



lcetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Luimnigh agus an Chláir
*Limerick and Clare
Education and Training Board*

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

*Limerick and Clare Education and
Training Board*

Further Education and Training Division

February 2016

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LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015 -2020



Number of Courses by Career Cluster

Learning Cluster	Courses
Agriculture, Horticulture & Mariculture	26
Animal Science	4
Art, Craft and Media	39
Built Environment	23
Business, Admin & Management	66
Financial Services	2
Food & Beverage	19
General Learning	554
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	19
Health, Family, other Social services	101
IT	56
Manufacturing	25
Natural Resources	1
Sales & Marketing	9
Sampling Skills	3
Science & Technology	8
Tourism & Sport	29
Transport, Distribution & Logistics	9
Total	993

LCETB FET DIVISION IN 2015

19,397 Part-Time Places

- Adult Literacy Groups - 5269
- ESOL - 1361
- IT ABE - 940
- Voluntary Literacy - 323
- BTEI - 3607
- SWF - 474
- Community Education - 4304
- Evening Training - 1472
- COOP Hours - 1565
- Specialist Training Providers - 82

25,861
beneficiaries
joined courses

6,464 Full-Time Places

- Apprenticeship - 624
- Bridging & Foundation - 267
- CTC - 106
- LTI - 288
- PLC - 2560
- Specific Skills Training - 1220
- Traineeship - 209
- VTOS - 522
- Youthreach - 668

993
Courses

300
locations
in Limerick
and Clare



Introduction

I am pleased to present the first LCETB FET Division Annual Report 2015. This document represents a milestone for the FET Division, since the amalgamation of three VECs in Limerick City, County and County Clare, as well as two Training Centres in Shannon and Raheen in July 2014. It captures the wide range of activities that took place in 2015 in all LCETB FET Centres, delivering 993 courses and services to 25,861 beneficiaries in over 300 locations across Limerick and Clare.

In 2015, a very significant milestone for our Service was the adoption and publication in October of the LCETB FET Division Strategic Framework 2015-2020 (www.lcfet.ie/Publications), which highlights the mission, vision and values of our organisation. As an umbrella framework, it promotes a shared vision for our service and guides all LCETB FET centres, colleges, programmes and services in the development of integrated implementation plans for their full-time and part-time provision. The strategy sets out four service-wide strategic priorities, which are in line with the LCETB Corporate Plan and the SOLAS Strategy 2014-2019: *1) Access and Progression, 2) Quality Teaching & Learning, 3) Stakeholder Engagement and 4) Effectiveness & Accountability in Governance & Leadership.*

This Annual Report 2015 reviews the work of the LCETB FET Division, and provides a snapshot of the impact our programmes and services in each of these four strategic areas. It is remarkable to see so many examples of good practice in LCETB FET centres, as well as innovative initiatives that have enhanced the learning experience of young people and adults who recognise the positive change FET can bring to their personal and professional lives. I would like to thank all FET staff for their professionalism and commitment during this year of change and consolidation.

Paul Patton

LCETB Head of Further Education and Training

Our Impact In 2015

Access & Progression

In 2015, significant efforts have been made to support learners to access and sustain participation in LCETB FET education and training programmes.

Between January and December 2015, LCETB FET Service provided 993 individual or bundled courses to 25,861 beneficiaries¹ in over 300 locations.

Better Visibility and Access to Improved Facilities

In order to enhance the visibility of LCETB FET provision, and facilitate learners to access our programmes and services, a strategic decision was made in 2015 to rebrand all adult education and training centres in Limerick and Clare as LCETB Further Education and Training Centres.

As part of this branding effort, a newly refurbished integrated Further Education & Training Centre opened on Kilmallock Road, Limerick in October 2015. Building on a local history of vibrant adult and community education, as well as



a strong community network, it offers modern, spacious and fully accessible facilities for adults in Limerick City and County. As part of its integrated provision, a wide range of full and part-time courses are now offered through VTOS, Community Education, Youthreach, Back to Education Initiative and evening programmes. It is envisaged that the campus will accommodate over



four to five hundred learners in the coming years. It has a unique potential to become a hub for community learning and development in the area, in line with the national SOLAS FET Strategy objectives 'to include levels of active inclusion



through the provision of high quality, more accessible and flexible education, training and skills development

interventions and supports suited to the individual'.

In other LCETB FET Centres, funding was allocated to improve existing facilities, either through refurbishing buildings, investments in IT



equipment, enhancing health and safety in woodwork classrooms, etc..

In Youthreach Shanagolden, learners and staff agreed the new colour scheme and used pots and planters to enhance the look of the centre and to give us fresh herbs for cooking

In Focus

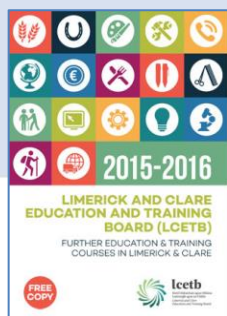
In 2015, LCFE was the first Further Education College to join 22 other campuses around Ireland on the National Transport Authority's **Smarter Travel Campus Programme**. LCFE staff and learners can now access site-specific advice and information from Travel Planners; an online travel survey and analysis; a free group on carsharing.ie; mapping resources; and access to walking and cycling challenges.

¹The statistics provided in this report are extracted from the SOLAS FARR database (Jan-Dec 2015)

FET Awareness Raising

A critical aspect to enhancing access to FET opportunities for learners is our ability to raise awareness on the benefits of lifelong learning and stimulate and sustain participation by offering information and supports to new and existing learners. In 2015, several initiatives focused on disseminating key information about LCETB FET courses and services.

An **LCETB Guide to Further Education and Training Courses in Limerick and Clare** was compiled in June 2015 by FET Information Officers. This represented a significant milestone for our newly merged organisation, as for the first time, it presented in one place the broad range of offerings from the LCETB FET Division across Limerick and Clare.



In addition, many FET Centres produced specific prospectus and documentation to highlight courses on offer at centre level.



Learners and staff at the LCFE Prospectus 2016/17 launch.

There were also a number of reports in the local press that

provided publicity for FET programmes, including photographs of examination results days, Open Days, etc.. Advertisements were also placed periodically in the local newspapers.

Social media (Facebook, Twitter) also continued to be used to raise awareness about our provision in 2015. For instance in 2015, Limerick School of Music launched its own social media Facebook & Twitter accounts.

LCETB also took a leading role in the annual **Clare Adult Learner Festival (February 2015)** and the **Learning Limerick Festival (March 2015)**, which featured and celebrated adult learning taking place all over Limerick and Clare.

Pre-entry Assessment and Recruitment

In order to ensure learners can sustain effective participation in FET courses, it is essential that appropriate pre-entry and recruitment methods are developed and implemented. In 2015, a number of **pre-entry assessments and recruitment initiatives** took place in order to refine the process by which learners access courses. These included:

- A new approach to learner recruitment for BTEI Limerick City programmes: In 2015, all new applicants for BTEI courses were scheduled to attend pre-entry information sessions, at which key information about the programme options, the approach adopted in delivery and the expectations that would be there for them on entry were explained and discussed. In addition, a pre-entry guidance session to look at 'Becoming a Learner and Making the right Course Choice' was provided. Learners were also screened for English Language capability and IT skills if needed. Feedback was very positive from learners and staff.
- In March and October 2015, VTOS Limerick City provided two access courses to facilitate new learners onto the Scheme. These courses offered participants a foundation in a range of subject areas as well as basic skills development.

