

# The 2017 Further Education and Training (FET) Services Plan

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Final Report, September 2017



**SOLAS**  
learning works



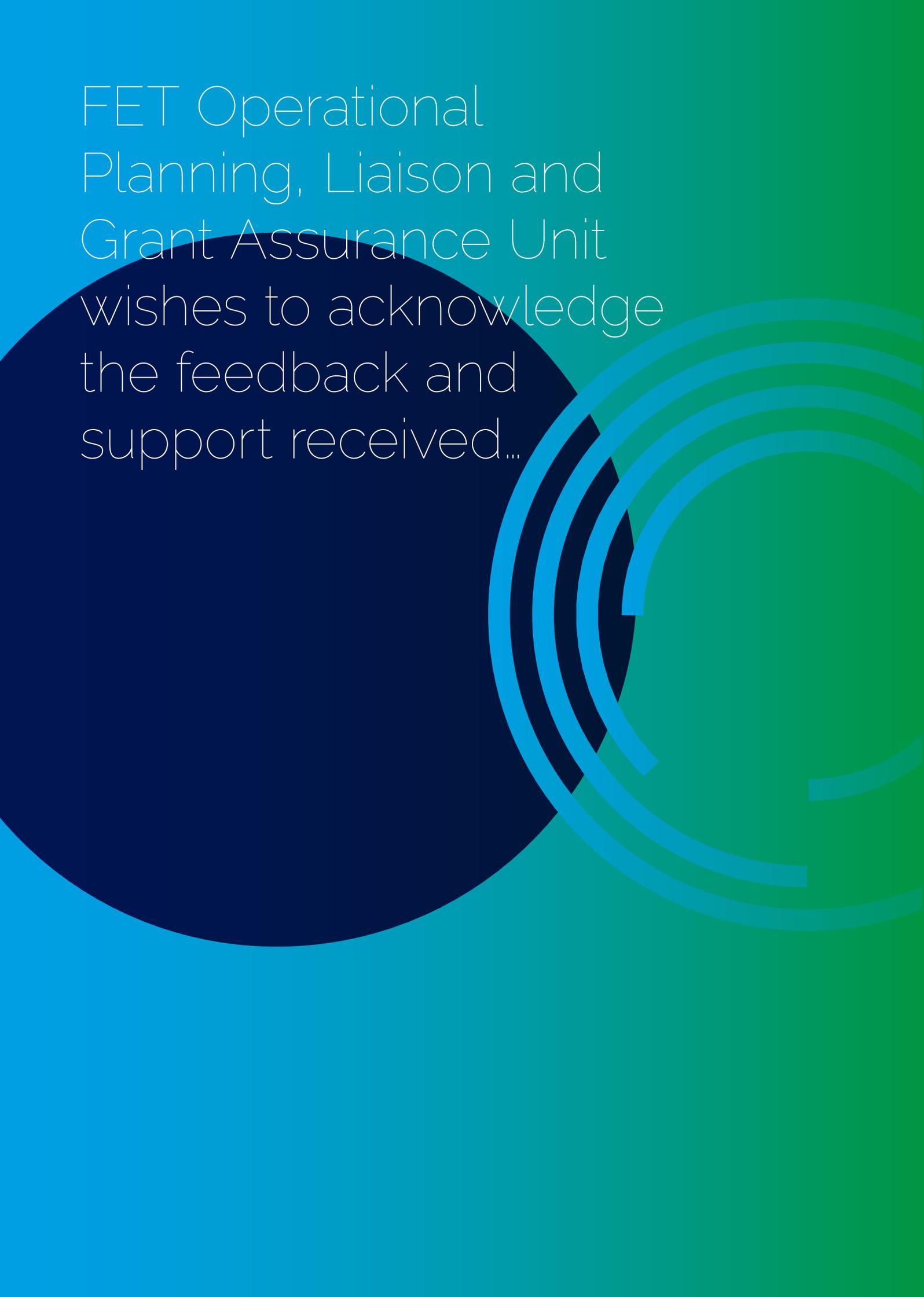
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FET Operational  
Planning, Liaison and  
Grant Assurance Unit  
wishes to acknowledge  
the feedback and  
support received...

The background features a gradient from light blue at the top to green at the bottom. A large, dark blue circle is positioned on the left side, partially overlapping the text. On the right side, there are several concentric, overlapping arcs in various shades of blue and green, creating a dynamic, circular pattern.

# Acknowledgements

**FET Operational Planning, Liaison and Grant Assurance Unit wishes to acknowledge the feedback and support received in the development of the Further Education and Training (FET) Services Plan 2017 from:**

## **The Department of Education and Skills**

- The Department of Education and Skills, Further Education Section
- The Department of Education and Skills, ESF and EGF Policy and Operations Unit

## **The Department of Social Protection**

## **The Department of Justice and Equality**

## **The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform**

## **The SOLAS/ETB Planning Group**

## **ETB Directors of FET**

## **Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)**

We would also like to acknowledge the stakeholders' contributions to the 2017 Further Education and Training Services Plan. Our thanks to:

## **The 16 Education and Training Boards**

- Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
- Cork Education and Training Board
- City of Dublin Education and Training Board
- Donegal Education and Training Board
- Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board
- Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
- Kerry Education and Training Board
- Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
- Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
- Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
- Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board
- Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
- Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board
- Tipperary Education and Training Board
- Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

## **The Voluntary Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS)**

- St Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, Co. Clare
- Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare
- Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, Co. Clare
- North Presentation Secondary School, Farranree, Cork
- Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
- Nagle Rice Secondary School, Doneraile, Co. Cork
- Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick
- Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo
- Nagle Centre Presentation Secondary School, Cannon Street, Waterford
- Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13

- Scoil Bernadette, Montenotte, Cork
- St Michaels, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon.

### **The Schools/Colleges to which Grants are allocated through the DES Post-Primary Payment Section**

- Coláiste Mhuire, Ballygar, Co. Galway
- St Cuan's College, Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
- St. Joseph's College, Summerhill, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
- Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet, Co. Mayo
- Jesus & Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo
- Mercy College, Sligo
- St. Patrick's Comprehensive School, Shannon, Co. Clare
- Community School, Cabinteely, Dublin 18
- Community School, Tullow, Co. Carlow
- Community School, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny
- Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara, Carna, Co. Galway
- Clifden Community School, Clifden, Co. Galway
- Community School, Dunmore, Co. Galway
- Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford
- Community School, Kilrush, Co. Clare
- Community School Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo
- Gorey Community School, Gorey, Co. Wexford
- Castlerea Community School, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon
- St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo
- Kinsale Community School, Kinsale, Co. Cork
- Moate Business College, Moate, Co. Westmeath
- Glenamaddy Community School, Co. Galway
- Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick.
- Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare
- Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo
- Community School, The Donahies, Streamville Rd, Dublin 13.

### **Other Providers**

- The Irish Deaf Society

### **Other Organisations**

- The Joint Managerial Body (JMB) and Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCs)

### **Agencies and Bodies**

- Age Action Ireland
- AONTAS
- Dyslexia Association of Ireland
- Education and Training Board Ireland
- Education and Training Board Ireland – ITABE co-ordinator
- Educational Trust
- European Agenda for Adult Learning (funding to AONTAS)
- Fast Track into Technology

### **FET – Lifelong Learning Opportunities**

- The Educational Trust
- IACTO
- Irish Countrywomen's Association
- Irish Deaf Society
- National Adult Literacy Agency

- National Centre for Guidance in Education
- People's College
- Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)
- WIT/NALA
- Working for Work Publication (Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed)

**The following SOLAS units**

- Finance Unit
- ICT Unit.
- FET Operational Planning – Support Unit
- Communications Unit
- FET Strategy and Evaluation Unit
- Skills and Labour Market Research (SLMRU)
- National Programme Innovation, CPD and Workforce Development Units
- FET Programme Improvement
- Apprenticeship Services and Construction Services Unit
- EGF Unit
- eCollege

The plan is framed within  
the context of further  
economic growth and an  
improving labour market



# Executive summary

## Section 1. Introduction

Annual service planning by SOLAS is informed by national policies and strategies, evidence-based analyses of skills demand and labour supply while taking into account the funding allocated to the FET sector.

The 2017 plan was prepared by SOLAS in consultation with ETBs, the Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools, and other partner agencies and bodies funded or part-funded by SOLAS, such as FIT, AONTAS and NALA.

Development of the plan was supported and informed by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and the Department of Justice and Equality.

The 2017 plan (the fourth annual FET Service Plan developed by SOLAS), sets out the nature and volume of FET provision planned for 2017 and provides details of how the 2017 grant allocation to SOLAS will be invested. The plan was approved by the SOLAS Board and endorsed by the Department of Education and Skills.

The plan presents details of the state's investment in FET in 2017, which will be in the region of €800+ million. It will also include a breakdown of SOLAS-funded FET provision, which encompasses circa **30,300** courses, providing for 323,308 beneficiaries across 28 different programmes.

The 2017 FET Service Plan takes account of the decline in unemployment and maintains a focus on key policy areas related to the long-term unemployed, those experiencing low work intensity or limited working hours resulting in low pay and the barriers to employment experienced by these cohorts. The plan is framed within the context of further economic growth and an improving labour market. In addition the Plan reflects the initial contributions by ETBs and SOLAS to the successful implementation of the FET sector service and performance targets included in the second SOLAS Corporate Plan at the request of the Minister for Education and Skills.

## Section 2. General economic outlook FET strategic responses and approach to planning and funding

The FET strategy developed by SOLAS and published in 2014 continues to provide a focus for the setting of investment priorities as well as a framework for the establishment and development of a strong FET sector.<sup>1</sup> The 2017 FET Services Plan reflects the aims, objectives and goals, presented in the FET strategy and also considers the change in the economic climate and potential future skills demands.

### **General economic outlook for the Irish economy and the labour market**

According to recent estimates, Ireland's economic recovery is set to continue. The fact that economic growth is now driven by strong gains in the labour market is particularly relevant for FET provision. Employment is expected to continue to increase and unemployment is expected to decrease to under 6% over the next few years. The anticipated tightening of the labour market will create challenges in terms of the availability of many skills. One of the greatest challenges will be providing sufficient skilled workers to serve the burgeoning building industry. Direct employment in the construction industry is expected to rise from approximately 140,000 currently to around 200,000 by 2020. Over the next few years, new apprentice registrations in construction apprenticeships is expected to almost double, from 2,314 in 2016 to 3,840 in 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 to 2019, page 3

Increased demand for skilled personnel is also expected in other areas, such as:

- Software engineers, especially at the upper end of the skills spectrum
- Accountants, actuaries, risk managers and compliance specialists in the financial sector
- Customer-service representatives
- Workers competent in languages and soft skills
- Logistics, covering a range of skills from supply-chain management to freight forwarding and inventory control
- Sectors such as pharmaceuticals and medical devices will continue to expand, resulting in a strong demand for technicians and professionals in industrial design, engineering, clinical testing and fault-finding. The skills required to supply components to these sectors such as tool-making, tool-design and CNC machining will also experience strong growth.
- Demographic factors combined with changing participation rates mean demand for skills in a range of care professions will also increase.

### **Further Education and Training sector initiatives to enhance employability within the workforce**

Despite the significant decline in unemployment, there are groups within the labour force who would benefit from more targeted FET provision. These include workers in precarious employment and job-seekers who are experiencing difficulties entering the workforce.

ETBs, working with SOLAS, significantly enhance the employability of both of these groups by equipping them with the skills required to secure decent sustainable employment.

### **Work-based learning**

Significant activity is planned in new apprenticeship and traineeship development in response to the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020. This plan aims to establish work based learning as a core contributor to skills development, employment and economic growth,

### **SOLAS/ETB strategic pilot initiative**

The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 proposed a new 'strategic input and outcomes-based' funding model for FET. The Department of Education and Skills-led FET Strategy Implementation Plan committed SOLAS to introducing a new funding framework over the lifetime of the Strategy.

SOLAS conducted an internal scoping exercise and took soundings from the sector in an attempt to identify what a successful funding model might look like and also to assess potential implications arising for the FET sector. The exercise confirmed best practice and found that targets set by SOLAS ought to be ETB-centric and evidence-based, including counterfactual impact evidence. ETB-centric means that, in principle, SOLAS will not formulate one set of national targets that each ETB must achieve. Rather each ETB will, according to its capacity, contribute to the overall achievement of national targets.

SOLAS will agree appropriate capacity and contributory targets for each ETB. Some ETBs will contribute more than others and this will be a feature of new SOLAS funding arrangements for FET. This approach facilitates adjustments that reflect local conditions over which the ETB has no control, such as different socio-economic profiles within individual ETB catchment areas; different FET learner profiles; different levels and type of unemployment; different types and scale of industry and occupations. SOLAS-set national and local targets for FET will still have to be informed by evidence. SOLAS is developing a data infrastructure to gather appropriate evidence including, in the longer term, counterfactual impact evaluation in support of the new funding model.

In 2015, the SOLAS /ETB strategic pilot initiative was conceived and initiated. Three ETBs participated in the strategic pilot, which is in its final stage and is scheduled to be completed in July 2017. The learning obtained through the strategic pilots will inform future strategic planning for the FET sector.

### Section 3. Top-level analysis of 2017 funding allocations and provision

This section of the FET Services Plan provides top-level analysis of the 2017 grant allocations for FET and analysis of the 2017 projected FET provision, **inputs, outputs** and **outcomes**.

No single metric can describe the overall picture of FET provision. In this document, the term "Beneficiary" is used to describe the total number of FET interventions provided for through the FET budget which individuals will benefit from in a given year, irrespective of whether they are present at the start of the year or join a course during the year. Consideration must be also given to the degree of participation, as some learners will partake in a full-time academic course of 33 weeks, while others may participate in a five-hour-a-week part-time literacy course. Both scenarios are considered equally when the term beneficiary is used. In the future FET planning processes will encompass analysis of data to determine full-time equivalents within FET provision. This will facilitate a broader picture of the capacity of FET provision.

The 2017 FET Services Plan provides for a total budget allocation of €638.25m, which will be made available for SOLAS-funded further education and training provision in 2017.

- Department of Education and Skills will continue to fund the PLC and Co-Operation Hours Provision (teacher pay and student capitation) (circa €189m in 2017)
- For 2017, it is envisaged that approximately 323,308 beneficiaries (339,283 beneficiaries were planned for in 2016) will benefit from SOLAS-funded FET programmes and services in 2017 with 230,641 new entrants (245,400 new entrants were planned for in 2016) expected to participate in provision
- Approximately 59% of beneficiaries will require introductory-level courses/ supports focused on progression and transversal skills that will help them access further training or employment
- 9,435 apprentices will participate in Apprenticeship in phases two to seven in 2017. The overall population of apprentices across **all phases** of their apprenticeship is expected to increase to about 12,000 in 2017

#### Analysis of data submitted through the Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting (FARR) mechanism

The Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting system (FARR) was used to capture planning data for 2017 and reporting data for 2016 to support the planning and funding process. The FARR system, which is now integrated with the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS), facilitated the capture of quantitative data by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to support their 2017 Funding Allocations Requests. The Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) and eCollege quantitative data is also captured in FARR for 2017.

Data available through the FARR database has been collated and presented as follows:

- **Table 3.3 Education and Training Boards and other FET providers: overview of provision inputs and outputs 2017.** This table provides a breakdown of beneficiary numbers and grant allocations by ETB and other providers for 2017. Estimated numbers of starters, completers and certification rates by ETB and other providers is also presented, (pg. 38-39)
- **Table 3.4 Overview of FET programme provision: inputs, outputs and funding allocation for 2017.** This table presents information related to projected figures provided by the ETBs, VSCCS and SOLAS national programmes for 2017, (pg. 41)
- **Table 3.5 Estimate of changes in FET projected programme provision for 2017 from the reported outturn for 2016.** This table provides information on changes that ETBs and other providers indicated in their plans as likely to occur during 2016 in relation to FET beneficiary / participant numbers. The information provided is presented in relation to full-time, part-time and unaccredited provision across FET programmes, (pg. 42)
- **Table 3.6 2017 FET skills-cluster provision.** This table provides data relating to skills clusters based on projected numbers entered in FARR. (pg 43)
- **Table 3.7 Top seven labour-market-focus skills clusters based on the overall number of projected FET beneficiaries in 2017.** This table outlines the top seven labour market focus skills clusters, based on the percentage proportion of the overall projected beneficiary numbers for FET provision in 2017 (pg.45)

- **Table 3.8 Top ten market focus skills clusters based on the number of projected FET beneficiaries in 2017 undertaking labour-market-focus skills cluster provision.** This table shows the top ten labour market focus skills clusters, based on the percentage proportion of the projected beneficiary numbers for labour-market-focus skills clusters relating to planned FET provision in 2017 (pg.46)
- **Chart 3.1 Overview - innovation and expanded course provision in 2017.** This chart sets out some examples of enhancement of course choices and innovations based on local- and industry-identified need. (pg. 48/49)
- **Chart 3.2 Estimated percentage of beneficiaries expected to participate in FET programmes in 2017.** This chart provides data in percentage terms in relation to the estimated number of beneficiaries expected to participate in FET programmes in 2017 on a full-time and part-time basis, and through community education. (pg. 52)
- **Chart 3.3 Estimate of FET outputs for beneficiary completions/exits during 2017.** This chart provides a breakdown in percentage terms in relation to estimated completions and exits of total beneficiaries in full-time, part-time and community education programmes. (pg. 52)
- **Chart 3.4 Estimate of outcomes in the context of Progression for beneficiaries completing FET provision during 2017.** This chart provides an estimate of outcomes for full-time, part-time and community education provision in 2017 (pg. 53)
- **Table 3.9 Estimate for specific target groups participating in FET provision in 2017.** This table provides the estimated number of long-term unemployed beneficiaries and beneficiaries with a disability expected to participate in FET provision in 2017. (pg. 57)
- **Table 3.10 2017 BTEI grant allocations for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools.** This table outlines the Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools that will receive grant allocations for the provision of BTEI during 2017. (pg. 58)
- **Table 3.11 Approved PLC places for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools.** This table provides detail of the total number of Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools-approved PLC places for 2017, (pg. 59)
- **Table 3.12 Grant allocations in 2017 for additional provision.** This table sets out other grant provision, including those to the Irish Deaf Society, NALA and the Cork Institute of Technology. (pg. 59)
- **Table 3.13 2016 FET provision reported outturn versus 2016 planned provision.** This table provides an analysis of the FET provision planned for 2016 against the reported outturn for 2016. (pg. 60)
- **Table 3.14 2016 FET provision reported outturn versus revised mid-year forecasted outturn.** This table provides an analysis of the 2016 FET provision based on the mid-year forecasted outturn compared with the reported outturn, (pg. 60)
- **Table 3.15 Estimate of FET provision inputs planned for 2017 compared to 2016 reported outturn.** This table compares the 2016 reported outturn for FET provision to the 2017 FET planned provision (pg. 61).

#### **SOLAS grant allocations to agencies and bodies in the further education and training sector**

- **Tables 3.16 FET support organisations.** This table provides the details of grant allocations to FET support organisations and an overview of the key activities planned for 2017, (pg. 64)
- **Table 3.17 Staff representative organisations (SOLAS-administered).** This table details grant allocations to FET – staff representative organisations administered by SOLAS (pg. 65)
- **Table 3.18 Staff representative organisations (ETBI-administered).** This table details associations that support practitioners in the FET sector and are administered by ETBI. (pg. 66)
- **Table 3.19 FET – Lifelong learning opportunities.** This table details grant allocations to organisations providing FET assistance to people undertaking new learning experiences. (pg. 66)
- **Table 3.20 FET – CPD provision.** This table details grant allocation to the WIT/NALA accreditation project, which supports those working in the National Adult Literacy Service, (pg. 67)
- **Table 3.21 EU and specific projects.** This table details grant allocations to agencies and bodies assisting adults, practitioners and others accessing information appropriate to the FET sector, (pg. 67)
- **Table 3.22 Overall summary total of specific budget allocations for 2017.** This table

summarises specific grant allocations for 2017 for FET support organisations, lifelong learning opportunities, staff representative organisations and associations, CPD provision and EU and specific projects (pg. 68).

#### **Section 4. Benefits of FET from the learner, enterprise and the community perspective**

A key aspect of the FET strategy is to support the creation of quality education and training solutions that respond to employers' existing and evolving needs and that support provision of high-quality, portable skills opportunities, which are genuinely valued by learners, employers and their communities.

SOLAS, as part of the 2017 Funding Allocations Requests process, sought to identify some tangible examples of the benefits of FET provision, from the perspective of the **learner**, the **employer** and **communities**. SOLAS grantees were asked to submit testimonials from the three identified stakeholder groups in support of their funding allocation request.

This section presents extracts from the testimonials provided by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and the Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) through their 2017 FAR submissions.

#### **Section 5. Further supports and developments**

Section 5 of the FET services plan 2017 presents additional programme information and provides an overview of strategies and systems currently in development.

#### **Section 6. Appendices**

Lists of tables and charts, etc.

The 2017 Plan was prepared by SOLAS in consultation with ETBs, the Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools, and other partner agencies and bodies



# Section 1

## Introduction

Annual service planning by SOLAS is informed by national policies and strategies, evidence-based analyses of skills demand and labour supply while taking into account the funding allocated to the FET sector.

The 2017 Plan was prepared by SOLAS in consultation with ETBs, the Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools, and other partner agencies and bodies funded or part-funded by SOLAS such as FIT, AONTAS and NALA.

Development of the plan was supported and informed by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI), the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and the Department of Justice and Equality.

DSP priority cohorts such as the long-term unemployed and unemployed youth, and associated target participation rates across FET provision (notified to SOLAS by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) following consultation with the DSP) are also reflected in this service plan.

The 2017 FET Service Plan (the fourth annual service plan developed by SOLAS) sets out the nature and volume of FET provision planned for 2017 and provides details of how the 2017 grant allocation to SOLAS will be invested. The plan was approved by the SOLAS Board and endorsed by the Department of Education and Skills.

The plan presents details of the state's investment in FET which has remained relatively stable since 2008, with overall annual expenditure in the region of €800+ m. In 2017, a total of €830m will be invested in FET through Exchequer funding and the National Training Fund (NTF) and supported by the European Social Fund (ESF).

The 2017 grant allocation to SOLAS is €638m, of which 52% is Exchequer funded and 48% non-Exchequer, funded by the National Training Fund (NTF). Some €578m of this allocation will be spent on Further Education and Training programmes and services. Through SOLAS, the ETBs receive over €568m of this allocation for the provision of further education and training programmes and services. The remaining €10m is spent across other FET-related activity, including SOLAS eCollege; non-ETB schools FET provision (mostly PLC) and other FET organisations funded by SOLAS; capital expenditure; SOLAS costs and FET supports. In addition, circa €189m in Exchequer funding is allocated for PLC and co-operation hours provision (teacher pay and student capitation).

More specifically the FET Service Plan includes a breakdown of SOLAS-funded FET provision, which encompasses circa **30,300** courses, providing for 323,308 beneficiaries across 28 different programme titles<sup>2</sup> on offer by ETBs in 2017. The plan sets out specific activities and deliverables to be completed: headline service budgets for each programme/service; examples of good practice in terms of meeting needs of employers, communities and individuals; how access and inclusiveness will be further strengthened across the sector; the performance indicators that will be used by SOLAS to measure progress against agreed targets<sup>3</sup>.

The profile of FET provision set out in this plan reflects government policy in education and training, and other related areas. It supports the commitments of SOLAS and ETBs outlined in a range of government policy initiatives, including the FET Strategy 2014-2019, Action Plan for Education, the National Skills Strategy 2025, Action Plan for Jobs, Pathways to Work and the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with a Disability.

There are a number of key policy areas that remain a focus for FET in 2017. Despite a welcome decline in overall unemployment levels<sup>4</sup>, long-term unemployment remains stubbornly high, accounting for over half of the total unemployment of 146,200<sup>5</sup>. In addition a further 14% have low work intensity, working less than half of the year, or report limited working hours or very low earnings. The most common barriers to employment among these cohorts of the working-age population are low-skill levels, limited work experience and scarce job opportunities. FET is uniquely positioned to address these particular combinations of needs.

A significant number of individuals, with no or weak labour-market attachment, faces multiple simultaneous employment barriers. The gap in employment rates for those with low levels of education and skills (which are particularly prevalent among older age groups) is large in Ireland<sup>6</sup>. The DSP Action Plan for Jobless Families aimed at addressing long-term and intergenerational unemployment is due to be published shortly. SOLAS in partnership with the ETBs is looking forward to playing its part in contributing to the success of this action plan.

2 For example, Post Leaving Certificate courses, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, Specific Skills Training courses, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, Literacy and Numeracy, Community Education programmes.

3 Including estimates of expected outputs, such as certification and completion rates and estimated outcomes such as progression to employment or to higher or further education.

4 CSO, 2017, Quarterly National Household Survey, May 2017 – Nineteenth quarter in succession where unemployment has declined on an annual basis

5 Compared with 56.1% a year earlier and 59.7% in the first quarter of 2015.

6 At 49% vs 70% for the overall population 20-64.

The report specifically highlights, among a number of barriers, the importance of FET to the realisation of active inclusion for the under 25s, the long-term employed, people with disabilities and members of migrant communities. It also points to the relevance of FET in an education sector that increasingly emphasises the importance of lifelong learning. SOLAS plans to publish its response in 2017. SOLAS has also conducted research into the barriers to engaging with FET with particular reference to long term unemployed persons<sup>7</sup>.

