

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

3rd July 2024

Presented by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland



Migrant Rights Centre Ireland

MRCI is a national organization working to advance the rights of migrant workers and their families at risk of exploitation, social exclusion, and discrimination.

MRCI handles up to 3,500 cases annually through our national Drop-In Centre, a **free and confidential service**. We provide information, support, and advocacy on various issues, including immigration rights, family reunification, work permit, and employment rights, through face-to-face, telephone, email, and ongoing public awareness campaigns.

The Migrant Rights Centre Ireland has been taking a stand with migrants to tackle the root causes of inequality since 2001



Disclaimer

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Agenda

- Provide information about bringing family members into Ireland including -
 - Qualified sponsors -- **Category B**
 - Qualified family members
 - Financial requirements
 - How to apply
 - Supporting documents
 - Appeals
- Q&A
- Family Reunification Policy - <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Policy-document-on-Non-EE>



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Introduction

If you currently living in Ireland or plan to move to Ireland, you may be eligible to bring your non-EEA family members to live with you. The family reunification process can be complicated, but generally, your rights to sponsor a family member and their pathway into Ireland is based on 3 main points:

- **Your immigration status in Ireland**
- **Your relationship to your family member**
- **If your family member is a visa or non-visa required national**

Sponsor

- Family reunification involves two people; the **sponsor** and the **family member**, also known as the **applicant**.
- The sponsor must assume a level of responsibility for the family member they are seeking to bring to live in Ireland, therefore the sponsor is generally required to meet specific financial or income requirements.
- Sponsors are broken down into different categories – Irish citizens and three categories of non-EEA national sponsors based on Family Reunification Policy.

Non-EEA Sponsor – Category A

Eligible to sponsor applications for **immediate** family reunification:

- Critical Skills Employment Permit Holder
- PHD Students (subject to conditions, including recourse to social welfare payments)
- Full time non-locum doctors in employment
- INIS Approved Scholarship Programme student e.g. KASP
- Investors
- Entrepreneurs
- Business Permission Holders
- Researchers Approved Scholarships programme students
- Intra Corporate transferees
- Minister of Religion (There is a case for putting these in category A provided they are maintained by the church)

Non-EEA Sponsor – Category B

Eligible to sponsor applications for family reunification after **12 months, page 46**

- Non-critical skills employment permit holders from **visa-required countries, GEP**
- All Stamp 4 holders not covered by other more favourable arrangements
- Minister of Religion (There is a case for putting these in category A provided they are maintained by the church)

Non-EEA Sponsor – Category C

NOT eligible to sponsor applications for family reunification:

- All other non-EEA nationals including Stamp 2 (except PhD students) and Stamp 2A holders, Stamp 0 and Working Holidays Authorisation Holders

Family Members (Applicant) page 7

The different categorisations of family applied are:

A. Immediate Family

- Spouse, civil partner or de facto partner (cohabitating for two years)
- Children under the age of 18 including
 - Adopted children (provided the adoption is recognised by the Irish State)
 - Step-children (full time member of sponsors household)
- Children between the age of 18 and 23 provided they continue to remain in full time education and are financially dependent on the sponsor;
- Children over the age of 18 where the child is dependent on the sponsor parent either directly or indirectly, due to a serious medical or psychological problem which makes independent life in the home country impossible

B. Parents

C. Other family

Financial threshold for sponsor

Category B -

- In case there are no children, sponsors must show a minimum earning of **€30,000 gross for the previous two years**, page 48 Family reunification policy.
- The figure increases depending on the number of children.