- In collaboration with colleagues from Clare, Tipperary as well as LCETB Guidance personnel, a new Initial Screening and Assessment process called “Pre-Learning” was piloted in BES Limerick City. This involved inviting potential literacy learners to come in groups to an initial information session to clarify expectations about the course. This was followed up with a one-to one initial assessment. Informal feedback was very positive.

Core Skills for FET Learners

LCETB FET Division recognises the central importance of core skills, as key to participation in FET or in achieving employment or education and training progression outcomes. It is also fundamental to personal fulfilment, active citizenship, and social cohesion, by enhancing participation in personal, social and economic life.

In 2015, there were opportunities for learners to engage within FET Literacy services throughout Limerick and Clare. Learners availed of courses ranging from non-certified taster courses to certified QQI level 1-3 via four main strands within the service i.e. General Literacy, Family Learning, Workplace, Basic Education and ESOL.

2015 Statistics

LCETB FET Adult Literacy: 5592 beneficiaries

ESOL: 1361 beneficiaries

IT ABE: 940 beneficiaries

The part-time nature of this provision facilitates learning both for unemployed and employed people, and offer community-based learning opportunities. Such initiatives in 2015 included:

- **Clare Family Learning Project** has developed a My Baby and Me programme (shortlisted for AONTAS Star Awards), in response to needs identified by St. Vincent de Paul. Parents need support in order to help their children learn, with a major focus on the 0-3 age group. In

operation since 2013, this programme has had significant impact for parents who want to do the best for their children but also continue to learn for themselves. The major advantage is that the child can attend with the parent avoiding the need for childcare provision. Parents receive a free book at each session, with a strong emphasis on reading and oral language development.

(www.clarefamilylearning.org)

- **Men’s Shed Bog Walk Project** (AONTAS Star Award Shortlisted) - Kilkishen and Sixmilebridge Men’s Shed group worked in partnership with Kilkishen CDP, under the guidance of LCETB Clare Community Education, in the development of a local community ‘Bog Walk’. 3 benches, 12 bird houses, 20 bat boxes and 12 carved tree names were made for the site. In addition to building community links, the purpose of the project was to create an opportunity for men living in Co. Clare to learn new skills and share their knowledge and expertise in an inclusive and supportive environment.
- In October 2015, Clare Adult Basic Education and Community Education Services hosted the **East Clare Knitathon**. This is one of the most popular literacy and numeracy events of the year to promote literacy to people in East Clare who often face barriers to participation (i.e. rural isolation, lack of transport, etc..)
- The **LCETB ESOL provision** in 2015 included intercultural programmes delivered by Literacy services, but also in partnership with BTEI and VTOS programmes. As part of the interagency group for the Refugee Resettlement programme, and working closely with Immigrant Support centres, FET literacy services also provide classes and advice on the availability of education programmes for adult refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

A key priority identified in the LCETB FET Strategic Framework is to further 'embed core literacies in all our provision'. In 2015, examples of integration of core skills into curriculum content included:

- Limerick City Youthreach staff worked together with the support of the literacy FET programme to develop a whole centre approach to the teaching of literacy. The new **Youthreach Literacy Intervention Programme** was rolled out in September 2014 and continued in September 2015. It involves nine staff members, a revised literacy curriculum and the sharing of new and creative teaching methods that support the literacy developments of learners. An action research approach supports the refinement of the model.
- **LCFE Spring into Words Festival 2015** took place in March to celebrate the literacy-rich environment of the PLC College. The aim of the festival was to raise awareness of developing literacy skills for life and learning and covered a broad range of literacy skills - from reading to rapping and from popular books to poetry.

In Focus

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) is a Study Skills pack developed by LCFE staff and consists of an interactive presentation and accompanying Learner Workbook, to be used either in a directed workshop or as an independent resource for self-directed learning. It encourages learners to support each other and to learn cooperatively under the guidance of trained learners called 'PASS Leaders'. Pass Leaders benefit by developing their personal and professional skills such as leadership, team working, organisation, time management, interpersonal and communication skills for which they receive certification.

While often QQI accredited, literacy courses also offer key pre-development unaccredited courses, as a first step back to education, with a view to ease into accredited courses in time. In 2015, **ITABE programmes** offered literacy through innovative themes such as Driver Theory and woodwork, as well as the oral use of history as part of a central theme 'My 1916'.

Through our **Specialist Training Provision**, we also provided support to a range of disability based services, as well as ESOL courses that provide essential English language skills.

In terms of **workplace basic education**, new initiatives in 2015 included:

- A novel Skills for Work course entitled '**Prep for One step up**' course was designed in partnership with members of an Employer's management team, to help bridge the gap to promotion that many long-serving employees identified. Completed in April 2015, the course was based on workplace projects set by the employer. This tailor-made course was rolled –out to two sister companies in Dublin and Cork in October 2015.
- A **Career Preparation course** was delivered in Limerick City, as part of a national initiative between the Skills for Work Programme and Defence Forces. This was aimed at staff facing early retirement in the coming years and focused on preparing them to develop the skills to search new employment.



Presentation of certs by the Minister for Education & Skills, Jan O' Sullivan, Sarsfield Barracks (November 2015)

Other Learner Supports

In 2015, significant efforts were also placed on supporting the **well-being of learners, with a special focus on mental health**, as a key factor for sustained participation and enjoyment of the FET teaching and learning experience.

- Several LCETB FET programmes in Limerick and Clare took part in the **AMBER FLAG initiative** run by Suicide Aware, to encourage promotion of positive mental health in education. Engagement took the form of workshops (e.g. on self-presentation and enhancing appearance through colour and clothes choice, effects of heroin; homelessness; domestic violence, etc.), or special events for learners and staff (e.g. walks, CPD for staff, etc.)



Mental Health Walk, Knockpatrick Foynes

- Various talks, workshops and introduction to mindfulness programmes dealing with stress and anxiety were held across Limerick and Clare FET locations.



- Several LCETB Youthreach programmes took part in the **Xhale Film Project Competition in 2015**. Youthreach Miltown Malbay was awarded the title of **Overall Winner of the best tobacco industry message** at the Irish Cancer Society Youth Awards 2015 for their film "Project X", while learner Kallum McGreene received X-Hale Youth Award Winner for 'BEST ACTOR'.

- **'Happiness week'** was held in Clare as a joint initiative with the HSE Adult Mental Health Services, Kilrush Family Resource Centre, local Schools, Gardaí, Clare Youth Service (May 2015).
- Youthreach Hospital retained the **Gold Award for Health Promotion** as part of the Health Promoting Youthreach Initiative in conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland.

FET Information and Guidance

A central element of our learner supports is the provision of the quality educational and careers information and guidance. Guidance supports ensure relevant information for learners, appropriate placement on courses, effective study skills, and identification of progression routes, etc..

In 2015, the LCETB Adult Educational Information and Guidance Services (AEIGS) in Co.Clare, Limerick City and County Limerick reached **4,480 clients**.

In the LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020², a key priority is to 'develop an integrated FET Division educational and careers guidance strategy'. An **integrated LCETB FET Guidance Team was set up** in 2015 to include AEIGS staff as well as VTOS, PLC and Youthreach guidance personnel. Through a process facilitated by the Development Team, a FET Integrated Guidance Strategy 2016-2020 has been developed and will be published early in 2016, in line with the SOLAS national FET Strategy. At its core will be a more streamlined service to integrate guidance into all LCETB programmes, which will benefit learners from pre-entry to progression stage. This is in line with National SOLAS goals in Adult Education Guidance, as well as LCETB FET strategies for enhancing access and working collaboratively and in an integrated manner.