With regard to hard-to-reach groups, senior officials at SOLAS, DES and DSP meet regularly to discuss among other things the FET needs of DSP qualified adults and current and emerging DSP priority cohorts who will be referred to ETBs for education and training. SOLAS is aware that in addition to long-term unemployed persons, DSP intends to extend Intreo services to proactively engage with those with a disability, and with others not on the live register, such as dependents of qualified people.

SOLAS, through the annual service planning exercise and in conjunction with the FET sector, DES, DSP/INTREO and the disability sector, supports the implementation of the high-level goal related to supporting active inclusion set out in The National Disability Implementation Plan (2013 to 2016). Over 20,000 people reported having a disability and benefiting from FET provision in 2016. In 2017, ETBs have reported to SOLAS that they intend to increase the range and number of programmes available at NFQ Levels 1, 2 and 3, as appropriate, for people with a disability, subject to demand.

The 2017 FET Service Plan is also framed within the context of expected further economic growth and an improving labour market. A number of commentators are forecasting continued economic growth for Ireland in 2017 and 2018<sup>8</sup>. Unemployment is expected to continue to fall to below 6 per cent by the end of 2018<sup>9</sup>. While this improvement is welcome, there are a number of uncertainties that could stall or reverse this trend, such as the impact of 'Brexit'; calls for a retreat from global integration affecting FDI investment in Ireland; the magnitude of potential job substitution due to digitisation<sup>10</sup> and the importance of imparting the right mix of technical and transversal skills to FET learners in support of innovation and productivity and to access and sustain decent work.

7 Recommended in the A Strategic Review of Further Education and Training and the Unemployed undertaken for the Department of Education and Skills by Dr John Sweeney, Senior Policy Analyst, National Economic and Social Council.

8 For example, European Commission; [http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/news/eu-spring-economic-forecast-for-ireland-strong-growth-against-external-headwinds\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/news/eu-spring-economic-forecast-for-ireland-strong-growth-against-external-headwinds_en) Also IMF; <http://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/05/12/ms051217-ireland-staff-concluding-statement-of-the-2017-article-iv-consultation> Also OECD; <http://www.oecd.org/ireland/ireland-economic-forecast-summary.htm>

9 For example, ESRI; <https://www.esri.ie/news/growth-to-remain-strong-in-2017-and-2018/>

10 OECD, The Future of Work <http://www.oecd.org/employment/future-of-work.htm>

Stronger employer input into FET planning and provision will therefore be critical to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of SOLAS-funded programmes and services in 2017. Work is on-going by SOLAS and ETBs to leverage the skills identification /response architecture now in place to identify and address skill needs through; the new National Skills Council, a refreshed mandate for the Expert Group on Future Skill Needs (EGFSN), the nine Regional Skills Fora and the Apprenticeship Council where a strong employer presence is already having a more positive impact on FET provision.

This work will further enhance the skills-forecasting capacity of SOLAS, through its Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU). This unit regularly evaluates the imbalances in skills supply and demand in the workplace on behalf of the EGFSN. It will provide similar support to the newly established National Skills Council. This work will cover craft apprenticeship occupations, which include forecasts of apprenticeship requirements over a five-year period. Using its research and skills and labour market intelligence capacity the SLMRU briefs all ETBs (and other education and government departments) on emerging and current skills needs from a national, regional and local perspective in support of individual ETB service planning exercises.

The 2017 FET Service Plan reflects many developments in that regard and provides details of education and training opportunities. It also details collaborative projects, planned and underway, designed to meet national and local identified skill needs across a range of skill clusters, as reported by the ETBs, in the 2017 planning process. For example, new further education and training opportunities to meet national and local identified skill needs reported by ETBs during 2017 to be available or in the planning phase include:

- Employability Skills Level 4 course aimed at a NEET target group
- Various new courses in business studies, office informatics and ESOL, legal and medical secretary, Introduction to JAVA, digital marketing, network security Professional, Cisco CCNA Security+, Cyber Security Specialist
- Professional cookery, hotel reception and guest services
- New construction courses in steel fixing, formwork, curtain walling
- Health, wellbeing and nutrition
- Product and industrial design
- Aircraft spray painting.

The ETBs, government departments, local business, agencies, such as FIT and third-level colleges, are collaborating on an ongoing basis to enhance opportunities for those taking part in FET provision. These projects support progression to higher-level qualifications and into employment and span a range of skills that support cluster areas related to:

- Tourism
- Transport
- Health, family and other social services
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture, horticulture and mariculture
- Business
- Built environment

The welcome improvement in the economy and in the labour market together with the associated uncertainties and challenges now require a further re-orientation by SOLAS and ETBs to develop greater opportunities for reskilling and up-skilling those already in the workforce - in addition to FET provision to assist unemployed jobseekers compete in the labour market.

A key challenge for the education and training sector is the need to develop a sustainable funding model for FET. This will enable a programme of reinvestment to address pressing demographic challenges, current and emerging skill needs and to advance social priorities. This new funding model, "the strategic inputs and outcomes-based" approach, must reflect best international practice while taking into the account the limited funding available to Government for the foreseeable future for investment across a wide range of other growing 'in-demand' services, including health and housing.

The 2017 Services Plan reflects how the FET sector will seek more broadly to increase opportunities not only for existing workers and unemployed jobseekers but more specifically for underrepresented groups such as long-term unemployed persons, women, migrants, youth, low-skilled and older workers. The plan also reflects further initiatives in development or being brought on stream by ETBs to address the employment needs of persons with a disability and for carers looking after family members/relatives who given their commitments, find it a challenge to access suitable education and training.

Finally, examples of ETB efforts to increase the overall level of entrepreneurship education and training opportunities within the FET sector are acknowledged in response to the findings of the SOLAS-commissioned research into best practice entrepreneurship education and training within FET<sup>11</sup>.

The FET approach of 'active inclusion through employment' outlined above is firmly embedded across a range of policy initiatives such as FET Strategy 2014-2019, Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025, Action Plan for Education, Pathways to Work, Action Plan for Jobs, and the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020. The new SOLAS

Corporate Plan 2017-2019 also sets out details of how SOLAS will support this approach and how it will enable the delivery of its commitments within these and other policy initiatives between now and 2020.

The importance of FET-related literacy and numeracy provision and participation in lifelong learning cannot be overemphasised. Approximately one in six adults has literacy difficulties. Many have insufficient literacy and numeracy skills in particular to obtain sustainable employment in Ireland.

For the economically inactive population, Ireland's lifelong learning participation is above the EU average<sup>12</sup>. Lifelong learning among the economically inactive population is one of the few areas where Ireland performs well. However, for almost all other indicators, Ireland's lifelong learning participation rate is below the EU average<sup>13</sup>. With this in mind, the 50,000+ learners who engage in FET community education provision funded by SOLAS is a key pillar of Ireland's lifelong learning objectives given that one of its primary purposes is to facilitate (re) engagement in the learning process by those who are distant from education and the labour market. Community education is very successful in achieving this. Consequently, the 2017 plan reflects an ongoing SOLAS commitment to focus on lifelong learning and implementing in full the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Implementation Plan developed by DES. SOLAS, therefore, will sustain funding for both literacy and numeracy and for community education provision.

This year's changing profile of FET provision reflects successful follow-through on the many initiatives developed or started since SOLAS and the ETBs were established. These include approaches to systematic performance-based evaluation and funding; advances in FET data infrastructure, analytics and research<sup>14</sup>; implementation of the professional development strategy for all FET staff; facilitating the development of new apprenticeships and traineeships, while enhancing the quality of existing apprenticeships and traineeships.

<sup>11</sup> Increasing FET entrepreneurship education and training is essential since according to the European Commission report Entrepreneurship Education: A road to success learners participating in entrepreneurship education are more likely to start their own business and their companies tend to be more innovative and more successful than those led by persons without entrepreneurship education backgrounds.

<sup>12</sup> 10% for Ireland compared to 8% for the EU.

<sup>13</sup> Lifelong learning in Ireland was 6.5%, compared to 10.7% for the EU average.

<sup>14</sup> Such as the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) – a FET learner database, FET course calendar, FET course database now integrated with the SOLAS funding application request records system (FARR).

A comprehensive programme of SOLAS evaluations of key lines of FET provision<sup>15</sup> and other FET-related research<sup>16</sup> is also underway. The findings are being considered by the FET sector with a view to improving those programmes and services. This research is part of a programme of continuous improvement designed to improve learner experiences and outcomes.

The ETB sector has delivered significant efficiencies given the limits of available administrative staff and capacity building across FET programmes to meet the increased demand for further education and training for unemployed people particularly those referred by DSP. This flexibility is also evident in the high-quality intermediate level skills courses (level 5/6) that have come on stream as growth continues and the focus on meeting employer skills intensifies.

Finally, the 2017 FET Service Plan reflects initial contributions by ETBs and SOLAS to the successful implementation of the FET sector service and performance targets included in the second SOLAS Corporate Plan at the request of the Minister for Education and Skills. The aggregate FET sector targets to be achieved by the end of 2020 are:

- 10% more learners securing employment after undertaking a relevant FET course.
- 10% more learners progressing to other FET courses or higher education from relevant courses.
- 10% increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on transversal (social mobility) skills development.
- 10% increase in adult learners taking part in lifelong learning delivered through FET
- 10% increase in the rate of certification on courses primarily focused on social- mobility skills development that is transversal in nature
- From 2018, for three years, an average 10,000 more learners each year are to achieve qualifications related to business sectors where employment growth and skills needs have been identified.

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<sup>15</sup> Action 4.4.1a of the FET STRATEGY 2014-2019 - Detailed Implementation Plan commits SOLAS to undertake a schedule of commissioned independent evaluations of full-time FET provision and other FET-related research to identify what is working well and what needs to be improved or put under review/terminated. Examples of key lines of FET include Evaluation of the National PLC programme (completed); Evaluation of National Youthreach Programme (commenced); Evaluation of VTOS (due to start 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2017); Evaluation of BTEI (due to commence in 2018).

<sup>16</sup> For example 'Best practice further education and training', a study of entrepreneurship education and training in the FET sector' to inform policy and practice(completed); Research into the Barriers to engaging in FET with particular reference to long-term unemployed (completed);



According to recent estimates Ireland's current economic recovery is set to continue over the next two years



# Section 2

## General economic outlook

### FET strategic responses and approach to planning and funding

#### The FET Strategy 2014-2019

The FET strategy developed by SOLAS and published in 2014 continues to provide a focus for the setting of investment priorities, and a framework for the establishment and development of a strong FET sector.<sup>17</sup> The 2017 FET Services Plan reflects the aims, objectives and goals presented in the FET strategy and also considers the change in our economic climate and potential future skills demands.

#### General economic outlook for the Irish economy and the labour market

According to recent estimates Ireland's current economic recovery is set to continue over the next two years. Particularly relevant for FET provision is the fact that economic growth is now driven by strong gains in the labour market.

Following strong growth in 2016, total employment increased by 2.9% and is expected to continue to expand by approximately 2.6% in 2017 and 1.9% in 2018. Despite uncertainties created by Brexit, the labour market outlook for the next few years remains positive, with unemployment expected to decline to below 6%. The decline includes all groups. Youth unemployment levels in 2017 (24,000) are only 30% of the level which pertained in Q2 2009<sup>18</sup> while long-term unemployment has declined significantly<sup>19</sup>.

The anticipated tightening of the labour market will create challenges in terms of the availability of many skills. The biggest challenges will be the need to provide sufficient skilled workers to serve the fast-growing building industry.

Direct employment in the construction industry is expected to rise from approximately 140,000 currently to around 200,000 by 2020. This major expansion in direct construction employment will create pressure on skills availability. At the moment, activity is strong in the non-residential sector and shortages are being reported of steel-fixers; curtain wallers; form workers; machines

drivers (particularly tower crane); 360 degree machine drivers (14 ton); basic and advanced scaffolders; ground workers and pipe layers; experienced arc welders; fitters and glazers; experienced (five years plus) R and D electrical, mechanical and civil engineers; experienced quantity surveyors and experienced shift managers and supervisors.

Residential construction is expected to increase significantly over the next few years from approximately 18,000 units completed this year to some 30,000 completions in 2020. The relatively low level of residential development at present is reflected in low apprentice intake in the so-called wet trades of bricklayers, plasterers and painters and, to a lesser extent, carpenters. If the anticipated increase in residential development materialises, shortages will probably emerge in all of these trades.

Over the next few years, new apprentice registrations in construction apprenticeships is expected to almost double, from 2,314 in 2016 to 3,840 in 2020. All construction apprenticeships are expected to experience strong growth, although from low base levels. In 2020, new registrations in construction apprenticeships are expected to account for 70% of total apprentice recruitment across all craft apprenticeship, increasing from 62% in 2016.

Construction is just one of the sectors where strong growth is anticipated. There will be further significant expansion in the software, finance and transport industries while a number of sub-sectors within manufacturing, including medical devices, pharmaceuticals and precision engineering are all poised for further growth.

The demand for software engineers – especially at the upper end of the skills spectrum – will continue to expand strongly. In the financial sector, there will be strong demand for accountants, actuaries, risk managers and compliance specialists. At the lower end of the skills spectrum, jobs related to customer service will feature strongly across a wide range of different sectors including finance, adding to the demand for workers competent in languages and soft skills.

The globalisation of markets is also driving the demand for workers fluent in a number of languages, but it is also

<sup>17</sup> Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 to 2019, page 3

<sup>18</sup> CSO, QNHS.

<sup>19</sup> From a peak of 204,300 in Q1 2012 to 78,700 in Q1 2017.

creating a boost in the demand for logistics-related skills. The demand covers a range of skills from supply-chain management to freight forwarding and inventory control.

Sectors such as pharmaceuticals and medical devices will continue to expand resulting in a strong demand for technicians and professionals in the areas of industrial design, engineering, clinical testing and fault-finding. The skills required to supply components to these sectors such as tool-making, tool-design and CNC machining will also exhibit strong growth.

Demographic factors combined with changing participation rates means that demand for skills in a range of care professions will also continue to expand. These include professions in the medical sector such as doctors, nurses, mid-wives and therapists, but it also includes qualified workers in the more broad caring professions, such as childcare workers and those involved in caring for the aged and will draw from workers with FET credentials.

In summary, the Irish labour market has entered a period of sustained growth, which will pose challenges to those responsible for the provision of workers with the appropriate qualifications. SOLAS will use its extensive research capacity to engage with the Education and Training Boards assist them to align their FET provision more closely to the needs of their local labour market.

In spite of the positive outlook, a detailed analysis of the labour market developments indicates some underlying risks. In a recent report, it was pointed out that both part-time and involuntary temporary work have risen since the crisis, particularly putting women and young workers (under 30s) at risk of underemployment and material deprivation<sup>20</sup>. While the incidence of long-term unemployed has declined significantly, the long-term unemployed continue to constitute more than half of the total unemployed. Despite the significant decline in unemployment, there are groups within the labour force who would benefit from more targeted FET provision. These include workers in precarious employment and job-seekers who are experiencing difficulties entering the workforce.

### **Further Education and Training sector initiatives to enhance employability within the workforce**

ETBs working with SOLAS significantly enhance the employability of both of these groups by providing them with the skills required to secure decent sustainable employment. SOLAS will use its extensive research capacity to identify these skills. It has engaged, through the 2017 service planning exercise, with the network of Education and Training Boards (ETBs) with a view to better aligning current FET provision with the requirements of the relevant local labour markets.

Given that long spells of unemployment are associated with among other things, 'de-skilling' of the labour force, this is another area where targeted FET interventions can make a difference. Targeted FET provision and further funding of the up-skilling of the employed can help protect these vulnerable groups from falling into unemployment.

Welcome progress has been made in the education profile of working-age people (15-64 years) participating in the labour force<sup>21</sup>. For example, the 2020 target of 48 percent for the third-level graduate cohort has been exceeded<sup>22</sup>. However, this can be contrasted with the group with higher secondary and FET education, which is lagging well behind the National Skills Strategy target rate of 45 percent<sup>23</sup>. It remains a challenge to reduce the share of individuals with lower secondary or less and increase the share of higher secondary/FET if the 2020 NSS targets are to be achieved.

### **Apprenticeship**

SOLAS has statutory responsibility for the co-ordination and control of designated apprenticeships under the Industrial Training Act, 1967 and the Labour Services Act, 1987. Apprenticeship is a demand-driven educational and training programme for employed people.

In April 2016, SOLAS in partnership with the ETB network commenced the process of implementing Version 4 for five pre-2016 apprenticeship programmes. SOLAS began discussions with the HEA on the roll-out of Version 4 curricula into the Institutes of Technology.

SOLAS, ETBI and the ETBs finalised an agreed Apprenticeship Memorandum of Understanding for the delivery of the apprenticeship programmes. The ETBI, ETB and SOLAS representatives also agreed a draft Service Level Agreement for the delivery functions of the apprenticeship system. SOLAS began MOU discussions with the HE sector towards the end of 2016.

Using a revised accelerated process, SOLAS finalised the programme review for 18 of its pre-2016 apprenticeship programmes in 2016. Following an extensive stakeholder consultation process, SOLAS submitted 14 pre-2016 apprenticeship programmes to QQI for validation in December 2016.

SOLAS in partnerships with the ETBs and the HEA are building provision capacity in response to the increase in apprentice registrations for existing apprenticeship programmes. At the end of 2016, overall apprentice registrations were up 19% on 2015. This positive trend is continuing across the majority of pre-2016 apprenticeships. The prognosis and forecast for future apprenticeship registrations remains strong and it is

<sup>20</sup> NERI (2017) A time-series analysis of precarious work in elementary professions in Ireland (2004-2015).

<sup>21</sup> With the share of the labour force at 1-3 NFQ levels reduced by 2% from 15% in Q1 2014 to 13% in Q1 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Exceeded by 1.4 percentage points, which is well above the EU28 average of 39.1 percent.

<sup>23</sup> At 37 percent.

predicted pre-2016 based apprentice registrations will continue to grow incrementally up to and including 2020.

### Work-based learning

Significant activity is planned in new apprenticeship and traineeship development in response to the Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020, which aims to establish work-based learning as a core contributor to skills development, employment and economic growth.

### New apprenticeship programme

In January 2016, the Minister for Education and Skills approved development funding to sanctioned consortia to develop new apprenticeships. SOLAS, on behalf of the Apprenticeship Council, issued Memoranda of Funding (MOF) and associated documentation to the 15 consortia.

In parallel to the development process, the governance and administrative arrangements for new apprenticeships and the validation and accreditation processes necessary to support new and existing apprenticeships were considered by a sub-group of the Apprenticeship Council.

SOLAS developed six new Industrial Training Orders following consultation with representatives of employers, employees and other relevant bodies, which were approved by the Board of SOLAS and laid before the Oireachtas 2016. The new Industrial Training Orders provide enabling legislation under the 1967 Industrial Training Act for 11 proposed apprenticeships and cover sectors not previously engaged in statutory apprenticeship activities.

The Insurance Practice apprenticeship programme and Industrial Electrical Engineering apprenticeship programme acquired QQI validation in 2016.

### Career Traineeships

SOLAS and Education and Training Boards (ETBs), working in partnership with employers and employer representative bodies, have developed a Career Traineeship model of work-based learning informed by national and international best practice. Career Traineeship is an occupational training programme based on identified labour market needs designed to offer trainees a foothold in a career. It provides a combination of on and off-the-job learning and generally lasts 6-18 months.

Collaboration between ETBs and a network of employers from industry sectors or sub-sectors is key to the development of the model in order to identify training needs, develop appropriate content, carry out recruitment and provide integrated learning for trainees.

SOLAS and ETBs, in partnership with industry, are developing and rolling-out Career Traineeships in the following areas: hospitality, engineering, visual effects and animation, digital sales and marketing for micro and small companies, interior systems and laboratory assistant. In 2016, three ETBs started seven Career Traineeship pilots in hospitality, engineering and interior systems. Work is ongoing with all ETBs to support the establishment of Career Traineeship programmes, which aim to address identified skills needs in relevant industry sectors. ETBs plan to deliver 18 Career Traineeship Programmes in 2017, four of which have already started.

A wide range of support materials have been developed to support the development and roll-out of Career Traineeships. These include two training initiatives to support ETB staff and company personnel with responsibility for Career Traineeships. A training programme has been designed to assist ETB staff in identifying training needs with companies through an occupational skills-profiling process. A Workplace Supervisor training programme is also provided to enhance the capacity of relevant personnel to enable them to support work-based learning. An evaluation of the Career Traineeship pilots is underway and will be completed in 2017.

In addition to the report on the new Career Traineeships a report will also be commissioned on the national traineeship programme, which was introduced in 1995 by the training and employment agency FÁS. It is envisaged that this report will identify initiatives that will enable this suite of successful traineeship programmes to be revamped and launched.

The eligibility requirements for trainees enrolling in traineeship programmes will also be amended to enable wider participation in traineeships programmes over the lifespan of the 2016-2020 Action Plan.

Finally, Ireland's lifelong learning rate, at 6.5% in 2015, is below the 15% target set out in the Action Plan for Education for 2020. Participation is particularly low among those in the workforce; therefore, opportunities for workers to engage in education and training, particularly non-formal learning will be crucial, not only to improve lifelong learning participation but also to ensure workers have up-to-date skills to meet labour market needs.

### SOLAS/ETB strategic planning pilot initiative

The Education and Training Act 2013 established SOLAS to manage, co-ordinate and support the delivery of an integrated Further Education and Training provision by the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs). The Act also requires SOLAS *"to assess whether or not training bodies, and other bodies engaged in the provision of further education and training programmes, to whom moneys have been advanced under section 21, perform their functions in an economic, efficient and effective manner."*

The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014–2019 also proposed a new 'strategic input and outcomes-based' funding model for FET. The Department of Education and Skills-led FET Strategy Implementation Plan committed SOLAS to introduce a new funding framework over the strategy's lifetime.

An internal scoping exercise has been conducted by SOLAS and soundings taken from the sector to identify what a successful funding model might look like and potential implications arising for the FET sector. It emerged from this exercise, and confirming best practice, that targets set by SOLAS ought to be ETB-centric and evidence-based including counterfactual impact evidence. ETB-centric means that, in principle, SOLAS will not formulate one set of national targets that each ETB must achieve. Rather each ETB will, according to its capacity, contribute to the overall achievement of national targets.

SOLAS will agree appropriate capacity and contributory targets for each ETB. Some ETBs will contribute more than others and this will be a feature of new SOLAS funding arrangements for FET. This approach facilitates adjustments that reflect and take into account local conditions over which the ETB has no control, such as different socio-economic profiles within individual ETB catchment areas; different FET learner profiles; different levels and type of unemployment; different types and scale of industry and occupations.

SOLAS-set national and local targets for FET will still have to be informed by evidence. SOLAS is working to develop a data infrastructure to enable it to access appropriate evidence and, in the longer term, counterfactual impact evaluation in support of the new funding model. Even where it is possible to establish FET programme outcomes, the success or value of any education or training programme cannot be judged by reference to employment and progression outcomes alone. There is also an obligation to ensure that the data infrastructure and evaluation mechanisms can capture "the wider benefits of learning" and less tangible impacts for a significant cohort of learners who initially may engage in FET for reasons other than direct progression to employment. Important less tangible effects might include increased self-confidence or feeling more positive about employment prospects.

In light of these requirements SOLAS is formulating suitable performance indicators which are intended to measure the extent to which the bodies it funds perform their core functions effectively and efficiently.

The proposed framework is expected to incorporate core ETB funding and adjustments to core funding based on certain weightings, such as demographics, programme purpose and objectives, and achievement of target outcomes. If it is to work properly, the existing 28 programme types<sup>24</sup> for FET will need to be

streamlined. SOLAS is proposing a simplified topology that will link FET funding streams (e.g. Exchequer/National Training Fund/ESF) with NFQ levels and with the official purpose(s) of that particular provision.

Given the above, the SOLAS/ETB strategic pilot initiative was conceived and initiated in 2015. It is in its final stage and is scheduled to be completed in 2017.

Some of the main points to emerge from the strategic pilot include:

- The commitments or 'calls' made by the three ETBs and laid out in the three Strategic Agreements support the view that the approach adopted (Strategic 'Inputs', Strategic Framework Agreement, Quarterly Progress Reports) is leading to more relevant and better quality 'in-demand' FET programmes and services.
- It was possible to restructure some existing provision to improve the quality of programmes and service on offer.
- It was also possible to restructure some existing provision to improve operational efficiencies in support of the new strategic direction agreed by ETBs with SOLAS
- ETBs welcomed the transparent target-setting process.
- The independent tracking of FET learners within the three ETBs after course completion, using administrative datasets at three different points in time, clearly demonstrated that tracking was feasible. The success of this feasibility test across three ETBs opened up the possibility of following the progression of all 300,000+ learners that engage in FET each year.

