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INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

General Work Permit holders are permitted to sponsor their spouses and dependents to join them in Ireland, 12 months after establishing a new life in Ireland.

Our group 'Reform Stamp 3' are Non-EU/EEA immigrants residing in Ireland under the condition of the Residence Permit Stamp 3 Visa mostly comprising of spouses of general employment permit holders.

Stamp 3 indicates permission to stay in Ireland for a specified period, subject to conditions. Stamp 3 is reckonable as residence when applying for citizenship by naturalisation.

The Summary of conditions:- You cannot work or engage in any business, trade, or profession, unless you are granted a work permit by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment (DETE).

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/registering-your-immigration-permission/information-on-registering/immigration-permission-stamps/#stamp-categories>



Most families in today's economic environment support their livelihood with two incomes and therefore the spouses would have to resign from employment in their birth country, dispose of the family assets, with the intention to settle long-term in Ireland.

When a spouse considers their own professional development, professional goals, aspirations, and income-generating contribution to the family, it is not an easy choice to make.

As the spouse, it is reasonable to expect that finding work once living in Ireland will be easier than trying to source employment while still outside the country.

Unfortunately, the red tape involved to obtain a work permit and the duty to fulfil the requirement of acquiring a work permit has a stigma attached to it which hinders the opportunity to restart their careers here.

After arriving in Ireland, many families have made the commitment to settle in Ireland and have left their previous lives behind. As a result, they are now in a challenging situation where they are struggling to make ends meet in their new home and are unable to afford to go back to where they were born because doing so would require them to start over from the ground up, and they currently have no way of improving or moving forward in their current situation.

By accepting the option of a citizenship opportunity, is indicative that the family and its members are planning long-term settlement in Ireland.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR STAMP 3 RESIDENTS IN IRELAND?

Applying for jobs has proven to be a very difficult process, with the main difficulty being that recruiters won't consider recommending a Stamp 3 resident. Businesses prefer not to accept Stamp 3 residents because doing so would require them to apply for work permits. DETE offering the work permit route has proven to not be a suitable option.

The full impact of this decision to join your GWP main family member in Ireland is only recognised after relocation.

CHANGING STAMP STATUS

This is the option offered by DOJ and DETE. Quick summarisation below of obstacles:-

Stamp 1- Discrimination reported when a Stamp 3 visa holder applied for a job, went through the 3-step interview process, disclosed thereafter the Stamp 3 status to apply for a work permit, the advertisement was withdrawn and re-posted with “eligible work permit to work in Ireland.” Most advertised jobs state “right to work”.

Stamp 2- Stamp 2 Study Visa disqualifies one from counting these years towards citizenship and many reputable institutions, universities, and other establishments only accept Stamp 2 Study Visa. Additionally, it can be financially challenging to support international cost studies when meeting basic needs in a household with one income.

Stamp 4,5,6 – This option is only available after 5 years of residency and on GWP spouse obtaining citizenship. As a result of losing key skills and spending this amount of time outside of the business sector, the individual will have a harder time finding employment in the future. Since the corporate climate is changing so quickly, the lost skills are no longer an attractive choice.

We provide alternative information in the following pages to highlight the *impact of this situation* and plead with the Human Rights Commission to seriously consider our situation and request assistance to find a suitable outcome that benefits all residents living in Ireland and those families that will follow their General Work Permit family member in the future.

PROCEDURE OF APPLICATION FOR WORK PERMIT – APPLICABLE FOR STAMP 3 HOLDERS IN IRELAND.

Labour Market Needs Test = 28 days

A copy of the advertisement for the job in a national newspaper for each of the 3 days. Estimate cost €1000.

A copy of the advertisement for the job in a local newspaper for each of the 3 days (if the paper is published weekly only 1 advertisement is required) or a copy of ad on a job’s website (separate to Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection/EURES website) for 3 days. Estimate cost €300.

The application for a work permit suggested to be received 12 weeks prior to the start of the employment period.

[Publications General-Employment-Permits-Checklist.pdf](#), [Employment-Permits](#)

FOLLOWING PROCESS TO HIGHLIGHT OUR PLIGHT WITH GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

None of the methods we have used to alert the government department to our situation have been effective to date.

We have presented to the **Department of Justice on May 6, 2021**, about the significance of the psychological, financial, and integration pressure of the spouses' jobless consequence.

On June 29, 2021, a presentation regarding the results of employment applications and issues with not being able to receive a work visa was made to the **Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment**.

