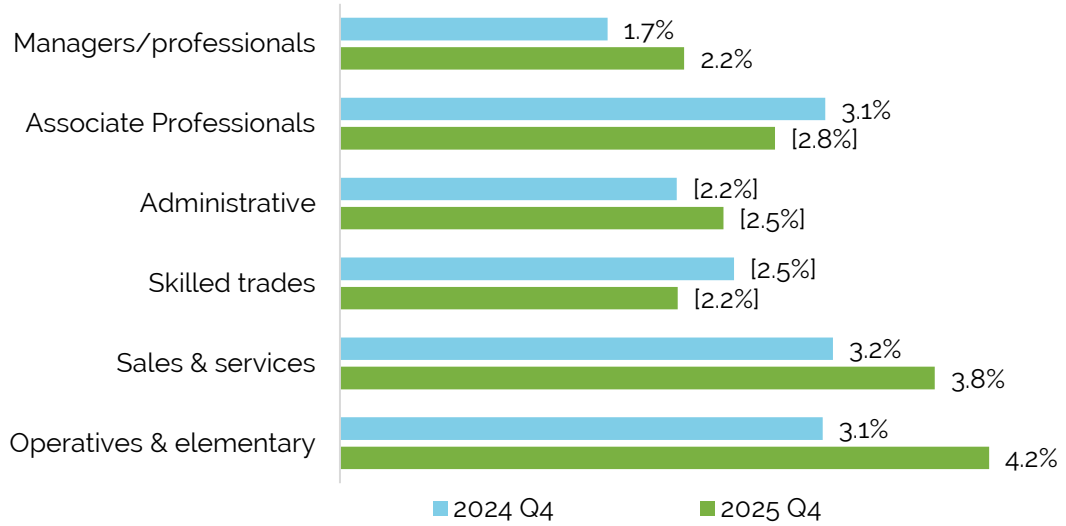


Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data
Note: Numbers in square brackets are based on small sample sizes and should be treated with caution.

In quarter 4 2025, persons previously employed in managerial or professional occupations and in skilled trades recorded the lowest unemployment rate, both at 2.2% (Figure 6.11). In contrast, the highest unemployment rates were observed among those previously employed in operative or elementary occupations (4.2%) and sales or services occupations (3.8%). Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, unemployment rates across occupational groups showed modest changes overall. The largest increase was recorded among persons previously employed in operative or elementary occupations (1.1 percentage point), while increases were also observed among those previously employed in sales and services, administrative and managerial or professional roles.

Compared to quarter 4 2019, the unemployment rate in quarter 4 2025 remained broadly similar across most occupational groups. Nevertheless, unemployment rates were marginally higher among associate professionals, those in managerial or professional occupations, and those in administrative roles, with lower unemployment rates for the remaining occupational groups.

Figure 6.11 Unemployment Rate by Previous Occupation (%), Quarter 4 2024–Quarter 4 2025



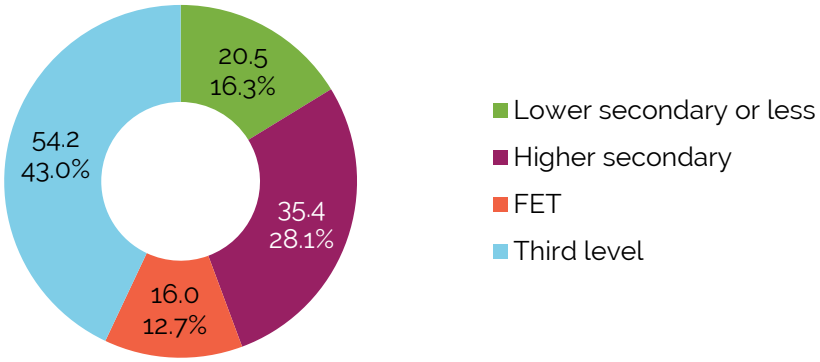
Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data
Note: Excludes persons who did not state or have a previous occupation; numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution.

6.9 Unemployment by Education

Unemployment by education is presented in Figure 6.12. In quarter 4 2025, 43% of all unemployed persons (excluding those who did not state a level of education) held a third-level qualification. More than a quarter (28.1%) held higher secondary qualifications (e.g. Leaving Certificate), while a further 12.7% held a FET qualification. 16.3% had a lower secondary education or less.

Compared to quarter 4 2024, unemployment increased for most educational attainment levels; only those with higher secondary educational attainment saw a decline (-8.8%, or 3,400 fewer unemployed persons). In terms of increases, the smallest increase was recorded among those with lower secondary education or less, rising by 1,400 persons (or 7.3%), The largest increase was observed among third-level graduates, where unemployment rose by 10,700 persons (24.6%).

Figure 6.12 Unemployment by Education Attainment Level* (000s, %), Quarter 4 2025

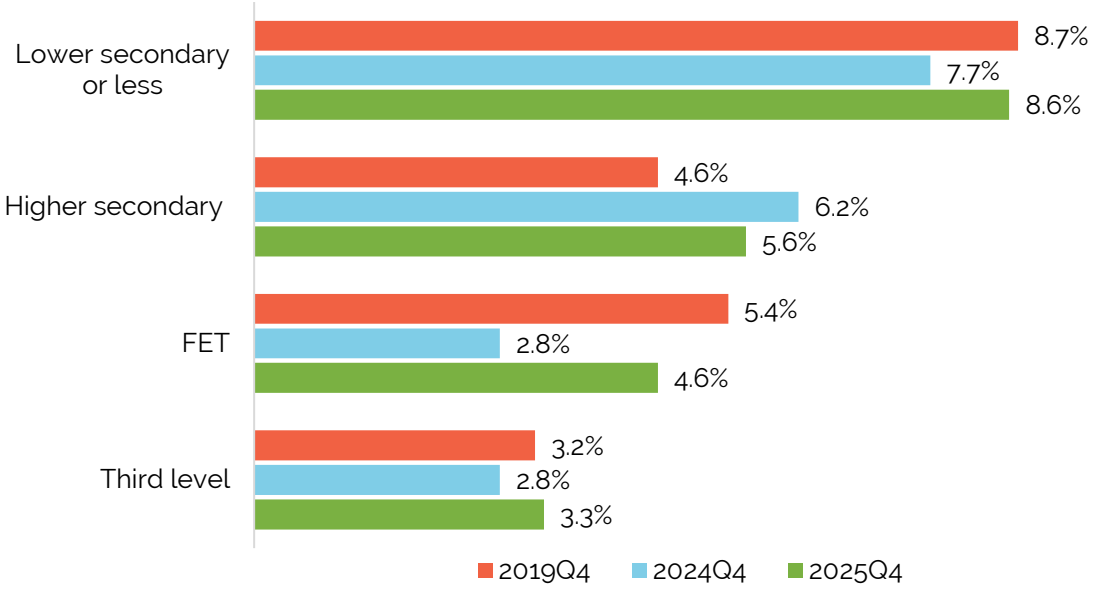


Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data
Note: Excludes not stated.

Unemployment rates by education attainment level for quarter 4 in 2019, 2024 and 2025 are presented in Figure 6.13. In quarter 4 2025, the higher the educational attainment level, the lower the unemployment rate, with an unemployment rate of 8.6% for those holding lower secondary education or less compared to 5.6% for those with higher secondary education, 4.6% for those with FET, and 3.3% for those with third level.

When compared to quarter 4 2024, unemployment rates increased slightly for most education attainment level groups, except those with higher secondary, for whom the unemployment rate declined slightly by over half a percentage point. When compared to quarter 4 2019, however, unemployment rates were almost unchanged for those with lower secondary education and those with third level, but while there was a full percentage point increase for those with upper secondary education (4.6% to 5.6%,), the unemployment rate for those with FET level education fell (from 5.4% to 4.6%).

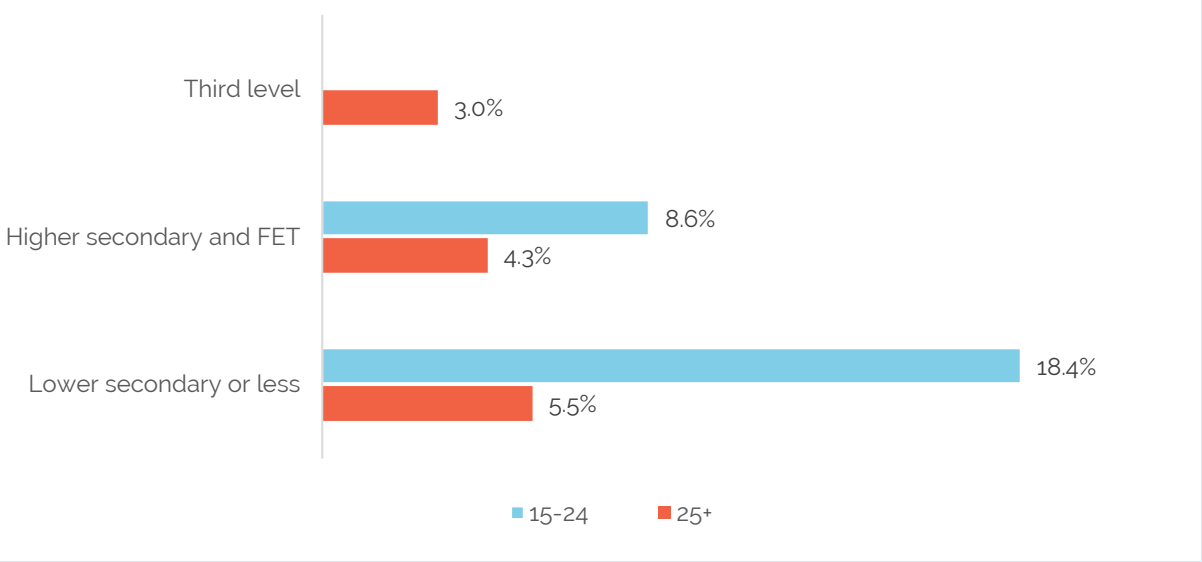
Figure 6.13 Unemployment Rate by Education Level (%), Quarter 4 2019. Quarter 4 2024 and Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data
Note: Excludes not stated.

In quarter 4 2025, as in quarter 4 2024, persons aged 15-24 years recorded the highest unemployment rates across lower secondary education or less and higher secondary/FET. In quarter 4 2025, those aged 15-24 years with lower secondary education or less had the highest unemployment rate (18.4%), while persons aged 25 years or over with third-level qualifications had the lowest rate at 3.0% (Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.14 Unemployment Rate (%) by Education and Age Group, Quarter 4 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data. The data for third level education for 15-24 age group is not reported due to small sample size.
Note: Excludes not stated.

Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, unemployment rates increased among persons with lower secondary education or less across both age groups, with the largest increase observed among those aged 15–24 years. In contrast, unemployment rates among persons with higher secondary/FET and third-level education showed little change over the period across both age cohorts.

Comparing quarter 4 2019 with quarter 4 2025, the largest declines in unemployment rates were again recorded among persons with lower secondary education or less, for both age groups. Over the same period, unemployment rates among those with higher secondary/FET and third-level education remained broadly unchanged.

Section 7 Labour Market Transitions

This section examines movements within the Irish labour market, examining labour market transitions, those who commenced a job within the previous three months (recent job hires) and those who exited the workforce within the previous three months (recent job leavers).[32]

7.1 Overall Transitions

The change in the labour market status of individuals – employment, unemployment and economic inactivity – between two points in time is referred to as a 'labour market transition'. The analysis of labour market transitions is based on the CSO Labour Force Survey (LFS) which allows for the examination of survey participants who remain on the survey panel in two subsequent quarters.

Average quarterly labour market transitions for 2025 are presented in Table 7.1. As observed in preceding years, with the exception of the unemployed, most individuals do not change their labour market status between successive quarters. In 2025, on average, 96% of individuals who were in employment remained employed, 88% of those economically inactive continued to be outside the labour force and 43% of those unemployed remained unemployed. Nonetheless, some individuals changed their labour market status between quarters: 4% of individuals transitioned out of employment, 3% to inactivity and 1% to unemployment; 57% of individuals transitioned out of unemployment, 32% to employment and 25% to inactivity; 12% of individuals transitioned out of inactivity, 8% to employment and 4% to unemployment.

Compared to 2024, the distribution of transitions remained broadly unchanged.

Table 7.1 Labour Market Transitions[33] by ILO Status (Persons Aged 15-74), 2025

	ILO end quarter		
ILO start quarter	**Employed**	**Unemployed**	**Inactive**
Employed	96%	1%	3%
Unemployed	32%	43%	25%
Inactive	8%	4%	88%

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data.

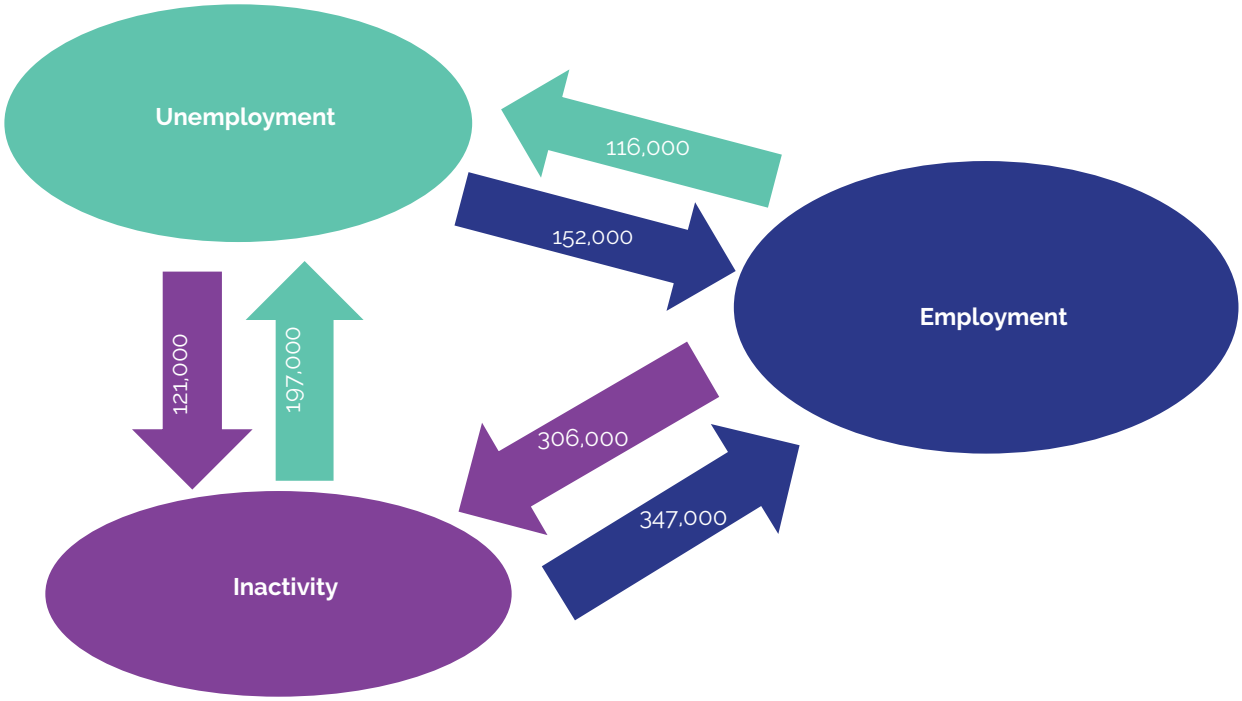
[32] The transitions data reported in this section reflects the most recent Labour Force Survey release for each of the quarters in 2025 (extracted July 2026); in contrast, data on recent job hires and job leavers for 2025 reflects the original Labour Force Survey release; while this data has been revised since then, the differences are small and do not impact on the analysis.

[33] Sum of transitions between quarter 4 2024 to quarter 1 2025, quarter 1 2025 to quarter 2 2025, quarter 2 2025 to quarter 3 2025, and quarter 3 2025 to quarter 4 2025.

Figure 7.1 shows estimated annual transitions in the Irish labour market in 2025. It is estimated that 1.24 million transitions occurred in the Irish labour market in 2025 (i.e. transitions between the core labour market states), compared with 1.22 million in 2024, 1.18 million in 2023, 1.24 million in 2022 and 1.03 million in 2019.[34] In 2025, there were approximately 268,000 transitions between employment and unemployment, 653,000 between employment and inactivity and 318,000 between unemployment and inactivity.

Compared to 2024, there was an increase in the volume of transitions from employment to unemployment (18,000) and from unemployment to employment (13,000), a combined increase of 31,000 transitions. The number of transitions from employment to inactivity and inactivity to employment decreased (34,000 and 6,000 respectively), a combined decrease of 40,000 transitions. The number of transitions from unemployment to inactivity increased very modestly (5,000), while the number of transitions from inactivity to unemployment increased (23,000), a combined increase of 28,000.

Figure 7.1 Labour Market Transitions, 2025 (Sum of Four Quarters)



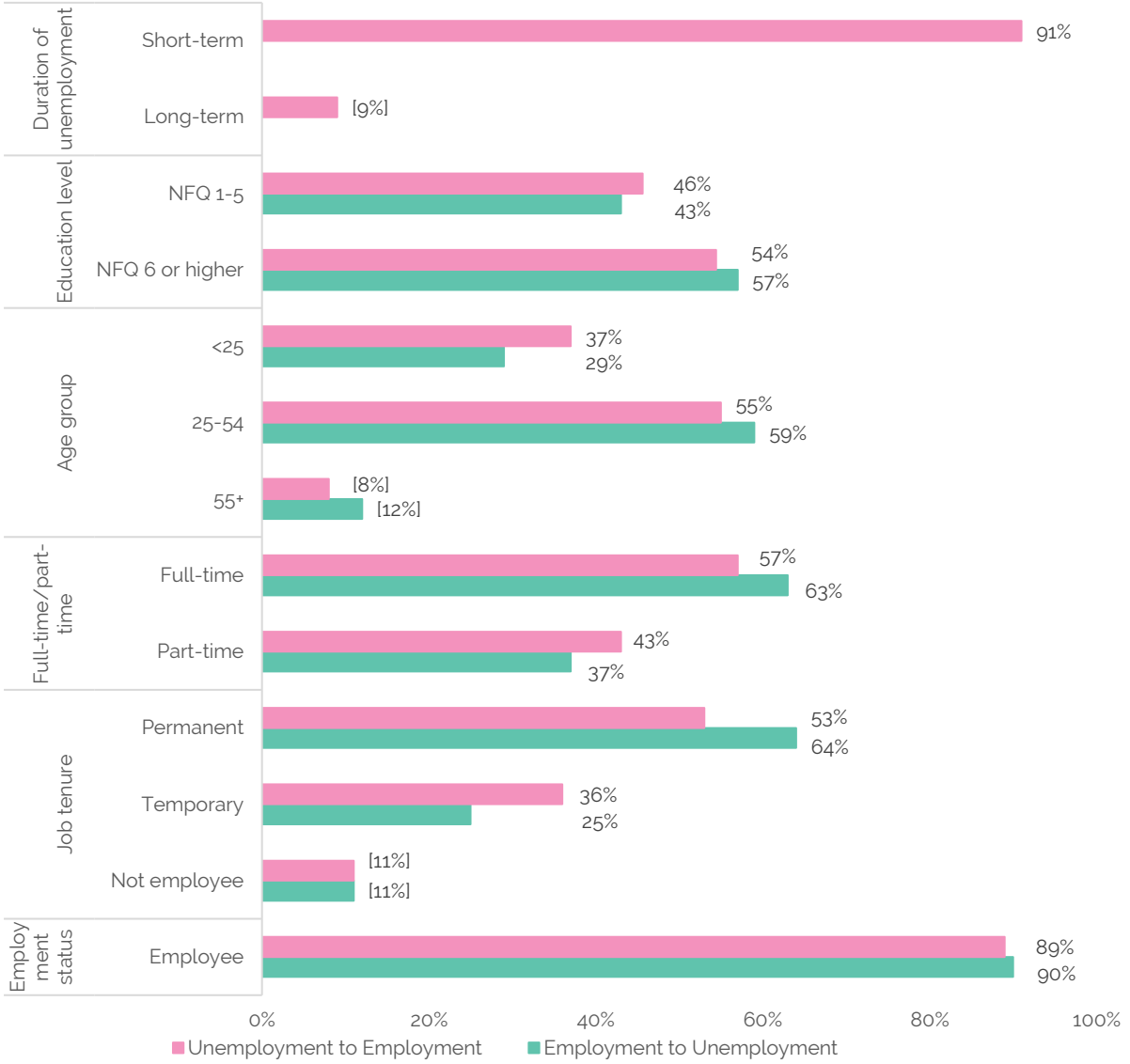
Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

[34] Due to issues with LFS data in the latter half of 2025, the occupational transitions data was excluded from this analysis. As such, the total number of transitions is different to previous editions of the National Skills Bulletin.

7.1.1 Transitions between Employment and Unemployment

The composition of transitions between employment and unemployment is presented in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2 Transitions between Employment and Unemployment, 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Note: Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution
Duration of unemployment: Total figures exclude those who did not state whether they were short-term or long-term unemployed.
NFQ level qualification: Total figures exclude those who did not state their NFQ level qualification.
Job tenure: Total figures exclude the not stated category.
Employment status: Figures for those who were self-employed or assisting relatives were too small to report.

Employment Status

In 2025, at 90%, the employee category accounted for most of those transitioning from employment to unemployment, which was 4 percentage points higher than the share of 86% observed in 2024. Of these, only 0.6% were associated with State-sponsored employment

schemes. Of transitions from unemployment to employment, 89% were to the employee category, which was 3 percentage points lower than the share observed in 2024 (at 92%). Of these, 4.2% were associated with employment schemes. In respect of both transition flows, the remainder were either self-employed or assisting relatives, but the numbers were too small for reporting and analysis.

Job Tenure

In terms of permanency of tenure, 64% of exits to unemployment were from permanent jobs, compared to 53% of entries into employment (Figure 7.2). The share of persons in temporary employment was greater in entries to employment compared to their share in exits to unemployment (36% compared to 25%). Compared to 2024, the share exiting employment from permanent jobs increased (6 percentage points), while the share exiting temporary jobs decreased (3 percentage points). The share entering permanent or temporary jobs decreased (1 and 2 percentage points respectively).

Full-Time or Part-Time

In 2025, 63% of transitions from employment to unemployment were from full-time employment, compared to 57% of transitions from unemployment to employment (Figure 7.2). Compared to 2024, the share of entries to full-time employment increased (4 percentage points), while a 3-percentage point increase was observed for the share of exits from full-time employment.

Broad Age Group

In 2025, the age distributions of exits from and entries to employment differed in that the share of persons younger than 25 years was greater in entries to employment compared to their share in exits from employment (37% compared to 29%) (Figure 7.2). Over half (55%) of entries into employment was associated with those aged 25-54 compared to 59% in exits from employment.

Compared to 2024, no change was observed in the share of persons aged younger than 25 years in exits from employment, while a 1 percentage point increase was observed in their share in entries to employment. The share aged 25-54 years in entries to employment and exits from employment increased (2 percentage points each).

National Framework Qualification (NFQ) Level

In 2025, the share of holders of NFQ level 6 qualifications or higher in exits from employment was higher than their share in entries to employment (57% compared to 54%); in contrast, the share of holders of NFQ level 5 or less qualifications was lower in exits from employment compared to entries to employment (43% compared to 46%). Just over 30% of transitions from employment to unemployment or in the opposite direction (from unemployment to employment) was associated with persons with NFQ level 4/5 qualifications (at 32% and 33% respectively).

Compared to 2024, a 3-percentage point increase was observed in the share of holders of NFQ level 6 qualifications or higher in exits from employment, while a 1 percentage point increase was observed in their share in entries to employment.

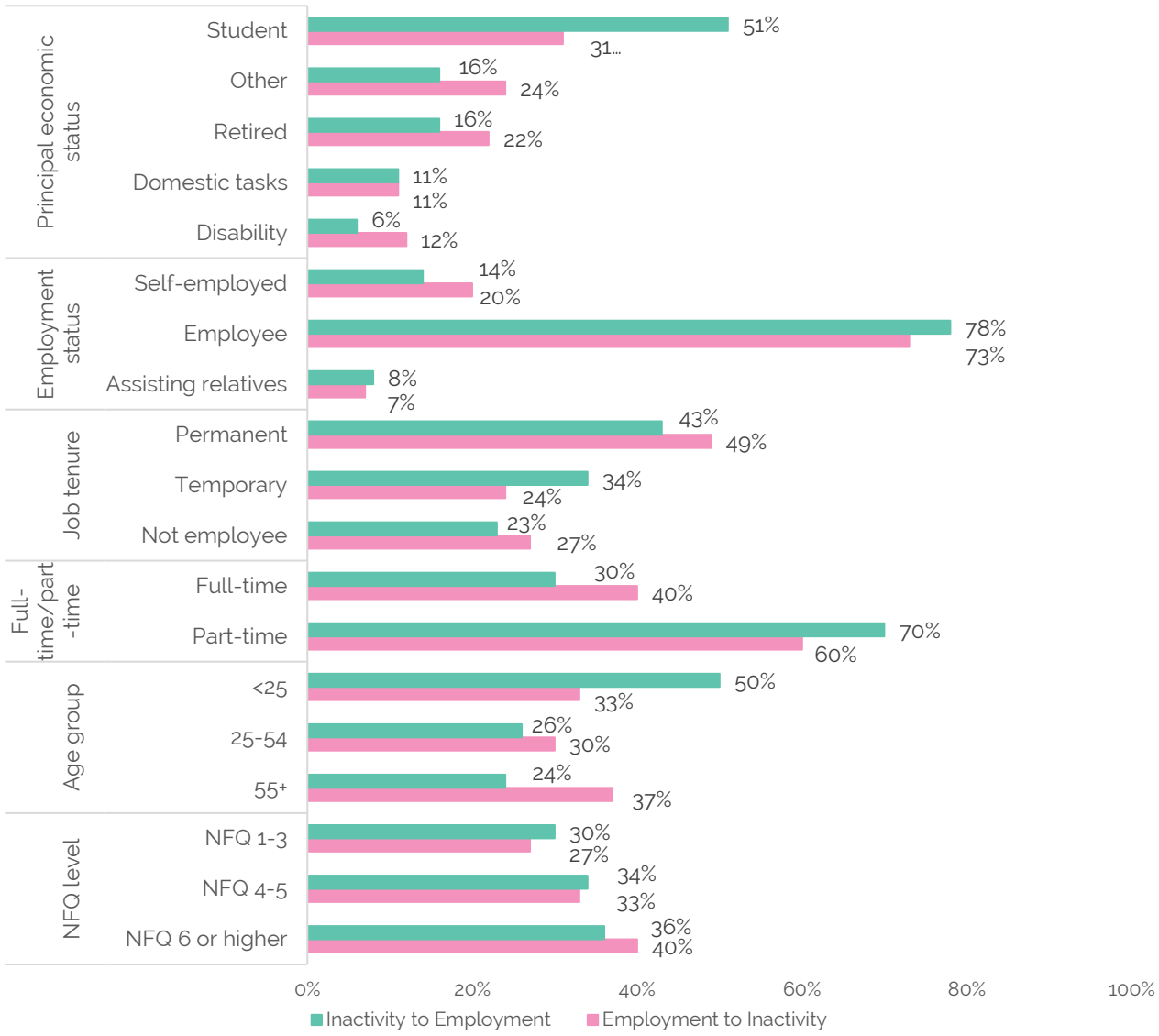
Duration of Unemployment

In 2025, at 91%, most transitions from unemployment to employment were from short-term unemployment, although the share has increased since 2024 (87%).

7.1.2 Transitions between Employment and Inactivity

The composition of transitions between employment and inactivity is detailed in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 Transitions between Employment and Inactivity, 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Note: **NFQ level qualification:** Total figures exclude those who did not state their NFQ level qualification.
Job Tenure: Total figures exclude the not stated category.

Principal Economic Status

In 2025, of the total transitions from employment to inactivity, 31% was to study, 22% to retirements, 12% was accounted for by exits due to long-standing health problems, a further 11% was due to being engaged in domestic tasks while the remaining 24% was for other reasons (Figure 7.3). In terms of transitions from inactivity to employment, 51% was from study, 16% from retirements, 11% from domestic tasks, 6% from long-standing health problems, with the remaining 16% from other forms of inactivity.

Compared to 2024, the most notable change in the distribution of transitions from employment to inactivity was a 5-percentage point increase observed in the share of exits from employment to

study (from 26% to 31%); for transitions in the opposite direction, a 3-percentage point increase was observed in the share engaged in domestic tasks in transitions from inactivity to employment.

Employment Status

In 2025, 73% of transitions from employment to inactivity were in the employee category (of which 2.2% was associated with Government employment schemes), while 78% of transitions from inactivity to employment was associated with employees (of which 1.9% was associated with Government employment schemes) (Figure 7.3).

Compared to 2024, the share of employees entering employment from inactivity or exiting employment to inactivity increased (2 percentage points each); in contrast, the share associated with assisting relatives entering employment from inactivity or exiting employment to inactivity decreased (3 percentage points each).

Job Tenure

In 2025, 49% of transitions from employment to inactivity were from permanent employment compared to 43% of transitions from inactivity to permanent employment (Figure 7.3). Just over one third (34%) of transitions from inactivity to employment were to temporary jobs compared to their share of 24% from employment to inactivity.

Compared to 2024, the share of transitions from inactivity to permanent employment increased (6 percentage points), and their share in transitions in the opposite direction (from employment to inactivity) also increased (2 percentage points).

Full-Time and Part-Time

In 2025, 60% of transitions from employment to inactivity were associated with part-time employment, while the distribution of flows from inactivity to employment was more skewed towards part-time employment (with 70% of transitions into part-time employment) (Figure 7.3).

Compared to 2024, the distribution of transitions from inactivity to employment did not change significantly, in terms of transitions in the opposite direction, the share of transitions from part-time employment to inactivity increased (2 percentage points).

Broad Age Group

In 2025, the share of persons younger than 25 years in transitions from inactivity to employment was greater than their share in exits from employment to inactivity (50% compared to 33%); the share of persons aged 55 years or older in entries to employment was 24% compared to 37% in exits from employment, while the share of persons aged 25 to 54 years in entries to employment was 26% compared to 30% in exits from employment (Figure 7.3).

Compared to 2024, the distribution of transitions from inactivity to employment did not change significantly; in terms of transitions in the opposite direction, a 5-percentage point decrease was observed in the share of persons aged 25-54 years in transitions from employment to inactivity, while a 4-percentage increase was observed for those younger than 25 years.

National Framework Qualification (NFQ) Level

In 2025, 60% of transitions from employment to inactivity were associated with persons who had attained qualifications equivalent to NFQ level 5 or below (which was lower than the share of 64% transitioning from inactivity to employment); the share transitioning from employment to inactivity at NFQ level 6 or above was higher than the share transitioning from inactivity to employment (40% compared with 36%); the share transitioning from employment to inactivity at NFQ level 1/3

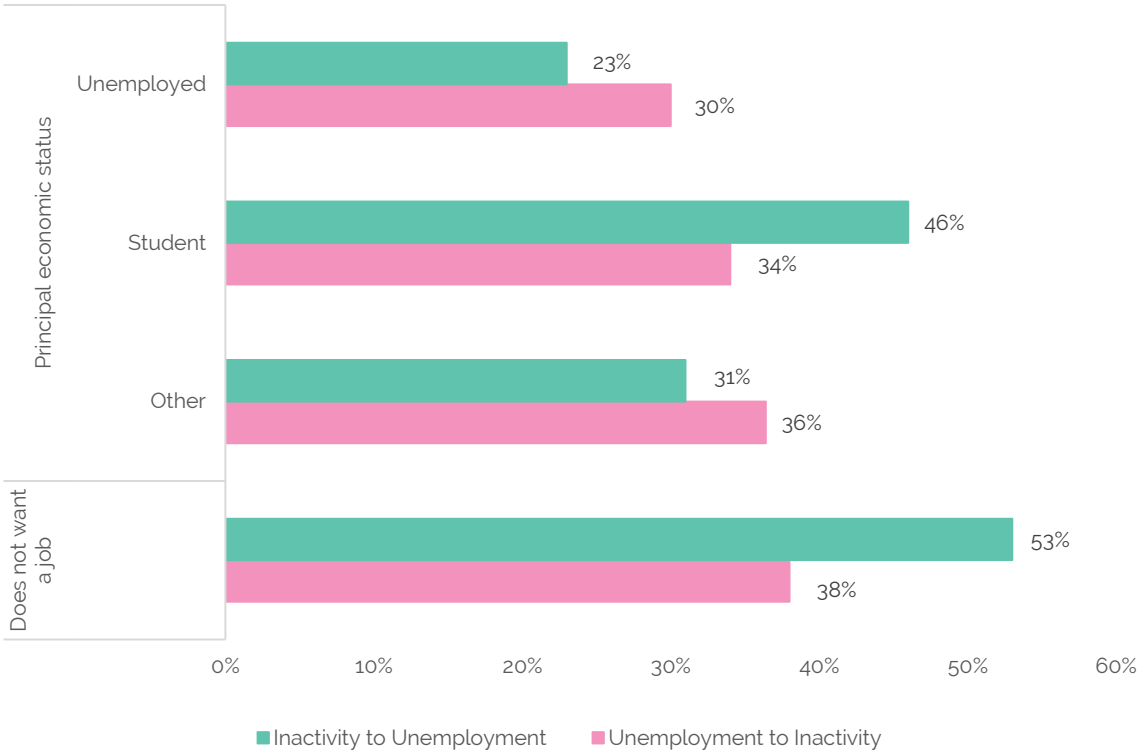
was lower than the share transitioning from inactivity to employment at this education level (27% compared with 30%) (Figure 7.3).

Compared to 2024, the distribution of transitions from inactivity to employment increased by 4 percentage points for those with qualifications at NFQ 6 or higher; the distribution of transitions from employment to inactivity by the NFQ qualification level categories was broadly similar to that observed in 2024.

7.1.3 Transitions between Unemployment and Inactivity

The composition of transitions between unemployment and inactivity is detailed in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4 Transitions between Unemployment and Inactivity, 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

In 2025, 38% of transitions from unemployment to inactivity were associated with persons who did not want a job for various reasons (Figure 7.4). In the opposite direction, the share was higher in transitions from inactivity to unemployment, 53% of persons did not want a job. Other categories include discouraged workers, persons who wanted a job, but were not available or seeking work due to being in education or training, illness/disability, looking after children or for other reasons. The numbers in such categories are not reported as they are too small.

Compared to 2024, an 8-percentage point increase was observed in the share of persons who did not want a job in transitions from unemployment to inactivity, while a 9-percentage point increase was observed in the share in transitions in the opposite direction (from inactivity to unemployment).

Principal Economic Status

In 2025, 30% of all persons moving from unemployment to inactivity continued to state their current principal economic status as unemployed; the share transitioning in the opposite direction

(from inactivity to unemployment) was lower, at 23%. Just over one third (34%) of transitions from unemployment to inactivity were to study, compared to 46% in the opposite direction (from inactivity to unemployment) (Figure 7.4). Approximately 36% of transitions from unemployment to inactivity were categorised as 'other' (which includes those retired, engaged in domestic tasks, unable to work due to long standing health problems or for other reasons), compared with 31% in the opposite direction.

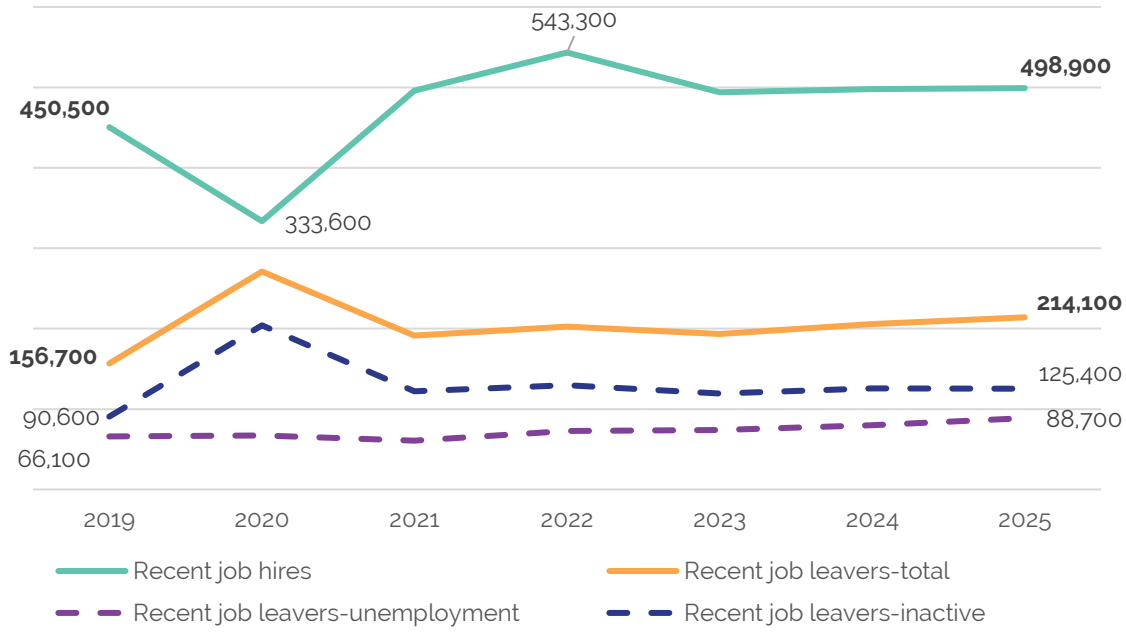
Compared to 2024, a 3-percentage point increase was observed in the share of students in transitions from unemployment to inactivity, with a 2-percentage increase was observed for this category in transitions in the opposite direction. A 6-percentage point increase was observed in the share for 'the other category' in transitions from unemployment to inactivity, while a 3-percentage increase was observed in the share for this category from inactivity to unemployment.

7.2 Recent job hires and job leavers

Recent job hires data refers to those who commenced employment in the previous three months, whereas recent job leavers data includes persons who exited employment within the past three months and subsequently became either unemployed or economically inactive. For both sets of data, the four quarters of each year have been summed to allow for a more comprehensive analysis than would have been possible if examining by quarter. It is important to note that individuals may be counted more than once within the same year if they change jobs across different quarters.

Figure 7.5 provides an overview of recent trends for both job hires and job leavers. Overall, recent job hires have remained at the same level since 2023, having experienced a COVID-19-related fall in 2020 and a subsequent surge in recruitment. The number of recent job leavers has seen a gradual increase in recent years driven by those entering unemployment. The number of those who left employment and entered economic inactivity rose sharply in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic but have remained stable in recent years.

Figure 7.5 Recent Job Hires and Recent Job Leavers (Sum of Four Quarters), 2019-2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

7.2.1 Recent job hires

Those aged 15-24 years accounted for the highest volume of recent job hires in the three time periods examined in Figure 7.6 with an increase of almost 8,000 between 2024 and 2025. Those aged 35-44 years were the only other age cohort to experience an increase over this time period. Between 2019 and 2025, recent job hires increased across all age cohorts with the exception of those aged 45-54 years.

Those with third level qualifications accounted for the highest share of recent job hires in 2025, the number of hires for this educational cohort increased in both time periods examined in Figure 7.7, accounting for 48% of all recent job hires in 2025 compared to a 43% share in 2019. In contrast, the number of new hires for those with lower secondary education or less saw little change in the periods examined and those with higher secondary education or FET saw a fall in the number of hires when compared to both 2019 and 2024.

