

Global Immigration alert

November 2025

Ireland

Legislative changes to the Citizenship Act and Non-EEA Family Reunification Policy

Executive summary

On 26 November 2025, Ireland announced a series of legislative and policy changes to the Citizenship Act and implemented new family reunification requirements for third-country nationals under the Non-EEA Family Reunification Policy.

Key developments

The Irish authorities are working on the following legislative changes to the Citizenship Act:

- **Exclusion of rights:** Certain categories of individuals will be ineligible for Irish citizenship by naturalization. This includes individuals who are in Ireland under the Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC (which was activated in response to the armed conflict in Ukraine), EU Treaty rights applicants, and individuals with Stamp O permits (i.e., dependent elderly relatives, retirees and certain temporarily visiting academics).
- **Character and self-sufficiency:** Applicants will be required to demonstrate "good character" and prove self-sufficiency (e.g., less reliance on state welfare benefits) as part of the eligibility criteria for Irish citizenship. The authorities are expected to issue further guidance on how eligible individuals may demonstrate "good character" and prove self-sufficiency.

Other changes to the citizenship application process:

- **Application fees:** The authorities are expected to review and increase visa application fees, which remain unchanged since 2011.

Starting on 26 November 2025, the following changes apply to the Non-EEA Family Reunification Policy, which impacts non-European Economic Area nationals ("third-country nationals"):

- **Immediate family:** Immediate family is clearly defined as spouses, civil partners and children under the age of 18. These individuals are automatically eligible to apply for family reunification to join the primary sponsor (i.e., Irish citizen or legal non-EEA resident in Ireland). Stricter criteria will apply to applicants who seek reunification with other family members, such as dependent parents.
- **Salary thresholds:** Revised salary thresholds will apply to individuals who seek to bring their family members to Ireland. Individuals who hold employment permits with higher salary thresholds (e.g., Critical Skill Employment Permits) are not subject to this requirement.
- **Work rights for dependent children:** The updated [policy](#) allows dependent children (above the age of 16) of General and Critical Skills Employment Permit holders to work without separate employment permits.
- **Reduced waiting period:** A reduced waiting period of one year now applies to General Employment Permit holders for family unification. This change has been made by reducing the financial records requirement from two years to one year. Critical Skills and Intra-Corporate Transferee Irish Employment permit holders are exempt from the waiting period requirement and their immediate family members are eligible for automatic family reunification upon arrival in Ireland.



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- **Processing time:** Individuals who must submit an application for family reunification prior to travel to Ireland will now be subject to a processing time of approximately 12 months.

Impact on employers

Companies that employ impacted individuals may stay updated on the latest developments, inform their employees of any changes, and support them as required.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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