



lcetb

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board

Further Education and Training Division

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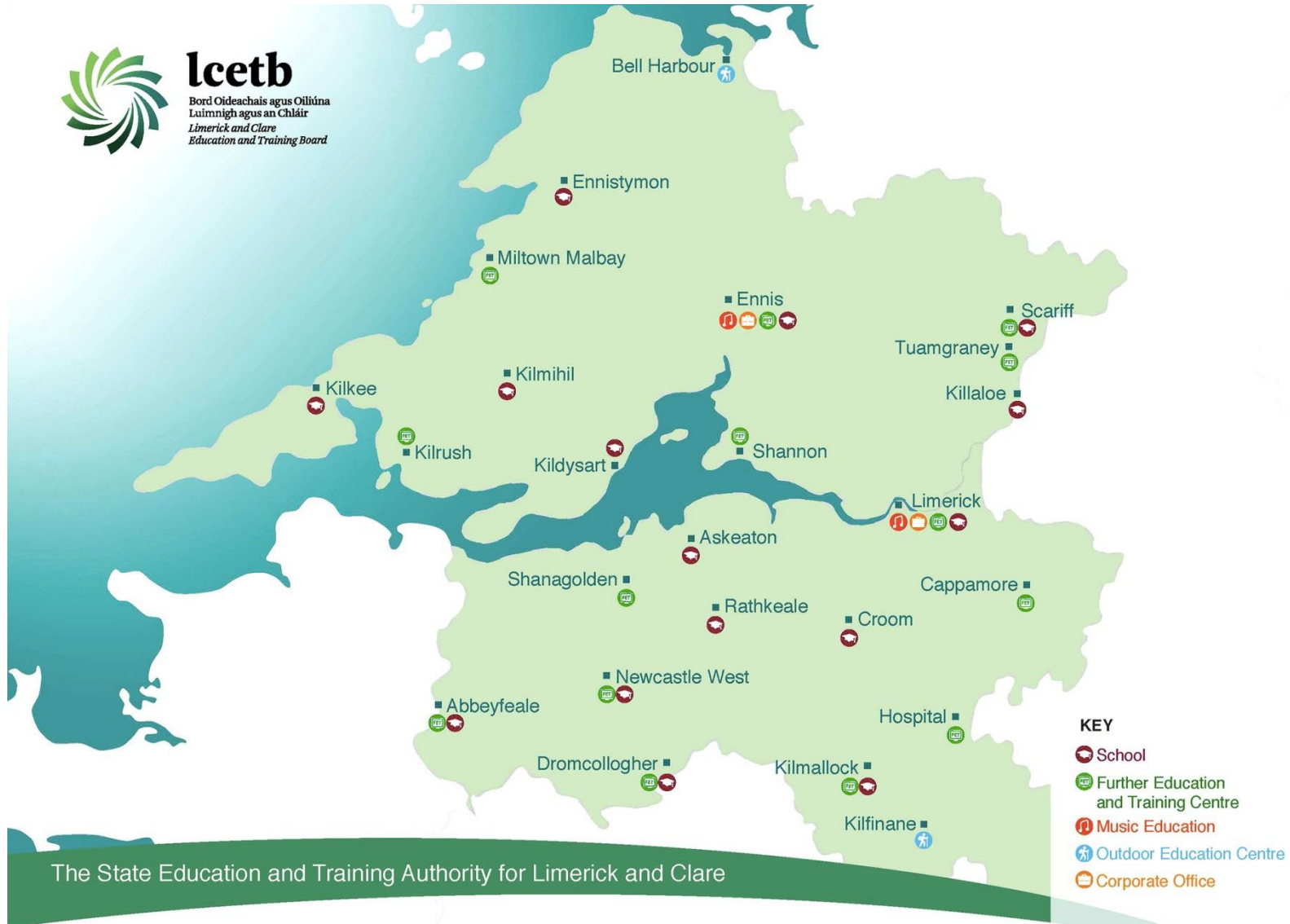
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LCETB FET Provision 2016





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Our Impact In 2016

1. Skills for the Economy

In the FET Strategy (2014-2019), SOLAS outlined the goal of 'Skills for the Economy' to address the current and future skills needs of learners, jobseekers and employees; meet the skills needs of enterprise and contribute to national economic development. In 2016, LCETB FET Division put an emphasis on enterprise engagement both at strategic and operational levels, to provide sectorial responses to local skills demands.

Building Partnerships to Identify Skills Needs

At regional level, LCETB FET Division continued to play an active role in **strategic fora** to identify local skills needs in Limerick and Clare through the Shannon Regional Skills Forum, which LCETB will be chairing in 2017. LCETB FET Division also held regular meetings with IDA in relation to training supports options available to potential client/s considering relocating within the Mid-West region. Representation on the local Chambers of Commerce, Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) in Limerick and Clare, and continued partnerships with Turas Nua, HSE, Probation Service and Limerick Prison, Employability Clare, Sports Partnerships, etc., all contribute to a more accurate analysis of local labour-market demands, and inform the supply of FET responses. Internally, structures such as the Local Area Networks have been set up in the LCETB FET Division for full-time and part-time programmes to share needs analysis, planning and coordination of responses, thus avoiding duplication (see p.44 for more details).

In 2016, LCETB FET Division also continued to enhance its **cross-agency collaboration** to identify local skills needs and potential joint-initiatives to avoid duplication. An Interagency framework was signed with the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in June 2016, and a protocol was also signed with the Local Employment Office (LEO). Enhanced collaboration with DSP through quarterly strategic meetings, as well as PLSS briefings with DSP Case Officers in Limerick and Clare have helped identify DSP priority cohorts, in particular the Long-Term unemployed (LTU), and the appropriate responses required by local FET programmes and services. LCETB FET Division also delivers programmes in partnership with local SICAP providers. These partnerships and ensuing referrals have led to the introduction of new targeted provision.

In 2016, **Community Employment participants** were prioritised within the BTEI provision in the rollout of new programmes in Healthcare, Childcare and Retail areas.

- 15 participants who work in voluntary organisations such as Enable Ireland, the Carers Association and St Gabriel’s School for the Deaf, all in caring roles, took part in a Health Service Skills Level 5 Award, which they will complete in 2017. New employment opportunities have already emerged (i.e. the Irish Wheelchair Association have been awarded a national contract for an Assisted Living Service for those with physical and sensory disabilities) and in Limerick City, learners on this programme are now able to apply, with high levels of expectation of success.
- Another group of 15 learners who work in Limerick Crèche’s are working to achieve the Early Childhood Care and Education L5 Award.
- Recruitment was also completed for another 15 CE participants, who work in Charity shops in Limerick to begin Retail Skills L4 Award in January 2017.

In terms of **provision specifically targeted at**

Long-term Unemployed (LTU), Preparation for Work courses accredited at QQI level 3 were designed in partnership with local employers. Progression options are available

for each of these courses up to QQI level 5. These courses enable learners develop the critical skills required to work in areas where employment is available, e.g. retail, catering, administration, hospitality. Also, a ‘Working with Wood’ programme was delivered in Kilrush as a result of direct group referral of LTU males through the DSP.

LCETB FET 2016 Beneficiaries

- Long-Term Unemployed: 1,046
- Youth Guarantee: 1,273

LCETB FET Sector-Specific Response to Skills Demand

Strategic partnerships at local and regional level, together with labour-market data and projections for the Mid-West have highlighted key occupational sectors for skills demand in our catchment area.

Science & Engineering

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 highlights the central importance of mathematics and science to addressing Ireland's future skills needs and identified the relatively low take-up of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) courses in higher education amongst learners of all ages and backgrounds.

In an effort to address policy issues related to access, and the skills requirements for **STEM**, a joint BTEI and University of Limerick programme commenced in September 2016. This pilot Higher Level Leaving Certificate Mathematics programme for Adult Learners is run on a part-time basis over one year, and offers participants an opportunity to obtain the prerequisite mathematics entry requirement for relevant degree programmes by sitting the Higher Level Leaving Certificate Mathematics examination in June 2017. It is anticipated that this pilot programme will be run for two years, with the ultimate goal of moving towards delivery of the QQI Maths for STEM award (5S2246 / 5N0556) by the FET sector within the region and recognition of this QQI award by UL as an alternative to Higher Level Leaving Certificate Mathematics. A total of 9 learners enrolled on the programme and mid-course evaluation showed that the learners are full of praise for the high quality of teaching and support that they are receiving – from their teachers and the support tutors in the UL Maths Learning Centre.

There was also a notable increase in the demand for **numeracy** support both for one-to-one tuition and group classes across Limerick and Clare, from taster classes to QQI levels 1, 2 and 3. In Shannon, thematic summer workshop classes in Maths resulted in more people accessing the Leaving Cert Maths Programme and QQI level 3 Maths programmes in the South Clare area in September 2016.