Figure 7.6 Recent Hires by Age, 2019, 2024 & 2025

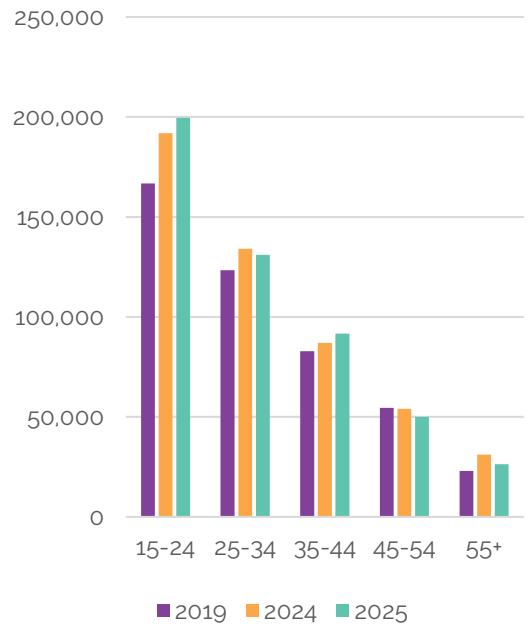
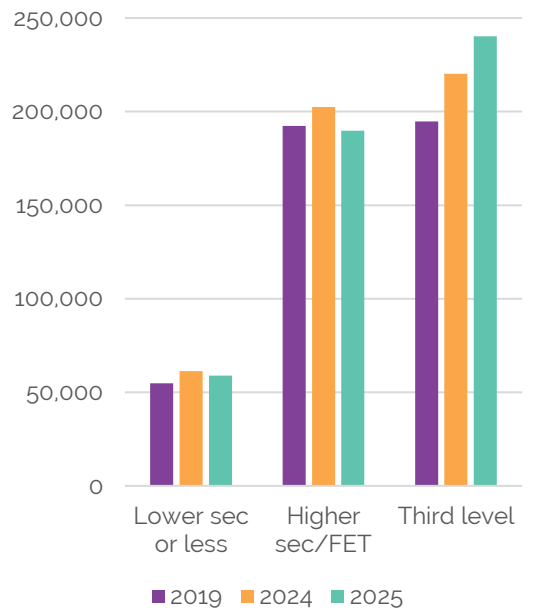


Figure 7.7 Recent Hires by Education Level, 2019, 2024 & 2025

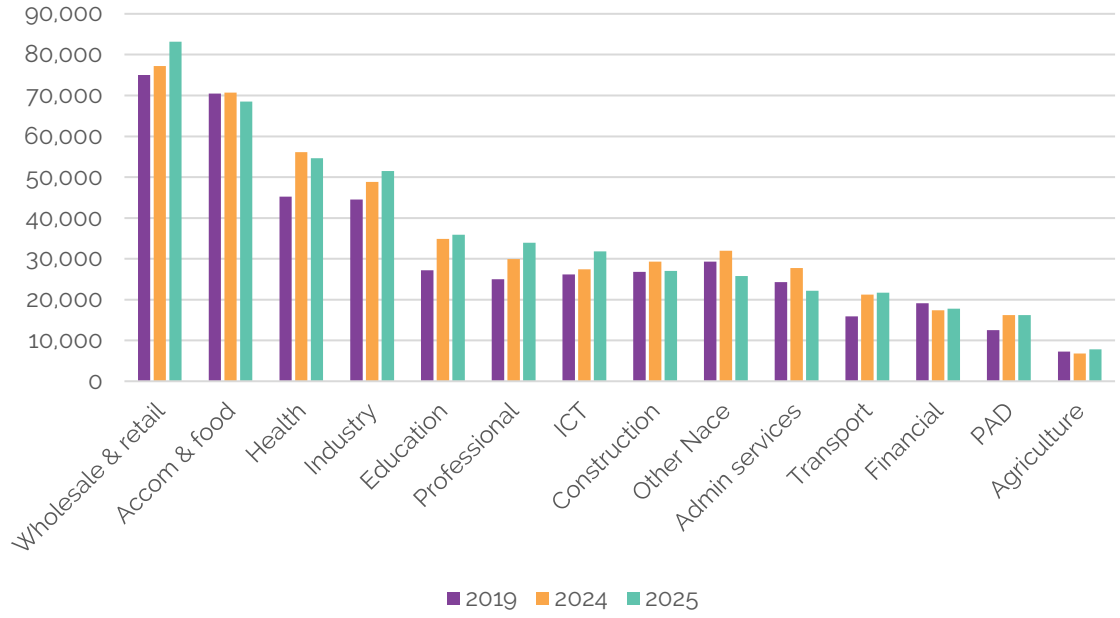


Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

In 2025, the wholesale and retail and accommodation and food sectors accounted for the largest number of recent job hires (Figure 7.8), as was the case in 2019 and 2024.

Between 2024 and 2025, the largest increase was for the wholesale and retail sector (+6,000 hires), followed by ICT (+4,400 hires) and professional activities (+4,000 hires), with the largest declines for Other Nace sectors (-6,200 hires) and administrative services (-5,500 hires). Between 2019 and 2025, the largest increase in the number of job hires was for the health sector (+9,400 hires).

Figure 7.8 Recent Job Hires by Sector, 2019, 2024 & 2025

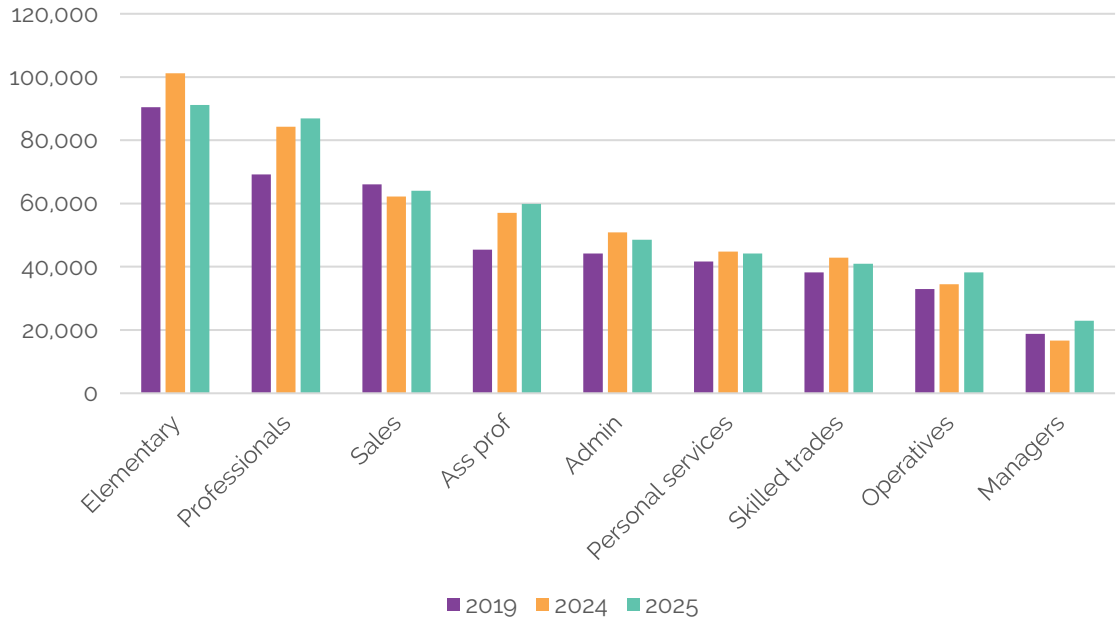


Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Elementary and professional occupations accounted for the largest numbers of recent job hires in 2025 (Figure 7.9). While the number of hires for elementary occupations fell between 2024 and 2025 (-10,000 hires), they rose slightly for professional occupations (+2,600 hires); managerial occupations had the largest increase over this time period (+6,200 hires) but they remain the smallest occupation in terms of the number of new hires.

Between 2019 and 2025, the number of new hires for professionals and associate professionals had the strongest growth (+17,700 and +14,500 hires respectively), highlighting the increased demand for high skilled roles in the economy.

Figure 7.9 Recent Job Hires by Broad Occupation, 2019, 2024 & 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Other trends include:

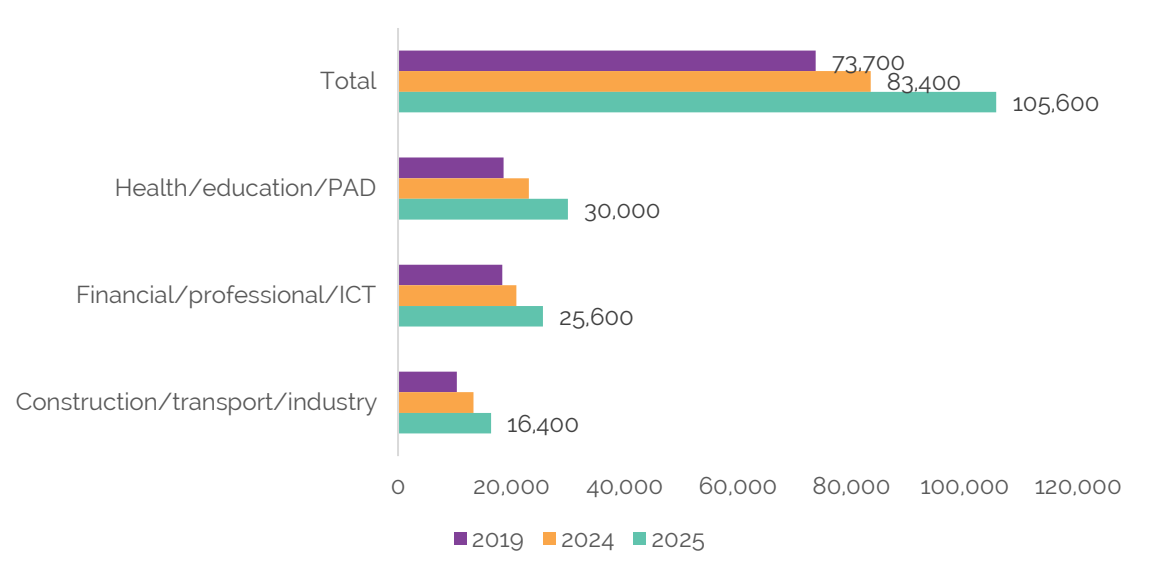
- **Full-time/part-time**: Two thirds of recent job hires in 2025 were for full-time roles, broadly in line with the share in 2024 and 2019.
- **Citizenship**: Just over 70% of recent job hires were for Irish citizens; between 2024 and 2025, the number of job hires for Irish citizens fell (-6,500 hires) whereas they rose for non-Irish citizens (+7,400); the number of new hires for non-Irish citizens has grown stronger than for their Irish counterparts since 2019 (+38,800 and 9,600 hires respectively).
- **Region**: Dublin accounted for 31% of all recent job hires in 2025, followed by the South West (16%) and Mid-East (14%); the number of new hires for the South West region saw the largest increases across both time periods (2019 and 2024), while the Dublin region saw declines compared to both 2024 and 2019.
- **Detailed occupation**: Sales assistants accounted for the largest number of recent job hires in 2025, at 48,100 (or 10% of the total); this was followed by waiters/waitress (22,400 hires), kitchen assistants (16,500 hires), care workers (14,000 hires), and other administrative occupations (14,000 hires).

Box 7.1 Has there been a change to hiring patterns for young graduates?

Overall, employment growth has slowed in Ireland due to factors such global economic uncertainty and significant investment in AI. As seen previously in Figure 7.6 young people account for a significant share of recent job hires; this relates to some extent to a high share in temporary employment while also a student or a recent graduate. This analysis focuses on those with third level qualifications and aged 20-29 years to capture, as much as possible, the hiring patterns of new graduates.

Figure 7.10 below indicates that despite no overall change in the number of recent job hires since 2024, job hires for those aged 20-29 years with third level qualifications has seen strong growth, with 22,200 additional hires. The number of new hires has grown for this cohort across key sectors of the economy (grouped due to the small numbers involved), namely public-sector related (e.g. health, education and public admin and defence), ICT, financial and professional activities and also in construction, transport and industry.

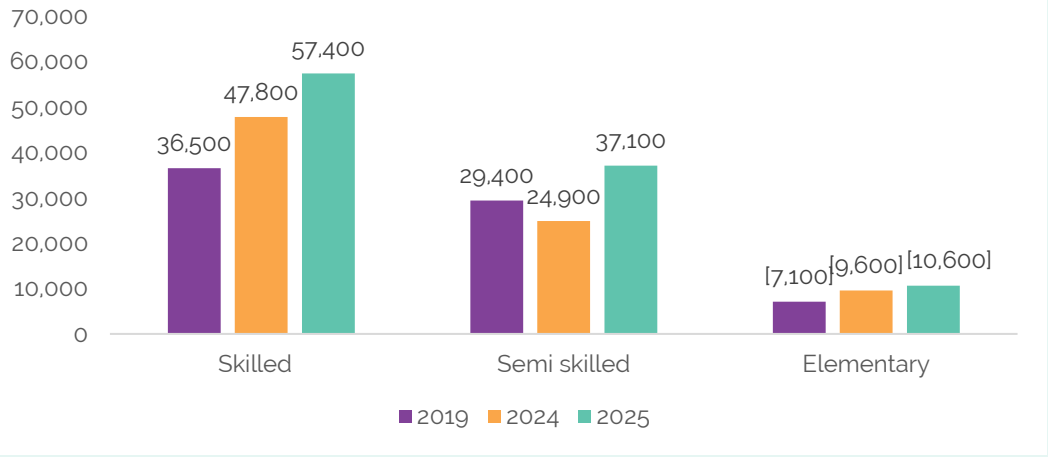
Figure 7.10 Recent Job Hires by Selected Sectors for Those aged 20-29 years with Third Level Education, 2019, 2024 & 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

The highest number of new hires in 2025 for 20-29 year-old third level graduates was in skilled occupations, with an increase of almost 10,000 new hires since 2024. Between 2019 and 2025, new hires for this cohort in skilled occupations grew by 20,900. Despite declining in 2024, the number of new hires in 2025 for those employed in semi-skilled occupations rose sharply to 37,100 in 2025. The number of recent job hires for elementary occupations has seen small gains over the period examined but remain the smallest group.

Figure 7.11 Recent Job Hires by Skilled, Semi-Skilled and Elementary Occupations for those Aged 20-29 Years with Third Level Education, 2019, 2024 & 2025



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution
Note: skilled occupations include professionals, associate professionals, managers, skilled trades; semi-skilled occupations include admin, sales, services and operatives

7.2.2 Recent job leavers

The key characteristics of recent job leavers who became unemployed or economically inactive are detailed in Figures 7.12 and 7,13 respectively.

Age: Persons aged 25-54 years who recently left employment accounted for almost two-thirds (63%) of those who became unemployed and 30% of those who became inactive. The economically inactive group had a notably higher proportion aged 55 years and over (30%), with many entering retirement, and 15–24 years (40%), mostly related to students returning to education.

Reason for leaving: Over half (56%) of leavers who moved into unemployment left the workforce for labour market reasons[35] with a further 14% leaving for education or other personal reasons. The reasons for leaving amongst those who became economically inactive were more spread, with almost a third (31%) leaving for education or other personal reasons, 29% for family reasons, illness, or retirement, and 29% for labour market-related reasons.

Education level: A half of unemployed persons who had recently left the workforce held a third-level qualification compared to 37% for those who became economically inactive.

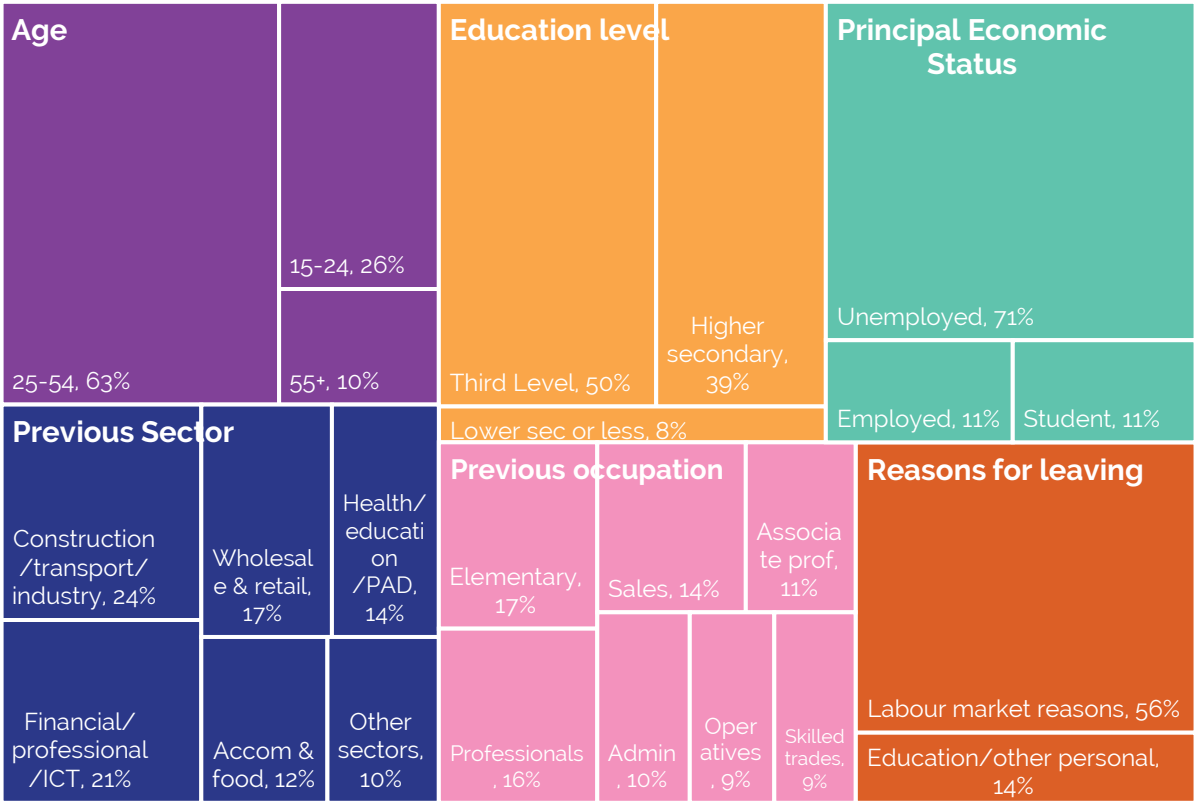
[35] Labour market reasons include being dismissed or made redundant or when a job of a limited duration has ended.

Previous sector: The highest proportion of recent job leavers who were unemployed were previously employed in construction, transport, and industry (24%), followed by financial, professional, and ICT services (21%), and the wholesale and retail sector (17%). Among those who became economically inactive, the largest share came from health, education, and public administration (25%), followed by construction, transport, and industry (18%), and wholesale and retail (14%).

Previous occupation: Combined, elementary, professional and sales occupations accounted for 47% of all job leavers who became unemployed and 50% of those who became inactive.

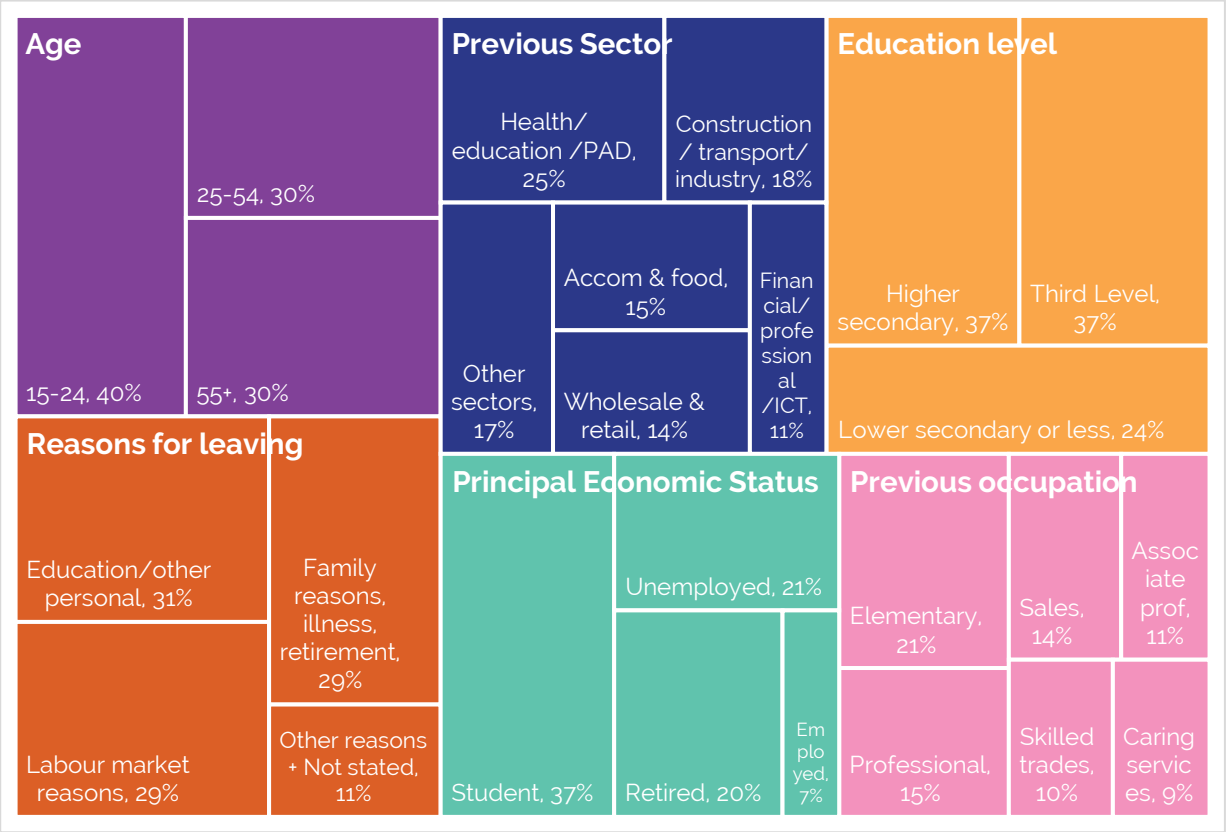
Principal economic status (PES): Among recent job leavers classified as unemployed, 71% identified themselves as unemployed. An additional 11% considered themselves employed (although they did not meet the ILO definition of employment), and a further 11% were classified as students. In contrast, among those who became economically inactive, over one-third (37%) identified as students, 21% as unemployed, and 20% as retired.

Figure 7.12 Recent Job Leavers (Unemployed) by Key Indicators (%), 2025 (Sum of Four Quarters)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Figure 7.13 Recent Job Leavers (Inactive) by Key Indicators (%), 2025 (Sum of Four Quarters)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO LFS data

Section 8 Employment Permits

8.1 Introduction

In this section, we provide an overview of the extent to which employers source labour from outside the EU through an analysis of employment permit data. Employment permits are required for all non-EEA nationals wishing to work in Ireland, unless an exemption applies. Analysing the occupations for which these permits are issued helps policymakers identify areas where employers face difficulties sourcing suitably qualified candidates from the Irish and EU labour market.

8.2 Overall Trends

8.2.1 Employment permits by permit type

There are nine types of employment permits available.[36] The three most common employment permits issued in Ireland include:

Critical skills: designed to attract highly skilled people into the labour market and take up residence in the State; eligible occupations under this type of permit are deemed to be critically important to Ireland's economy, are in high demand, high skilled, and in significant shortage.

- **General**: designed to attract non-EEA nationals for occupations which are experiencing a labour or skills shortage in roles that pay at least €34,000* per year; a new roadmap, announced in December 2025, indicated a minimum increase to €36,605 for most general permits and €32,691 for health/care workers and meat processors to be scheduled for March 2026.
- **Intra-company transfer**: designed to facilitate the transfer of key personnel, senior management and trainees who are non-EEA nationals from an overseas branch of a multinational corporation to its Irish branch. The annual salary for senior management and key personnel applicants must be at least €46,000: personnel undergoing training programmes must have a minimum salary of €34,000. A new roadmap announced in December 2025, indicated salary will increase from €46,000 to €49,523 for senior management and key personnel and from €34,000 to €36,605 for trainee personnel starting March 2026.

* Some exceptions apply

Of the 24,233 new employment permits issued in 2025 (Figure 8.1),

- almost one half (47%, 11,502 permits) were general employment permits
- similarly, almost half (46%, 11,086 permits) were new critical skills employment permits
- 3% were intra-company transfers.

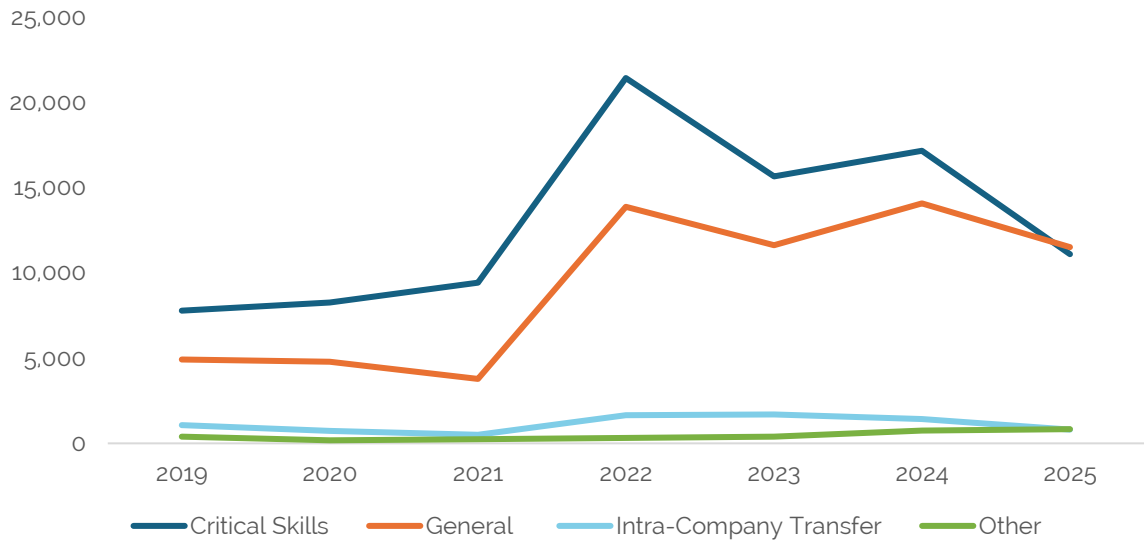
Between 2024 and 2025, the number of **new permits decreased by 27%** or 9,171 fewer permits, most of which was due to the decrease for new general and critical skills employment permits.

- **Critical skill permits** accounted for the largest absolute fall (6,074 fewer permits, or -35%); this decrease related primarily to the fall in the number of these permits issued for the health and ICT sectors
- **General permits**, accounted for the second largest absolute decrease, with 2,568 fewer permits (-18%), mostly related to decreases in the number of permits issued for the health, agriculture and accommodation & food activities sectors.

[36] The details of the other six permit types are available on the DETE website: https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/What-WeDo/Workplace-and-Skills/Employment-Permits/Permit-Types/

Between 2019 and 2025, the number of new permits issued grew by 71% or (10,067 additional permits), with much of the growth occurring between 2021 and 2022. The most notable growth during this period was for the two largest permit types: general employment permits which accounted for 65% of the growth (6,576 additional permits) and critical skills permits which accounted for 33% (3,306 additional permits) of the growth.

Figure 8.1 New Employment Permits Issued by Type, 2019-2025



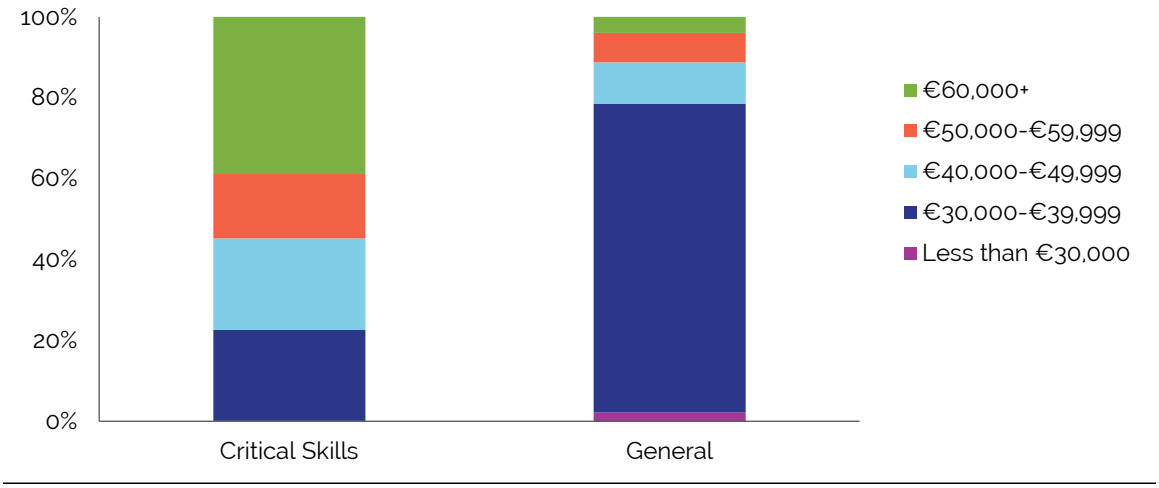
Source: DETE

8.2.2 Employment permits by salary level

Of the new critical skills permits issued in 2025, 22% were for salaries of €30,000-€39,999, a further 23% for salaries of €40,000-€49,999, and 39% for salaries of €60,000 or above (Figure 8.2). Of the new general permits issued, 76% were for salaries of €30,000-€39,999 and 10% for salaries of €40,000-€49,999. Currently, the minimum salary for those occupations on the critical skills occupations list is €38,000 per annum and €64,000 for all other occupations that are not on the critical skill list but are eligible for an employment permit. Proposed plans to increase the minimum annual remuneration for employment permits in January 2025 were postponed and commenced in March 2026.[37]

[37] Deferral of increases to Minimum Annual Remuneration for employment permits - DETE

Figure 8.2 New Employment Permits Type by Salary, 2025



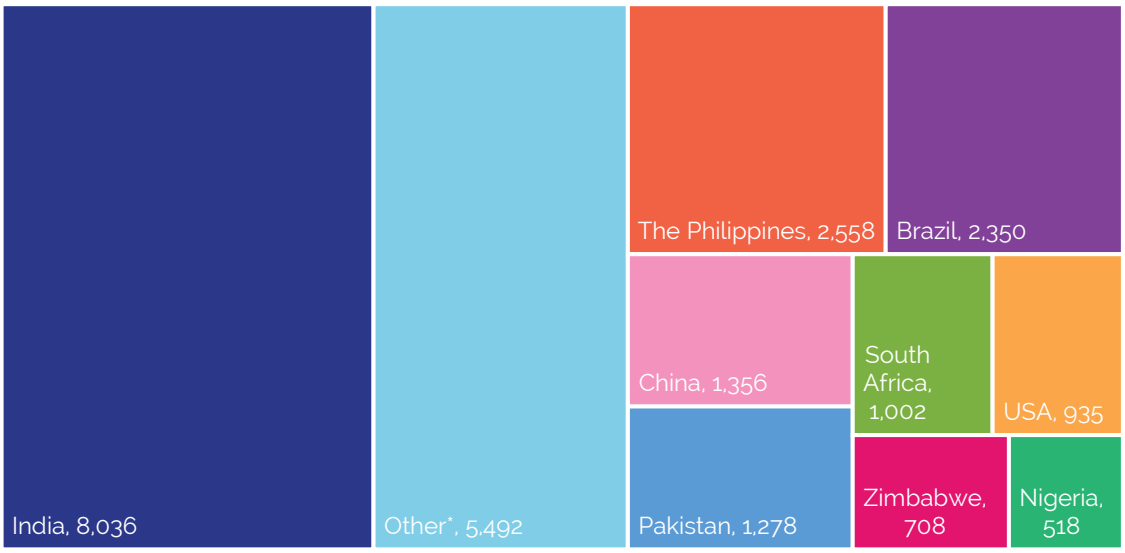
Source: DETE

8.2.3 Employment permits by nationality

Figure 8.3 shows the most frequently occurring nationalities for which new employment permits were issued in 2025. A third (33%) of the new permits issued in 2025 were held by persons from India, a further 31% of the 24,233 new permits issued in 2025 were held by persons from the Philippines, Brazil, China and Pakistan collectively.

Over half (55%) of new permits issued to Indian nationals were for the health and ICT sector combined. A substantial share (59%) of new permits issued to persons from the Philippines were for positions in the health, industry and construction sectors combined. Exactly half (50%) of new permits issued to persons from Brazil were for positions in the accommodation/food, health and construction sectors combined, while almost two thirds (64%) of new permits issued to China nationals were for positions in the accommodation/food, ICT and construction sectors combined. Additionally, almost half (48%) of new permits issued to persons from Pakistan were for positions in the health sector.

Figure 8.3 New Employment Permits by Nationality, 2025



Source: DETE

**Combination of 121 countries*

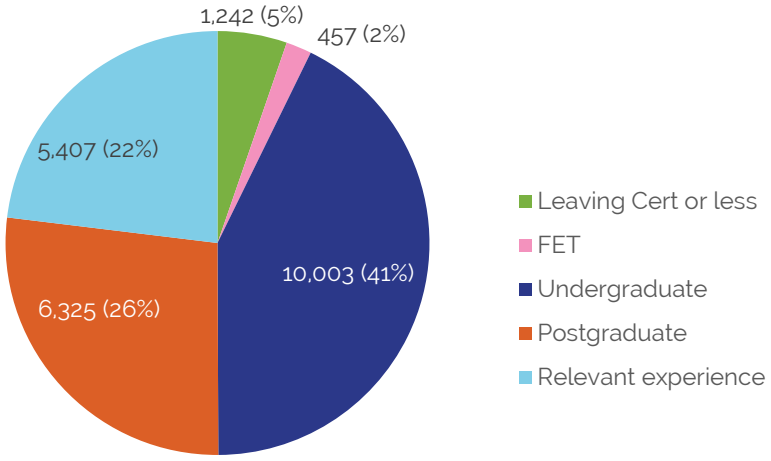
8.2.4 Employment permits by region

Half or 12,095 of all new permits issued in 2025 were for positions in Dublin, the majority of which were for positions in the ICT (25%), health (19%), and financial sectors (12%). The South West had the second highest share, at 11%, followed by the Mid-East at 9%. Since 2024, Dublin accounted for over half of the decline in the number of new permits issued, falling by over 5,000 permits.

8.2.5 Employment permits by education level

Over two thirds (67%) of new permits issued in 2025 were for persons with third level educational attainment (undergraduate and postgraduate combined) (Figure 8.4), of which almost two thirds (65%) were critical skill permits. New permits issued that required relevant experience were primarily general employment permits.

Figure 8.4 New Employment Permits by Education, 2025



Source: DETE
Excludes education level not stated

8.3 Employment Permits by Sector

8.3.1 Key sectors

Figure 8.5 illustrates the breakdown of new employment permits issued for key sectors between 2023 and 2025; in 2025, combined, these sectors accounted for 91% of all new permits issued for that year.

In 2025, the largest number of new employment permits issued was for the health (5,946 permits, or 25%) and ICT (3,490 permits, or 14%) sectors, which combined made up 39% of total new permits issued that year.

- In the **health** sector, over half (54%) of total new permits issued in 2025 were general employment permits, while a further 45% were critical skills permits.
- In the **ICT** sector, almost four fifths (79%) of total new permits issued in 2025 were critical skills permits.

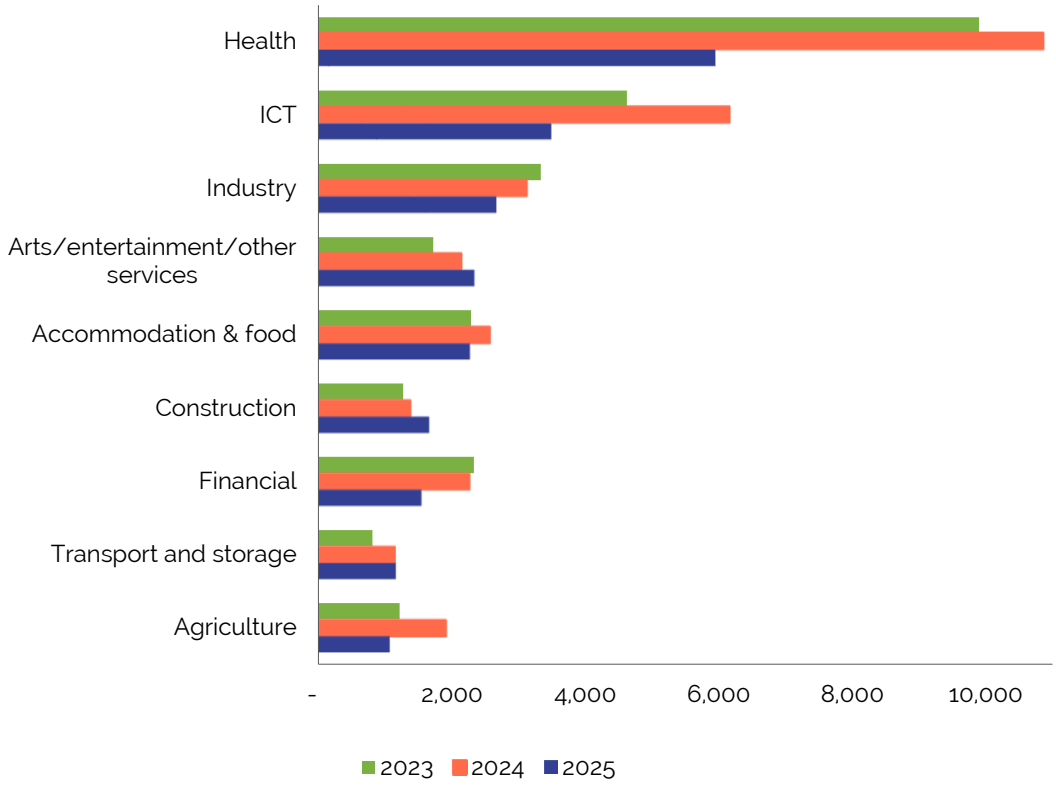
The number of new permits issued declined for each of the top five sectors between 2024 and 2025, with the largest declines in absolute terms for:

- the health sector (-45%, or 4,906 fewer new permits); this drop may be partly attributed to 50:50 rule which requires employers to have at least as many EEA workers as non-EEA workers; this in turn may have caused difficulties for nursing home operators who are reliant on international staff (the department is presently reviewing regulations); additionally, rising salary thresholds (approaching €30,000 for carers) and higher administrative burdens on employers may have contributed to the reduction in permit applications[38]
- the ICT sector (-43%, or 2,661 fewer new employment permits); despite an increase between 2023 and 2024, the 2025 level was lower than in both 2024 and 2023.

There were also decreases in the number of new permits issued for agricultural roles in 2025 when compared to 2024 (-44%, -838 permits) which was due primarily to the exhaustion of quotas for key roles by late 2025. However, a quota of 1,000 new permits for meat processing operatives and 850 new permits for dairy farm assistants was introduced in December 2025 to address labour shortages in the agri-food sector.

When compared to 2023, the number of employment permits in 2025 fell for the following sectors, health (-40%, or 3,955 fewer new permits), ICT (-24%, or 1,131 fewer permits), financial (-34%, or 783 fewer permits) industry (-20% or 664 fewer permits), and agriculture (-12% or 145 fewer permits).

Figure 8.5 New Employment Permits for Selected Sectors*, 2023-2025



Source: DETE
*In 2025, these selected sectors account for 91% of all new permits issued.

[38] Government unveils roadmap for gradual increase in employment permit salary thresholds - DETE

8.4 Employment Permits by Occupation

At 12,206 of new employment permits, professional occupations accounted for 50% of all new permits issued in 2025, down from 58% in 2024 and 61% in 2023 (Figure 8.6). This decrease is primarily due to a fall in the number of new employment permits issued for both health and ICT professionals in 2025 (e.g. nurses, software programmers).

There were 4,603 new permits for skilled trades in 2025, down slightly from 4,684 in 2024. To facilitate demand within the transport industry, in April 2025, employment quotas were extended for vehicle maintenance roles, whereby:

- the quota was extended for motor mechanics, auto electricians and motor vehicle technicians by 200 new permits
- an additional quota of 200 was extended for HGV/bus mechanics and 50 vehicle body builders to meet the needs of the transport and storage sector.

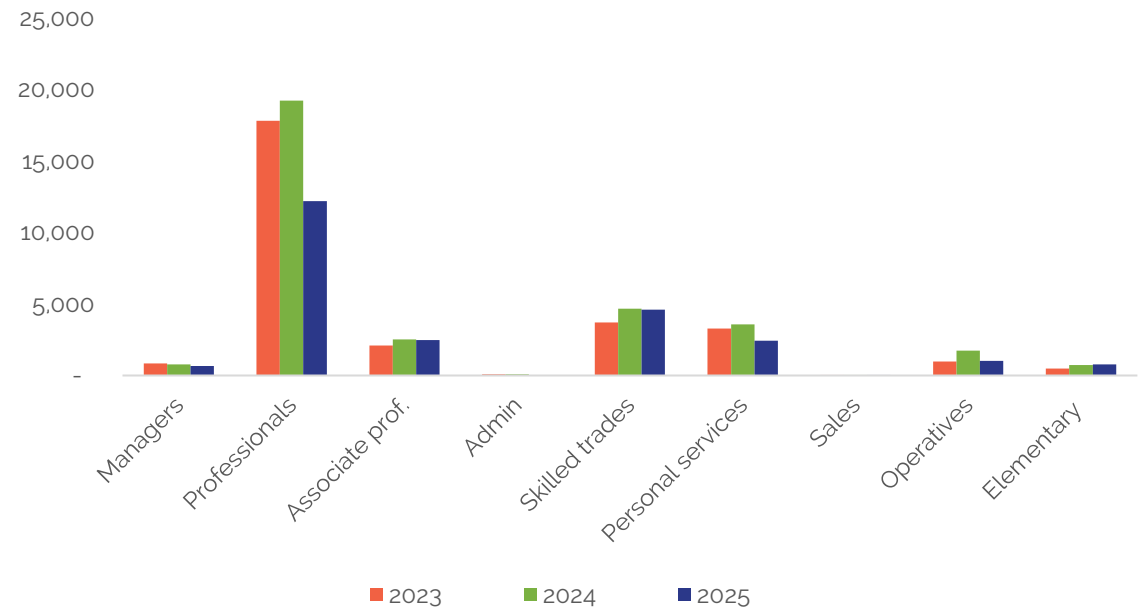
The majority of the new permits issued for the services occupation were for healthcare assistants. New permits for services occupations grew slightly between 2023 and 2024; however, between 2024 and 2025 the number of new permits fell for this occupation possibly due to administrative delays related to the introduction of a new online application portal, cooling of recruitment drives by major employers, and higher salary thresholds.[39] In early 2025, a quota of 1,000 general employment permits was extended for the role of care workers and home carers to address labour shortages in these roles.

New permits for operative occupations, which were predominantly general employment permits, grew notably from 971 to 1,746 new permits in 2024, partly due to a quota extension of 1,000 permits for meat processing operatives introduced in January 2024. However, the numbers declined significantly in early 2025, possibly due to quotas filled for these permits. In late 2025, a new quota for 1,000 meat processing operatives was introduced to assist labour shortages in the agri-food sector.

Although the number of new employment permits issued for elementary occupations grew between 2023 and 2025 to reach 782 in 2025, they remained below their 2022 level of 1,017. The increase in 2024 was partly due to a quota extension for this occupation of 1,000 permits for horticultural workers and 350 dairy farm assistants, these quotas were further extended in December 2025, when 850 new permits for dairy farm assistants were introduced.

