



# GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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## Ireland – COVID-19: Residence Permits Extensions and Cessation of Visa Processing

The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service has announced that the Burgh Quay Registration Office in Dublin and all other local registration offices have closed for a period of two months effective from 20 March 2020 until 20 May 2020.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, all existing appointments at the Burgh Quay Registration Office are cancelled. All permissions that are due to expire within the period from 20 March 2020 to 20 May 2020, are automatically renewed by the minister for a period of two months, thereby maintaining the legal status of all those with permissions expiring during this period.

In addition, the processing of visa applications has ceased temporarily as of close of business 20 March 2020. Only certain emergency visas will be processed such as those for certain health-care professionals, immediate family members of Irish citizens, persons legally resident in Ireland and persons entitled to avail of the European Union (EU) Free Movement Directive.

For prior coverage of COVID-19 developments, see GMS [Flash Alert 2020-064](#) (March 17, 2020).

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### WHY THIS MATTERS

Immigration counsel and clients need to be aware that upcoming appointments are cancelled during the closure period. Employers should note that if any of their employees' Irish residence permits expiry dates fall between 20 March to 20 May 2020, they will still have legal status in Ireland and will be able to continue working and residing in Ireland, in line with the current permissions they hold. In addition, employers should be aware that as visa applications are temporarily no longer being processed, prospective employees' visa applications will be delayed, and they will not be able to enter Ireland.

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# Extension of Permissions, Closure of Registration Offices and Non-Processing of Visa Applications

As a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, the Burgh Quay Registration Office and all other local registration offices have announced that they are closed for a period of two months. Therefore, all existing appointments booked with the Burgh Quay Registration Office are cancelled and individuals are advised not to attend.

As a result of this, all such permissions that are due to expire from 20 March 2020 to 20 May 2020 are automatically renewed by the minister for a period of two months. There is no need for individuals to register this two-month renewal and no fee will be incurred. The legal status of people with valid immigration permissions that are due to expire between 20 March and 20 May 2020, will be maintained. This renewal is on the same basis as an individual's existing permission and the same conditions will continue to apply.

Individuals who have recently arrived in the state and were required to register at the Burgh Quay Registration Office or their local registration office will not be required to register their permission until the registration offices re-open or alternative arrangements are put in place. Employers should be aware that employees/prospective employees will still be able to continue/begin working despite not having a valid Irish Residence Permit during this period.

Those in the country with a short-stay visa (such as a tourist visa), who have been granted permission to remain for less than three months who may be unable to leave the state and return home due to uncertainties caused by COVID-19 will also fall under this notice. If an individual has permission to be in the state, and this is due to expire between 20 March and 20 May 2020, such permission is considered renewed for two more months.

Finally, new visa applications have temporarily ceased. While it will still be possible to apply for an Irish visa online in the normal manner, these temporary measures mean that applicants will not be able to complete the application process. However, it is worth noting that certain priority/emergency cases will continue to be processed such as emergency visas for certain health-care professionals, immediate family members of Irish citizens, persons legally resident in Ireland and persons entitled under the EU Free Movement Directive.

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## KPMG NOTE

Clients should be aware of these changes as some individuals who have Irish residence permits that have expired or are due to expire will now be able to have them extended automatically. In addition, most prospective employees who are nationals required to have visas will not be able to enter Ireland for the time being.

For advice on this changing situation, please contact your local qualified immigration or the Corporate Immigration and Employment Law Team with KPMG in Ireland.

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## FOOTNOTE:

1 See Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service [homepage](#).

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## Contact us

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*\* Please note that KPMG LLP (U.S.) does not provide any immigration services. However, KPMG Law LLP in Canada can assist clients with U.S. immigration matters.*

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