In terms of **engineering** skills, LCETB FET Division is part of the Employer Group - Limerick for Engineering, and several programmes took part in the 'Limerick for Engineering' event in Limerick in February 2016. Also, a new Engineering Award Level 5 was designed in conjunction with Engineering Sector employers. The Pathway to Engineering course, which was designed in response to a request by both LIT and the Limerick for Engineering Group commenced in Kilmallock Road Campus in October 2016. It hopes to promote Engineering as a career choice and offers an alternative to people who may not have been able to get direct entry into third level from secondary schools.

Healthcare

SkilleTB is a consortium of all 16 ETBs, led by City of Dublin ETB, which was set up to provide QQI Awards at Levels 5 and 6 to health service staff nationally. The main purpose is to *“educate, develop and train support staff in the health services to the optimum of their abilities in order to enhance their role in the quality of service to patients/clients”*. LCETB provides the Health Service Skills Award at Level 5 to support staff from a variety of different backgrounds in the HSE Mid-west. It offers both core and mandatory modules to meet specific job requirements within the service.

In 2016, a total of 70 employees have participated in the programme in BTEI/Upskill in Limerick City. 37 of these are employed full-time with the HSE and 33 are part-time employees. They work in roles such as Carers and Hospital Attendants. Almost half have less than LC qualification (36) and 33 have Level 4 or 5, so the challenge in returning to learning for them is significant. However, the success rate in terms of completion and certification is very high, as all are motivated to get their qualifications in order to build their skills for the workplace and hold onto their jobs.

Also, as mentioned previously, BTEI in Limerick City rolled out a Health Service Skills Level 5 Award programme for 15 CE participants who work in voluntary organisations such as Enable Ireland, the Carers Association and St Gabriel’s School for the Deaf.

LCETB has also forged strong links with one of the largest Healthcare Recruitment Agency in the country and as a result, agency personnel advise on Interview Skills, CV Preparation and Job Sourcing as well as advising on current Industry needs and standards.

Hospitality

Angela Smith, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility DIAGEO:
“Limerick is the best in class when it comes to ETB's delivering training for the hospitality sector”.

Since its opening in 2014, LCETB Hospitality Education & Training Centre (HETC) in Limerick has achieved great recognition for its efforts to engage with the hospitality industry for maximum relevance of its curriculum as well as excellent progression and employment outcomes for its learners. 210 full and part-time jobs have been created, with more than 100 of these jobs going to people from regeneration areas of Limerick city.

In 2016, HETC was awarded the European Framework Quality Management Award (EFQM), the first in the country to get this award. In October 2016, Patrick O'Donovan, T.D., Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, visited the Hospitality Education & Training Centre, and addressed staff and management about the growth of jobs in this sector. He said that the HETC Centre is a model that could be replicated on a National Level.



The Hospitality Education and Training Centre based at Limerick Enterprise Development Park has become the first centre in the Republic of Ireland to be awarded a European Framework for Excellence Award. This award acknowledges HETC as a centre committed to the highest level of achievement, as it engages with its stakeholders - trainees, staff, industry and education partners as well as government agencies and the local authority.

<https://vimeo.com/195082335>

Other Skills Areas

There is a widened scope of provision to meet current employment requirements in the areas of Leisure, Food & Catering and Childcare within the school system, e.g. Lifeguarding, ITEC, Children with additional needs, EOHA. The **Sports, Recreation & Exercise** programme, in consultation with employers has been expanded to increase employment opportunities within the Leisure Sector. Consultation took place with Leisure Centres in relation to their employment requirements and minimum entry qualification requirements.

In the **Retail/Catering Sector** many of our employed learners undertook mandatory, regulatory certification to ensure retention/progression of employment.

LCETB FET Division is also part of the **Limerick For Film** Steering Group, set up in 2016. Following the opening of TROY Studios in Limerick City, LCETB is engaging with Screen Training Ireland re the inclusion of additional relevant components in Level 5 programmes to prepare trainees to work in the film industry.

Finally, evening courses in LCFE provide a good indicator of demand trends through self-referrals. In 2016, there was a swing back towards **Business programmes**, particularly in the area of Accounting Technician. Another area that has shown great interest is Special Needs assisting.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Through the National Skills Strategy 2025, the Action Plan for Education 2016-2019 and the new Action Plan to expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship in Ireland 2016-2020, significant investments are planned to grow work-based learning over the coming five years using the apprenticeship and traineeship models of skills development.

LCETB FET 2016 Beneficiaries

- Apprenticeships: 1,011
- Traineeships: 306

In 2016, LCETB FET Division significantly expanded its **apprenticeship** opportunities through the FET Centres, Raheen and Shannon campuses.

- A new course, Plumbing Apprentice v4 commenced in April 2016. As part of this apprenticeship, learners will have to complete studies in Communication and Teamwork as well as the core skills subjects.
- In May 2016, the FET Centre – Raheen Campus received approval to provide a new Apprenticeship in Tool Making, which commenced in September 2016.
- The FET Centre – Shannon Campus received approval to provide a new Apprenticeship in Refrigeration & Air Conditioning.
- Authorised Officers (Service to Business Training Advisors) engaged with employers and newly registered apprentices in the fields of Industrial Electrical Engineering L7 of whom Limerick Institute of Technology is the Consortium lead and Insurance Practitioner L8 of whom Sligo Institute of Technology is the Consortium lead.
- A new Aircraft Spray Painting Course in conjunction with Eirtech Aviation, Shannon, started in April 2016. The first class qualified in December 2016, a second class is currently underway with a plan to train an additional 200 people over the next 3 years. Early signs of success were evident in the final City and Guilds Audit, resulting in 10 learners receiving certification in January 2017. In 12 months since the initial request to LCETB from the employer, 14 learners are now in permanent skilled employment.

Aircraft Painter Training Project in FET Centre – Shannon Campus

A joint training venture with Eirtech/IAC, a locally based aircraft coating company, resulted in the development of a course in direct response to a skill shortage in the labour market of qualified aircraft spray painters. The Aircraft Spray-painting course is ideally suited to long term unemployed people who may or who may not have a leaving certificate. The Level 3 Diploma is a National Vocational Qualification which requires it to be delivered in a live occupational environment. It is a requirement that C&G candidates will train, work and be assessed on live aircraft in a suitable hangar. This results in very little class time and little study. Assessments take the form of observation while working on job and professional discussions on job skills and requirements. This course is ideal for learners, for whom the formal academic route did not suit, to gain a C&G L3 qualification. This initiative also presented a fantastic CPD opportunity for staff on the course, who received up-to-date training directly from the employer, thus enhancing LCETB staff industry currency.



In 2016, LCETB was a member of **Career Traineeship** Steering and Working Groups and was the first ETB to launch a Career Traineeship in Hospitality in conjunction with SOLAS, Irish Hospitality Federation and employers.

A prime example of public and private partners working together to tackle unemployment is the **Learning for Life** course in partnership with Diageo. It focuses on skills relevant for the hospitality and tourism industry, such as bar & food service skills and customer engagement skills, as well as important job skills like interview skills, team work, health & safety and computer skills. 16 young people from across Limerick commenced training and education in the intensive certified ten week training programme in September 2016. Following completion of the education and training element the participants will take up full-time/part-time work with a DIAGEO hospitality industry partner in landmark pubs, hotels and restaurants in Limerick. The programme is supported by the Department of Social Protection. Trainees will be attending training in the Bar Academy in the Guinness Store House Dublin.



Workforce Development

As Ireland's economy appears to enter a recovery and growth period, the FET provision must place itself strategically to contribute to the development of the workforce, upskilling employees so they can maintain employment and progress in their career. Strategically and at national level, LCETB FET Division is represented on the National Workforce Development Group, and contributed to the Workforce Development Framework, which will be published in 2017.

Skills for Work (SFW) continued to effectively link with employers across Limerick and Clare around work-based learning. Based on a solid network of employers, SFW provides flexible unaccredited solutions to local companies. In 2016, there were 361 beneficiaries on LCETB SFW programmes, including some of the following initiatives:

- **Workplace language** courses to employees in the Strand Hotel to improve their language skills in order to be able to interact with management, colleagues & customers. The Hotel Management recommended SFW to their counterparts in the Maldron Hotel in Limerick.
- In Clare, SFW extended its offerings in Scariff from Digital Media, Culinary Operations and IT, to providing classes to the farming community. In addition to its IT classes on online Herd Registration and Health and Safety Statement, it is currently **piloting Animal Remedies Recording** and plans are under way to introduce Online Banking and Woodwork classes, which will include the construction of bird, bat and bee boxes so that farmers might avail of new Glas grants.
- In Limerick City, SFW ran a very successful **Excel course with Abercorn**, a traditional construction company who have moved into site maintenance. Abercorn are contracted to the highly regulated pharmaceutical company, Regeneron who require all maintenance interventions be logged in Excel & subsequently uploaded to their database. Although highly skilled craftsmen, tilers, electricians, plumbers etc., they did not have Excel knowledge & struggled to perform this part of their duties.

