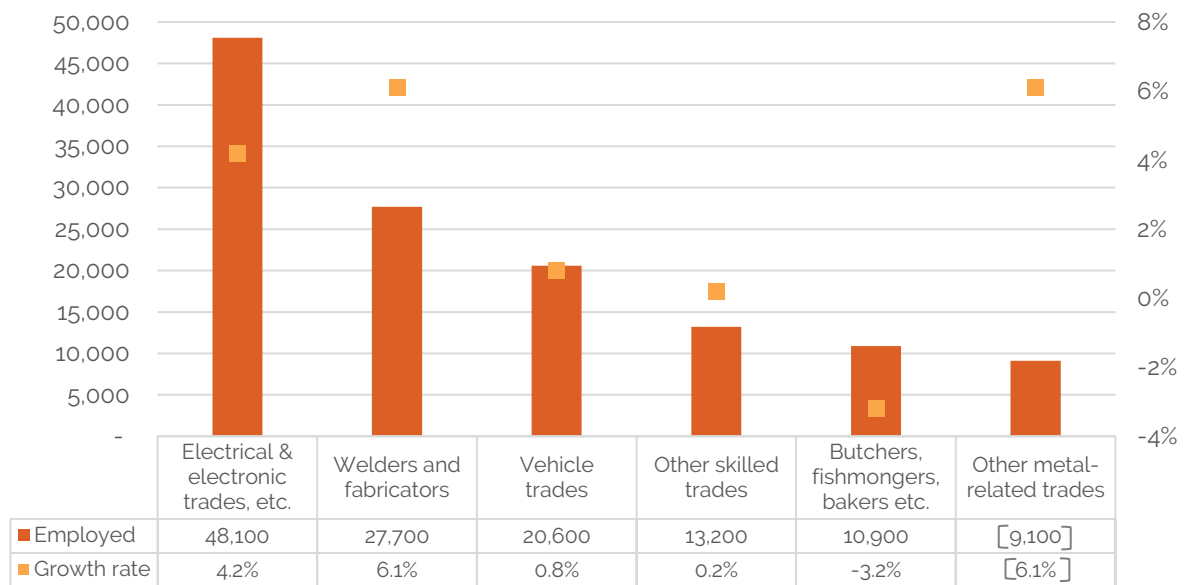


10.9 Other Craft Occupations n.e.c.

Figure 10.9 Annual Average Employment (2023) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2018-2023)



Overall employment	129,600
Share of total workforce	5.0%
Main sectors of employment	36% - Industry 18% - Construction 17% - Wholesale & retail 8% - Professional activities [7%] - ICT
Employment growth	+17,500 between 2018 and 2023 +2.9% on average annually (compared to +3.5% for total workforce)

2023	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Welders and fabricators	...	97%	[23%]	82%	37%	587	✓
Other metal-related trades	...	[97%]	...	[83%]	...	190	
Vehicle trades	...	94%	...	79%	[32%]	228	
Electrical & electronic trades etc.	...	97%	[14%]	82%	40%	107	✓
Other skilled trades	...	85%	...	73%	...	12	
Butchers, fishmongers, bakers etc.	...	[76%]	...	[45%]	...	126	
Overall total	10%	93%	17%	77%	35%	1,250	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (...) denotes numbers too small to report

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment growth for this occupational group over the five-year period was largely attributed to increases in levels for welders/fabricators and electricians. Males accounted for by far the largest share employed across all of the occupations in this group. Employment permits were issued across all occupations indicating some level of difficulty in sourcing skills from the available labour market. Employment was spread across many sectors including industry, construction and wholesale & retail. Future outlooks for this occupational group will vary depending on the main sector of employment for the individual occupations. Increased digitalisation and automation in these roles will require investment in upskilling/reskilling for those already in employment.