The pilot findings also underscore the need to relate FET provision more directly to the profile and skill needs of business sectors operating in Ireland. Learning and insights from the pilot's strategic inputs approach will be systematically integrated on a phased basis into the 2018 service planning process. A number of aspects of the existing SOLAS funding application request system (FAR) used by ETBs are being enhanced. These enhancements are as follows:

- Support documentation provided by SOLAS to ETBs in relation to the funding allocation request system will be amended to meet the new requirements of the evolving strategic inputs model.
- The 'Approach to FET Planning' document will now incorporate three new elements: 'strategic approach to planning', 'ESF reporting' and 'grant and grant assurance'.
- The SOLAS Overarching Planning and Funding Parameters and Requirements document will incorporate the following new elements: 'national and regional/ETB targets' and 'overall FET provision, individual ETB provision categorised under an occupational skills cluster'.
- FAR 3 will now reflect the strategic goals, targets and actions material captured in the pilot 'Strategic pilot' documentation.

<sup>24</sup> Such as PLC, Traineeship, Community Education, Literacy/Numeracy, Specific Skills, VTOS, Youthreach, ITABE, BTEI etc.

- The SOLAS Funding Allocation Request and Reporting (FARR) Database (Provision and Funding) is now integrated with the PLSS and also contains 'estimated' input, output and outcome variables for ETB provision.
- FET provision will be summed up and grouped at course level, e.g. childcare, by full-time, part-time, by programme, by skill cluster, by NFQ, etc.
- A new front-end 'target table' for FARR is being considered, that will allow targets to be inputted under each programme type, e.g. PLC, Traineeship.
- A more streamlined classification of FET provision

will be introduced, based on the primary purpose/target cohort of the provision, e.g. full-time employability courses aimed at job seekers, part-time courses aimed at re-engaging adult learners.

- A new Management information System on the PLSS learner database will be developed to give multi lens views on the reporting of FET provision on a 'monthly', 'quarterly', 'annual' basis.
- A proposed new target table in the database element of the new FARR system is evolving on the lines of the table below:

Programme Target Table	INPUTS	OUTPUTS			OUTCOMES		
	Utilisation	Retention	Completion	Certification	Employment	Progression HET	Progression FET
Apprenticeship	95%	95%	95%	95%	98%	0%	0%
Post Leaving Cert (PLC)	95%	85%	90%	90%	60%	20%	10%
BTEI	90%						
Community Training Centres	90%						
Specific Skills Training	95%						
Traineeship Training	95%						
Voluntary Literacy	70%						
VTOS Core	85%						
Community Education	80%						

*Note: While each ETB will have the facility to set targets in the FAR system against FET programme type (e.g. PLC, VTOS), SOLAS is proposing to introduce this gradually. In that regard SOLAS is proposing to use a traffic light system against each input, output and outcomes target.*

■ Green is intended to represent a target that will be introduced and achieved within a three year time frame (cool target).

■ Amber is intended to represent a target that will be introduced and achieved within two years (moderate target).

■ Red is intended to represent a target to be achieved in the next planning cycle (so-called 'hot' target) - in this instance in 2018. Targets will be reviewed by SOLAS on an annual basis and classified accordingly.

Finally, as part of the 2018 planning process, SOLAS intends to work with the ETBs to agree, sign and incorporate Strategic Expectations Agreements (FAR 3) for each ETB into the SOLAS annual FET service planning and Funding Allocation Request (FAR) process. Some preliminary work is set out in this 2017 Service Plan. Also set out in this Service Plan is the movement within the profile of 2017 FET provision that has been informed by a more strategic planning emphasis evident within ETB 2017 Funding Allocations Requests.

For more information on the SOLAS/ETB strategic planning pilot initiative, please see [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie)

This section provides top-level analysis of the 2017 FET grant allocations and projected FET provision in regard to inputs, outputs and outcomes.



# Section 3

## Top-level analysis of 2017 funding allocations and provision

This section provides top-level analysis of the 2017 FET grant allocations and projected FET provision in regard to **inputs**, **outputs** and **outcomes**. No single metric can describe the overall picture of FET provision. For the purpose of this document the term 'beneficiary' is used to describe the total number of interventions provided for through FET funding which individuals will benefit from in a given year, irrespective of whether they are present at the start of the year or join a course during the year. Consideration must also be given to the degree of participation as some learners will partake in a full-time course, for example, a 33-week course delivered over an academic year, while others may participate in a part-time course for example delivered over a number of weeks for five hours a week. Both examples are considered equally when the term beneficiary is used. It is intended that future FET planning processes will encompass analysis of data to determine full-time equivalents within FET provision. This will facilitate a broader picture of the capacity of FET provision.

### Budget allocations

The 2017 Further Education and Training Services Plan provides for a total budget allocation of €638,250m, which will be made available for SOLAS-funded further education and training provision in 2017.

- The Department of Education and Skills will continue to fund the PLC and co-operation hours provision (teacher pay and student capitation) (circa €189m in 2017)
- For 2017, it is envisaged that some 323,308 beneficiaries (339,283 beneficiaries were planned for in 2016) will benefit from SOLAS-funded FET programmes and services with 230,641 new entrants (245,400 new entrants were planned for in 2016) expected to participate in provision
- Approximately 59% of beneficiaries will be individuals that require introductory level courses/ supports focused on progression and transversal skills that will assist them in accessing further training or employment
- 9,435 apprentices will participate in the Apprenticeship in phases 2 to 7 in 2017. The overall population of apprentices across **all phases** of their apprenticeship is expected to increase to circa 12,000 in 2017.

### Budget availability for 2017 FET grants

The total amount allocated to SOLAS in 2017 is €638.250m. This is comprised of €332.618m in Exchequer funding, €302.382m from the National Training Fund and SOLAS income of €3.250m. The available funding to SOLAS for FET grants and the source of this funding is set out below.

### Funding allocations

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 provide summary details of the SOLAS grant allocation and how the grant allocation will be utilised in terms of grants to:

- Education and Training Boards
- Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools
- Other FET organisations funded by SOLAS.

Table 3.2 indicates the funding retained centrally and other cash resources to be used in funding the full FET provision and services for 2017.

## Grant allocations and expenditure

Table 3.1 **SOLAS 2017 grant allocation**

<b>SOLAS Grant Allocation for 2017</b>	
Overall Grant Allocation Detail	Amount
Total Grant Allocation to SOLAS for 2017	€635,000,000
SOLAS Income	€ 3,250,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€638,250,000</b>

Table 3.2 **Total projected expenditure for FET provision – breakdown for 2017**

<b>Total Projected Expenditure for FET Provision - Breakdown for 2017</b>	
Grant Breakdown	Amount
SOLAS Costs (including eCollege, MOMENTUM and EGF funding)	€ 62,900,000
SOLAS Capital	€ 500,000
<b>Total SOLAS</b>	<b>€ 63,400,000</b>
ETB FET Grants Provision 2017	€ 552,500,168
Funding Provision Profiled (yet to be allocated)	
— Existing SBA Apprenticeship Provision	€ 4,030,063
— New Apprenticeship Development and Promotion	€ 7,350,000
— VSCC Schools, LDA Payments	€ 320,000
Other FET Organisations - Grants	€ 6,499,903
Other Providers - Grants	
- Voluntary Secondary & Community and Comprehensive Schools	€ 440,552
- Irish Deaf Society	€ 240,000
- Cork Institute Of Technology	€ 160,588
- NALA Write On Provision	€ 220,000
Balance of funding not yet profiled (contingency for pay and non-pay)	€ 588,726
FET Provision and Grants to Agencies and Bodies sub-total	€ 572,350,000
FET Capital Grant Allocations Sub-total	€ 2,500,000
FET Provision and Capital Grant Allocations Sub-total	€ 574,850,000
<b>Total Grant Allocation and SOLAS costs</b>	<b>€ 638,250,000</b>

## Analysis of data submitted through the Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting (FARR) System

Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting system (FARR) was used to capture planning data for 2017 and reporting data for 2016 to support the planning and funding process. FARR is a browser-based application linked to a database that captures quantitative data in a questionnaire format. The FARR system, which is now integrated with the Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS), facilitated the capture of quantitative data by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to support their 2017 Funding Allocations Requests. The Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) and eCollege quantitative data is also captured in FARR for 2017.

Set out below is a list of tables and charts that reflect the information obtained through the FARR system and Funding Allocations Requests submissions.

- Table 3.3 Education and Training Boards and other FET Providers: Overview of provision, inputs and outputs 2017
- Table 3.4 Overview of FET 2017 programme provision inputs, outputs and funding allocation for 2017
- Table 3.5 Estimate of changes in FET projected programme provision for 2017 from the reported outturn for 2016
- Table 3.6 2017 FET skills-cluster provision
- Table 3.7 Top seven labour-market-focus skills clusters based on the overall number of Projected FET Beneficiaries in 2017
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- Chart 3.2 Estimated percentage of beneficiaries expected to participate in FET programmes in 2017
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- for 2017 compared to the 2016 reported outturn
- Table 3.16 FET support organisations
- Table 3.17 FET staff representatives organisations (SOLAS-administered)
- Table 3.18 FET staff representatives organisations (ETBI-administered)
- Table 3.19 FET lifelong learning opportunities
- Table 3.20 FET CPD provision
- Table 3.21 EU and specific projects
- Table 3.22 Overall summary total of specific budget allocations for 2017

## Further education and training outputs and outcomes

To support understanding of the concept of outputs and outcomes, explanatory notes are presented below.

### **Further education and training outputs**

#### *FET retention*

In this plan, the concept of 'retention' is used, as opposed to the more common concept of 'dropout'. The concept of 'retention' captures the positive reality of learners progressing through their studies while also acknowledging the reality that some learners will leave the course early without completing a significant portion of the course.

The term retention describes those who are estimated to be retained past 25% of the course duration (e.g. have not dropped out of the course early) in 2017. In the tables that follow, the percentage retention for starters is calculated as follows: the number of course starters completing more than 25% of the course duration, divided by the total number of course starters. The percentage retention for beneficiaries is calculated as follows: the number of beneficiaries completing more than 25% of the course duration, divided by the total number of beneficiaries.

#### *FET completion*

To understand the population base for the outputs and outcomes values from FET provision in 2017, it is necessary to establish the number of learners retained on courses that are scheduled to finish (complete) in 2017. The concept of both 'scheduled course completion' and concept of 'individual learner completion' on these courses needs to be considered.

FET courses can span a two year period. In relation to "*scheduled course completion*"

- Some of the courses funded in 2017, commenced in 2016 and will complete in 2017
- Some of the courses funded in 2017, will commence in 2017 and will complete 2017
- Some courses funded in 2017, will commence in 2017 and will complete in 2018.

Only learners that are estimated to complete/finish in 2017 will be considered in the calculation of completion values for 2017.

In relation to 'individual learner completion' on the courses scheduled to complete in 2017, the following must be considered:

- The learners who will fully complete their course of study
- The learners who will partially complete their course of study, i.e. have completed a significant portion of the course but left/exited the course prior to its completion and may have some success level in terms of outputs and outcomes
- The learners who will complete their course in 2018 and, therefore, will not be included in the 2017 completion values.

Where the tables in Section 3 refer to the percentage for completion, it is calculated by: the number of learners/beneficiaries estimated to finish/complete in 2017 less the estimated number of learners that have left their course early in 2017.

Taking into account the 'completion statistics' is important as they form the population base for determining all the other output and outcomes values for 2017 FET provision.

### **FET accreditation**

The term 'accreditation' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) on courses that are scheduled to finish in 2017 and who will achieve certification by the end of their course. The percentage certification rates is calculated based on the above number of beneficiaries (learners) on accredited programmes that are estimated to achieve certification, either QQI full or component awards and/or other (non-QQI) awards, divided by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2017.

### **Further Education and Training outcomes**

FET outcomes include employment, progression to another course in FET or HET and personal progression, details outlined below:

#### **FET into employment**

The term 'into employment' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) who will enter employment post-course participation. The percentage is calculated by: the number of beneficiaries (learners) who will complete their course in 2017 and are estimated will enter employment on either a full-time, part-time or self-employment basis, (excluding apprenticeship completers, as they are already employed and community education completers, as the programme is not an active FET employment programme), divided by

the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2017.

#### **FET progressing to another course in FET or HET**

The term 'progressing to another course in FET or HET' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) who complete their course and progress to an FET or HET course, post their 2017 FET course participation. The percentage numbers of beneficiaries (learners) progressing to another course in FET or HET is divided by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2017.

#### **FET personal progression**

The term 'personal progression' describes the number of beneficiaries (learners) who complete their course and progress on a personal level, e.g. through either voluntary work or an employment scheme. The percentage numbers of beneficiaries (learners) achieving personal progression are calculated without the inclusion of apprenticeship completers by dividing the number of learners achieving a personal progression by the number of beneficiaries (learners) that will complete their course of study in 2017.

Table 3.3 is presented over two pages and provides estimated data for FET provision inputs and outputs for 2017 (see page 10 for explanatory notes).

The data in the tables that follow represents, as appropriate, the projected estimated figures as provided by the ETBs, Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and SOLAS national programmes for 2017.

Table 3.3: Education and Training Boards and other FET providers: Overview of provision inputs and outputs 2017.

FET PROVISION IN 2017	Estimate of Inputs in 2017			Estimate of Outputs in 2017			
	Number of Beneficiaries		Funding	Retention	Completion	Accreditation	
Provider	Provision Type	Starting Courses During 2017	Revised Projected Beneficiaries in 2017*	Funding for FET Provision in 2017	Percentage of starters retained on their course during 2017	Percentage of retained beneficiaries scheduled to finish courses in 2017	Accreditation rate for beneficiaries completing courses in 2017
Cavan and Monaghan ETB	Full Time	2,747	4,889	€12,026,940	91.0%	94.9%	68.4%
	Part Time	4,806	4,983	€2,172,324	97.0%	98.7%	55.1%
	Community Education	1,710	1,727	€422,237	95.6%	99.0%	8.4%
	ETB Guidance Services			€360,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€1,771,094			
		9,263	11,599	€16,752,595			
City of Dublin ETB	Full Time	13,575	22,892	€58,590,500	92.8%	64.5%	66.3%
	Part Time	16,623	20,891	€9,850,000	90.3%	96.4%	32.0%
	Community Education	7,402	7,752	€1,834,000	92.8%	99.5%	10.0%
	ETB Guidance Services			€560,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€9,597,500			
		37,600	51,535	€80,432,000			
Cork ETB	Full Time	7,719	13,456	€36,829,225	93.7%	76.2%	54.9%
	Part Time	10,046	10,762	€4,898,465	92.5%	94.7%	45.9%
	Community Education	7,510	6,210	€1,094,438	100.0%	120.5%	0.2%
	ETB Guidance Services			€460,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€7,775,429			
		25,275	30,428	€51,057,557			
Donegal ETB	Full Time	1,179	2,248	€13,336,560	96.3%	76.7%	52.2%
	Part Time	2,979	3,599	€2,578,251	93.9%	85.1%	60.2%
	Community Education	4,580	4,820	€553,000	100.0%	80.0%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services			€310,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€3,535,103			
		8,738	10,667	€20,312,914			
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB	Full Time	8,294	13,296	€41,386,052	92.9%	62.1%	47.7%
	Part Time	7,367	11,045	€9,450,636	90.0%	65.4%	36.3%
	Community Education	4,761	4,803	€1,700,027	86.2%	99.7%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services			€683,408			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€11,547,047			
		20,422	29,144	€64,767,170			
Galway and Roscommon ETB	Full Time	3,869	6,635	€21,897,332	98.3%	57.0%	58.6%
	Part Time	5,178	10,491	€5,385,384	97.6%	40.2%	45.5%
	Community Education	3,165	3,628	€525,000	83.5%	85.3%	2.3%
	ETB Guidance Services			€364,919			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€4,239,272			
		12,212	20,754	€32,411,907			
Kerry ETB	Full Time	2,120	3,647	€17,748,681	95.4%	78.1%	47.9%
	Part Time	3,396	4,870	€2,609,000	96.8%	74.0%	33.3%
	Community Education	1,520	2,200	€224,390	100.0%	73.9%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services			€212,388			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€4,314,036			
		7,036	10,717	€25,108,495			

Table 3.3, continued

FET PROVISION IN 2017	Estimate of Inputs in 2017				Estimate of Outputs in 2017			
	Number of Beneficiaries		Funding	Retention	Completion	Accreditation		
Provider	Provision Type	Starting Courses During 2017	Revised Projected Beneficiaries in 2017*	Funding for FET Provision in 2017	Percentage of starters retained on their course during 2017	Percentage of retained beneficiaries scheduled to finish courses in 2017	Accreditation rate for beneficiaries completing courses in 2017	
Kildare and Wicklow ETB	Full Time	3,856	6,268	€22,864,687	87.0%	70.1%	77.8%	
	Part Time	6,407	9,287	€3,011,475	91.0%	72.4%	19.1%	
	Community Education	1,587	1,899	€561,785	100.0%	86.6%	5.2%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€484,895			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€2,242,500			
			11,850	17,454	€29,165,342			
Kilkenny and Carlow ETB	Full Time	2,216	3,696	€13,259,651	96.6%	58.7%	74.9%	
	Part Time	2,316	3,774	€2,130,005	84.8%	74.4%	34.7%	
	Community Education	1,755	1,755	€331,948	95.4%	74.1%	0.0%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€600,428			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€1,062,531			
			6,287	9,225	€17,384,563			
Laois and Offaly ETB	Full Time	1,162	2,359	€11,153,997	91.0%	89.1%	85.1%	
	Part Time	3,559	7,707	€2,285,008	95.3%	73.7%	47.0%	
	Community Education	630	645	€354,626	94.0%	69.9%	4.7%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€310,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€2,503,451			
			5,351	10,711	€16,607,082			
Limerick and Clare ETB	Full Time	4,983	7,846	€34,648,350	93.3%	56.8%	54.2%	
	Part Time	8,381	10,170	€5,673,436	91.4%	88.2%	31.2%	
	Community Education	3,649	3,649	€810,000	93.3%	100.0%	0.0%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€660,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€9,109,941			
			17,013	21,665	€50,901,727			
Longford and Westmeath ETB	Full Time	1,471	2,684	€16,513,429	94.6%	76.1%	72.6%	
	Part Time	2,126	3,738	€2,926,862	89.3%	71.4%	58.9%	
	Community Education	319	395	€253,200	97.2%	98.2%	2.6%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€278,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€3,809,140			
			3,916	6,817	€23,780,631			
Louth and Meath ETB	Full Time	4,767	6,646	€21,272,564	91.5%	95.6%	63.4%	
	Part Time	8,325	9,307	€3,218,815	92.9%	99.6%	29.0%	
	Community Education	2,492	2,581	€562,541	100.0%	83.1%	0.0%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€358,380			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€4,376,968			
			15,584	18,534	€29,789,268			
Mayo Sligo and Leitrim ETB	Full Time	3,517	5,518	€22,076,894	94.4%	66.1%	66.4%	
	Part Time	4,704	5,262	€3,292,128	94.8%	94.6%	33.9%	
	Community Education	3,751	3,751	€574,000	100.0%	100.5%	0.0%	
	ETB Guidance Services				€440,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs				€4,232,709			
			11,972	14,531	€30,615,731			

Table 3.3, continued

FET PROVISION IN 2017	Estimate of Inputs in 2017				Estimate of Outputs in 2017		
	Number of Beneficiaries		Funding	Retention	Completion	Accreditation	
Provider	Provision Type	Starting Courses During 2017	Revised Projected Beneficiaries in 2017*	Funding for FET Provision in 2017	Percentage of starters retained on their course during 2017	Percentage of retained beneficiaries scheduled to finish courses in 2017	Accreditation rate for beneficiaries completing courses in 2017
Tipperary ETB	Full Time	1,927	3,404	€13,021,115	95.5%	44.6%	57.9%
	Part Time	3,261	4,795	€2,308,000	96.0%	72.1%	48.8%
	Community Education	2,571	2,580	€400,000	90.5%	100.0%	0.0%
	ETB Guidance Services			€320,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€946,444			
		7,759	10,779	€16,995,559			
Waterford and Wexford ETB	Full Time	5,374	8,511	€34,369,663	95.1%	86.2%	58.0%
	Part Time	5,355	8,676	€4,274,000	97.6%	79.2%	49.7%
	Community Education	947	2,019	€635,000	100.0%	54.4%	0.5%
	ETB Guidance Services			€383,000			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€6,755,964			
		11,676	19,206	€46,417,627			
<b>Total ETB Provision</b>		<b>211,954</b>	<b>293,766</b>	<b>552,500,168</b>			
Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools <sup>1</sup>	Full Time	1,850	3,175	€440,552	91.3%	44.0%	93.5%
	Part Time	832	1,239	€320,000	92.8%	96.9%	77.7%
	Total	2,682	4,414	€760,552			
Irish Deaf Society	Full Time	249	272	€240,000	100.0%	0.0%	51.9%
Cork Institute of Technology <sup>2</sup>	Full Time			€160,588			
NALA	Part Time	7,200	16,300	€220,000	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Total Additional Provision</b>		<b>7,449</b>	<b>16,572</b>	<b>€620,588</b>			
Momentum <sup>3</sup>	Full Time			€1,000,000			
eCollege <sup>3</sup>	Part Time	8,556	8,556	€1,685,000	72.5%	88.6%	5.2%
<b>Total National Programmes Provision</b>		<b>8,556</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>€2,685,000</b>			
<b>FET PROVISION TOTALS</b>	Full Time	70,875	117,442	€392,836,780			
	Part Time	111,417	155,452	€68,288,789			
	Community Education	48,349	50,414	€10,836,192			
	ETB Guidance Services			€6,785,418			
	ETB FET Operational Costs			€77,819,129			
	Profiled but Unallocated			€11,700,063			
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>230,641</b>	<b>323,308</b>	<b>€568,266,371</b>			

\*Revised beneficiaries includes FARR planning data and amendments made in post planning review

<sup>1</sup> Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools PLC enhanced capitation only

<sup>2</sup> Cork Institute of Technology projected beneficiary number included under Cork ETB

<sup>3</sup> Momentum and eCollege funded through SOLAS allocation

## Notes

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 are views of the data pertaining to projected provision for 2017 by FET providers and programmes respectively. The data is presented on a full-time, part-time and community education basis. The data also includes the number of projected starters and beneficiaries and percentage analysis of projected data, relating to retained starters and completers.

Table 3.3 - provides a breakdown of beneficiary numbers and grant allocations by ETB and other FET providers for 2017. Estimated numbers of starters, completers and certification rates on a full-time, part-time and community education basis by ETB and other providers is presented. Funding values do not include the full cost of PLC provision (please refer to budget allocations in this section on page 32).

Table 3.4 presents information on provision inputs and outputs on a programme basis. The information is in relation to full-time, part-time and community education

provision across FET programmes. This table also indicates that the estimated overall total number of beneficiaries of FET provision for 2017 will be circa **323,300** at a total cost of €568,266,371. The estimated overall beneficiary number of **323,300** includes the projected number of starters in 2017 of **230,641**. This table also provides information on the estimated **retention, completion and accreditation** rates across the Education and Training Boards and other providers by programme for 2017.

The percentage analysis of starters retained and completers achieving accreditation is based on the planning data entered in FARR. Post-planning, the overall projected beneficiary numbers were reviewed compared to funding allocations and, where appropriate, revisions were made by FET providers, which are reflected in the table. The retained beneficiaries calculations are based on the early-leaver estimates recorded in FARR and the revised overall projected beneficiary numbers.

Table 3.4: Overview of FET programme provision: inputs, outputs and funding allocation for 2017.