An Abercorn Worker said - *"I now know what I am supposed to be doing, whereas before it was like painting by numbers & if I made a mistake I did not know how to correct it"*.

Other work-based learning opportunities are facilitated by the part-time nature of over 70% of the LCETB FET provision. This enables those in employment to upskill and part-take in part-time, day, evening and weekend programmes and offers the flexibility to retain their employment while upskilling. Classes within the part-time provision (BTEI, Literacy and Community Education) are offered from 9.00am -9.30pm, Monday to Saturday, all year around, as learners should be able to access both short and longer term courses to suit their needs. This facilitates retention of their current employment as well as widens their career options for the future. Evening courses also provide flexible means of adjusting provision to address changing parameters within the LCETB catchment area. In 2016, there were 112 evening programmes provided in LCFE to 1202 learners.

A few examples of flexible delivery for people in employment included:

- CABES collaborated with a number of local bus/transport companies to design a new taster course – Chauffeur Skills. Covering customer service, tourism, local history, IT and aspects of industry standards, the aim of the course was to enable drivers of taxis and buses to extend their employment opportunities to Chauffeur Services. With international tourism recognised as a growth area for the region, this is another step in the development of a suite of courses relevant to this sector in collaboration with these local partners.
- SkilleTB project in Healthcare (see p.7)
- After an audit of local fabrication companies, it emerged that there was a need for training in stainless steel light wall pipe welding to meet needs in dairy food and pharmaceutical processing. A course was designed and is currently running as an evening course and has been incorporated into the contracted day course.
- A Breakfast Preparation Programme was delivered in line with industry timekeeping, i.e. class start time of 6:00 am in line with industry start time. Classes ran until 10:00am weekdays as well as a full day on Saturday.
- A City & Guilds L2 Barbering course was developed and marketed specifically to people working in the industry but who do not have a qualification. This qualification provides more job security for the people involved and encourages them to further their training and qualifications.

Enterprise Engagement at Centre Level

It is often difficult for national bodies to identify the skills needs of enterprises (overwhelmingly SMEs) who are principally engaged in serving local and domestic markets. Skills needs at micro level can often be gathered at centre level, through local intelligence and relationships built with key stakeholders. All FET Centres engage with local employers, particularly SMEs who make 92% of active enterprises in the Mid-West Region, accounting for 36% of employment in the region. This engagement takes various forms, including inputs from employers, site visits, work placements, etc. In 2016, all LCETB FET programmes participated in an internal survey to assess the extent and frequency of their engagement with employers. This will provide critical information during the planning process for the **LCETB FET Enterprise Engagement Framework**, which will commence in 2017.

Enterprise engagement at Centre level took various forms in 2016:

- Multiple events at centre levels to engage with local SMEs, such as the CABES programme showcasing the range of relevant course options at the **Scariff Enterprise town event** in June.
- VTOS learners from the FET Centre – Shanagolden and Kilmallock Campuses visited DELL EMC. The site visit included a guided tour of the Solution Centre with a discussion on career opportunities with the learners.
- **Direct links** were established in BTEI with public and private Healthcare and Childcare providers. Other links with employers exist between tutors and learners for the purposes of placements in relation to specific, relevant subject areas (Business and Office Admin., Hairdressing, Catering etc.).
- A new development in the LCFE November Graduation Ceremony was the presence of **Employer Partners** who sponsored an Outstanding Learner Award in each of LCFE's Departments.



Building these linkages at local level have proved very effective, so much so that a number of employers now often contact the centres directly when vacancies are available.

2. Active Inclusion

While addressing labour market goals, ETBs also have a unique remit to address social and educational exclusion. 'Active inclusion means enabling every citizen, notably the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society, including having a job' (SOLAS). LCETB FET Strategic Framework (2015-2020) places active inclusion as a central priority to enhance access to FET opportunities and progression to further education or employment for learners in Limerick and Clare.

Information, Recruitment and Guidance (IRG)

In 2016, a focus was placed on the integration of IRG activities across the FET Division. This culminated in the publication of the **LCETB FET Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework 2016-2020** in June 2016. This has already resulted in change of practice with integrated Guidance Meetings now taking place quarterly with all



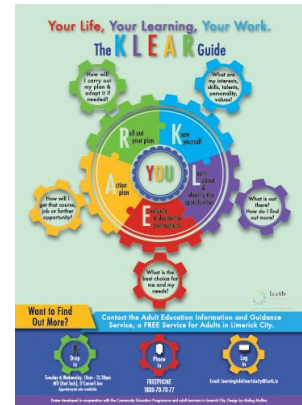
LCETB guidance staff from the full-time (including PLC) and part-time provision. In 2016, the three LCETB FET Adult Education Information, Recruitment and Guidance Services provided over 1600 one-to-one guidance sessions, and information to over 7000 individuals via groups or individual meetings. In addition, the provision of the Adult Guidance Service was reviewed to include Recruitment Officers from Raheen and Shannon Campuses, in keeping with the National Information, Recruitment and Guidance Strategy.

Key information resources were developed to support learners and learning practitioners in accessing information about LCETB FET courses (samples in photo). These included:



- **A single LCETB FET courses brochure** to highlight all LCETB FET opportunities and clear progression options, which was widely distributed across Limerick and Clare.
- In Clare, the Information Officer produced the annual '**Job Vacancies in Clare**' report to help identify skills in demand in the local labour market.

- A new colourful **Poster for the KLEAR GUIDE** was developed with the Community Education Programme and learners across Limerick City. This is a guide to the different steps involved in planning and managing learning, life and work and it signposts where people can get more information and guidance supports.
- The **new national website** for education and training opportunities in FET across Ireland was also launched in 2016 (www.fetchcourses.ie). LCETB now feeds all further education and training courses information into this centralised database, making it easier for potential learners and partner agencies to access up-to-date information.
- Several **information stands were also organised at DSP offices** in Limerick and Clare.



Locally developed QQI Award posters for learners and learning practitioners.

Learners on part-time programmes can work over a few years towards their overall QQI Award/ Qualification. While a flexible solution, this can sometimes lead to an individual losing their way. In order to support them to keep their end goal in sight to achieve their full QQI Award, QQI Award Posters were developed to ‘check-up’ what is achieved, what is needed next etc. Learners can also use it as a resource in case of a change of direction or award subject. Posters are now professionally produced and available in all classrooms to provide a handy reference and planning tool. A similar resource is now being developed for all community-based BTEI learners in the City.

- Participation at **Education and Employment Fairs and Events** was a successful way to reach many potential learners in 2016. Clare FET Guidance staff hosted LCETB stand at the IGC Mid-West Careers Expo in UL, as well as Course Information Stand in partnership with the FET Centre, Shannon Campus at the Roche Pharmaceuticals Staff



Education /Training Day in Clarecastle in September 2016.

Therese Lahiffe, Information Officer and Michael Donnellan, Guidance Counsellor manning the LCETB FET Stand at The IGC's Mid-West Careers Expo in UL (Sept.16)

First FET Learning Fair in Limerick City (April 2016)

The first FET Learning Fair in Limerick City was organised by Guidance Counsellors from across FET Programmes and was a great success. All LCETB FET Programmes in the city and county exhibited (Adult Education, LCFE, Training Centres, Croom College of FE, Central College, the Organic College-Dromcollogher). Limerick Community Education Network and Intreo were also present to highlight their programmes and services.



Guidance supports also include the **organisation of visits from LCETB FET learners** to other FET Centres, highlighting potential progression options for them. For instance in April 2016, Clare Guidance counsellors led a trip for learners from Ennis VTOS, BTEI and CABES to LCFE and Hospitality Education and Training Centre open days. Other visits focused on progression to third level through LIT/UL/MIC/LSAD Open Days, with ex-LCETB learners on hand to tell them about their experience of studying at Third Level. LCETB FET programmes also facilitated some learners to attend the Troy Film Studios Open Recruitment Day in Limerick in October 2016, as it presented clear employment opportunities for some FET learners.

With falling numbers of people on the 'live register', recruitment to FET courses remains a challenge and FET programmes increasingly need to reach out to people who self-refer onto available courses. In 2016, a number of innovative information and recruitment initiatives included:

- **Increased linkages between LCETB FET programmes**, e.g. BTEI Limerick City links with the Recruitment Officer in the FET Centre - Raheen Campus, to identify potential applicants for Leaving Cert Maths in order to progress on to particular Apprenticeship programmes.
- **Intensive Recruitment Drive for Part-time learners in Limerick City BTEI**. This included the production of professionally produced Promotional Materials for part-time programmes Level 1-5 ; General adverts in local papers, and in the case of Science & Engineering, a joint-advert was designed between BTEI and the FET Centre - Raheen Campus. In addition, recruitment Meetings with new applicants provided them with clear information (pre-entry Guidance) on learning options; what to expect if joining a class; qualification levels, etc. 1 to 1 meetings took place with all new applicants, as well as digital screening and assessment of reading and writing levels.