Financial threshold sponsor with children

Families with children would require the following net incomes per week (based on Working Family Payment):

WFP income limits from 4 January 2024		
If you have:	Net income per week	Gross Income
One child	€645	€ 40,500 (est.)
Two children	€746	€ 50,000 (est.)
Three children	€847	€ 60,000 (est.)
SPOUSE		€30,000

Cont. Financial Threshold for sponsor

- Savings by the applicant or sponsor may be considered in assessing the application, if the sponsor falls short of the financial income threshold
- The figures provided by the Working Family Payment are for guideline purposes only. An immigration officer may take into consideration several factors including if the children are of school age and deemed a cost to the State
- The onus is on the applicant to satisfy the immigration authorities as to the level of earnings or financial resources available, that includes providing sufficient supporting documents as evidence

Steps to Apply – ONLINE AVATS portal

- Check if your family member is a visa or non-visa-required national – [click here.](#)
- Establish the travel pathway – [click here.](#)
- If your family member is required to apply for a Long Stay 'D' Visa or Preclearance – [click here.](#)
 - **Each applicant** will need to complete this online form via the AVATS portal
 - Once complete they will be required to submit their documents to the nearest designated Irish embassy, Third party- VFS Global

Supporting Documents (1/5)

- **Signed and dated summary application form** and the appropriate fee
- **Two colour passport sized photographs** not more than 6 months old.
- **Your current passport** and a full copy of all previous passports.
- **A signed letter of application (applicant):**
 - Including your full contact details
 - Outlining your reason for coming to Ireland
 - Providing details of the family member in Ireland who is sponsoring your application
 - Giving details of any other members of your family who are currently in Ireland, the United Kingdom, or any EU Member State
- **Sponsor's status or eligibility to sponsor**
 - For a sponsor who is a non-EEA citizen: Please provide a clear and legible copy of all pages of their passport,
 - Where relevant, a copy of their certificate of registration (a document issued by the Irish immigration authorities)
 - A copy of their current employment permit/researcher (scientific) hosting agreement or other evidence of eligibility to sponsor

Cont. Supporting Documents (2/5)

Evidence of claimed relationship

- **Spouse or civil partner**
 - Marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate (must be recognized under Irish law)
 - A full account of your relationship history including where and when you met, how your relationship developed, and future intentions in the State. Supporting documents can include visas, entry/exit stamps on the passport, photographs, call logs, screenshots of messages, letters, presents, etc
 - A relationship must include several face-to-face meetings between the parties. It is not sufficient for a relationship to have developed solely over the internet, telephone/ SMS or webcam for immigration purposes.
- **Child (under 18 years and unmarried)**
 - Birth certificate, adoption order
 - In the case of a child from a previous marriage or relationship; evidence of full custody and/ or an affidavit by that parent consenting to the child being removed from their home country
- **Children above 18-23 years**
 - Same as above
 - Letter of enrolment in education

Cont. Supporting Documents (3/5)

Finances

- Applicant's 6-month bank statement, immediately before the applicant's application
- Sponsor's 6-month bank statement, immediately before the applicant's application

Sponsor who is resident in Ireland:

Evidence that they meet the minimum level of earnings required:

- Employment Detail Summary from Revenue for the 3 years immediately prior to the date of your application
 - If self-employed you must submit Notices of Assessment of income from self-employment for the three most recent years and evidence of earnings in the period since the most recent tax return was filed.
 - Evidence that they meet the minimum level of earning required – P60s/Tax cert for the previous 2 years (or previous 1 year in the case of an employment permit holder who has been in Ireland for 1 year only), or if self-employed you must submit Notices of Assessment of income from self-employment, as appropriate
 - 3 recent consecutive payslips.
- **An employment permit holder** must include a copy of their contract of employment of at least 1 year from your proposed date of entry giving their annual salary is also required

Cont. Supporting Documents (4/5)

Evidence of dependency

Documentary evidence may vary from case to case; however, evidence of the following will normally be relevant:

- Amount, frequency and duration of the financial support provided from sponsor to applicant (bank statement, money transfer receipts, etc)
- Applicants' other sources of income that you may have
- If you have no other source of income, evidence of why you are unable to work, why you are not eligible for state benefits
- Your living costs (evidence of mortgage or rent, utility, food, medical, education payments)
- Details of any other family members in your country of residence
- Your medical condition (where relevant), relationship with the sponsor including evidence of active and continuous involvement in your life, for example evidence of visits or correspondence.