All Providers	2017 - Planned Further Education and Training Programme Provision Totals					
	Projected Inputs		Funding for FET Provision in 2017			
Programme	Starters During 2017	Revised Total Beneficiaries in 2017*	Funding for FET Provision in 2017	Percentage of Starters Retained	Percentage of Retained Beneficiaries scheduled to complete courses in 2017	Percentage Accreditation Rate for beneficiaries completing courses in 2017
Apprenticeship Training**	7,434	9,435	€53,173,592	99.6%	86.9%	13.1%
Blended Training	411	563	€751,584	92.5%	85.2%	2.5%
Bridging and Foundation Training	848	1,171	€2,715,450	90.7%	81.6%	37.7%
Community Training Centres	1,410	2,982	€32,789,775	89.6%	53.5%	82.6%
Justice Workshops	118	219	€982,329	89.8%	56.5%	77.0%
Local Training Initiatives	2,057	3,569	€24,898,732	94.4%	71.8%	83.9%
PLC	34,350	59,778	€7,133,900	92.2%	63.5%	80.5%
Specialist Training Programmes	1,762	3,594	€46,785,490	95.8%	73.1%	74.1%
Specific Skills Training	11,014	14,286	€55,902,384	92.5%	90.4%	32.9%
Traineeships Training	1,884	3,482	€26,159,261	93.4%	75.6%	64.8%
VTOS	4,049	7,966	€73,742,944	92.5%	69.4%	73.4%
Youthreach	3,439	6,950	€65,960,199	96.6%	72.3%	43.2%
<b>Sub-total Full Time Programmes</b>	<b>68,776</b>	<b>113,995</b>	<b>€390,995,640</b>			
Adult Literacy	30,837	37,621	€24,964,367	93.2%	90.8%	30.3%
BTEI Groups	22,164	33,397	€26,822,212	93.1%	73.5%	68.7%
ESOL	10,420	14,458	€1,736,987	90.2%	75.5%	26.8%
Evening Training	13,388	14,562	€5,743,787	93.2%	93.7%	43.4%
FET Co-operation Hours	10,872	20,614	€0	92.1%	69.3%	19.2%
ITABE	1,980	2,752	€1,938,124	94.2%	68.8%	43.4%
Libraries Training	0	120	€0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Refugee Resettlement	786	1,035	€2,058,312	94.9%	78.3%	2.1%
Skills for Work	3,390	3,460	€2,800,000	94.6%	95.4%	17.6%
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	992	1,338	€0	94.3%	73.5%	1.8%
<b>Sub-total Part-time Programmes</b>	<b>94,829</b>	<b>129,357</b>	<b>€66,063,789</b>			
Community Education	48,349	50,414	€10,836,192	95.0%	93.7%	2.3%
<b>Total Community Education</b>	<b>48,349</b>	<b>50,414</b>	<b>€10,836,192</b>			
VSCCS PLC <sup>1</sup>	1,850	3,175	€440,552	91.3%	44.0%	93.5%
VSCCS BTEI	832	1,239	€320,000	92.8%	96.9%	77.7%
<b>Total All PLC</b>	<b>36,200</b>	<b>62,953</b>	<b>€7,574,452</b>			
<b>Total All BTEI</b>	<b>22,996</b>	<b>34,636</b>	<b>€27,142,212</b>			
Irish Deaf Society (f/t)	249	272	€240,000	100.0%	99.3%	51.9%
Momentum National Programme <sup>2</sup>	0	0	€1,000,000	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>National Programmes Full-time Total</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>€1,240,000</b>			
<b>All Full Time Programmes Total</b>	<b>70,875</b>	<b>117,442</b>	<b>€392,676,192</b>			
NALA Write on (p/t)	7,200	16,300	€220,000	100.0%	6.3%	100.0%
On-line Learning (eCollege) (p/t) <sup>2</sup>	8,556	8,556	€1,685,000	72.5%	88.6%	5.2%
<b>National Programmes Part-time Total</b>	<b>15,756</b>	<b>24,856</b>	<b>€1,905,000</b>			
<b>All Part-time Programmes Total</b>	<b>159,766</b>	<b>205,866</b>	<b>€79,124,981</b>			
Adult Guidance Service			€6,785,418			
ETB Staff & Operational Costs			€77,819,129			
Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools			€760,552			
Cork Institute of Technology <sup>3</sup>			€160,588			
Profiled but Unallocated			€11,700,063			
<b>Total All Programmes</b>	<b>230,641</b>	<b>323,308</b>	<b>€568,266,371</b>			

\*Revised beneficiaries includes FARR planning data and amendments made in post planning review

<sup>1</sup> Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools PLC enhanced capitation only

<sup>2</sup> Momentum and eCollege funded through SOLAS allocation

<sup>3</sup> Cork Institute of Technology projected beneficiary number included under Cork ETB

<sup>3</sup> Momentum and eCollege funded through SOLAS allocation

\*\* Apprenticeship: Accreditation includes completers for phases; 2, 4, 6 & 7, only Phase 7 has accreditation.

Table 3.5: Estimate of changes in FET projected programme provision for 2017 from the reported outcome for 2016.

Changes in FET Programme 2017 Projected Provision from 2016 Reported Outcome.					
FET PROVISION IN 2017	Number of Beneficiaries		Analysis		
Programme	Projected Beneficiaries Starting Courses During 2017	Total Revised Projected Beneficiary Numbers for 2017*	Percentage Change in Beneficiaries Projected for 2017 from 2016 Reported Outcome	Percentage Proportion of the Reported Outcome of Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2016	Percentage Proportion of the Revised Projected Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2017
Apprenticeship Training	7,434	9,435	17.5%	7.0%	8.3%
Blended Learning	411	563	16.8%	0.4%	0.5%
Bridging and Foundation Training	848	1,171	-8.6%	1.1%	1.0%
Community Training Centres	1,410	2,982	-5.8%	2.8%	2.6%
Justice Workshops	118	219	-29.6%	0.3%	0.2%
Local Training Initiatives	2,057	3,569	-16.8%	3.8%	3.1%
PLC	34,350	59,778	3.2%	50.6%	52.4%
Specialist Training Providers	1,762	3,594	-2.5%	3.2%	3.2%
Specific Skills Training	11,014	14,286	-0.2%	12.5%	12.5%
Traineeship Training	1,884	3,482	-16.1%	3.6%	3.1%
VTOS Core	4,049	7,966	-3.3%	7.2%	7.0%
Youthreach (including Advocacy)	3,439	6,950	-18.6%	7.5%	6.1%
<b>Full Time Provision Total</b>	<b>68,776</b>	<b>113,995</b>	<b>-0.35%</b>		
Part Time Provision					
Adult Literacy Groups (incl Family Literacy)	30,837	37,621	-6.4%	28.8%	29.1%
BTEI (incl Breacadh & Innovation Projects)	22,164	33,397	-10.7%	26.8%	25.5%
ESOL	10,420	14,458	-7.2%	11.2%	10.8%
Evening Training	13,388	14,562	-0.9%	10.5%	12.1%
FET Co-operation Hours	10,872	20,614	-7.5%	16.0%	13.4%
ITABE	1,980	2,752	-17.3%	2.4%	1.8%
Libraries Training	0	120	-62.1%	0.2%	0.0%
Refugee Resettlement (ESOL)	786	1,035	77.2%	0.4%	0.8%
Skills For Work	3,390	3,460	17.0%	2.1%	3.0%
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	992	1,338	-38.1%	1.5%	0.9%
<b>Part Time Provision Total</b>	<b>94,829</b>	<b>129,357</b>	<b>-7.27%</b>		
Part Time Unaccredited Provision					
Community Education	48,349	50,414	-6.4%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Part Time Unaccredited Provision Total</b>	<b>48,349</b>	<b>50,414</b>	<b>-6.35%</b>		
VSCCS Provision					
VSCCS PLC	1,850	3,175	8.3%	2.6%	2.8%
VSCCS BTEI	832	1,239	2.7%	2.2%	2.5%
<b>VSCCS Provision Total</b>	<b>2,682</b>	<b>4,414</b>	<b>6.70%</b>		
National Programmes Provision					
Momentum (Full Time)	0			7.3%	
eCollege (Part Time)	8,556	8,556	-7.4%	92.4%	100.0%
Cork Institute of Technology <sup>1</sup>	0			0.3%	
<b>National Programmes Provision Total</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>-14.49%</b>		
Other Programme Provision					
Irish Deaf Society (Adult Literacy)	249	272	-25.5%	2.2%	1.6%
NALA (Write On / Phone Tuition)	7,200	16,300	0.6%	97.8%	98.4%
<b>Other Programme Provision Total</b>	<b>7,449</b>	<b>16,572</b>	<b>0.04%</b>		
<b>FET Programme Provision Totals</b>	<b>230,641</b>	<b>323,308</b>	<b>-4.47%</b>		

\*Revised beneficiaries includes FARR planning data and amendments made in post planning review

<sup>1</sup>CIT projected numbers for 2017 included under Cork ETB

## Analysis of planned FET provision in 2017 by skills cluster

Table 3.6 2017 FET skills cluster provision

2017 FET Skills Cluster Provision				
SKILLS CLUSTER	Projected Inputs		Analysis	
	Beneficiaries (Starting Courses during 2017)	Total Number of Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2017	Percentage Proportion of Beneficiaries by Skills Cluster for Labour Market Skills & Transversal Skills focus	Percentage Proportion of Beneficiaries Completing Courses in 2017 by Skills Cluster for Labour Market Skills & Transversal Skills focus
Labour Market Skills Focus				
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	1,693	2,642	1.6%	1.6%
Animal Science	1,210	2,125	1.3%	1.0%
Arts & Crafts	4,129	7,112	4.3%	3.3%
Built Environment	5,901	7,237	4.4%	5.3%
Business, Administration	12,991	21,739	13.3%	12.8%
Core ICT	4,440	7,318	4.5%	4.8%
Engineering	571	906	0.6%	0.6%
Engineering (Electrical)	794	1,005	0.6%	0.6%
Engineering (IT)	165	259	0.2%	0.2%
Engineering (Mechanical)	2,542	2,844	1.7%	2.1%
Engineering (Transport)	724	1,084	0.7%	0.6%
Entrepreneurship	686	711	0.4%	0.5%
Financial Services	1,013	1,913	1.2%	1.2%
Food and Beverage	1,826	2,604	1.6%	1.7%
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	4,473	7,322	4.5%	4.0%
Health, Family other Social Services	30,965	44,619	27.2%	28.0%
Information Technology	3,454	6,941	4.2%	3.9%
Language	8,637	9,895	6.0%	6.8%
Management	720	831	0.5%	0.6%
Manufacturing	3,473	4,314	2.6%	3.1%
Media Graphics Communications	4,578	7,401	4.5%	3.5%
Natural Resources	122	122	0.1%	0.1%
Research and Education-Training	436	572	0.3%	0.4%
Sales & Marketing	2,164	3,509	2.1%	2.0%
Science and Technology	1,746	2,346	1.4%	1.3%
Security, Guarding & Emergency Services	1,775	2,004	1.2%	1.4%
Sport and Leisure	3,293	5,822	3.6%	3.2%
Tourism	1,811	2,824	1.7%	1.5%
Transport, Distribution & Logistics	3,103	3,712	2.3%	2.8%
Web Development & Design	835	2,090	1.3%	1.2%
Sub-Total Labour Market Skills Focus	110,270	163,823		
<b>Transversal Skills Focus</b>				
Core Personal	59,483	64,833	46.1%	53.2%
General Learning	52,896	75,387	53.6%	46.7%
Skills Sampling, General Learning & Core Personal	176	338	0.2%	0.1%
Sub-Total Transversal Skills Focus	112,555	140,558		
<b>Total</b>	<b>222,825</b>	<b>304,381</b>		

\*Projected beneficiary number includes FARR planning data and excludes any amendments made in the post planning review

Note: Data relating to Skills Clusters is based on the projected numbers entered in FARR and excludes amendments made in the post planning review. Post planning the overall projected beneficiary numbers were reviewed vis-à-vis funding allocations and where appropriate revisions were made by FET Providers at a programme level and the revisions are reflected in the programme view tables.

Prior to 2017, career clusters were used to analyse FET provision, based on 18 Classifications. In 2017, the classifications were reviewed and now include 33 classifications as outlined in Table 3.6. SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) codes are now assigned centrally by SOLAS in 30 of the 33 skills clusters. There are two categories:

- Skill clusters linked to the labour market through SOC (30)
- Skill clusters that are personal and general in direction (transversal skills) and are not specifically linked to a labour-market sector (3).

The emergence of new occupational areas and specialisation within occupational areas generated the need to expand what is now called 'skills clusters'. The skills clusters without SOC codes assigned are:

- 'General learning'
- 'Core personal'
- 'Skills sampling, general learning & core personal'.

The skills Clusters are assigned at programme level within the PLSS (Programme and Learner Support System), enabling each course to be categorised by a skills cluster. The skills cluster expansion and SOC code alignment will provide enriched data on existing and future skills demands and, more pertinently, the FET response to those demands. The labour market research data is now linked to the course provision both nationally and within each ETB at course level. The proportion of the overall projected beneficiaries for 2017 undertaking labour-market-oriented Further Education and Training courses, based on the skills cluster focus, is almost 54%. The remaining 46% take transversal-oriented courses. The projected 2017 beneficiary numbers within the skills clusters data sets are not directly comparable to 2016 career clusters. However, some general observations can be made as follows:

### General learning

In 2016, 46% of projected beneficiaries of FET provision were classified in the general learning cluster. Analysis of the FARR database and insight from ETBs suggested this was an issue of definition and that a considerable number of beneficiaries in this cluster could be redistributed. In 2017 it is noted that there is a significant decrease in the number of beneficiaries in the general learning skills cluster projected at 25% in 2017. However, the combined clusters without SOC codes assigned represents just over 46% of the provision as a proportion of the beneficiary numbers and mainly caters for transversal skills involved with literacy and numeracy and community education provision.

### Engineering

Five new engineering clusters have been added to the skills cluster categories: engineering, engineering (electrical), engineering (IT), engineering (mechanical) and engineering (transport). Between 2014 and 2015,

overall employment in engineering occupations increased by 18%. The largest increases were observed for process, production and QA technicians.<sup>25</sup> The proportion of FET provision planned with a labour-market-skills focus for 2017, based on beneficiary numbers in the related skills clusters of engineering, is 3.7%.

### Health, family and other social services

Almost 15% of beneficiaries of FET provision in 2017 are projected to be from the health, family and other social services skills cluster. Between 2014 and 2015, overall employment in social and care occupations expanded by 9.9%. Ireland's ageing population will be a key driver of the future demand for care workers, while any increase in the labour force participation will result in the increase in the need for child care workers.<sup>26</sup> Table 3.7 outlines the top seven labour-market-focus skills clusters, based on the percentage proportion of the overall projected beneficiary numbers for FET provision in 2017:

Table 3.7 **Top seven labour-market-Focus skills clusters based on the overall number of projected FET beneficiaries in 2017**

Top Seven Labour Market Focus Skills Clusters based on the overall Number of Projected FET Beneficiaries in 2017		
Labour Market Focus Skills Cluster	Percentage Proportion of overall Beneficiaries by Skills Cluster	Number of Beneficiaries
Health, Family and other Social Services	14.7%	44,619
Business, Administration	7.1%	21,739
Language	3.3%	9,895
Media, Graphics, Communications	2.4%	7,401
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	2.4%	7,322
Core ICT	2.4%	7,318
Built Environment	2.4%	7,237

The skills clusters listed in table 3.7 are closely followed by the skills clusters of arts and crafts at 2.3% or 7,112 projected beneficiaries and information technology also at 2.3% or 6,941 beneficiaries.

Table 3.8 outlines the top ten labour-market-focus skills clusters, based on the percentage proportion of the projected beneficiary numbers for labour-market-focus skills clusters relating to planned FET provision in 2017:

<sup>25</sup> National Skills Bulletin 2016  
<sup>26</sup> National Skills Bulletin 2016

Table 3.8 **Top ten labour-market-focus skills clusters based on number of projected FET beneficiaries in 2017 undertaking labour-market, skills-cluster-focused provision**

Top Ten Labour Market Focus Skills Clusters based on Number of Projected FET Beneficiaries in 2017 undertaking Labour Market Skills Cluster Focused Provision		
Labour Market Focus Skills Cluster	Percentage Proportion of overall Beneficiaries by Skills Cluster	Number of Beneficiaries
Health, Family and other Social Services	27.2%	44,619
Business, Administration	13.3%	21,739
Language	6.0%	9,895
Media, Graphics, Communications	4.5%	7,401
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	4.5%	7,322
Core ICT	4.5%	7,318
Built Environment	4.4%	7,237
Arts & Crafts	4.3%	7,112
Information Technology	4.2%	6,941
Sport and Leisure	3.6%	5,822
<b>Total</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>125,406</b>

### FET provision supporting skills for the economy and employment

FET Strategy 2014-2019 identifies the need for stakeholders, such as SOLAS and the ETBs, to talk to employers to establish the short to medium-term skill needs for their companies.

The ETB FARs submissions provided qualitative data related to identification of emerging skills needs. The information submitted was based on local labour market intelligence which was obtained by the ETBs through their interaction with local and regional employer networks, other educational institutions, relevant organisations and community groups. The ETBs also indicated that, as part of their 2017 planning process, consideration was given to the information provided in the following publications:

- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs National Skills Bulletin 2016 (September 2016)
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Monitoring Ireland's Skills Supply, Trends in Education and Training Outputs (November 2016)
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Regional Labour Market Bulletin 2016 (October 2016)
- The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs Vacancy Overview 2015 (May 2016)
- National Skills Strategy 2025 - Ireland's Future
- The Action Plan for Jobs 2016
- Pathways to Work 2016-2020
- Action Plan for Education 2017

### FET provision to address emerging skill needs

FET provision supports business sectors by providing a wide range of programmes and courses. The FET sector also interacts and collaborates with a variety of stakeholders, e.g. Government departments and organisations, Chambers of Commerce, local development groups, local employers and community groups such as tidy towns, active retirement and Traveller support groups to ensure the sector maintains an awareness of changing needs in the context of FET provision.

The ETBs are currently reviewing existing provision for the purpose of matching capacity with potential demand for specific programmes/courses, e.g. apprenticeship, engineering, entrepreneurship, IT, etc., and for the purpose of realignment of course provision to meet identified skills shortages through the inclusion of additional/alternative modules in existing courses.

### Course innovation and expanded delivery in 2017

The 2017 Funding Allocations Requests (FARs) process sought information on FET plans in relation to provision of new innovative courses. Information was also sought on plans to enhance course choice based on local and industry need. The chart below sets out some examples of the course detail provided.

Chart 3.1

Skill Clusters	Overview - Innovation and expanded course provision in 2017
<b>Health family and other social services</b>	<p>The growth in demand for healthcare and social services education and training opportunities is continuing. Plans to provide new courses address the emerging need and include courses related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Pre-paramedic Fire &amp; Ambulance Services Level 5</li> <li>– Healthcare Supervisory Management Level 6</li> <li>– Food Science and Nutrition Level 6</li> <li>– Public and Emergency Services Level 5</li> </ul>
<b>Engineering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Plans to provide a 'pre-apprenticeship' programme in light engineering are underway.</li> <li>– As a result of a need identified by several engineering firms, provision of a computer-aided engineering course will be provided. It will equip current and prospective employees with the skills needed to work in engineering firms that supply the medical device industry.</li> </ul>
<b>Entrepreneurship</b>	<p>There has been a marked increase in the promotion of entrepreneurship across a range of programmes. Entrepreneurship modules have been integrated into many courses and 'start your own business'-type courses are now provided at a number of locations. One ETB intends to support a Dragons' Den-inspired event in 2017 to help identify new business ideas.</p>
<b>Information Technology</b>	<p>Plans for delivery of the ICT Associative Professional course across arrange of locations are in progress. Digital marketing/social media skills are in high demand. The following new courses are planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A new Digital Media and Marketing Career Traineeship</li> <li>– Illustration and Design Skills Level 5 and 6</li> <li>– Career Traineeships in Animation</li> <li>– Gaming and Digital Innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Built environment</b>	<p>There continues to be a focus on renewable energy and sustainability and FET continues to provide a range of training opportunities related to retrofitting of domestic buildings, thermal insulation, air tightness, wind turbine maintenance and solar power. New courses planned for 2017 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Home repair and Care Level 4</li> <li>– Level 5 CAD with Architectural Design for Green Building</li> <li>– Ecology and Environmental Management Level 5</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<p>In response to the Assessment of Future Skills Requirements in the hospitality sector, courses related to professional cookery, reception and guest services and a traineeship in food and beverages and tour guiding have been introduced. Plans are also underway for the introduction of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– New Commis Chef Apprenticeship</li> <li>– Expansion of course delivery in relation to the tour guiding National Certificate QQI Level 6</li> </ul> <p>Drivers for expansion of courses related to tourism and hospitality have been identified as a result of the Wild Atlantic Way initiative and the advent of the Center Parcs project.</p>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<p>Courses planned in relation to manufacturing include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Make it in Manufacturing</li> </ul> <p>This part-time course provides learners with the information they need to decide if manufacturing is the career for them. During the five-week course, learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hear from manufacturing experts</li> <li>– Talk to others who have made a successful move into manufacturing</li> <li>– Learn how new products are developed and manufactured for customers across the globe</li> <li>– Meet potential future employers.</li> <li>– Develop a high-quality CV</li> </ul> <p>In response to feedback from local biomedical industry, including Boston Scientific and Medtronic, a module has been added to a Clean Room programme in Infection Prevention and Control</p>
<b>Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The CPA accounting traineeship is to be introduced for provision in a number of additional ETB locations</li> <li>– Contact Centre Skills Level 5 courses will be available through three separate ETB locations</li> </ul>
<b>Sport and leisure</b>	<p>Programmes planned in relation to sports and recreation across a range of ETBs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Professional Soccer and Player Development Level 6</li> <li>– Professional Sports Fitness Instruction Level 6</li> <li>– Soccer Academy Level 5 to be provided in a number of locations</li> <li>– Expansion of delivery of the Surf Instructor and Beach Lifeguard course across a number of ETBs</li> <li>– Festival Management and Sound Production</li> </ul>
<b>Transport, distribution and logistics</b>	<p>New courses in transport, distribution and logistics skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Warehousing, Stock Control</li> <li>– HGV Driving</li> <li>– A Bespoke Programme – Vehicle Conversion (auto electrical QQI level 5 Motor Technology)</li> <li>– Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSV) Industry Knowledge Test preparation course – in response to the shortage of taxi drivers</li> <li>– Aircraft Structural Repair Technician</li> <li>– Cabin Crew/Airline Studies</li> <li>– A suitable Aircraft Spray Painter course was developed in collaboration with Eirtech (IAC) Aviation in 2015/2016. The first class were certified by the end of 2016 and employment contracts were issued to 70% of the class.</li> </ul>

## ETB collaborative projects

As well as the new courses in 2017, collaboration is ongoing between the ETBs and government departments, LEOs, local business, agencies, such as FIT, and third level colleges, all with a view to enhancing opportunities through participation in FET provision.

### **Some examples of collaborative projects include:**

- The learning for life programme supported by Diageo is ongoing and continues to provide opportunities for the long-term unemployed to develop skills that support gaining employment in the tourism and hospitality sector. This programme is running in a number of ETBs, which include WWETB and LMETB.
- A healthcare security officer course in development with St James' Hospital, and first reported on in 2016, is ongoing.
- A work-based skills development programme has been developed with a number of hotels in the Cork region and is being delivered on a pilot basis to up-skill and certify staff across a number of employment areas within the sector.
- A new commis chef apprenticeship is being developed in collaboration with the hospitality industry. This project is being led by Kerry ETB and is supported by a number of other ETBs.
- GRETB has provided accredited training programmes in aquaculture and boat building in partnership with Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Údarás na Gaeltachta and employers in the Marine sector. GRETB has plans to continue these training programmes into the future to support local industry.
- A 'pre-apprenticeship' programme in light engineering is being developed for delivery in North Cork to address skills requirements identified in collaboration with the North Cork Engineering Companies.
- Planned new traineeship programmes include courses related to: hospitality, construction, engineering, digital media, hairdressing, pharmacy assistant, catering/food science, business/insurance, retail/sales.
- A new MCSA Windows Server 2012 (blended course) will be provided. The course will be delivered via Moodle and will run Monday to Friday using live and pre-recorded classes. Face-to-face workshops will be facilitated on a modular basis.
- In conjunction with the Western Drugs Task Force, GRETB is running a pilot programme in Galway city. This programme was developed to support all addiction service users seeking access to an education programme in a supportive environment. Participants also received input from the Adult Guidance Service to help them to explore progression options.
- A GRETB up-skilling initiative through the Monksland Centre is underway in partnership with the Defence Forces to provide participants (mostly those due to retire from the Defence Forces) with education and skills for further employment opportunities in the civilian workforce.

- As a result of collaboration between Kerry ETB and Transmission Links International (Tralee), a Fibre Installation Technician Course is scheduled to run in 2017.
- A number of ETBs are participating in the EU-funded, ETBI-led, transfer-of-innovation partnership called EDISON (Educational Diversity and Innovate Skills on Entrepreneurship). This project aims to transfer successful experiences and strategies in teaching entrepreneurship from Austria, Spain and Italy to the national VET Associations in the Netherlands, Ireland and UK. All three countries are well positioned to develop a VET 'entrepreneurial learning pathway' on a national scale.<sup>27</sup>
- A programme on finance and taxation was delivered to 22 local business owners in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), incorporating bookkeeping, taxation, cash-flow planning and legal issues.
- LOETB has partnered with Elverys Intersport to provide a nine-month QQI-certified Retail Practice programme for trainee managers in stores across the country. The programme consists of monthly tutorials provided by an ETB tutor, online learning and work placements supervised by Elverys Intersport management. The programme is compulsory for all new trainee managers. On completion, trainees are better placed to be promoted to management roles in the organisation.
- KWETB successfully completed the delivery of the pilot programme with FIT and Intel leading to the award of a Level 6 QQI Advanced Certificate in Maintenance Skills Technology. All students who finished the course went into full-time employment. The majority gaining employment with Intel.
- WWETB has worked with Zurich Insurance to provide a traineeship for the insurance industry. Eight of the graduates joined Zurich at the end of the course.

## FET provision and outcomes for 2017

The charts below provide information on FET provision outcomes with a focus on estimates related beneficiary, completion/exit and progression outcomes for 2017.

Chart 3.2 provides overall data in percentage terms in relation to the estimated number of beneficiaries expected to participate in FET programmes in 2017 on a full-time, part-time basis and through community education.

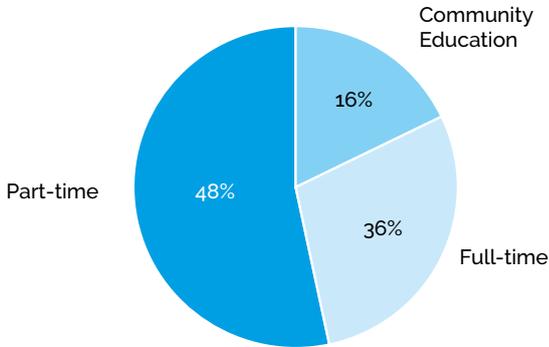
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<sup>27</sup> ETBI Website

**Estimated Percentage of Beneficiaries Expected to Participated in FET Programmes in 2017**

**Chart 3.2**

Note: The data represents projected figures provided by FET providers for 2017.