Learning happens everywhere! – Promotional Postcards

The Limerick City Community Education Programme in conjunction with the LCEN (Limerick Community Education Network) developed 10 different promotional postcards entitled 'Learning happens every-where!' to depict 10 different unique community education settings, the broad range of learning opportunities and outcomes possible.



Community Centre/School	Phone Number
Adapt Services	065-212354
Art & Soul Mhuine	065-249014
Bedford Row Family Project	065-315332
Carroll's Senior Centre, Bandon Rd	065-403293
Carrymore Community Project	065-315353
Le Cheile, Bandon Rd	065-311288
Limerick City CEP - Our Lady of Lourdes	065-409683
Limerick City CEP - St. Mary's	065-412076
Limerick City CEP - St. Michael's	065-318900
Limerick Social Service Centre	065-318111
Marymount Adult Education	067-3279437
Northside FHC	065-419623
Northside Family Support Project	065-419169
Our Lady Queen of Peace NS	065-410095
Santon St. Schools	067-2181903
Southill FHC	065-440290
Southill Area Centre	065-407928
St. John's NS	065-418752
St. Leger's Age Friendly Com Ed Campus	065-418651
St. Mary's NS	065-418284
St. Saviour's/Queen of Peace	067-2461167 / 069-0940733
Tull House	065-415340
Watch House Cross Library	065-437728

The idea for the cards came from an EU funded project called REVEAL in which the Community Education Programme and LCEN were participants. 1000+ cards have been distributed to communities and the back of each card had contact information for community education centres across the city.

Integration of Core Skills

As per its FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020, the integration of core skills into mainstream FET provision was one of the key priorities in 2016. The FET Literacy provision is for the most part accredited (basic literacy, Numeracy and ICT at level 1-3; special needs; ITABE intensive literacy; themed literacy, etc.), with some unaccredited options (one-to-one; family learning; personal skills development; etc.) to engage new learners.

LCETB FET 2016 Beneficiaries

- Adult Literacy: 4,276
- ITABE: 646

In Limerick City, there has been a 30% increase in the number of learners presenting at level 1 or less on entry to the Literacy Service. Hence the continued need for entry level non-accredited courses, which often evolves into accredited courses as learners gain confidence in their belief that they are capable of achieving certification. It is also important to note that a significant portion of LCETB FET uncertified delivery is in the support of learners who are engaging with certified programmes either through the LCETB or other providers. This delivery includes portfolio preparation, literacy and numeracy support, supports in essay writing, language testing, language acquisition etc. Annual investment also continues to be required for the training and support of Adult Literacy Services Volunteers across LCETB. By the end of 2016, there were **170 active Volunteer Literacy Tutors** in Limerick and Clare, many of whom worked with multiple learners.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy

Following a participative planning process (meetings and FET wide consultations), **LCETB's FET Framework for the Integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)** was produced in November 2016. This is part of a wider strategy to 'increase levels of active inclusion through the provision of high-quality, more accessible and flexible education, training and development interventions and supports to suit the individual' (SOLAS). This framework outlines LCETB approach to providing language, literacy and numeracy interventions and supports to meet the needs of all learners who participate in full-time and part-time FET programmes.

While Literacy provision continued through its one-to-one and group delivery, significant efforts have been made in 2016 towards the integration of core skills into main subject areas. Some examples of integration of LLN provision in 2016 included:

- The LCETB Literacy services in Limerick and Clare have partnered with Shannon and Raheen campuses to set up a **Learner Support Service** to provide academic literacy and numeracy support for apprentices and other learners.
- Limerick Literacy Staff were invited to provide **Literacy Awareness Training** – firstly with Turas Nua, and front-line staff in the local Intreo Office. Interaction between the

Literacy Service and Intreo has become more streamlined with the introduction of the BOMI/PLSS system of referrals.

- BTEI and Literacy tutors worked closely around Learner supports needed for the completion of Woodturning modules which are delivered in **PALLS** (Probation and Linkage in Limerick Scheme) premises to their participants.
- **Dedicated course-related literacy support** was also provided by literacy tutors to core subject tutors on other certified programmes. This includes portfolio preparation, literacy and numeracy support, supports in essay writing, language testing, language acquisition etc.

Employability Skills

Another type of core skills is employability skills, which are *“a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers, which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”* (Yorke, LTSN Generic Centre et al. 2004). The ongoing development of Employability Skills within all LCETB FET programmes is targeted towards those learners who have been out of the workforce for any length of times. All programmes place an emphasis on Personal Development, IT Skills, Career Preparation and have a clear progression pathway. Career Management Skills development was indeed included in the FET LLN Framework.

In 2016, several examples of integration of employability skills into LCETB provision included:

- VTOS Pilot project in Ennis, in partnership with **FIT**, continued to support learners and staff to make greater connections with the workplace and to keep us abreast of trends.
- VTOS, Kilmallock Road Campus designed a new course entitled **Career Links** to replace the traditional Junior Certificate provision and provide more flexible progression pathways.
- Several FET centres took the opportunity of the **Employer Focus Week**, to engage with employers to visit and conduct mock interviews, and network with staff and learners.
- Ongoing efforts in Raheen and Shannon Campuses through the new **Learner Support Service** to offer services such as CV preparation, interview skills training, support to learners around literacy and numeracy to support them while undertaking training, support to instruction staff etc.
- **Information, Recruitment & Guidance (IRG) Support Service workshops** on ‘Using Social Media for Jobseeking’, ‘What Employers are looking for’, etc.

- **Work placements** are also key features for developing employability skills for FET learners. The First Step Programme in Youthreach Hospital for instance is supported by the Advocacy Service and offers 3 work placements to participants during a transition year for Youthreach learners.
- All Clare Workplace classes engaged in the **Hour of Code Project** in 2016, to build learners confidence in the area of coding.

Entrepreneurship Skills

In 2016, an LCETB FET Survey was carried out to identify the level of entrepreneurship awareness across FET programmes and to identify courses where entrepreneurship skills could be included. When progression data was available, it was recorded that over **8% of our learners progressed to full/part-time self-employment in 2016**. All programmes strive to expose FET learners to the concept and principles of entrepreneurship by their teachers as part of their subject delivery.

In LCFE for instance, in some areas such as business and photography, the QQI module at Level 5, Start Your Own Business and the Level 6 module Entrepreneurship are integrated as part of the course. In other areas, such as Media and Fashion, industry experts come in and deliver on specific projects funded under the NAPD Creative Engagement Grant. The College also held an Annual Business Forum where entrepreneurship was the key theme. Local industry experts and local entrepreneurs were invited to speak to the learner body as well as past learners who have started their own business. LCFE also recently welcomed the Limerick Employment Office's Senior Enterprise Development Officer who gave an informative discussion on financial supports, training and mentoring programmes for people in business and for start-ups. He also discussed the European Enterprise network.

From Youthreach to entrepreneur

Ms. Ciara McCarthy, a past learner of Youth-reach in Shanagolden, has fulfilled her dream and opened her own hair & beauty Salon in Main St Rathkeale. Ciara's sister Niamh, also a past learner, is working with Ciara and together we know they will thrive and grow.



Other Learner Supports

Mental Health issues for FET learners continue to be highlighted by many learning practitioners as being 'prevalent and on the rise', and present a significant barrier to full and sustained participation.

The importance of welcoming and inclusive environments is critical, and ongoing and daily efforts are made in all LCETB FET centres to **raise awareness** about mental health issues and wellbeing for both learning practitioners and learners. The **Health and Wellbeing Week** took place in October 2016, and was a great opportunity for centres



to design a range of awareness-raising initiatives, such as Mental health workshops, yoga classes and healthy breakfasts, a VTOS Shanagolden cycling event with funding from Limerick Smarter travel, rowing events, Art Exhibitions, etc. Many FET centres also took part in the **national Amber Flag initiative** by developing innovative projects to promote positive mental health in their centres and communities.



In Life Time lab, Cork

The **Young Social Innovators initiative** challenges young people to work within their communities to identify areas of social need and to identify and implement solutions for positive social change. In 2016, three learners from Youthreach Miltown Malbay travelled to Cork to pitch their YSI project "Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass but learning to dance in the rain". It focused on raising awareness about mental health, positive coping skills and support services that young people could contact. €400 was awarded by the YSI panel to their project. They scored very high marks in their pitch and were commended for their project title and positive change that it will bring about in the community.



In addition, 285 learners with disability started an LCETB FET course in 2016. The **Fund for Learners with Disabilities (FSD)** was accessed by PLC programmes to support learners with disabilities to provide services such as Disabled parking space, disability toilet, ramps, lift, stair lift, Dyslexia Tutorials, wheelchair taxi service, Assistive Technologies (e.g. Dragon voice recognition software, large font size Examination papers, Examination Accommodations such as Readers/Scribes, etc.). However, this fund only applies to PLC Programmes and not to learners in other FET provision. This structural inequity means uneven access to supports for learners with disabilities attending other full-time programmes such as VTOS/Contracted training etc.

