

RESIDENCY

“Attaining residency prepare to wait”

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A NEAR two-year wait can be expected if you're applying for long-term residency in Ireland. According to latest statistics released by the Department of Justice, files from people who submitted their long-term residency applications in March 2007 are “currently being processed”.

New applicants can also join a long line of some 8,000 people, all in the same boat. Those successful in attaining long-term residency are usually exempt from needing work permits ever again, and can plan for their future in Ireland. Only people who have been legally resident in Ireland for over five years on the basis of work permit/authorisation/visa conditions may apply for the status, which is initially granted for five years.

The Department of Justice's section dealing with residency applications is staffed by 23 civil servants, but “not all staff work exclusively on long-term residency”, said a department spokesperson.

Often confused with long-term residency, stamp 4 status exempts holders from needing a work permit to enter the employment market, but is only an interim measure.

Some parents of Irish-born scheme – mostly fathers who arrived in Ireland after their wives gave birth here.

One father, who did not wish to have his name disclosed, explained that he came to Ireland in September 2007 with a student visa. He journeyed here to join his family, who had residency under the Irish-Born Child programme, but was engaged in studies, completing an MSc.

Under regulations, he is permitted to work until the summer, but is currently waiting on a decision on his application for a stamp 4, which he is eager to get so he can support his family into the future.

“When I sent the application, they said they've received it and are having too many cases,” he said, with reference to the Department of Justice. “The situation is full of uncertainty, and one doesn't know what to do.” However, he added that he believes the department has to be careful in handling such applications.

“To be candid, where there are rules, they have to be followed to the letter. They are only doing their work and need to follow it up step-by-step so they will not set any bad precedent.”

Nevertheless, he adds coyly: prepare to wait “Justice delayed is justice denied.”

This article was produced in association with the Forum on Migration and Communications (FOMACS)