**Estimate of FET outputs for beneficiary completions/exits during 2017**

Chart 3.3 presents a breakdown, in percentage terms, of estimated completions and exits of total beneficiaries in full-time, part-time and community education programmes. The data available indicates that across the three programmes duration types, an average of:

- 63% of beneficiaries will be 'full completers'.
- 8% of beneficiaries will be 'partial completers'.
- 6% of beneficiaries will be 'early leavers'.
- 23% of beneficiaries will not complete in 2017 and will continue their studies into 2018.

**Estimate of FET outputs for beneficiary completions/exits during 2017**

**Chart 3.3**

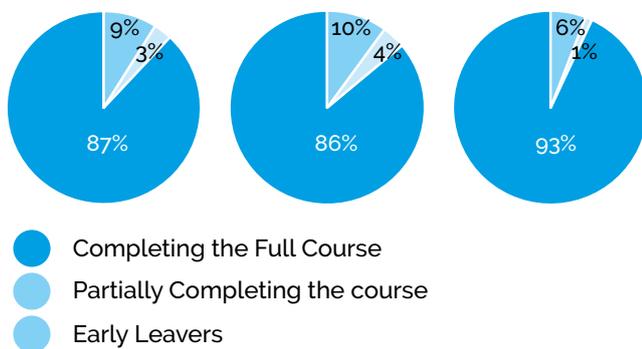
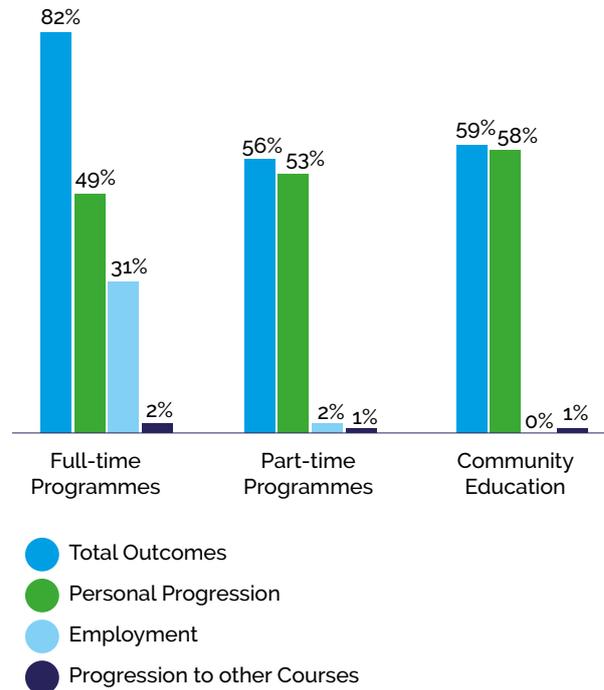


Chart 3.4 provides an estimate of outcomes in the context of full-time, part-time and community education provision in 2017 for beneficiaries:

- Gaining employment
- Progressing to further studies/learning
- Personal progression

**Estimate of outcomes for beneficiaries completing FET Provision During 2017**

**Chart 3.4**



**Wider benefits of learning**

The impacts of learning extend beyond purely economic values, such as earnings, employment and increased productivity. There are many individual and societal benefits over and above the 'earnings' aspect. These include: increased confidence and development, an increase in social inclusion and improved personal wellbeing\*. Adult learning is linked more broadly to such diverse areas as increases in social inclusion, more equitable income distribution and savings in social welfare and medical costs.

Participation in FET programmes can result in the learner gaining accreditation, qualifications on the NFQ, employment, and opportunities to participate in higher level FET and HET programmes. The wider benefits of learning which accrue through participation in FET provision are internationally recognised as having the capacity to contribute to a social return on FET investment. More data and evidence on the wider benefits of learning as they relate to FET would be very beneficial in terms of policy making, evaluation, planning and funding.

Some of the wider benefits of learning have been identified as:

- Promoting active inclusion and reducing isolation, particularly in rural areas
- Building knowledge, skill and competence that, in the future, may support learner progression

- Addressing IT skill gaps that can be used in every-day life and in employment
- Increasing self-confidence, particularly for those seeking a return to work
- Providing opportunities for inclusion by helping learners to keep up with an ever-changing society

*\*Source: National Adult Learner Forum Policy Report 2016*

### **FET provision for literacy and numeracy**

Literacy and numeracy skills are important in supporting participation in employment and the ability to function within society. The FET Strategy 2014 to 2019 states *...‘FET provision will support the active inclusion of people of all abilities with special reference to literacy and numeracy.’*

The funding for literacy and numeracy provision will be sustained. It will remain in place until an agreed strategic inputs/outcomes-based funding model has been trialled and tested on other types of FET provision.

Literacy and numeracy provision is committed to the best possible outcomes for a diverse learner group, including:

- Advertising and promotion of literacy and numeracy
- Fit-for-purpose screening and assessment systems
- Broader access and range of provision for learners with basic skills needs
- Increased participation, completion and attainment at NFQ levels 1-3 for learners
- Literacy and numeracy for personal, family, social and community contexts
- ESOL

SOLAS, in partnership with providers and other agencies, will support the achievement of these outcomes throughout 2017 and over the remainder of the Further Education and Training Strategy.

### **FET Provision for the Long Term Unemployed (LTU)**

The number of unemployed people fell by 33,200 in the year to Quarter 1 2017. Available data suggests this decline will continue for 2017. However, high levels of long-term unemployment continue to persist. It is estimated that 15% of starters on FET provision in 2017 will be long-term unemployed.

### **FET provision for people with a disability**

SOLAS, through the FET planning process and in conjunction with the FET sector, DES, DSP/INTREO and the disability sector, supports the implementation of the high-level goal related to supporting active inclusion set out in the “The National Disability Implementation Plan (2013 to 2016)” and this is reflected in the SOLAS

FET strategy (2014 to 2019).

Detail of how the FET sector will support the active inclusion of persons with disability in 2017 is set out below:

- FET programmes are available to all learners, including those with a disability who meet the eligibility criteria and the guidelines provided for each FET programme.
- Specific FET programmes are provided for persons with a disability through Specialist Training Providers (STPs) and community education.
- ETBs intend increasing the range and number of programmes available at NFQ levels 1, 2 and 3, as well as non-accredited programmes, as appropriate, for persons with a disability.
- The HEA “Fund for Students with Disabilities” can provide support for students with disability. This fund allocates funding to further and higher education colleges for the provision of services and supports to full-time students with disabilities. The fund aims to ensure that students can participate fully in their academic programmes and are not disadvantaged by reason of their disability.

Set out below is summary detail of the supports available to persons with a disability (as appropriate) as outlined by the ETBs:

- Assisted technology
- Visual aids
- Sign language services
- Staff supports/staff development
- Accessibility
- Personal assistants/small group support
- Student ‘buddy’ system
- Transport (where necessary/appropriate)
- Psychological/counselling supports/guidance
- Reasonable accommodation
- Specialist training providers
- Inclusive environment, based on strong equality policy
- Community education, which assists learners with a disability to participate in FET provision by adapting course content, resources and teaching methodologies to suit their abilities/needs
- Participation in the HSE New Direction Group with a view to the mainstream inclusion of people with disabilities

Table 3.9 details the estimated number of long-term unemployed beneficiaries and beneficiaries with a disability expected to participate in FET provision in 2017.

**Estimate for specific target groups participating in FET provision in 2017.**

Table 3.9: **Estimate for specific target groups participating in FET provision in 2017**

Estimates for Specific Target Groups Participating in FET Provision in 2017			
Full Time Provision	Total Projected Starters Based on data entered in FARR	Projected Beneficiary Number reported as Long-term Unemployed starting courses during 2017*	Projected Beneficiaries reported as having a disability starting courses during 2017*
Apprenticeship Training	7,434	142	29
Blended Training	411	48	4
Bridging and Foundation Training	848	184	21
Community Training Centres	1,410	10	35
Justice Workshop	118	49	8
Local Training Initiatives	2,057	1,049	203
PLC	36,200	5,507	2,800
Specialist Training Providers	1,762	428	2,474
Specific Skills Training	11,014	3,319	215
Traineeship Training	1,884	567	25
VTOS Core	4,049	3,404	476
Youthreach	3,439	78	317
<b>Full Time Provision Total</b>	<b>70,626</b>	<b>14,785</b>	<b>6,607</b>
<b>Part Time Provision</b>			
Adult Literacy Groups	38,286	8,851	2,481
BTEI Groups	22,996	6,273	1,608
ESOL	10,420	3,704	246
Evening Training	13,388	1,321	23
FET Cooperation Hours	10,872	611	1,481
ITABE	1,980	712	110
Libraries Training	0	0	0
Refugee Resettlement	786	10	15
Skills for Work	3,390	63	29
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	992	347	67
<b>Part Time Provision Total</b>	<b>103,110</b>	<b>21,892</b>	<b>6,060</b>
<b>Part Time Community Education Provision</b>			
Community Education	48,349	6,695	4,392
<b>Part Time Community Education Total</b>	<b>48,349</b>	<b>6,695</b>	<b>4,392</b>
<b>National Programmes Provision</b>			
eCollege	8,556	0	0
Momentum			
<b>National Programmes Provision Total</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>FET Programmes Provision Totals</b>	<b>230,641</b>	<b>43,372</b>	<b>17,059</b>

## Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS)

Grant allocations will be provided to 13 Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools in 2017. The grant allocations will be used for the purpose of provision of the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). Table 3.10 outlines the Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools that will be in receipt of grant allocations for the provision of BTEI during 2017.

Table 3.10 **2017 BTEI grant allocations for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools**

2017 BTEI Grant Allocations for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools	
School/College	Funding Allocations
Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick	€56,700
Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13	€55,125
Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare	€41,360
Nagle Centre, Presentation Secondary School, Cannon Street, Waterford	€34,125
Nagle Rice Secondary School, Doneraile, Co Cork	€18,165
North Presentation Secondary School, Farranree, Cork	€72,450
Sacred Heart Secondary School, Clonakilty, Co Cork	€40,950
Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co Mayo	€13,440
Scoil Bernadette, Montenotte, Cork	€12,075
Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon, Co. Clare	€13,125
St Joseph's Secondary School, Spanish Point, Co. Clare	€43,050
St Michael's School, Castlerea, Co Roscommon	€29,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>€429,965</b>

The Department of Education and Skills will continue to fund all PLC and co-operation hours provision (teacher pay and student capitation), estimated at €189m for 2017.

SOLAS will have responsibility for Enhanced Capitation and Locally Devised Assessments (LDAs) payments to Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools. It will also approve the BTEI and PLC programmes. Table 3.11 summarises the approved PLC places for 2017 for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools. Detail of the schools and colleges that will receive grant allocations through the DES Post-Primary Payment Section in 2017 is located in the appendix 4

## Summary of Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools approved PLC places

Table 3.11 **2017 approved PLC places for Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools**

2017 Approved PLC Places for Voluntary Secondary & Community and Comprehensive Schools	
Approved Programme Places	1,614

## Grant allocations in 2017 for additional provision

Table 3.12 **Grant allocations in 2017 for additional provision**

Grant Allocations for Additional Provision in 2017		
Providers	Programme	Funding
Irish Deaf Society	Adult Literacy	€240,000
NALA (Write On)	Adult Literacy	€220,000
Cork Institute of Technology	Standard Based Apprenticeship	€160,588
<b>Total</b>		<b>€620,588</b>

Table 3.12 sets out the detail of grants in respect of other provision, which include grants to the Irish Deaf Society, NALA and Cork Institute of Technology. Due to the nature of the services provided by the Irish Deaf Society, e.g. provision of literacy courses for the deaf community through Irish sign language (The deaf community's first/preferred language), this provision has been included in the programme tables 3.3 and 3.4.

## 2016 FET provision reported outturn

In 2016, the SOLAS-funded FET provision set out to cater for 339,283 beneficiaries. Overall, the number of reported beneficiaries catered for were closely in-line with the planned number of beneficiaries. However, the 2016 plan, when compared to the reported outturn, for full-time programmes shows that 93% of the planned beneficiary number was achieved, whereas the outturn for part-time and community education shows that the planned numbers were exceeded respectively by 4%.

Table 3.13 provides an overview of planned **starters**, **completions** and **beneficiaries** on FET full-time, part-time and community education provision for 2016 planned provision, compared with the reported outturn for 2016.

**2016 FET provision reported outturn compared to 2016 planned provision.**

Table 3.13 **2016 FET provision reported outturn compared to 2016 planned provision**

2016 FET PROVISION OUTTURN									
	2016 FET Plan			2016 FET Reported Outturn			Analysis of 2016 FET Provision		
Provision Type	Starters During 2016	Completions During 2016	Beneficiaries During 2016	Starters During 2016	Completions During 2016	Beneficiaries During 2016	2016 Reported Starters v 2016 Plan	2016 Reported Completions v 2016 Plan	2016 Reported Beneficiaries v 2016 Plan
Full Time FET Provision	76,437	72,034	127,165	71,134	63,909	118,365	93%	89%	93%
Part Time FET Provision	118,698	111,100	160,119	127,361	107,439	166,143	107%	97%	104%
Community Education	50,265	46,988	51,999	52,751	47,175	53,835	105%	100%	104%
<b>Total</b>	<b>245,400</b>	<b>230,122</b>	<b>339,283</b>	<b>251,246</b>	<b>218,523</b>	<b>338,427</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The FET planning process includes a mid-year review by FET providers and SOLAS, which can result in revisions to planned activity. The revised forecasted outturn is subject to SOLAS board approval. Table 3.14 provides analysis of the mid-year revised forecasted outturn for FET provision against the 2016 FET reported outturn.

**2016 FET provision reported outturn compared to revised mid-year forecasted outturn.**

Table 3.14 **2016 FET provision reported outturn compared to revised mid-year forecasted outturn**

2016 FET PROVISION OUTTURN COMPARED TO THE MID-YEAR FORECASTED OUTTURN						
	2016 Revised Mid-Year Plan		2016 FET Reported Outturn		2016 FET Provision Analysis	
Provision Type	Starters During 2016	Beneficiaries During 2016	Starters During 2016	Beneficiaries During 2016	Beneficiary Variance Outturn v Mid-Year Revised Plan	Reported Outturn Starters v Mid-Year Revised Plan
Full Time FET Provision	71,879	119,110	71,134	118,365	99%	99%
Part Time FET Provision	125,035	163,817	127,361	166,143	101%	102%
Community Education	49,369	50,453	52,751	53,835	107%	107%
<b>Total</b>	<b>246,283</b>	<b>333,380</b>	<b>251,246</b>	<b>338,427</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>102%</b>

**Analysis of FET provision planned for 2017 compared to the 2016 reported outturn.**

Table 3.15 compares FET provision for the 2016 reported outturn position against 2017 FET planned provision.

## Estimate of FET provision inputs planned for 2017 compared to 2016 reported outcome

Table 3.15 Estimate of FET provision inputs planned for 2017 compared to 2016 reported outcome

Estimate of Inputs into FET Provision for 2017 Planned v 2016 Reported Outcome						
FET Provision in 2017	Number of Beneficiaries Estimated for 2017		Number of Beneficiaries Reported for 2016		Differences between 2016 and 2017	
Programme	Projected Number of Beneficiaries Starting Courses During 2017	*Revised Total Projected Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2017	Starting Courses During 2016	Reported Beneficiaries of FET Provision in 2016	Estimated Variance of Beneficiary Starters During 2017	*Variance for Revised Projected Beneficiary Numbers of FET Provision in 2017
Apprenticeship Training	7,434	9,435	6,802	8,028	632	1,407
Blended Learning	411	563	329	482	82	81
Bridging and Foundation Training	848	1,171	1,023	1,281	-175	-110
Community Training Centres	1,410	2,982	1,719	3,167	-309	-185
Justice Workshops	118	219	173	311	-55	-92
Local Training Initiatives	2,057	3,569	2,479	4,292	-422	-723
PLC	36,200	62,953	32,869	60,751	3,331	2,202
Specialist Training Providers	1,762	3,594	2,104	3,687	-342	-93
Specific Skills Training	11,014	14,286	10,869	14,310	145	-24
Traineeship Training	1,884	3,482	2,321	4,151	-437	-669
VTOS Core	3,929	7,966	4,505	8,235	-576	-269
Youthreach	3,439	6,950	5,329	8,542	-1,890	-1,592
<b>Full Time Provision Total</b>	<b>70,506</b>	<b>117,170</b>	<b>70,522</b>	<b>117,237</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-67</b>
<b>Part Time Provision</b>						
Adult Literacy Groups	30,837	37,621	32,484	40,186	-1,647	-2,565
BTEI	22,996	34,636	27,832	38,618	-4,836	-3,982
ESOL	10,420	14,458	12,383	15,584	-1,963	-1,126
Evening Training	13,388	14,562	14,485	14,688	-1,097	-126
FET Co-operation Hours	10,872	20,614	16,585	22,277	-5,713	-1,663
ITABE	1,980	2,752	3,228	3,327	-1,248	-575
Libraries Training	0	120	225	317	-225	-197
Refugee Resettlement (ESOL)	786	1,035	539	584	247	451
Skills For Work	3,390	3,460	2,860	2,958	530	502
Voluntary Literacy Tuition	1,112	1,338	1,835	2,160	-723	-822
<b>Part Time Provision Total</b>	<b>95,781</b>	<b>130,596</b>	<b>112,456</b>	<b>140,699</b>	<b>-16,675</b>	<b>-10,103</b>
<b>Part Time Unaccredited Provision</b>						
Community Education	48,349	50,414	52,751	53,835	-4,402	-3,421
<b>Part Time Unaccredited Provision Total</b>	<b>48,349</b>	<b>50,414</b>	<b>52,751</b>	<b>53,835</b>	<b>-4,402</b>	<b>-3,421</b>
<b>National Programmes Provision</b>						
Momentum (Full Time)	0		410	735	-410	-735
eCollege (Part Time)	8,556	8,556	7,834	9,243	722	-687
Cork Institute of Technology <sup>1</sup>	0		28	28	-28	-28
<b>National Programmes Provision Total</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>8,272</b>	<b>10,006</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>-1,450</b>
<b>Other Programme Provision</b>						
Irish Deaf Society (Adult Literacy)	249	272	174	365	75	440
NALA (Write On / Phone Tuition)	7,200	16,300	7,071	16,201	129	16,330
<b>Other Programme Provision Total</b>	<b>7,449</b>	<b>16,572</b>	<b>7,245</b>	<b>16,566</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>16,770</b>
<b>FET Programme Provision Totals</b>	<b>230,641</b>	<b>323,308</b>	<b>251,246</b>	<b>338,343</b>	<b>-20,605</b>	<b>-15,035</b>

<sup>1</sup> CIT Projected beneficiary numbers included under Cork ETB

\*Revised beneficiaries includes FARR planning data and amendments made in post planning review

Analysis of changes in 2017 FET provision plan compared to the 2016 FET provision plan and reported outturn.

Table 3.15 provides analysis of inputs reported for 2016 versus 2017 FET planned provision in full-time, part-time and community education provision. It shows the beneficiaries enrolled at the start of the year and the additional starters enrolling throughout the year.

Changes in the estimated number of beneficiaries in 2017 compared to 2016 reported outturn relates to training programmes with increased numbers projected for: apprenticeship training (17.5% or 1,400 beneficiaries), refugee resettlement (77% or 450 beneficiaries), Post Leaving Certificate (3.6% or 2,200 beneficiaries) and Skills for Work (17% or 500 beneficiaries).

Decreases in the projected number of beneficiaries are in: justice workshops (29.6% or 90 beneficiaries), traineeships (16% or 670 beneficiaries), libraries training (62% or 200 beneficiaries), local training initiatives (16.8% or 720 beneficiaries), ITABE (17% or 570 beneficiaries) and voluntary literacy tuition (38% or 820 beneficiaries).

It is estimated that there will be approximately the same number of starters on full-time courses in 2017 as in 2016. However, the projected number of beneficiaries that had already started (started their course in 2016) at the beginning of January 2017 has decreased by almost 6.9% compared to the same period in 2016. Most programmes indicate a decrease in beneficiaries with the exception of apprenticeship training, PLC, and blended learning. The overall estimated number of beneficiaries in 2017 for full-time programmes will remain broadly similar to 2016. The projected numbers for part-time programmes delivered through ETBs are estimated to decrease significantly by approximately 7%, or just over 10,000. The overall provision for 2017, taking into account all providers, has decreased by approximately 4.5% from 2016 beneficiary numbers.

## FET support organisations

### **SOLAS grant allocations to agencies and bodies in the Further Education and Training sector**

A portion of the funding that SOLAS will receive from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) during 2017 will be allocated to a number of agencies and bodies that support and provide services to the FET sector.

To facilitate funding in 2017 SOLAS developed a guideline document titled *Overarching Parameters and Guidelines Document for 2017 Grant Allocations by SOLAS to Agencies in the FET Sector*. The document was issued to a range of Agencies whose organisational objectives are closely aligned to the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019. They were asked to outline their proposed activities for 2017 with reference to the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019, list the expected outcomes and the grant

required. This document sets out the protocols and procedures for grant allocations in 2017.

SOLAS evaluated the submissions received and the grants requested from Agencies and Bodies. Grants were approved based on the alignment of planned activities to the overall FET Strategy.

To support the critical contribution of FET Professional Associations within the ETB sector, and as part of the implementation of the FET Strategy, from 2017 funding for FET Professional Associations will be channelled through ETBI. This approach reflects the changing structures, new governance requirements and emerging demands on the FET sector.

The following tables provide a list of the Agencies and Bodies grouped according to the type of activities planned for 2017 and the grant allocations:

- 3.16 support organisations
- 3.17 staff representative associations (SOLAS-administered)
- 3.18 staff representative associations (ETBI-administered)
- 3.19 lifelong learning opportunities
- 3.20 CPD provision
- Table 3.21 identifies a number of EU and specific projects which will be co-funded/grant supported in 2017. Additional information on the 2017 planned activities for which grants have been approved is provided later in this document
- Table 3.22 provides a summary of the specific grant allocations for 2017.

## Further Education and Training - support organisations

Table 3.16 FET – support organisations

Further Education and Training - support organisations		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2017	Grant €
AONTAS	Extend advocacy and representation across the FET sector. Co-ordinate and support the Community Education Network. Promote the value and benefits of adult learning. Provide an information and referral service to adult learners. Build organisational capacity. Managing the 2017 National FET Learners Forum.	1,127,636
Dyslexia Association of Ireland	Provide specialist support to learners with dyslexia to improve access to and opportunities in further education and employment. Provide information and advice to learners, employers and communities.	129,273
Fast Track into Technology	Develop market-orientated curricula in response to the needs of client groups and industry. Provide information and guidance for marginalised job seekers. Help participants through preparation for employment, placement opportunities and support progression into further education and training.	1,144,000
National Adult Literacy Agency	Build awareness of the importance of literacy in society. Lead innovation in teaching and learning adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Advocate for further investment in literacy skills.	1,858,000
National Centre for Guidance in Education	Inform, influence, facilitate and support the development of guidance policy, provision and delivery in post-primary schools and FET. Co-ordinate the provision of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for guidance counsellors and practitioners in post-primary schools and FET. Establish, support and promote quality assurance and best practice guidelines for guidance in post-primary schools and FET.	276,573
*Waterford Institute of Technology (support for WIT/REGSA Project)	Provide an educational guidance service for adults in the Waterford area.	NIL
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,535,482</b>

\*Note: WIT/REGSA project is being funded through Waterford and Wexford ETB from 2017.

## FET-Staff Representative Organisations (SOLAS-administered)

SOLAS will continue to administer FET grants to the FET Staff Representative Association detailed below.

Table 3.17 Staff Representative Organisations (SOLAS-administered)

Staff Representative Organisations (SOLAS-administered)		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2017	Grant €
National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors	Provide continuing professional development, networking opportunities and other support services for members.	4,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,000</b>

## FET-Staff Representative Organisations (ETBI-administered)

These associations support practitioners in the FET sector. From 2017, ETBI will administer grants to the following associations:

Table 3.18 Staff Representative Organisations (ETBI-administered)

Staff Representative Organisations (ETBI-administered)		
Agency/body	Illustration of key activities planned for 2017	Grant €
ETBI	For administration to FET Staff Representative Associations	60,400
Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI)	Represent the views of members and work with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of a FET guidance service as outlined in the FET Guidance Strategy.	ETBI
Adult Education Officers' Association	Provide continuous professional development for members and represent their views at a national level.	ETBI
Adult Literacy Organisers Association (ALOA)	Assist members to develop their professional competencies in adult literacy and share knowledge and experience through networking.	ETBI
Community Education Facilitators Association	Promote community education and support members through CPD and networking activities.	ETBI
National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors	Provide continuing professional development, networking opportunities and other support services for members.	ETBI
National Association of VTOS Coordinators	Raise awareness of the developmental needs of adult learners and share best practice among coordinators.	ETBI
National Association of Youthreach Coordinators	Raise the profile of Youthreach through its website, publications and social media.	ETBI
<b>Total</b>		<b>60,400</b>

## FET - Lifelong learning opportunities

These organisations assist people undertaking new learning experiences.