The LCETB FET Division also thrives to use and **integrate new technologies** to provide further supports to learners. In 2016, a single LCETB FET VLE (Moodle) site with Browse aloud was installed to make the site fully accessible to those with dyslexia, learning difficulties, mild visual impairments as well as learners with English as a second language. Further commitments have been made through the new LCETB FET TEL Action Plan to put in place fit-for-purpose processes, procedures and support systems for the use of assistive technology, as well as to provide access to CPD opportunities on the use of assistive technology.

As key stakeholders of the FET Sector, it is also important to **support learners to have a voice** in shaping the service and the FET sector as a whole. At centre level, programmes routinely carry out learners consultations as part of the quality assurance process, to ensure the views of learners inform the improvement plans of our centres. LCFE also organised Student Union Elections in 2016, with over 90 class reps elected by their classmates across all programmes at LCFE and the multiple campuses the college operates on.

In addition in February 2016, LCETB FET Division sent a representation of six FET learners to the first National Adult Learners Forum in Mansion House, Dublin. This was organised by Aontas, on behalf of SOLAS. Entitled *'Speak today, shape tomorrow'*, this new forum gave adult learners an opportunity to share their views at national level and to help influence policy.

Left to Right - Sara Mee (PLC Kilmallock), Michael Sheehan, (BTEI Limerick City), Críona Ní Dhálaigh (Lord Mayor of Dublin), Dermot Graham (PLC Ennis), Niamh O'Reilly CEO AONTAS, Megan McCarthy (LCFE). Missing from Photo – Martin Mongan (Youthreach Miltown Malbay) and John Hogan (Raheen Campus).



Community Engagement

In a Further Education context, 'active inclusion' means enabling every learner to fully participate in the educational opportunities available to them. Community engagement is a critical aspect of the work of the FET Division, and takes place in the context of a proud tradition of close partnership with community stakeholders in Limerick and Clare.

Consultation with community groups takes place each year through an active networking and cluster Planning Process, to identify community needs in terms of FET. In Limerick, the mechanism for community groups to access part-time hours is through an annual 'Cluster Meeting' process across the City and a subsequent formal application process. This process has been in place for many years in the City and is fully supported by Limerick Community



Education Network (LCEN) and LCETB part-time programmes in the City. It has promoted co-operation between groups and openness to sharing resources, referring learners and has created efficiencies in the provision of community-based adult education across the city. In 2016, the LCEN played a key role in shaping the process of

QQI re-engagement in communities. In September, sixty-five staff from the three Limerick City part-time programmes and guidance service along with thirty five local community co-ordinators participated in the annual part-time tutors meeting to discuss key community education issues.

In Limerick County, LCETB also signed a MOU with Ballyhoura Development Ltd. to give a renewed impetus to FET provision, community development and social inclusion across East Limerick with the Cappamore campus as a hub for this new activity.

In Clare, the LCETB Community Education Service co-ordinates the Clare Lifelong Learning Network. There are 5 network areas in Clare, North Clare, East Clare, West Clare, South Clare and Ennis. This network approach enables a wide variety of community groups, voluntary organisations and state agencies to collaborate in the provision of a continuum of lifelong learning opportunities for participants in all parts of Co. Clare. In 2016, the LCETB Community Education Service liaised with 97 groups through Community Education Grants Application Scheme, including 6 new communities from around the county. This process invites community/voluntary groups from around the county to apply for funding (tutor hours) to work in partnership with our service to address needs which have been identified locally. The networks meet 3 times a year to evaluate and consider opportunities within their area.

Responding To the Needs of New Groups

In 2016, the landscape of Irish communities was impacted by both national and international crisis. In its continuous community engagement efforts, LCETB has expanded its provision through its community education programmes to include responses for new groups of learners.

This included an enhanced engagement with agencies dealing with the national **homeless crisis**. While LCETB is part of the Mid-West Homeless forum, FET centres designed new initiatives at local level:

- **Set up of a women's group in partnership with the Mid-West Simon homeless service** for classes in beauty and skin care, personal development and Pilates for women who attend their food bank on a weekly basis have facilitated the development of peer support.
- **The Homeless Choir** in Limerick City was a new initiative between the Community Education Programme, The Learning Hub, Music Generation, and the homeless agencies Novas and Focus Ireland. The regular choir meetings helped participants to establish a structure in their lives and, combined with other services on offer, gain a sense of purpose. Public performances were held in a number of venues including St. John's Cathedral.

In addition, the FET Division played a key role in the implementation of the national **Irish Refugee Protection Programme**. LCETB is represented on the two Refugee Resettlement Programme Interagency Groups hosted by the Local Authorities in Limerick and Clare. In 2016, there were four groups from the Refugee Resettlement Programme in the LCETB catchment area (Limerick City, Newcastle West, Shannon and Sixmilebridge). 76 participants received 20 hours English Language tuition per week for a total of 44 weeks per group. The classes commenced in June 2016 and will end in July 2017. The RRP programmes are facilitated by the Literacy services, and all classes are at elementary/beginner level and concentrate on language acquisition.



Welcome notice created by students for Reception in Ennis

In parallel in 2016, **ESOL provision continued to grow to reach 1,498 beneficiaries**. Several initiatives aimed at **raising intercultural awareness** took place, including classes in ESOL, Cooking, Personal development, IT, maths, etc.; CPD training on Language Awareness; Intercultural Awareness and Understanding ESOL Assessments; a SPIRASI information session on working with survivors of torture.

Many celebratory events were also organised in FET centres during the year, i.e. intercultural days where learners came together to celebrate and share their cultures with one another.



FET Centres as Part of Neighbourhoods and Communities

FET centres play an active role in the life of their communities and neighbourhoods. In 2016, **investments in FET facilities and innovative neighbourhood initiatives** have highlighted LCETB's commitment to contribute to the social cohesion of the communities in its catchment areas. Innovative initiatives included:

- **The Blacksmithing Skills for Work group in Cappamore** designed and created sculpture, which has been installed in the FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus– Limerick.



- **Youthreach Hospital created a wildlife area** near the FET Centre field, which greatly added to the appearance of the building. This work was commended in this year's Tidy Towns Report.

- **Music Generation Limerick City (MGLC)** opened **a new 'Creative Centre'** – the first of its kind to come out of the national music programme instigated by U2 and The Ireland Funds. It acts as an informal venue, and hosts a range of other arts organisations in the city, as part of the Creative Exchange model pioneered by the Limerick 2020 European City of Culture bid. The Centre, at the heart of Limerick City, will act as a base for MGLC's range of after-school and weekend sessions.

- Several programmes (including LCFE and Youthreach Shanagolden) put teams of staff and learners together and dedicated time to take part in the Limerick city/county wide **Clean-up initiative**.



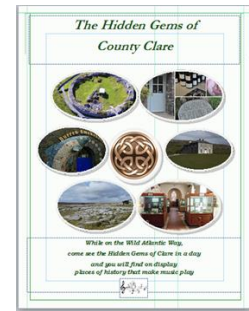
- Youthreach East Clare works closely with the patients of Raheen Hospital in **linking young and old in the community** with common interests. Through the medium of art, craft, storytelling and singing weekly, energy and fun is brought to the hospital throughout the year, and in Summer help is at hand with the gardens and flowerbeds.



Learner Art work at Community Hospital, East Clare

- Youthreach Hospital invited its neighbours to their **Christmas Dinner** this year. Staff and Learners were delighted with the turnout, which provided a great opportunity to show local people the work done in the Centre.

- The CABES Preparation for Work Admin/Reception group launched a brochure entitled **'The Hidden Gems of Clare'** in December 2016, devised in collaboration with The Clare Museum, as part of the coursework for the Tourism in Clare (QQI level 3) module. The brochure is now available to visitors to the Clare Museum, Clare Tourist Office and other tourist outlets around the County.



- LCETB FET Division made significant contributions to the organisation and delivery of events for the **Learning Festivals in Clare and Limerick**. The Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival was held in April 2016. In its 6th year, the festival showcased learning in various forms through over 150 events, all of which were FREE and open to all. A Thomond Park Showcase opened the festival with a wide range of interactive events, activities and workshops.
- The Clare Family learning project worked with St Vincent de Paul to develop a programme supporting vulnerable families: **'Looking after the family, looking after me'**. The content covered basic home management skills, budgeting and cookery.
- The Literacy Service in Limerick City provided a half-day **training session to the Limerick City Traveller Advocacy Group on Internet safety**, aiming to promote safe internet use for parents and children in the Traveller Community.
- **Voter Education Active Citizenship** Training Programmes were also delivered to a number of groups throughout Limerick and Clare in the run up to the general election on the 26th of February 2016.

In 2016, LCETB was also represented on both the Limerick and Clare **AGE Friendly Strategy Implementation Teams**, which has led to a series of actions. One of them was the LCETB engagement with DSP to train CE workers to QQI Level 5 Healthcare with St Munchin's Community Centre. This initiative will enable elderly citizens to remain at home and avail of homecare in line with actions in the Age Friendly Strategy.