From **May 2021 to October 2021** members submitted letters to their **local TD's** highlighting their plight. The standard reply was that there were no current plans to extend an option of employment permits to spouse of general employment permit holders.

Tracey Milledge submitted a petition to the **House of Oireachtas on January 25th, 2022**, asking for the reconsideration of Stamp 3 residence visa holders. House of Oireachtas submitted to DETE for review, and then forwarded same to Department of Justice for consideration. On this application, there has been no final decision.

In **November 2022** Reform Stamp 3 did an **Arts Presentation** in Enniscorthy highlighting our plight through the arts. We won an award as best group presentation.

We currently have a **petition** signed by 1853 members in support of changing the working rights for Stamp 3 residents in Ireland. Effective date **04 September 2023**. <https://my.uplift.ie/petitions/support-stamp-3-visa-holders-to-access-employment-in-ireland>

In the meanwhile, General Employment Permits are still being allocated to skills shortage demanded by business and our members continue to grow, reaching out and requesting our assistance to help them transition this difficult phase.

OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED BY STAMP 3 RESIDENTS

IN THE JOB SEARCH: Most job applications are done online and via a recruitment agency. The biggest challenge in the job application process has been that recruiters won't consider suggesting a Stamp 3 visa resident. Businesses are reluctant to hire a Stamp 3 national because doing so would require a work permit application.

For the work permit application, a job offer is necessary. The extended application process for a work permit raises the possibility that a job offer may be rescinded. It is extremely difficult to request a change to Stamp 1, and according to our statistics, just 2% of applicants were successful in changing their visa stamp with the help of the employer. The work permit route offered by DETE has proven to be an inadequate option.

The minimal effect of permitting GWP spouse equity in the labour market is illustrated below.

ESTIMATED NON-EU/EEA EFFECT ON EMPLOYMENT

Year	Ireland Population	Work Permits Issued	% to Population	Calculation on impact with spouse based on 80% are married	Potential % Impact to Employment Opportunities
2018	4,818,690	11,305	0.23%	18,088	0.19%
2019	4,882,495	14,163	0.29%	22,661	0.23%
2020	4,937,786	16,419	0.33%	26,270	0.27%
2021	5,011,500	16,275	0.32%	26,040	0.26%
2022	5,023,109	39,995	0.80%	63,992	0.64%
2023 YTD	5,062,065	18,367	0.36%	29,387	0.29%

Reference Links

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/ireland-population/>
<https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/Publications/Employment-Permit-Statistics>

Note on above. This table includes both Critical and General Work Permit Holders and therefore is not accurate in that the % impact will be lower for GWP family members. It also does not differentiate between new work permit and renewed work permit. The above confirms that the outcome of allowing Stamp 3 holders access to work will not have any impact on the employability of Irish and EU citizens.

MENTAL HEALTH:- The repeated rejection from job applications has had an influence on the person's mental health, including desperation, depression, financial stress, and self-confidence. Once depression sets in, this is very difficult to overcome these waves of feelings and *social isolation* becomes a part of this mental state.



Financial worries was named as the number one issue for 57 per cent impacting on their mental health. This is closely followed by relationships for 44 per cent, family responsibilities for 41 per cent and work for 40 per cent. Reference [Mental health issues rising in Ireland survey 28-06-2023](#). The online survey was conducted by Amárach Research with a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adults from April 28th to May 4th 2023.

INTEGRATION:- Being involved in the community is an essential component of mental health, yet having few financial resources can make integration challenging. 48.4% of Non-EU/EEA/EEA immigrants are at risk of poverty due to social exclusion. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/b/b4/Migrant_Integration_A4_V5.jpg

FINANCIAL WELLBEING / COST OF LIVING: - A household experiences severe financial difficulty because of a Stamp 3 holder being unable to secure employment and contribute to the household's financial well-being. The individual in possession of Stamp 3 feels useless, alone, and helpless.

COST OF LIVING BREAKDOWN OF GWP

Breakdown Budget for 2 adults		
Monthly Salary	€2,500.00	
Rent	€850.00	34%
Car Insurance	€80.00	3%
Medical Insurance	€120.00	5%
Car Finance	€230.00	9%
Fuel for travel	€160.00	6%
Internet/Phone	€60.00	2%
Food	€600.00	24%
Electricity	€200.00	8%
Heating	€200.00	8%
Total Expenses	€2,500.00	
Savings		€0.00

Due to the high cost of rent in city centres, the expense example depicts living outside of the city, in more rural areas, but then requiring the cost of a capable car. Living in or around the city centre, for example, Dublin would only be under the auspice of house sharing.



