



## **Submission to the Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation on the General Scheme of an Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill**

**January 2020**

Dublin Chamber is the largest chamber of commerce in Ireland, representing 1,300 businesses from across the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), employing 300,000 nationally. Members include businesses across the spectrum from SMEs to large corporates. Dublin Chamber welcomes the opportunity to make this brief submission to the Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation in relation to the General Scheme of an Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill. The current economic environment is one of nearly full employment, with December 2019 unemployment figures at 4.8%.<sup>1</sup> The attraction and retention of talent is consistently cited by Dublin Chamber members as one of the biggest challenges facing their businesses. In this context, access to international talent pools is essential.

The adaptability of the permit system to the changing needs of the economy is critical to its success. Criticism of the system as it stands largely centres on slowness to respond to a dynamic economic and labour environment, and a slow administrative process. For this reason, Dublin Chamber welcomes the intent of the General Scheme of an Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill to become more flexible and responsive to market needs and to modernise the process by reflecting changes in recruitment practices. We broadly support the outlined amendments in the Bill. We recommend that further consideration be given to the following proposals:

- A mechanism for granting permits where an organisation can demonstrate a genuine skills shortage in one or more areas.
- Provision to introduce a seasonal workers permit that is suitably agile to respond to unexpected peaks in activity or consumer demand.
- Improvements to administrative expediency for simple cases where processing for a candidate's permit has already occurred. For example, short term extensions for existing permits, or permits for candidates that have already gone through the application system but whose job offer fell through.
- When an applicant's permit has been successfully approved there should be a means to fast-track the application of a spouse awaiting a spousal visa.

Dublin Chamber broadly welcomes the General Scheme of the Employment Permits (Consolidation and Amendment) Bill and encourages Government to ensure that all changes focus on the core aim of increasing agility and responsiveness to labour market demand.

---

<sup>1</sup> CSO Monthly Unemployment Figures,  
<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/labourmarket/monthlyunemployment/>