Key initiatives in 2015 included:

- In Limerick City, guidance counsellors from across the part-time adult education programmes developed and rolled out the Information and Guidance Plans for Adult Education Programmes. These included writing the regular KLEAR Newsletter for Upskill Learners, developing resources to support the roll-out of the **KLEAR Guide**, and reflecting on work through regular Peer Support Meetings.
- A **Calendar of Talks and Events** was set up in collaboration with guidance colleagues. Highlights across the Service in 2015 included:
 - A talk by Dr. Fergus Heffernan, Psychologist, Therapist and Lecturer to 150 Learners, staff and community colleagues from across the city on the theme of 'Managing Your Life by Managing Your Mind'.
 - Career and employment talks with outside guest speakers from industry and employment agencies.
 - Workshop on Accessing Further and Higher Education as an adult, with representatives of UL and LCFE.
 - Seminar on Managing Your Life as an Adult Learner Looking After Yourself and tips for dealing with stress, worry and anxiety - Bernie Quillinan - UL
 - Talk about 'A Learner's Journey' – One learner's story of progressing from the First Steps Pre-entry Programme to part-time BTEI Modules and then on to a Degree Programme in LIT.
 - Visits with groups of learners to LIT and UL

² www.lcfet.ie/Publications

- Other initiatives in Clare in 2015 included the use of ICARES Career Matching Software; holding Information stands in key locations with high footfall such as the Mid-West Job Shop in Limerick (October); Learners Visits to Higher Education providers Open Days; tours of employers facilities, Group sessions with FET learners, etc..



VTOS/PLC Kilmallock learners visit to LIT

In Focus

The Clare AEIGS has produced Information Factsheets, as key resources to support learners, tutors and staff with career management and planning. In 2015 factsheets were reviewed to include a new A4 layout with a section for Career and Labour Market Information, and a second section on Education and Training Routes.



- Guidance Services also continued to highlight that the best way of getting current learners to experience the possibilities that are open to them after their course is through field trips and presentations from ex-learners. Often supported by guidance staff, these trips are critical and need the full support of teaching and management staff.

In 2015, learners have been given many **opportunities in all FET programmes to visit higher education institutions** to explore progression options. For example, Youthreach KRC Learners visited the Limerick Institute of Technology through the Access office, and are also availing of the University of Limerick Access study programme 3 evenings a week.

At a European level, VTOS (Limerick City) was the lead partner in a European project - the EDGE (Enhancing the Delivery of Guidance and Employability) Project, with partners in Austria, Greece, Portugal and Wales. The main focus of EDGE is the exchange of information regarding employability provision and the development of innovative accreditation and career guidance tools such as the e-portfolio and the Mozilla Open Badges system. This European Project also represented a significant CPD opportunity for all staff involved.

Learner Progression

In 2015, 78% of beneficiaries completed their courses, and 11.5% partially completed their course. Enhanced progression opportunities have been made available for learners in 2015:

- Following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between LCETB and Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) in February 2015, **new streamlined progression links between LCFE and LIT** have been approved by LIT's Academic Council. This is a significant and unique milestone at national level, which will greatly benefit LCFE learners, by creating smooth and seamless progression pathways.
- **BTEI and Mary Immaculate College (MIC) Pilot Teacher Education Access Programme** had its second successful year in 2015. It offers direct access to the B.Ed. for mature learners who otherwise would not qualify for entry. Two subjects Gaeilge and English (honours) are delivered by two LCETB tutors and on successful achievement of results, direct entry to the B.Ed is guaranteed.
- External speakers were also invited by many programmes to speak about progression opportunities both in further education or in employment (e.g. a speaker from SOLAS addressed Youthreach learners about Apprenticeship Programmes). Employers are routinely engaging with programmes to speak about what employers need, visit factories, etc.

While progression tracking remains both a challenge and a priority for the LCETB FET Division for 2016, there were many success stories to highlight in 2015 from former LCETB FET learners, as illustrated below:

Robbie Ball –Ennis VTOS Student received the inaugural Bluebird in-CARE Carer of the Year Award for 2015



In Focus



Savannah McCarthy is a learner on the **FAI-LCETB Programme** and has been identified as a special talent. As a player in the **Emerging Talent Programme (ETP)**, she represented Ireland at u17 and u19 level. Supported by her family from the Travelling Community, she has proven to be an exceptional learner, travelling on a daily basis from Listowel to Limerick and showing exceptional commitment to the academic, physical and matchday demands of the course. Since joining the programme, Savanna has played for the senior Ireland Women's National Team (WNT) making her competitive debut in March 2016 in the Cyprus Cup against Austria. She has signed a contract with Glasgow City, who compete in the Senior Women's Premier League in Scotland and who are currently in contention for the Women's Champions League. Everyone at LCETB wishes her all the best, and take pride in the role that we played in the development of such a dedicated player.

In Focus

The message below was posted on VTOS Limerick City Facebook page, and illustrates what FET represents for many learners in terms of personal as well as professional development.

'To all the teachers and staff who invested time in me throughout last year's jc3, I'd like to thank you all, and all my fellow learners that helped me grow through the year. Thank you all. I've secured a full time position with exertice/regeneron in Raheen as a warehouse operative. This job has serious prospects for me as an individual and for my family going forward. I feel what I have achieved in VTOS has been vital in my development and education. Sending love to you all. Cheers. I hope you all get what you want down the road. I'm sure we will all cross paths again at some stage'

Quality Teaching & Learning

This core strategic priority is about promoting a culture of continuous improvement and organisational learning, celebrating learners and staff achievements and enhancing the relevance of our provision.

Excellence in Teaching & Learning


In 2015, there were many examples of excellence in teaching and learning practice in LCETB FET programmes. Some examples are highlighted below:

LCETB Youthreach Hospital was included in the pilot **DROICHEAD National Induction Programme for Teachers**, a whole school approach to the Induction of newly qualified teachers (NQT). NQTs are supported by an experienced teacher who acts as a mentor. Innovations in the area of teaching and learning are discussed. This project has enriched the quality of Teaching and Learning in the centre (see www.teacherinduction.ie)

- In August 2015, Ros Wynne won **Gold Medal in Aircraft Maintenance at WorldSkills** in



Brazil. This competition occurs every two years and is the biggest vocational education and skills excellence event in the world that truly reflects global industry. Ros has won 4 Gold medals in a row in Aircraft Maintenance for Ireland following the footsteps of Joe Kelly (2013), Colin Callaghan (2011) and Andy Burke (2009). Prior to the competition, he completed a 10 week intensive training/preparation course under the guidance of Michael Hayes (see picture above), senior aircraft maintenance Instructor at the Shannon Training Centre.

- Shannon Mc Ghee, a Junior Certificate Learner from Youthreach Hospital received an award from the Engineering Technology Teachers association for receiving the **highest grade in Junior Cert Metal work**. She was presented with her award at a ceremony in Clonmel. 
- CABES (Clare Adult Basic Education Service) published an article in the ETBI Autumn 2015 newsletter: *'Addressing Intergenerational Disadvantage Through Family Learning'* and was used as an example of effective literacy practice. It was published online and in Learning Families Intergenerational Approaches to Literacy Teaching and Learning (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002342/234252e.pdf>). **CFLP work was also presented in Luxembourg at an EU wide Family Learning Sharing Best Practice Conference** in October 2015.
- BES (Basic Education Solutions) in Limerick City was invited to make a presentation on the **Little Voices programme**, at the annual NALA Family Learning conference. Little Voices is a newly developed programme, which aims to provide parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to enhance their children's oral language development. The conference provided a great opportunity to promote the work of the programme to other ETBs and those involved in early learning settings.