ESTIMATION OF THE LOSS TO IRELAND- REVENUE

The following exercises are intended to demonstrate the revenue lost to Ireland due to restricting holders of Stamp 3 easier access to the labour force.

SKILLS THAT QUALIFY FOR A GENERAL WORK PERMIT

Sector	Permits Issued year 2023	% GWP	Total GWP
Mining & Quarrying	15	80%	12
Transport & Storage	461	90%	415
Accommodation & Food Services activities	1503	40%	601
Care Givers	237	100%	237
Administrative & Support Service Activities	44	50%	22
Construction	789	40%	316
Wholesale & Retail Trade	166	60%	100
Meat Industry & Dairy Farming	373	90%	336
Total GWP			2038

<https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/employment-permit-statistics-2023.html> (Permit by Sectors)

CALCULATION ON LOST REVENUE – STAMP 3

2038 GWP work permit	60%	1222
1222 spouses on Stamp3 and 80% are employed	80%	976
976 spouses on Stamp3	€30,000	€29,280,000
€29 280 000,00 revenue taxed at 20% per annum	20%	€5,856,000

We are estimating the number of GWP employees in Ireland due to the absence of information on their exact number. **The figures, in our opinion, are understated as the actual GWP statistics are not published.**

HYPOTHESIS: Based on the calculations above, 1222 spouses will be registered on Stamp3 if there are 2038 GWP holders in Ireland and 60% of them are married. The assumption is that at least 80% of the spouses will want employment. The result is that there will be 976 people on Stamp3 who will be contributing taxes totalling €5,856,000,000 per annum.

ESTIMATION OF THE LOSS TO IRELAND – SKILLS

Reform Stamp3 highlight the positions listed on the **Ineligible list of Occupations** for work permits and by comparison the number of advertised positions indicating a skills shortage in these sectors. If Stamp 3 holders can enter the employment market these positions can be filled, but they can only enter the employment market if the Stamp 3 get changed.

Industry	Positions Advertised Available on Indeed.ie	Positions Advertised Available on Jobs.ie
Hospitality	3775	1144
Administrative	2221	539
Deli Staff	225	55
Quality Assurance	1001	120
Cleaning Operatives	1148	90
Call Centre Agents	251	141
Business Development Sales	891	51
Customer Service	4575	1849

Most Stamp3 holders have sufficient qualifications, skills, and experience to fill these positions, even if it is below their skill level. This is reflected below in some of the qualifications and skills currently in Ireland on Stamp3.

SOME EXAMPLES OF IRELANDS LOST SKILLS DUE TO STAMP 3:

Diploma in Personnel Management, B. Com. Human Resources Management, B.Com. Honours Human Resources Management. Work Experience: 3-year HR Administrator. Profile: Excellent administration and IT skills; Extensive knowledge of database systems; Full understanding of HR systems; willingness to adapt; Good written and oral language skills in English. In quest of an opportunity in a similar role to contribute positively

Passionate English language teacher who strives to deliver a well-rounded education in grammar. After studies were completed in Limerick, the residence was changed from Stamp 2 (student stamp) to Stamp 3.

PhD in Arts & Humanities studied at the University of Limerick; Bachelor of Arts: English Language (Algeria); Master's in Arts: Language and Communication (Algeria); Additional Skills: Fluent in French, Arabic and English

Project/Operations Manager | Internal Auditor | Assets & Facilities Manager. A certified and accomplished Internal Auditor/Operational Project Manager with 25+ years of experience.

Degree in Criminology and Forensics. Further training in Case Management 101. Currently studying QQI Level 5 in healthcare in the hope of employment as a Carer.

Young, dynamic UI/UX Designer. Completed her certification in UI/UX Design Specialization, Google Technical Support Fundamentals & Sage Pastel Accounting V12. Recently qualified, wants work experience.

QQI Level 6 Advanced certification in Business Management, Marketing & related support Services; QQI Level 5 Certification in Animal Care; Certification in Manual Handling, Health, and Safety. Studies and qualifications were completed at Cork College of FET, Mallow Campus, Ireland. Additional Qualifications: Sign language; Play-based early childhood education; Diploma Level 5 TEFL. Work Experience: Office Health and Safety Administrator; Training Centre Coordinator and Administrator; HR/Legal Assistant

CASE SCENARIO

Case Scenario 1.