'Connecting the past with the present'

In Scariff, a FET tutor brought in a selection of old farm tools and household implements to our active agers in Raheen, Co. Clare. Hearts and history became alive that afternoon when the participants met with some long lost friends.

Chat and stories were recorded by a past learner who had just completed her QQI L4 Community Radio studies with the Clare Community Education Service for broadcast on Scariff Bay Radio. This is part of a partnership project with CRAOL (The Community Radio Forum of Ireland) on the upskilling of a local community group based in Scariff.



1916-2016 Celebrations

In 2016, the LCETB FET Division also took great pride in contributing to community celebrations of the Centenary of the 1916 Rising. A significant number of initiatives took place in all FET centres:

- Learners and staff from centres across the LCETB Youthreach Programme went to Croke Park in March 2016 to receive the Proclamation of Independence and the Irish Flag. It was a very memorable experience. On Tuesday 15th March, the learners and teachers involved read the proclamation for all learners and staff in their centres.
- A 1916 commemoration event was held at the Kilmallock Road Campus. The event consisted of a historical lecture by Frank Noonan, history teacher, entitled '1916 Rising - Fact and Myth'. VTOS learners also participated by reading the Proclamation and reciting some of Yeats' poetry. Many teachers and learners also dressed in period costume, which greatly added to the occasion.
- A joint-initiative between CABES and Community Education networking with Scariff Community Council and the local CE Scheme saw a group of learners plan, design and construct a 1916 Commemoration Float, which was displayed and won two first prizes in the annual Scariff St. Patrick's Day Parade. This project has been embraced by the local community and was displayed once more as part of the Tuamgraney Harp Festival.
- Part-Time Programmes in West-Limerick were invited to display the Abbeyfeale 1916 Exhibition in the Hunt Museum for national heritage week in August 2016. Limerick City and County Council have requested the programme to do the performance piece to launch heritage week for Co. Limerick.
- A Limerick City Community Education float in St. Patrick's Day Parade celebrated and commemorated 30 years of creativity and diversity in non-formal adult community education in Limerick City. This won Best Performance at the Limerick Parade 2016, and the group was presented with the award by the Mayor of Limerick.
- The Brothers of Charity Clare, Ennis Men's Shed and the Clare Community Education Service came together to develop a flexible learner-centred programme to promote social inclusion in the local community of Ennis. The group produced a life-sized map of Ireland entitled '*Ireland Piece by Piece, 1916 - 2016*', which was exhibited at various venues including Clare County Library and Eason's Bookshop window during National Fleadh Week 2016. This project has been nominated for a 2017 Aontas STAR award.

- Limerick Prison Learners contributed art pieces to 'Project 16: Studying the Rising', an exhibition of prisoners' work which formed part of the national centenary celebration and was opened by President Higgins. Several pieces were selected for the National Prison Art Exhibition.
- 'Sing Together', a vocal group started by Music Generation Limerick City, took part in a National Event on Easter Sunday in Collins Barracks, Dublin. The performance culminated of 1100 voices, 300 of which were children who performed with the National Symphony Orchestra.



1916 Flag Presentation Croke Park –
Youthreach Learner Receiving Flag and Proclamation



3. Quality Teaching and Learning

Quality Teaching and Learning is about enhancing the quality of provision and delivery of our education and training programmes to meet national and international quality standards. It is also about reflecting on and sharing good practice and celebrating the achievements of our learners and learning practitioners. LCETB FET Division employs over 800 Learning Practitioners as teachers, tutors, instructors, trainers, guidance staff, managers, coordinators, development workers, administrative and ancillary staff. Our success relies on the competence and professionalism of FET learning practitioners, who are key to the quality of our provision and the achievements of best possible outcomes for FET learners.

Continuous Professional Development

LCETB's approach to CDP focuses on the development of both individuals and organisational capability. It builds on existing best practice locally, nationally and internationally, but also on continuously upskilling staff to ensure highest quality standards and relevance to the changing needs of learners and industry. In particular, as a large organisation with regional provision in around 300 locations, networking and practice sharing events remain key to the roll out of CPD events, bringing learning practitioners together from different programmes and different geographical locations across Limerick and Clare.

In 2016, 99 individual events were funded through a **centralised LCETB FET CPD budget** (almost 320 hours of training and development). Cross-service CPD expenditure of 50,000 Euros was used in 2016 to hire facilitators/tutors, venues, resources and refreshments costs, purchase of new training related video and audio recording equipment as well as number of subscriptions to apps and services, which



are available for all FET staff to use. This new centralised budget and payment system makes the co-ordination, administration and tracking of CPD more streamlined across the Service, whilst also improving access to CPD information through the LCETB CPD Calendar on StaffConnect – LCETB's FET internal collaborative platform. In addition, a series of social media spaces (Facebook page and CPD twitter account) are now used to keep learning practitioners informed of forthcoming CPD opportunities.

A significant number of CPD events were also organised at centre level. In all, CPD events at centre and Division-wide levels can be organised by a variety of staff including the CPD Development Officer, Senior Managers, existing FET CPD Networks, Development Officers with a remit in a particular area and some were delivered in partnership between the wider ETB and external bodies.

In 2016, LCETB FET also provided extensive inputs into the SOLAS national Continuous Professional Development Strategy, which was launched in November and provided guiding principles for FET CPD. LCETB Chief Executive and the FET Senior Management Team hosted the SOLAS Innovation Unit and Skills Profile Consultants (ICF) to review the results of the LCETB FET Skills Profile. LCETB have nominated 13 staff to participate in follow-on Focus Groups.

Some of the key CPD initiatives that took place in 2016 reflect priority areas identified in the SOLAS Continuous Professional Development Strategy:

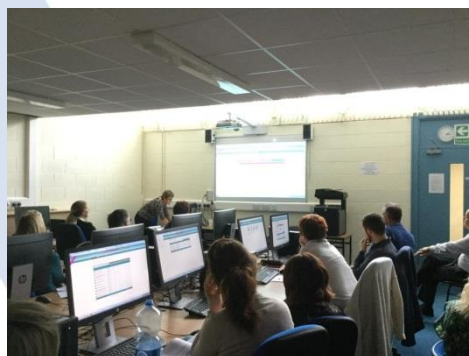
- **Working with and Supporting FET Learners:** A significant investment was made in 2016 to support those working with FET Learners, mainly in the area of pedagogy/andragogy and working with learners who have diverse needs. This is reflected in the variety of events that took place e.g. **Voter Awareness, Dyslexia Training, Numeracy Awareness and Language Awareness, Intercultural awareness, English language assessment and Working with Survivors of Torture**. Three very successful large scale conference style events, attended by 255 staff, were held in Clare and Limerick, each focusing on teaching and learning. In March, the Youthreach programme also held a *'StaffConnect - Connecting People'* event featuring input from Fr. Peter McVerry and Harry Freeman. Professor Billy O' Connor was the keynote speaker at April's *'Creating Connections'* Conference in Limerick City, which focused on learning and the brain. In December, Professor Ted Fleming and Dr. Leo Casey spoke to a rapt audience in Clare about *'Democracy in Education and Motivating Adult Learners'*.
- **Leadership and Management-Growing with the Organisation:** *'Growing with the Organization'* is a series of short bursts training for FET managers run by the LCETB Human Resources Pillar in collaboration with the FET Division. Two very successful and well received half day sessions attracted 118 staff in 2016. The first session looked at statutory policies- namely the Bullying and Harassment Policy and the second was themed around Creating a Positive Work Environment and Dealing with Conflict. 10 senior managers also attended the ETBI Conference 2017 to hear about innovative practice across the FET sector.
- **Health and Safety:** A number of health and safety training events took place in 2016 including a Basic First Aid Course and a Managing Safety, Health and Welfare at Work with IPB attended by 51 FET managers and staff.

Technology Enhanced Learning

Through our Learning Technology Development Officer, LCETB FET was represented on the SOLAS national TEL Strategy Group, which published a national Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy in June 2016, and the national ICT Retention initiative, which sought to address the issue of drop-outs in ICT courses at Third Level. LCETB was also one of two ETBs involved in a pilot project, which conducted a Development Needs Analysis (DNA) in the area of Technology Enhanced Learning to research the development needs of LCETB FET staff in relation to the use of technology. A framework was produced to develop self-assessment tools and help with the planning of future TEL CPD.

This involvement at national level informed the development of **LCETB's FET Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plan (2017-2020)**, which was developed by the FET TEL Planning Team. This plan will guide the implementation and use of technology for teaching, learning and collaboration in LCETB FET programmes and services in the coming years. This plan was also informed by the development in parallel, of the LCETB ICT Strategy, which is due for publication in 2017.

In 2016, there was a significant increase in **TEL CPD** with offerings focussed on key technologies including StaffConnect (Sharepoint), Moodle, Web tools for teaching and learning, Urkund & Open Badges. Almost 25 TEL related CPD events were held in 2016, reflecting the priority placed for development in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. These workshops were delivered by in-house staff and attended by more than 240 staff. Workshops included beginners and intermediate Moodle sessions, *'Tools for Technology for Teaching and Learning'* as well as training in *'Using Social Media for Job Seeking'*.