[39] Launch of new employment permits system - DETE

Figure 8.6 New Employment Permits by Broad Occupation, 2023-2025

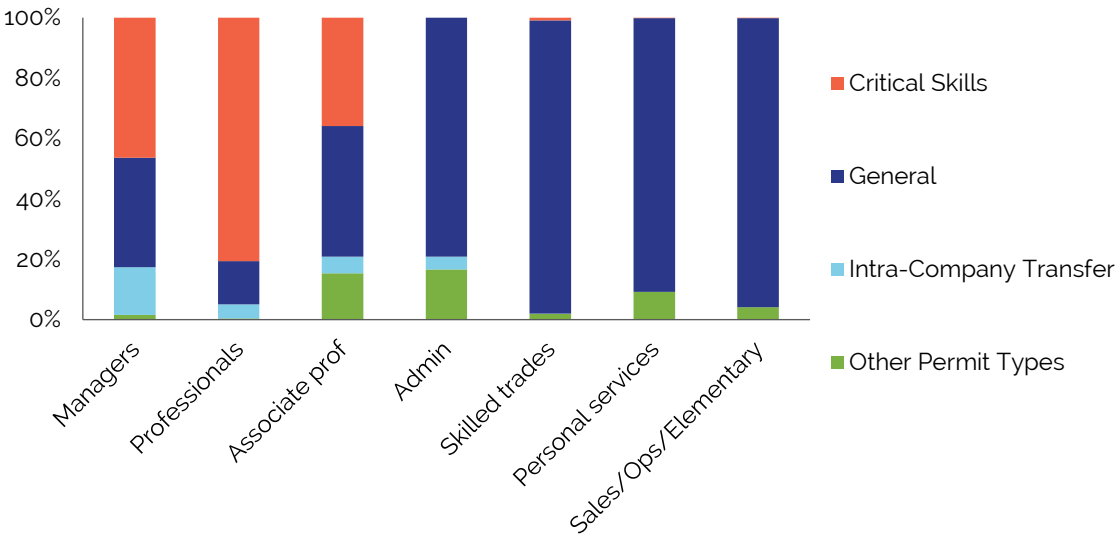


Source: DETE

8.4.1 New permits by occupation & type

The type of employment permit issued varied across occupational groups in 2025 (Figure 8.7). Almost half (46%) of new permits issued for managers and over four-fifths (81%) of new permits issued for professionals in 2025 were critical skills permits, while the majority of new permits issued for administrative, skilled trades, personal services, sales, operatives and elementary occupations were general permits.

Figure 8.7 New Employment Permits by Occupation and Permit Type, 2025

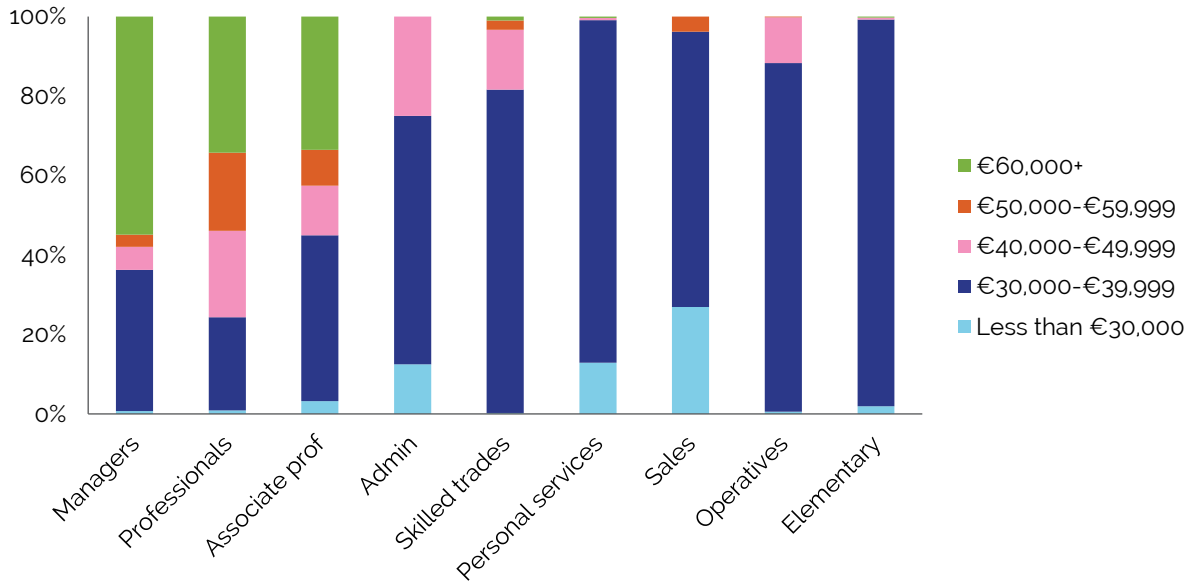


Source: DETE

8.4.2 New permits by occupation & salary

Of the new permits issued for managers, over half (55%) were for roles which offered a salary of €60,000 or above; while over half (54%) of new permits issued for professionals were for a salary of €50,000 or above (Figure 8.8). The majority of new permits issued for administrative, skilled trades, personal services, sales, operatives and elementary occupations had a salary of less than €40.000.

Figure 8.8 New Employment Permits by Occupation and Salary, 2025



Source: DETE

Managers

- **Overall:** new employment permits for managerial positions accounted for 3% of all permits issued in 2025
- **Type:** critical skills accounted for 46% of the new permits issued for this occupation, with a further 36% for general permits and 16% for intra-company transfers
- **Salary:** 55% of new permits issued had a salary of €60,000 or more; this occupation has the largest share of permits offering salaries at this level
- **Sector:** employment permits were primarily issued for positions in industry (22%), accommodation and food services (16%), ICT (14%), and arts, entertainment and other services (12%)
- **Nationality:** a fifth of all permits issued for managers were for those originating from India, with a further 18% of permits issued for those originating from the USA
- **Region:** over half (57%) of all new permits issued for managers were for positions in Dublin
- **Occupations:** new employment permits were most frequently issued for
  - vice presidents/CEOs and directors in financial services, manufacturing, and ICT
  - managers in manufacturing, hospitality, ICT, arts, entertainment, recreation and other services activities, wholesale/retail, financial services, farming, healthcare, construction, and transport/storage.

Professionals

- **Overall:** new employment permits for professionals accounted for half (50%) of total permits issued in 2025
- **Type:** critical skills accounted for the majority (81%) of the new permits issued for this occupation, with a further 14% for general permits and 5% for intra-company transfers
- **Salary:** over two fifths (45%) of new permits issued were for a salary of between €30,000 and €49,999 with a further 54% with a salary of €50,000 or more
- **Sector:** new permits were mainly issued for positions in the health (30%), ICT (22%), industry (12%), and finance sectors (11%)
- **Nationality:** almost half (49%) of all new permits for professionals were issued to persons from India, while a further 17% were to persons from Pakistan, the Philippines and Brazil collectively
- **Region:** over half (59%) of all new permits issued for professionals were for positions in Dublin, with a further 11% in the South West
- **Occupations:** new employment permits were most frequently issued for
  - health: the majority of permits were issued for nurses (primarily staff nurses), senior house officers, registrars (general, emergency medicine, gynaecology, paediatrics and, anaesthesiology), and general practitioners. There were further permits issued for qualified social workers, dentists, medical specialists such as radiographers/ sonographers, cardiac physiologists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, occupational therapists, optometrists, speech & language therapists, and psychologists
  - ICT: software engineers/developers, analysts/engineers (systems, cloud, security, network, test), IT business analysts/project managers, data analysts/scientists, architects (technical, systems, software, solutions), web designers, consultants (in cyber security, SAP, business process), and UX designers
  - finance: analysts (business, financial, data, risk, tax, regulatory/compliance), accountants (in auditing), project managers, and actuaries
  - industry: engineers (e.g., process, design, electrical, mechanical, quality, automation, validation, electronic), quality assurance/quality control and regulatory professionals, scientists (including analytical, medical, chemical), software engineers, business analysts, manufacturing technicians, and data analysts
  - construction: civil/site engineers and other engineers (electrical, mechanical and design, quality control), project managers, quantity surveyors, architectural technologists, business analysts, and EHS advisors.

Associate professionals & technical

- **Overall:** new employment permits for associate professionals accounted for 10% of total permits issued in 2025
- **Type:** general employment permits accounted for over two fifths (43%) and critical skills employment permits for 36% of new permits issued for this occupation
- **Salary:** 45% of new permits issued had a salary of less than €40,000 and a further 43%, a salary of €50,000 or more
- **Sector:** almost a third (31%) of new permits issued were for positions in arts, entertainment and other services sector, with a further 21% for positions in ICT and 12% for positions in industry
- **Nationality:** persons from India, the USA and Brazil collectively accounted for 49% of all new permits issued for this occupational group
- **Region:** over two thirds (67%) of all new permits issued for associate professionals were for positions in Dublin

- **Occupations:** new employment permits were most frequently issued for
  - sales & marketing: primarily marketing specialists, business development and sales executives but also account managers/strategists (with languages)
  - other: financial/data/business/quality analysts, technician roles (e.g. manufacturing, electrical, financial accounting, BIM/CAD), film/TV roles (e.g. producers, actors, animators, visual effects supervisors, directors), procurement analysts/buyers, IT technical support, customer engineers, HR/recruitment consultants, estimators, sports coaches/players, dancers, and health and safety officers/advisors.

Administrative and secretarial

- **Overall:** with 24 permits, administrative positions accounted for less than 1% of total new permits issued in 2025
- **Type:** the majority of new permits issued for this occupational group were general permits (79%)
- **Salary:** three quarters (75%) of new permits issued had a salary of less than €40,000
- **Region:** over two thirds (71%) of all new permits issued were for positions in Dublin
- **Occupations:** new employment permits were most frequently issued for transport and distribution clerks and assistants.

Skilled trades

- **Overall:** new employment permits issued for those in skilled trades accounted for 19% of total new permits issued in 2025
- **Type:** the majority (97%) of new permits issued were general employment permits
- **Salary:** most of the new permits issued (82%) had a salary of less than €40,000
- **Sector:** over two fifths (42%) of all new permits issued were for positions in the accommodation and food services sector, 17% for construction and a further 13% for industry
- **Nationality:** persons from the Philippines, Brazil and China accounted for over half (57%) of all new permits issued for this occupational group
- **Region:** over a third (36%) of all new permits issued for skilled trades were for positions in Dublin with the remainder spread across all counties
- **Occupations:** new permits were most frequently issued for
  - chefs (primarily Chef de Partie), bakers
  - HGV/car/bus/aircraft mechanics and technicians, roadworthiness testers, and panel beaters/spray painters
  - welders/fabricators, CNC programmers/operators, pipe fitters, and lineworkers
  - carpenters (primarily shuttering), maintenance fitters/technicians, bricklayers/stone masons, electrical fitters/technicians, plumbers, sheet metal workers, painters, steel fixers/fabricators, concrete moulders, tilers, and plasterers
  - meat deboners/butchers.

Personal Services

- **Overall:** personal services occupations accounted for 10% of total new permits issued in 2025
- **Type:** the majority (91%) of the new permits issued for this occupational group were general employment permits
- **Sector:** most (85%) of new permits issued were for positions within the health sector

- **Salary:** almost all (99%) of new permits issued were for employment with a salary of less than €40,000
- **Nationality:** persons from India, Brazil and the Philippines accounted for two thirds (66%) of all new permits issued for this occupational group
- **Region:** over two fifths (42%) of all new permits issued for personal service roles were for positions in Dublin, with a further 18% in the Mid-East and 14% in the Mid-West
- **Occupations:** permits were most frequently issued for healthcare assistants and home care workers, the majority of whom were employed in the health sector; a further small percentage were issued for work riders and playgroup leaders/early years educators.

Sales and Customer Services

- **Overall:** new employment permits issued for those in sales related occupations accounted for less than 1% of total permits issued in 2025
- **Salary:** most (96%) new permits issued had a salary of less than €40,000
- **Sector:** almost three fifths (58%) of new permits issued were for positions in the ICT sector
- **Occupations:** permits were most frequently issued for customer service and sales support occupations (with languages) within the general employment permits; specific roles included registration and compliance operations (RCO)/investigation specialists, and customer services associates.

Operatives

- **Overall:** new employment permits issued for those in operative occupations accounted for 4% of total permits issued in 2025; almost all (97%) permits issued for this occupational group were general employment permits and the majority (88%) had a salary of less than €40,000
- **Sector:** almost three quarters (72%) of new permits issued were for positions in the transport and storage sector; a further 13% were issued for positions in the construction sector and 10% for industry
- **Nationality:** persons from Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Philippines combined accounted for almost three quarter (72%) of all new permits issued
- **Region:** the South-East region accounted for 35% of new permits issued, followed by the Mid-West (14%) and the South-West and Midlands (11% jointly)
- **Occupations:** new permits were most frequently issued for HGV drivers followed by bus/coach drivers and scaffolders.

Elementary occupations

- **Overall:** new employment permits for elementary positions accounted for 3% of total new permits issued in 2025, the majority (95%) of which were issued for general employment permits and almost all had a salary of less than €40,000; the Philippines, Nepal and Thailand accounted for two-thirds of all new permits issued; the South-East accounted for 25% of new permits issued, followed by the Border region (23%); most were in the agricultural sector in roles including dairy and pig farm assistants and horticultural operatives/mushroom harvesters.

8.4.3 Key findings for renewal employment permits issued

Between 2024 and 2025 the number of employment permit renewals grew by 6% or 350 additional permits. The growth can be attributed mainly to personal services and skilled trades roles (e.g. healthcare assistants and chefs), with a fall in the number of renewals issued for meat processing operatives. Of those renewals issued in 2025:

- **Overall:** over 6,300 renewal permits were issued
- **Type:** the majority (93%) of renewal permits issued were general employment permits
- **Salary:** most of the renewal permits issued (80%) had a salary of less than €40,000
- **Sector:** almost a third (31%) of all renewal permits issued were for positions in the health sector, with a further 19% for positions in the accommodation and food services sector and 12% each for permits in the industry sector and agriculture sector
- **Nationality:** persons from India, Brazil and the Philippines accounted for over half (56%) of all permits issued
- **Region:** over a third (36%) of all renewal permits issued were for positions in Dublin with a further 18% for the Mid-East and 10% for both the South-West and South-East equally.

Section 9 Vacancies and Job Adverts

This section provides an analysis of job vacancy, online job adverts, and difficult-to-fill vacancy data in Ireland. It examines a number of indicators, including

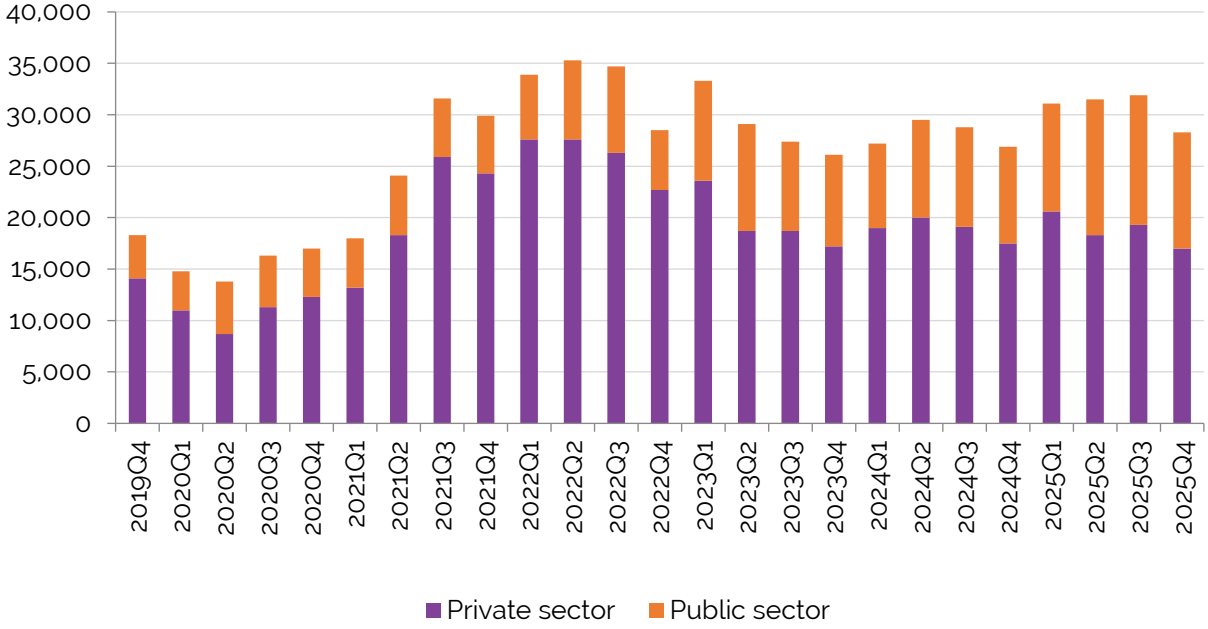
- job vacancy numbers and rates by sector (source: CSO's Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS))
- patterns in online job adverts (sources: Indeed and LinkedIn)
- occupations and skills in in online job adverts (sources: Eurostat's Web Intelligence Hub (WIH)/CEDEFOP and JobsIreland.ie (DSP))
- results of the annual Recruitment Agency Survey conducted by the SLMRU.

9.1 Vacancy rates (CSO)

The CSO's Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS) examines the number of open job vacancies businesses have at the end of each quarter. In quarter 4 2025, there were 28,300 vacancies reported, representing a job vacancy rate[40] of 1.2%. As the economy recovered following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of reported vacancies increased quarterly from quarter 3 2020 to quarter 2 2022 (with the exception of quarter 4 2021), peaking at 35,300 vacancies (Figure 9.1). The number of vacancies has fluctuated since; in quarter 4 2025, although at a lower level than the peak in 2022, they remained above pre-COVID-19 levels.

The private sector accounted for three-fifths of the 28,300 job vacancies in quarter 4 2025, with the remaining 40% in the public sector; the number of job vacancies in the public sector increased in the latter half of the period examined in Figure 9.1, having accounted for just 23% of all job vacancies in quarter 4 2019.

Figure 9.1 Job Vacancies (CSO), Quarter 4 2019-Quarter 4 2025



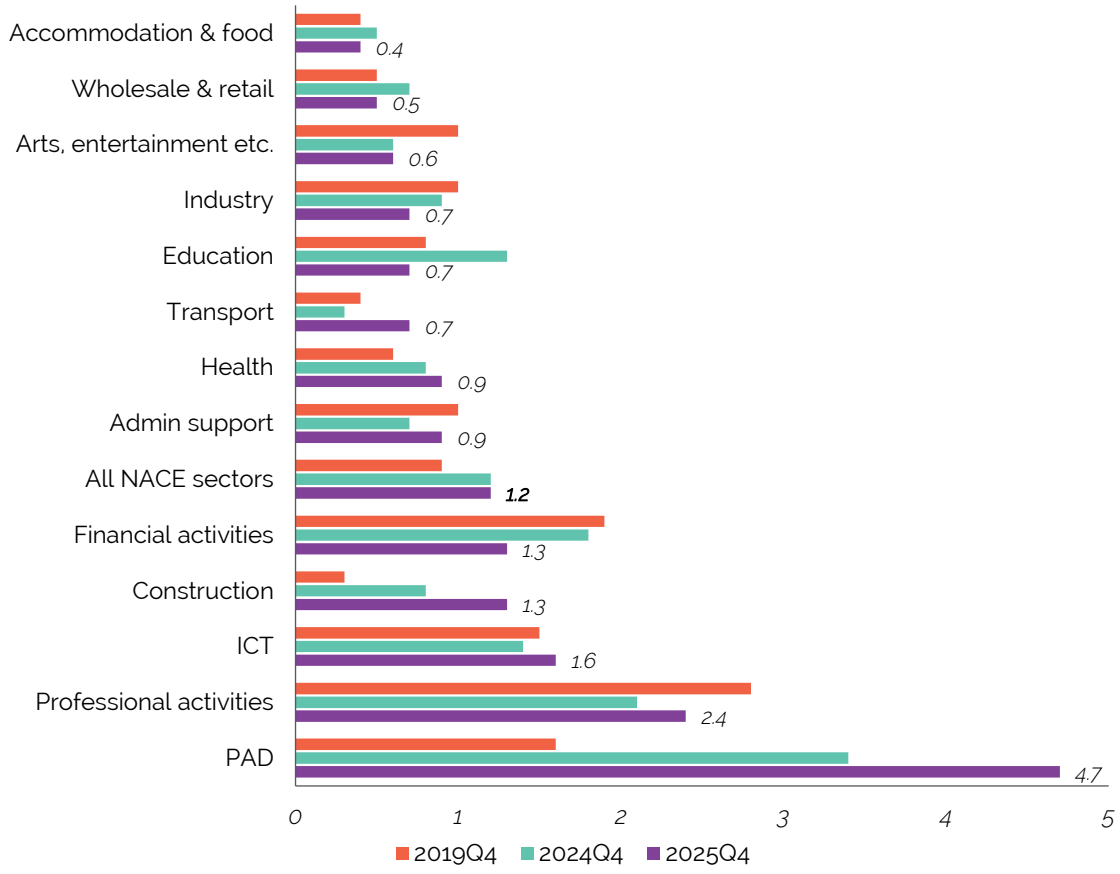
Source: CSO EHECS (Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey)

[40] The job vacancy rate, as detailed in the CSO Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey (EHECS), measures the proportion of total posts that are vacant as a proportion of total occupied posts and job vacancies.

Figure 9.2 presents the job vacancy rates by sector for quarter 4 2019, quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025. Public administration and defence (PAD) had the highest vacancy rate in quarter 4 2025, at 4.7%, far exceeding the rate for all sectors (1.2%). The accommodation and food sector had the lowest job vacancy rate at 0.4%, although the arts, entertainment, recreation and other services sector reported the lowest number of job vacancies in quarter 4 2025 (with just 300 reported vacancies). Between quarter 4 2024 and quarter 4 2025, the overall vacancy rate remained unchanged although this masked fluctuations across sectors over this time period. The job vacancy rate for the PAD sector grew by 1.3 percentage points while the education sector saw a decline of 0.6 percentage points.

Between quarter 4 2019 and quarter 4 2025, the overall job vacancy rate increased by 0.3 percentage points. By far the largest increase over this time was for the PAD sector, increasing by 3.1 percentage points (or 6,500 vacancies). A more detailed examination of trends for the PAD sector reveals that the job vacancy rate for this sector peaked in quarter 2 2025 at 5.5% (or 10,400 vacancies) but has declined in each subsequent quarter (including provisional data for quarter 1 2026). The financial and professional activities sectors experienced the largest declines since quarter 4 2019, of 0.6 and 0.4 percentage points respectively.

Figure 9.2 Job Vacancy Rate (%) by Sector, Quarter 4 2019, Quarter 4 2024 and Quarter 4 2025



Source: CSO EHECS (Earnings, Hours and Employment Costs Survey)

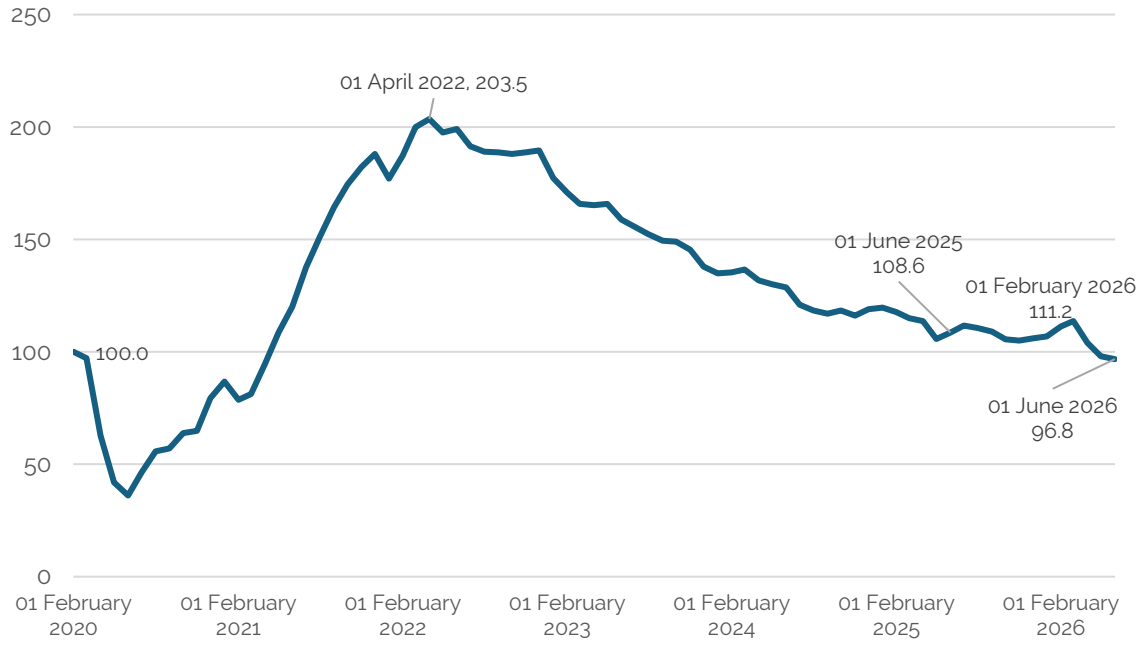
9.2 Online job ads as an indicator of labour market tightness

This section examines data available from Indeed's Hiring Lab and from LinkedIn, providing a valuable indicator of patterns in job hiring and labour market tightness in recent years in Ireland. Data from both Indeed.com and LinkedIn show that there has been some easing in labour market tightness in recent months: when compared to pre-COVID levels, the total volume of job postings on Indeed.com and the number of adverts relative to the number of job seekers on LinkedIn have both declined, suggesting that while recruitment demand remains strong in Ireland, the pace of growth has moderated significantly since the immediate aftermath of the COVID recovery.

9.2.1 Insights from Indeed Hiring Lab data

Figure 9.3 shows the change in job postings (indexed to February 2020) for the period February 1st, 2020, to June 1st, 2026. Following a post-COVID surge in job postings, peaking in April 2022 at over double that seen in February 2020, the overall volume of job postings has been for the most part declining since. Although the volume job postings on the Indeed.com platform at the beginning of June 2025 was nearly 9% higher than pre-pandemic levels (February 2020), it has since declined and by June 1st 2026, the volume of job postings was slightly (over 3%) lower than pre-pandemic levels, suggesting an easing in labour market tightness in the past 12 months (in line with LinkedIn data, as shown in Section 9,2.2).

Figure 9.3 Index change in job postings (February 1, 2020 = 100), February 2020 -June 2026



Source: Indeed Hiring Lab

9.2.2 Insights from LinkedIn data: labour market tightness

Using information on job applications submitted by LinkedIn members to job postings listed on the platform, LinkedIn has developed a labour market tightness indicator which allows for insights into patterns of potential demand, supply and competition for jobs.[41] This section looks at

[41] The SLMRU is grateful to LinkedIn for the provision of detailed labour market data outlined in this section.

LinkedIn's measure of labour market tightness (including by industry) in Ireland up to March 2026. The data has been indexed to the second half of 2019 (pre-pandemic levels).[42]

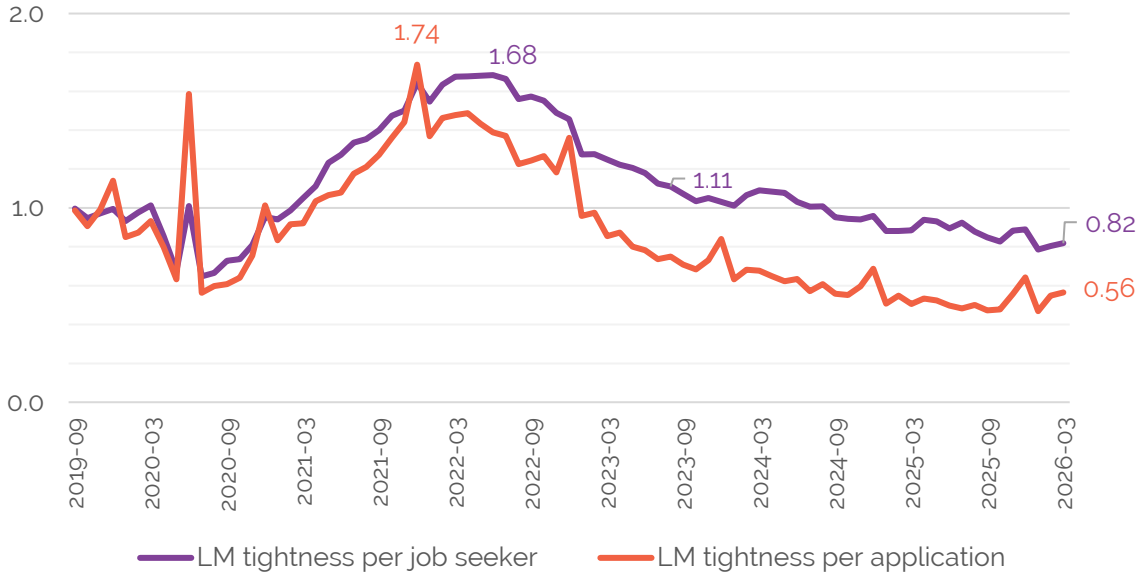
Measuring labour market tightness: LinkedIn data allows for two distinct measures of labour market tightness.

- The baseline measure of labour market tightness is derived by looking at the ratio of job postings that attract applicants to the number of **job seekers** (i.e. applicants) for these roles. A value greater than 1 indicates that there are more job adverts for posts than there were people applying (via LinkedIn) for those posts, and points to a tight labour market. An index with a value of less than 1 points to a situation where there are more job seekers (i.e. applicants) competing for each job posting.
- A second measure of labour market tightness is based on the number of **job applications** submitted by job seekers divided by the number of job seekers; in other words, it signals job search intensity by job seekers.

As shown in Figure 9.4, the labour market tightness measures in Ireland reflected increases associated with the post-pandemic years (2021 and 2022), with labour market tightness by job seeker (as measured by the ratio of job postings on LinkedIn to job seekers – purple line) rising to nearly 70% above pre-Covid levels by June 2022 but returning to pre-COVID levels by July 2023. Since then, labour market tightness has eased and declined to well below pre-Covid levels; by early 2026, the number of job postings per job seeker was roughly 20% below pre-Covid levels.

While the ratio of job postings to job seekers (purple line) and the number of job postings per application (orange line) were broadly similar in the second half of 2019, the gap widened considerably during the post-pandemic years; at over 40% below pre-pandemic levels by March 2026, the decline in the ratio of job postings per job application was larger than the decline in the ratio of job postings to job seeker (20% below pre-pandemic levels). This suggests that more recent job seekers are searching more intensely for roles as compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 9.4 LinkedIn Labour Market Tightness Index (July-Dec 2019 = 1), September 2019-March 2026



Source: LinkedIn

[42] See note on methodology:: Technical Note: Learning about labor market tightness from job application data on LinkedIn (LinkedIn Economic Graph).

Labour market tightness index by industry: Figure 9.5 shows the labour market tightness index (number of job postings divided by number of applicants) by industry in Ireland.[43]
When broken down by industry, the labour market tightness index differs from the overall index (Figure 9.4 – purple line) due to the fact that applicants may apply for a job in more than one industry; the total number of job seekers on LinkedIn remains unchanged, but the number of job postings in an industry is necessarily less than for the labour market overall; competition per job at industry level therefore appears to be tighter than the overall. As a result, the labour market tightness indicator by sector is not comparable with the total labour market tightness indicator. It should also be borne in mind that some industries (e.g. ICT, finance) are more likely to have higher representation in online job advert data when compared to others (e.g. accommodation/food, retail sales).

For most industries, labour market tightness had eased (i.e. was lower) in March 2026 compared to immediately prior to the pandemic. The exceptions were

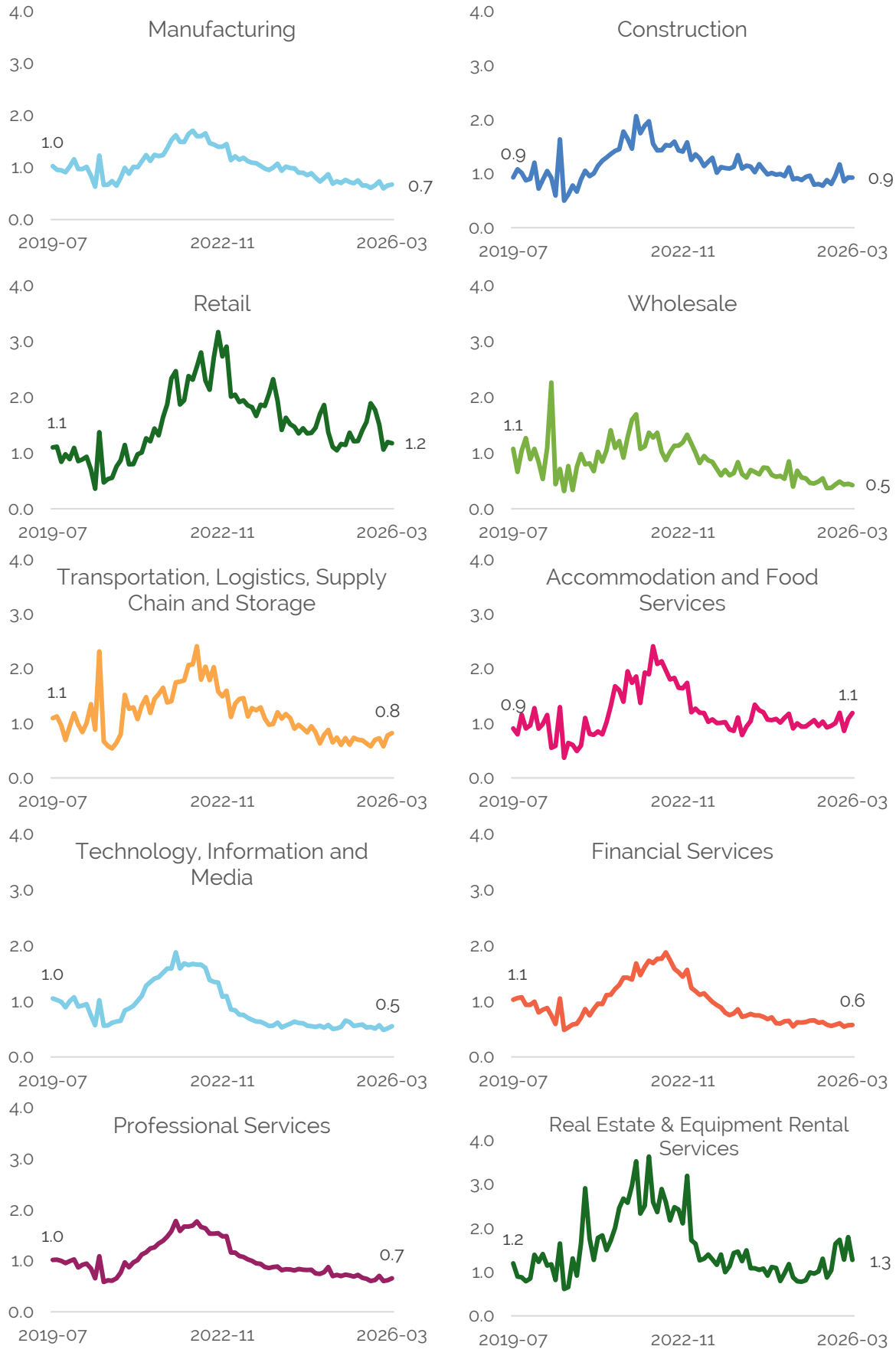
- Construction – unchanged
- Hospitals and health care – unchanged
- Retail
- Real estate and equipment rental
- Government administration
- Accommodation and food

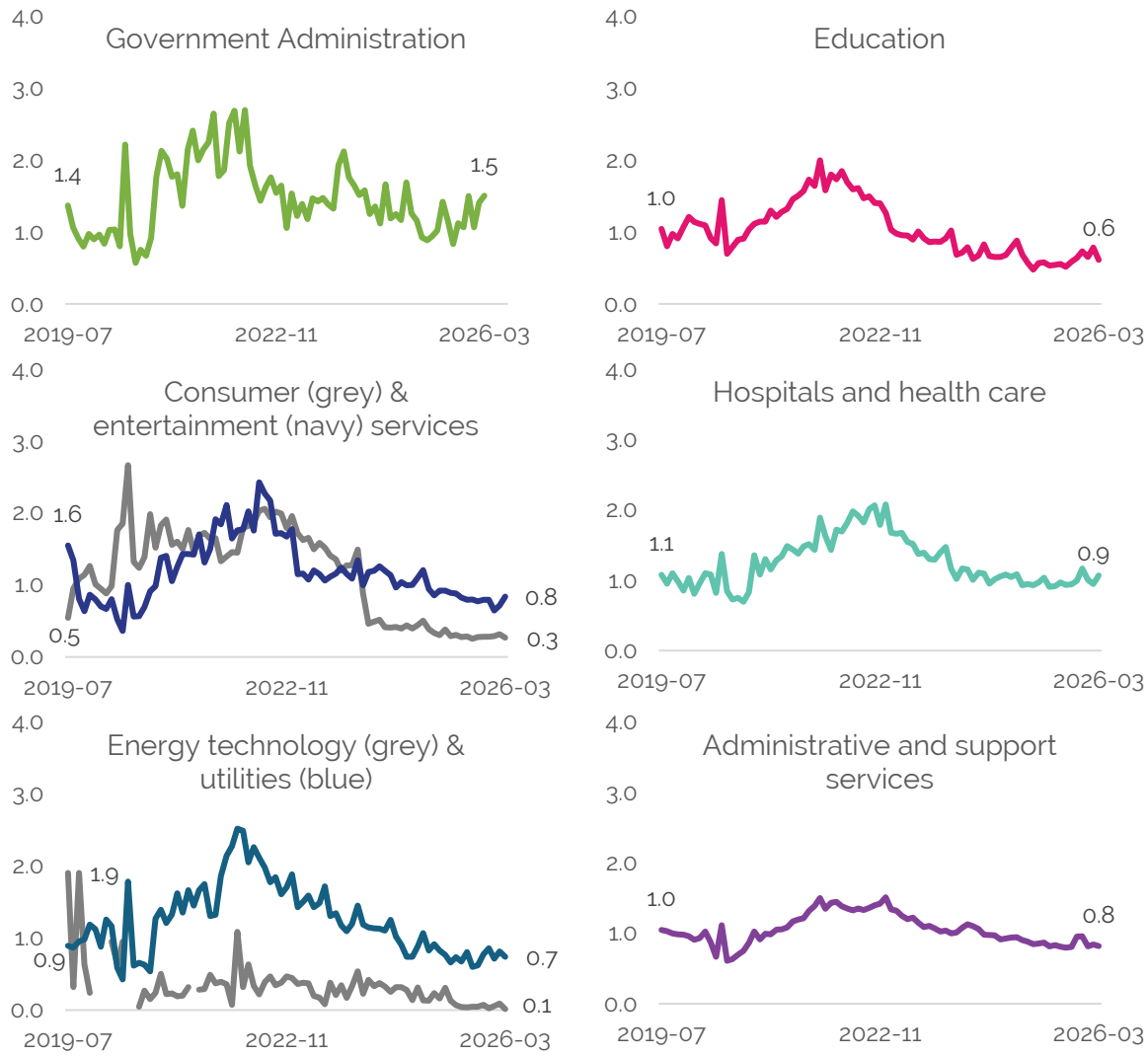
For all other industries, labour market tightness was lower, with the strongest declines of 50% or more observed for

- Energy technology
- Entertainment providers
- Wholesale
- Technology, information and media.

[43] Note; LinkedIn industry categories are similar but not identical to the NACE sectors used to describe sectoral employment elsewhere in this report.

Figure 9.5 LinkedIn Labour Market Tightness Index by Industry*, July 2019-March 2026





Source: LinkedIn
Excludes holding companies and oil, gas and mining companies due to the fact that they employ relatively few people in Ireland's labour market; excludes farming, ranching & forestry, due to the relatively low presence of online job postings for occupations associated with this sector.

9.3 Online job adverts: demand for occupations and skills

In-depth analyses of online job advertisements can provide insights into the types of jobs and skills for which employers are seeking candidates. It should be borne in mind that not all job openings are advertised, and not all adverts are online postings. For this reason, the data presented in this section needs to be interpreted in the context of broader labour market trends, including the employment, recent job hires and transitions data presented in earlier sections of this report.

Section 9.3.1 examines online job adverts available via the Eurostat/CEDEFOP Web Intelligence Hub (WIH). This is followed by section 9.3.2, which provides an analysis of a subset of the WIH data, namely the job vacancy adverts posted on the Department of Social Protection's portal, jobsireland.ie.

9.3.1 Eurostat/CEDEFOP online job adverts

The WIH is a database of online job advertisements (OJAs), developed by CEDEFOP and Eurostat, containing data relating to vacancies advertised across a range of public (e.g. jobsireland.ie, publicjobs.ie) and private (e.g. CPL) online recruitment portals as well as job search engines (e.g. Monster).[44] To minimise the occurrence of duplication, where the same job vacancy may be advertised on more than one portal, the vacancy data undergoes a de-duplication process.

It should be noted that this dataset is relatively new and continuously subject to refinements and improvements. From 2023, technical adjustments to the scraping and processing of job postings at EU level have seen a reduction in data volume compared to earlier data extractions. In addition, the number of websites and job portals for Ireland included in the online job adverts database in 2024 and 2025 was considerably lower than earlier years. Consequently, the data presented here is not comparable with that in earlier versions of the National Skills Bulletin. Neither is it possible to present a time series analysis of the data, as any changes in volume will not necessarily reflect developments in the labour market.