A. Jane who is a chef by profession comes to Ireland as a dependent of John a critical skills employment permit holder on Stamp 1 immigration permission. Based on the privileges that come with John's work permit, Jane gets direct access to employment under stamp 1G immigration permission. While in Ireland, Jane continues to advance in her career as a chef without any barriers.

B. John who is a chef by profession comes to Ireland as a dependent of Jane a General Work Employment Permit holder on Stamp 1 immigration permission. John does not get direct access to employment as he gets immigration permission Stamp 3 with condition labelled on his card **Cannot work or engage in business**. While in Ireland, John's career as a chef is damaged due to the barriers that come with Stamp 3 permission and mostly tied to his partner's work permit privileges.

Case Scenario 2.

A. Jane a Critical Skills Employment Permit holder from a Non-EU/EEA country has a net income of €40000 per annum, due to privileges she enjoys based on her work permit situation, her spouse John who is a chef can access employment and earns a net income of €25000 per annum putting their household's net income at €65000 per annum. Jane and John in this case can afford to take a mortgage or rent in better condition than the family in case B.

B. John a General Work Permit holder from a Non-EU/EEA country has a net income of €30,000 per annum, due to the stripped spousal direct access to employment privileges, his partner Jane stays at home unemployed. This family are not able to afford a mortgage nor proper housing in a city like Dublin.

In the scenario above, the numerous social classes that emerge are the product of distinct privileges because of classifications resulting from immigration employment policies.

ECONOMIC ENDANGERMENT

The current policy effectively creates a class of people who cannot legally contribute to the economy thus limiting the Ireland's full economic potential and ultimately create strain and higher risk for people to fall into poverty.

The group's members are aware of the constraints and the need for the Irish government to prioritise Irish and EU interests, so we provide some recommendations to take into consideration, even though this request emphasises the difficulties and demands for a reassessment of the employment conditions imposed on people with Stamp 3 residence cards.

INTERIM ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

We are already living here, so we do not put pressure on the housing issue. We want to work but getting employed with a Stamp 3 is almost impossible. Most would do any work just to be able to supplement income and contribute to the Irish revenue. Our GWP working spouse **contribute** to social benefits, but we do not qualify for any social benefits, we are **not a burden** on government. We spend the earned household money in Ireland. We are here to stay, we want to help, just make it easier to access employment to fill at least some of the skills gap. Help us maintain our financial security, skills, experience, and qualifications.

In attempting to reach a compromise based on the aforementioned information, we propose the following considerations that are beneficial to both participants as follows:-

Consider offering Stamp 3 residents an opportunity to fill those skills gaps by offering the opportunity to Stamp 3 residents before opening the GWP to the international Non-EU/EEA market. This must be highlighted to business.

Consider eliminating delay and costs on approving a Stamp 3 work permit.

Year 1 & Year 2- Employment without the application of work permit allowed for 20 hours work per week, no restriction on basic income. All residents must be registered with Revenue.ie upon arrival in Ireland (proof to be provided to qualify for a residence permit)

Year 3 – Employment without the application of work permit allowed for 40 hours per week, no restriction on basic income.

Further information on temporary and part time positions for reference on Jobs.ie

Industry	Jobs.ie Temporary and Part-Time Positions
Hospitality	There are 61 temporary Hospitality jobs and 135 part-time Hospitality jobs available in Eire at the moment.
Administrative	There are 40 temporary Administrative jobs and 38 part-time Administrative jobs available in Eire at the moment.
Deli Staff	There are 2 temporary Deli jobs and 16 part-time Deli jobs available in Eire at the moment.
Quality Assurance	There are 2 temporary Quality Assurance jobs and 1 part-time Quality Assurance jobs available in Eire at the moment.
Cleaning Operatives	There are 2 temporary Cleaning Operative jobs and 18 part-time Cleaning Operative jobs available in Eire at the moment.
Call Centre Agents	There are 9 temporary Call centre jobs and 9 part-time Call centre jobs available in Eire at the moment.
Business Development Sales	There are no temporary positions in this field.
Customer Service	There are 53 temporary Customer Service jobs and 271 part-time Customer Service jobs available in Eire at the moment.

IDEAL CONCLUSION

The Government has the power to recognise the contribution of essential workers and fight exploitation by simply providing people on General Employment Permits the same rights as those on Critical Skills Permits.

This would mean General Employment Permit holders would have the right to freely change employers after two years instead of five which would enable them to better challenge exploitation and sub-standard conditions.

In addition, it would mean equal rights to have their immediate family with them in Ireland and the right for their family members to work.