In 2015, **three LCETB programmes were selected or shortlisted for the AONTAS Star Awards:**

- **Men's Shed Bog Walk Project** (AONTAS Star Award Shortlisted) - Kilkishen and Sixmilebridge Men's Shed group worked in partnership with Kilkishen CDP, under the guidance of LCETB Clare Community

Education, in the development of a local community 'Bog Walk'

- **Clare Family Learning Project** has developed a My Baby and Me programme (shortlisted for AONTAS Star Awards), in response to needs identified by St. Vincent de Paul.
- In **LCFE Cappamore Campus, a blacksmithing programme** was piloted regionally through Skills For Work in 2015. Due to its uniqueness and practical hands-on nature, it was selected for an award to National Aontas Star Award. It is the only centre in the country to provide a fully accredited programme in forge work iron-craft. Learners spend 10 hrs in the forge preparing for the City & Guilds element of the programme, and come together with the engineering learners to complete common QQI modules such as Health & Safety, Communications, Maths, Materials Science, etc.

Team Work/Collaboration

In 2015, team working and collaboration were prioritised to maximise the significant and existing skillset and resources of LCETB FET Division, in Limerick and Clare. Examples of such collaboration included:

- A team building exercise for all LCETB VTOS Centres and Guidance staff in August 2015. Staff came together for a **team building day in Kilfinane Outdoor Education Centre**, and enjoyed an opportunity to build connections, understand other contexts and network.
- **A cooperation agreement** continued between VTOS Kilmallock and Colaiste Iosaef (PLC) to deliver Word Processing and Spreadsheets courses to both VTOS and PLC learners, ensuring the course could be delivered and learners could receive accreditation in Kilmallock.

- **Two LCETB FET part-time programmes networking meetings for managers** took place in June and December 2015, to look at a wide variety of topics from Programme Planning to HR policy, Sharepoint, QA and planning for rollout of FARR and PLSS etc..
- A number of part-time programme **staff networking days** were held in 2015 in Clare, Limerick and Co. Limerick. Staff were brought together to hear information about important LCETB, regional and national policy developments-for example HR, rollout of StaffConnect, etc..

Continuous Professional Development

In 2015, the LCETB FET Division used a variety of sources and methods to identify CPD needs at local centre and service level, through area-based or regional programme networks, as well as at organisation level. Across the service, a wide variety of CPD initiatives were put in place to enhance the capacity and capability of FET staff. Training was held at locations across Limerick and Clare. Where possible, it was carried out by LCETB staff at venues owned or rented by the LCETB.

CPD at centre and local service level

The following gives a glimpse of the type of activities that were organised by either individual centres or CPD networks in 2015.

- The **Clare Adult Education Service CPD Network** carried out Training Needs Analysis (TNA), and organised/facilitated Staff Days or training, through a locally managed CPD budget. In 2015, training priorities identified included: New IT systems including Staff Connect, FARR, PLSS, Social media, Health and Safety, Mindfulness / Staff care, IT training. **40 training sessions were carried out for a total of 494 staff. This represented 2137 Participant Training Hours.**
- **Two whole-service staff days** were organised for adult education service staff in Clare and Limerick. In Clare, neuroscientist Professor Billy Higgins spoke to an audience of 90 about the Brain and Learning, followed by a series of workshops from singing to healthy eating to Qi Jong. In Limerick City, 70 staff attended a team building exercise in the Burren Outdoor Education Centre. This activity also helped establish new working relationships between different parts of the FET Division.
- Community Education tutors in Limerick City identified personal self-care and how to identify and deal with substance misuse in a teaching context as two distinct CPD priorities. A full-day workshop on self-care in which 14 staff participated was facilitated by a trainer with Adapt Services. Two half-day workshops on substance misuse were facilitated by the Youth Officer and a staff member from the Mid-West Drugs Task Force. **Tutors from three PT programmes attended these workshops, along with tutors from the Training Centre in Raheen.** Feedback was very positive and gave rise to a series of four two-hour workshops (November and December 2015) on reflective practice, which were facilitated by the same trainers (9 staff participated). This gave Tutors an opportunity to think and reflect on their professional role, to manage their self-care and to prevent burnout.
- Limerick College of Further Education ran a half-day workshop in **Active Teaching and Learning Methodologies**, which was attended by over 60 staff and facilitated by the Further Education and Support Service (FESS)
- LCETB FET Division also recognises the very valuable work that volunteers carry out in literacy settings. In 2015, the LCETB FET Voluntary Literacy Provision served 323 beneficiaries. As quality is at the centre of our

provision to learners, CPD is also organised for volunteers.

In September 2015, 22 new recruits completed their Initial Volunteer Tutor Training programme in BES Limerick City. These volunteers now work with the existing team who are currently working with in excess of 55 learners, in a one-to-one capacity, class support or facilitating a book club. This year, tutors who work in a paid capacity in the two other part-time Programmes, BTEI and Community Education, also attended training. This will heighten their awareness of literacy issues in the classroom and equip them with the skills to help learners around their challenges.

In Clare volunteer tutors participated in events organised by the Clare Adult Education Service CPD network including Dyslexia training.

CPD at FET Division Level

In 2015, the FET Division committed 37,000 Euros to staff development initiatives across the FET Division, and co-ordinated or organised over 60 structured training and briefing events. In total, **897 staff attended 2250 hours of CPD at FET level.**

At Service level, there was a strong focus in 2015 on providing CPD to support the **rollout of new regional and national systems.** Highlights included:

- Service-wide **StaffConnect rollout** across locations in Limerick and Clare.

- **Training on FARR and PLSS** delivered by SOLAS/ETBI;

In Focus

A cascade model of CPD was trialled in 2015 to introduce Staff Connect, the new LCETB staff communication portal. 22 FET staff members were trained up, who in turn delivered CPD in their centres and across the service. A common curriculum was devised by the FET Development Team along with supporting training materials. Registration was managed through survey monkey and co-ordinated by the Learning Technology Development Officer who communicated sign up details back to trainers and centres. **45 sessions for more than 350 staff took place in total,** across locations across Clare and Limerick. All sessions were organised with the input and support of the centre management. Evaluations with both participants and trainers suggest that this is an effective model to deliver CPD related to large scale systems rollout.

- **FET Managers Networking Days,** which featured inputs from SOLAS;
- **Skills and Labour Market Research Unit Inputs,** which brought managers from across the service together to discuss themes such as employer engagement, local socio-economic planning and FARR.
- **Moodle Champions planning meetings and briefings** took place with inputs from SOLAS CPD Unit on the ETBI FET Skills Survey Project and from E-college.

CPD Developments at National Level

The Further Education Support Service (FESS) ran a series of **national CPD events** for FET staff throughout 2015, in which more than 20 LCETB staff participated. Topics ranged from Active Teaching and Learning Methodologies to Learner Mental Health and Well Being as well as a series of events designed to support the delivery of the new QQI Level 5 and 6 IT programmes.

Also this year, a significant development was the rollout of the **ETBI/SOLAS FET Skills Survey project**, as the first ever national profiling of FET staff. **52% of LCETB FET staff participated** in the survey, which looked at the skill and CPD needs of FET staff. LCETB will receive a dedicated report early in 2016. A national report will follow in March. This should have a far reaching impact on CPD design and planning at both local and national level in to the future.

