



Velo Coffee Roasters Cork makes retail breakthrough with Aldi Ireland. Rob Horgan and Jen Ramsbottom of Velo Coffee Roasters Café at George's Quay. They have formed a retail partnership with Aldi Ireland following a successful application to the Grow with Aldi Programme which aims to support and grow local Irish businesses. Ground and whole bean coffee hand roasted and packed in Cork by Velo Coffee Roasters will be available on the shelves of 130 Aldi stores over the coming weeks.



Jacky Lorimer from Mallow.

'Earn as you Learn' scheme a success

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Minister signs off on changes to permit regulations

THE Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys TD, has signed off on further changes to Employment Permit Regulations, which will make it easier for the meat processing sector to source workers from outside the EEA.

The changes provide for the provision of 500 permits for meat processor operatives in addition to the 250 announced in May 2018.

Earlier this year, Minister Humphreys signed off on changes to the employment permit regulations to establish a pilot quota based scheme to address the immediate needs of the horticulture, meat processing and dairy sectors.

She applied a quota of 500 permits for horticulture workers, 250 meat processing operatives and 50 for dairy farm assistants. A remuneration threshold of €22,000 was introduced for these occupations, with employers obliged to ensure access to suitable accommodation and training, including language training.

There has been a particularly strong demand from the meat processing sector with all of the initial allocation of 250 employment permits for meat processing operatives set to be exhausted in the coming weeks.

Minister Humphreys decided to extend the pilot scheme for meat processing operatives, following consideration of an evidenced based submission from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

In making the announcement Minister Humphreys said: "The extension of the pilot scheme for meat processing operatives will ensure that the sectors immediate labour difficulties are addressed and the potential that a lack of available labour could constrict growth is minimised.

"The agri-food sector is our most important indigenous sector, employing some 173,000 people and contributing almost 8% to gross national income. Its reach into rural Ireland brings jobs and value to every region. With the opening up of new markets such as to China, it is critical that there are adequate numbers of trained staff to meet the demands of this highly lucrative market for Irish meat exports."

"I continue to be conscious that any changes to the employment permit regime must not disrupt the domestic labour market. In the longer-term sectors experiencing labour shortages need to take action to attract and retain labour supply from within Ireland and across Europe and to invest in innovative technologies for the sector"

The report of the review of economic migration policies underpinning the employment permit system has just been submitted to Minister Humphreys. The purpose of the review is to ensure that our current policies are fully supportive of Ireland's emerging labour market needs. The review, which was overseen by an interdepartmental group, makes recommendations for a strategy for economic migration to meet the State's changing needs into the future. Following consideration by the Minister, it is expected that the review report will be published.

The Irish State's general policy is to promote the sourcing of labour and skills needs from within the workforce of Ireland, the European Union and other EEA states. Policy in relation to applications for employment permits remains focused on facilitating the recruitment from outside the EEA of highly skilled personnel, where the requisite skills cannot be met by normal recruitment or by training. Employment permit policy is part of the response to addressing skills deficits which exist and are likely to continue into the medium term, but it is not intended over the longer term to act as a substitute for meeting the challenge of up-skilling the State's resident workforce, with an emphasis on the process of lifelong learning, and on maximising the potential of EEA nationals to fill our skills deficits.

The employment permits system is managed in part through the operation of the highly skilled and ineligible lists for grant of employment permits.

Highly skilled jobs are professional positions in medicine, ICT, sciences, finance and business. Special "fast-track" rules apply e.g. family can join the permit holder immediately, permanent residency in available after two years.

A CORK student has been able to change to her dream career thanks to Accounting Technician Ireland's innovative 'earn as you learn' apprenticeship.

Jacky Lorimer, from Mallow, has just finished her first year of the ATI's funded, work-based programme and says she can't wait to get into her workplace each day.

The 39-year-old spent one day a week studying and four days working with accountancy firm Crowleys DFK during the college term, and is now spending the summer working five days a week at the company.

The ATI Apprenticeship is a funded, work-based learning programme in which locally-placed apprentices earn at least €18,000 a year and the course is open to both mature learners and Leaving Cert students.

Apprentices can work in all sectors of the economy, with organisations ranging from large accountancy firms to SMEs and the public sector.

"I had been working part-time as a secretary at an estate agency but I've always had a love of numbers and I knew it would be very difficult to get into accountancy or accounts payable jobs without a qualification," said Jacky.

"I absolutely love the course and the apprenticeship. I can't wait to get into work each day and sigh when I am leaving at 5.30pm.

"The course is incredibly interesting. It is a lot of work but if you make the effort, you'll be fine. The college and placement mentors are hugely supportive."

Crowleys DFK said that they were very happy with how their first year in the apprenticeship programme worked out.

"We are delighted to be inaugural participants in the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship programme," said Shane Moloney, Business Outsourcing Manager at Crowleys DFK

This year the programme is running in partnership with Bray Institute of Further Education, Blackrock Further Education Institute, Colaiste Ide College of Further Education, Cork College of Commerce, Monaghan Institute, Galway Technology Institute, Waterford College of Further Education and Rathmines College of Further Education.

Full details are available at www.accountingtechnicianapprenticeship.ie.