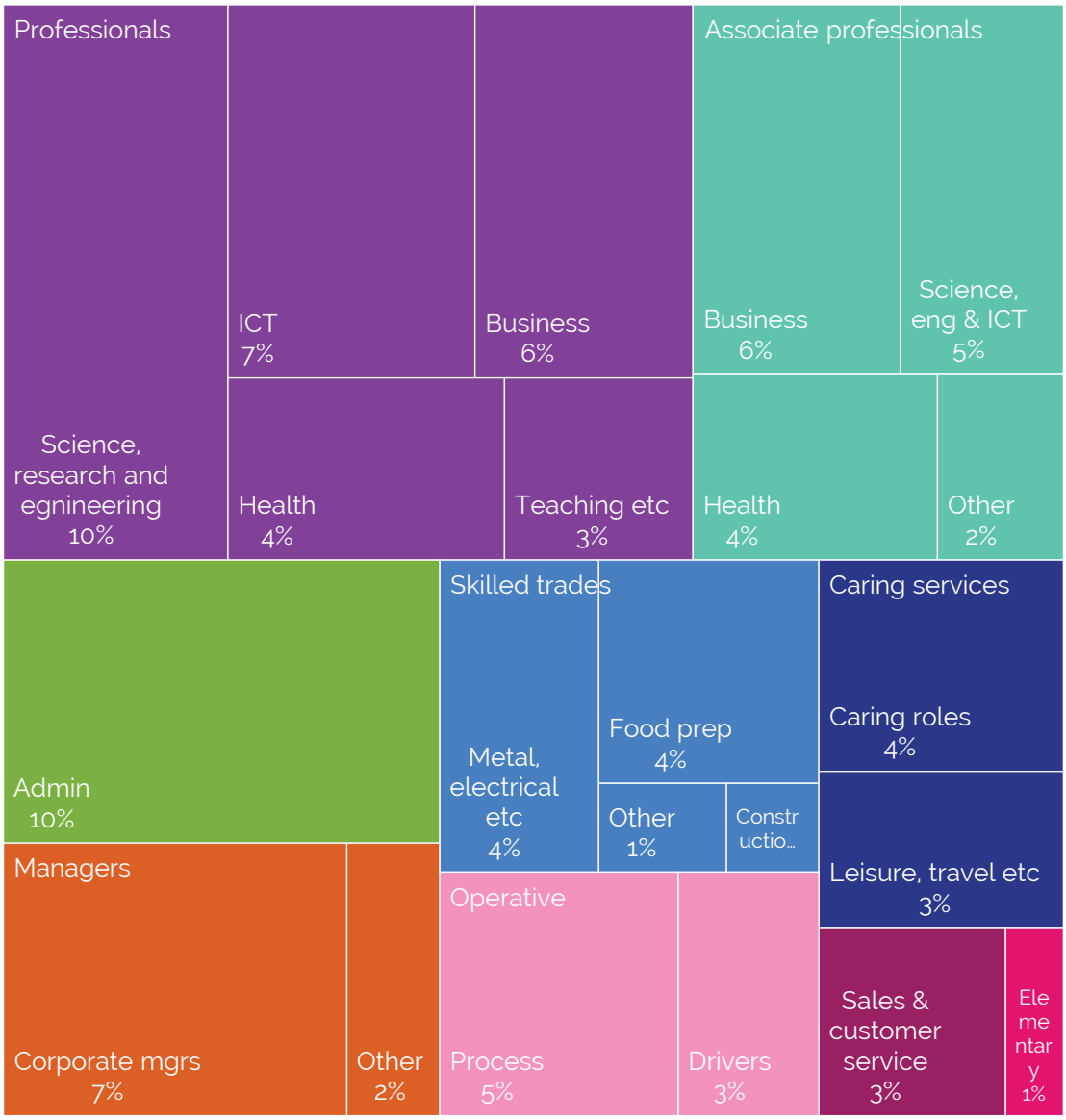
Occupations in online job adverts

Compared to employment numbers (see Section 4.1), online job adverts in the Eurostat/CEDEFOP database tend to be skewed towards higher skilled occupations (Figure 9.6): of the nearly 63,000 job adverts for roles in Ireland in 2025,

- 56% were for high skilled roles (managers, professionals, and associate professionals); employment data, in contrast, shows that high skilled roles made up less than half (48%) of the total workforce in quarter 4 2025
- 17% of ads were for science, research, engineering, and ICT professional roles, although these occupations accounted for 7% of total employment in quarter 4 2025
- 3% of ads were for education/teaching professionals, but their share in employment was twice that, at 6% in quarter 2025.

[44] These platforms excluded LinkedIn and Indeed.com, although if jobs advertised on these portals are also be advertised on other portals (e.g. publicjobs.ie or jobsireland.ie), they may also feature in the WIH data.

Figure 9.6 Occupations (%) in Online Job Adverts, 2025



Source: Eurostat/CEDEFOP Web Intelligence Hub (WIH)

Skills in online job adverts

Skills information in online job adverts are classified according to ESCO, the classification of European skills/competencies, qualifications and occupations.[45] Skills and competencies can be categorised into sub-classifications at different levels of detail. In ESCO, there are nearly 14,000 skills, 300 Level 3 categories, 100 Level 2 categories, 22 Level 1 categories, and four Level 0 categories. In 2025, there were 1.7 million skill mentions in job adverts for posts in Ireland. Of the total Level 0 category skill mentions,

- 37% were for skills associated with job tasks (skills)
- 35% were for knowledge
- 27% were for transversal skills and knowledge
- 1% were for language skills (typically, French, German, and Spanish).

[45] Skills & competences | European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO)

Figure 9.7 details the top 30 skills (ESCO Level 3) mentioned in online job adverts in 2025. Combined these 30 skills made up two thirds (66%) of all skill mentions. The most frequently mentioned areas of knowledge across all job ads included

- **personal skills and development,** which includes detailed skills such as teamwork, communication, and assertiveness
- **wholesale and retail sales**, where most mentions referred to quality standards
- **marketing and advertising**, covering a wide range of detailed skill areas, such as sales strategies, customer segmentation, and digital and social media marketing techniques.

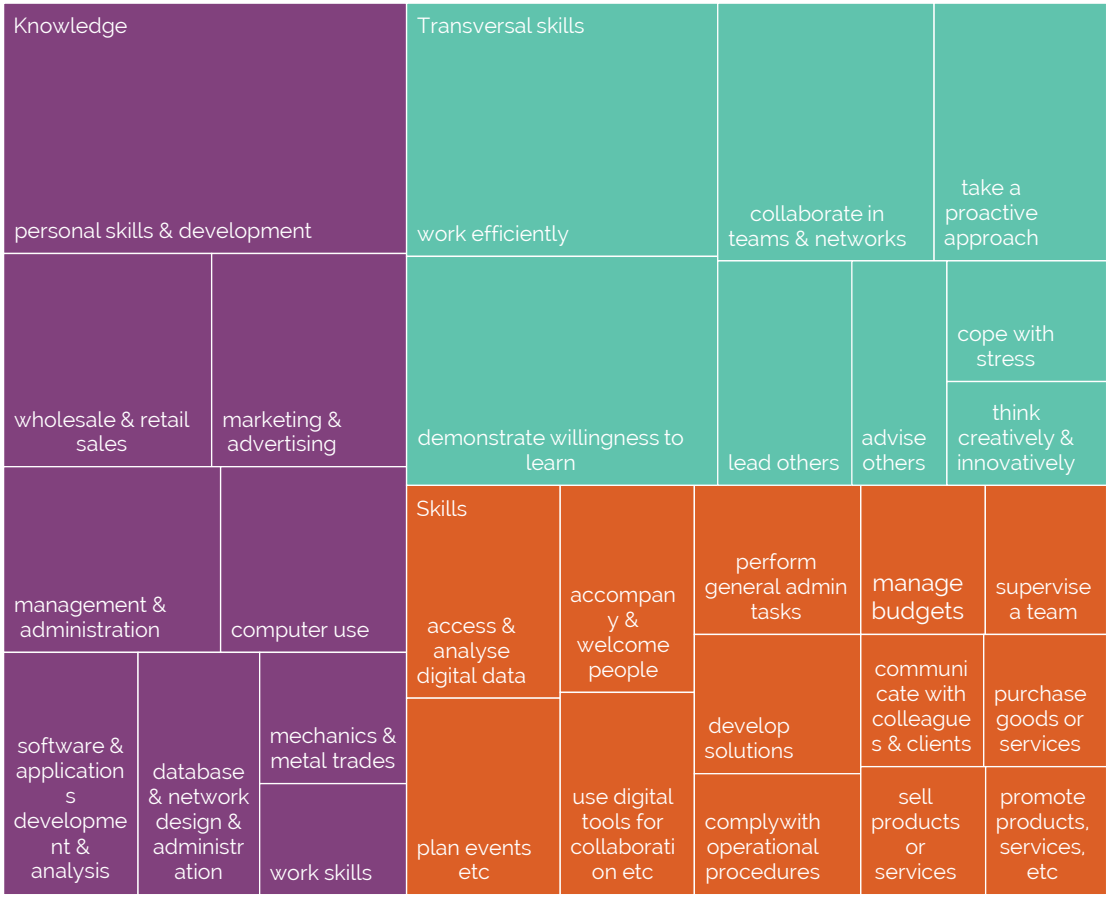
For the skills category, the most frequent mentions were for

- **access & analyse digital data**
- **plan events** etc, which includes an ability to adjust priorities,
- **accompany & welcome people** (refers to providing information and support to clients and/or members of the public)
- **use digital tools for collaboration,** which typically relates to being able to use MS Office.

The most frequently mentioned transversal skills included

- **work efficiently**, including detailed skills such as attention to detail, manage time and quality, and work independently
- **willingness to learn** (mostly related to an ability to adapt to change)
- **collaborate in teams and networks**
- **take a proactive approach** (assume responsibility, show commitment and determination).

Figure 9.7 Top 30 skills (ESCO Level 3) in Online Job Adverts, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Occupations and skills in job adverts by broad occupation

This section highlights the detailed occupations and the most frequently mentioned skills that characterise adverts associated with each of the nine broad occupational groups. As can be seen in Figures 9.5-9.13, some skills appeared in the top 20 skill mentions for all or nearly all occupational groups: regardless of the occupation, skills most in demand in online job adverts tend to be those related to self-management (**willingness to learn, being proactive, working efficiently**), personal skills and development (mostly **communication**), digital, and sales/customer service[46] skills, and these skills should be prioritised in any skills development, particularly for those entering/re-entering the labour market.

On the other hand, skills that tended to appear in higher skilled (e.g. professionals) or medium skilled (e.g. administrative) occupations but not in lower skilled (e.g. operatives or elementary) occupations included **access and analyse digital data** (abbreviated here to 'data analysis') or **lead others** and can point to possible progression pathways for those already in employment.

Finally, each occupational group also demonstrates unique or almost unique skill requirements. For instance, the ability t**o cope with stress** features in occupational groups that typically interact with people (e.g. managers, administrative and sales occupations), while other occupations, usually, but not exclusively linked to lower skilled occupations, often demand skills that are specific to the occupation or role (e.g. **drive vehicles** or **clean tools/equipment** for skilled trades, operative, elementary occupations).

These distinctions highlight the importance of the mix of human, digital, transferable and occupation-specific skills across occupations.

[46] Typically visible in skills data as 'accompanying and welcoming' people, where the ESCO skill refers to supporting clients, patrons, visitors etc and includes activities such as making reservations, managing customer experience, managing tourist groups, greeting guests, etc.

Broad Occupation	Manager Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	12%	10%	9%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations** in 2025	• Marketing and sales directors • Managers and directors in retail and wholesale • Managers and proprietors in other services n.e.c.* • Hotel, restaurant and catering managers and proprietors • Financial managers and directors Combined, these occupations accounted for 60% of OJAs for manager occupations in 2025, broadly in line with 2024.		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for manager occupations, 2025	• Personal skills and development for managers mostly referred to knowledge of **teamwork principles, team building and communication** • Management & admin knowledge was dominated by management skills (**project, customer relationship and personnel**).		

Figure 9.8 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Manager Occupations, 2025

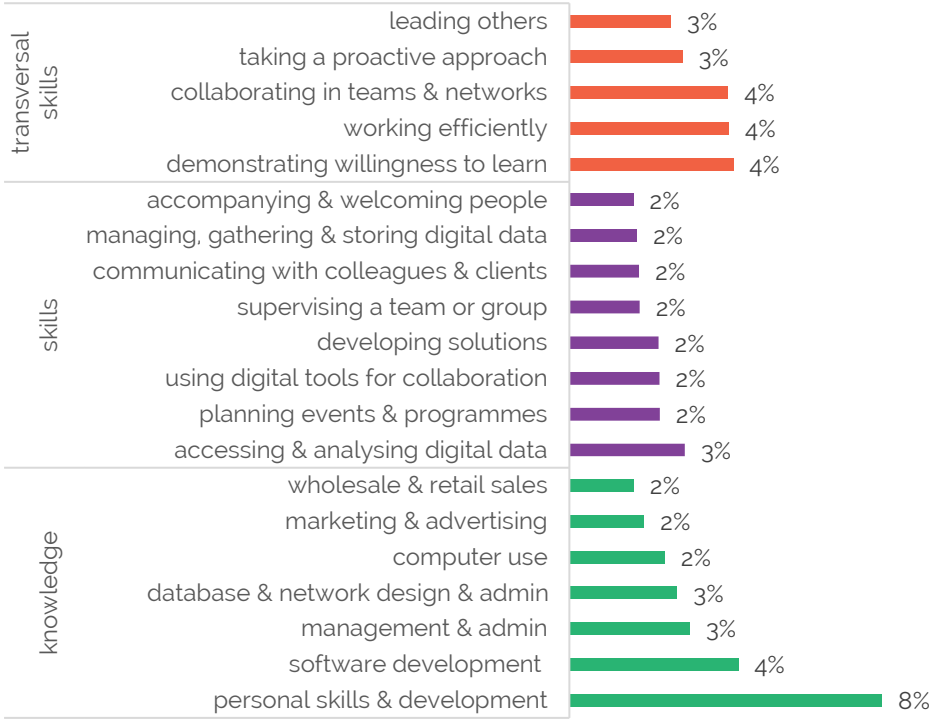


Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

*This occupation includes property managers, hairdressing salon owners/managers, waste disposal and environmental services managers.

Broad Occupation:	Professional Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	33%	30%	31%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations** in 2025	• Programmers & software development professionals • Engineering professionals not elsewhere classified • Research and development managers • IT business analysts, architects & systems designers • Nurses • Advertising accounts managers • Accountants & tax experts As in 2024, these occupations accounted for 61% of OJAs for professional occupations in 2025		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for professional occupations, 2025	• Self-management related skills (e.g. **willingness to learn, work efficiently, take a proactive approach**) made up 10% of all skill mentions for this occupation • Personal skills related mostly to **knowledge** of **teamwork** and **communication** principles • Management skills (e.g. plan, supervise, & general admin) and digital skills (data analysis and program computers) were the most prominent job-related skills • Software development, and database related knowledge was mentioned mostly for IT occupations, but also for engineers, HE professionals, and R&D managers.		

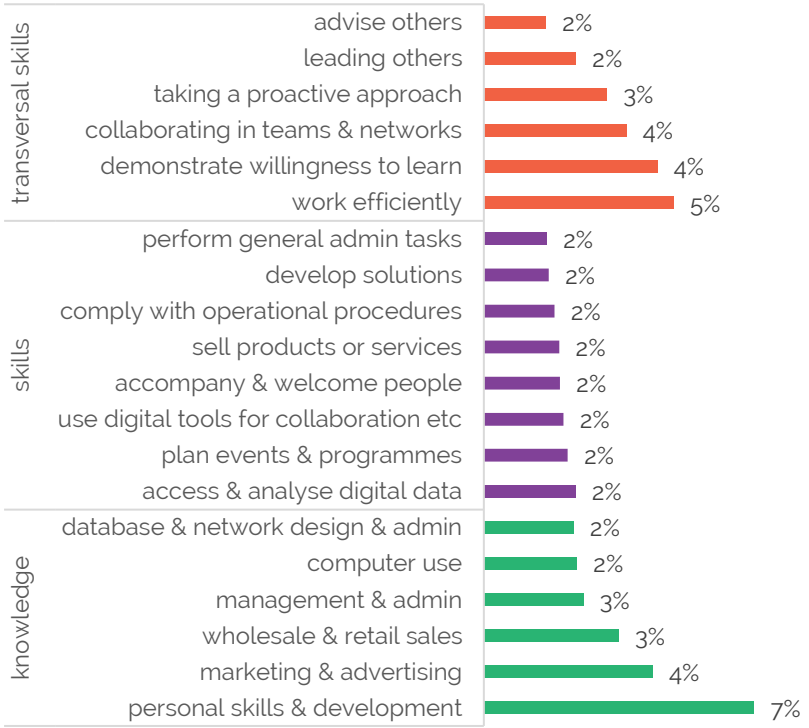
Figure 9.9 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Professional Occupations, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Broad Occupation:	Associate Professional Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	18%	17%	16%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations** in 2025	• Business sales executives & business dev managers • Laboratory technicians • Health associate professionals n.e.c. • Writers, authors & translators • Welfare and housing associate professionals n.e.c. • Building/civil eng technicians and draughtspersons • IT user support and operations technicians Combined, these occupations made up more than one half (54%) of all OJAs for associate professional occupations in 2025, broadly in line with the 52% share observed in 2024.		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for associate professional occupations, 2025	• Knowledge of personal skills & development mostly referred to **teamwork** and **communication** principles and, to a lesser extent, **assertiveness** • The ability to **plan events** related to **adjusting priorities** and **coordinating components of work** • work efficiently referred mostly to an ability to **manage time, manage quality, pay attention to detail,** and **work independently**.		

Figure 9.10 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Associate Professionals, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Broad Occupation:	Administrative Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	11%	10%	10%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations*** in 2025 *Only occupations with a minimum of 400 job ads in 2025 are considered	• Personal assistants and other secretaries • Local government administrative occupations • Receptionists • Financial admin occupations (e.g. book-keepers, payroll managers) These occupations accounted for more than four fifths (83%) of all OJAs for administrative occupations.		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for administrative occupations, 2025	• **Self-management skills** (willingness to learn, work efficiently, take a proactive approach, & cope with stress) were particularly prominent in admin roles, accounting for 17% of all skill mentions for this occupation (compared to 14% for all occupations) • Detailed skills included in **personal skills & development** included **communication, teamwork,** and **assertiveness** • **Working with computers** (computer use, data analysis, using digital tools for collaboration) made up 9.5% of all skill mentions, above the average across all occupations (4%).		

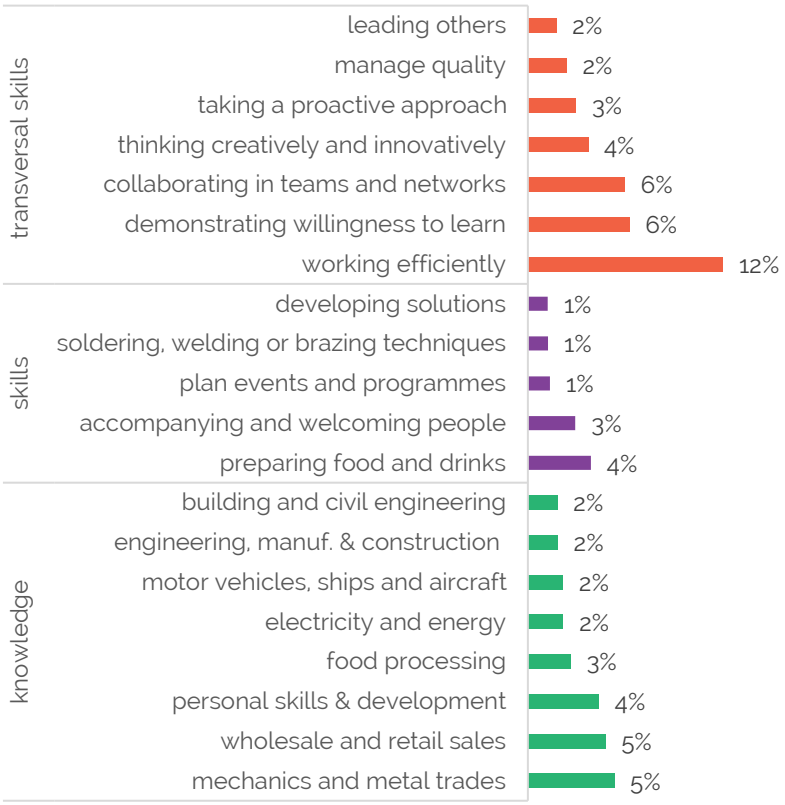
Figure 9.11 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Administrative Occupations, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Broad Occupation:	Skilled Trades Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	7%	9%	9%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations** in 2025	• Chefs & cooks • Vehicle technicians, mechanics and electricians • Electricians and electrical fitters • Metal forming & welding trades (e.g. sheet metal workers, welders etc) As in 2024, these occupations accounted for 72% of all skilled trades OJAs in 2025, However, the share for chefs & cooks fell (from 44% to 40%), while that of electricians grew from 8% to 10%.		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for skilled trades occupations, 2025	• With the exception of personal skills/development and sales skills, the knowledge category was dominated by engineering & manufacturing related skills • As was the case in 2024, **working efficiently** was the largest individual skill and mostly referred to an ability to **attend to detail** and **manage quality**.		

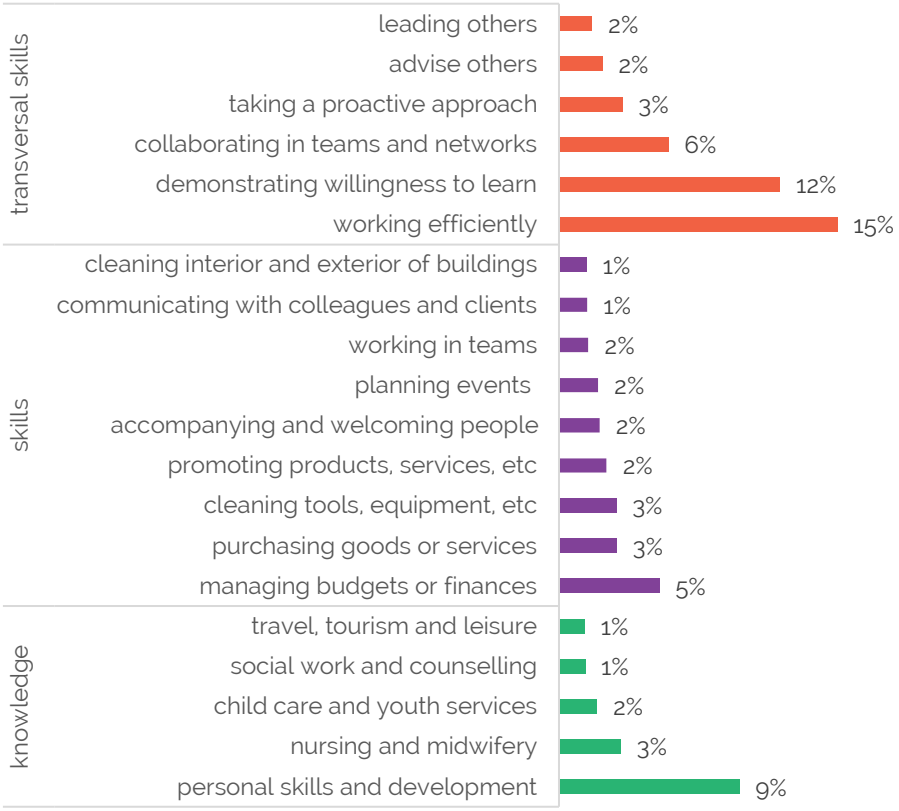
Figure 9.12 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Skilled Trades Occupations, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Broad Occupation:	Caring & Personal Service Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	4%	7%	7%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations*** in 2025 *Only occupations with a minimum of 400 job ads in 2025 are considered	• Nursing auxiliaries and assistants • Caretakers • Childminders and related occupations As in 2024, approximately three quarters of OJAs for caring/personal service occupations in 2025 were for just three occupations		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for caring/personal service occupations, 2025	• The ability to work efficiently referred mostly to being able to **attend to detail** (especially for caretaker roles) and **manage time and quality** (especially nursing auxiliary roles). • Personal skills/development included **communication** skills (mentioned in nearly all job ads for nursing auxiliaries and childminders). • **Managing budgets/finances** was mostly mentioned in ads for caretaker or childcare worker roles.		

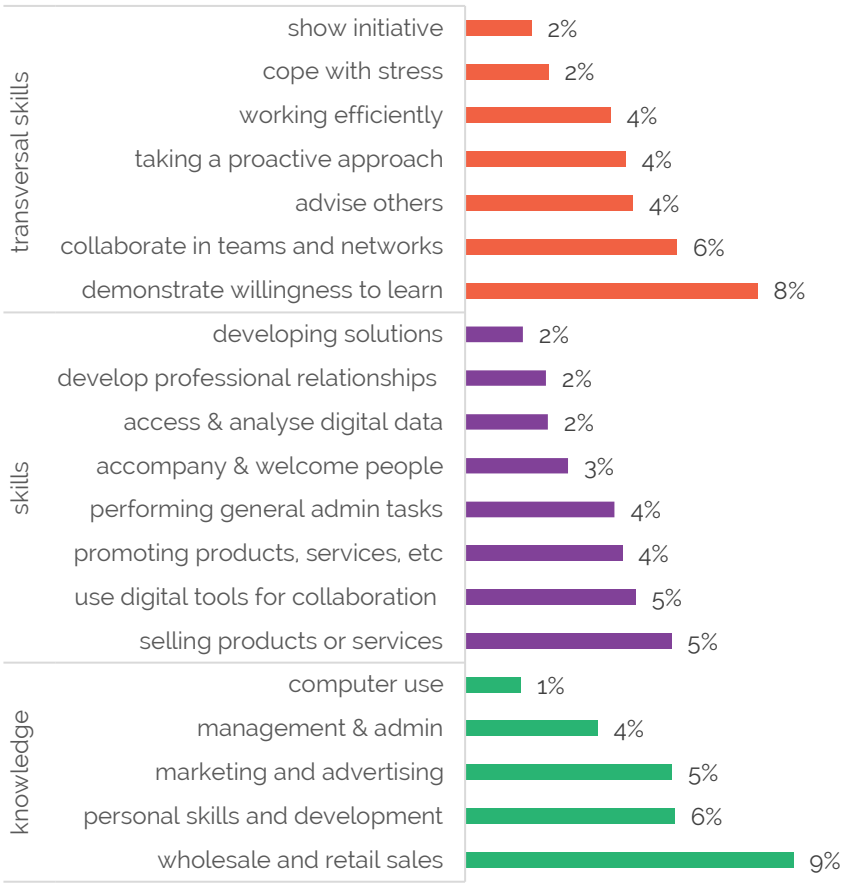
Figure 9.13 Most Frequently Mentioned Skills in Ads for Caring/Personal Services Occupations, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Broad Occupation:	Sales & Customer Service Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	4%	4%	3%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations** in 2025	Most (54%) online job adverts for sales related occupations were for **sales and retail assistants**; for all other sales occupations, the number of job adverts was under 400.		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for sales occupations, 2025	• Transversal skills for sales related occupations were dominated **by self-management** (e.g. willingness to learn, work efficiently, show initiative) or **communication** (e.g. advise others, collaboration) **skills** • As would be expected for this occupation, key work-related skills included promoting and selling, liaising with people (developing professional relationships; accompany & welcome people); however, **digital skills** were also in demand (**data analysis**, **using digital tools**).		

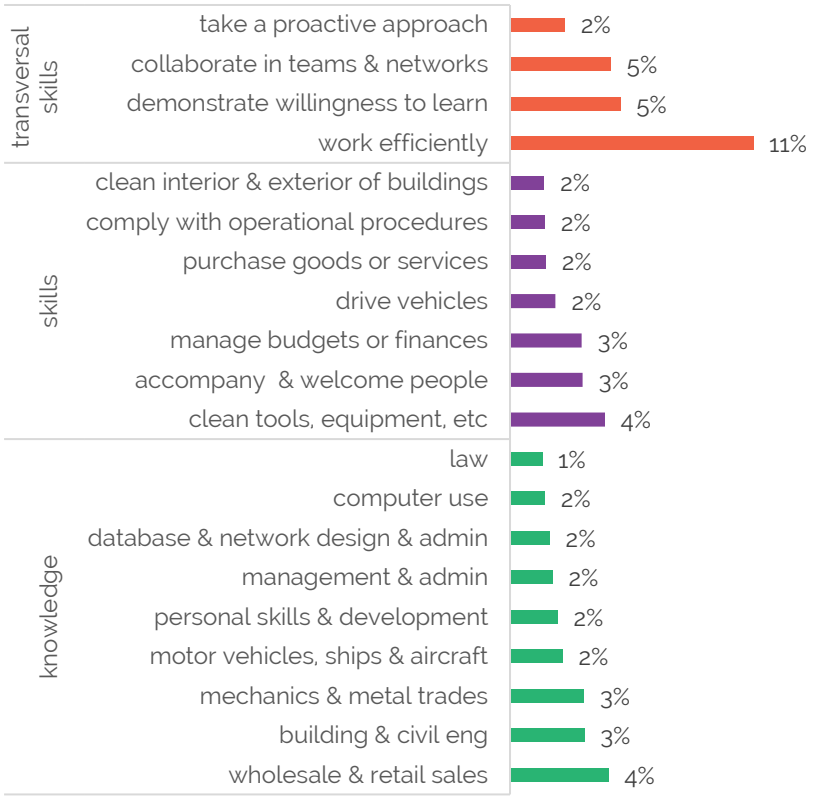
Figure 9.14 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Sales Occupations, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)

Broad Occupation:	Operative Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	5%	7%	7%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations** in 2025	• Paper and wood machine operatives • Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c. • Large goods vehicle drivers • Construction operatives (e.g. scaffolders, road construction) Combined, these occupations made up 62% of OJAs for operative occupations in 2025, similar to the share observed in 2024		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for operative occupations, 2025	• 15% of all skill mentions for operative roles related to being able to **work efficiently** – by far the highest share across all occupations. It encompassed detailed skills such as being able to **pay attention to detail**, and to a lesser extent, **manage quality** • **Management** related skills (manage finances, allocate physical resources, plan events and develop solutions made up 9% of all skills mentioned for operatives. **Cleaning** related skills made up over 7%.		

Figure 9.15 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Operative Occupations, 2025



Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP)
Excludes skills with fewer than 1,000 mentions

Broad Occupation:	Elementary Occupations		
Share of total OJAs	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
	5%	7%	7%
Most frequently occurring **detailed occupations*** in 2025* *Only occupations with a minimum of 400 job ads in 2025 are considered	• Kitchen and catering assistants • Cleaners and domestics • Bar staff & waiting staff These occupations made up 62% of OJAs for elementary occupations.in 2025, up slightly from 60% in 2024		
Most frequently mentioned **skills** in ads for elementary occupations, 2025	• Transversal skill mentions were dominated by **self-management-related skills** (willingness to learn, work efficiently, and take a proactive approach) • Many of the work-specific skills related to **handling or moving** (e.g. cleaning tools etc, or buildings), **management** (e.g. budgets, resources), and **communication/collaboration** skills (e.g. develop solutions, purchasing, selling and promotion). • Subject knowledge areas did not feature among the top 15 skill mentions, the only occupational group for which this occurred.		

Figure 9.16 Most Frequently Mentioned Detailed Skills in Ads for Elementary Occupations, 2025*



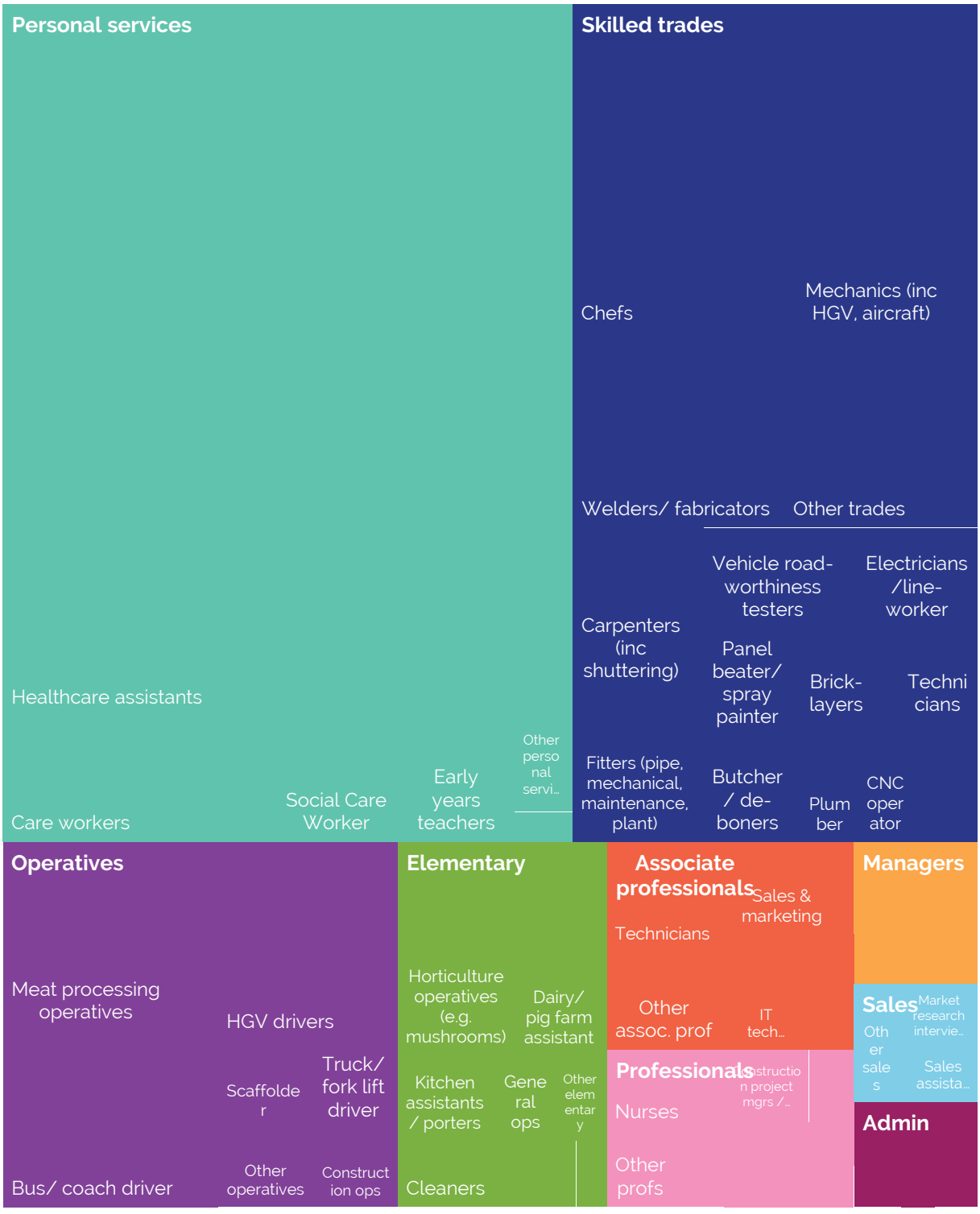
Source: WIH (Eurostat/CEDEFOP); Confined to top 15 skill mentions due to small numbers involved

9.3.2 DSP JobsIreland.ie vacancy adverts

DSP JobsIreland.ie vacancy data is a subset of the Eurostat's Web Intelligence Hub (WIH) data examined above. In addition, the SLMRU receive a separate JobsIreland.ie vacancy dataset directly from the DSP containing additional detail such as job title, offering useful insights into the type of roles employers are recruiting through this portal. The vacancies detailed in Figure 9.14 relate to paid positions only and refer to the number of posts rather than adverts. The overall number of paid position posts advertised on DSP Jobs Ireland in 2025 was broadly in line with the previous year, with healthcare assistants continuing to account for a significant share of total posts. The key findings from the latest data by occupation include:

- **Managers** accounted for 2% of vacancies in 2025, with job titles relating to managers in logistics/warehousing, restaurants, bars and hotels, store managers, production/operations managers, and construction project managers. An increase in the number of vacancy posts advertised for logistics/warehouse managers offset the fall in vacancies for hospitality-related managers.
- **Professionals** accounted for 3% of vacancies in 2025, with job titles including nurses, construction project managers and engineers, other medical-related professionals, quantity surveyors, and youth/social workers. The number of vacant posts for ICT professionals fell compared to 2024, while construction-related vacancies grew.
- **Associate professional** vacancies (4% of total in 2025) primarily related to various technicians (including production, process, mechanical) and sales and marketing roles, both of which saw an increase in the volume of vacancy posts since 2024.
- **Administrative** vacancies (1% of total in 2025) primarily related to community employment supervisors, stock takers, financial and transport admin roles, and receptionists/secretaries.
- **Skilled trades** vacancies (27% of total) were primarily for chefs (with chef de partie appearing most frequently), mechanics (including HGV and aircraft) and welders/fabricators. There was an increase in the number of construction-related vacancy posts since 2024 (including carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers and plasterers), along with fitters (pipe, mechanical, maintenance, plant), vehicle roadworthiness testers, electricians, lines workers, panel beaters/spray painters, butchers/deboners and CNC operators.
- **Personal services** posts continued to dominate the DSP JobsIreland.ie data in 2025; this occupation made up 41% of the total, with healthcare assistants accounting for most of the posts advertised in this category, far exceeding the number of people employed in this occupation (see Section 10.6); in addition, posts arose for care workers and early years teachers, with a smaller share for hairdressers, barbers, and spa therapists.
- **Sales** roles accounted for 1% of posts advertised in 2025, with the number of posts for sales assistants continuing to decline since 2023 (when they accounted for 9% of total posts); other posts included market research interviewers.
- **Operative** roles accounted for 14% of all posts advertised in 2025, with the majority relating to meat processing operatives, HGV and bus/coach drivers, each of which saw an increase on 2024; other posts included those for scaffolders, other drivers (e.g. truck, forklift), and construction operatives.
- **Elementary occupations** (7% of total in 2025) were primarily for agricultural roles including horticultural operatives (e.g. mushroom pickers) and dairy/pig farm assistants, but also for hospitality roles (kitchen assistants/porters, waiters, bar staff/baristas), cleaners, and warehouse operatives.

Figure 9.17 DSP Jobs Ireland Vacancies (Paid Positions Only) by Occupational Group & Key Job Titles, 2025



Source: DSP Jobs Ireland

9.4 Difficult-to-Fill Vacancies: Recruitment Agency Survey (November 2025)

The SLMRU in SOLAS conducts a recruitment agency survey annually to gather recruitment agencies' views on vacancies which in their experience are proving difficult to fill. Table 9.1 refers to the roles that were most frequently identified as difficult-to-fill when agencies were surveyed in November 2025.[47]

Table 9.1 Summary of Main Job Titles Identified as Difficult-To-Fill, November 2025

Managers	Project/site/contracts/managers in construction
	Procurement/warehouse managers (middle/upper level)
	Finance/Insurance managers
Professionals	Software developers: Python, Java, full stack, C++, SQL/Oracle IT engineers: AI, machine learning, cyber security, devOps, cloud, site reliability, test, mobile, network, data Other IT: data scientists, solution architects, ICT risk management (DORA)
	Engineering: quality control/quality assurance, EHS (environmental health & safety), electrical, process, automation, mechanical, R&D, validation, manufacturing, injection moulding Pharmacovigilance specialists, lab managers, scientists (clinical research) Regulatory affairs, compliance & quality managers/specialists in pharma
	Business & finance: financial/practice/tax/insurance accountants, regulatory/compliance advisors, practice/portfolio managers
	Construction: site/civil engineers, quantity surveyors
	Health: nurses (theatre, staff, general, oncology, urology, psychiatric, midwives), medical consultants and registrars (psychiatric, emergency medicine), therapists (occupational, speech & language), social care workers
Associate professionals	Sales/marketing managers and executives, freight sales
	Planners (transport & construction), supply chain analysts
	Health & safety officers, BIM/draughtspersons, data analysts
	IT technicians: tech support/customer care (with language skills)
	Insurance claims handlers/underwriters, brokers, private credit/debt associates, risk/compliance officers
	Other technicians: maintenance (electrical/mechanical), engineering, accounts

[47] Difficult-to-fill vacancies survey (SOLAS: November 2025)

Administrative	Credit controllers, accounts/payroll
	Freight forwarders, site/procurement administration
Skilled trades	Welders: TIG, ARC
	Construction: carpenters (inc. shuttering), steel fixers/erectors, building supervisors/foreman, electricians, fitters & glaziers, curtain wallers
	Mechanics
	Chefs
Personal services	Healthcare assistants, nursing home care workers
Sales & customer service	Customer service (automotive/insurance/admin), technical/counter sales reps (construction)
Operatives and Elementary	Drivers: HGV (artic/rigid), (C, CE license), reach/forklift, machine, van, site dump, crane, teleporters, bus
	Operatives (warehouse, packaging, food, production)
	Waiting/bar and cleaning staff
	Construction: general labourers, banksman, pipe layers, scaffolders, ground workers

Source: Recruitment Agency Survey, November 2025

Section 10 Occupational Employment Profiles

This section provides a statistical analysis of employment at occupational level. Employment profiles are provided for nearly 100 occupations. The occupations were based on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2010, as this is the classification used by the CSO for the Labour Force Survey. In cases where estimated employment was too small to report for statistical reasons, two or more occupations were merged. All of the occupations were then grouped into 16 groups. In general, occupations that were associated with the same sector of employment or occupations with similar duties were grouped together. The occupational groups were as follows

- science and engineering occupations
- ICT occupations
- business and financial occupations
- healthcare occupations
- education occupations
- social and care occupations
- legal and security occupations
- construction occupations
- other craft occupations
- agriculture and animal care occupations
- hospitality occupations
- arts, sports and tourism occupations
- transport and logistics occupations
- administrative and secretarial occupations
- sales, marketing and customer service occupations
- operative and elementary occupations (labourers) n.e.c.