Occupation	Economic summary
<p>Welders & fabricators*</p> <p>Skills shortage: Welders/fabricators</p>	<p>Employment growth was above average for welders and fabricators; employment grew strongly in 2022 with more moderate growth in 2023. The age profile was older than the national average indicating that replacement demand may lead to openings in the coming years. Almost 600 employment permits were issued in 2023 for welders/fabricators, primarily in industry and construction but also across other sectors in the economy with a relatively high share of vacancies advertised through DSP for these roles. The Recruitment Agency Survey noted difficulty in filling vacancies for welders (TIG/ARC) with Skills for Growth data noting strong evidence of issues highlighted for welders (MIG/TIG/ARC), and to a lesser extent, fabricators; difficulties arose across a range of manufacturing sectors (e.g. machinery, steel fabricators (doors, containers etc.)). In addition, future demand for welders is anticipated in relation to the development of Ireland's off-shore energy capacity¹. Supply from the education and training system does not appear to be meeting current demand for these roles with fluctuating numbers of apprenticeship registrations for metal fabrication.</p>
<p>Other metal-related trades*</p> <p>Skills shortage: CNC programmers</p>	<p>This group contains, amongst others, sheet metal workers, toolmakers and pipefitters. Employment growth was above average for this occupation but numbers employed are too small for detailed analysis. Employment permits issued in 2023 related mainly to CNC programmers/operators, but also for sheet metal workers and pipefitters. Vacancies advertised across the two sources were for sheet metal workers, press break operators and CNC operatives/machinists. Skills for Growth data also highlights issues with recruiting CNC operators along with pipe fitters, maintenance technicians and refrigeration technicians. Demand persists for CNC programmers/operators in particular with shortages arising; however, the numbers are likely to be small given the size of the overall occupation.</p>
<p>Vehicle trades</p>	<p>Vehicle technicians and mechanics account for the majority share of employment in this occupation. Employment growth was below average with employment declining marginally since 2022. Employment permits issued in 2023 related mainly to vehicle roadworthiness testers and aircraft mechanics. The large volume of job adverts through the DSP were for vehicle roadworthiness testers along with various mechanics (aircraft, HGV and car). Skills for Growth data highlights issues recruiting HGV mechanics and auto electricians.</p> <p>The number of apprenticeship awards issued for aircraft mechanics remains small (28 in 2023). Awards for HGV mechanics rose from 78 in 2022 to 115 in 2023; new apprenticeship registrations in 2023 for this role were higher than seen previously at 232 persons. The number of awards for motor mechanics stood at 225 awards in 2023 although new apprenticeship registrations were substantially higher in 2021 and 2022, indicating increases in awards for this trade in the short-to-medium term.</p> <p>Given the lack of employment growth in this occupation, issues with sourcing HGV mechanics should ease in the short-term with increased numbers undertaking apprenticeships and the recent removal of this occupation from the ineligible list for employment permits (along with bus/car mechanics) subject to a quota of 200 general employment permits. Upskilling/reskilling will be a key requirement for these roles as we move increasingly towards electric vehicles.</p>

¹ https://www.skillnetireland.ie/uploads/attachments/Building_Our_Potential-Ireland's_Offshore_Wind_Skills_and_Talent_Needs_Jan_2024.pdf

<p>Electrical & electronic trades, etc.</p>	<p>Although annual average employment growth was above average, employment levels declined by 4,000 between 2022 and 2023 for this occupation (having grown strongly in 2022). There was a relatively high share of recent job hires for these roles indicating that job churn has been occurring. Two-fifths of employment was in the construction sector, with a further two-fifths in industry and ICT combined. Difficult to fill vacancy mentions in the Recruitment Agency Survey and Skills for Growth data were for electricians (including high voltage), while new employment permits were issued for roles including electricians and field service engineers. Online job adverts (Eurostat/CEDEFOP) were mainly for electricians while adverts through DSP included electricians and overhead line workers.</p> <p>Demand is being driven by activity in the construction sector but also in part by energy efficiency and the green agenda. This is leading to a shift in the skills mix required for electricians to energy performance in building, energy sector policy, maintenance and repair. Depending on the extent to which the technology for all electric, smart-ready homes and businesses is adopted, there is likely to be additional demand for this occupation, particularly in relation to energy saving, energy generation (via photovoltaic panels) and electric battery charging.</p>
<p>Other skilled trades (e.g. printers, furniture makers, and textile trades)</p>	<p>There was almost no employment growth over the five-year period for this occupation; employment declined in the earlier years but has been increasing since 2021, returning to 2018 levels. At 27%, the share of non-Irish citizens was above the national average. The volume of vacancies was small for this occupation; most online job adverts (Eurostat/CEDEFOP) related to tailors and dressmakers with DSP adverts for upholsterers. Employment growth in recent years may be related to an increased focus on the circular economy leading to larger demand, or at least a slowing of the decline, for roles such as upholsterers and tailors. In the latest review by DETE, upholsterers, tailors and dressmakers have been removed from the ineligible list of occupations for employment permits, subject to a quota.²</p>
<p>Butchers, fishmongers, bakers etc.</p>	<p>Following annual declines in employment between 2018 and 2021, employment levels grew in subsequent years; however, levels remained below that of 2018 resulting in a negative growth rate. Approximately three-fifths of those employed were in industry with the remainder working in the wholesale and retail sector. Over half (55%) of those employed were non-Irish citizens, the highest share across all occupations. Online job adverts (Eurostat/CEDEFOP) were small in number and related primarily to bakers/confectioners with skilled meat deboners and butchers the largest share of DSP Jobs Ireland vacancy adverts. New employment permits issued in 2023 were mainly for meat deboners, with a new quota of 350 employment permits for butchers/deboners and 200 for bakers issued in December 2023. Skills for Growth data indicated some issues with finding skilled bakers. The attractiveness of the job is likely to be one of the key factors relating to issues in sourcing suitable candidates, particularly for meat deboners. Climate targets may impact the future demand for butchers and meat processing skills.</p>

** This occupation has been revised since the previous edition. See page 126 for details of the revision and Appendix for a list of job roles included in this occupation.*

² <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/publication-files/outcome-of-the-review-of-the-employment-permits-occupations-lists-december-2023.pdf>