

OPEN LETTER

Supporting International Doctors During Visa Processing Delays

A Call for Fair, Compassionate and Consistent Recruitment Practices

From:

Irish Association of International Doctors (IAID)

Representing thousands of international doctors working, training and contributing to healthcare throughout Ireland.

To:

Chief Executive Officers, Human Resources Directors, Medical Workforce Managers, Clinical Directors, Consultants, Hospital Group CEOs, HSE National HR, Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Irish Medical Council, All stakeholders involved in the recruitment of international doctors

Dear Colleagues,

The Irish Association of International Doctors (IAID), representing thousands of international doctors across Ireland, writes to express our growing concern regarding reports from doctors whose employment offers or contracts are being placed at risk because of delays in visa processing.

International doctors are an indispensable part of Ireland's healthcare workforce. Every day they provide emergency care, deliver specialist services, support rural and urban hospitals, and contribute enormously to patient care. Those choosing to work in Ireland do so with a genuine commitment to serving the Irish healthcare system.

Unfortunately, our Association is receiving an increasing number of reports from doctors who, despite completing every requirement expected of them, are being warned that their contracts may be withdrawn if government visa processing is not completed before their agreed start date.

International Doctors Have Already Demonstrated Their Commitment

Before arriving in Ireland, these doctors have typically:

- Successfully completed a competitive recruitment process.
- Accepted a formal offer of employment.
- Obtained professional registration and completed all pre-employment requirements.
- Submitted employment permit and visa applications promptly, together with all requested documentation.
- Responded immediately to any additional requests from the relevant authorities.
- Resigned from secure employment in their home countries.
- Declined alternative job offers after committing to Irish hospitals.

- Invested substantial financial resources in visas, relocation, accommodation and travel.
- Made significant family commitments, including relocating spouses and arranging accommodation and schooling for their children.
- Remained available to commence employment immediately upon visa approval.

Despite fulfilling every obligation within their control, some doctors are being informed that their employment may be withdrawn because of delays entirely outside their control.

Visa processing is the responsibility of Government departments, and applicants have no ability to influence processing timelines once a complete application has been submitted.

The Human Impact

Behind every delayed visa is a doctor-and a family.

Many doctors have already made irreversible personal and professional decisions based upon signed employment contracts. The possibility of losing their position because of administrative delays causes unnecessary emotional distress, financial hardship and uncertainty, with a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of doctors and their families.

These individuals are preparing to become valued colleagues within Irish hospitals. They deserve to be supported throughout the recruitment process, not left feeling isolated because of circumstances beyond their control.

A Better Way

Many of our members have previously worked in comparable healthcare systems, where employers generally adopt a more supportive approach during visa delays. Rather than issuing ultimatums, hospitals typically:

- Maintain regular communication.
- Offer assistance where possible.
- Provide reassurance when delays arise outside the doctor's control.
- Liaise with relevant authorities where appropriate.
- Work collaboratively to facilitate the doctor's arrival.

This approach builds trust, supports workforce retention and reflects the professionalism expected of modern healthcare organisations.

A Shared Responsibility

We fully recognise the workforce pressures facing Irish hospitals. However, withdrawing employment offers because of government processing delays does not solve staffing shortages—it risks losing doctors whom hospitals have already invested significant time and resources in recruiting.

A collaborative approach benefits everyone:

- Doctors experience less uncertainty and stress.

- Hospitals retain successfully recruited staff.
- Recruitment investment is protected.
- Vacancies are filled more efficiently.
- Patient care ultimately benefits.

We Respectfully Call Upon Healthcare Employers To:

1. Adopt a compassionate, supportive and nationally consistent approach when communicating with international doctors awaiting visas.
2. Refrain from threatening withdrawal of employment offers where delays arise solely from Government processing timelines.
3. Maintain regular communication with incoming doctors and proactively offer assistance where possible.
4. Liaise with relevant Government departments to support critical healthcare recruitment where appropriate.
5. Commence international recruitment sufficiently early to accommodate published visa processing timelines.
6. Work collaboratively with organisations representing international doctors to improve recruitment practices nationally.

Our Commitment

This letter is not about assigning blame. It is about ensuring that doctors who have chosen Ireland are treated with fairness, dignity and professionalism.

International doctors have stood beside Ireland's healthcare system through periods of unprecedented challenge and continue to make an invaluable contribution to patient care. We ask only that they receive the same commitment and support as they prepare to join their new teams.

The Irish Association of International Doctors remains committed to working constructively with healthcare employers, Government departments and professional bodies to develop practical solutions that strengthen recruitment, support workforce planning and uphold the values of compassion, fairness and respect that define Irish healthcare.

We invite healthcare professionals, colleagues and members of the public who share these principles to add their names in support of this Open Letter.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Liqa ur Rehman
President
Irish Association of International Doctors (IAID)

Add your signature here: <https://forms.gle/seKUoTiFpbuchDjG8>

Signatories

Signature	Name	Designation	Town/City	Date
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