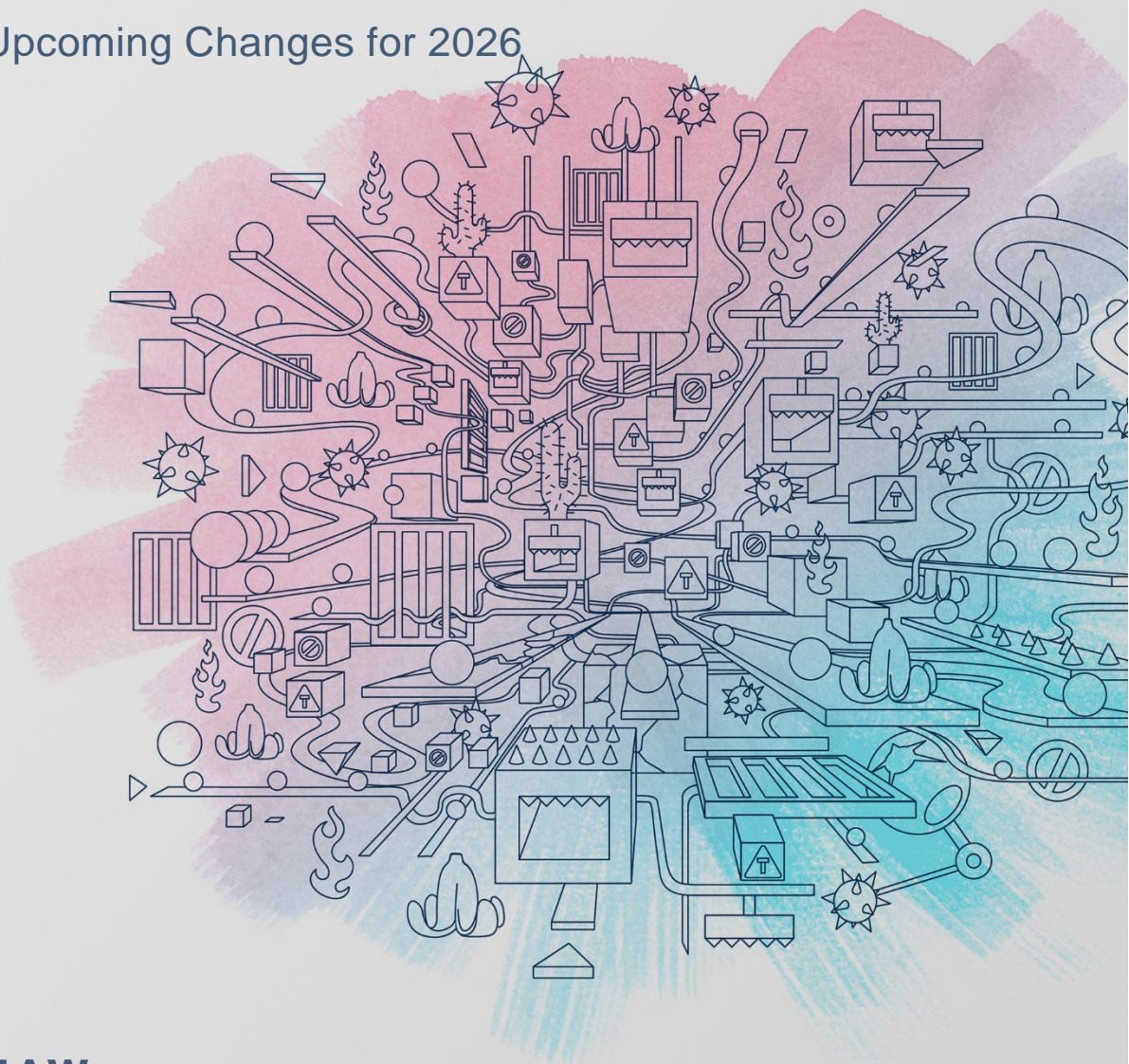


SUMMARY OF IRISH IMMIGRATION UPDATES

for 2025 and Upcoming Changes for 2026



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IRISH RESIDENCE PERMIT (IRP) RENEWALS AND CHRISTMAS TRAVEL 2025 – 2026

- Temporary measure allows Non-EEA Nationals legally resident in Ireland to travel internationally over Christmas using a recently expired Irish Residence Permit (IRP) card, if a renewal application was submitted before expiry.
- Valid travel period: 8 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.
- Travellers must present printed Travel Confirmation Notice, expired IRP card, and proof of renewal application (e.g., email confirmation).
- Airlines and foreign missions will be notified of these arrangements.
- Local immigration and visa requirements in third countries still apply.
- The validity of renewed permission is based on the current expiry date, not the application date.

NEW EMPLOYMENT PERMITS ONLINE (EPO) PORTAL (2025)

- The new EPO system launched on 28 April 2025, requiring separate accounts for employers, employees, and agents, with multi-factor authentication.
- Employers were required to set up accounts using company registration and Revenue documents; employees need a personal email, phone, and passport image.
- Previous Trusted Partner employers' accounts are pre-populated with recent applications.
- All parties (employer, employee, agent) must jointly complete applications online, using electronic signatures.
- The old EPOS system was offline for a few weeks during the transition; only fully submitted applications will transfer.
- The new system aims to streamline processing, enhance security, and improve user experience, but some practical details (e.g., shared access) remain unclear.

