

1 JANUARY, 2018

Mr. Colm Murphy,
Corporate Services Department,
South Dublin County Council,
County Hall, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.

Dear Mr. Murphy,

I have been asked by Ms Heather Humphreys, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, to refer to your correspondence with the Office of An Taoiseach dated 8th December 2017.

The focus of the employment permits regime in recent years has been to ensure that the skills requirements of enterprise in the State can be met through immigration where necessary; as we approach full employment, labour as well as skills needs are beginning to manifest. In this context, the Minister has asked officials to undertake a review of the employment permits system to ensure it remains correctly oriented to meet the State's needs.

In undertaking any adjustment in the orientation of the system, however, the interest of the 244,000 people on the Live Register in Ireland and the 18.45 million unemployed in the EU 28 must be remembered, and a balance must be maintained which does not further disadvantage these job seekers.

In addition, the development of particular skills in the resident labour force can depend upon a judicious deployment of economic migration as a supplementary rather than a primary source of those skills, and adjustments must be made with this in mind. Terms of reference for the planned review are being finalised with these potential effects, as well as more broad effects of economic migration (for example the demand on the State's infrastructure of increased population) in mind.

The Minister intends to seek a cross-sectoral approach in this review, which will be steered by an Inter-Departmental Group to ensure that labour and skills needs in all sectors of the economy are examined. The review will also include a public consultation and the Department will contact you when that process commences.

Immigration for purposes other than employment does not come within the scope of the employment permits system, so matters relating to immigration policy more generally will not be examined in the planned review, but should rather be referred to the Minister for Justice and Equality for consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Fayona O'Connell
Famonn McDormack