Use of Technologies for Teaching & Learning

ICTs present numerous opportunities for innovative and collaborative learning. They can also expand educational access to learners from disadvantaged background and help reach older people, and those living in remote or rural communities.

In 2015, planning commenced for the rollout of a **Virtual Learning Environment** for LCETB FET Division using Moodle. All existing LCETB Moodle sites have been migrated to an eCollege hosted environment with many potential benefits including centrally provisioned support, content and commercial plugins. A Moodle Champions group has been formed to share best practice and coordinate Moodle CPD in 2016.

In Focus

In 2015, an updated version of the **Moodle Taxi Drivers course** was developed by BES in Limerick City. Tutors and learners from many ETBs around the country continue to access our online course which is used as part of a blended learning programme. Feedback from tutors and learners alike has been very positive, and the course has proven to be an excellent backup to classroom tuition. For more information please contact siobhan.obrien@lcetb.ie

In Focus

In Clare, two workplace groups participated in a **Computer Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) project**, which used Facebook as a learning platform. Key outcomes were recorded e.g. higher order learning, enhanced teamwork, increased self-confidence and taking of responsibility for own and project work. The findings were presented at two national fora in 2015 and the tutor involved is due to present workshops at a NALA event in 2016. The methodology will be introduced to all workplace classes in 2016.

There are many examples at FET Centre level of the innovative use of technologies for teaching and learning.

In Focus

The **Farmers Online Herd Training Programme** (Skills for Work) was designed and provided by the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine and supported by the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) and Teagasc. It aims to give farmers the confidence and skills to register stock to the Dep. of Agriculture using computers to replace the current paper based system. The project started as a pilot in County Clare in 2011 and now has a national uptake. The training is delivered in small groups by LCETB adult literacy tutors who have been trained by the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine on the operations of the on-line site.

In addition, many innovations are currently in planning or development around the use of technologies for teaching and learning, e.g.:

- the **use of ePortfolios** (using Mahara) and Open Badges in VTOS as part of their Edge Project (an Erasmus+ EU funded programme)
- the **licensing and use of Turnitin**, a plagiarism prevention and learner feedback tool in LCFE.

In terms of advocacy work, LCETB FET Division is represented on the **national SOLAS On-Line Learning Steering group**, who are charged with the development of a national Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Strategy for the FET sector. We are also one of two ETBs involved in the national **Development Needs Analysis Working Group**, who are developing a process and methodology for analysing CPD needs in the sector. We will be piloting the methodology and process in the area of TEL in 2016.

Measuring Outcomes of Learning

2015 Statistics

- LCETB FET Division has 36 centres registered with QQI offering accredited programmes between Level 1-6 of the NFQ.
- **7,461 awards were issued by QQI to learners in Limerick and Clare.**
- **1,093 awards¹ were issued by other accrediting bodies** (e.g. Department of Education & Skills Junior/Leaving Certs, City and Guilds, Approved Engineering Certified Bodies, ICS, Comptia, CIDESCO, etc.).

While accreditation and awards remain critical indicators of outcomes of learning, LCEBT FET Division is constantly working to capture the wider benefits of learning to recognise, in line with the ESRI report on Further Education and Training (2013), that non formal and informal learning are a critical access point to education and progression for many early school leavers, and people at risk of socio-economic exclusion.

In 2015, LCETB FET Division continued to explore several approaches to capturing the benefits of learning.

Two of these approaches were presented at an ETBI workshop on the Wider Benefits of Learning in November 2015.

1. A tool/methodology for Capturing the WBL was developed in 2009/10 by Limerick City Adult Education Service with Community Education staff and Tutors as part of a service-wide curriculum planning and staff development initiative. Used with a range of Community Education groups in Limerick City, it allows learners to rate progress in their learning related to the subject while also capturing any knock-on or wider benefits of

their participation in learning. It records vital data about the impact of FET learning and helps Tutors, Community Centres and the Community Education programme with reporting and planning. In 2015, an online step-by-step guide to use the tool was developed. The **CWBL e-learning course** and supplementary videos and downloadable tools

(<http://www.limerickcityaes.ie/cwbl/CWBL>)

2. The **CABES (Clare Adult Basic Education Service) Framework** is a tool for teaching and learning that can be used to help bridge the gap between theory and practice in adult learning. The Framework promotes practice informed by three strands important to adult literacy work: social theories of literacy, social constructivist learning theory and principles of adult learning. The tool seeks to capture learner growth within the course (assessing those course elements that enable change in learners).

Youthreach Limerick City has been working since 2014 as a partner on an Erasmus PLUS European funded project titled **SMART - Quality Framework and Systematic Measurement of outcomes in second chance education** (www.edu-smart.eu). This European-wide project involves a variety of Second Chance centres and aims to develop a systematic measurement system of soft skills development for use in second chance centres. In November 2015, LCETB FET Division (Youthreach Team, FET Development Team and Gerry Griffin - National co-ordinator Youthreach) organised a one day Conference in Limerick on *'Valuing informal learning; supporting organisations to measure success.'* This project also represented a significant CPD opportunity for all FET staff involved.

Celebrating Learners and Staff Achievements

The celebrations of staff and learners achievements and journey travelled remain a highlight for the LCETB FET programmes and services each year. They showcase excellence both at personal level for FET learners and at organisational level highlighting the quality and professionalism of all our staff.

In 2015, many events were organised across FET Centres in Limerick and Clare to celebrate learners and staff achievements e.g.:

- The Bedford Row Family Project celebrated the work of the Men's Art Group with an exhibition launched by Minister Jan O'Sullivan in Central Buildings (October 2015). The exhibition was the culmination of 2 years work with the men's group by LCETB Community Education tutor. Art from learners in Limerick Prison was also exhibited with the permission of the Education Unit and Artists.
- CABES published 'Simply Said', an annual collection of learners' stories (June 2015), in a celebration of music, digital stories and written work where learners and their family and friends can see their work in print.
- VTOS learners held their annual Art Exhibition entitled "Le Chéile" in Newcastle West Library (June 2015). The display included 87 pieces in a variety of media; acrylic, oil pastels and mixed media covering a range of subject matter as part of QQI Level 5 Painting module.
- Limerick School of Music took part in a Christmas showcase at LIT Millennium Theatre.
- The 2015 Student Yearbook with writings from learners in Limerick City Literacy Service was one of our most successful publications to date with almost 350 copies distributed and many tutors using the book as a teaching and learning resource in class. Electronic copies of the book are available (deidre.aherne@lcetb.ie)

Here are some examples of the celebrations that took place in



Stakeholders Engagement

The consolidation and establishment of formal linkages with existing and new partners, including employers, statutory and community partners as well as other education providers are key priorities for the LCETB FET Division. Our efforts all point to enhancing the quality and relevance of our work in Limerick and Clare for the ultimate benefit of our learners.

The comprehensive range of FET programmes available in LCETB is an indicator of our constant efforts to deliver flexible, high quality education and training that meets the needs and ambitions of learners, businesses and communities, and responds to national and local industry needs. **In 2015, LCETB FET Division provided 993 courses.**

Fostering strategic partnerships to meet the skills needs of the region

Employer engagement has been identified as a priority in the LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020, to ensure *'our provision responds to key regional and national skills demands, and equips learners to participate successfully in the workforce'*.