FIRST-TIME IMMIGRATION REGISTRATION CENTRALISED IN DUBLIN (2025)

- From 13 January 2025, all first-time registrations for Irish immigration residence permission are handled at the Registration Office, Burgh Quay, Dublin, for all counties.
- Applicants must book appointments via the Digital Contact Centre.
- Renewals for all counties continue online; no in-person attendance required.

MINIMUM ANNUAL REMUNERATION (MAR) THRESHOLDS FOR EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (2025)

- The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is consulting on future MAR increases, following significant rises in January 2024.
- Stakeholders could submit feedback until 10 January 2025.
- Planned increases for January 2025 were deferred pending consultation, except for certain healthcare roles.
- The roadmap aims to align thresholds with cost-of-living and labour market needs.

CHANGES TO IRISH IMMIGRATION POLICY ANNOUNCED BY MINISTER FOR JUSTICE ON 26 NOVEMBER 2025

- Most of the changes announced on 26 November 2025 concern refugees and asylum seekers, though changes to family reunification will extend to all non-EEA families.
- Legislation will be required to implement many of the changes and government officials say they are now developing the heads of a bill.
- The majority of changes to family reunification, which follow a long-awaited review, will take immediate effect.

- Among the changes for those granted international protection status is that family reunification will now only be granted in cases where it can be shown they have sufficient resources to support family members.
- The period before applying for citizenship will be extended from **three years to five years**, bringing refugees in line with other migrants, which officials say is justified by improvements in processing times.
- The criteria for citizenship will also change, with new guidance on the application of good character requirements and the introduction of a requirement that applicants are self-sufficient.
- International protection applicants for citizenship must be self-sufficient and not in receipt of certain social protection payments within the previous two years before an application is made.
- Residents of international protection accommodation who are in employment will also be expected to make a financial contribution towards their accommodation, based on their income.
- The scheme will be implemented within a planned 12-month period, allowing for the development of systems and resources to assess eligibility, share data securely and collect and process payments.
- New powers will be introduced to revoke refugee status where a person is found to be a danger to the security of the state or has been convicted of a serious crime.
- Meanwhile, an updated policy document will tighten the existing policy on family reunification for most non-EEA residents, reduce the effective waiting period for those on general employment permits, and will give permission to work for 16-18 years olds.
- The updated family reunification policy will allow Irish citizens and eligible non-EEA citizens to be joined by spouses, partners and children under 18, but strict limits will be placed on other family members.
- People sponsoring applications will need to demonstrate a clear financial capacity to provide for their family members if they are to be granted a permission to come to Ireland.
- Applications must be made while their family members are outside the State, and an application fee will be introduced.
- It is understood that new conditions will also be introduced over time to ensure certain sponsors have suitable private accommodation for their family before they arrive in Ireland.

IRISH GOVERNMENT ROADMAP FOR EMPLOYMENT PERMIT SALARY THRESHOLDS

- Gradual increase in minimum annual remuneration (MAR) for employment permits from 1 March 2026, continuing through 2030.
- General Employment Permit minimum salary rises from €34,000 to €36,605; Critical Skills Employment Permit (CSEP) with degree from €38,000 to €40,904; CSEP without degree from €64,000 to €68,911; meat processors, horticultural workers, healthcare assistants, and home carers from €30,000 to €32,691.
- New guidelines for graduates: GEP for Irish graduates at €34,009; CSEP for graduates from any recognised institution at €36,848.
- Sector-specific lower thresholds in agri-food and healthcare phased out by 2030; public service/community/voluntary CSEP roles exempt, following national pay agreements.
- MAR thresholds indexed to average earnings (CSO data), with 4.9% average annual adjustment; hourly rate calculated from annual salary divided by 2,028 hours.
- Policy aims to balance worker rights and business needs, focusing on medium-term skills deficits and prioritising EEA labour.
- First increase effective 1 March 2026; phased adjustments through 2030.
- Full details available in the published roadmap document.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR 2025

- Early action was required for IRP renewals before Christmas 2025.
- All employment permit applications must now be made through the new EPO portal, with joint participation from all parties.
- First-time immigration registrations are centralised in Dublin from January 2025. All immigration permission renewals are now submitted online
- MAR threshold increases are under review, with stakeholder input invited.

- Significant changes to family reunification and international protection are being implemented, with further changes likely in 2026.

KEY CHANGES COMING FOR 2026

- Full implementation of stricter family reunification policy: eligibility, financial, and accommodation requirements.
- Further increases to MAR thresholds for employment permits, subject to ongoing consultation.
- Continued development and refinement of the EPO portal and digital immigration processes.
- Legislative changes to support new international protection and family reunification rules, including revocation powers and self-sufficiency requirements for citizenship.
- Stricter requirements for sponsors of family reunification (financial capacity, accommodation, application from outside Ireland, and fees).
- Ongoing alignment of employment permit policy with labour market needs and cost-of-living.

SOME EMPLOYMENT PERMIT STATISTICS COMPARING 2024 AND 2025:

In 2024 a total of 39,390 employment permits were issued in full year. The sector with the highest number of permits was Health & Social Work Activities with 12,501 permits. The second and third highest sectors were Accommodation & Food Services activities with 6,788 permits and Information & Communication Activities" with 3,358 permits, respectively.

In 2025 the total number of employment permits issued up to end December 2025 was 31,044. The sector with the highest number of permits was again Health & Social Work Activities with 7,948 permits, followed by Information & Communication Activities" with 3,630 permits, and Accommodation & Food Services Activities with 3,499 permits.



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