

Dear Michael.

Liam Ryan here, owner of the Ryan Super Valu group we operate 5 supermarkets, 2 of the stores are in your Cork south Central constituency in Grange and Togher. We currently employ 551 people and have 31 full time vacancies that need to be filled immediately. I have been in business in Cork for 30 years and never have I experienced the recruitment and staffing challenges that I am now facing on a daily basis. The staffing issues are impacting my business operationally and are also putting significant pressure on the teams that have worked hard to provide a vital service to our communities during the Covid-19 Pandemic. I am now in a situation where my business is struggling to continue to provide an acceptable level of service for my customers. I estimate that in the communities in which we operate we have given over 2500 people their first job, we take pride in giving these people a number of skills and valuable experience that have set them on their way to bigger and better things.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the current challenges that we are facing, we have a young workforce, with 36% of our workforce are under the age of 21, with an additional 19% under 25 and given the difficulties these students have had attending college over the past 20 months many have now decided not to take up part-time employment, while others are still in receipt of the PUP payment. In addition, we also would have depended on are those that are looking to return to the workforce after a career break or those that are opting to wind down and work less hours and we employ these people on a part-time/ pro-rata basis. We now find it difficult to re-engage these people as understandably, they are concerned about Covid-19 and the impact it could have on the health of them and their families.

We have and will continue to exhaust all avenues to recruit staff locally, we have also had to engage with agencies in Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia and Portugal in an effort to fill major voids in our store's teams. This has been ongoing for the past 6 months and we are getting very limited responses as the cost of living and housing in Ireland is putting potential candidates off. Our current list of vacancies does not meet the criteria required to secure employment permits for those that may be interested in coming to work with the Ryan Group from outside the EU. I am asking you to consider making representation to Minister English on my behalf to expand the scheme to recruit from outside the EU and add retail to the Critical Skills Occupations list.

[I would like to discuss this matter with you at your earliest convenience.](#)

Kind Regards,

Liam Ryan