In 2024, the SLMRU conducted a review of the occupations included in each occupational group resulting in the introduction of some minor changes to some of the groups (see the 2024 edition for further details). As a result, in addition to the break in series (outlined in the Introduction), data in Section 10 is not directly comparable with that in Section 10 of editions of the National Skills Bulletin prior to 2024. Full details of the occupations included in each occupational group are available in the Appendix.

Following processing and compilation issues identified in relation to the LFS data for quarter 3 and quarter 4 2025, data for these quarters were formally updated by the CSO in May 2026 and again in September 2026, after compilation of most chapters in this report. For the most part, the changes amounted to less than 500 persons, and do not change the interpretation of the analysis; however, for larger changes, including the detailed occupations presented in this section, the numbers have been updated to provide the most accurate interpretation of the labour market for these variables.

For each of the occupations, an analysis was conducted using the following indicators

- **Employment:** an annual average of employment figures over the four quarters in 2025
- **Employment growth:** the annualised rate of employment growth for the period 2019-2025
- **Females:** the percentage of females employed in an occupation (based on quarter 4 2025 data from the LFS)

- **Full-time:** the percentage of persons who work full-time in an occupation (based on quarter 4 2025 data from the LFS)
- **Aged 55 years and over:** a higher than average share of persons aged 55 years and over indicates a higher expected retirement rate in the short to medium-term (based on quarter 4 2025 data from the LFS)
- **Non-Irish citizens:** a higher than average proportion of non-Irish citizens in an occupation indicates employers' reliance on sourcing skills/labour from abroad to fill vacancies (based on quarter 4 2025 data from the LFS)
- **Third level graduates**: the percentage of persons who have attained a third level qualification (based on quarter 4 2025 data from the LFS)
- **Employment permits:** issued to non-EEA nationals in 2025. This is an indicator of the demand for skills that could not be met from domestic or EEA sources. (Based on new permits issued in 2024; Source: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment)
- **Recruitment Agency Survey:** presents the results of the SLMRU (SOLAS) Recruitment Agency Survey conducted in November 2025. The occupations with mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies reported by recruitment agencies are indicated by a '√'.

In addition, the outlooks for each of the occupations were determined using the above data and a number of additional sources including

- The Skills for Growth data, where employers, working directly with Regional Skills Fora managers (DFHERIS) in the 12 months to June 2026, identified job vacancies which in their experience were proving difficult to fill.
- Data on employers' critical skills needs gathered from Enterprise Ireland's (EI) client skills data.
- Recent job hires data (from the LFS) refers to those who commenced employment in the previous three months and is examined in detail in Section 7.2; for the outlooks by occupation, a high volume of recent job hires often signals job churn, particularly when there is little evidence of employment growth.
- Vacancy data from both CEDEFOP/Eurostat's Web Intelligence Hub and DSP Jobs Ireland in 2025 (as detailed in Section 9) as well as data from LinkedIn relating to unmet skills demand and most frequently occurring skills for selected occupations.
- Supply of skills was approximated using the expected output from the formal education and training system, bearing in mind that education/training provision is not always directly linked to a specific occupation and that for many occupations there are no mandatory qualification requirements.
- Potential jobs creation pipeline in IDA client companies, based on data on approved projects from the IDA.
- Employment forecasts at occupational level from the projections model held within the SLMRU.
- Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026,[48] assessing the extent to which different types of occupations are potentially exposed to artificial intelligence (AI).
- Reference is also made to any relevant sectoral and Government reports which directly impact on skills.

[48] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming).

10.1 Science & Engineering Occupations

Overall employment	156,500
Share of total workforce	6.0%
Main sectors of employment	56% - Industry 19% - Professional activities
Employment growth	**+57,700** between 2019 and 2025 **+8.0%** on average annually (2019-2025) (+3.4% for total workforce) **+5.4%** growth annually since 2024 (+2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **2.7%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	teamwork, digital skills (data analysis, MS Office), adaptability, quality standards, provide information, problem solving, assume responsibility

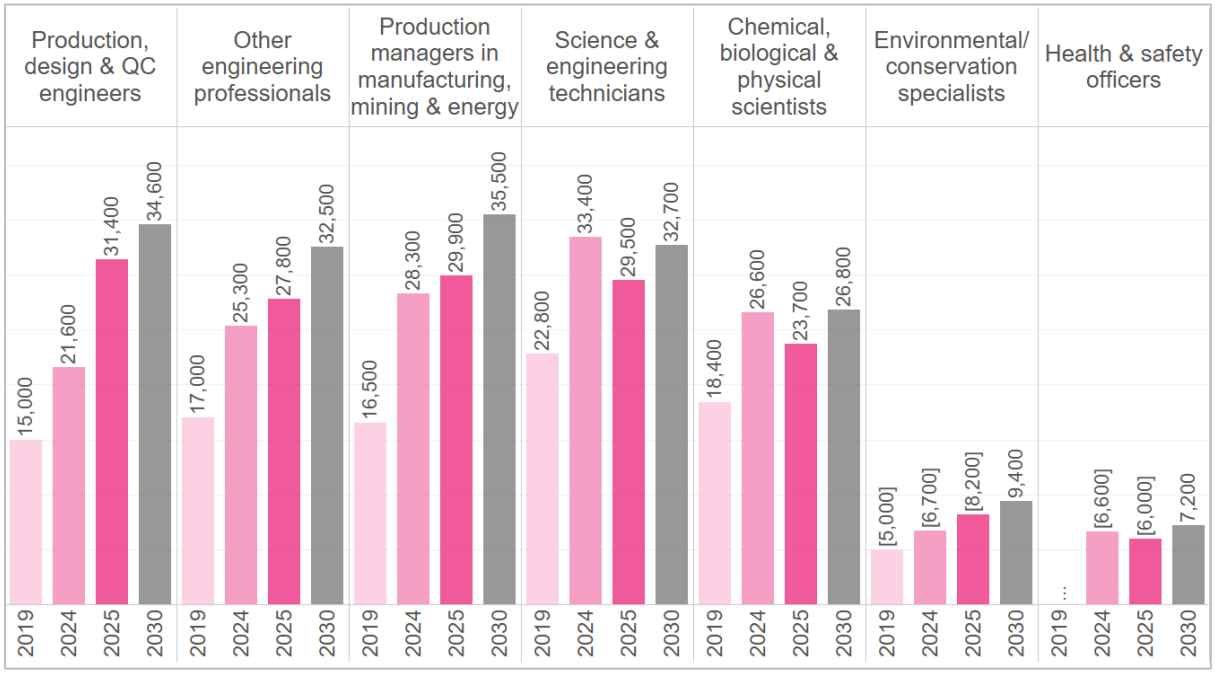
Overview: Science and engineering occupations comprise highly skilled (predominantly professional and associate professional) roles that have experienced strong employment growth in recent years, with further expansion projected to 2030. Those working in this occupational group are characterised by high levels of educational attainment and predominantly full-time employment. Recruitment demand for this occupation remains strong, with shortages and difficult-to-fill vacancies evident across several sources. Employers seek a combination of specialised technical expertise and transversal skills, particularly adaptability, problem-solving, teamwork, communication, project management, and knowledge of quality standards.

Opportunities & challenges: Strong demand is partly driven by the continued growth of high-value sub-sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, and research and development (R&D), which have performed well in recent years. However, employers face persistent recruitment difficulties, alongside a need to upskill the existing workforce in response to technological, regulatory, and industry change. Advances in artificial intelligence are likely to reshape how work is carried out, with productivity gains expected to outweigh displacement effects, but increasing the need for workers to adapt to new tools and work processes. Additional opportunities continue to emerge from the green transition, while evolving regulatory, compliance, and quality requirements will continue to raise the demand for specialised technical expertise.

Skills supply from the education and training system remains robust. In 2024, there were almost 6,200 science awards and 4,500 engineering/manufacturing graduates at NFQ levels 8-10, broadly in line with 2023 levels. However, demand for these skills is economy wide: these graduates possess transferable skills (e.g. problem solving, critical thinking) that are in demand across a wide range of sectors, including education, health, and public administration and defence (PAD), meaning that employers must compete with a range of sectors for these skills. A further challenge is broadening participation, particularly among females, whose representation remains relatively low in these occupations; greater female participation and/or retention in the science and engineering fields could unlock a further supply of skills for this occupation.

Outlook: Employment growth is expected to continue to 2030, with above average growth for these occupations. This growth is projected to be driven primarily by the foreign-owned manufacturing sector. Within the occupations in this group, the strongest growth is projected for production managers.

Figure 10.1 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; an ellipsis (…) denotes numbers too small to report

Table 10.1 Labour Market Profile of Science and Engineering 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
Chemical, biological & physical scientists	4.3%	2.5%	54%	91%	…	79%	98%	269	✓
Production, design & quality control engineers	13.1%	2.0%	37%	96%	…	76%	91%	1,146	✓
Other engineering professionals	8.5%	3.2%	…	94%	[16%]	76%	92%	876	✓
Science & engineering technicians	4.4%	2.1%	46%	97%	…	85%	71%	241	✓
Production managers	10.4%	3.5%	[25%]	94%	[27%]	82%	66%	75	
Environmental/ conservation specialists	[8.6%]	2.8%	…	[86%]	…	[79%]	[75%]	50	
Health & safety officers	…	3.7%	…	…	…	…	…	13	✓
Overall total	**8.0%**	**2.7%**	**34%**	**94%**	**17%**	**79%**	**83%**	**2,670**	

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

Chemical, biological & physical scientists

Despite an above average annual average employment growth between 2019 and 2025, employment levels for this occupation declined by 2,900 since 2024, returning to 2023 levels. This was the only occupation in this group where females accounted for the higher share (excluding health and safety officers where the numbers were too small to determine sex). Industry and professional activities sectors accounted for the larger share of employment, at 70% combined.

Scientists were one of the most frequently mentioned occupations in online job adverts (WIH/CEDEFOP), making up 4% of the total in 2025. Difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data related **to laboratory managers, clinical research associates, chemical scientists, R&D scientists, physical scientists (e.g. GIS).** Employment permits were issued for sectors including the manufacture of chemicals/pharmaceuticals and medical devices (e.g. **various scientists (including bioprocessing, chemical**)), as well as healthcare (e.g. **medical/clinical scientists**) and **R&D**.

LinkedIn data points to an unmet demand for individuals with strong technical skills (Method Development, Liquid and Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectroscopy (LC-MS and GC-MS), Wet Chemistry, among others. Additional data from Skills for Growth/Spotlight on Skills and online job adverts highlight the demand for IT skills (e.g. data analysis programming languages), time and project management, and leadership skills for these occupations.

Skills supply from the education/training sector remained strong in 2024: science awards made at levels NFQ 8-10 included nearly 1,500 awards in physical sciences, nearly 700 in biochemistry, and over 800 in biology.[49]

The already strong demand for biological, chemical and physical scientists, particularly in the high-tech and life sciences sectors, is expected to persist, and shortages are expected to continue, especially for those with transversal skills and technical experience and/or expertise in niche areas.

Skills shortages: Chemical and R&D scientists

Production, design & quality control engineers

Production, design and quality control engineers recorded the fastest employment growth over the six-year period of any occupation (13.1% on average annually), driven by a sharp increase of 9,800 additional workers between 2024-2025. Growth is projected to moderate in the coming years, but employment in 2030 will remain well above 2024 levels.

Evidence of strong demand was present across difficult-to-fill and job advert data sources. There was a high volume of mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey (primarily related to difficult-to-fill vacancies in life sciences) and Skills for Growth data: job titles in demand included process engineers, validation engineers, pharmacovigilance specialists, quality engineers, manufacturing engineers, regulatory affairs specialists, design engineers, and R&D engineers. In addition, LinkedIn data highlights a shortage of quality assurance managers/engineers with skills in regulatory and industry compliance and standards (e.g. ISO 13485), product quality, GxP (Good Practice) and Six Sigma, while Skills for Growth evidence underlines the need for a combination of strong interpersonal and technical skills.

Although lower than in recent years (due to declines in the ICT sector), this occupation nonetheless ranked among the top 10 for which new employment permits were issued in 2025, with job titles including quality, design, and process engineers.

In addition to the current difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions and continued reliance on employment permits, future demand for this occupation is expected to remain strong. In 2025, the IDA (Industrial Development Agency) approved projects securing a strong jobs pipeline for quality control and validation engineers mostly in high-tech manufacturing or utilities.

Skills shortages: Quality control/assurance, process, design, and manufacturing engineers

[49] Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply (SOLAS: 2026)

Other engineering professionals (e.g. mechanical, electrical and electronic engineers)

Employment levels for other engineering professionals have grown since 2023, resulting in an above average employment growth rate over the six-year period since 2019. Employment growth is projected to be strong to 2030, driven primarily by the foreign-owned manufacturing sector (approximately three quarters of those working in this occupation work in industry, one of the highest shares across all science/engineering occupations).

Demand for other engineering professional is evident in the high volume of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey, frequent mentions in the Skills for Growth data, EI's critical skill needs data, and in online job adverts data. Demand related to a range of sectors (e.g. life sciences, construction and, to a lesser extent, energy), with the most frequently difficult-to-fill job titles being environmental health and safety (EHS), automation, mechanical, electrical, and injection moulding/polymer engineers. The number of new employment permits issued fell by over 460 between 2024 and 2025 but remained one of the highest occupations in terms of permits issued; job titles included mechanical, electrical, project, automation.

The demand for this occupation often requires a specific skills profile, including those with relevant industry experience; Skills for Growth LinkedIn data point to a need for mechanical engineers with skills in 3D Modelling (CAD, Revit), mechanical systems, HVAC design, building services, MEP (mechanical, electrical & plumbing), and drawing (engineering, mechanical). Other sought-after skills mentioned in Skills for Growth included for environmental impact assessment, environmental science, sustainability (mostly for electrical engineers), and process automation and software/system expertise (especially electronic engineers). In 2025, the IDA (Industrial Development Agency) approved projects securing a strong jobs pipeline for senior mechanical engineers over the next few years.

Despite a fall in the number of new employment permits issued, demand for skilled candidates to fill engineering roles is high, with shortages persisting in the medium term.

Skills shortages: Engineers (mechanical, electrical, automation, and EHS)

Science & engineering technicians

The employment growth for science and engineering technicians was above average for the six-year period, and despite a decline between 2024 and 2025, employment numbers for this occupation remain above those in 2023. Science and engineering technicians are employed across a range of sectors; while industry accounted for the highest share (58%), other sectors of employment included professional activities and health. Although males outnumbered females, the share of males (54%) was one of the smallest across all science/engineering occupations.

There is evidence of strong demand for this occupation across numerous sources, particularly for mechanical, maintenance, and electrical technicians, for which there were numerous difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions (Recruitment Agency Survey and/or Skills for Growth) and new employment permits issued, mainly for the high-tech manufacturing, utilities, and professional services sector. There is also demand for other types of technicians in this group, including production and manufacturing engineers. Nearly 9% of online job adverts for the science/engineering occupational family were for this occupation, with the largest numbers being for laboratory technicians (including chemical), followed by technicians not elsewhere classified, and electrical/electronic technicians.

Skills in demand for these occupations, as evidenced in the Skills for Growth and Enterprise Ireland data, pointed to a need for candidates with technical expertise (e.g. voltage systems (medium and high), quality assurance), digital (CAD/REVIT software; data analysis) and problem solving skills, while those mentioned in online job adverts included an ability to delegate responsibilities, and set production KPIs.

The supply of skills for this occupation is growing, with 4,200 science and engineering awards made in higher education at levels 6 and 7 in 2024, up from 3,800 one year previously.

Overall, the demand for this occupation is likely to be sustained in the medium term, with shortages for some types of technicians persisting.

Skills shortages: maintenance, electrical, mechanical technicians

Production managers in manufacturing, mining and energy

Employment for production managers has grown, albeit slowly, every year since 2020, resulting in an above average employment growth rate over the six-year period. Further growth is projected out to 2030, due to above-average growth for the foreign-owned manufacturing sector. Although there was limited or no evidence of unmet demand for this occupation, new employment permits issued in 2025 (for production, manufacturing and operations managers) and IDA job creation announcements (for management roles in manufacturing) combined with the consistent growth in employment numbers in recent years, all point to a continued demand for this occupation in the medium term.

Environmental/conservation specialists

Employment levels have grown considerably over the six-year period for this occupation, although the numbers employed remain too small for detailed analysis.

Evidence of demand for this occupation was confined to employment permits and Skills for Growth data: in 2025 new employment permits were issued for job titles such as environmental engineers/consultants and sustainability consultants, while difficult-to-fill mentions related primarily to sustainability engineers. The demand spans a range of sectors (professional activities, construction and industry). However, there is evidence, particularly in the Skills for Growth and Enterprise Ireland data, that employers seek environmental expertise for various types of other engineering roles (e.g. electrical, civil engineers), spanning a range of sectors (e.g. industry, construction), suggesting that the skills typically associated with environmental and conservation specialists are cross-occupational and cross-sectoral.

Health and safety officers

Employment numbers for this occupation have remained largely stable in recent years, although overall numbers are too small for detailed analysis. A limited number of new employment permits were issued for construction health & safety officers and EHS advisors, while the Recruitment Agency Survey identified difficulty in filling vacancies for health and safety officers/advisers in construction. Although this occupation was not specifically mentioned in either the Skills for Growth or job advert data, evidence of skills mentioned in relation to other occupations (ranging from professional, to skilled trade to operative roles) highlights the important role health and safety and compliance procedures play in the job specification of other roles.

10.2 ICT Occupations

Overall employment	142,300
Share of total workforce	5.0%
Main sectors of employment	64% - ICT 9% - Industry 8% - Financial
Employment growth	+55,000 between 2019 and 2025 +8.5% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +2.3% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **1.5%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, business ICT systems, computer programming, access & analyse digital data, use MS office, create solutions to problems, think creatively

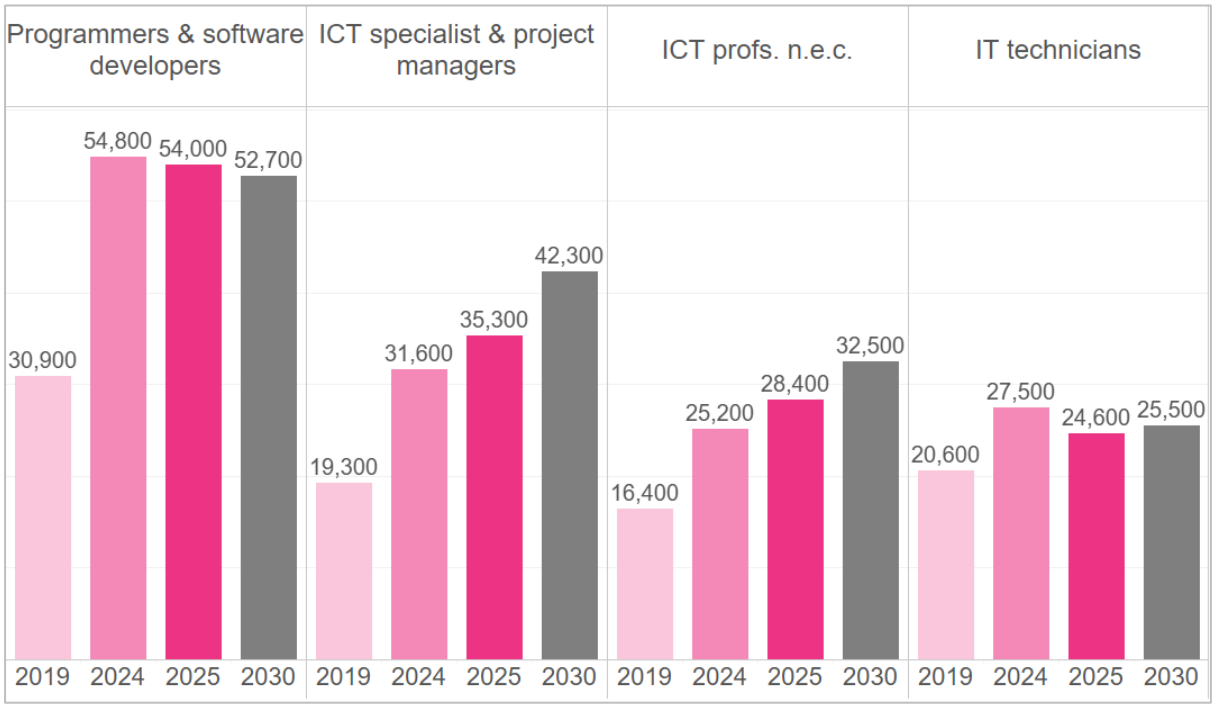
Overview: Despite some fluctuations in employment in the ICT sector where two-thirds of employment is concentrated, this occupational group has seen overall employment gains annually over the six-year period, although 60% of the growth occurred between 2019 and 2021. Those employed in ICT occupations are mainly young (86% aged 25-54 years), male (77%) and highly educated (89% held third level qualifications), with an above average share (36%) who were non-Irish citizens. The number of new employment permits issued for these occupations fell from 5,108 in 2024 to 3,648 in 2025 but was broadly on a par with the number of new permits issued annually over the period 2018-2021. The fall related almost entirely to permits issued to the ICT sector. These occupations have been identified as being particularly exposed to AI; all of employment in these roles was considered either significantly or moderately exposed to GenAI.[50]. Since quarter 1 2025, those employed in significantly exposed ICT roles saw employment gains to quarter 1 2026 while those moderately exposed experienced declines.

Skills supply: A total of 13,550 ICT awards were made in 2024, nearly two thirds of which were in higher education. Across the EU, Ireland had the third highest share of third level graduates with ICT awards (at 8.6%) after Estonia and Finland. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of ICT education awards went up by 21% (+2,300 awards) with the largest increase in software and application development/analysis, and with increases also occurring for major education awards in artificial intelligence and cyber security. In 2025, a total of 236 new ICT apprentices were registered across a range of apprenticeships including cybersecurity, software development and telecommunications and data network technicians.

Forecast report: A recent report from the EGFSN projects strong demand for digital specialists out to 2030, with particularly strong growth in areas including AI, cybersecurity, data engineering, advanced analytics, cloud architecture and software development.[51] SOLAS employment projections are for slightly above average employment growth for this group at 1.5%, primarily in the ICT sector. Job creation in projects approved in IDA-supported companies highlight sustained demand for a range of these occupations, particularly in manufacturing and ICT.

[50] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS: forthcoming).
[51] EGFSN (2026) Skills for Digital Specialists: An Assessment of the Future Skills Needs of Ireland's Digital Specialists to 2030

Figure 10.2 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data,

Table 10.2 Labour Market Profile of ICT 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
ICT specialist & project managers	10.6%	3.7%	[26%]	98%	[18%]	75%	90%	396	✓
Programmers & software developers	9.8%	-0.5%	[18%]	98%	...	54%	92%	1,655	✓
ICT professionals n.e.c	9.6%	2.7%	[24%]	98%	...	70%	90%	1,505	✓
IT technicians	3.0%	0.7%	[27%]	98%	...	64%	81%	92	✓
Overall total	**8.5%**	**1.5%**	**23%**	**98%**	**11%**	**64%**	**89%**	**3,648**	

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

ICT specialist & project managers

Employment in this occupation has seen steady growth over the six-year period, with an additional 3,700 persons since 2024. Less than a third were female and a higher than average share were non-Irish citizens (at 25%). The number of new employment permits issued for this occupation fell by 197 to 396; job titles included various IT managers including project/service managers, and IT directors. A small number of mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey relating to ICT risk management. Although employment growth is projected to be strong to 2030 and there is some evidence of demand, there is no clear indication of shortages at present.

Programmers & software developers

There was a small decline in employment between 2024 and 2025, although levels remained significantly above that of 2019, resulting in an above average growth rate for the six-year period. Despite the decline in employment levels, there was a high volume of recent job hires which would indicate that job churn was a significant feature in 2025 for these roles. This remains an occupation with a very low share of females employed and a high share of non-Irish citizens employed (46%). There was a large fall in the number of new employment permits for this occupation (falling by 740 to 1,655), returning to levels seen in 2018-2021. Despite the decline, this occupation still accounted for the third highest share of new employment permits issued in 2025, with permits issued across various software developer/engineer roles.

A high volume of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey occurred across developer/engineer roles (with Java, C++, Python, SQL/Oracle, full stack). There is also evidence that employers (Skills for Growth and Spotlight on Skills data) continue to experience difficulties in filling vacancies for software engineers and developers, particularly those with expertise in cyber security, cloud computing, AI (regulation & compliance). This occupation made up nearly 4% of all online job adverts (WIH/CEDEFOP) in 2025; in addition to IT skills, other skills such as teamwork, communication, an ability to manage time, manage quality, and adaptability featured strongly in adverts for this occupation. Data from LinkedIn points to unmet demand for software engineers with skills and know-how in Continuous Integration (CI), full-stack development, Apache Kafka, DevOps, Microsoft Azure, and Test-Driven Development. Unmet demand also exists for cybersecurity specialists with skills in application security, security information and event management (SIEM), and risk assessment.

Employment projections to 2030 are for a minor contraction but it is expected that within the occupation, AI technologies will have both positive and negative effects across a variety of roles. Despite both the recent and projected decline in employment and the potential impacts of AI on programming roles, demand for these skills and issues attracting suitably skilled personnel exists.

Skills shortages: Software developers/engineers

ICT professionals (including IT business analysts, architects, and systems designers, web design and development professionals)

Employment levels grew by 3,200 persons since 2024, with an above average growth rate over the six-year period. This occupation had a very low share of females employed, a higher than average share of non-Irish citizens (30%) and most held third-level qualifications. The number of new employment permits issued fell by 479 to 1,984 between 2024 and 2025 but still accounted for the fourth highest number of new permits issued; job titles included network/security engineer, IT business analysts, technical/solutions architects, web developers/designers.

A high volume of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions occurred in the Recruitment Agency Survey with titles including engineers (cyber security, AI, machine learning, site reliability, cloud), solutions architects. This occupation made up nearly 4% of total online job adverts in 2025, a share similar to 2024, with most adverts relating to IT business analysts, architects and systems designers. Data from LinkedIn points to an unmet demand for network engineers with various technical skills (e.g. Transmission Control Protocol (TCP), Network Infrastructure, Ansible, VLAN) and for data engineers with data related skills (e.g. quality. integration, governance, models, and analytics) and knowledge of Scala, Amazon Redshift, and NoSQL.

Employment is projected to grow reasonably strongly to 2030, with demand continuing and shortages persisting, particularly for network/security engineers.

Skills shortages: Network, security and data engineers, solutions architects

IT technicians

Employment numbers have fallen annually for the last two years for this occupation, falling by 2,900 persons since 2024. Most employed were male, the share of non-Irish citizens employed, at 36%, was above average; the high share with third level qualifications possibly points to an element of over-qualification for these roles. Employment permits issued in 2025 related to technical support and, to a lesser extent, AI annotators.

The small number of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to technical support. Approximately 1.4% of all online job adverts were for IT technician roles, broadly similar to 2024. Unmet skills needs are evident in the LinkedIn data for technical support engineers (with skills/know how in Windows 10, Ticketing Systems, Office 365, Firewalls, MS Azure, MS Exchange, Service Desk, Amazon Web Services (AWS), Citrix Products, and Powershell).

Overall employment to 2030 is not projected to grow although variation across roles within this occupation could still see job opportunities in some areas.

10.3 Business & Financial Occupations

Overall employment	306,300
Share of total workforce	11%
Main sectors of employment	35% - Financial activities 22% - Professional activities 10% - Industry 6% - ICT
Employment growth	+93,700 between 2019 and 2025 +6.3% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +4.1% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.8%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, access & analyse digital data, use MS office, assume responsibility, accounting, communication, provide information, economics

Overview: The business and financial group of occupations is one of the largest economy-wide, representing more than a tenth of total employment in Ireland. While annual average employment growth was well above average between 2019 and 2025 (at 6.3%), further growth to the year 2030 is projected to be below average, due primarily to automation and AI.

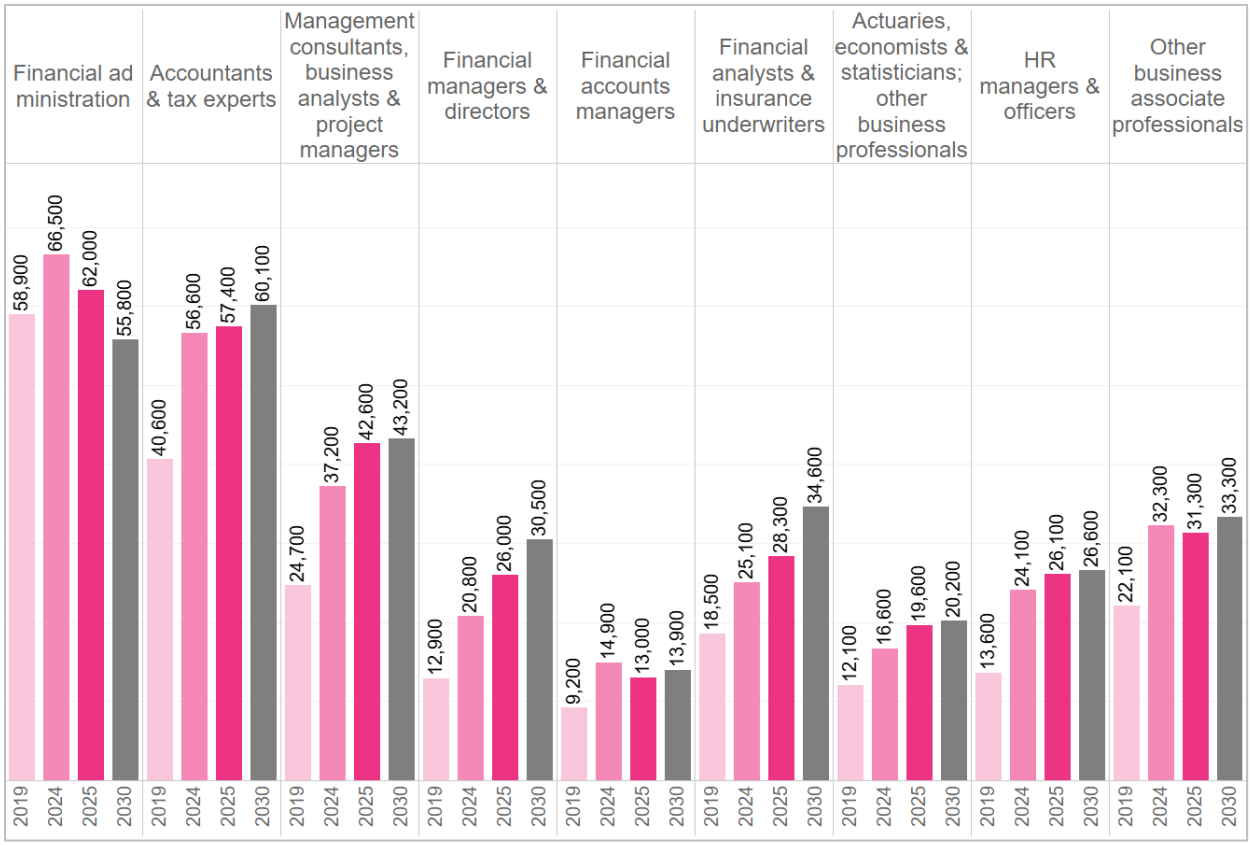
Opportunities & challenges: The large volume of persons employed in this occupation means job opportunities are likely to arise due to replacement demand alone, even if there is little or no employment growth in the medium term. Demand for business and financial occupations will be shaped by evolving skills requirements driven by technological change (including AI and automation) and increasing regulatory, risk, and ESG-related demands.[52] The share of workers with third level qualifications has risen from 77% in 2019 to 86%, reflecting the growing need for a sophisticated mix of technical, analytical, and transversal skills across these occupations as well as in other areas of the economy.[53] The evidence points to the ongoing need for skills such as leadership, people management (including talent retention, relationship management), project management, and change management (e.g. Lean) across most segments of the labour market.

Supply: Despite small declines (mostly in higher education) in more recent years, the potential supply of skills from Ireland's education and training system remains robust, with 31,000 awards made in the business and administration field in 2024 and a further 2,144 people obtaining professional awards (accountants and tax experts). Education and training provision for key finance occupations has expanded beyond the traditional routes, with five new apprenticeships available in insurance, accounting and financial services: although numbers remain low, they are, in the main growing.

Outlook: employment in this occupational group is concentrated in the finance and professional services sectors, sectors that are expected to drive most of the growth in these roles. Strong growth in some occupations (e.g. financial analysts) is projected to be offset by declines in financial administrative roles which have been highlighted as particularly vulnerable to both AI and digital technology advancements.

[52] Skills for International Financial Services, 2024
[53] Skill Requirements for Emerging Technologies in Ireland (ESRI)

Figure 10.3 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 10.3 Labour Market Profile of Business and Financial 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
Accountants & tax experts	5.9%	0.9%	54%	91%	15%	78%	95%	445	✓
Mgt. consultants, business analysts & project managers	9.5%	0.3%	48%	90%	[19%]	76%	94%	1,350	✓
Actuaries, economists & statisticians	8.4%	0.6%	[49%]	90%	...	68%	96%	90	✓
Financial analysts & insurance underwriters	7.3%	4.1%	[37%]	97%	...	78%	90%	92	✓
Other business associate professionals	6.0%	1.2%	50%	93%	...	79%	86%	337	✓
Financial accounts managers	5.9%	1.3%	[59%]	92%	...	68%	90%	11	✓
Financial managers & directors	12.4%	3.2%	39%	96%	...	83%	90%	43	✓

	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
Financial admin. occupations	0.9%	-2.1%	71%	77%	26%	85%	63%	4	✓
HR managers & officers	11.5%	0.4%	71%	92%	...	74%	91%	95	
Overall total	**6.3%**	**0.8%**	**55%**	**89%**	**17%**	**78%**	**86%**	**2,467**	

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

Accountants & tax experts

Although this occupation has been identified as one of the most exposed to the potential impacts of AI, employment levels for accountants and tax experts have continued to grow, with an above-average annual growth rate recorded since 2019. Nonetheless, employment growth is projected to slow in the years to 2030, due to further technological change (e.g. AI). Approximately one half were employed in the professional activities sector, with the remainder across sectors including financial activities and industry. Females accounted for over half (54%) of employment, and most worked full-time.

Evidence of demand for this occupation includes: new employment permits data, for which auditors (financial sector) and accountants (various areas) were the main job titles in 2025; difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions for roles such as tax, insurance, and financial accountants were cited in the Recruitment Agency Survey and, to a lesser extent, Skills for Growth data. In addition, employers, via Skills for Growth and Spotlight on Skills, as well as data from LinkedIn, indicate demand for accounting skills within other occupations (e.g. ACCA certification for financial analysts) or for certain types of accounting skills (e.g. financial planning, management, reporting and costing) within specific sectors (e.g. construction or manufacturing).

Despite small declines in recent years, education and training outputs for this occupation remain strong: accounting/tax fields made up over 3,400 awards, with more than a further 2,100 qualifiers through professional bodies in 2024. Additionally, a new level 8 apprenticeship programme (accounting technologist), designed to prepare professionals to work at the intersection of finance, information systems and governance rather than in traditional accounting roles alone, was introduced in 2025, although numbers remain small for now (20 registrations).

While demand remains evident for this occupation, there are signs of some easing, with declines in the number of new employment permits issued (numbers have halved compared to 2023), the share of online job adverts (at 14% compared to 2.3% in 2023), and in their prevalence in difficult-to-fill mention data. While no shortages have been identified, the impact of technology, as well as evolving business environments, mean changes to the skills mix required for this occupation will result in re-skilling and up-skilling requirements.

Management consultants, business analysts & project managers

Employment in this occupation has grown strongly since 2023, with an additional 5,400 persons employed compared 2024. Three sectors (professional services, finance and industry) accounted for two-thirds of employment, while non-Irish citizens accounted for almost a quarter, above the national average.

Despite a fall in 2025 (related mostly to falls in finance and ICT), this occupation had the largest number of new employment permits issued within the broad business and financial occupational family, and comprised primarily of analyst roles (e.g. financial, business, risk), project managers, and various consultants. Evidence from other sources (Skills for Growth, Spotlight on Skills) provides limited evidence of difficulty in filling positions for the occupation itself, but these sources nonetheless point to a strong demand for project management and business analysis skills across a wide range of occupations,

including for scientists and engineers (especially mechanical engineers), and sectors (construction, finance, manufacturing, logistics). Additionally, data from LinkedIn highlights unmet demand for business analysts with skills in business systems analysis, process modelling, documentation, analytics, systems analysis, and data modelling. This occupation made up a small but growing share of online job adverts (WIH/CEDEFOP); while the top skills mentioned for this occupation included adaptability, teamwork and communications, an increasing share of ads mentioned skills such as quality standards, creative, analytical, and proactive thinking.

While no shortage was identified for this occupation, demand exists for analyst and project management skills within several other unrelated occupations.

Actuaries, economists & statisticians; other business professionals

With the exception of 2024, employment levels for actuaries, economists, statisticians and other business professionals have grown annually since 2019. Recent growth was driven in part by an increasing share of non-Irish workers who made up almost a third of employment in this occupation (up from less a fifth in 2024) in 2025. New employment permits issued in 2025 were primarily for actuarial analysts in the financial activities sector. While direct evidence of demand in the available data sources is limited, partly due to the small size of the occupation, demand for the quantitative and analytical skills associated with this occupation remains strong, particularly through related roles in the area of data analysis. With continued needs for financial models, data informed decision making, and changing regulatory requirements, demand for actuaries, economists and statisticians is expected to persist.

Skills shortages: Inconclusive

Financial analysts & insurance underwriters

Employment among financial analysts and insurance advisers has grown strongly since 2019, increasing at an average annual rate of 7.3%, well above the national average. Demand for this occupation is evident across a range of data sources,: new employment permits were issued mainly for financial and investment analysts, and employers (in the Recruitment Agency Survey and/or Skills for Growth data) cited difficulties in filling vacancies for insurance roles (underwriters, client advisors, brokers), risk/compliance officers, financial advisers with customer service, risk, communications, and digital skills. LinkedIn data points to an unmet demand for financial analysts (with budgeting & forecasting, balance sheets, and variance analysis, skills) and investment analysts (with skills in due diligence, problem solving, financial modelling, and investment analysis). Planned job creation for junior roles in the financial services sector among IDA-client companies also indicates a sustained demand for this occupation in the medium-term.

The education/training system provides a strong and growing pipeline of potential skills for this occupation: by 2024, the number of higher education awards in the field of finance and banking more than doubled since 2019 to 2,400 awards and three new apprenticeships have been introduced (Insurance Practitioner (level 8), International Financial Services Specialist (level 8) and International Financial Services Associate (level 6).

While there is a growing pipeline of graduates and apprentices for this occupation, evidence suggests a sustained demand, especially for those with financial and regulatory expertise and analytical skills.

Other business associate professionals (e.g. accounting technicians, estimators, valuers)

Although employment levels have fluctuated in recent years, and a decline of 1,000 persons employed since 2024, this occupation had an above average employment growth for the period since 2019. Approximately a third were employed in the financial activities sector with the remainder spread across sectors including professional activities and industry.

Despite a decline in the number of new employment permits issued for this occupation in the ICT sector, demand remains evident for estimators, accounting technicians, and logistics analysts, while the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data highlight employers' difficulties in filling vacancies for financial planners and data analysts. Evidence from LinkedIn points to an unmet demand for data analysts (especially those with skills in data quality, visualization, and governance, among others).

However, data analytical skills are not confined to the occupation of data analyst alone, with evidence from both online job ads (CEDEFOP and LinkedIn), difficult-to-fill mentions, Spotlight on Skills data highlighting the need for these skills across a range occupations and sectors (e.g. industry, construction): including other business related occupations (e.g. business intelligence analysts, statisticians, and

analytics managers, regulatory specialists and financial analysts), as well as other engineers, scientists, ICT professionals, PAs & secretaries, and sales/digital marketing roles. This broad-based demand for data analysis skills, in addition to planned job creation in IDA-client companies for this role, mean that employment in this occupation is likely to be sustained.

Financial accounts managers

Despite an above average annual employment growth rate over the last six years, employment levels fell by 1,900 persons since 2024. Females accounted for the higher share, at 59%, with the share of non-Irish citizens employed higher than average.

Only a small number of new employment permits were issued for this occupation, difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions were limited, and there was little or no evidence of demand across any of the other data sources.

Financial managers & directors

At 12.4% on average annually since 2019, employment growth for financial managers and directors was well above average, with 5,200 additional workers since 2024 alone. Over 70% of employment was in the financial activities sector, and the shares of females and non-Irish citizens were both below the national average.

Evidence of demand for this occupation was confined to difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey, relating mostly to company secretaries and managers (operations and financial) and new employment permits data (issued for various finance managers and directors). Nonetheless, data from Spotlight on Skills points to a need for people with financial management and business acumen across a range of sectors (e.g. construction, industry, entertainment).

Financial administration

Employment fell for financial administrative occupations in 2025, returning to 2020 levels. This is a large occupation with employment spread across a number of different sectors; 40% were employed in financial activities, and a further 21% in professional activities and transport combined. Despite the fall in employment, there was a large volume of recent job hires, indicating a high level of job churn for these roles. This occupation had an above average share of females employed (71%) and share of those aged 55 years and over (26%). The share working part-time (23%) was the highest across the business and financial occupations.

Despite the decline in employment levels, there is some evidence that employers continue to experience difficulty in filling vacancies for some roles: mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to claims handlers, credit controllers, accounts administration and payroll staff and a small number of employment permits were issued for finance and accounts assistants.

Additionally, Skills for Growth data highlights a shift towards upskilling needs for existing workers in financial administration related skills (e.g. Sage, book-keeping, and finance for non-financial staff).