Cont. Supporting Documents (5/5)

Medical or travel insurance

Evidence of medical or travel insurance does not need to be provided with your application. However, the Visa Officer may request it before they make a decision on your application. If your visa is approved, you must have evidence of medical or travel insurance when you arrive at the port of entry (airport or seaport) and must present it to the Immigration Officer on request.

Previous Visa Refusals

If you have been refused a visa in the past for any country, you must provide the details. The original letter issued to you by the authorities of that country must be provided with your application.

Current Processing time - 9th of July 2024

The table below sets out the dates that applications for visa and visa appeals received are currently being processed.

This includes preclearance applications.

Visa type Latest Visa/Preclearance Decisions	Date applications received in Dublin	Date appeals received in Dublin
Business	22 May 2024	10 May 2024
Employment	20 May 2024	20 March 2023
Join family (Sponsor is in Category B*)	13 July 2023	11 July 2022
Join family (Sponsor is an Irish citizen** or is in Category A*)	13 July 2023	13 December 2022
Family Member of EU/EEA/Swiss Citizen***	04 April 2024	07 March 2024
Re-entry (children)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Study	04 June 2024	05 July 2023
Tourism or visit a family/friend	28 May 2024	19 April 2023
Family Member of UK National	20 December 2023	11 March 2024
Minister of Religion	21 May 2024	30 April 2024
Volunteer	22 May 2024	30 April 2024
De Facto (unmarried) Partner of Irish National	16 January 2024	06 March 2024
De Facto (unmarried) Partner of CSEP/HA	05 January 2024	10 May 2024
Other	23 May 2024	11 September 2023

Appeal

- If the visa application is refused, an explanation for the refusal must be given in writing and you have the right to appeal any refusal within two months of receiving the refusal letter
- Visa applications can be refused for several reasons but the most common reasons we identify are;
 - Sponsor does not meet the financial requirement
 - Not enough supporting evidence of the relationship between applicant and sponsor
- It is very important to ensure that comprehensive and detailed supporting documents are submitted.

Drop in Centre

Our Centre is currently running on an appointment basis.

If you would like to speak to us, the best way to get in touch is by sending us a message via the [Contact Page](#) on our website!

Talk to us

MRCI's Helpline Service is open from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.

You can contact our caseworkers by sending your query via the webform below or by emailing us at info@mrci.ie

Please note, we are receiving a high volume of queries so we anticipate coming back to you within 10 working days.

Our Drop-in Centre remains closed for walk-ins, but we continue to operate online. Our caseworkers are still here to help with your questions. Limited face to face appointments are available for emergency cases only.

For information relating to the Regularisation Scheme, visit our [new information page](#). For queries on immigration, exploitation and trafficking, employment rights and housing you check our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Useful Links](#). Knowledge is power – know your rights!

MRCI provides free and confidential information and support to migrant workers and their families.

Message us

MRCI takes your data protection seriously. Read our [privacy policy](#) here.

First Name*

Last Name*

Email*

Mobile

Message:

Please tick to confirm you have read and accepted our [privacy policy](#) before proceeding.

Tick this box to get email updates on how to take action with migrant workers and to hear about MRCI's advocacy work, events and fundraising.

Resources and further information

1. Frequently asked questions about Family Reunification:

https://www.mrci.ie/family-children/#Family_Children_section_03

2. Department of Justice Family Reunification, all related information:

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-join-family-in-ireland/joining-a-non-eea-non-swiss-national/join-non-eea-family-member/#policy>

3. Family Reunification Policy Document:

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Policy-document-on-Non-EEA-family-reunification.pdf>

Want to get involved in the Family Reunion Campaign??



Join the campaign:

<https://www.mrci.ie/family-reunion-signup/>

Find out more:

<https://www.mrci.ie/our-work/familiesbelongtogether/>



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Thank you so much for joining us!