

Open helps drive pay of hospitality managers in NI to £95k, says report

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New openings on the north coast coupled with low unemployment have pushed salaries in the hospitality industry to as much as £95,000 for a general manager, a report has said.

A range of hotels are opening in anticipation of The Open's return to Royal Portrush in July, including the new, luxury Dunluce Lodge, the relaunch of Roe Park Resort under the ownership of Galgorm Collection and the opening of The Marcus by Andras Hotels.

The Hotel & Catering Sector Salary Guide for 2025 from Irish hiring specialist Excel Recruitment said a 'good' salary for an executive chef in Northern Ireland was now £90,500, up from £90,000 a year earlier.

The survey ranks surveys for roles in the industry as 'low', 'medium' and 'good'.

For head chefs, 'good' salaries have grown over the year from £65,000 to £65,700, and for general managers in the industry, good salaries have gone from £75,000 to £95,000 – an increase of nearly 27%. And sous-chefs, even those at the lowest level, have seen salaries grow from

£30,000 to £35,500.

While the biggest jump in salaries was for top-level general managers, mid-level general managers have also seen salaries rise from £60,000 to £65,200. But there was no change in the level of pay for general managers at the lower level, who were still at last year's level of £50,000.

Damien Davis, hospitality recruitment consultant at Excel, said: "Salaries within 2025 are being driven by record low unemployment in Northern Ireland of 1.5%, which is putting the candidates in prime position to carefully choose their preferred employer when moving on within not just hospitality but all major work sectors in the country, creating a smaller pool of available candidates who are open to a move.

"The increase this year in new and refurbished sites like Dunluce Lodge, The Marcus, the redevelopment of Roe Park as well as many other sites, which is continuing into 2026 with another 800 bedrooms coming into the market, will further increase this pressure on the market

for staff, from team member employees to senior management throughout the country."

He said that hospitality firms faced a fight for staff on one hand – but were also battling the government and pleading for help with costs like 20% Vat, high energy prices, business rates and a recent increase in employer national insurance contributions.

"If the government is serious and want the NI hospitality sector to grow to its full potential, then they must help those businesses doing all they can to expand or come into the country but are being held back by countless challenges and obstacles being placed on them."

He said labour shortages and wage increases were limiting the potential for growth of the hospitality sector.

"Action from the Government bodies is critical if we want to see sustainable growth moving forward."





Sous chef salaries have gone up in NI