In addition, the **first LCETB FET service-wide application for an Erasmus Plus Project** was successful in 2016. An application to the KA1 strand for a CPD initiative titled *'Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL): Supporting Quality Teaching and Learning through use of New Technologies'* provided 25,000 Euros to support staff to attend structured professional development events on TEL, through conferences and training programmes in Europe. It is hoped that the CPD will enhance the competence and confidence of learning practitioners, particularly in the area of TEL. A further 3 people attended the EC-TEL Learning Technology Conference in Lyons in France in September 2016.

In 2016, the **merging of the three existing FET Moodle sites into a single LCETB FET Moodle Site** with areas for all FET centres contributed to enhancing quality teaching and learning in the FET Division. The new site is fully supported and includes key plugins such as Mahara plugin for ePortfolios and URKUND plugin for plagiarism. Key pilot projects were also initiated in order to experiment with ePortfolios, Open Badges and anti-plagiarism tools and share best practice prior to mainstreaming/implementation.

Quality Assurance

In 2016, significant resources were put into the area of Quality Assurance, with the set-up of a 5 person FET Quality Assurance Support Service in Ennis, Co.Clare. The FET QA Development Officer is also a member of the national ETBI-QQI Forum and the FET Director is a member of ETBI QA Strategy Steering Group, which contribute to shaping developments around QA in the FET Sector. Significant QA developments took place in the FET sector at national level, supported by the publication of key QQI Policies in 2016:

- Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for use by all Providers.
- Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training
- Topic Specific Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines for providers of Statutory Apprenticeship Programmes
- White Paper – Sector Specific Quality Assurance (QA Guidelines for Education and Training Boards –

The Core Statutory QA guidelines define eleven new areas to be addressed in provider quality assurance procedures, the first of these being '*Governance and Management of Quality*'. As a result, a Quality Assurance Management Structure was developed to include the establishment of an LCETB FET Quality Assurance Steering Group, and three **LCETB FET Quality Assurance Implementation Groups**. In addition, LCETB FET set up a Quality Assurance Support Service to develop, implement, manage and support, all cross-centre and centre level QA activities, monitoring, reviewing and improving quality of service and provision.

As part of the new QA Support Service, three Support Officers were recruited to provide regional Quality Assurance (QA) support to LCETB FET centres, colleges and schools, and to provide development and management support for cross-centre FET LCETB Quality Assurance processes, as well as cascade training across the FET Division on relevant QA matters. In 2016, QA Support Officers visited FET centres, provided extensive telephone and email support, engaged in cross centre developmental activities such as an integrated External Authentication process and delivered centre specific and generic CPD to tutors. For instance, a QA Practitioners Forum entitled '*Ensuring Consistency of Assessment across Multi-Centre Provision*' took place in February 2016.

In addition, 57 LCETB FET learning practitioners attended training delivered by the Further Education and Support Service (FESS) such as Developing Learners Academic Writing Skills, Active Teaching and Learning, Assessing Learners for QQI Certification, Being LGBT in FET and External Authenticator training. Some of this training will be cascaded to all staff by the QA Support Service in 2017. One staff member also got the opportunity to participate on a pilot EVP (Externship Visiting Programme) trip to Cisco Systems in Dublin.

In parallel, other LCETB FET learning practitioners were involved in the development of new quality assurance policies and systems.

- Youthreach staff was involved in revising the **CEIP - a QA System for the Youthreach Programme**, similar to the "Looking at our Schools" QA System for primary and post-primary schools. The revised pilot is currently being rolled out across LCETB's Youthreach Scheme.
- FET centres participated in roll-out of **new QA Guidelines for Apprenticeships**.
- A Literacy Tutor was involved in developing a **Health Literacy quality standard** for University Hospital Limerick (UHL)
- LCETB FET staff has joined the **national RPL Practitioners Network**, and will share best practice with the Network, while also collaborating with ETBI on its forthcoming RPL Research in 2017.

Sharing Best Practice to Enhance the Profile of the FET Sector at National and International Level

Sharing knowledge and experience, both nationally and internationally is an important part of the work of LCETB FET division. We participate and actively contribute to national initiatives, international networks and research in the fields of core skills, quality assurance, technology enhanced learning, professional development, etc.

In 2016, **multiple inputs** were delivered by LCETB FET learning practitioners. A sample of inputs is highlighted below:

- Presentation of findings from **My Baby and Me pilot project** to 'Enriching the Home Environment Conference', National College of Ireland, Dublin in June 2016. Jenifer Schneider, PhD, Professor in University of Tampa, Florida, also visited the project and conducted an interview on CFLP work to date for her Fulbright Scholarship research work in Ireland. Also in 2016, four Norwegians from an Adult Education Centre in Drammen, attended Clare Family Learning Project tutor training.

- The Coordinator of the Clare Family Learning Project was invited by **UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL)** in Hamburg, Germany to take part in a three day **international workshop** contributing to the development of a family learning resource pack to reach vulnerable families. The generic resource is planned for use internationally but has a special focus on supporting women and young girls in sub-Saharan Africa.
- In 2016, the Clare Adult Literacy Officer made presentations on *'Constructing an online collaborative learning space for Adult Basic Education'*, at the European Society of Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA) 8th Triennial European Research Conference in NUI Maynooth (<http://triennial2016.maynoothuniversity.ie>), and the Digital Learning Research Symposium- DCU.
- In other areas, seven ESOL staff contributed to a seminar on creating a **policy framework for "ESOL for Adult Asylum Seekers, Immigrants & Refugees"** in the Mid-West at University of Limerick in November 2016.
- An **Impact Review of the Skills for Work Ironcraft Programme**, LCETB Cappamore Campus was submitted to SOLAS in August 2016, and highlighted impact of the project on participants and the rural local economy.
- In June 2016, three LCETB staff attended the **Learning Cities Conference in Glasgow**. A paper on *'Limerick's journey to become a Learning Region - exploring the connection challenges'* was presented, which generated significant interest, and was deemed to have played a positive role in the eventual designation of Limerick as UNESCO City of Learning in the Summer 2016.



Following this networking event, a Limerick Delegation of representatives from LCETB, Limerick City and County Council including the Mayor of Limerick was invited to attend the Urban/Rural UNESCO Conference in Hangzhou City, China. A paper on *'Distributing Learning Resources evenly between Urban Communities and Rural Areas'* was presented. Now a member of UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), **Learning Limerick**, with significant support from LCETB FET, submitted an application to **UNESCO for Learning City Award** which was successful.

LCETB FET **involvement in European projects** also continued in 2016 through innovative projects, which present far-reaching opportunities for our programmes and our region. They also contribute to enhancing the profile of LCETB and the FET Sector.

Some key initiatives included:

- In February 2016 a contingency of senior managers and policy makers from the Sardinian government came on a fact finding and study visit to Limerick City Youthreach Centres. Their purpose was to gain an insight and understanding of how successful **second chance education centres** are developed, organised and managed.
- **The EDGE Project** (*Enhancing the Delivery of Guidance and Employability*) came to an end in Limerick in November with a very successful dissemination event attended by 33 people including representatives from E-college, the SOLAS CPD Unit and Leargas. A commitment was made by the FET Division to mainstream the work initiated by VTOS in Limerick City in the area of open badges for CPD in 2017. (See Website - <http://edgeproject.eu>)
- **The SMART Project** (Second Chance Schools Working with Systematic Measurement of Outcomes) also ended in 2016, culminating with a three-day training event held in Co.Clare in April 2016. Entitled '*SMART - Measuring Soft Skills Development*', it was designed for frontline LCETB staff working with learners and was attended by 24 staff, with a commitment to embed the learning in to the practices and policies of Youthreach both locally and nationally. This event focused on soft skills delivery and the measurement of soft skills as part of both formal and non-formal teaching and learning organisations. Staff gained knowledge regarding educational planning tools such as the logic model, learning about organisational culture and becoming reflective practitioners.
- **QUAKE** (Qualifications & Knowledge ECVET) in partnership with Mary Immaculate College and EU partners aims to facilitate the transfer and recognition of assessed learning outcomes achieved by learners during a transnational mobility. The focus of the QUAKE Project is horticulture and staff in Limerick City VTOS and the Organic College in Co.Limerick worked closely on that project. Several project mobilities took place in 2016 including a Colloquium in Mary Immaculate College, which featured a guest speaker Mr. Jos Noesen, an expert in ECVET as well as inputs from the two FET programmes involved.
- LCETB FET QA Officer participated in **EU quality assurance projects**, nationally when presenting at and chairing IQAVET (Irish National Reference Point for European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) conference, and also internationally when representing ETBI on '*Working Group for developing guidelines on EQAVET+*'
- **Erasmus + Project** (see TEL section p.34)

Awards & Recognition of Excellent Teaching & Learning

All the efforts to continuously improve the FET provision in LCETB have not gone unnoticed both at local, national and international levels. In 2016, there was a widening recognition of the Quality Teaching and Learning in LCETB FET provision, which in turn contributed to enhancing the profile of the FET sector.