Due to automation, digitalisation and AI technologies, employment levels for financial administration occupations are projected to decline in the years to 2030.

HR managers & officers

Annual average employment growth was above average for HR managers and officers (11.5%), with an additional 2,000 additional persons employed since 2024 alone. The majority of those employed in this occupation were female (71%) and the share of non-Irish, at 26%, was higher than average.

Employment permits were issued across a number of sectors across various HR roles. Additional evidence from employers (Spotlight on Skills data) points to skill needs for staff with people management, performance management, recruitment, talent retention and succession planning skills.

10.4 Healthcare Occupations

Overall employment	176,900
Share of total workforce	6.0%
Main sectors of employment	92% - Health sector 5% - Wholesale & retail
Employment growth	**+45,200** between 2019 and 2025 **+5.0%** on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) **+4.2%** growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **2.1%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, person centred care, communicate with nursing staff, implement nursing care, nursing principles, assist customers, communication

Overview: Employment growth was above average for healthcare occupations both in the most recent year and the six-year annual average. There is a high reliance on a migrant workforce to fill gaps, particularly for nurses and doctors, as evidenced by the high share of non-Irish citizens employed in these occupations and the large volume of employment permits issued. The large drop in the number of permits issued since 2024 was partly attributed to the 50:50 rule which requires employers to have at least as many EEA workers as non-EEA workers. Despite the fall, this occupational group accounted for one of the highest shares of employment permits issued in 2025, alongside ICT occupations.

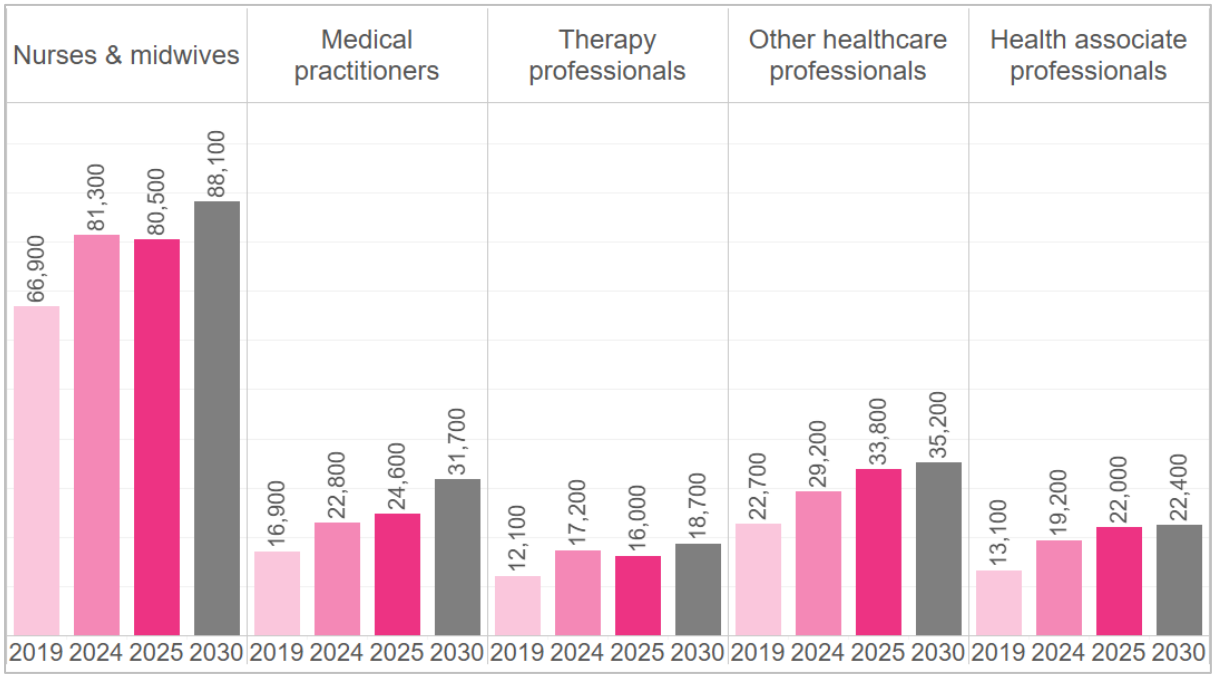
Demand: A recent report from the Department of Health projects strong future demand across health and social care occupations with demand driven in particular by demographic change and the expansion of community-based care.[54] The ESRI also project strong increases in healthcare workforce requirements to 2040, particularly driven by the older age cohorts.[55]

Supply: A total of 14,429 awards were made in 2024 from health-related courses (an increase of 1,256 awards since 2023), 43% at level 8 and a further 40% at levels 9-10. At levels 8-10, of the 12,000 awards made, 4,788 were in nursing/caring, 2,497 in medicine, 562 awards were pharmacy related, and 138 were in dental studies. Recent announcements of expansion of training places across nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, medicine, and therapy professionals is expected to go some way to alleviate issues across healthcare occupations.[56] [57]

Outlook: Our growing and ageing population will be key drivers of demand for the healthcare workforce in the coming years although productivity gains will also be needed to alleviate the increased demand for skills in this area. Employment is projected to have an above average growth rate to 2030, with nurses and medical practitioners especially expected to drive this growth.

[54] Irelands_Future_Health_and_Social_Care_Workforce.pdf
[55] Projections of regional workforce requirements for HSE primary and community care services in Ireland, 2022–2040: Based on the Hippocrates model
[56] Minister Lawless announces largest expansion of Healthcare education places in State history
[57] Major boost for health and disability services as Government approves 274 additional Health and Social Care Professional training places

Figure 10.4 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data,

Table 10.4 Labour Market Profile of Healthcare 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
Medical practitioners	6.5%	5.2%	56%	90%	…	70%	99%	1,155	✓
Therapy professionals	4.8%	3.2%	79%	64%	…	85%	100%	97	✓
Nurses & midwives	3.1%	1.8%	87%	83%	17%	63%	100%	2,047	✓
Other healthcare professionals	6.9%	0.8%	75%	80%	21%	81%	93%	276	
Health associate professionals	9.0%	0.4%	80%	75%	…	81%	65%	7	
Overall total	**5.0%**	**2.1%**	**79%**	**81%**	**18%**	**72%**	**94%**	**3,582**	

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

Medical practitioners

The number of medical practitioners in employment has increased annually in recent years with an additional 1,600 persons employed since 2024. Although females account for the highest share, at 56% this is the lowest share of females across the healthcare occupations. At 30%, the share of non-Irish citizens in employment was above the national average. Despite a drop of approximately 500 new permits issued in 2025, the permit system remains a key source of supply for this role; over 1,100 new permits were issued primarily for senior house officers, registrars and general practitioners. Difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey noted issues recruiting psychiatric and emergency medicine registrars/consultants.

Demand for medical practitioners continues to grow across the healthcare system (e.g. the ESRI Capacity Review into General Practice (2025) reported that increased demand for GP consultations to 2040 will result in a projected additional demand for GPs). Although employment is projected to grow to 2030, it is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the additional demand as a result of a growing and ageing population. Initial analysis of 2026 employment permit data to date indicates a recovery in the number of permits issued for healthcare roles and the additional medicine training places recently announced will go some way to reducing the issues related to this occupation but shortages are expected to persist.

Skills shortages: Medical practitioners

Therapy professionals (e.g. occupational, speech & language, physiotherapist)

Despite a decline since 2024 of 1,200 persons, the numbers employed remained above 2019 levels resulting in an above average annual employment growth rate over the six-year period. The number of therapy professionals employed in the LFS data is too small to allow for a breakdown by role, but a recent CORU report indicates that of the 13,137 therapists registered in 2025, 51% were physiotherapists, 30% occupational and 19% speech & language therapists.

Most employed in therapy-related roles were female, 36% were employed part-time (the highest share across the healthcare occupations), and the share of non-Irish citizens was below average. Most new employment permits issued in 2025 were for physiotherapists, followed by occupational and speech & language therapists. There were a small number of mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey for qualified occupational and speech & language therapists.

A total of 455 awards were made in 2024 for CORU-approved level 8-9 therapy courses across occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy, a fall of 25 awards on 2023 and 77 awards compared to 2019. The recent announcement of additional places for healthcare related training (see above) includes additional provision for occupational therapy and speech and language therapy with the Programme for Government committing to doubling the number of college places for speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Demand is expected to continue for these roles, particularly given commitments in Sláintecare and the rollout of the Education Therapy Service. As the numbers employed in each of the therapy categories are too small to allow for detailed analysis, it is not possible for the most part to determine the extent to which shortages exist, but shortages have been identified by the Department of Health for occupational therapists.

Skills shortages: Occupational therapists

Nurses & midwives

The number of nurses and midwives employed has declined marginally in the last two years, although numbers remain above 2019 levels and it continues to be one of the larger occupations in the economy. Most employed were female and worked full-time. Less than two-thirds employed were Irish citizens; of those non-Irish citizens employed, three quarters were Asian citizens. Compared to quarter 4 2025, the number of Irish citizens employed fell slightly while the number of Asian citizens employed increased.

This occupation accounted for the highest number of new employment permits issued in 2025, despite the fact that the number has more than halved since 2024 due to issues relating to the 50:50 threshold, which impacted the nursing home sector in particular. Difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions of in the Recruitment Agency Survey were across a number of fields of nursing with staff/theatre nurses required in areas including theatre, psychiatric, endoscopy, urology and oncology. The high volume of vacancies notified on DSP JobsIreland.ie were primarily through recruitment agencies for registered nurses. In terms of supply, almost 4,800 NFQ level 8-10 awards were made in nursing in 2024; almost half of these

were at levels 9-10, however, and likely primarily represent upskilling of the current workforce rather than additional supply for the occupation.

Demand for nurses across the hospital, community and nursing home sectors is expected to continue, particularly given Government commitments and the increasing and ageing population, with the Department of Health forecasting that demand for nurses will increase by 43% to 2040. The increasing share of non-Irish citizens employed as nurses and midwives and the high volume of employment permits issued highlights both the significant demand for these roles and issues with filling posts from the Irish labour force.

Skills shortages: Nurses

Other healthcare professionals (e.g. dentists, pharmacists, psychologists, radiographers, opticians & health services managers)

The numbers employed in this occupation grew strongly in the year since 2024, with an additional 4,600 persons employed. Three quarters of those employed were female, the share of non-Irish was below average while the share aged 55 years and older was at the national average. The numbers employed across the individual job titles were too small to report in the LFS but CORU cited that registrations in 2025 included 3,694 radiographers and 1,057 optometrists, while there were almost 8,000 pharmacists registered with the Pharmacy Society of Ireland. New employment permits were issued mainly for radiographers, dentists, optometrists and pharmacists.

Demand is expected to increase across many, if not all, of these job titles in the coming years particularly due to factors including increased community care, growing and ageing demographics. However, the numbers employed across the individual roles are too small to determine the extent to which shortages exist.

Skills shortages: Inconclusive

Health associate professionals (e.g. pharmaceutical /medical technicians, dental nurses, paramedics, dispensing opticians)

Employment increased by 2,800 persons since 2024, having remained unchanged in the previous year. Most (80%) were females, a quarter worked part-time and almost two-thirds held third level qualifications. There are many job titles associated with this occupation, with employment levels too small to report in the LFS data. However, CORU data shows that registrations in 2025 included 226 dispensing opticians, while there were 144 pharmaceutical assistants registered with the Pharmacy Society of Ireland. A small number of new employment permits were issued for dental hygienists.

10.5 Education Occupations

Overall employment	209,900
Share of total workforce	7.0%
Main sectors of employment	95% - Education sector
Employment growth	**+55,400** between 2019 and 2025 **+5.2%** on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) **+8.3%** growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **1.1%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, communication, identify suppliers, instruct in sport, access & analyse digital data, lead others, develop creative ideas, computer programming

Overview: Employment grew strongly for education occupations over the period from 2019 to 2025, with particularly strong growth since 2024, related mainly to an increase in employment for primary school teachers. Most employed in these roles were female and held third level qualifications. Demographic factors will play a significant role in in the demand for education positions across the education lifecycles of Ireland's population, with reduced numbers entering the primary and post-primary system [58] over the next 15-20 years and an increased focus on lifelong learning. Funding was announced in Budget 2026 for 1,717 additional special needs assistants (SNAs) and 860 additional teachers for special education.[59]

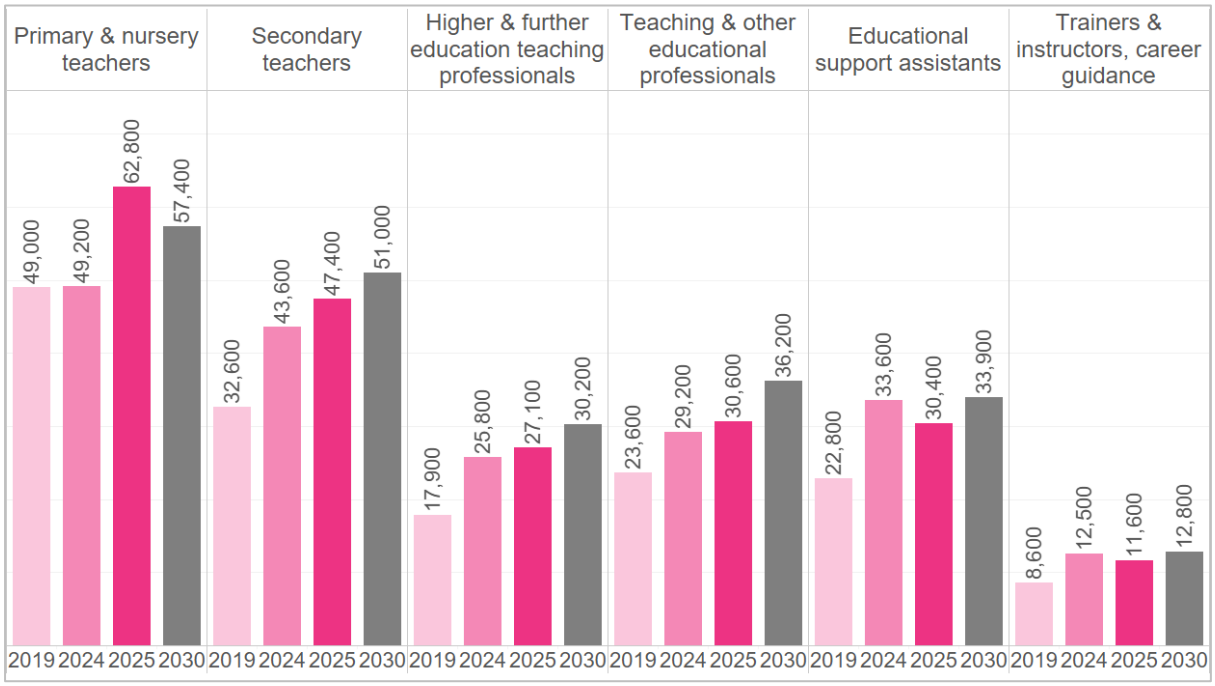
Supply: The number of awards in the education field of learning in 2024 totalled 9,771 awards, an increase of 25% over the period 2019 to 2024, with almost 2,000 additional awards; 4,000 awards were made at levels 9-10.

Outlook: More modest growth is projected to 2030 although almost in line with the national average. Continued demand for educational support roles along with secondary teachers and higher/further education will be offset somewhat by a slowdown in demand for primary school teachers due to a projected fall in enrolment numbers for this age cohort.

[58] Department of Education, National Projections of full-time enrolment: Primary & Post-Primary Level 2025/26 to 2044/45 December 2025 See https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/ac1e81f3/Projections_of_full-time_enrolments_Primary_and_Post-Primary_level_2025__2044.pdf

[59] Ministers McEntee and Moynihan announce details of €13.1 billion education and youth funding in Budget 2026

Figure 10.5 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data,

Table 10.5 Labour Market Profile Education 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
Higher & further education teaching professionals	7.2%	2.2%	61%	88%	36%	84%	99%	93	
Secondary teachers	6.4%	1.5%	66%	88%	[12%]	94%	100%	5	
Primary & nursery teachers	4.2%	-1.8%	92%	81%	[9%]	95%	95%	1	
Teaching & other educational professionals	4.4%	3.4%	70%	76%	23%	85%	84%	18	
Educational support assistants	4.9%	2.2%	92%	76%	[26%]	96%	53%	…	
Trainers & instructors, career guidance	5.2%	2.0%	[59%]	81%	…	88%	76%	4	
Overall total	**5.2%**	**1.1%**	**77%**	**82%**	**19%**	**91%**	**88%**	**128**	

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

Higher & further education teaching professionals

Employment has grown annually since 2019, with an increase of 1,300 persons since 2024. Four-fifths of those employed were female and an above average share (36% compared 21% nationally) were aged 55 years and over which could have implications for replacement demand in the coming years. New employment permits issued in 2025 were primarily for lecturers. Replacing those retiring and an expected increased demand due to demographics and lifelong learning initiatives is expected to result in increased demand for this occupation but no shortages have been identified at present.

Secondary teachers

Employment for secondary teachers has grown annually since 2019 with particularly strong growth over the last two years (an additional 7,600 persons employed since 2023). Two-thirds of those employed were female and most were employed full-time. The volume of recent job hires, which exceeded employment growth, suggests some level of job churn for these roles, potentially due to shorter-term contracts associated with substitute teaching. A small number of new employment permits were issued for teachers in visual arts, maths, computer science, and science.

A Department of Education and Youth survey of post-primary schools found that mathematics, Irish and home economics had the highest level of unmet demand (based on vacant posts and teachers teaching a subject outside of their subject specialism) for the 2023/24 academic year.[60]

Careers advice in Ireland's post-primary school system is provided by guidance counsellors, who typically hold both teaching and guidance counselling qualifications, with many combining guidance with subject teaching duties. As such, many guidance professionals are captured in the data within this occupation (secondary teachers) rather than under careers advisers (see final occupation in this section). The National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance 2024-2030 is expected to increase the demand for guidance professional services across the system (not just at post-primary level), with increased numbers of training places for guidance counsellors recently announced.[61]

Demand is expected to continue in the short-term at least due to the rise in the secondary school population in recent years. Attracting and retaining second level teachers, particularly for specific subjects, continues to be an issue.

Skills shortages: Subject specific secondary teachers

Primary & nursery teachers

There was a significant increase in employment for primary and nursery teachers since 2024, growing by 13,600 persons; however, it is not possible to disentangle primary and nursery teachers to determine which may be driving the growth. The volume of recent job hires was considerably below the employment growth indicating some potential anomalies in the data, pointing to a need for some caution in interpreting recent trends for this occupation. Most employed were female, almost a fifth worked part-time and almost all held third level qualifications. Demographic factors and pupil-teacher ratios are expected to be the key drivers of demand for primary teachers along with policy initiatives in this area.

Teaching & other educational professionals (e.g. special needs teachers, school principals, nursery managers/owners)

Numbers employed in this occupation grew in 2023 and have remained elevated since, with an increase of 1,400 persons employed since 2024. Most employed were female (70%) and held a third level qualification, while the share aged 55 years and over was above average. The small number of new employment permits issued related mainly to special needs and language teachers/tutors. The Budget 2026 announcement of funding for additional teachers for special education along with replacement demand due to the older age cohorts will likely see a high level of job openings for these roles in the coming years.

Educational support assistants

Employment numbers fell in the year since 2024 by 3,200 persons but remained higher than 2019

[60] https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/f30264cc/Survey_of_Unmet_Demand_School_year_2023_24.pdf
[61] Minister McEntee announces new part-time course for post-primary teachers in guidance counselling

levels, resulting in an above average growth rate over the six-year period. Most were female, over half held third level qualifications and over a quarter were aged 55 years and over. The additional funding for 1,717 SNAs, demographic factors, further government funding and potentially high levels of replacement demand due to retirements will all be key drivers of demand for this occupation in the coming years.

Trainers & instructors, career guidance

Employment numbers dropped by 900 persons since 2024 but were broadly in line with 2023 levels. Those providing career guidance in secondary schools are typically employed (and qualified) as post-primary teachers and are most likely categorised with secondary teachers above. Three quarters held third level qualifications, females accounted for a higher share and most were Irish citizens. The small number of new employment permits related to trainers. Demand for careers advisors, careers information officers etc. outside the post-primary sector is expected to persist under plans to strengthen lifelong guidance in Ireland.

10.6 Social & Care Occupations

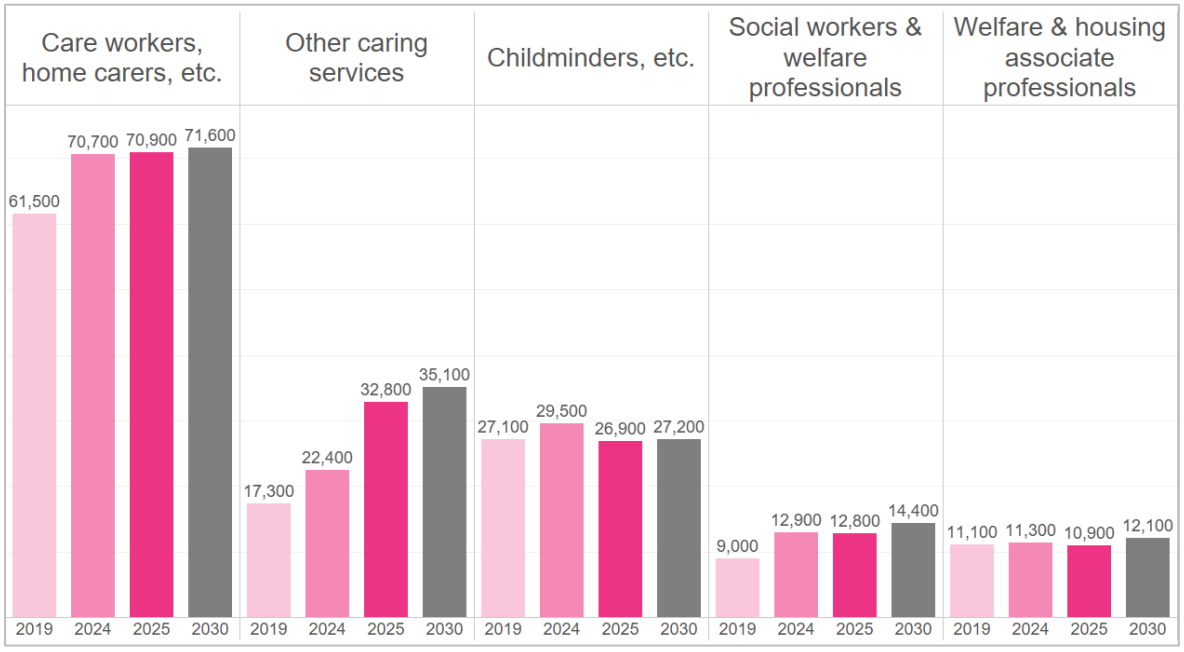
Overall employment	154,300
Share of total workforce	5.0%
Main sectors of employment	87% - Health [5%] - Other NACE activities [4%] - Education
Employment growth	**28,300** between 2019 and 2025 **+3.4%** on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) **+5.1%** growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) **0.8%** projected annual average growth (2025-2030)
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, attend to detail, teamwork, communication, manage quality, manage budgets/finances, purchase raw material supplies, social pedagogy, provide customer follow-up, assist customers

Overview: At 3.4%, annual average employment growth for social and care occupations was in line with the national average over the period 2019-2025, although growth between 2024 and 2025 was even higher at 5.1%.

Opportunities and challenges: Ireland's demographic profile is shifting, and demand for social and care related occupations is being driven by an increasing population, as well as a growing number and share of older people. At the same time, greater labour market participation could offset, at least in part, a potential fall in demand for childcare related roles brought about by declining numbers of births. Care workers represent the largest occupation in this group; although demand for caring roles is high, attractiveness of the job may be constraining capacity to expand in these occupations.

Outlook: Future growth to 2030 is projected to be more modest than that seen in recent years, at 0.8% on average annually, representing an additional 6,100 persons.

Figure 10.6 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 10.6 Labour Market Profile of Social and Care 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
Welfare & housing associates professionals	-0.3%	2.1%	[67%]	[73%]	…	85%	[74%]	82	
Childminders, etc.	-0.1%	0.2%	97%	52%	…	73%	[37%]	171	
Other caring services	11.3%	1.4%	65%	69%	[19%]	59%	44%	1,329	
Social workers & welfare professionals	6.1%	2.4%	[59%]	88%	…	75%	93%	91	✓
Care workers, home carers, etc.	2.4%	0.2%	80%	65%	29%	77%	43%	748	✓
Overall total	**3.4%**	**0.8%**	**77%**	**67%**	**25%**	**73%**	**49%**	**2,421**	

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

Welfare & housing associates professionals

Employment levels for this occupation have seen little change in recent years. Most employed were female, 27% worked part-time, and three-quarters held third level qualifications. New employment permits issued in 2025 related to support workers in community and welfare settings.

Childminders, etc.

The number of persons employed as childminders fell in both 2024 and 2025, returning to 2019 levels. Almost all (97%) employed in this occupation were female, nearly half (48%) were working part-time, 27% were non-Irish citizens, and over a third were third level graduates. Most new employment permits issued in 2025 were for playgroup leaders, as was the case for vacancies notified to DSP JobsIreland.ie, along with early childhood educators.

Demand for childminders may be reduced as a result of the declining number of children in the population, although any reduction in demand may be offset by possible further increase in female participation in the labour force.

Other caring services

Most persons employed in this occupation were employed in nursing auxiliary and assistant roles (e.g. healthcare assistants). Annual average growth for other caring services occupations was well above average over the period 2019-2025, at 11.3% (compared to 3.4% nationally), with employment numbers nearly doubling over this period. However, two thirds of the total increase was due to an additional 10,400 workers between 2024 and 2025 alone. Almost two thirds of those employed in this occupation were female, 31% were working part-time and over two-fifths held third level qualifications. The share of non-Irish citizens was above average at 41% (up from 29% in 2024).

There were frequent mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey, and a steady share of online job adverts for this occupation (nearly 2.5% of all job ads in 2024 and 2025). Despite this, the number of new employment permits issued fell sharply in the year to 2025, with over 1,000 fewer new permits issued, although the number of renewal permits issued grew slightly to 1,689 (from 1,555 in 2024Permits issued were mostly for healthcare assistants.

Although FET qualifications at NFQ level 5 are typically a requirement for employment in healthcare assistant roles, more than 40% of those employed in this occupation held third level qualifications, pointing to a certain amount of over-qualification in this occupation.[62]

Employment opportunities for healthcare assistants arise in both hospital and residential care settings, with the latter in particular likely to be in increasing demand as Ireland's old-age population continues to grow.

Skills shortages: Healthcare assistants

Social workers & welfare professionals

Employment levels remained unchanged between 2024 and 2025 but were considerably higher than in 2019. Over half of those employed were female, with the vast majority (91%) holding third level qualifications, in line with the professional regulation requirements for many of the occupations included in this category.

Social workers and social care workers are distinct regulated professions, with only those registered with CORU (the health professions regulator) permitted to use these job titles. Demand for social workers is evident in the number of new employment permits issued in 2025 for professionally qualified social workers while the Recruitment Agency Survey highlights difficulties in filling vacancies for social care workers and leaders.

Additional programmes have been introduced to help alleviate difficulties in the recruitment of social workers (e.g. new apprenticeship (level 9) and a new social work tertiary degree (level 8)) and social care workers (e.g. BSc health and social care level 8). Nonetheless, given population increases,

[62] PW HCA - HSE Career Hub and Health Care Assistant Careers | Healthcare Sector Occupation Profile | CareersPortal

demand for these roles is likely to be sustained, as will the difficulty in filling some vacancies. The extent to which shortages are occurring, however, is difficult to determine, given the relatively small numbers employed and mainly public sector nature of employment.

Skills shortages: Inconclusive

Care workers, home carers, etc.

The number of care workers, home carers etc. in employment has remained unchanged since 2023, but this occupation remains one of the largest economy-wide. Most employed were female (80%), two-thirds worked full-time, a high share (29%) were aged 55 years and older, 23% were non-Irish citizens. The high share of third level qualification holders (over two-fifths held third level qualifications) suggest a certain amount of skills mismatch in this occupation. Despite a lack of employment growth, there was a high volume of recent job hires, indicating a high level of job churn for these roles, with attractiveness of the job a potential factor.

There was also significant volume of vacancy posts for these roles on DSP JobsIreland.ie but the extent to which these relate to care workers or healthcare assistants is unclear, as these jobs are often interlinked. Indeed, the job titles for many of the new employment permits issued for this role were termed 'healthcare assistants/home carers' making it difficult to determine the extent to which these roles involve tasks in medical settings (and therefore more likely to relate to healthcare assistants) or the provision of personal care.

Although employment growth is not forecast for this occupation, demand is continuing particularly given our ageing population, with replacement demand alone likely to create job opportunities in this occupation.

Skills shortages: labour shortage

10.7 Legal & Security Occupations

Overall employment	60,100
Share of total workforce	2%
Main sectors of employment	46% - Public administration and defence 24% - Professional activities [15%] - Administrative and support services
Employment growth	3,100 between 2019 and 2025 +0.9% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +4.2% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.6%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, communication, access & analyse digital data, assist customers, customer service, use MS office, provide information, attend to detail

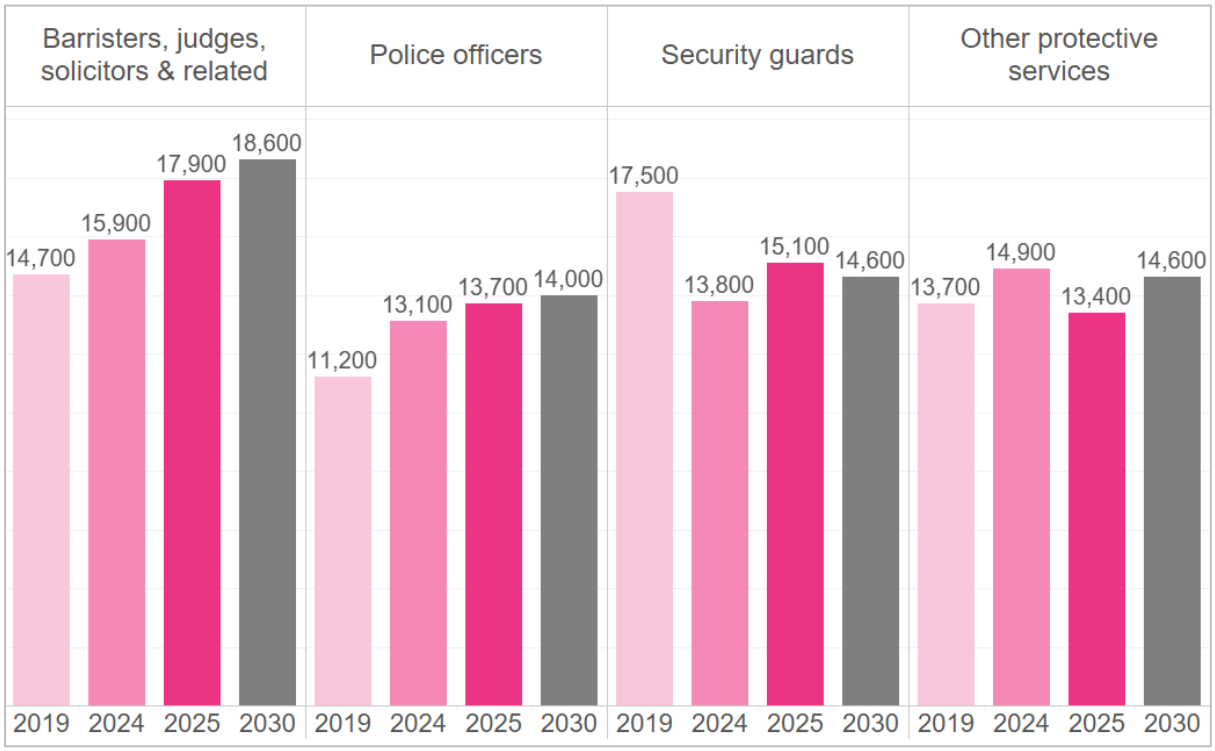
Overview: At just under 1% on average annually, employment growth over the period 2019-2025 was below the national average (3.4%) for these occupations. Well over two fifths of persons employed in these occupations worked in the public administration and defence sector.

Challenges and opportunities: Although there has been a shift towards a greater female share working in these occupations (with an increase from 25% to 31% in the year to 2024), employment in these occupations continues to be male dominated. Demand will be in part be driven by the current Programme for Government, which outlined a commitment to fund recruitment of 5,000 Gardai across the five-year term of Government[63] (on average, 1,000 a year).

Outlook: This occupational group has seen little employment growth in recent years with projected growth expected to be below average. Employment declines are projected for security-related roles, with minor gains for other protective services (which includes army, prison services).

[63] programme-for-government-securing-irelands-future.pdf

Figure 10.7 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data,

Table 10.7 Labour Market Profile of Legal and Security 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
Barristers, judges, solicitors & related professionals	3.3%	0.8%	58%	89%	..	97%	99%	25	
Police officers	3.4%	0.4%	..	99%	..	98%	87%	..	
Security guards	-2.4%	-0.7%	..	[75%]	..	65%	..	1	
Other protective services	-0.4%	1.7%	..	90%	..	82%	[57%]	..	
Overall total	**0.9%**	**0.6%**	**31%**	**88%**	**19%**	**86%**	**72%**	**26**	

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

Barristers, judges, solicitors & related professionals

Employment grew by 2,000 persons in the year since 2024, resulting in an annual average growth rate almost on par with the national average for the six-year period to 2019. Females accounted for the higher share (at 58%), almost all had third level qualifications and three quarters were employed in the professional activities sector. A small number of new employment permits were issued for trainee solicitors, lawyers and legal directors.

There were 3,128 persons on the Roll of Practicing Barristers as of December 2025 and 12,430 solicitors held practising certificates (increases of 57 and 255 respectively since 2024).[64] In addition, there are approximately 200 judges in Ireland with an additional 20 judges expected to be appointed in the coming years.[65]

Police officers (e.g. gardaí)

Employment numbers for police officers grew marginally in 2025, having declined in the previous year. Those employed were primarily male, Irish and held third level qualifications. Garda workforce data as of August 2026 estimates the total garda strength at 14,497, with civilians bringing the total workforce to 18,113, with little change observed in recent years. The growing population would indicate future demand for police officers but attractiveness and retention issues may hinder future growth in this occupation.

Security guards

Despite an increase in employment since 2024, employment remained below 2019 levels. Most employed were male and the share of non-Irish citizens was above average (35% compared to 21% nationally) and higher than in 2024 (26%). Over half were employed in the administrative and support services sector with the remainder spread across most other sectors. Skills for Growth data point to issues attracting security guards for event and crowd management.

Other protective services (e.g. army personnel, fire/prison service officers)

With employment declining between 2024 and 2025, numbers returned to just below 2019 levels. Most (87%) were employed in the public administration and defence sector, most were male, over half (57%) held third level qualifications and 18% were non-Irish citizens. Recent recruitment campaigns for the prison service and defence forces aim to boost numbers across these services.

[64] FINAL-LSRA-Annual-Report_2025-single-page-view.pdf
[65] Minister McEntee secures government approval for 20 additional Judges

10.8 Construction Occupations

Overall employment	163,100
Share of total workforce	6.0%
Main sectors of employment	75% - Construction 10% - Professional activities [6%] - Industry
Employment growth	+17,500 between 2019 and 2025 +1.9% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +6.9% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **+2.5%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	Adaptability, teamwork, access & analyse digital data, project management, provide information, quality standards, assume responsibility, attend to detail

Overall: Despite a below average employment growth rate over the six-year period from 2019-2025, construction occupations saw strong employment growth in the year since 2024 with an additional 10,500 persons employed. Much of the growth occurred for professional occupations, with little or no overall growth for skilled trades. The share of females employed in construction occupations remains low, while the share aged 55 years and older was at the national average of 21%. Despite overall declines in the number of new employment permits issued since 2024, the number issued for construction occupations grew (from 1,341 to 1,466), with an additional 240 renewals issued, mainly related to the trades.

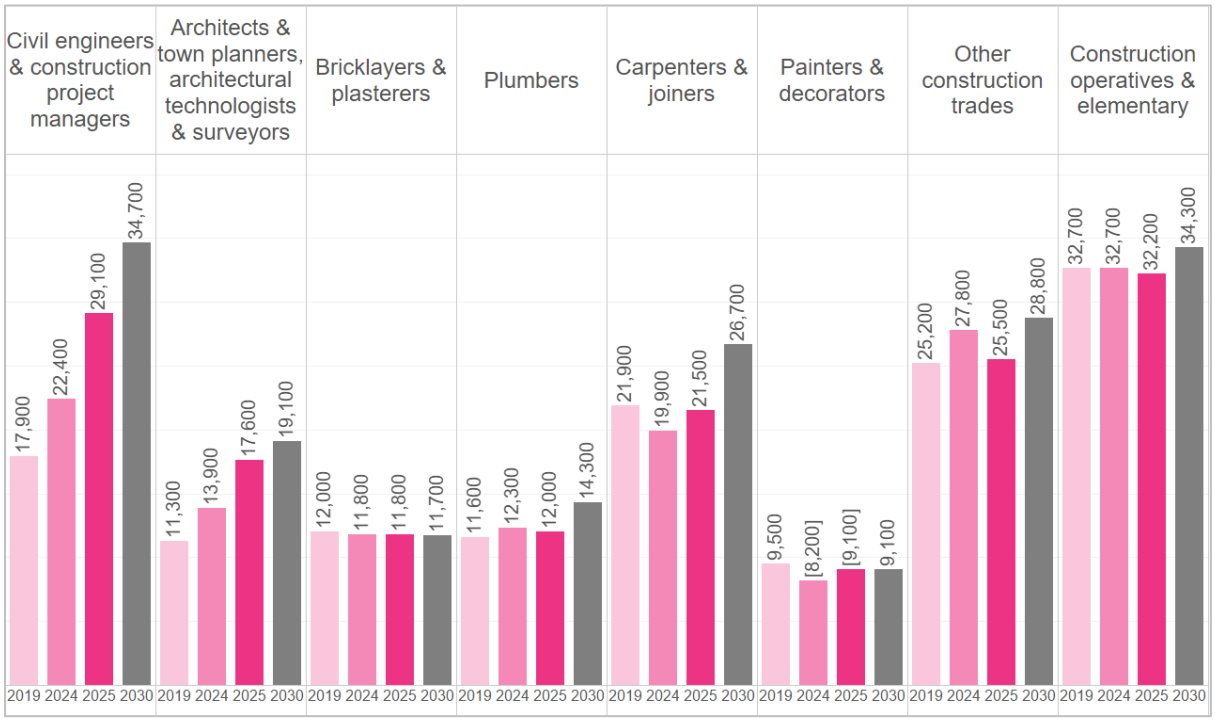
Opportunities and challenges: Construction skills are a key requirement to meet Government priorities across housing, climate and infrastructure as detailed in the updated National Development Plan.[66] A recent DFHERIS (2026) report estimates additional demand of between 40,295 and 53,605 construction-related workers by 2030, depending on the level of adoption of modern methods of construction (MMC), with skilled trades accounting for a large share of this additional demand.[67]

The number of construction-related awards has grown steadily in recent years, totalling over 4,300 awards in 2024 across all NFQ levels, an increase of 47% (or 1,382 awards) since 2019; the largest gains were at level 6 (FET). Despite these increases, further expansion of provision will be required to meet future demand. Identifying additional supply (through migration and attracting those outside of the labour force) and improving productivity levels may also be required along with ensuring retention and reskilling/upskilling of the current workforce.

Outlook: The SOLAS occupational projections indicate that construction occupations will grow by 19,600 persons to 2030 given the Department of Finance employment projections of an additional 163,000 persons for the entire workforce. While most of the growth is projected to be driven by the construction sector, construction occupations employed in professional services (e.g. architects and civil engineers) are also projected to grow. In terms of detailed occupations, strong growth is projected for carpenters, other construction trades, civil engineers, and plumbers.

[66] NDP_Review_document_-_22_July_2025_1025.pdf
[67] National Framework for Meeting Priority Construction Workforce Needs

Figure 10.8 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



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

Table 10.8 Labour Market Profile of Construction 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
Civil engineers & construction project managers	8.4%	3.6%	...	97%	25%	87%	75%	559	✓
Architects & town planners etc.	7.7%	1.6%	...	90%	...	79%	93%	116	✓
Construction related technicians	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	50	✓
Bricklayers & plasterers	-0.3%	-0.2%	...	95%	...	[66%]	...	104	
Plumbers	0.6%	3.6%	...	96%	...	93%	...	74	
Carpenters & joiners	-0.3%	4.4%	...	95%	...	89%	...	279	✓
Painters & decorators	[-0.8%]	0.0%	...	[83%]	...	[71%]	...	51	
Other construction trades	0.2%	2.5%	...	92%	...	70%	...	116	✓
Construction operatives & elementary	-0.3%	1.3%	...	78%	[24%]	76%	...	117	✓
Overall total	**1.9%**	**2.5%**	**6%**	**90%**	**21%**	**79%**	**36%**	**1,466**	

Source: SLMRU 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 Construction related technicians are included in overall total but numbers are too small to report.

Civil engineers & construction project managers

Employment for civil engineers and construction project managers saw strong growth in 2025, particularly in the second half of the year. The number of new employment permits issued fell slightly between 2024 and 2025; job titles included civil/site/structural engineers with a smaller number issued for construction site and project managers. Difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to site engineers/managers, civil engineers and project managers with Skills for Growth data identifying demand for project managers with skills in risk and time management and project planning. The most characteristic skills appearing in the 2025 LinkedIn vacancies were for civil and construction engineering, infrastructure development, civil engineering design, AutoCAD, Total Station, Global Positioning System (GPD), Autodesk Civil 3D, Land surveying and construction management.