Strategic engagement in 2015 took several forms:

- **Shannon Regional Skills Forum:** In conjunction with the National Skills Strategy 2025, and the Regional Action Plans for Jobs, the Department of Education and Skills have created a network of Regional Skills Forum based on the NUTS 3 Geographical Areas. The Shannon Regional Skills Forum was formed in the Mid-West Region to be a cohesive education-led entity to assist employers establish and enhance links with the education and training providers. The role of the Forums will include the support of job creation and enterprise development, analysis

of labour market information, analysis of employer needs, greater collaboration on education and training provision, support of career progression for existing staff and enhancing links with local employers.

- LCETB participated in the **"Action Plan For Jobs" Fora throughout the Mid -West** to continue to address the unemployment issue and to support job seekers to reskill.
- **Awareness raising:** In 2015, several exploratory meetings took place with employers to raise awareness about the FET provision and respond to their needs. These included meetings with the Vintners Federation (work experience programme), I.A.S.I to explore Accommodation Skill Area, meetings with IDA (bespoke programme for general operatives in Industry), HSE (Care Skills and Care of the Older Person QQI L5 modules for a group of Home Helps in Limerick City under the SKILLETB programme), Penn Engineering and LIT to explore apprenticeship and address a skills shortage in the precision engineering sector.
- LCETB FET Division is a member of the **Limerick for Engineering Consortium**, and exhibited at the Limerick for Engineering showcase in May 2015. This is a direct link to employers to develop a pipeline of apprentices, technicians and engineers in the region to meet the specific demands of the engineering sector in the region.

Matching Supply and Demand

LCETB is working increasingly closer with employers through work-based learning, work placements, apprenticeships, etc., with a view to enhancing its economic impact, by contributing to increased productivity and raising the skills of the local community. LCETB also presents employers great value for money, by offering learners and employers a range of options that fit their needs.

In response to the Youth Guarantee, LCETB FET Division has developed a range of quality work-related learning opportunities for young people, including the following:

- **Apprenticeship:** While there has been a significant pick-up on registrations of new apprentices nationally with an increase of 17% over 2015, **LCETB exceeded the national performance with an increase in registrations of 27%**. This reflects a strong economic recovery within Counties Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary.

- **Traineeship:** In November 2015, LCETB launched the **first Career Traineeship in the country**. This programme was developed in conjunction with ETBs, SOLAS, Irish Hotel Federation and Failte Ireland.



The participants are studying for a Level 2 City & Guilds Qualification in Professional Food & Beverage studies. This is the first time this particular programme has been offered and is a new development whereby participants get the opportunity to experience extended periods of work practice in the hospitality industry while studying for their qualification. The traineeship is supported by 10 employers in the Hospitality sector.

- **First Professional Cookery Level 5 full-time programme:** In September 2015, with the shortage of chefs at “crisis levels”, LCFE and the HETC. came together to deliver the first Professional Cookery Level 5 full-time programme. 15 learners are currently participating in this programme. Since opening its door in September 2014, the new LCETB Hospitality Education & Training Centre (HETC.) has been addressing the shortfall in suitably qualified staff in the Irish Hospitality Industry. This is a partnership project involving LCETB, DSP, Paul Partnership, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership, LIT, IHF, LCFE and representatives from the Hospitality and Tourism sectors.



- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and the **Learner Fund:** The LCETB are one of the approved Training Providers to deliver courses that meet the requirement for the Learner Fund and are working in cooperation with POBAL and with both of the Childcare Committees in Limerick and Clare. Over 60 participants, all of whom are working in the Early Childhood Care and Education sector have received formal Level 5 and Level 6 QQI certification in Childcare in 2015.

- **Aviation Training:** Aviation has been identified as a potential growth sector within the Mid-West Region and the Shannon Training Centre continues to play its part in the provision of highly skilled craft people to



support the projected growth within the sector. In June 2015,

there were 74 aircraft mechanic apprentices and 28 trainee aircraft maintenance technicians at the Aircraft Maintenance training section of the Shannon Training Centre. All were preparing and taking their EASA 147 approved exams at either Category A or Category B level. They will join over 20,000 technicians who have been trained in the Shannon Training Centre over the past 30 years.

Improving Inter-Agency Work

Monthly Stakeholder Engagement meetings took place in 2015 between LCETB and the DSP re. course recruitment and provision. As a result, a series of initiatives emerged including:

- **Youth Developmental Internship / First Steps**
A LCETB FET Division YDI co-ordinating group developed two proposed models of delivery:
 - **Model One:** LCETB working with the support of Youth Advocacy Service used 'First Steps' as a mechanism to support a small cohort of Youthreach participants, in danger of entering the live register, transition from an education programme into a supported work environment.
 - **Model Two:** BTEI in Limerick City piloted a successful YDI Internship Work Preparation Course in May 2015 in partnership with DSP for 12 Level 5 learners. The programme focused on Group Development, Computers for Job

search and CV preparation, Positive Career Choices, Self-Awareness, Presenting Yourself well and Health and Safety in the workplace. All were referred from DSP as participants and the programme, while delivered by LCETB was planned collaboratively.

- **Community Employment Supervisor Training with a Specific Focus on QQI Awards.**
Following a request from the DSP, LCETB co-delivered five one day training programmes for over 120 CE supervisors from Limerick and Clare. The DSP's priority in supporting CE is having access to schemes that can provide job seekers and other vulnerable groups with quality work experience and training qualifications to support progression. A key feature of CE is to ensure participant have access to recognised qualifications. These workshops were designed to enable Community Employment Supervisors to identify and draw down relevant qualifications for participants on CE and report on outcomes.

Enhancing linkages with employers at centre levels

In 2015, there were numerous examples of employer engagement at FET centre level, including employer site visits and skills demonstrations (e.g. DSM Ltd (Call Services; Marketing; Invoicing and Credit Control work); Bluebird Care, Home Nursing Mid-West and The Carers Association in Healthcare; Vaughan Hotel Group, CPL Recruitment Agency, etc.).

All these opportunities offered great insights for learners and staff into the world of work, enhanced their understanding and motivation levels and opened up new avenues for employment and job-search. As a result, employers also became more aware of the work of LCETB as a FET provider.

In Focus

In Ennis VTOS, an Employer Focus Week was a great success in 2015, with employers attending and carrying mock interviews, participating in seminars and networking with staff and learners.

- **LCETB Training Centre Raheen** is directly involved with employers and IDA in exploratory discussions re. the provision of specific skills programmes for companies i.e. Vistakon, Allegis Global Solutions/IDA, and Fazzi Associates/IDA. These links enable LCETB to address specific training needs and design bespoke programmes where required.
- **Work Placements:** More placements have been sought for learners as an effective way to make the transition to the labour market. Some have already led to full time employment.

In Focus

In September 15, VTOS in Ennis started a Pilot project in partnership with FIT to support learners to make greater connections with the workplace.

- **Workplace Learning:** upskilling training courses were provided by many programmes across the FET Division, e.g.:
 - The **Shannon Training Centre** provided upskilling training for two companies in 2015 (E.I. Electronics and Atlantic Aviation Group). Both courses were sponsored and funded by the companies themselves. The feedback from course participants and the companies involved was extremely positive.
 - **SkillETB Training for HSE Workers:** BTEI Limerick City continues to offer up-skilling courses for HSE workers as part

of the 'national' SKILL Programme. In 2015, modules offered were Care Skills, Care of the Older Person, Palliative Care and Activities of Living Patient Care. With up to 20 people in each group, and all of these in current workplace settings, the learners worked extremely hard to achieve their certification.

- In response to the growing opportunities, three **Local Training Initiatives** in East and West Clare and South Limerick focused on delivering hospitality skills training.