Table 3.19 FET - Lifelong learning opportunities

FET - Lifelong Learning Opportunities		
Agency/body	Illustration of key Activities Planned for 2017	Grant €
Age Action Ireland	Promote intergenerational and lifelong learning opportunities. Support individual learners to engage or re-engage in lifelong learning. Engage with businesses and enterprise to change attitudes to ageing and stereotyping. Enhance social inclusion, competitiveness and employability.	66,500
Irish Countrywomen's Association	Provide members and non-members with support, personal development, education and lifelong learning opportunities.	20,900
The Educational Trust	Provide support to ex-prisoners and ex-offenders to access training and education	18,050
People's College	Support the provision of lifelong learning to adults through a wide range of courses.	92,150
<b>Total</b>		<b>197,600</b>

## FET - CPD provision

The Waterford Institute of Technology/NALA Accreditation Project provides higher-education qualifications to those working in the national adult literacy service.

Table 3.20 FET - CPD provision

FET - CPD provision		
Agency/body	Illustration of key Activities Planned for 2017	Grant €
Waterford Institute of Technology (to support the WIT/NALA Project)	Design and deliver nationally recognised qualifications that offer flexible models of study, progression routes and innovative modes of delivery for adult and further education practitioners.	494,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>494,000</b>

## EU and specific projects details

The projects listed below assist adults, practitioners, policy makers and others access information about the further education and training sector.

Table 3.21 EU and specific projects

EU and specific projects	
Organisation	Grant €
AONTAS (EU project co-funding requested by DES for the European Agenda for Adult Learning Project).	53,833
FIT Associate Professional – Two-year dual education pilot project comprising a number of software development or computer systems networking courses delivered by a number of ETBs.	315,000
IACTO – Provide advice and support to CTC boards of management in their employer function. Represent CTC boards in collective negotiations. Provide management services to promote and enhance the delivery of quality training outcomes.	166,000
Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC related fee).	33,000
Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed (INOUE) for the publication Working for Work 2017.	20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>587,833</b>

## Overall summary total of specific budget allocations for 2017

Table 3.22 Overall summary total of specific budget allocations for 2017

Overall summary total of specific budget allocations for 2017	
Classification	Grant allocation €
FET support organisations	4,535,482
FET – lifelong learning opportunities	197,600
FET Staff Representative Organisations (SOLAS-administered)	4,000
FET Staff Representative Organisations (ETBI-administered)	60,400
FET – CPD provision	494,000
EU and specific projects	587,833
FET- additional provision	620,588
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,499,903</b>



The testimonials provided an insight into the impact of FET provision across a broad spectrum of learners and the capacity of FET to support learner needs at various stages in life



# Section 4

## Benefits of FET from the Learner, Enterprise and the Community Perspective

### Introduction

A key aspect of the FET strategy is to support the creation of quality education and training solutions that respond to employers' existing and evolving needs. The strategy also supports the provision of high-quality, portable skills opportunities that are genuinely valued by learners, employers and their communities.

SOLAS, as part of the 2017 Funding Allocations Requests process, sought to identify some tangible examples of the benefits of FET provision, from the perspective of the **learner**, the **employer** and **communities**. SOLAS grantees were asked to obtain and submit testimonials from the three identified stakeholder groups.

The following extracts from these testimonials are not definitive as, while individual ETBs have been mentioned, many of the examples provided apply across the full complement of the ETBs.

### Benefits of ETB FET provision – the learner perspective

Through the 16 **Education and Training Boards (ETBs)** learners can participate in a range of programmes, including apprenticeship, career traineeship, specific skills training, Youthreach, VTOS, PLC, BTEI etc.

As part of the 2017 Funding Allocations Requests process, learners testimonials outlining the benefits of these programmes were given to SOLAS. The testimonials provided an insight into the impact of FET provision across a broad spectrum of learners and the capacity of FET to support learner needs at various stages in life. Recurring themes were evident in the learner testimonials:

- Finding a pathway to employment and progression
- Changing direction and lifelong learning
- Active inclusion

### *Finding a pathway to employment and progression*

The testimonial excerpts describe how participation in FET provision can boost learner confidence, support decision-making, help identify progression routes to qualifications and employment, and facilitate lifelong learning.

This learner participated in a programme through **Tipperary ETB (TETB)** and described their experience as follows:

*...During my time at Thurles CTC, I had the chance to come out of my shell. I was very shy and quiet in Secondary School and I didn't like the big classes. In Thurles, the smaller groups gave me a better chance to learn and work on getting my QQI level 3 and level 4 Major Awards. The work experience really gave me a chance to see what I would like to do when I finished. I lived a good bit away from the centre but I never minded the journey as every day was good in the centre. The teachers gave me help when I needed it and I got on with all my classmates. Now I am hoping to go on with my study and do a Level 5 in childcare. The place where I did my work experience have said that they will be able to give me full-time work in the childcare setting once I have my course done...<sup>28</sup>*

A learner from **Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB** described their return to education and training as follows: ...

*I have just completed a QQI level 5 in Healthcare Support with the **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB (MSLETB)**. To re-enter education was a daunting task for me, however, once I got started on the training programme all my concerns and fears were put at ease. I found the training very interesting and the tutor was extremely supportive throughout the programme.*

*During the programme, I secured part-time work in home support and now that I have completed the training I have full-time work. I am also planning to attend third level education...<sup>29</sup>*

<sup>28</sup> Learner testimonial L38

<sup>29</sup> Learner testimonial L36

This testimonial was provided by **Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB** (DDLETB) and is from learner who participated in an Early Childhood Education Course through the DDLETB Adult Education service in Balbriggan.

*... I contacted Balbriggan Adult Education to enrol on an Early Childhood Education and Care level 5. I always wanted to do this but never had the opportunity. I completed level 5 and progressed to level 6 in the same area. The support I received from the tutors was outstanding, my confidence grew over the two years with them and they encouraged me to go further. I am now in my first year of my level 8 honours degree in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (DCU).<sup>30</sup>*

This testimonial is from a **Kildare and Wicklow ETB** (KWETB) learner who describes her participation in FET as life-changing for herself and for her children.

*... As a single parent to four children, I had found myself stuck in a rut with no vision of a meaningful future for myself or my children. The day I started the course with **Kildare and Wicklow ETB** (KWETB) in Celbridge Training Centre, was the day that changed my own and my children's lives for the better. Throughout the course I not only learned the skills to be a great healthcare assistant, I also learned that I could do anything I wanted to do in relation to further education and my future...*

*...Alongside the skills that I learned and with the support and encouragement that I received throughout the entire course, I believe in me as a person again and feel that I am not just a mam. I believe that without the support and encouragement and everything that I learned while participating in the course I would not be where I am today. Currently, I have applied to go to Maynooth University to study Social Science. Before I took part in the course I had never envisioned myself being given the opportunity to return to further education, now it is all I can wait for.<sup>31</sup>*

## Changing direction and lifelong learning

A number of learner testimonials said FET had supported them in changing their career direction. In some cases, the change was prompted by choice and in others, by need. The following testimonials show how FET has supported individual learners in both cases.

This first example is from a learner studying for a Level 8 BA in Social Care Practice at IT Tallaght after completing both a Level 5 BTEI (part-time) over two years and a Level 6 (full-time) in Social Studies and Social and Vocational Integration at **City of Dublin ETB** (Liberties College).

*...I had returned to education as a result of losing my job at the age of 50. [There was] a gap of 35 years since my last link with education. It was an overpowering experience to begin with as I had limited computer and academic skills but with excellent tutelage I began to excel. I was encouraged to advance further with a Level 8 qualification which at present I am enjoying.*

*Through work placement at both Level 5 and 6 I gained valuable experience working with the Mendicity Institute on Island St, Dublin 8. It is a drop-in centre feeding the homeless and people with addictions, mental health issues and loneliness. I completed work placements but remained as a volunteer for close to three years. During that time, I accompanied a service user back to his native Budapest to continue his treatment in his own familiar surroundings with his family's support. I was also invited by the Polish charity Barka to visit their therapeutic communities around Poznan for five days as I had worked with many Polish and other Eastern Europeans who availed of the services provided by the Mendicity. Upon my return, I wrote a report for my own benefit and showed it to Barka who asked my permission to post it on their website where it remained for a year and a half. Other experiences involved bringing another service user for assessment to St Francis Farm in Tullow. These experiences would never have happened but for returning to education.<sup>32</sup>*

This **Donegal ETB** (DETB) learner describes how a downturn in demand for the skills he had acquired over a 25-year period acted as a catalyst to look for new opportunities.

*...I was working as a joiner for over 25 years. Work was not as plentiful as it once was. I decided to check out what was available in adult education so I phoned **Donegal ETB** (DETB)...*

Following discussions with staff at **Donegal ETB**, this learner decided to take part in a two-year health care course at level 5. The learner finished his course in 2016 and got full-time employment:

<sup>30</sup> Learner testimonial L10  
<sup>31</sup> Learner testimonial L17

<sup>32</sup> Learner testimonial L1

*...I can honestly say I am enjoying my work and get great job satisfaction. I would highly recommend adult education and the ETB to anyone who feels they want a career change...*<sup>33</sup>

Some testimonials highlighted how upskilling led to career opportunities in green energy. A learner with **Kerry ETB** said:

*...I benefitted greatly from the Wind Turbine Maintenance course as it enabled me to further develop my mechanical and electrical skills. Before I did the course, I was a car mechanic for 20 years and had been trying to get into the wind industry for quite some time. Through the course, I gained all the required training such as working at heights, hub rescue and first aid. I also trained on hydraulic, mechanical and electrical systems with the instructors. I found the instructors were very knowledgeable and professional. The 36-week course also included a 10-week work placement to gain on-the-job experience. At the end of my placement, I was offered a job maintaining a wind farm consisting of 22 Vestas wind turbines. I had a great experience doing the course and met some interesting people along the way. I would highly recommend doing the course if you want to start a new career in renewable energy sector...*<sup>34</sup>

This testimonial is from a 46-year-old man, a former bricklayer, who returned to education and training through **Laois Offaly ETB** (LOETB).

*...I have a keen interest in computers – an interest that I could take no further as a hobby due to a lack of education. In 2008, I gave up bricklaying and commenced Level 2 courses to build my way to a Level 5 course. In 2010, I was accepted into the VEC to study the Level 5 course Computer Network and Maintenance. With hard work, dedication and support I managed to complete the level 5 and got a place in AIT studying a BA in Computer Science and Network Management. In 2015, I graduated with a 2.1 degree and began my career in IT support for Integra LifeSciences in Tullamore and six more sites in north Europe. Here I am part of a European and global IT and IS team. 10% of my work is project-based in Ireland, Germany, Belgium and France. Within the first months at Integra, I managed to obtain an 8% pay increase, and last year managed to exceed expectations in my annual review and win a global ops award. These appraisals have come from hard work, determination and a drive to succeed that was embedded in to me by my tutor in (LOETB tutor). Her belief in me gave me the courage to have confidence in my abilities.*<sup>35</sup>

## Active inclusion

The European Commission defines active inclusion as follows:

*Active inclusion means enabling every citizen, notably the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society, including having a job."*

Goal 2 in the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014- 2019 commits to supporting active inclusion: "The aim of this goal is that FET provision will support the active inclusion of people of all abilities in society with special reference to literacy and numeracy."<sup>36</sup>

Opportunities through Further Education and Training (FET) are available to all learners over age 16. Testimonials indicate that learners engage in FET provision for myriad reasons which can include a desire to: gain qualifications, enhance employment opportunities, upskill, re-skill, combat literacy and numeracy difficulties, become computer literate and support their children and, in some cases, grandchildren by setting example and helping with homework.

A good example of how FET provision can have benefits beyond those intended was provided by a learner from **Kilkenny and Carlow ETB** (KCETB). This learner describes how she left school after Intermediate Certificate and since that time worked, reared a family and is now a grandmother. Through interaction with her grandson's school and the Home School Liaison Officer (HSCLO), she gained the confidence to return to education herself. This excerpt from her testimonial clearly describes what participation in FET meant for her and her grandson.

*...I remember my first day I was so afraid but everyone made me feel so welcome.. I tried some QQI level 2 and 3 modules in nutrition, personal and interpersonal skills, and some computers and communications. It was the first time I ever used a computer. I was very nervous that if I pressed something I might blow it up, but I didn't and now I can send emails, make a calendar, make a birthday card, write a letter and Google (most important)*

*...It has been a great help with my grandson. I can help with homework and I don't feel embarrassed when he asks me things anymore.*<sup>37</sup>

A learner who participated in an LTI course with **Tipperary ETB** (TETB) described the experience as follows:

*...I completed my LTI Training in September 2016. I really enjoyed the course especially computers and cooking. I am now working in the hospitality industry as a chef assistant. I learned a lot about*

<sup>33</sup> Learner testimonial L 9

<sup>34</sup> Learner testimonial L 12

<sup>35</sup> Learner testimonial L23

<sup>36</sup> Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 to 2019 pg. 32

<sup>37</sup> Learner testimonial L22

*kitchen hygiene rules and food temperatures. My work placement helped me to get a job. I am more confident in form-filling. This course helped me gain confidence and brought me out of my shyness. It has also helped me work on my maths...<sup>38</sup>*

This learner from **Cavan Monaghan ETB** (CMETB) describes how not having IT or computer certification was a barrier to employment and how FET provision helped her to get the qualifications needed.

*... I feel that I benefitted greatly from my interaction with **Cavan Monaghan ETB** (CMETB). There were no computers when I was at school, only typewriting, which I learnt and received a qualification in. I worked all my adult life in offices and taught myself how to use a computer but I did not have any computer qualifications so I could not prove to prospective employers that I could do the job I was applying for. Due to the courses I have done through CMETB, I now have a level 4 in IT and a level 4 in Computer Applications...*

*...Being on this course provided the structure of being in an office job again, timekeeping, meeting new people and having to interact and get to know them...<sup>39</sup>*

A **Laois and Offaly ETB** (LOETB) learner describes their experience while on a welding course:

*...I had welding in mind since 2011 when I attended the National Rehabilitation Hospital. I found the course to be very accommodating. I wasn't ever left aside although I'm in a wheelchair and was always treated equally. I realise that everyone in LOETB and METAC has had to work extra hard to include me on this programme.*

*Though I thoroughly enjoyed the bench fitting, I found it to be the most challenging aspect of the course for me. I found TIG the most interesting part and this is what I want to concentrate on in the future.*

*The METAC building was easily accessible. The trainers and staff were second to none, without their support I may not have achieved what I have. I couldn't recommend LOETB and this course enough...<sup>40</sup>*

**Galway and Roscommon ETB** (GRETB) provided a car maintenance course specifically tailored to meet the needs of deaf-hear group service users. Testimonials showed that the learners really appreciated the course as it provided the opportunity to share their interest in cars with their peers and learn about car maintenance and health and safety-related issues. It also gave this group of deaf men the opportunity to come together and forge new friendships and an interest in learning.

<sup>38</sup> Learner testimonial L39  
<sup>39</sup> Learner testimonial L2  
<sup>40</sup> Learner testimonial L24

## Benefits of ETB FET provision – the employer perspective

Increasingly, ETBs are collaborating with local enterprise and working to align courses with local employment opportunities. There are a number of collaborative projects between the ETBs and local enterprise across a range of industries, such as hospitality, healthcare and engineering to name but a few.

To gain further insight into the benefits of FET, the 2017 Funding Allocations Request process sought employer testimonials. These offer an insight into how FET provision helps enterprise. There were recurring themes in the employer testimonials:

- Supporting enterprise
- Meeting identified skills need
- Skills for work
- Entrepreneurship

### Supporting enterprise

Networking, collaboration, and education and training opportunities that address identified need are key to supporting enterprise and, in turn, the local economy and employment. Collaboration is ongoing, and increasing, between the ETBs and government departments, LEOs, local business, agencies such as FIT, and third-level colleges, all with a view to enhancing opportunities through FET provision. The following employer testimonials detail some of the benefits and results of such collaboration.

This testimonial was received through **Kildare and Wicklow ETB** (KWETB).

*...Intel has been working with KWETB and FIT since 2015 to develop a training initiative that will skill people for Ireland's growing advanced manufacturing sector. Considering the importance of this sector and indeed the opportunity that it holds, the collaboration with FIT has been for us an excellent example of how industry and education and training can work together to shape the provision of future skills and ensure their relevancy to industry. The flexible, practical and dynamic nature of the Manufacturing Maintenance Technician programme has been very positive for Intel and for the participants and we have been very impressed by the standard of skills and work readiness of the graduating students.<sup>41</sup>*

This testimonial came from a company (**Castle Home Care**) involved in the healthcare sector and was provided through **City of Dublin ETB** (CDETB).

*...Our company has benefitted greatly from our relationship with CDETB (Ballsbridge College). The fact that we can come in to the college, speak to the students on the Health Sector*

<sup>41</sup> Employer testimonial EE13

*Studies course about our organisation and the employment opportunities we have is absolutely fantastic. We find the students who come to work with us after they graduate from their course in FET to be very well trained, knowledgeable and well versed in what is expected of them in a homecare work environment. Overall, the relationship with City of Dublin Education and Training Board has proven to be very fruitful...<sup>42</sup>*

**Laois and Offaly ETB (LOETB)** has worked with **Elverys Intersport** to provide opportunities for up-skilling in retail management:

*...Laois and Offaly ETB has facilitated Elverys Intersport in provision of a QQI-certified programme in Level 5 Retail Practice for Trainee Managers. The tuition provided, through monthly tutorials and online contact, has been a fantastic help to our trainee managers as they embark on their management careers with Elverys Intersport. The programme was designed by LOETB with the specific needs of Elverys Intersport in mind, and the modules are all very relevant to the work that trainees do in their daily jobs. The flexibility of the programme and the availability of the tutor at all times throughout the programme added to its success. Elverys Intersport is delighted to work with LOETB and hopes to continue this very successful partnership into the future. On completion of the programme, the majority of the trainees have moved seamlessly into senior management positions in Elverys stores...<sup>43</sup>*

### Meeting identified skills need

The access to and the availability of well-trained staff is very much appreciated by employers.

This testimonial provided through **Waterford and Wexford ETB (WWETB)** shows the advantages of having access to well-trained, staff from the employer perspective.

*WWETB has facilitated an enhanced competitive advantage for Winthrop Engineering, by providing a high standard apprenticeship system for both our mechanical and electrical employees. In addition, WWETB have identified potential employment applicants, which would meet the requirements of Winthrop, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of our resourcing process at a reduced cost.<sup>44</sup>*

This testimonial from Nypro Healthcare Waterford describes how the company made contact with **Waterford and Wexford ETB (WWETB)** through the manager of the Waterford Training Centre to discuss alternative ways of recruiting, trained Manufacturing Team Members for its start-up operation in 2013. As

a result, the QQI level 6 Cleanroom and Packaging Operations Programme was initiated:

*Waterford and Wexford ETB facilitated our involvement in recruiting candidates onto the programme, and the programme ensured candidates were competent to our Quality and GMP standards, whilst giving them an in-depth knowledge of Cleanroom Operations. The programme resulted in Nypro having 'job ready' candidates to hire, of which 46% of the candidates hired by Nypro were promoted in Year 1. This programme resulted in a large number of candidates gaining a FETAC (now QQI) level 5 Special Purpose qualification and a permanent job. This programme has had a huge impact on the lives of those who were previously long-term unemployed, and hence allowed Nypro play its role in social responsibility. We continue to support this programme through facilitating plant tours, work experience and hiring candidates...<sup>45</sup>*

### Skills for Work programme

Skills for Work is a national programme that aims to provide employees with skills training to meet the basic demands of the workplace. Here, employers describe the impact this programme had in their workplace.

This testimonial is from a company in the **Cavan and Monaghan ETB (CMETB)** area.

*...We are very appreciative of the support we have received through the Skills for Work programme. We have worked with the team for the last few years and they have provided basic education workplace language support and level 3 communications classes on site. The employees who undertook the level 3 were extremely proud of reviving their certificates and all the feedback from all levels has been positive. It has been a pleasure working with the team...<sup>46</sup>*

A hospitality-sector employer said in a testimonial how appreciative it was of **Cork ETB (CETB)** support in developing an in-house leadership programme.

*...The ETB has been an integral part in the development of our in-house Leadership Development Programme here at The Fota Collection. This programme was designed to give skills training, knowledge and accreditation to current staff wanting to progress within the organisation, while also retaining staff and attracting new staff into the organisation. It has created a culture of learning and development within the Collection and we have built a team of professional assessors within our management structure. The ETB has provided invaluable support and mentorship for us to get the programme to the level it is today in terms of*

<sup>42</sup> Employer testimonial EE4  
<sup>43</sup> Employer testimonial EE 17  
<sup>44</sup> Employer testimonial EE 42

<sup>45</sup> Employer testimonial EE 44  
<sup>46</sup> Employer testimonial EE3

content development and accreditation. The current trainees on the programme have come on greatly in confidence since they joined and notably are more skilful and knowledgeable and have stepped up in their roles. I would recommend this programme to any organisation as a process to develop, attract and retain employees...<sup>47</sup>

**Dublin and Dun Laoghaire** (DDLETB)'s testimonial from a pharmaceutical industry company in the DDLETB catchment area provides another example of how the Skills for Work programme has supported local enterprise:

...The Skills for Work programme was a very positive experience for a group of employees who felt they would benefit from the short courses in career options and computer skills. Though some were quite nervous of taking on a course that was outside their comfort zone, the SFW co-ordinator and her team had a very warm and down-to-earth manner which helped everyone put aside any worries and concentrate on learning for themselves. The success of the programme was visible in the smiles of all participants at the end, finishing not just with a certificate but with greater confidence and enhanced skills for work...<sup>48</sup>

A testimonial received through **Limerick and Clare ETB** (LCETB) from a local employer described how the Skills for Work Programme helped staff get certification to meet legislative requirements and how it also helped many learners get full-time employment in childcare.<sup>49</sup>

A food-processing company, based in the southeast of Ireland, worked with **Kilkenny and Carlow ETB** (KCETB) to provide workplace language courses for employees. The course helps the company's diverse workforce to enhance their English-language skills. The employer reported as follows:

...We find this course extremely beneficial to our organisation. It gives our employees a better chance to be able to communicate with their colleagues on the production floor. Not only that, our employees can get more involved in their own communities outside work. Having a greater knowledge of the English language allows them to socially engage with their local communities. I can say, without doubt, that the ETB training on workplace language has really enhanced our employees' way of living... and opens a pool of opportunity for them...<sup>50</sup>

This testimonial from **Tipperary ETB** (TETB) describes how English-language courses provided through the Skills for Work programme helped new employees

integrate into the workforce, benefitting both employee and employer:

...We found here in ABP (Nenagh) that the Skills for Work programme, which supports workplace contextualised English classes for our employees, is really beneficial in more ways than one, for the company and employees alike. We have beginners and intermediate classes/groups. The complete beginner mainly comprised new employees. They gain vital language skills and are able to communicate better within an employer/employee relationship. The benefits are not only for us, but for the new employee; often having just arrived in a new job and country, they need skills to interact with landlords, banks and the tax office. All these tasks would be difficult for all concerned without some basic knowledge of the language. The intermediate classes were beneficial to our longer-term employees, improving their confidence with the language skills they already have. It was this cohort that encouraged their fellow colleagues to attend classes. Some employees have further educated themselves with their new-found awareness and knowledge of the Skills for Work programme and the ETB.<sup>51</sup>

### Entrepreneurship

All ETBs have reported that they promote entrepreneurship to learners through FET provision and are continually looking for ways to enhance entrepreneurial skills through:

- Integrated components on entrepreneurship into major award programmes
- Start your own business courses
- Collaboration with LEOs and PLCs
- Guest speakers to talk about experiences of setting up their own businesses

ETBs are placing an increased emphasis on working in partnership with local employers/regional skills fora to develop a new range of bespoke entrepreneurial skills programmes. (EE21)

Here are some examples of how FET provision has supported entrepreneurship:

**Laois and Offaly** (LOETB) have liaised with LEOs in Laois and Offaly regarding the NFTE Youth Entrepreneurship Programmes in both counties. This led to input from guest speakers and business mentors as well as learners attending businesses and trade fairs to help improve the business, academic and life skills of the young people involved. This has been very successful outcomes to date; 29 of 34 learners completed the programme and 19 mini-businesses were established.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Employer testimonial EE6

<sup>48</sup> Employer testimonial EE8

<sup>49</sup> Employer testimonial EE18

<sup>50</sup> Employer testimonial EE15

<sup>51</sup> Employer testimonial EE37

<sup>52</sup> LOETB FAR 2

Information from **Louth and Meath ETB** (LMETB) gave an example of how ETB community education supported entrepreneurship:

*...Community education provided grant assistance in 2016 to a not-for-profit social enterprise to support creative industries in Co Louth and support innovate enterprise through the provision of training and workspace facilities. The grant assistance was for a tutor to deliver a programme specifically focused on business skills for craft and design entrepreneurs. The course provided information on the steps needed to set up and grow a small business. The participants have developed a valuable network of craft makers and like-minded colleagues to act as support group going forward ...<sup>53</sup>*

This testimonial describes the journey one learner took to become self-employed. This learner's journey started with **Kildare Wicklow ETB** (KWETB) on a furniture-making course in Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE). Over a seven-year period, the learner successfully completed the course, went on to qualify with higher-level qualifications in this area and ultimately got a job with leading Irish furniture makers. This learner described what happened next:

*...I decided to set up my own business in 2015. The furniture-making course in BIFE was a very valuable part of me being able to get to this stage. Not only did it teach me the basics of furniture making, it also allowed me the freedom to experiment and create my designs and enabled me to carry out a project from design stage to finished piece ...<sup>54</sup>*

### **Benefits of ETB FET provision – the community perspective**

The 2017 Funding Allocations Requests process also identified tangible benefits of FET provision from the Community's perspective. The ETBs were asked to submit testimonials from community groups and organisations.