The number of awards in civil/building engineering at levels 8-10 totalled 1,180 in 2024, similar to awards made in 2023. Registrations on the new civil engineering apprenticeship continued to increase in 2025.

Demand for these roles is continuing across a number of activities including housing, retrofitting and infrastructure projects (e.g. renewable energies) with employment projections expecting continued growth for this occupation out to 2030. In addition, given the older age cohort, there may be increased replacement demand.

Skills shortage: Civil engineers & construction project managers

Architects & town planners, architectural technologists & surveyors

This occupation experienced strong employment growth in 2025, having seen only modest employment changes in recent years. The numbers employed across the individual roles were too small for detailed analysis. At 73%, this occupation had the lowest share of males across all construction occupations. Three fifths were employed in the professional activities sector. New employment permits were issued for quantity surveyors, architectural technologists, planners and architects, while the difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey and the Skills for Growth data both point to issues sourcing quantity surveyors with experience. Key skills listed in the LinkedIn data for these roles included measurements, procurement, cost management, valuation, construction estimating, tender preparation, cost reporting, and final accounts.

There were over 880 architecture-related awards in 2024, 180 awards were made to learners on RIAI-accredited programmes;[68] 92 awards were for town planning at levels 8 and 9 (of which 53 awards will qualify learners to be a town planner[69]); and 377 awards were for quantity surveying. A two-year level 9 advanced quantity surveying apprenticeship has also been introduced in recent years.

Employment is projected to grow at a rate marginally above the national average. Demand is evident across these roles, with issues with recruiting quantity surveyors persisting.

Skills shortage: Quantity surveyors

Construction related technicians

Employment numbers in this occupation were too small for detailed analysis. New employment permits were mainly issued for Building Information Modelling (BIM) technicians, but also for CAD (Computer-Aided Design)/design technicians and draughtspersons. A small number of mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to BIM technicians. A new level 6 civil engineering technician apprenticeship was launched in 2025. Many construction-related roles increasingly require BIM and CAD skills with those working as BIM technicians requiring work experience in the area rather than specific qualifications.

Skills shortage: Inconclusive for BIM/CAD technician

Bricklayers & plasterers

[68] https://www.riai.ie/careers-in-architecture/education/accredited-programmes

[69] These awards at levels 8 and 9 are accredited by the Irish Planning Institute. See https://ipi.ie/become-a-planner/accredited-courses/

Employment levels have seen little change over the six-year period (2019-2025). At 66%, the share of Irish citizens in employment was below average, and the lowest across all construction occupations. The number of new employment permits issued increased in 2025 compared to 2024, primarily for stone masons/bricklayers with a smaller share for plasterers. The number of awards from the apprenticeship system was small across these roles, namely brick and stone laying, stonecutting and stonemasonry and plastering.

The recent DFHERIS report indicates that the nature of work for wet trades such as bricklayers and plasterers will likely evolve as a result of increased uptake of MMC, although issues with sourcing these skills have been reported with demand across housebuilding, renovations and retrofitting. A lack of supply and a weak pipeline were identified in a recent report by the South East Regional Skills as impacting on the future supply of qualified plasterers.[70] Given the lack of employment growth, attractiveness of the job may also be a factor affecting supply of skills in these roles.

Plumbers

Employment levels have seen little change in recent years, although relatively strong growth is projected to 2030 as Ireland looks to meet targets for housebuilding and retrofitting along with demand in other areas of the economy such as datacentres. There was an increase in the number of new employment permits issued from 45 to 74 between 2024 and 2025; while most were issued for plumbers, a small number were issued for heating and ventilation roles. Skills for Growth data points to issues sourcing plumbers for both the construction and retail (e.g. hardware) sector.

In 2025, new plumbing apprentice registrations totalled 903 (a 9% increase compared to 2024, and a 44% increase compared to 2019 levels); the number of awards issued in 2024 increased to 483 awards, compared with 409 in 2023 and 204 in 2019.

With increased interest in home energy upgrades (e.g. installation of sustainable heat pumps), demand for plumbers is expected to persist, particularly for those with skills and expertise in water, waste water, and energy efficient systems. The DFHERIS report notes increased demand for plumbers to 2030 which may result in shortages.

Potential future skills shortages: Plumbers

Carpenters & joiners

Overall employment levels have seen little change in recent years, although above average growth is projected to 2030 to meet demand for housebuilding and repair/maintenance. In 2025, at almost 20%, this occupational group accounted for the second largest share of new employment permits issued for construction occupations, after civil engineers and construction project managers. Shuttering carpenters accounted for the larger share of new permits issued; they also accounted for most of the difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey and for vacancies advertised on DSP JobsIreland.ie.

In 2025, at 851, the number of new carpentry and joinery apprentice registrations was 10% higher than 2024 levels and 43% higher than 2019 levels. The number of carpentry/joinery level 6 awards decreased from 397 in 2023 to 326 in 2024, but was considerably higher than the 148 awards issued in 2019. The DFHERIS report indicates strong future demand for carpenters, but with increased MMC adoption, the nature of work is expected to evolve and will likely require upskilling/reskilling interventions.

Potential future skills shortages: Carpenters

Painters & decorators

The number of painters/decorators employed has seen little change in recent years with little projected growth to 2030. The share of non-Irish citizens was above the national average. The number of new employment permits issued for painters (including industrial and aircraft spray painters) increased from 36 in 2024 to 51 in 2025. New apprenticeship registration numbers remained small for this occupation and declined between 2024 and 2025 (from 24 to 13). The numbers employed are too small to determine the extent to which persons employed in these roles held a FET qualification. Although demand for painters in

[70] South_East_Regional_Skills_Forum_Plastering_Survey_Report.pdf

house building activities may decline with increased use of MMC, job opportunities will likely continue to arise for home maintenance activity and in industrial settings.

Other construction trades (e.g. construction supervisors, floorers, glaziers, roofers)

This occupation has seen some fluctuation in employment levels in recent years, with an overall negative annual average employment growth for the period 2019-2025, mainly due to a fall in employment since 2024 of 2,300 persons. There was a high share of non-Irish citizens employed (30%) with new employment permits in 2025 issued for steel fixers/fabricators, roofers, floorers/wall tilers, window fitter/glazier and forepersons. Vacancies posted on DSP JobsIreland.ie were spread across a range of roles including steel fabricators/fixers/erectors, wall and floor tilers, roofers, and site forepersons/supervisors. Difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey included steel erectors/fixers, fitters, glaziers, curtain wallers and forepersons, with Skills for Growth data highlighting a demand for glaziers and estimators. This occupation includes a large variety of roles; with numbers employed too small to allow for any disaggregation, it is difficult to determine the extent to which issues with sourcing suitable candidates for unfilled roles exists.

Construction operatives & elementary

Employment levels have seen little change in recent years for these occupations. This occupation was associated with above average shares of non-Irish citizens, those who held at most a lower secondary education. and those aged 55 years and older. A high number of recent job hires indicates that job churn is a feature of these roles, particularly given the lack of employment growth. The increase in the number of new employment permits issued between 2024 and 2025 (from 23 to 117) mainly related to scaffolders, with most vacancies advertised with DSP JobsIreland.ie for this occupation also for scaffolders. The Recruitment Agency Survey identified difficult-to-fill vacancies for construction drivers, ground workers/banksmen, foremen/supervisors, scaffolders and pipe layers. Between 2024 and 2025, the number of new scaffolding apprentice registrations decreased (from 45 to 25). Future growth in the construction sector will likely lead to a demand for these roles e.g. banksman, signposting, pipe layers, and general labourers. Issues with sourcing scaffolders is likely to persist with any increase in construction activity but the numbers employed are too small to determine if shortages exist for this role.

Skills shortage: Inconclusive for scaffolders

10.9 Other Craft Occupations n.e.c.

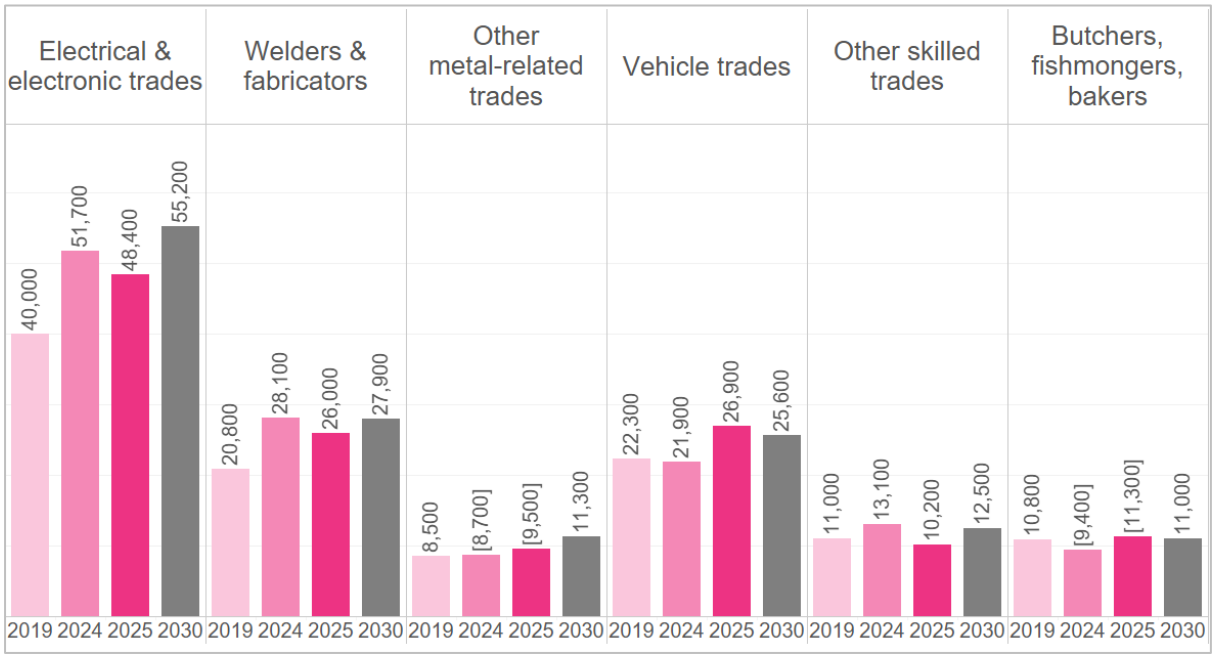
Overall employment	132,300
Share of total workforce	5.0%
Main sectors of employment	39% - Industry 23% - Construction 18% - Wholesale & retail
Employment growth	+18,900 between 2019 and 2025 +2.6% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) -0.5% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) 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.[71]

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.

[71] 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.

10.10 Agriculture & Animal Care Occupations

Overall employment	120,800
Share of total workforce	4.0%
Main sectors of employment	82% - Agriculture sector [5%] - Administrative and support services
Employment growth	+6,900 between 2019 and 2025 +1.0% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) -2.7% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.3%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	attend to detail, manage budgets/finances, adaptability, use consulting techniques, funding methods, analyse business requirements, teamwork, purchase raw material supplies, quality standards, control engineering

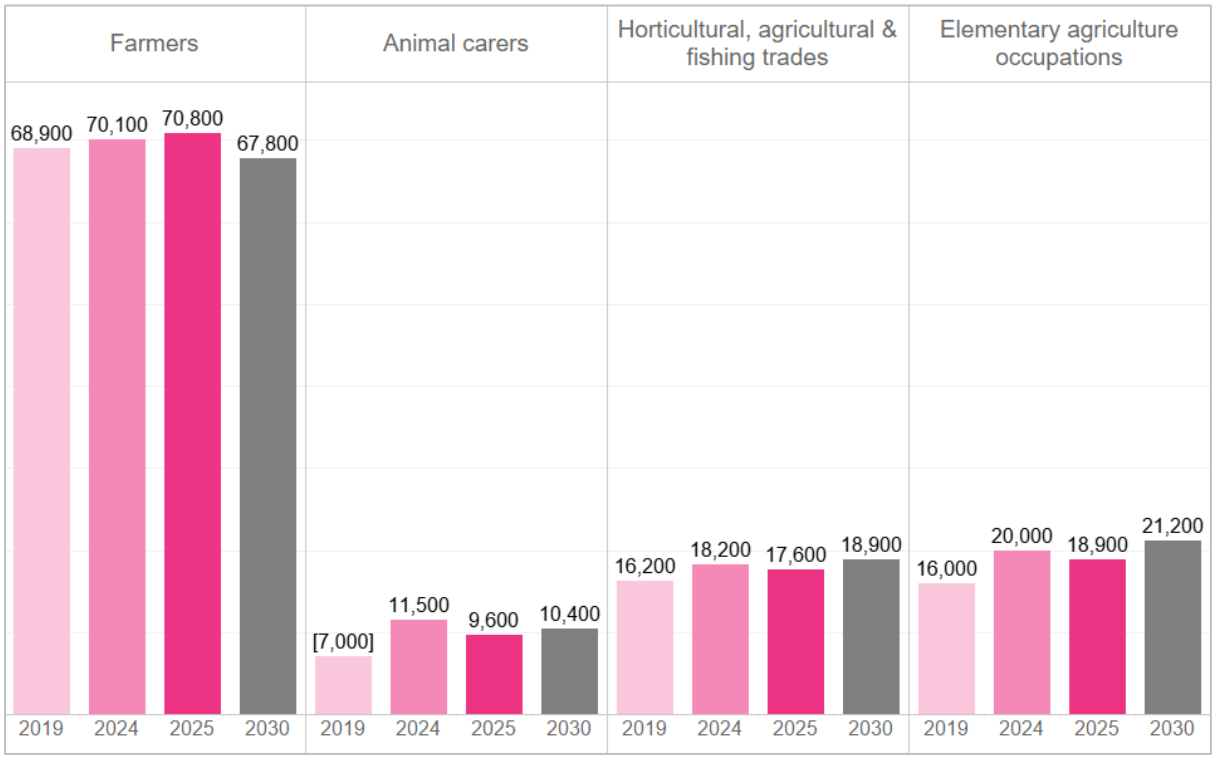
Overview: Employment growth for this occupational group was below average over the six-year period since 2019, with a fall in employment of 3,300 persons since 2024. Employment growth is projected to be below average over the forecast period to 2030. The older age profile of farmers is one of the contributing factors for this with a decline in the number of farmers expected to be offset to some extent by increases in employment in elementary agricultural occupations.

Those employed in agriculture and animal care occupations were primarily male, older and with lower levels of education than the national average; almost a third held at most a lower secondary education with just 28% holding a third level qualifications, one of the lowest shares across all occupational groups.

Increasing productivity and profitability through the adoption of emerging technologies are a key aim of the agricultural sector.[72] Teagasc's Climate Action Strategy also outlines the key role that agriculture will play in the reduction of carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.[73]

[72] Teagasc Statement of Strategy 2025 - 2028 - Teagasc | Agriculture and Food Development Authority
[73] https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2022/Teagasc-Climate-Action-Strategy-2022-2030-web.pdf

Figure 10.10 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data
Numbers in square brackets are small and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 10.10 Labour Market Profile of Agriculture and Animal Care 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
Managers in horticulture, agriculture & fishing	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34	
Farmers	0.5%	-0.9%	[8%]	80%	64%	99%	24%	...	
Horticulture, agriculture & fishing trades n.e.c.	1.4%	1.4%	...	[57%]	[33%]	83%	...	15	
Elementary agriculture	2.8%	2.3%	[33%]	[42%]	[30%]	92%	...	760	
Animal carers	[5.4%]	1.6%	...	[72%]	...	[92%]	[66%]	188	
Overall total	**1.0%**	**0.3%**	**16%**	**71%**	**51%**	**95%**	**28%**	**982**	

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

Managers in horticulture, agriculture and fishing

Numbers employed in this occupation were too small for analysis. The small number of new employment permits issued were for farm (pig, dairy) managers and foresters. In addition, there were 64 renewals for farm managers roles (primarily pig and dairy).

Farmers

Employment levels for farmers has seen little growth in recent years, with the six-year annual average growth rate of 0.5%. Employment is projected to fall slightly over the period to 2030, particularly given the older age of farmers (almost two-thirds aged 55 years and over). A third of farmers held at most a lower secondary education and almost all were male.

A key aim of the Teagasc's Climate Action Strategy is to support farmers to adopt new technologies and sustainable practices, with a National Training and Learning Platform being developed. Teagasc also aims to improve the attractiveness of the occupation with a particular emphasis on supporting young, female and part-time farmers.

Horticulture, agriculture & fishing trades not otherwise classified (e.g. gardeners)

Employment levels declined slightly since 2024, returning to 2023 levels. Almost two-fifths of employment was in the administrative services sector with the remainder spread across a number of sectors. Those employed in these roles were primarily male, a third were aged 55 years and older and 43% worked part-time. The small number of new employment permits issued were for sea fishers and deckhands.

Coillte's commitment to promoting timber construction, with the aim of increasing the proportion of timber-framed homes from 20% to 80% by 2050, has the potential to generate additional demand for skilled workers in the forestry and wood processing sector, albeit on a relatively small scale. [74]

Elementary agriculture

Employment levels fell by 1,100 persons since 2024, but numbers employed remained above 2019 levels. A third employed in these roles were female, almost a third were aged 55 years and older, over a third held at most a lower secondary education, and over half (58%) were employed part-time. There was a high volume of vacancies notified for these roles. The large volume of employment permits issued were for dairy/pig farm assistants and horticulture operatives. An additional 379 permits were renewed for these roles.

Despite the high volume of employment permits and DSP Jobs Ireland vacancies, other indicators do not point to an issue with this role and with employment levels declining, no shortage has been identified. Attractiveness of the job may be a more significant issue here. The newly introduced seasonal employment permit for horticultural operatives and increased use of technology and automation may go some way to easing any issues with recruitment and retention in these roles.

Animal carers (including vets)

Despite an above average employment growth rate over the six-year period, employment declined by 1,900 since 2024. Of those employed, two-thirds were third-level graduates, 28% worked part-time and the gender breakdown was too small to report. New employment permits in 2025 related mainly to work riders with a small number of veterinary surgeons.

[74] Coillte (2022). A Greener Future for All. Annual Report 2022

10.11 Hospitality Occupations

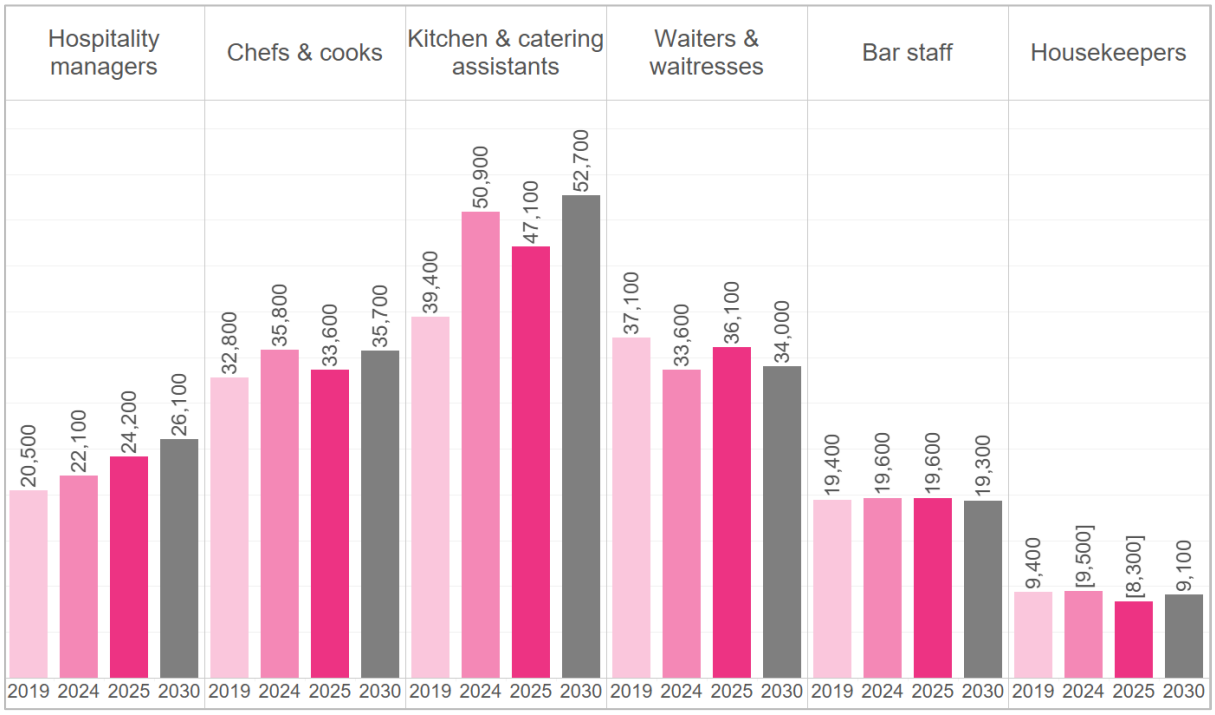
Overall employment	174,000
Share of total workforce	6.0%
Main sectors of employment	88% - Accommodation & food [5%] - Health
Employment growth	+8,600 between 2019 and 2025 +0.9% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) -2.1% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **1.1%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, use food preparation techniques, think creatively, attend to detail, food and beverage industry, quality standards, manage quality, define quality standards

Overview: Employment numbers for this occupational group grew by 8,700 persons between 2019 and 2025, representing an annual average employment growth rate of 0.9%, below that of the total workforce. Employment levels declined since 2024 by almost 4,000 persons overall, although there were gains and losses across occupations within this group over that time. This occupational group accounted for 12% of recent job hires and 12% of recent job leavers (see Section 7) indicating that a high level of job churn occurred in 2025 particularly related to hospitality roles with a high share working part-time (e.g. waiters).

Opportunities and challenges: Approximately 60% of employment in this occupational group in 2025 was in three occupations, namely kitchen assistants, waiters and bar staff. These occupations are characterised by a high level of churn, a high share working part-time and a young profile, with 37% aged 15-24 years. Kitchen and catering assistants accounted for most of the employment growth in this occupational group overall over the period 2019-2025, with most of the growth occurring for part-time roles. Indeed, in the accommodation and food sector, where 89% of those in hospitality occupations were employed, the number of persons employed working full-time declined between 2019 and 2025 (-7,400), while the number of persons employed part-time increased (+13,200). Many working in these roles are also likely to be students, with almost a third (42,000) of persons working in the accommodation and food sector in quarter 4 2025 classifying themselves as students.

Outlook: Employment is projected to grow in line with the national average to 2030 with the decline in the number of waiters employed projected to be offset somewhat by increases for chefs and kitchen assistants. The cost of doing business, consumer sentiment and tourism levels will likely be key factors determining the demand for these skills in the coming years.

Figure 10.11 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 10.11 Labour Market Profile of Hospitality 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
Hospitality managers	2.8%	1.5%	47%	89%	[21%]	65%	50%	73	
Chefs & cooks	0.4%	1.2%	[29%]	84%	[17%]	53%	48%	1,966	✓
Catering & bar managers	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	
Kitchen & catering assistants	3.0%	2.3%	64%	42%	…	64%	[22%]	8	✓
Waiters & waitresses	-0.5%	-1.2%	75%	[31%]	…	79%	…	6	✓
Bar staff	0.2%	-0.3%	[43%]	[37%]	…	82%	…	…	✓
Housekeepers	[-2.1%]	1.9%	…	…	…	…	…	2	
Overall total	**0.9%**	**1.1%**	**55%**	**57%**	**11%**	**67%**	**33%**	**2,055**	

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

Hospitality managers

Employment grew strongly for hospitality managers since 2024, with an additional 2,100 persons employed. The share of non-Irish citizens was well above the national average. Approximately half held third level qualifications. New employment permits issued in 2025 mainly related to restaurant managers. Skills for Growth data pointed to some issues with finding a variety of manager types (leisure centre, duty, night managers), but also trainee managers, reflecting the upskilling activities taking place in the sector. Other skills in demand included business development, leadership, people management and communications.

Chefs & cooks

Employment numbers declined since 2024, having increased in the previous three years, with employment returning levels similar to 2019. Almost half of those employed were non-Irish citizens, aligning with the high share of employment permits issued for this occupation. In 2025, almost 2,000 new employment permits were issued (the second highest number after nurses), with a further 1,106 permits renewed. This, along with a high volume of vacancies advertised with DSP Jobs Ireland combined with a fall in employment, point to issues with retention for this occupation. Mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to sous and head chefs with no difficulties reported in the Skills for Growth data. The high volume of vacancies and new employment permits without evidence of employment growth, suggest that retention of staff and attractiveness of the job is the predominant issue affecting this occupation.

Catering & bar managers

The numbers employed were too small for detailed analysis of this occupation. A small number of new employment permits were issued to various catering and bar managers.

Kitchen & catering assistants

Having grown strongly between 2023 and 2024, employment levels declined in 2025 by 3,800 persons although numbers remained above 2019 levels. Two thirds of those employed were female, over half were employed part-time and 36% were non-Irish citizens. Over two-fifths of those employed were aged 15-24 years, above the national average, with only one-fifth holding a third level qualification. The large volume of recent job hires indicates a high level of job churn, particularly given the fall in overall employment since 2024. The small number of new employment permits issued were reactivation employment permits, while mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to baristas. Although employment is projected to grow moderately for this occupational group, the share of part-time roles is likely to continue to be considerable and may not result in an increase in full-time equivalent employment.

Waiters & waitresses

The number of waiters employed grew by 2,400 persons in the year since 2024, although numbers remained below 2019 levels. Of those in employment, 69% worked part-time, three-quarters were female, 72% were aged 15-24 years, and the share with third level qualifications was too small to report. Waiters had the second largest volume of recent job hires after sales assistants pointing to a very high level of job churn for this role. There was a small number of mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey for waiters while the new employment permits issued were reactivation employment permits. A projected decline in employment to 2030 masks the dynamics between full-time and part-time roles which are a significant feature for this occupation.

Bar staff

Employment levels remained unchanged in 2025 when compared to 2024 and on a par with 2019 levels. As with waiters and kitchen and catering assistants, part-time bar staff outnumbered those working full-time; 57% were male, and almost two thirds were aged 15-24 years. The high volume of recent job hires indicates that job churn is a feature of these roles. There was a small volume of mentions of difficult-to-fill vacancies in the Recruitment Agency Survey for bar staff.

Housekeepers

Although housekeepers were mainly employed in the accommodation and food sector, employment was also spread across a number of other sectors such as administration and support services and health. Employment has fallen in the last two years, with numbers employed too small for detailed analysis. The small number of new employment permits issued related to reactivation employment permits.

10.12 Arts, Sports & Tourism Occupations

Overall employment	107,200
Share of total workforce	4.0%
Main sectors of employment	63% - Other NACE activities 14% - ICT [8%] - Professional activities
Employment growth	+9,900 between 2019 and 2025 +1.6% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +5.6% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.3%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, access & analyse digital data, communication, use MS office, customer service, assume responsibility, tolerate stress, provide information

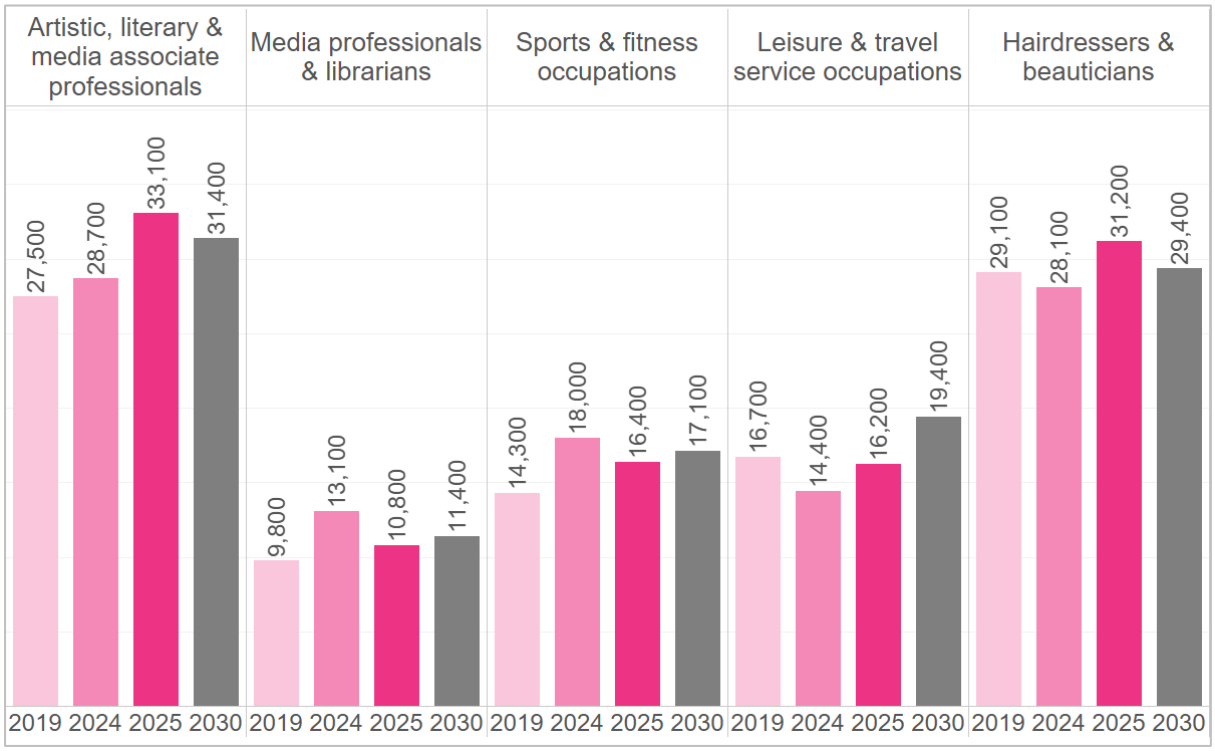
Overview: Overall employment growth for this occupational group has been modest in the six-year period since 2019, despite strong relative growth since 2024. Almost two-thirds were employed in the Other NACE activities sector which includes arts, entertainment and recreation services. The share working part-time for this group was above average which may have contributed to the relatively high volume of recent job hires and leavers in this occupational group in 2025 (accounting for 5% each of hires and leavers).

Opportunities & challenges: Over 20% of employment in this occupational group is considered either significantly or moderately exposed to GenAI;[75] ; the extent to which this represents opportunities or challenges (or both) is as yet unknown and likely to be occupation specific. Employment growth in these roles will be determined to some extent by the level of consumer spending in the economy; a constrained economy could impact growth, particularly for sports, fitness and tourism-related roles.

Outlook: The projected employment growth to 2030 is expected to be below the national average.

[75] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS: forthcoming).

Figure 10.12 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 10.12 Labour Market Profile of Arts, Sports and Tourism 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
Media professionals & librarians	1.6%	1.1%	..	[85%]	..	[94%]	[77%]	37	
Artistic, literary & media associate professionals	3.1%	-1.0%	42%	75%	[21%]	77%	80%	374	
Sports & fitness occupations	2.4%	0.8%	55%	61%	..	87%	63%	99	
Leisure & travel service occupations	-0.5%	3.7%	58%	[56%]	..	75%	[36%]	..	
Hairdressers & beauticians, etc.	1.2%	-1.2%	83%	57%	..	75%	[30%]	15	
Overall total	**1.6%**	**0.3%**	**60%**	**65%**	**17%**	**79%**	**56%**	**525**	

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

Media professionals & librarians

Numbers employed are too small for detailed analysis particularly given the recent fall in employment (2,300 fewer persons employed since 2024). A small number of employment permits were issued for roles including social media analyst.

Artistic, literary & media associate professionals (e.g. graphic designers, actors, authors/writers, photographers, artists and arts officers)

Numbers employed have fluctuated in this occupation in recent years, peaking at 36,000 in 2022, with declines in the subsequent two years before increasing in the year to 2025 by 4,400 persons. Over half (58%) employed were male, 25% worked part-time, and 23% were non-Irish citizens. Employment was spread across a number of sectors including ICT, professional activities and Other NACE sectors (which includes arts/entertainment). The large volume of recent job hires, above the increase in employment, suggests some level of job churn or short-term contracts. New employment permits were issued for a number of film/TV-related roles including producers, directors and actors. Exposure to GenAI varies significantly across job titles in this occupation, with authors/writers considered significantly exposed, graphic designers moderately exposed and actors, artists and photographers either minimally or not exposed.[76] Future demand is also likely to vary across these job roles.

Sports & fitness occupations (e.g. sports coaches, players, fitness instructors, leisure/sports managers)

Although employment fell in 2025 compared to the previous year, it remained above 2019 levels. Females accounted for the higher share (at 55%), 39% worked part-time and 63% held third level qualifications. The age profile was younger than average with 58% aged 25-54 years (compared to 68% nationally). Most (89%) working in this occupation were employed in Other NACE sectors. Employment permits related to various sports coaches. Increased take-up of gym memberships may lead to demand for fitness instructors and personal trainers.[77]

Leisure & travel service occupations (e.g. sports/leisure assistants, travel agents, air travel assistants)

Employment increased by 1,300 persons since 2024, but overall levels remained below that of 2019. A higher than average share worked part-time (44%) and were non-Irish citizens (25%) with 36% holding third level qualifications. Approximately two fifths were employed in the Other Nace sector with the remainder spread across sectors including administrative and support services and transport and storage. Future demand for these roles is likely to be impacted by trends in consumer spending and environmental targets (particularly relating to air travel).

Hairdressers & beauticians, etc.

Having been unchanged for the previous two years, employment levels saw an increase in 2025 (of 3,100 persons). Those employed were primarily female, with a high share working part-time (43%) and, at 25%, a higher than average share who were non-Irish citizens. Almost all (96%) were employed in Other NACE sectors. In 2025, there were 238 new registrations for the hairdressing apprenticeship (a decrease of 8.5% compared to 2024, at 260); there were a total of 1,700 awards at NFQ levels 1-5 in hair and beauty-related fields in 2024. Costs of doing business, tourism numbers and consumer spending levels can all potentially impact on future demand for these roles, with employment levels projected to decline slightly to 2030 based on a more constrained economy.

[76] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS forthcoming).
[77] Irish gyms make gains after pandemic hurt – The Irish Times

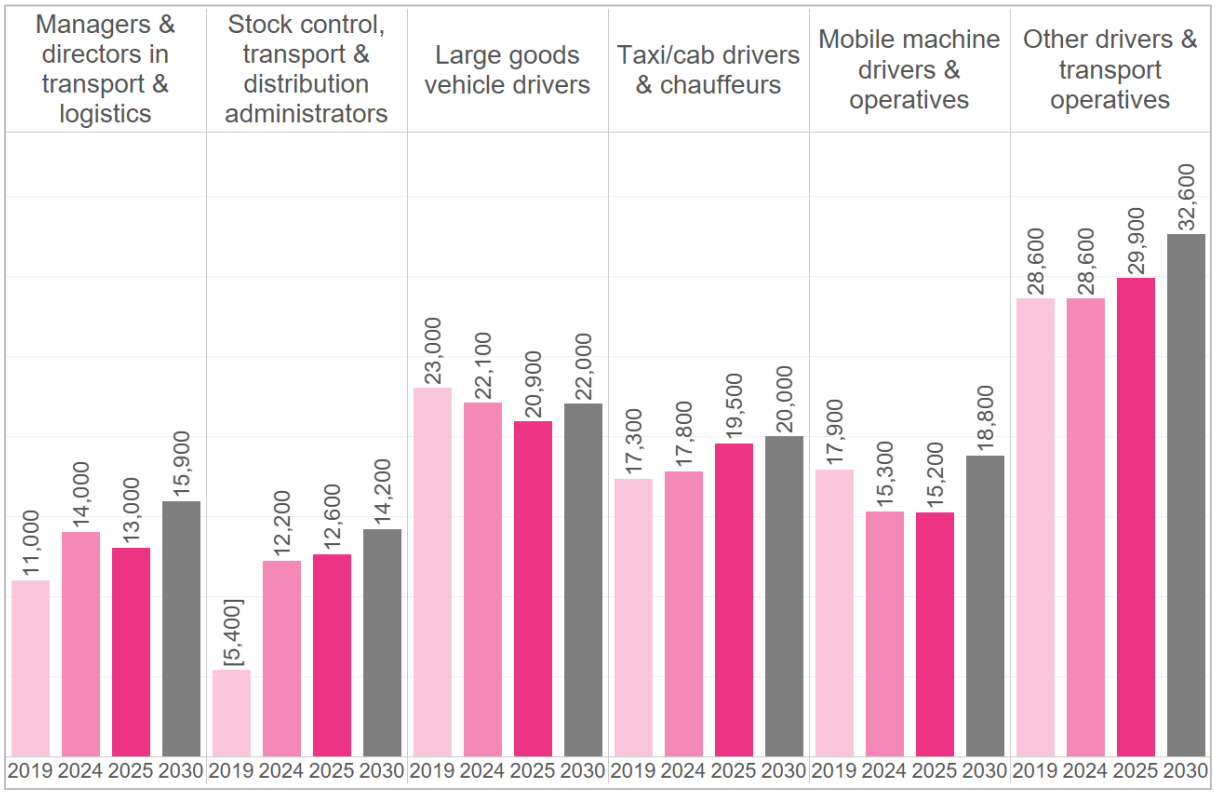
10.13 Transport & Logistics Occupations

Overall employment	114,700
Share of total workforce	4.0%
Main sectors of employment	60% - Transport 14% - Wholesale & retail 10% - Industry
Employment growth	+9,300 between 2019 and 2025 +1.4% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +1.1% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **2.1%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	attend to detail, adaptability, manage budgets/finances, mechanics of motor vehicles, drive vehicles, clean equipment, provide information, teamwork, environmental legislation, transportation methods

Overview: Annual average employment growth for transport and logistics occupations was lower than the national average for the six-year period to 2025. Given the high volume of recent job hires and the older age profile of those employed in this occupation, it appears that job openings are arising due to job churn as well as replacement demand. Despite the lower-than-average growth, demand remains evident in the Recruitment Agency Survey, Skills for Growth data, and online job adverts as well as the growing number of new employment permits issued for some transport occupations. Job attractiveness (work conditions, salary) remains an issue with upskilling of the existing workforce also required in order to adapt to changes in driving (e.g. eco-driving skills, new engine technologies (EV, hydrogen), environmental legislation and policies).

Outlook: Employment is projected to grow at 2.1% on average annually, nearly twice the rate for overall employment, with growth concentrated in mobile machine driver and transport/logistics manager occupations.

Figure 10.13 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



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

Table 10.13 Labour Market Profile of Transport and Logistics 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
Managers & directors in transport & logistics	2.8%	4.1%	…	97%	…	81%	[52%]	52	✓
Stock control, transport & distribution administration	[15.2%]	2.4%	…	[85%]	…	[70%]	…	14	✓
Large goods vehicle drivers	-1.5%	1.0%	…	92%	[27%]	74%	…	590	✓
Mobile machine drivers & operatives	-2.7%	4.3%	…	97%	…	76%	…	4	✓
Taxi/cab drivers and chauffeurs	2.0%	0.5%	…	76%	44%	81%	…	…	
Other drivers & transport operatives	0.7%	1.7%	…	73%	39%	73%	…	216	✓
Aircraft pilots, ship officers, air traffic controllers	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	2	
Overall total	**1.4%**	**2.1%**	**10%**	**85%**	**31%**	**76%**	**26%**	**878**	

Source: SLMRU 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

Managers & directors in transport & logistics

Between 2019 and 2025, annual average employment growth for this occupation, at 2.8%, was just below the national average (3.4%), but the second largest across the transport and storage occupations. Most employed were males, the vast majority worked full-time and just over one half were third level graduates.

Vacancies for these roles were evident in difficult-to-fill mentions in the Skills for Growth and to a lesser extent the Recruitment Agency Survey, with job titles mostly relating to fleet managers and store/purchasing managers. The number of new employment permits issued in 2025, although small was 53% higher than in 2024, with most relating to warehouse managers. LinkedIn data highlights an increasing demand for management (inventory; logistics) and problem-solving skills for logistics specialists.

While there is evidence of demand for this occupation, no shortages have been identified.

Stock control, transport & distribution administrative occupations

The number of persons employed in this occupation more than doubled between 2019 and 2025, although the numbers are small and should be treated with caution. Further growth is projected to be more moderate, but still strong, at 2.4% per annum in the years to 2030. Data from employers (Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth) points to difficulties in filling vacancies for freight forwarder roles, but no shortages have been identified due primarily to the small numbers involved.

Skills shortages: Inconclusive

Large goods vehicle drivers

Employment numbers for large goods vehicle drivers have fallen in the last two years with a negative annual average employment growth rate for the period 2019-2025. This occupation had higher than average shares of older workers (27% were aged 55 years and over), males (the number of females is too small to report), and non-Irish citizens (26%).

Evidence of demand appears across a range of sources: there was a large volume of vacancy posts (DSP Jobs Ireland) and a slight increase in the share in online jobs adverts (WIH/CEDEFOP). Employers reported difficulties in filling vacancies for HGV drivers in both the Recruitment Agency Survey (rigid/arctic drivers) and Skills for Growth data, where upskilling needs in digitalisation, customer service, and eco-driving skills were also mentioned. The number of new employment permits issued in 2025 for HGV drivers grew by more than a fifth, with the largest shares for employment in the South-East and Mid-West regions; three quarters of permits were for salaries of less than €35,000.

The extent to which this is a skills or labour shortage, or both, is uncertain: employment declined but other indicators point to significant issues with sourcing HGV drivers. The older age profile of this occupation suggests that openings will arise due to replacement demand in the coming years. However, attractiveness of the job (including salary and working conditions) are issues that may impact recruitment and retention. Geopolitical uncertainty, fluctuating fuel costs, supply chain pressures and decarbonisation-related regulatory and work practice (e.g. eco-driving, different fuel types) changes are further challenges influencing the outlook for this occupation.