Centre level recognition came to HETC who received the European Framework Quality Management Award (EFQM). In addition, the FET Centre, Raheen Campus received the Centre of Excellence Status for 2015-16 from Prodigy Learning. This recognises exceptional performance in delivering internationally recognised IT certifications from industry leaders such as Adobe, Autodesk and Microsoft. Individuals were also recognised, such as LCFE Tutor - Laura Halvey, renowned make-up artist and who took home the prestigious *'Make-Up Artist of the Year'* at the Brides of Limerick Awards.

But **LCETB FET proudest awards are the ones achieved by our learners**. Some highlights included:

- **Simply Said** – The 28th issue of this annual collection of writings by adult learners taking part in programmes with the Clare Adult Basic Education Service was launched in Glor Music Theatre, Ennis in June 2016.
- **The creative writing group from Our Lady Queen of Peace parish** in Limerick City partnered with learners from the Northside and Our Lady of Lourdes parishes for a project with the Arts Office in the University of Limerick. A compilation of pieces entitled *'What Are We Like? A Miscellany'* was published by the University of Limerick Arts Office and launched in October 2016 by author and UL Writer in Residence Joseph O'Connor.

Double celebrations for father and son

Gerard Kearns Snr and Jnr both received their Leaving Cert results with a 30 year age gap between them! Gerard Jnr collected his result from Ardscoil Rís, while his father Gerard Snr collected results from VTOS, Kilmallock Road Campus later on the same day.

Gerard Snr had been employed in the manufacturing business for 20 years but when the recession hit, he felt it was necessary to upskill. He is currently completing his studies with a Level 5 Office Administration course, and he hopes to get a full award in Office Administration, component certification in Digital Marketing and New ECDL to complement the academic achievement of his Leaving Certificate results.



- The Gaisce President Awards is a self-development programme that encourages young people aged 15-25 to dream big, and make a difference in their community! Several FET learners took part in 2016, including **twelve Limerick Prison Learners who received bronze Gaisce President Awards** for their programme of work, which culminated in a catering event for a Christmas meal for senior citizens in the prison sports hall.
- **St. Saviours Drama Group** in Limerick also launched their first Short Film and New Play, *'The Lipstick Club (Mayhem in A&E)'* at the Imperial Bar in April 2016. The group have written and produced all their own scripts, sold out two shows in the Belltable Theatre and attended classes twice weekly to achieve their full L3 Award in General Learning.



The LCFE School of Creative Media and Visual Arts achieved extraordinary national recognition in 2016.

- Wally Cassidy - 1st Year Photography learner, won News Photographer of the Year at the National Student Media Awards in Dublin.
- Three films produced and filmed by LCFE learners featured in two separate Galway film festivals over the summer. TRANSition, Aoibhinn and the Bear and Amhras were selected by festival coordinators and showcased amongst other national and international works.
- LCFE Graduate, Robert Cunningham took home the award for the 2016 Next Generation Student Short Documentary at the GuthGafa, International Film Festival.
- LCFE Advanced TV learner Robert Cunningham produced a documentary as part of his course, 'TRANSition', which tells the story of a transgender young adult in Limerick city. 'TRANSition' has won the 'Anti-Stigma Award' at the Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival, one of Scotland's most diverse cultural events, covering everything from music, film and visual art to theatre, dance, and literature.



Finally, the National Adult Learning Week in February 2016 was one of many opportunities for FET Centres to organise celebrations and **Learners Awards Events**.



4. Effectiveness & Accountability in Governance & Leadership

Our quality provision must be supported by effective management and administration systems to meet the highest standards of accountability, transparency and compliance.

In 2016, the **LCETB amalgamation process was finalised** when LCETB transferred responsibility for relevant external training to Tipperary ETB in March 2016. The transfer, including payment of learner allowances and training of newly recruited staff in TETB, was concluded seamlessly and was testament to the detailed advance planning that took place. Recognising the significant efforts that took place over the last few years since the inception of the amalgamation process, **LCETB FET Division was awarded the Public Service Award in July 2016.**

New Systems Roll Out

This was also an extraordinarily busy year from a new systems roll out point of view, which required significant individual and organisational commitment to the implementation of these new systems. Some cross-service activities in 2016 included:

- **National PLSS (Programme and Learner Support System)** 2016 saw further development and roll out of the FARR/PLSS including the pilot of the new Learner Database conducted in LCETB, as the first pilot site in the country. This was accompanied by 12 training and development sessions attended by 226 staff. Feedback highlighted the challenge of collecting learners' client profile information for some of the most vulnerable learners, which can be a barrier to participation, and may be excessive for short taster classes.
Two members of the FET Senior Management Team also attended a joint PLSS Advisory Group and PLSS Coordination Group meeting in ETBI in January 2016 to agree elements of the Unaccredited Framework (UAF) for Literacy and Community Education. The KEATS (Key Skills, ESOL, Access to FET & Employment, and Thematic & Social Inclusion) Framework was endorsed by the National Steering Group before roll-out.
- **FARR Databases 'Funding Allocations Requests and Reporting' (FARR).** The FARR database provides an overview of the planned inputs, outputs and outcomes of the FET Division by programme and course type, as well as reports against set targets. Inputs of estimated provision continues to prove challenging, particularly for part-time provision due to the high level of flexibility it offers. However, FET Managers have made huge efforts to ensure all deadlines were met for inputting data in 2016.

- **The National Course Calendar FETCH was launched in 2016.** This required all LCETB FET courses to populate the database, and provides a central point where potential learners, guidance personnel and external agencies can consult the breadth of LCETB FET provision.
- **DCS Part-Time Teacher Payment System Roll Out.** The DCS project required a lot of effort from LCETB FET staff as it was a brand new system for colleagues in County Limerick and County Clare. This for instance required additional training on the set up of “contracts”.

Planning & Reporting

In order to implement the myriad of new FET policies and directives at national level, it is essential that the LCETB FET Division carries out its own participative planning processes to identify roles, responsibilities and actions necessary to the effective implementation of these priorities at local level.

In 2016, LCETB FET Division invested significant time and resources in the **development of several local frameworks**, in line with national directives. They highlighted how a range of priority areas would be implemented across all part-time and full-time FET provision, while at service-wide consultation ensured buy-in from all parts of the FET Division.

- The FET Integrated Guidance Strategy 2016-2020 was published in July 2016
- The FET Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework was published in September 2016.
- The FET Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plan 2017-2019 was published in December 2016.

At operational level, two **FARR Planning Networks (FPNs)** were established in Limerick and Clare to develop integrated approaches to FET provision and avoid duplication. The effectiveness of these structures will be reviewed to ensure local needs and targeted responses are examined on a regular basis. In addition, the availability of FARR data and summary cross-service reports has informed planning review of the FET full-time and part-time provision, against the targets set in FARR data.

The LCETB FET Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy was reviewed and updated in 2016. This policy sets out the quality management process relating to how new programmes are approved for delivery or development in LCETB FET Division. In 2016, the **Regional Programme Approval Group considered 56 applications** for new programmes or for changes to programme structures. In 2016, the FET division also completed the transition to a single LCETB version of the Level 5 and 6 programmes as developed by the former VECs. To aid the FARR and PLSS processes, all programmes were entered on to the National Programme Database and/or the local partition of that database.

In terms of monitoring the work carried out by the FET Division, a new tool was designed in 2016 to support the FET Senior Management Team. A **Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP)** now captures higher level goals/actions planned by the FET Division, to be reviewed annually. This is in addition to the planning and reporting on the core FET provision on the ground, which is captured in the **Annual Service Plan, FARR reports and the FET Division Annual Reports.**

Information and Communication

As a large regional organisation, effective information and communication remains a challenge. In 2016, significant efforts were made to enhance our internal communication across the service, but also our external communication with key stakeholders.

- A single LCETB FET courses brochure was produced in 2016 with clear progression options identified.
- Work is well under way for the development of a new LCETB FET Website.
- Significant investments were made in FET facilities to standardise signs on FET Centres, thus enhancing the coherence and recognition of LCETB's FET brand.
- Signagelive was extended to 3 Centres as a key communication resource.
- A new Energy Monitoring System was introduced and FET Centres continued to engage with the Energy Efficiency Project.
- LCETB's FET Division Annual Report 2015 was made available on StaffConnect, and an Animoto Video based on the report, was produced to be used at staff meetings and externally for promotional purposes.
- LCETB's FET Division also produced its third Service Plan in 2016, which supplements the FARR 2, 3 and 4 forms submitted for funding approval by SOLAS.

2016 was an extraordinarily busy year. All this work wouldn't have been possible without the cooperation, commitment and professionalism of all LCETB FET learning practitioners, and the dedication of outstanding FET learners in Limerick and Clare.



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