Promoting social inclusion through Community Education

In 2015, LCETB FET provision was delivered in over 300 locations across Limerick and Clare, most of those at the heart of disadvantaged communities. Throughout the year, the LCETB FET Community Education programmes continued to promote social inclusion and community cohesion, enhance learning and foster empowerment.

In 2015, LCETB Community Education programmes served 4304 beneficiaries through 495 courses or groups in Limerick and Clare.

In accordance with DES Operational Guidelines, currently all LCETB community education is unaccredited and is integrated at the level of planning and provision with the accredited learning options available under the Literacy and BTEI programmes. The Guidelines also support a communal aspect of community education in terms of the contribution learners make to the social, cultural and economic development of their area. Indeed, while mostly unaccredited, adult learning in communities continue to incorporate social and personal development, team building, communication skills, active citizenship, community development/participation, self-esteem, confidence and positive group experience.

Some highlights in 2015 included:

- **Southill Family Resource Centre** celebrated its 15th anniversary through a comedy drama entitled 'Southside Story', which was performed in the Lime Tree Theatre to a sell-out audience.



This production was developed as part of their community education programme. It was collaboration between Southside Women's Group and the Southill Men's Shed. In addition to performing, the Men's Shed group made the props during their community education woodwork course.

- **Kilrush Men's Shed:** Manufactured furniture (bunk bed and chairs) which will be put into the 'Light Keepers Cottage' located on the historic Scattery Island - a small uninhabited island in West Clare. The men also planned out and built a



Community Currach, the traditional canoe of the Loop Head Peninsula. The skill required to build these boats had been all but lost, however is being revived again by working with such community groups in order that a new generation of people can learn these skills of crafting these unique boats. The project also involved a partnership with Clare County Council who funded the raw materials. This group was shortlisted for an Aontas STAR Award in 2015.

- Several programmes were designed and delivered to **active agers** in 2015. While these programmes are themed, i.e. art and craft, all modules delivered incorporate the enhancement of self-esteem, social/personal development, communication skills, trust, confidence and positive group experience.



"I looked forward to and really enjoyed coming out and meeting people every week, I live on my own and would not see anyone from one end of the week to another."

In Focus

St. Saviours drama group had a great year with two sell out shows in the Belltable Arts Centre in Limerick of their self-penned play A Fishy Affair!, the shooting of their first short film with original music score whilst also succeeding in gaining accreditation in QQI Communications level 3.



The LCETB Community Education programmes also continued to carry out extensive partnership activities at various levels by:

- Supporting established groups through the provision of tuition hours and curriculum development/support
- Facilitating countywide network meetings and dissemination of information through the Clare Learning Network and Limerick Community Education Network, Adult Learner Festivals, Limerick Learning Region Festival, etc.
- In addition, external Training staff continued to work with Community Groups across Limerick, Clare & North Tipperary in 2015, to provide training opportunities to Early School Leavers, People with Disabilities and other disadvantaged groups to achieve qualifications between Levels 3 to 5. In 2015, **Local Training Initiatives reached 288 beneficiaries through 29 courses or groups.** One particular development worthy of note is the addition of a Local Training Initiative Programme in Granagh, Co. Limerick which is delivering a Level 5 programme in Intellectual Disability Practice. Participants successful in achieving the Level 5 award will be qualified to work with people with Autism where there is currently a shortage of people with the requisite skills and knowledge.

In Focus

Another initiative under the auspices of LCETB is the **Music Generation Project in Limerick and Clare.** Music Generation is Ireland's National Music Education Programme, a unique and pioneering initiative co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds and the Department of Education and Skills, that enables children and young people to access high quality affordable music tuition in their local area. In 2015, a significant achievement was the mainstreaming of the project in Limerick City, with annual funding of €200,000 secured from the Department of Education and Skills, on condition that it is matched by equivalent local funding.

The work of Music Generation is not only impacting positively on the hearts and minds of the thousands of young participants, it is genuinely contributing in a real and tangible way to the social and economic regeneration of Limerick City through its contribution to the cultural life of the city and the employment opportunities created for professional musicians.



MGLC ran a programme in 12 National schools in 2015. The programme centred on group song-writing and culminated in a series of original compositions and the inaugural 'Schools Summit' event in UL Arena, with over 1500 young people performing to each-other.

Engaging with Local Government Reform

At a strategic level, the LCETB FET Division works closely with key statutory and community stakeholders to target areas identified within the SAPS for the planning and delivery of programmes in disadvantaged areas. LCETB part-time provision uses a networking model (LCEN, CLLN) and an area planning approach, where provision is planned on a local basis, in consultation with all relevant actors and providers. This allows the joint identification of needs, avoids duplication and ensures that priorities are addressed. Local groups play a key role in identifying learning needs and interests, organising courses, inputting into content and delivery methods, providing venues often free of charge for ETBs, etc..

In accordance with the SOLAS FET five year strategy (2014) and the Overarching Planning and Funding Parameters and Requirements documents (2016), **ETBs are required to engage proactively with local government reform.** Indeed, many **FET Staff represent LCETB at various economic and social fora in Limerick and Clare.** The local government reform programme seeks to give local government a more central coordinating role in local and community development.

From an LCETB perspective the formal merger of city/county councils in Limerick, the new regional assemblies, and the provisions relating to community development in the context of local government, involving the establishment of Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) in place of the City and County Development Boards are of particular interest.

The LCETB, due to its geographic remit in both Clare and Limerick, is a member of both the Clare and Limerick Local Community Development Committees. **LCDCs** are comprised of both public and private sector socio-economic partners drawn from the relevant local authority administrative

area. Community representatives on the Local Community Development Committees are drawn from newly established Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and PPNS have been established in each of Limerick's four Municipal and Metropolitan Districts, and in the four Municipal Districts/Electoral Areas in Clare. The **LCDCs** have primary responsibility for co-ordinating, planning and overseeing local and community development funding, whether spent by local authorities or on behalf of the State by other local development bodies. For instance, they prepare the community elements of a 6-year Local Economic and Community Plan (**LCEP**). They are also responsible for managing the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (**SICAP**) at a local level, which aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

Proactive engagement with local government reform structures is essential for the LCETB both from a planning and implementation point of view, to ensure that our services and programmes meet the needs of a wide range of stakeholders from employers to those learners who are furthest from the labour market.

Some of our key partners...