Analysis of these testimonials provided an insight into the intrinsic links between the FET sector and the community, particularly in the context of volunteering. Submissions highlighted the significance of the role played by the FET sector and of volunteers in the community across a range of areas:

- Literacy, numeracy and introductory IT skills
- Integration of those with low-level English language skills
- Supporting those who support the homeless
- Promoting and maintaining a vibrant and caring community

<sup>53</sup> Employer testimonial EE 21  
<sup>54</sup> Learner testimonial L20

The following testimonials from the local community should not be considered definitive, while individual ETBs have been mentioned, many of the examples apply across all ETBs.

### **Literacy, numeracy and introductory IT skills**

The significance of literacy and numeracy skills in supporting participation in employment, the ability to function within society and on a personal level on a daily basis has long been established. The Education and Training Boards (ETBs) provide an invaluable literacy and numeracy service through the Adult Literacy Service. The volunteer literacy tutors are key to the service's success. They give up their personal time to work with individuals and/or groups of learners seeking to enhance their skill base in all or some of the following: reading, writing, numeracy, spelling and IT.

Volunteers complete literacy tutor training with the ETBs over six to 10 weeks. All tutors are Garda vetted, without exception.<sup>55</sup> After training, the literacy tutor volunteer usually gives one to three hours of their time weekly.

It is clear from testimonials that the volunteer tutors make a huge difference to learners and, at the same time, they feel they benefit greatly from the volunteering experience. These excerpts are from the perspective of the volunteer.

A volunteer working with **Kildare Wicklow ETB** (KWETB) describes their experience as follows:-

*...I have been a volunteer literacy tutor for the past two years. The main reason I wanted to volunteer was to give back to my local area. It was something I've wanted to do for a long time and when I had a bit more time on my hands I decided to give it a go. I started my training in Lucan and now I volunteer for two hours a week in the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). I really enjoy going in every week. All the people in KWETB are very welcoming and nice and my student is a pleasure to help. Our sessions are very varied and are student-led. It's a great feeling when your student achieves something they thought was impossible at the start of our sessions. I think the ability to give your time can be so worthwhile and I would recommend to anyone who was thinking of volunteering to just go for it – I am so glad I did.<sup>56</sup>*

An adult literacy tutor with **Louth and Meath ETB** (LMEB) provided this testimonial:

*...The volunteer work has been incredibly rewarding for me. It's exciting to think I would be making a difference in a student's life. The six-week training course has given me great confidence as I have never worked as a tutor before...<sup>57</sup>*

<sup>55</sup> NALA website  
<sup>56</sup> Volunteer testimonial V17  
<sup>57</sup> Volunteer testimonial V28

This testimonial from a local voluntary farming purchasing group describes the benefits of a basic FET IT skills course provided by **Longford and Westmeath ETB** (LWETB). The group negotiates more competitive costs for bulk buying of animal feed and agricultural products and stated that:

*...Prior to the course we were very dependent on the IT skills of others to help us with the administration of our work, for example, online registration of calves, single farm payments, ordering replacement tags... The course covered topics which were of huge assistance to us... We would love to revise what we have done and learn more about spread sheets in the autumn.<sup>58</sup>*

### **Integration of those with low-level English-language skills**

The importance of education and training that supports integration, the needs of diverse communities, social inclusion and combats isolation was highlighted in the testimonials.. Adult literacy tutors play a key role in integration as they support those new to a community who have a low level of English. A testimonial from **Waterford and Wexford ETB** (WWETB) described how the WWETB Adult Literacy Service supported approximately 50 Roma families in their area:

*...The Roma community found it very hard to learn English... This had led to isolation and sometimes depression, but this changed when members of the group registered for English classes with WWETB...<sup>59</sup>*

### **Supporting those who support the homeless**

A testimonial received from an organisation working within the **City of Dublin ETB** (CDETb) catchment area describes how organisations come together to support people at risk in their communities:

*...We work with people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness. We aim to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it. We provide volunteers and students with a unique opportunity to experience our work and be part of a values-led organisation. All volunteers and students experience first-hand our approach to the issue of homelessness and how we work with and value those affected by it. Our service users come from all backgrounds and may have a range of complex issues. This may include mental health problems, domestic violence, bereavement, unemployment, alcohol and addictions issues, etc. We strive to ensure we continually provide high-quality services. In 2016, we approached CDETb to develop a partnership for the recruitment of Student Placements and Volunteers. This has proved a great success and we currently have ten student placements across a range of services. Working closely*

*with the college, we have recruited students who have a particular interest in working in the homeless sector. These students came with a fundamental understanding of the issues faced by those affected by homelessness. Each student commits to working to the organisation's policies and procedures, which are firmly underpinned by our organisations values... The professional and diligent approach of the college has ensured the success of this partnership and we look forward to continuing our work with them for the coming year.<sup>60</sup>*

### **Promoting and maintaining a vibrant and caring community**

Other examples of supports to communities through collaboration between FET provision and local organisations included:

- Provision of first aid training by **Cavan and Monaghan ETB** for coaches who volunteer with various sporting teams and activities<sup>61</sup>
- Support for the Tidy Towns initiative in Clara, Co Offaly, provided through **Laois and Offaly ETB** Youthreach programme. The Youthreach programme has worked with the local Tidy Towns group since 2011 and has provided support in:
  - **Landscaping:** Clara Youthreach has installed, cultivated and maintained multiple planters in Clara. All of the soil preparation work, weeding and planting is undertaken by the students using a variety of plants and bulbs.
  - **Sustainable waste and resource management:** Clara Youthreach, through participation in the ECO UNESCO young environmentalist awards, constructed a feature outside the local FRC which incorporated water harvesting, solar-powered generator and planting.
  - **Wildlife, habitats and natural amenities:** Focusing on Clara bog,

*Youthreach helped to raise awareness of this area of conservation through art and by portraying the flora and fauna in a colourful and creative way.<sup>62</sup>*

- Support for local festivals: Festivals contribute greatly to the local economy. These events, however, are very dependent on volunteers. This testimonial from **Limerick and Clare ETB** (LCETB) describes its work with the community:

*...The LCEN Limerick Community Education Network works hand in hand with **Limerick and Clare ETB (LCETB)** in relation to the provision of community education in Limerick city. ETB representatives are our statutory partners and are an integral part of the network. They engage and consult with us regarding policy changes nationally, locally and operational changes.*

<sup>58</sup> Volunteer testimonial V25  
<sup>59</sup> Volunteer testimonial V39

<sup>60</sup> Volunteer testimonial V3  
<sup>61</sup> Volunteer testimonial V1  
<sup>62</sup> Volunteer testimonial V 20

The LCEN and the ETB work very closely on the promotion of classes and courses and also collaborate on big events such as festivals. The LCEN would not have the capacity to run these events without the support of the Community Education Programme...<sup>63</sup>

- A testimonial from **Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB** (MSLETB) describes how the local scout group benefitted from its support:

*...I found that I was able to get very practical advice from the ETB Youth Officer as I carried out my new role as group leader. This included advice and help on things like Garda vetting and leader recruitment and on planning meetings. I also found it good to be able to get help on filling in the application form for the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, and also on the National Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth Groups. This made it much less daunting in terms of what was required with these forms and was of benefit to me as group leader...<sup>64</sup>*

- Community radio stations are operated and owned by the community and play a key role in keeping people in touch with local events and initiatives. Community radio relies on the support of volunteers to deliver their service. A testimonial from a community radio station describes the support it received from **Waterford and Wexford ETB** (WWETB) through the community education programme. WWETB provided training in: Basic Computers skills, QQI level 4 in Community Radio (in conjunction with (CRAOL), Radio Production, at QQI level 5. The radio station reports that these initiatives resulted in increased volunteer confidence and an enhanced service.<sup>65</sup>

### Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS)

The Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) also have a role to play in making available quality Further Education and Training opportunities, through Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC) and the Back to Education initiative (BTEI) to meet immediate and emerging skill needs. Learners participating in PLC and BTEI programmes include:

- Young learners who have completed their Leaving Certificate and are seeking to continue their education and training through PLC to identify a career path and/or progress to higher education
- Learners, many of whom were early-school leavers, seeking second-chance education opportunities
- Learners hoping to upskill to change career
- Learners seeking support in their endeavours to return to work
- People who have been long-term unemployed
- Learners with a disability

<sup>63</sup> Volunteer testimonial V23

<sup>64</sup> Volunteer testimonial V32

<sup>65</sup> Volunteer testimonial V42

The Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) also provided examples of how VSCCS FET provision benefits the **learner, employer** and the **community**. Here is an overview of their testimonials.

### Benefits of VSCCS FET provision

#### – the learner perspective

Participation in Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) PLC and BTEI FET provision can give the learner an opportunity to gain qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Examples of some of the courses provided by the VSCCS through the PLC and BTEI are set out below. (This list should not be considered definitive): nursing studies, applied social studies, early childhood education and care skills, community health, business studies, business administration, interior design, e-business, Information technology, general learning, ESOL, maths levels 3 and 4, Spanish levels 3 and 4, English and communications levels 3 and 4.

Courses provided by the VSCCS are, in many cases, aligned with local employment opportunities and, as a result, the learner can gain work experience and potentially a job after completing the course. These learner testimonials give an insight into the benefits of taking part in these courses:

This learner chose a PLC to help change career direction:

*...I chose to do the QQI Level 5 Business Studies PLC course as I was looking to reskill from the area of beauty therapy to office administration. During the course, we had a fantastic opportunity to carry out a two-week work placement. I carried out my work experience in the role of office administrator for a local non-profit community childcare service which is run by a volunteer committee.<sup>66</sup>*

The learner qualified with a certificate and is now confident enough to pursue a career as an accounts technician.

A learner who did a childcare course through the Back to Education Programme provided by a VSCC School described the experience as follows:

*...The course I completed was one that I had contemplated 20 years ago. The timing was never right but when I heard that the local secondary school was offering the course I had no excuse as it was so conveniently near to where I live...<sup>67</sup> This learner attained a level 5 and 6 qualification of the NFQ and is now in a position to choose where they would like to work due to high demand for childcare workers.*

<sup>66</sup> VSCCS learner testimonial L9

<sup>67</sup> VSCCS learner testimonial L11

## Benefits of VSCCS FET provision

### – the employer perspective

Strong links continue to be developed between the VSCCS and employers through an increased emphasis on networking and on the identification of employer needs. Contact between the VSCCS and local employers through work placement programmes, surveys and networking with employers, facilitates the identification of employers' current and future skills needs. Feedback received through VSCCS employer links is used to identify skill gaps and, where appropriate, the VSCCS works to design and/or redesign course content and/or identify new courses to meet the identified need.

Information provided by the Voluntary Secondary Community and Comprehensive Schools (VSCCS) clearly indicates that there are long-established relationships between local employers and the VSCCS. It is also clear that local enterprise is supported by VSCCS learners on work placement and, ultimately, through the availability of staff that matches local enterprise skill needs.

Testimonials show that employers are committed to providing work placement/experience opportunities for learners. Employer testimonials highlight some of the benefits:

- The enthusiasm and motivation the learner brings to the employer organisation
- The knowledge, skills and support provided to the employer organisation by the learner during their work placement
- The 'real time' learning experience that the work placement opportunity brings to the learner
- Confidence building and skills practice gained by the learner
- Building the relationship between the employer and the VSCCS through work placements

The benefit of having access to trained staff was also noted in the employer testimonials.

One employer involved in the healthcare sector said:

*... We have offered work placements to students from the college and found the quality of the students excellent, with some of the students being offered full-time, permanent roles at the hospital...<sup>68</sup>*

Another employer who had recruited office staff through one of the VSCCS courses said they found the new recruits to be:-

*...well-trained individuals with a good knowledge of office administration. Through this we have benefitted greatly as a small business which doesn't have the manpower or time to incorporate a comprehensive training programme. We have*

<sup>68</sup> VSCCS testimonial EE3

*found that these employees have adapted to and picked up our processes and procedures with ease, which saves time and cost" ...<sup>69</sup>*

## Benefits of VSCCS FET provision

### – community perspective

The VSCCS support the local community by developing and maintaining relationships with local business and by interacting with a wide range of stakeholders, such as the Department of Social Protection (Intreo offices), Chambers of Commerce, local development groups, local employers and community groups, such as Tidy Towns, Active Retirement and Traveller support groups.

Some examples of the benefits of FET from the community perspective are highlighted in these testimonial excerpts:

One voluntary organisation said

*...Students studying the Professional Cookery Course at our local VSCCS volunteer with our local Meals on Wheels initiative, which is a great help to the community<sup>70</sup>*

This volunteer described the benefits of taking part in a Sports and Recreation course:

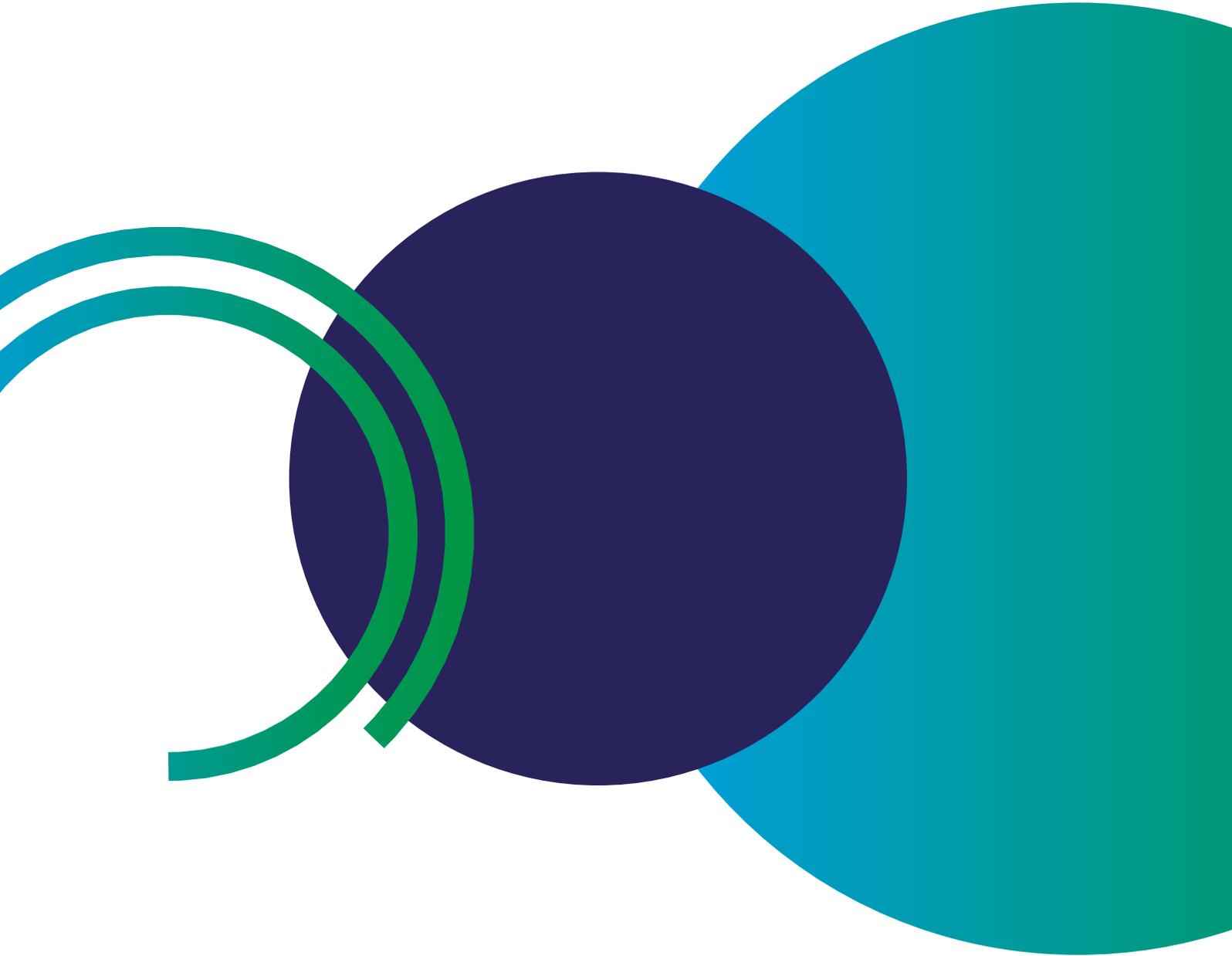
*...in completing my course I learnt new techniques and training methods that I was able to use in my voluntary role in my local athletics club.<sup>71</sup>*

VSCCS FET provision can also help young people to remain in their own area while studying in their chosen field, which helps to maintain a young presence in the community. It also allows older members of the community to reskill, up-skill and can help to combat rural isolation.

<sup>69</sup> VSCCS testimonial EE11

<sup>70</sup> VSCCS testimonial V6

<sup>71</sup> VSCCS testimonial V10



This section of the FET services plan presents additional programme information and provides an overview of systems and strategies currently in development



# Section 5

## FET Supports

This section of the FET services plan presents additional programme information and provides an overview of systems and strategies currently in development.

### Additional programme information

#### **National construction schemes and the Safe Pass programme**

SOLAS is responsible for the governance of the national Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), Quarrying Skills Certification Scheme (QSCS) and Safe Pass programmes. The CSCS programme provides for the training, assessment, certification and registration of non-craft operatives within the construction sector and is covered under the provisions of Schedule 5 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

The QSCS programme provides for the training, assessment, certification and registration of non-craft operatives within the construction sector and is covered under the provisions of Schedule 1 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Quarry) Regulations 2008.

The Safe Pass Programme is a one-day health and safety awareness training programme aimed primarily at construction sector workers, including new entrants. The Safe Pass programme is covered under the provisions of Schedule 4 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

Consequently, SOLAS is responsible for the maintenance of the national database and the processing of applications for Safe Pass, CSCS and QSCS cards. Participants who successfully complete their respective courses are registered on the relevant database and are issued with their cards. In 2016, a total of 17,286 CSCS cards, 612 QSCS cards and 93,991 Safe Pass cards were issued.

Following consultation with industry stakeholders, an employer card validation facility has been developed. This will allow registered employers check the validity of all SOLAS CSCS and Safe Pass cards without having to contact the unit directly. The unit will continue to maintain the mutual recognition agreement with CITB UK and process applications for recognition of qualifications, in compliance with S.I. No. 8 of 2017 regulations.

#### **Skills for Work programme**

Skills for Work is a national programme which aims to provide employees with skills training that meets the basic demands of the workplace. This programme is co-ordinated nationally by **Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB)**, where the Administration Unit for the Skills for Work project is based. The budget allocation for 2017 for **Skills for Work** will be **€2.8m**. ETBs participating in the Skills for Work programme develop and budget for their planned response to the Skills for Work projects. In line with the Funding Allocations Requests process, SOLAS provides the agreed funding related to Skills for Work projects to **DDLETB** for distribution to the relevant ETBs.

#### **eCollege**

eCollege is the National Online Learning service delivering training free of charge to approximately 9,000 jobseekers and over 1,000 employed learners in 2016. eCollege courses are increasingly for continuous professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning.

eCollege courses are available online on a continuous intake basis. There is no waiting list and the length of the course is flexible. All eCollege courses are supported by e-tutors who help learners to activate accounts and then support their progress in a number of ways, including setting and correcting assignments. When an individual learner completes the course, their e-tutor identifies a test centre where they can complete certification. The e-tutor can then help them to go on to further education, training or employment.

Courses are delivered through "Moodle", a Learning Management System (LMS) that contains communication and collaboration tools. Courses contain online tutorials, simulations, videos, animations, eBooks, virtual labs, assessments and assignments. Learners are also given software when required. Virtual classroom software is used to facilitate live video conferencing- type interaction between tutors and learners. Learners can also watch previously recorded training sessions. Courses are free to jobseekers while those in employment pay a fee.

#### **Contracted training**

The ETBs can use contracted training to support and address identified need. It can be used to:-

- Support innovation
- Facilitate responsiveness to act quickly/address local, regional, hard-to-predict and specific need
- Provide flexibility in programme delivery

## European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

The SOLAS EGF coordination unit, in collaboration with the EGF Managing Authority within the Department of Education and Skills, supports the implementation of European Globalisation Adjustment [EGF] programmes in Ireland. Since 2010, the SOLAS EGF coordination unit has implemented nine EGF programmes in the Irish State – six were company specific and three sectoral – supporting over 10,000 redundant workers. Since 2014, the SOLAS EGF coordination unit, in collaboration with the Departments of Education and Skills and Social Protection, have provided EGF-supported measures to over 400 NEETs (those between the ages of 18–25 years and not in employment, education or training). In 2017, the SOLAS EGF coordination unit will finalise Ireland's tenth EGF programme, EGF Pratt and Whittney International [PWAII].

## Systems and strategies currently in development

### Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS)

Both the National Programme Database (NPD) and the National Course Calendar have been in operation within FET programmes, funded by SOLAS, since October 2015.

### National programme database

To April 2017, 661 national programmes (consisting of 3,627 modules) were published on the NPD, covering the diversity of awards available through FET provision, including QQI Awards, ACCA, Accounting Technicians of Ireland, CITAC, City and Guilds, CompTIA, Irish Computer Society (ICS), ITEC, Microsoft, Oracle and Pearson.

### National course calendar

PLSS scheduling of courses and manual referrals from DSP, through programme data available through the NPD and NCC, has started in all SOLAS-funded FET providers. By April 2017, ETBs scheduled 28,167 courses, 12,219 in 2017, resulting in total capacity to date of 174,387.

### Fetchcourses.ie

Since August 2016, the public-facing course-search facility, fetchcourses.ie, has had 191,229 users, with 380,328 sessions generating 3.8m page views. A **widget** has been developed to support the principle of one-point entry facilitating the use of information presented on fetchcourses.ie on the providers' website, brochures and other marketing materials, providing real time information. It also means that national portals may display available courses in real time, for example Careers Portal and DSP Services.

### Learner database

The PLSS Learner Database (LDB) is available for use in all SOLAS-funded FET provision. The FET learner

database functionality, relating to facilities for the management of Applicant and Learner Lifecycle (Version 1), was completed in September 2016. The development work incorporates feedback from the pilot, which was completed in June 2016. Training on the learner database started in October 2016 and finished in April 2017. It focused on programme type, prioritising participation data in relation to ESF requirements, e.g. Youthreach, BTEI, adult literacy, specific skills training, bridging, traineeships and programmes on offer in CTCs. At the end of April 2017, there were 80,865 learners in the system.

Work on the learner account creation and application (public access) to the PLSS has started and will be available May 2017.

### Data-sharing agreements

A data-exchange agreement has been signed-off with DSP. SOLAS, in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills, continues to explore the establishment of data-exchange agreements with HEA, QQI and Revenue.

### Workforce development strategy

Following the publication of the National Skills Strategy in January 2016, SOLAS agreed with the Department of Education and Skills to develop a Further Education and Training (FET) Policy Framework for Workforce Development to guide ETBs on employee development. The framework will also help ETBs conform with the objectives for workforce development outlined in the National Skills Strategy 2025.

The framework and associated implementation plan have been drafted in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills, ETBs, ETBI and other relevant stakeholders including Regional Skills Fora, EI/LEOs, IDA, IBEC, NALA, Skillsnet, SFA, ISME and ICTU. It has been presented to the Department of Education and Skills for agreement.

### FET Professional Development Strategy

The FET Professional Development Strategy and an implementation plan were published by SOLAS and ETBI in November 2016. The strategy is informed by the Skills Profile of ETB staff conducted in early 2016.

The plan has 19 separate actions relating to these strategic goals:

1. Creating the infrastructure and delivery systems for high-quality professional development
2. Increasing FET sector capability through relevant, targeted professional development
3. Securing sustainable funding and the resourcing of professional development

Implementation of the strategy is being overseen by a National Steering Group, chaired by DES. The

first meeting was held on March 10. A national PD coordinator has been recruited and is based in ETBI.

Work is underway, led by SOLAS in consultation with ETBs, to produce development practice frameworks for the critical areas identified in the strategy. Collaborative development work on a number of infrastructural projects is also ongoing to facilitate the strategy's implementation. These include:

- The development of an ETB staff development planning format, which is aligned with the FET Skills Profile and Professional Development Strategy
- A recording and tracking system for PD activity at ETB and national level.

### TEL strategy

SOLAS TEL support unit is working closely with the further education and training sector on the development of a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) strategy for the sector. This strategy was launched in December 2016 and builds on the existing good practice in using technology to enhance FET provision. It will help to expand the range and flexibility of FET provision in the future. The TEL Strategy is part of the Action Plan for Jobs 2017, the Action Plan for Education 2017 and The National Skills Strategy 2025.