Skills/labour shortages: HGV drivers

Mobile machine drivers & operatives

Following declines in 2020 and 2021, employment levels for this occupation have remained broadly stable in more recent years, but numbers in 2025 remained below 2019 levels. There were frequent difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey (forklift, reach, machine, crane, site dump, and teleporter drivers for the construction and transport sectors) and in the Skills for Growth data (forklift drivers in the manufacturing and transport sectors). Forklift driving skills were also in demand in other operative roles (general, factory, stores).

Taxi/cab drivers and chauffeurs

The number of taxi drivers has increased annually since 2023, having fallen significantly in the aftermath of COVID-19. Almost half (44%) were aged 55 years and over and a quarter worked part-

time. In July 2026, there were 21,396 SPSV (Small Public Service Vehicle) licences active, an increase of approximately 600 on the previous year.[78] The older age profile of those working in this occupation suggest demand will arise due to replacement of those who retire.

Other drivers & transport operatives

Annual average employment growth for this occupation was below the national average for the period 2019-2025. This is a male dominated occupation and the share of non-Irish citizens, at 27%, was higher than average. The number of recent job hires exceeded total employment growth in 2025, suggesting issues with job churn. There was a large volume of vacancy posts on DSP Jobs Ireland and the Recruitment Agency Survey pointed to difficulties in filling vacances for van and bus drivers.

While recent initiatives such as campaigns to attract women offering part-time positions[79] should go some way in addressing the demand for bus drivers, shortages are nonetheless expected to persist.

Skills shortages: Bus/coach drivers

Aircraft pilots, ship officers, air traffic controllers

Employment numbers in this occupation are too small for analysis.

[78] https://www.nationaltransport.ie/taxi/statistics-and-legislation/vehicle-licences-statistics/
[79] Dublin Bus - Take the Driver's Seat: Dublin Bus Calls on More Women to Explore Flexible Driving Careers

10.14 Administrative & Secretarial Occupations

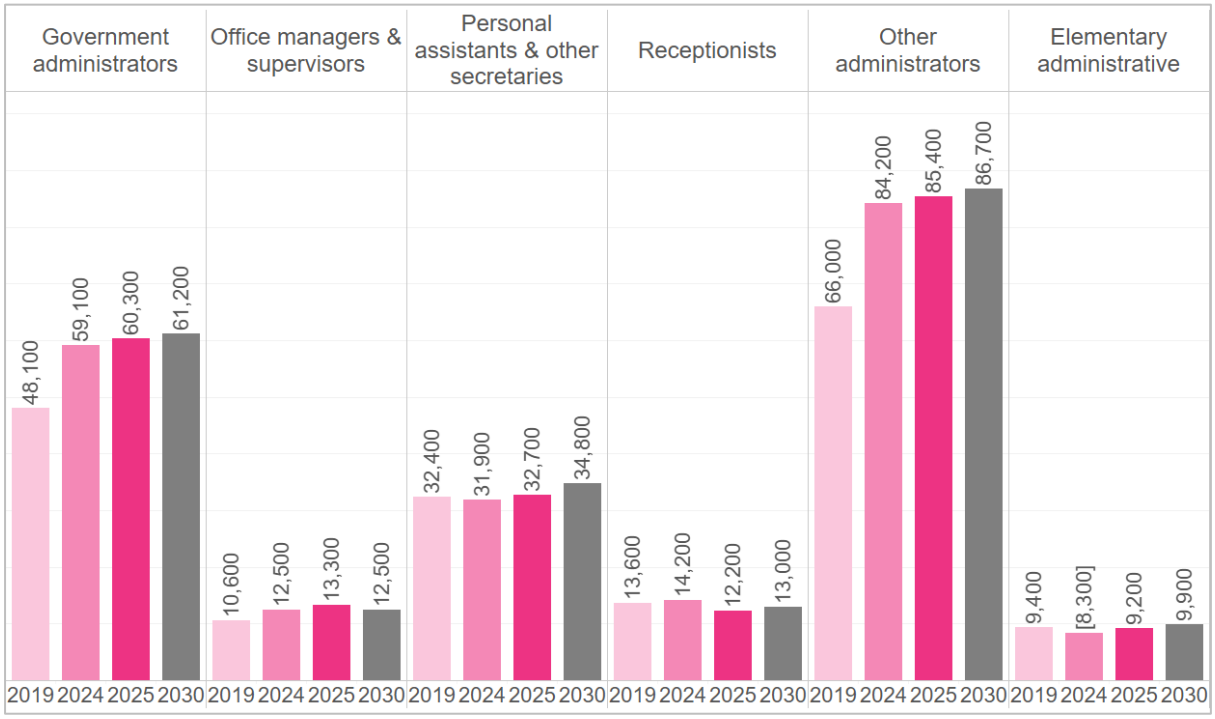
Overall employment	213,100
Share of total workforce	8.0%
Main sectors of employment	31% - Public administration and defence (PAD) 17% - Health 8% - Professional activities 7% - Transport
Employment growth	+32,900 between 2019 and 2025 +2.8% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +0.8% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.5%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, communication, attend to detail, use MS office, access & analyse digital data, customer service, manage budgets/finances, use office systems

Overview: Employment numbers in this occupational group increased by 32,900 persons in the six years since 2019, driven by government administrative and other administrator occupations, with little or no growth in the remaining occupations within this group. The overall employment growth in the year since 2024 was modest. Employment was spread across all sectors, with the largest share (31%) employed in public administration and defence. Most employed in these roles were female, the share aged 55 years and over was above average, and over half held third level qualifications. This occupational group has one of the highest shares of employment in roles considered exposed to GenAI;[80] a third were considered highly exposed with a further half either significantly or moderately exposed. Highly exposed occupations are associated with a low task variability making them more highly susceptible to tasks being replaced by AI, with the broader digitalisation of tasks already having an impact on employment growth in these jobs.

Outlook: Overall employment growth is forecast to be low to 2030 for this occupational group although this may mask more significant changes across particular occupations depending on the sector of employment. AI and digital transformations are also expected to impact on employment growth in these occupations over the forecast period. The high share aged 55 years and over may lead to increased job opportunities due to replacement demand but this may depend on whether the roles are replaced once vacated.

[80] Autumn Skills Bulletin 2026: Who is most exposed: Generative AI and Ireland's workforce (SOLAS: forthcoming).

Figure 10.14 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution

Table 10.14 Labour Market Profile of Administrative and Secretarial 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
Government admin	3.8%	0.3%	65%	91%	27%	94%	67%	4	
Other administrators	4.4%	0.3%	78%	68%	24%	84%	56%	1	✓
Office managers & supervisors	3.8%	-1.2%	[75%]	91%	…	94%	[61%]	1	
Personal assistants & other secretaries	0.1%	1.3%	92%	67%	28%	88%	49%	…	
Receptionists	-1.8%	1.3%	[83%]	…	…	[78%]	…	…	
Elementary administrative	-0.4%	1.5%	…	88%	[50%]	100%	…	…	
Overall total	**2.8%**	**0.5%**	**73%**	**77%**	**27%**	**89%**	**56%**	**6**	

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

Government administration

Employment growth (annual average) for government administration roles was above average over the period 2019-2025 although there was little change in employment levels since 2024. Two thirds of persons employed held third level qualifications, 65% were female and a higher than average share were aged 55 years and older (27%). The volume of recent job hires far exceeded any employment growth in the last year, indicating a level of job churn is occurring for these roles.

Other administrators

Other administrators were the second largest occupation in employment terms in 2025, with little change in overall levels since 2024. Employment was spread across all sectors, although at 25% the largest share was in the health sector. Most employed were female, almost a third were working part-time, over half held third level qualifications and 24% were aged 55 years and over. There was a high volume of recent job hires indicating a high level of job churn given the lack of employment growth. A small number of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey related to purchasing/site administration.

Office managers & supervisors

Employment levels have fluctuated in recent years for this occupation, although employment has grown in the last two years, resulting in an above average growth rate for the six-year period. Three quarters of those employed were female, two-thirds held third level qualifications, with employed spread across all sectors.

Personal assistants & other secretaries

Employment numbers have grown annually since 2022 for this occupation, although numbers remain at 2019 levels. Half of those employed were working in the health and professional activities sectors combined, with the remainder spread across all other sectors. Almost all employed were female, a third worked part-time, and nearly a half held third level qualifications. A higher-than-average share were aged 55 years and older and the extent to which some of these roles are replaced in the coming years is unclear.

Receptionists

The numbers employed as receptionists have declined in the last two years resulting in a negative growth rate for the six-year period. Employment was spread across many sectors, most employed were female and a slightly higher than average share were non-Irish. Although future growth is forecast, it is likely that tasks associated with this role will evolve due to AI and digitalisation.

10.15 Sales, Marketing and Customer Service Occupations

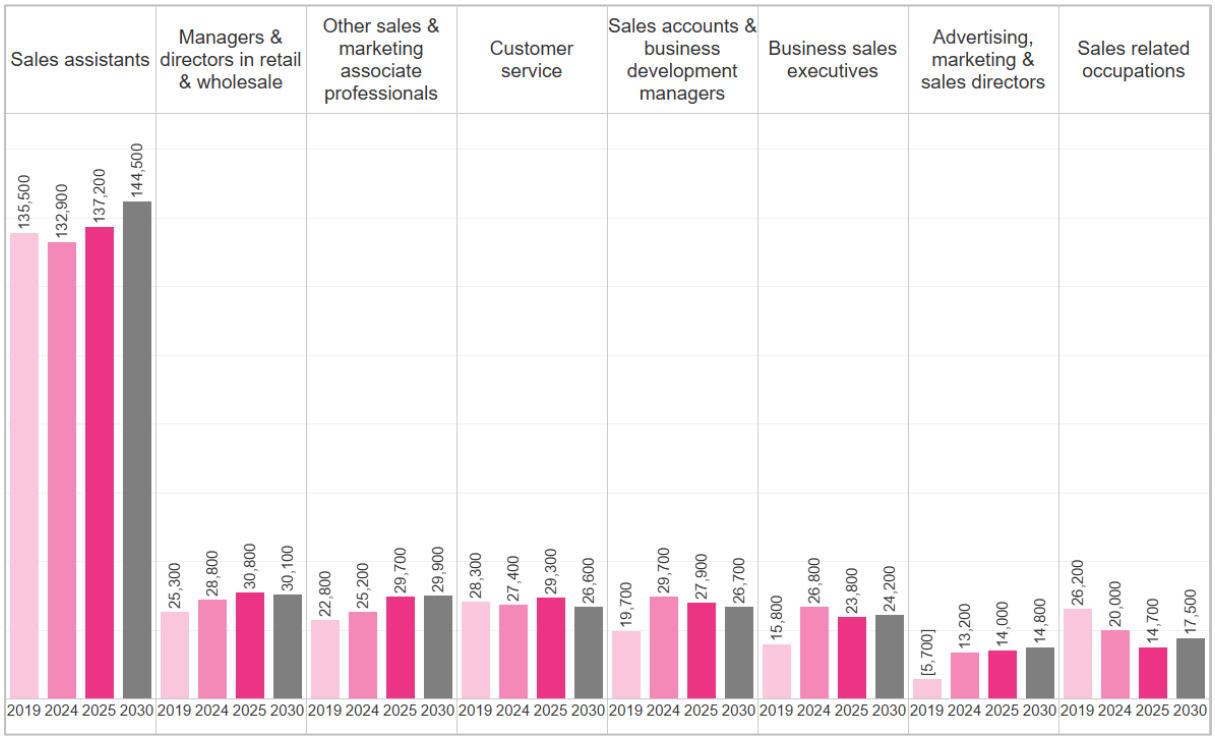
Overall employment	307,400
Share of total workforce	11%
Main sectors of employment	66% - Wholesale & retail 7% - Industry 5% - ICT
Employment growth	+27,900 between 2019 and 2025 +1.6% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) +1.1% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **0.4%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, access & analyse digital data, sales strategies, sales activities, assist customers, use MS office, teamwork, customer relationship management, teamwork principles, customer segmentation

Overview: Although the annual average employment growth rate for this occupational group was approximately half that of the national average, it is a large group and added nearly 28,000 workers between 2019 and 2025. Two thirds were employed in the wholesale/retail sector primarily as sales assistants (who were mostly in part-time employment), with the remaining third, approximately 100,000 persons, employed across many sectors including industry, ICT, financial and professional activities and administrative and support services.

Challenges and opportunities: The slower than average employment growth for this occupational group was due largely to declines in the number of persons working in these roles in the ICT sector; this was also reflected in the decline in the number new employment permits, which again was related to a fall in those issued for the ICT sector. The demand for sales related skills is not, however, confined to sales and customer service occupations, with employers frequently identifying upskilling needs in sales, marketing (especially digital), and relationship management (business and client) for those already working in a range of other occupations (e.g. engineers and technicians, HGV drivers, hospitality occupations etc) in order to develop business and drive commercial growth.

Outlook: Employment growth is expected to continue to be below average over the forecast period, at 0.4%. The wholesale/retail sector is by far the largest employer for this occupational group with little growth projected for occupations directly employed in this sector. However, employment growth is projected for sales-related roles in finance, ICT and professional services. While some declines are expected at a detailed occupational level (e.g. customer service roles due to the continued adoption of AI), some gains are forecast (e.g. sales assistants and sales related occupations).

Figure 10.15 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



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

Table 10.15 Labour Market Profile of Sales, Marketing, and Customer Service 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
Advertising, marketing & sales directors	[16.2%]	1.1%	...	98%	...	92%	87%	60	✓
Managers & directors in retail & wholesale	3.3%	-0.5%	37%	91%	29%	82%	49%	42	
Business sales executives	7.1%	0.3%	[25%]	90%	...	83%	60%	329	
Sales accounts & business development managers	6.0%	-0.9%	[33%]	96%	[27%]	81%	74%	223	✓
Other sales & marketing associate professionals	4.5%	0.1%	56%	85%	[21%]	85%	72%	460	✓
Sales assistants	0.2%	1.0%	63%	40%	13%	80%	23%	7	
Sales related n.e.c.	-9.2%	3.5%	[48%]	[73%]	...	85%	...	...	✓
Customer service	0.6%	-1.9%	61%	83%	...	71%	58%	19	✓
Overall total	**1.6%**	**0.4%**	**53%**	**66%**	**17%**	**81%**	**44%**	**1,140**	

Source: SLMRU 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

Advertising, marketing & sales directors; purchasing managers

Employment in this occupation grew by 800 persons since 2024, with levels over double that of 2019. Males accounted for the higher share of those employed, and most (87%) held third level qualifications. The number of new employment permits issued fell compared to 2024 with declines in the numbers issued for the ICT and industrial sectors; job titles included sales and marketing managers/directors and procurement managers. Difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey were mainly for procurement managers roles, with Skills for Growth data pointing to issues sourcing heads of new markets and marketing, with strong digital and eMarketing skills. Additional data from Spotlight on Skills highlights the cross-sectoral need for those who can lead marketing and sales strategies to grow and develop businesses in construction, ICT, manufacturing, and finance.

Managers & directors in retail & wholesale

Numbers employed in this occupation have fluctuated in recent years with an increase of 2,000 persons since 2024 although numbers remained below 2022-2023 levels. Of those employed, 63% were male and almost a half held third level qualifications. The share aged 55 years and over was above average which may lead to increased replacement demand in future years. New employment permits were across a number of job titles including store managers.

Business sales executives

The number of persons employed as business sales executives fell by 3,000 persons since 2024, with numbers returning to 2023 levels. Three quarters of those employed were male, 60% held third level qualifications and the share of non-Irish citizens was below average. The number of new employment permits issued was similar to 2024; although the numbers issued for the ICT sector were down on the previous year, they still accounted for the sector with the largest share of permits for this occupation. Job titles included business sales executives and account managers/strategists. Vacancies for this occupation were also identified as difficult-to-fill in the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth, in particular for those with customer relationship management (CRM) skills for client advisers and technical sales staff in manufacturing.

While no shortage has been identified for this occupation, future upskilling needs due to technology (including AI) and sustainability are likely for businesses to remain competitive and grow.

Sales accounts & business development managers

Although numbers employed in this occupation fell since 2024, they remained above 2023 levels and the growth rate for the period 2019-2025 was above average. Employment was spread across all sectors. Over two thirds employed were male, most (74%) held third level qualifications, and the share of non-Irish citizens was below average (19%). The share aged 55 years and older was above average at 27%. There was a slight decline in the number of new employment permits issued, mainly due to a fall in the numbers issued to the ICT sector (although this sector remained the largest in terms of permits issued); job titles included business/sales development managers and account managers.

There were a number of difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey (sales managers and (digital) marketing managers) and Skills for Growth (mainly hospitality and manufacturing sectors). In addition, data from LinkedIn highlights an unmet demand for account managers (selling, relationship management and negotiant skills) and sales managers (sales development and growth, new business opportunities, and business relationship management).

While no shortages have been identified for this occupation, it remains an occupation in demand for businesses needing to develop and foster commercial growth; further demand will also be related to new job creation in IDA client companies for business development roles in a range of sectors (administration and support, ICT, and high-tech manufacturing).

Other sales and marketing associate professionals

Employment grew strongly for this occupation between 2024 and 2025, with an additional 4,500 persons employed. Although employment was spread across all sectors, a quarter were employed in financial activities. Over half (56%) of those employed were female, almost all (85%) were working full-time, and most (72%) held third level qualifications.

The number of new employment permits issued fell from 603 to 460 between 2024 and 2025 related to a fall in the number of permits issued in the ICT sector; job titles for new permits included digital marketing specialists, procurement officers, and account managers.

Difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey were mainly for procurement staff, supply chain analysts and sales/marketing executives while those in the Skills for Growth data related to events managers (typically in the hospitality sector).

Sales assistants

Despite an annual increase of 4,300 persons employed since 2024, employment levels in 2025 for sales assistants was broadly on par with that of 2019; this occupation remains the largest in the economy, however, with almost 140,000 persons employed. Almost two-thirds employed were female, 63% worked part-time, 23% held third level qualifications and 45% were aged 15-24 years. The share of non-Irish citizens was broadly in line with the national average. There was a high volume of recent job hires for this occupation, accounting for approximately 10% of all recent job hires; as such, job churn is a significant feature of these roles.

Sales related not otherwise classified

Employment fell sharply for those working in these sales related occupations over the period 2024-2025, with 5,300 fewer workers. Employment levels fell in the wholesale and retail sector, but the falls in other sectors were more pronounced, and as a result, the share of this occupation in the wholesale/retail sector grew from just less than half in 2024 to over three-fifths (61%) in 2025.

With numbers falling in an already relatively small occupation, detailed analysis is limited for this occupation.

Customer service

Annual average employment growth, at 0.6%, was well below the national average, and 2025 employment levels were only marginally above those in 2019, despite growth of 1,900 persons between 2024 and 2025. Employment was spread across all sectors in small numbers. Females accounted for the larger share, 29% were non-Irish citizens and over half held third level qualifications.

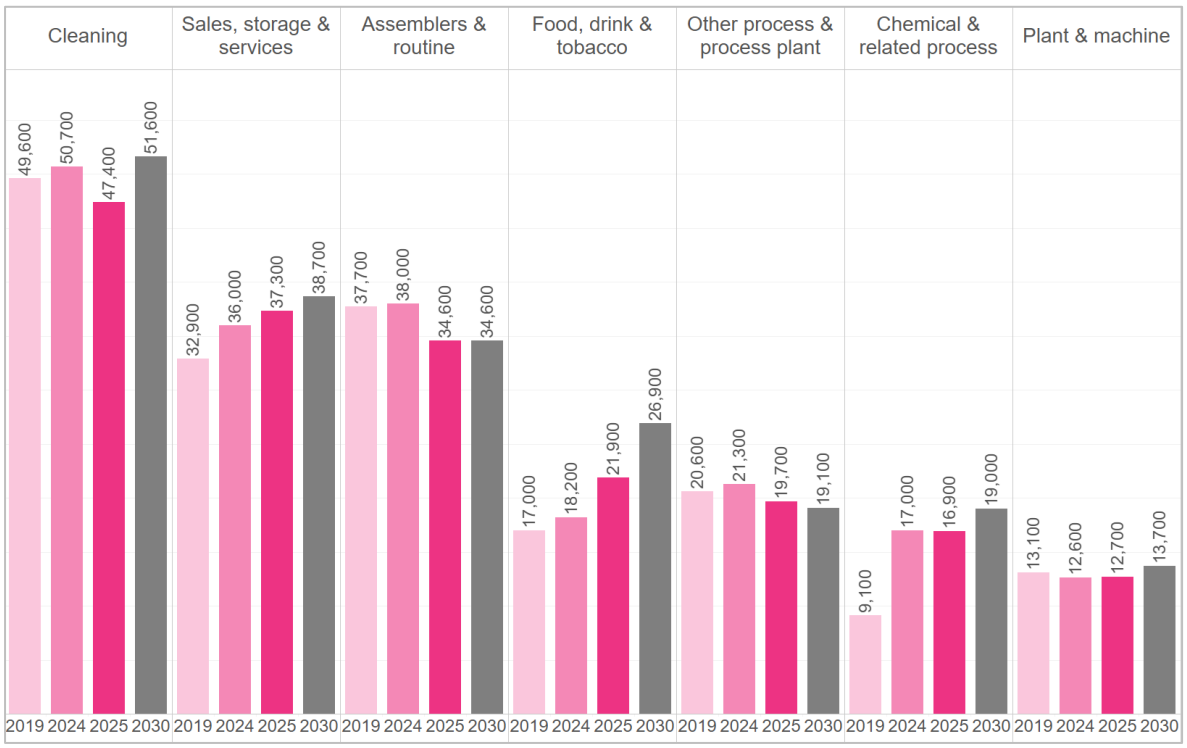
Difficult-to-fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey were mainly for customer service and multilingual call centre staff, while those in the Skills for Growth data were limited in number and related primarily to those in manufacturing companies. In addition, however, customer service skills are frequently sought after by employers in a range of other occupations (e.g. engineers, ICT professionals, finance), highlighting the increasing need for persons with a combination of human and technical skills.

10.16 Operatives & Elementary Occupations n.e.c.

Overall employment	190,400
Share of total workforce	7.0%
Main sectors of employment	56% - Industry 10% - Administrative and support services 10% - Wholesale & retail
Employment growth	+10,500 between 2019 and 2025 +0.9% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce) -1.8% growth since 2024 (compared to +2.2% for total workforce) Projected annual average growth (2025-2030): **1.3%**
Key skills identified in OJAs	adaptability, teamwork, attend to detail, provide information, quality standards, manage budgets/finances, manage quality, technical drawings, create solutions to problems, clean equipment

Overall employment levels have seen little change in recent years for this occupational group, with employment growth for food operatives offsetting declines for other operatives or elementary occupations. Future growth is projected to be primarily related to domestic industrial enterprises and those employed as food operatives, followed by cleaners. Over a quarter of those working in this occupation held third level qualifications, and while this share was below the national average, it points to an element of over-qualification for some roles as operative and elementary occupations typically do not require higher levels of education.

Figure 10.16 Annual Average Employment (2019, 2024 & 2025) & Employment Projections (2030)



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data

Table 10.16 Labour Market Profile of Operative and Elementary 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
Food, drink & tobacco	4.3%	4.2%	[35%]	86%	…	61%	…	16	✓
Chemical & related process	10.9%	2.4%	…	95%	…	73%	[55%]	…	
Other process operatives	-0.7%	-0.6%	…	86%	…	66%	…	19	✓
Plant & machine	-0.5%	1.5%	…	93%	…	74%	…	50	
Assemblers & routine operatives	-1.4%	0.0%	39%	89%	[18%]	77%	40%	6	
Cleaning	-0.8%	1.7%	69%	43%	25%	55%	[19%]	1	✓
Sales, storage & services	2.1%	0.8%	[21%]	75%	[14%]	65%	[25%]	2	✓
Overall total	**0.9%**	**1.3%**	**39%**	**76%**	**19%**	**66%**	**29%**	**94**	

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

Food, drink & tobacco operatives

This occupation was one of the few roles in this broad occupational group which saw employment growth since 2024 (increasing by 3,700 persons); it also has the highest projected annual average growth rate to 2030, with employment expected to reach approximately 27,000 persons. The share of non-Irish employed (at 39%) was significantly above the national average, most employed were working full-time, four-fifths held a higher secondary/FET qualification, and most (65%) were male.

Difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data related to food operatives. There was a high volume of vacancy posts for meat processing operatives notified through the DSP Jobs Ireland. Although there was a fall in the number of new employment permits issued for these roles (thought to be related to a filling of quotas), there were 400 renewal permits issued in 2025 for meat processing operatives.

Chemical & related process operatives

The above average employment growth for this occupation primarily relates to increases between 2021 and 2022, with employment levels falling annually since 2023. Most employed were male, working full-time, over a quarter were non-Irish citizens and more than a half held third level qualifications with the remainder holding a higher secondary/FET qualification. Difficult-to-fill mentions were confined to Skills for Growth data, with factory, production, and general operatives required for mostly medium-high and medium-low technology manufacturing.

No issues have been identified, although employment is projected to grow in the coming years, reaching 19,000 by the year 2030.

Other process operatives (e.g. packers, bottlers)

Despite annual increases between 2022 and 2024, the number of persons employed as other process operatives was marginally lower in 2025 than in 2019, with a negative annual average growth rate for

the period. Two-thirds of those employed held a higher secondary/FET qualification, most were male and working full-time, and 34% were non-Irish citizens, far above the national average.

Vacancy posts notified through the DSP Jobs Ireland for this occupation included concrete finishers/moulders, packing staff, general/maintenance operatives. Difficult-to-fill mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data related to packaging and general operatives.

Plant & machine operatives (e.g. quarry workers, energy & sewerage plant operatives)

This is one of the smallest occupations within this group. Employment levels have remained broadly unchanged, with only minor gains in recent years. Most employed were male and working full-time, half held a higher secondary/FET qualification and 26% were non-Irish citizens.

New employment permits issued in 2025 were mainly for wood machine/working technicians. Job creation in approved projects in IDA client companies include a number of operatives in machinery manufacturing segments over the coming years.

Assemblers & routine operatives

The number of persons working as assemblers and routine operatives fell sharply (by 3,400 persons) since 2024 and employment levels in 2025 were below those observed in 2019. Employment for this occupation is projected to remain broadly unchanged in the years to 2030, and increased automation for routine operative roles could potentially result in further declines for this occupation.

Cleaning

The number of persons employed as cleaners has fluctuated substantially over the period 2019-2025, with employment levels falling during the COVID-19 pandemic, recovering in subsequent years, but declining again in both 2024 and 2025. Although employment growth is projected to be above average in the period to 2030, employment is nonetheless expected to remain below 2023 levels. The high prevalence of part-time working in this role may also mean that any employment growth may not result in an increase in FTE employment. The share of non-Irish citizens, at 45%, far exceeds the national average. Approximately a fifth of those working in the occupation held third level qualifications, pointing to possible skills mismatches among cleaning staff.

Despite the fall in employment, there was a high volume of recent job hires indicating a high level of job churn for this role. The attractiveness of the job may be a key issue for these roles with cleaning staff mentioned as roles which were difficult to fill in the Recruitment Agency Survey.

Sales, storage & services

Having grown strongly in 2024, employment levels in this occupation saw more modest growth in 2025. The wholesale/retail and transport sectors combined accounted for 57% of total employment. Most employed were male and there was a high share employed who were non-Irish citizens (35%). The high volume of recent job hires points to job churn issues, far exceeding any employment growth in the past year. Vacancies for warehouse operative roles proved difficult to fill, as mentioned in both the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data, with skills and knowledge in areas such as health and safety, and forklifting in demand. Data relating to job creating projects approved in IDA client companies points to sustained demand for warehousing and logistics staff (particularly in high-tech manufacturing) in the coming years.

Appendix

Breakdown of Occupational Groups

Occupational Groups	Occupations	SOC Description
Science & Engineering Occupations	Chemical, biological & physical scientists	Chemical scientists
		Biological scientists and biochemists
		Physical scientists
		Social and humanities scientists
		Natural and social science professionals n.e.c.
		Research and development managers
	Environmental/conservation specialists	Conservation and environmental associate professionals
		Conservation professionals
		Environment professionals
		Production managers and directors in mining and energy
		Waste disposal and environmental services managers
		Environmental health professionals
	Health and safety officers	Health and safety officers
	Production, design & quality control engineers	Production and process engineers
		Design and development engineers
		Quality control and planning engineers
		Quality assurance and regulatory professionals
	Other engineering professionals	Mechanical engineers
		Electrical engineers
		Electronics engineers
		Engineering professionals n.e.c.
	Science & engineering technicians	Laboratory technicians
		Electrical and electronic technicians
		Engineering technicians
		Quality assurance technicians
		Planning, process and production technicians
		Science, engineering and production technicians n.e.c.
	Production managers in manufacturing	Production managers and directors in manufacturing
ICT Occupations	ICT specialist & project managers	Information technology and telecommunications directors
		IT specialist managers
		IT project and programme managers
	Programmers & software developers	Programmers and software development professionals
	ICT professionals. n.e.c.	IT business analysts, architects and systems designers
		Web design and development professionals
		Information technology & telecommunications professionals n.e.c.

	IT technicians	IT operations technicians
		IT user support technicians
Business & Financial Occupations	**Accountants & tax experts**	Chartered and certified accountants and taxation experts
	Management consultants, business analysts & project managers	Management consultants and business analysts
		Business and financial project management professionals
	Actuaries, economists & statisticians; other business professionals	Actuaries, economists and statisticians
		Business and related research professionals
		Business, research and administrative professionals n.e.c.
	Financial analysts & insurance underwriters	Brokers
		Insurance underwriters
		Finance and investment analysts and advisers
	Other business associate professionals	Estimators, valuers and assessors
		Importers and exporters
		Financial and accounting technicians
		Business and related associate professionals n.e.c.
		Legal associate professionals
	Financial accounts managers	Financial accounts managers
	Financial managers & directors	Financial managers and directors
		Financial institution managers and directors
	Financial administrative occupations	Credit controllers
		Book-keepers, payroll managers and wages clerks
		Bank and post-office clerks
		Finance officers
		Financial administrative occupations n.e.c.
		Pensions and insurance clerks and assistants
	HR managers & officers	Human resource managers and directors
		Human resources and industrial relations officers
Healthcare Occupations	**Other healthcare professionals**	Psychologists
		Pharmacists
		Opticians (including dispensing opticians)
		Dental practitioners
		Veterinarians
		Medical radiographers
		Podiatrists
		Health professionals n.e.c.
		Health services and public health managers and directors
		Social services managers and directors
		Health care practice managers
	Medical practitioners	Medical practitioners
	Therapy professionals	Physiotherapists

		Occupational therapists
		Speech and language therapists
		Therapy professionals n.e.c.
	Nurses & midwives	Nurses and midwives
	Health associate professionals	Paramedics
		Pharmaceutical technicians
		Medical and dental technicians
		Health associate professionals n.e.c.
		Dispensing opticians
		Dental nurses
Education Occupations	**Higher & further education teaching professionals**	Further and higher education teaching professionals
	Secondary teachers	Secondary education teaching professionals
	Primary & nursery teachers	Primary and nursery education teaching professionals
	Teaching & other educational professionals	Senior professionals of educational establishments
		Special education teaching professionals
		Education advisers and school inspectors
		Teaching, special needs, & other educational professionals n.e.c.
	Educational support assistants	Teaching assistants
		Educational support assistants
	Trainers & instructors, career guidance	Vocational and industrial trainers and instructors
		Careers advisers and vocational guidance specialists
		Driving instructors
Social & Care Occupations	**Welfare & housing associate professionals**	Youth and community workers
		Child and early years officers
		Housing officers
		Counsellors
		Welfare and housing associate professionals n.e.c.
	Childminders etc.	Nursery nurses and assistants and playworkers
		Childminders and related occupations
		Playgroup leaders
	Other caring services	Nursing auxiliaries and assistants
		Ambulance staff (excluding paramedics)
		Undertakers, mortuary and crematorium assistants
	Social workers & welfare professionals	Social workers
		Probation officers
		Clergy
		Welfare professionals n.e.c.
	Care workers, home carers, etc.	Houseparents and residential wardens
		Care workers and home carers
		Residential, day and domiciliary care managers and proprietors

		Senior care workers
		Care escorts
Legal & Security Occupations	Barristers, judges, solicitors & related professionals	Barristers and judges
		Solicitors
		Legal professionals n.e.c.
	Police officers (e.g. Gardaí)	Senior police officers
		Police officers (sergeant and below)
	Other protective service occupations	Officers in armed forces
		Senior officers in fire, ambulance, prison and related services
		NCOs and other ranks
		Fire service officers (watch manager and below)
		Prison service officers (below principal officer)
		Police community support officers
		Protective service associate professionals n.e.c.
	Security guards	Security guards and related occupations
		Parking and civil enforcement occupations
		School midday and crossing patrol occupations
		Elementary security occupations n.e.c.
Construction Occupations	Civil engineers & construction project managers	Civil engineers
		Construction project managers and related professionals
		Production managers and directors in construction
	Architects & town planners, architectural technologists, & surveyors	Architects
		Quantity surveyors
		Town planners
		Chartered surveyors
		Chartered architectural technologists
	Construction related technicians	Building and civil engineering technicians
		Architectural and town planning technicians
		Draughtspersons
	Bricklayers & plasterers	Bricklayers and masons
		Plasterers
	Plumbers	Plumbers and heating and ventilating engineers
	Carpenters & joiners	Carpenters and joiners
	Painters & decorators	Painters and decorators
	Other construction trades	Steel erectors
		Roofers, roof tilers and slaters
		Glaziers, window fabricators and fitters
		Construction and building trades n.e.c.
		Floorers and wall tilers

		Construction and building trades supervisors
	Construction operatives & elementary	Elementary construction occupations
		Scaffolders, stagers and riggers
		Road construction operatives
		Rail construction and maintenance operatives
		Construction operatives n.e.c.
Other Craft Occupations	**Other metal-related trades**	Smiths and forge workers
		Moulders, core makers and die casters
		Sheet metal workers
		Metal plate workers, and riveters
		Air-conditioning and refrigeration engineers
		Metal machining setters and setter-operators
		Tool makers, tool fitters and markers-out
		Precision instrument makers and repairers
		Pipe fitters
	Welding and fabricators	Welding trades
		Metal working production and maintenance fitters
	Vehicle trades	Vehicle technicians, mechanics and electricians
		Vehicle body builders and repairers
		Vehicle paint technicians
		Aircraft maintenance and related trades
		Boat and ship builders and repairers
		Rail and rolling stock builders and repairers
	Electrical & electronic trades, etc.	Electricians and electrical fitters
		Telecommunications engineers
		TV, video and audio engineers
		IT engineers
		Electrical and electronic trades n.e.c.
		Skilled metal, electrical and electronic trades supervisors
	Other skilled trades	Weavers and knitters
		Upholsterers
		Footwear and leather working trades
		Tailors and dressmakers
		Textiles, garments and related trades n.e.c.
		Pre-press technicians
		Printers
		Print finishing and binding workers
		Glass and ceramics makers, decorators and finishers

		Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers
		Florists
		Other skilled trades n.e.c.
	Butchers, fishmongers, bakers etc.	Butchers
		Bakers and flour confectioners
		Fishmongers and poultry dressers
Agriculture & Animal Care Occupations	**Managers in horticulture, agriculture and fishing**	Managers and proprietors in agriculture and horticulture
		Managers and proprietors in forestry, fishing and related services
		Managers and proprietors in horse-racing and related industries
	Farmers	Farmers
	Horticultural, agricultural & fishing trades n.e.c.	Horticultural trades
		Gardeners and landscape gardeners
		Groundsmen and greenkeepers
		Skilled workers in horse racing and related industries
		Agricultural and fishing trades n.e.c.
	Animal carers	Veterinary nurses
		Pest control officers
		Veterinarians
		Animal care services occupations n.e.c.
	Elementary agriculture occupations	Farm workers
		Forestry workers
		Elementary occupations in horse racing and related industries
		Fishing and other elementary agriculture occupations n.e.c.
Hospitality Occupations	**Hospitality managers**	Hotel and accommodation managers and proprietors
		Restaurant and catering establishment managers and proprietors
		Publicans and managers of licensed premises
	Chefs & cooks	Chefs
		Cooks
	Catering & bar managers	Catering & bar managers
	Kitchen & catering assistants	Kitchen and catering assistants
	Waiters & waitresses	Waiters and waitresses
	Bar staff	Bar staff
	Housekeepers etc.	Housekeepers and related occupations
		Cleaning and housekeeping managers and supervisors
Arts, Sports & Tourism Occupations	**Media profs. & librarians**	Librarians
		Archivists and curators
		Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors
		Public relations professionals
		Advertising account managers and creative directors

	Artistic, literary & media associate professionals	Artists
		Authors, writers and translators
		Actors, entertainers and presenters
		Dancers and choreographers
		Musicians
		Arts officers, producers and directors
		Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators
		Graphic designers
		Product, clothing and related designers
	Sports & fitness	Leisure and sports managers
		Sports players
		Sports coaches, instructors and officials
		Fitness instructors
	Leisure & travel service	Sports and leisure assistants
		Travel agents
		Air travel assistants
		Rail travel assistants
		Leisure and theme park attendants
		Travel agency managers and proprietors
		Leisure and travel service occupations n.e.c.
	Hairdressers & beauticians, etc.	Beauticians and related occupations
		Hairdressers, barbers, beauticians and related occupations
		Hairdressing and beauty salon managers and proprietors
Transport & Logistics Occupations	**Managers & directors in transport & logistics**	Managers and directors in transport and distribution
		Managers and directors in storage and warehousing
	Stock control, transport & distribution administration	Stock control clerks and assistants
		Transport and distribution clerks and assistants
	Large goods vehicle drivers	Large goods vehicle drivers
	Mobile machine drivers & operatives	Crane drivers
		Fork-lift truck drivers
		Agricultural machinery drivers
		Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.
	Taxi/cab drivers & chauffeurs	Taxi and cab drivers and chauffeurs
	Other drivers & transport operatives	Marine and waterways transport operatives
		Air transport operatives
		Rail transport operatives
		Bus and coach drivers
		Train and tram drivers
		Van drivers
		Other drivers and transport operatives n.e.c.

	Aircraft pilots, ship officers, air traffic controllers	Air traffic controllers
		Aircraft pilots and flight engineers
		Ship and hovercraft officers
Administrative & Secretarial Occupations	**Government administrative**	National government administrative occupations
		Local government administrative occupations
		Officers of non-governmental organisations
	Other administrators	Records clerks and assistants
		Library clerks and assistants
		Human resources administrative occupations
		Sales administrators
		Other administrative occupations n.e.c.
	Office managers & supervisors	Office managers
		Office supervisors
	PAs & other secretaries, etc.	Medical secretaries
		Legal secretaries
		Personal assistants and other secretaries
		Typists and related keyboard occupations
	Receptionists	Receptionists
	Elementary administrative	Postal workers, mail sorters, messengers and couriers
		Elementary administration occupations n.e.c.
Sales & Customer Service Occupations	**Advertising, marketing & sales directors**	Marketing and sales directors
		Purchasing managers and directors
		Advertising and public relations directors
	Managers & directors in retail & wholesale	Managers and directors in retail and wholesale
	Business sales executives	Business sales executives
	Sales accounts & business development managers	Sales accounts and business development managers
	Other sales & marketing associate professionals	Buyers and procurement officers
		Marketing associate professionals
		Estate agents and auctioneers
		Conference and exhibition managers and organisers
		Property, housing and estate managers
	Sales assistants	Sales and retail assistants, cashiers and checkout operators
		Retail cash desk and check-out operators
		Telephone salespersons
		Pharmacy and other dispensing assistants
		Vehicle and parts salespersons and advisers
	Sales related occupations	Collector salespersons and credit agents
		Debt, rent and other cash collectors
		Roundspersons and van salespersons

		Market and street traders and assistants
		Merchandisers and window dressers
		Sales related occupations n.e.c.
		Sales supervisors
	Customer service	Call and contact centre occupations
		Telephonists
		Communication operators
		Market research interviewers
		Customer service occupations n.e.c.
		Customer service managers and supervisors
Operatives & Elementary Occupations n.e.c.	**Food, drink & tobacco operatives**	Food, drink and tobacco process operatives
	Chemical & related process	Chemical and related process operatives
	Other process operatives & process plant	Glass and ceramics process operatives
		Textile process operatives
		Rubber process operatives
		Plastics process operatives
		Metal making and treating process operatives
		Electroplaters
		Process operatives n.e.c.
		Industrial cleaning process occupations
		Packers, bottlers, canners and fillers
		Elementary process plant occupations n.e.c.
	Plant & machine	Paper and wood machine operatives
		Coal mine operatives
		Quarry workers and related operatives
		Energy plant operatives
		Metal working machine operatives
		Water and sewerage plant operatives
		Printing machine assistants
		Plant and machine operatives n.e.c.
	Assemblers & routine operatives	Assemblers (electrical and electronic products)
		Assemblers (vehicles and metal goods)
		Routine inspectors and testers
		Weighers, graders and sorters
		Tyre, exhaust and windscreen fitters
		Sewing machinists
		Assemblers and routine operatives n.e.c.
	Cleaning	Window cleaners
		Street cleaners

		Cleaners and domestics
		Launderers, dry cleaners and pressers
		Refuse and salvage occupations
		Vehicle valeters and cleaners
		Elementary cleaning occupations n.e.c.
	Sales, storage & services	Shelf fillers
		Elementary sales occupations n.e.c.
		Elementary storage occupations
		Hospital porters
		Other elementary services occupations n.e.c.

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