ACIST, Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland, Adult Education Organisers Association, Adult literacy organisers Association, An Garda Síochána, AONTAS, Arts Council, Association RAPID Get Vocal Group (Older Persons Forum) Parenting, ASTI, Age Friendly Clare, Back to Education Initiative Association, Brothers of Charity, CEEOA, CESI (Computer Education Society of Ireland), City and Guilds, Clare Active Citizenship Network, Clare County Council, Clare Haven, Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Clare Learning Network, Clare Lifelong Learning, Clarecare, CLASP (Community Leadership in Arts and Sports Project), CLDC, Community Education Facilitators, Department of Education and Skills, Diocesan Office, ECDL, Employability Clare, Ennis Chamber of Commerce, Ennis HSCL, Ennis Educate Together National School, Ennis Learning Network, Ennis Restaurants Association of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, ETBI, FAI, Focus Ireland, HEA, Headway, Holy Family School, Home School Community Liaison, Hospital Family Resource Centre Education network, HSE, IBEC, ICS-Skills Network, IFA Implementation Group, Impact, Intreo, Irish Hotels Federation, Jobbridge, Jobs clubs, Killaloe/Ballina Business Network, Kilmallock Family Support Network, LCDC, LCEN, Learning Hub, LEPD, Library Services, Limerick and Clare Sports Partnerships, Limerick Chamber of Commerce, Limerick Children & Young People's Services Committee, Limerick City and County Council, Limerick Education Center, Limerick Homeless Network, Limerick Integration Working Group, Limerick Smarter Travel, LIT, LMUG (Limerick Moodle Users Group), Local Enterprise Offices, Mary Immaculate College, Merchant's Quay Drug Advisory Service, Mid-West Regional Drugs Task Force, Moyross Development Company, Moyross Partners Southill Adult Education Group Our Lady Queen of Peace/St. Saviours Adult Education Network, NALA, NAPD, National association of VTOS coordinators, National Education Welfare Board, National Learning Network, NAYC, NCGE, Network, North Clare Area Network, Northside FRC, Obair, Our Lady of Lourdes, Paul Partnership, Probation Office, Psychological services, QQI, Qualifax, Rehabcare, Shannon Development, Shannon Regional Skills Forum, SICAP, SIPTU, Skillnet, Slainte, SOLAS, South Clare Learning network Kilrush Chamber of Commerce West Clare Area Learning Network, Southill Area Centre, Southill FRC, St Mary's CDP, Support Network (sub-group of Childcare Committee) Limerick Mens Sheds Network, Teaching Council, the National Educational Welfare Board, Traveller Health Advocacy Project, TUI, Tusla, TusNua, University of Limerick, West Limerick Resources/Ballyhoura Development, Youth Forum...

Effectiveness & Accountability in Governance & Leadership

In 2015, the LCETB amalgamation process was completed with two Training Centres becoming part of the FET Division. This presented a timely opportunity to articulate a Vision for the LCETB FET Division as a new organisation.

An extensive strategic consultative and planning process was designed and carried out internally by the FET Development Team in 2015. It culminated with the launch in October 2015 of the **LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020**



(www.lcfet.ie/Publications). It promotes a shared vision across our service and guides our FET centres, colleges, programmes and services in the development of integrated

implementation plans for their full-time and part-time provision. It sets out four service-wide strategic priorities, which are in line with the LCETB Corporate Plan and the SOLAS Strategy 2014-2019: 1) *Access and Progression* 2) *Quality Teaching & Learning*, 3) *Stakeholder Engagement and* 4) *Effectiveness & Accountability in Governance & Leadership*.

New Management and Administrative Systems

The change process involved paying particular attention to communication and new management and administration systems to support the development and continued delivery of quality education and training programmes in Limerick and Clare. While these systems provide valuable information, it is expected that the increasing workload associated with the implementation of these systems will ease in 2016 to allow staff to firmly put their focus back on the core business of quality teaching and learning.

The key systems implemented in 2015 included:

- A **new funding and reporting system** was introduced by SOLAS. The **FARR** (Funding Allocation Request and Reporting) system enables reporting on all FET programmes using a single database. This system is the precursor to PLSS (Programme and Learner Support System) that will include a Course Database, a Calendar Database and a Learner Database. This new system required significant investment from ETBs in terms of staff time and training, in order to be able to provide accurate data from all our FET centres.

- **Introduction of StaffConnect - LCETB new Communication Portal**, launched in July 2015.

This portal consists of:

- LCETB sites where staff can access information on LCETB policies and procedures as well as use online HR forms, etc.
- A FET Site where staff can access relevant information to their work within the FET Division
- Local Sites where various FET centres and Programmes share local information with staff

In Focus

In September/October 2015, an extensive CPD initiative was organised to introduce StaffConnect to staff across the FET Division. 35 workshops were organised and 350 staff attended the introduction to StaffConnect workshops. In addition, initial training was provided to Local Site administrators to enable them to begin to develop local StaffConnect sites.

- In 2015, LCETB Head Office pillars (i.e. HR, Corporate Affairs, ICT, Finance, Procurement) have conducted a range of **CPDs for management and administration staff** in relation to :
 - Finance training sessions for managers and administrative staff included an overview of the Finance Department including Payroll, Treasury, Budget Management, Reporting, Purchasing Procedures, Emergency Orders, Coding and P2P, as well as the introduction of new systems (e.g. Core system, DCS, etc..)
 - **Mandatory/regulatory** CPD that needs to be completed e.g. Health and Safety, Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults, Data Protection, Centre Insurance, etc.

New Planning Mechanisms

In order to reflect the regional dimension of the newly merged FET Division, new planning mechanisms were devised to help identify and avoid duplication of provision.

- **Regional Programme Approval process:** The LCETB FET Programme Delivery Development & Validation Policy was updated in 2015. It sets out a clear quality management structure and process to govern the service-wide programme approval process, including terms of reference for the LCETB FET Programme Group. The policy expanded to look at programmes from all awarding bodies and not just QQI. A new process for requesting further information and convening a programme subgroup to probe applications in more detail was also added. **In 2015, it met 6 times to approve over 45 programmes.**

In Focus

In October 2015, LCETB FET Programme Curriculum/CPD and QA Officers made a presentation on *'Co-ordinating and Managing Programmes in LCETB'* as part of the **first ETBI Snapshot of Practice Seminar on 'Interim Governance Process for Programme Management'**. The presentation provided an overview of the Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy and associated process for the management of programmes.

As part of the work of the Programme Group, a service-wide process of rationalisation of the **Qualification Business System (QBS)** was initiated. All former VEC centres who offer QQI awards participated in an exercise to map their approved programme against QQI lists. This exercise ensured 100% accuracy of each centres QBS.

In addition, the PC/CPD Officer and QA Unit populated the LCETB FET Division local partition of the National Course Database with locally devised programmes. **This enabled programmes to input on the national course calendar.**

- **Area Networking:** cohesive integrated programmes of adult learning for geographical areas within LCETB were developed to build on the structures in place across the LCETB FET Division. In Clare, area planning is facilitated across five learning networks, while in Limerick, area planning is facilitated across three learning network areas in the City and two network areas in the County.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The **FET Division Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** was designed by the FET Development Team in 2015, to monitor progress against the implementation of the LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020. This will draw quantitative and qualitative data from the FARR and MIS databases, consultation questionnaires, as well as from examples of best practice in the FET Division.
- A **Best Practice Toolkit** was designed to capture examples of good practice in the LCETB FET Division. Initial feedback is very positive as a user-friendly tool to highlight and share excellent initiatives across the Service. Analysis from this data will be used to illustrate and communicate the impact of the work of the LCETB FET Division to all our partners and stakeholders.



Quality Assurance

In 2015, LCETB FET Division engaged with ETBI and QQI in the drafting of Quality Assurance guidelines for ETBs. In January 2015, LCETB was one of three ETBs to take part in a **feasibility study on the draft QQI QA guidelines for ETBs**, carried out by an external advisory panel. Currently, LCETB FET Division operates with eight QQI quality agreements across Limerick and Clare, which will need to be aligned into a single agreement. In March 2015, a **QA Information Seminar** was organised for all FET Centre Managers and Programme Coordinators to Re-inform managers / coordinators of their roles, responsibilities and expectations, as well as a QA Survey to identify any gaps.

In Focus

The establishment of new FET structures to support a regional FET development and delivery, led to new, wider roles. In BTEI Limerick City, a key Resource Staff co-ordinated the External Authentication and Results Approval process for all learners presenting for certification from 6 FET centres: Adult Literacy, BTEI; Prison Education; VTOS and Youthreach. In 2015, 2267 portfolios were presented for certification. The process was managed professionally and effectively and was crucial to the successful provision of 'quality assured' learning.