



Low pay, hard work – Ireland's inhospitable hospitality sector

Does economic growth mean more and better jobs? Even before the crisis the quality of some jobs was declining. Current research by the think-tank TASC is examining what is happening to job quality in Ireland today. The 'Working Conditions in Ireland' project studies four sectors: construction, hospitality, financial services and IT/software. Its initial findings in the hospitality sector suggest that the industry is growing bad jobs. These findings are contained in a 'Research Highlights' document released today:

www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/wciphighlightshospitality.pdf

The key findings include:

Irish hospitality is a low pay sector:

- Average weekly earnings in 2015 are 324.86 Euros (national average weekly earnings 697.52 Euros)*.
- In 2013 more than 16% of those working in Accommodation and Food Services only earned the National Minimum Wage*.
- Low hourly rates are combined with low hours: now in 2015 the average hours worked in this sector amounted to 26.4 per week (national average 31.9)*.
- Hours are uncertain: many employees do not know how many hours they will work next week.

Health and safety issues:

- Despite being classified as 'services', many of the occupations in this sector involve work that is physically demanding.
- Unlike in other sectors such physical work is often not recognised and not financially rewarded.
- An extreme example: In the accommodation departments of hotels staff can develop serious health problems (back injuries) since they are required to turn more and more mattresses on a daily basis.

Limited career options:

- In the recent past there were clear career paths available for some occupations in the Irish hospitality sector.
- Over the last two decades entry jobs have been casualised and intermediate jobs removed, flattening the occupational structure.
- Managerial positions in hospitality don't come with high wages: the average hourly rate for managers, professionals and associate professionals in this sector is around 19 Euros per hour (national average for the same group is more than 30 Euros).

This is the first in a series of 'Research Highlights' examining working conditions in Ireland. Subsequent issues will look at work in the other three sectors: construction, financial services and IT/Software.

Notes to editors:



TASC (www.tasc.ie) is an independent progressive think-tank promoting action on social change grounded in evidence-based policy proposals. Our vision is of a flourishing society based on equality, social justice, transparent democracy and sustainable economic activity.

WCIP is funded by FEPS (Federation of European Progressive Studies) and ICTU. For further information contact the project researcher Dr. Alicja Bobek

Contact details: abobek@tasc.ie; tel. 01 6169050

Project webpage:

<http://www.feps-europe.eu/en/recovery-and-good-jobs>
www.tasc.ie/researchpolicy/wcip.html