ETBs are benchmarking their existing TEL practices against identified good practice. Each ETB will then use this information to develop individual action plans that will build on existing good practice and further develop the use of technology to enhance their service to learners.

More info here. ([http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/TEL\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/TEL_Strategy.pdf))



# Section 6

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## Appendix 2. List of Education and Training Boards

List of Education and Training Boards (ETBs)
Cavan and Monaghan Education and Training Board
City of Dublin Education and Training Board
Cork Education and Training Board
Donegal Education and Training Board
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board
Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
Kerry Education and Training Board
Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board
Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board
Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board
Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board
Tipperary Education and Training Board
Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board

**Appendix 3. Summary of the Further Education and Training (FET) support organisations planned activities for 2017**

The 2017 activities planned by the agencies and bodies funded by SOLAS are listed here.

**Further Education and Training support organisations**

Agency/body	2017 planned activities
<b>National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)</b>	
<p>An independent charity working in partnership with government departments, organisations, tutors and learners to advance adult literacy policy. Ensuring that adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties can fully take part in society and access learning opportunities that meet their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Work with ETBs to promote and ensure accessibility for all learners.</li> <li>— Engage with champions of learning to promote lifelong learning.</li> <li>— Support the implementation of the adult literacy and numeracy strategy in the FET Strategy 2015-2019, the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy, Learner Forum and Workplace Development Strategy.</li> <li>— Develop a variety of supports for the use of technology and digital media.</li> <li>— Provide CPD for professionals involved in supporting literacy and lifelong learning.</li> <li>— Work with policy makers to raise awareness and increase funding for literacy numeracy and digital skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Dyslexia Association of Ireland</b>	
<p>Membership-based association representing over 2,000 families and individuals affected by dyslexia all over Ireland. Membership also includes teachers, psychologists and other professionals. Advocates and raises awareness on behalf of people affected by dyslexia. Currently has a nationwide network of 37 branches and workshops providing information, assessment, training and support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Provide subsidised educational psychology assessments for disadvantaged adults.</li> <li>— Facilitate learner progression to education and the workplace through specialist support and training.</li> <li>— Provide a specialist information service on adult dyslexia, including helpline, drop in service and information seminars.</li> <li>— Develop two training seminars for FET staff in the assessment of literacy needs and the development of support strategies for learners.</li> <li>— Work with FET sector, employers and policy makers to drive policy and new initiatives for learners with dyslexia.</li> </ul>
<b>AONTAS</b>	
<p>Non-governmental voluntary membership organisation with over 500 members from the formal and non-formal adult and community education sector and the lifelong learning spectrum. Advocating and lobbying for the development of a quality service for adult learners, promoting the value and benefits of adult learning, widening participation in lifelong learning, ensuring quality learning opportunities are offered to those who are educationally disadvantaged. Ensuring adult learners are central to adult learning policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Engage in regional, national and international advocacy, consultation and research with SOLAS, ETBI, ICAE and EAEA.</li> <li>— Co-ordinate and support the Community Education Network (CEN). Represent adult learners at national and European level.</li> <li>— Organise and promote the 2017 National Learners' Festival, including the AONTAS STAR awards and National Learner Forum.</li> <li>— Update and maintain the One Step Up adult learner Information and Referral Service resource and supports.</li> <li>— Manage the National Adult Learner Forum 2017.</li> <li>— Increase attendance and broaden learner representation.</li> <li>— Produce a policy report based on findings and feedback from the forum.</li> </ul>

Agency/body	2017 planned activities
<b>Fast Track Into Technology (FIT)</b>	
<p>Industry-led, not-for-profit organisation that develops and promotes technology-based programmes and career development opportunities for job seekers. Works in collaboration with government, education and training providers and disadvantaged communities to improve access to employment for marginalised job seekers and those at risk of long-term unemployment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Recruit and support 3,500 participants on FIT programmes in 2017.</li> <li>— Review existing training and develop new courses to provide pathways to employment and meet the needs of the labour market.</li> <li>— Provide access to appropriate training programmes for marginalised learners.</li> <li>— Carry out skills-needs research through the ICT Skills Audit and disseminate the outcomes to the FET sector.</li> <li>— Promote the value of further education and training through engagement with employers.</li> </ul>

Agency body	2017 planned activities
<b>National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)</b>	
<p>Agency of the Department of Education and Skills, under the aegis of Léargas, responsible for supporting and developing guidance practice in all areas of education and informing the guidance policy of the DES. Hosts the Euroguidance Centre Ireland and represents Ireland/DES at the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Work with SOLAS, DES and ETBI to achieve the development and implementation of the FET Integrated Guidance Strategy.</li> <li>— Complete the Career Learning and Development Framework for Schools.</li> <li>— Ensure the systematic evaluation of career guidance initiatives.</li> <li>— Develop CPT programmes, qualifications and training for guidance staff working in the FET sector.</li> <li>— Exchange information on guidance and support development of policy at national and EU level via Euro guidance Centre and National Forum on Guidance and ELGPN.</li> </ul>

## Further Education and Training

### – lifelong learning opportunities

Agency/body overview	2017 planned activities
<b>Age Action Ireland</b>	
<p>National non-governmental, membership-based organisation concerned with ageing and older people. With 3,660 members, it acts as a network of organisations and individuals including older people and carers of older people. It is a development agency promoting better policies and services for older people. The organisation engages with a variety of people who have an interest in the ageing sector and work with government departments, universities, health-care professionals, private commercial bodies, banks and insurance companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Organise national, regional and cross-border activities and events through the education programmes, the University of the 3rd Age (U3A) and Generations Together.</li> <li>– Expand policy and advocacy activities.</li> <li>– Provide regional and national workshops and events promoting lifelong learning opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Countrywomen's Association</b>	
<p>The association is the largest-membership organisation of women in Ireland. The association's adult education college, An Grianán, plays a key role in the education of the association's members and the wider public providing access to a wide range of courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide further education courses for members and non-members.</li> <li>– Inform and assist learners in accessing and attending programmes of learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Irish Deaf Society</b>	
<p>The society seeks to achieve and promote the equality and rights of deaf people in Ireland and to achieve full access to citizenship and society for the deaf community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Increase the number of learners achieving QQI certification.</li> <li>– Provide a variety of personal development and QQI-certified training programmes and short duration workshops for the deaf community.</li> </ul>
<b>People's College</b>	
<p>Voluntary body that provides general adult education, personal development and communication skills to trade unionists, their families and the general public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide adult education classes in a wide range of areas, including politics, finance, history, languages and the arts.</li> <li>– Support social and cultural activities for the student population.</li> </ul>
<b>The Educational Trust</b>	
<p>A charitable trust providing access to further education and training for ex-prisoners and ex-offenders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Payment of fees/costs relating to study/training undertaken by ex-prisoners and ex-offenders.</li> <li>– Provide advice/guidance to ex-prisoners and ex-offenders.</li> </ul>

## Further Education and Training

### - staff representative organisations

Agency/body overview	2017 planned activities
National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors	
<p>Provides a support structure and networking arrangement for directors of adult and community education within the Community and Comprehensive School Sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Provide continuous professional development (CPD) for members. Improve collaboration between Community/ Comprehensive Schools and Education and Training Boards.</li> <li>— Promote adult education through social media and at National Adult Education events.</li> <li>— Increase the number of schools offering programmes leading to QQI certification.</li> </ul>

### Further Education and Training - CPD provision

Agency/body	2017 planned activities
Waterford Institute of Technology (support for WIT/NALA project)	
<p>Adult Literacy Accreditation Project that provides third-level programmes to practitioners in the adult literacy field, e.g. managers, tutors, organisers, resource workers. The centre collaborates with stakeholder groups to heighten awareness of the value of adult literacy and the CPD needs of practitioners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Deliver 35 modules across four programmes. Improve access and participation through blended learning, RPL and supports for learners.</li> <li>— Develop two new minor award programmes to address professional development needs in FET.</li> <li>— Evaluate and review programmes in consultation with stakeholders.</li> <li>— Contribute to and support ongoing and emerging research within literacy and FET.</li> </ul>

## Further Education and Training EU and specific projects

Project/agency/body	2017 planned activities
<b>European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)</b>	
AONTAS/European Agenda for Adult Learning	AONTAS is the national co-ordinator for the EAAL promotional project, co-ordinated by DES. The project aims to deliver a web-based information service on FET services to help adults navigate the resources and services available online.
<b>ICT Associate Professional</b>	
FIT - ICT Associate Professional	The ICT Associate Professional initiative is designed as a two-year dual education pilot project in which 200 learners will participate on a number of software development or computer systems networking, courses delivered by particular Education and Training Boards.
<b>IACTO</b>	
<p>Irish Association of Community Training Organisations (IACTO)</p> <p>Representative body for Boards of Management of CTCs. The Board of Directors of IACTO operates in a voluntary capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Provide individual and collective advice and consultancy to CTCs.</li> <li>— Engage with DES Liaison Committee.</li> <li>— Hold a series of regional information forum meetings.</li> <li>— Make available Training and Development interventions for CTC Board and General Managers.</li> <li>— Co-ordinate the 40th anniversary celebration of the provision of education through Community Training Centres.</li> </ul>
<b>Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)</b>	
Léargas- co-funding for EPALE element of Erasmus+ Léargas is the National Support Service for EPALE in Ireland	The Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) is a multilingual on-line community funded by the European Commission. It is designed to assist teachers, trainers, researchers, academics and policy makers and those with an interest in adult learning.
<b>Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)</b>	
<p>Central Statistics Office – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).</p> <p>CSO is the national statistical office. It provides statistical information to government for the formation and monitoring of policy and programmes at a national, regional and local level and it also serves the needs of the wider national and international community.</p>	International survey of adult skills conducted in 33 countries, which measures cognitive and workplace skills needed for individuals to participate in society and for economies to prosper. The results of the survey help educators, policy makers and labour economists to develop economic, education and social policies to enhance adult skills.
<b>Working for Work 2017 publication</b>	
<p>Working for Work 2017 publication (Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed)</p> <p>The INOU is a federation of unemployed people, unemployed centres, unemployed groups, community organisations and trade unions. The INOU promotes and campaigns for policies to achieve full employment for all and for an acceptable standard of living for unemployed people and their dependents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Produce and distribute 25,000 copies of Working for Work to unemployed people, INOU member organisations, ETV, DSP Intreo and local offices, Citizen Information Centres, MABS and other organisations, including those associated with education and training provision and support services.</li> <li>— Support the on-going development of the online version of Working for Work.</li> </ul>

**Appendix 4. List of Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools and Colleges approved PLC places**

<b>List of Voluntary Secondary and Community and Comprehensive Schools that grants are allocated to through the Department of Education and Skills post-primary payment section for the PLC programme.</b>	
<b>Schools/colleges</b>	<b>Places (2017)</b>
Ballyhaunis, Community School, Co. Mayo	20
Cabinteely, Community School, Dublin 18	40
Castlecomer, Community School, Co. Kilkenny	28
Castlerea Community School, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon	16
Central College, Sexton Street, Limerick	240
Clifden Community School, Clifden, Co. Galway	18
Coláiste Mhuire, Ballygar, Co Galway	16
Donahies Community School, Streamville Road, Dublin 13	30
Dunmore, Community School, Co. Galway	20
Glenamaddy Community School, Co. Galway	50
Gorey Community School, Gorey, Co. Wexford	96
Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo	75
Kilrush, Community School, Co. Clare	20
Kinsale Community School, Kinsale, Co. Cork	20
Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare	40
Mercy College, Sligo	60
Moate Business College, Moate, Co. Westmeath	430
Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet, Co. Mayo	16
Ramsgrange Community School, New Ross, Co. Wexford	24
Sancta Maria College, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo	30
St Cuan's College, Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway	38
St Joseph's College, Summerhill, Athlone, Co. Westmeath	34
St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo	145
St Patricks Comprehensive School, Shannon	42
Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara, Carna, Co. Galway	16
Tullow Community School, Carlow	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>1614</b>

## Appendix 5. FET supports provided for Further

### Education and Training Learners

A number of supports are provided for learners engaging in Further Education and Training programmes. The following examples are not definitive.

- The Adult Education Guidance and Information Service (AEGIS), which provides nationwide guidance for learners before, during and after they participate in BTEI, Adult Literacy, Community Education or VTOS programmes. This service also supports the provision of quality AEGS guidance and information services to people aged 16 and over.
- Participants in Youthreach, VTOS, or BTEI are eligible for low-cost childcare under the Childcare in Education and Training Scheme (CETS), operated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).
- The HEA Fund for Students with Disabilities can provide support for students with a disability. This fund allocates funding to further and higher education colleges for services and supports to full-time students with disabilities. The fund aims to ensure that students can participate fully in their academic programmes and are not disadvantaged by reason of a disability.
- The Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Service in Youthreach and Community Training Centres mainly provides counselling for young people on these programmes.
- The INTREO service, administered by the Department of Social Protection, provides a single point of contact for all employment and income supports. It also offers employment services and supports for both jobseekers and employers.
- The Advocacy Service provides a network of full-time advocates whose role is to support Youthreach participants in decision-making, referral, progression and placement. Advocates are also instrumental in organising work experience and monitoring students on work experience.

## Appendix 6. Definitions

Definitions	
<b>Full-time Further Education and Training programmes</b>	
<b>Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)</b>	
<b>Starter definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study (typically in September/October)
<b>Completer definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study (typically in May).
<b>Note</b>	In the case of multi-year PLC programmes, each year is a standalone year and should be considered independently. If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
<b>The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)</b>	
<b>Starter definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
<b>Completer definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
<b>Note</b>	In the case of multi-year VTOS programmes, each year is a standalone year and should be considered independently. If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
<b>Youthreach</b>	
<b>Starter definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
<b>Completer definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study
<b>Note</b>	Youthreach is organised on an academic year / semester basis therefore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Completion of the summer programme should be considered as the completion of the year.</li> <li>— Resumption of the Youthreach programme post- summer break should be considered as the start of the next year,</li> <li>— If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Bridging, Foundation, Specific Skills Training (SST), Traineeship Programmes, Local Training Initiatives (LTIs), Apprenticeship.</b>	
<b>Starter definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
<b>Completer definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
<b>Note</b>	If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
<b>Community Training Centres (CTCs)</b>	
<b>Starter definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
<b>Completer definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
<b>Note</b>	If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.  The commencement of subsequent years occurs on the anniversary date of the learners' initial registration on the course.
<b>Specialist training providers</b>	
<b>Starter definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
<b>Completer definition</b>	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
<b>Note</b>	If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.  The commencement of subsequent years occurs on the anniversary date of the learners' initial registration on the course.

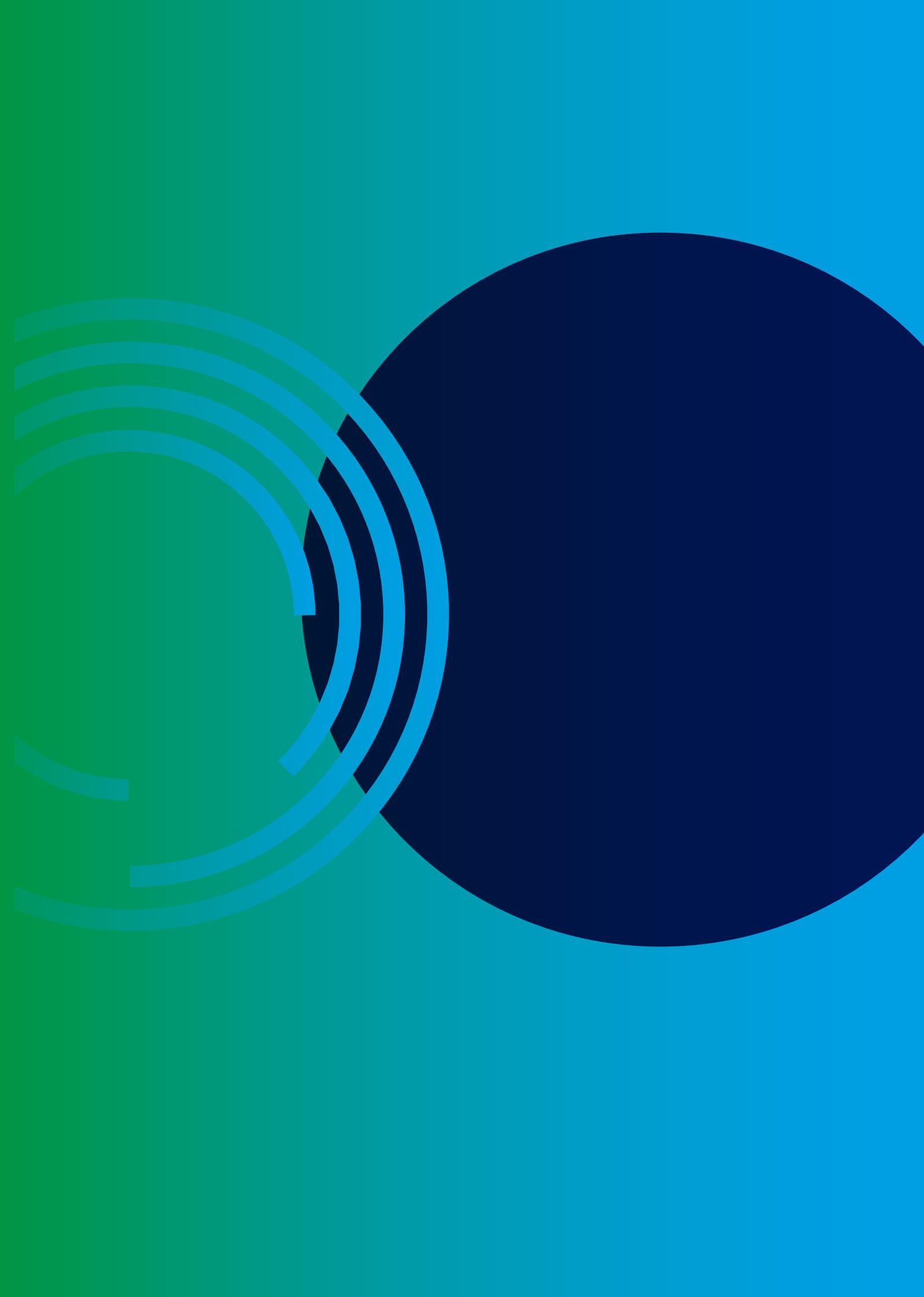
<b>Definitions</b>	
<b>Part-time Further Education and Training Programmes</b>	
<b>The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)</b>	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	The course of study is whatever the learner sets out to complete, i.e. this could be one module or any number of modules.
<b>Adult Literacy (including ITABE, ESOL and DEIS, Skills for Work initiatives)</b>	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	On completion of their course (perhaps involving only one module) the learner is considered to have progressed and is, therefore, considered to be a starter at the beginning of any additional course undertaken.
<b>FET co-operation hours</b>	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	In the case of multi-year programmes, each year is a standalone year and should be considered independently. If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
<b>Evening courses, online learning and blended courses</b>	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	If the course crosses the calendar year, this has no impact.
<b>Community Education provision</b>	
Starter definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on the date the learner commenced tuition on their course of study.
Completer definition	The counting of each learner in this category, on date the learner finished their course of study.
Note	On completion of their course (perhaps involving only one module), the learner is considered to have progressed and is, therefore, considered to be a starter at the beginning of any additional course undertaken. If the course crosses the calendar year this has no impact.

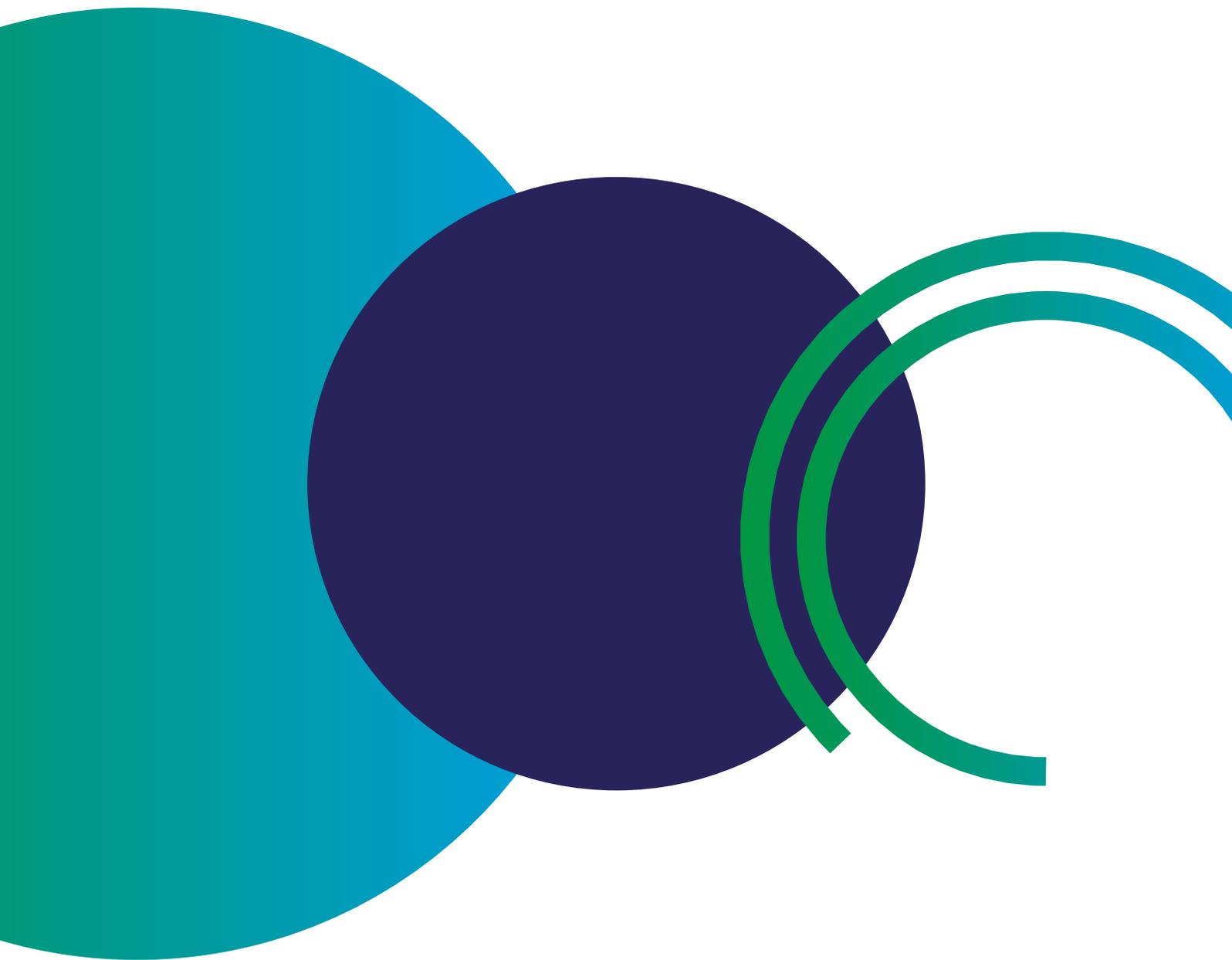
## Appendix 7. Acronyms/glossary

Acronyms/glossary	
<b>AEGI</b>	Adult Education Guidance Initiative
<b>AEGIS</b>	Adult Education and Guidance Information Service
<b>AES</b>	Adult Education Service
<b>ALCES</b>	Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme
<b>BTEI</b>	Back to Education Initiative
<b>CETS</b>	Childcare in Education and Training Scheme
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development
<b>CSCS</b>	Construction Skills Certification Scheme
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>CTCs</b>	Community Training Centres
<b>DCYA</b>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
<b>DEIS</b>	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education and Skills
<b>DJEI</b>	Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
<b>DPER</b>	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
<b>DSP</b>	Department of Social Protection
<b>EGF</b>	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
<b>EGFSN</b>	The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
<b>ERP</b>	Enterprise Resource Planning
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages
<b>ETB</b>	Education and Training Board
<b>FAR</b>	Funding Allocations Requests
<b>FE</b>	Further Education
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>FIT</b>	Fast Track Into Technology
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNP</b>	Gross National Product
<b>HET</b>	Higher Education and Training
<b>INTREO</b>	DSP service offering a single point of contact for all employment and income supports

Acronyms/glossary	
<b>IOT</b>	Institute of Technology
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>ITABE</b>	Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education
<b>LEO</b>	Local Enterprise Office
<b>LTI</b>	Local Training Initiative
<b>LTU</b>	Long- Term Unemployed
<b>NALA</b>	National Adult Literacy Agency
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NFQ</b>	National Framework of Qualifications
<b>PLC</b>	Post Leaving Certificate
<b>P-POD</b>	Post-Primary Online Database
<b>QQI</b>	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
<b>QSCS</b>	Quarry Skills Certification Scheme
<b>SLMRU</b>	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
<b>SOLAS</b>	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (Further Education and Training Authority)
<b>SST</b>	Specific Skills Training
<b>STP</b>	Specialist Training Providers
<b>SUSI</b>	Student Universal Support Ireland
<b>VTOS</b>	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
<b>VSSCCS</b>	Voluntary Secondary Schools and Community and Comprehensive Schools
<b>YDI</b>	Youth Development Internship
<b>YG</b>	Youth Guarantee







**SOLAS**

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