



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board

Further Education & Training Division

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25, 092 FET Beneficiaries in 2017

**300 Locations
 in Limerick
 and Clare**

**2,645 Course
 Instances**

Part-time Provision – 17,775

- Adult Literacy Groups -2,846
- ESOL -892
- ITABE - 241
- BTEI -2,719
- Skills for Work -470
- Community Education - 4,160
- Evening Training - 4,137
- COOP Hours -1,967
- Specialist Training Providers -225
- Justice Workshops -23
- Refugee Resettlement programme -95

Full-Time Provision – 7,317

- Apprenticeship - 1,258
- Traineeship - 289
- Bridging & Foundation Training - 29
- Community Training Centre - 239
- Local Training Initiative - 313
- PLC - 2,702
- Specific Skills Training - 998
- VTOS -898
- Youthreach -591

Agriculture, Horticulture & Mariculture	15	Hairdressing, Beauty & Complementary Therapies	30
Animal Science	11	Health, Family other Social Services	136
Arts & Crafts	39	Information Technology	17
Built Environment	70	Management	1
Business, Administration	102	Manufacturing	32
Core ICT	48	Media Graphics Communications	25
Core Personal	933	Research and Education-Training	2
Engineering	6	Sales & Marketing	14
Engineering (Electrical)	7	Science and Technology	2
Engineering (Mechanical)	51	Security, Guarding & Emergency Services	19
Engineering (Transport)	24	Skills Sampling, General Learning & Core Personal	11
Entrepreneurship	3	Sport and Leisure	24
Financial Services	8	Tourism	9
Food and Beverage	20	Transport, Distribution & Logistics	61
General Learning	915	Web Development & Design	10

Limerick and Clare Context – 2016 CSO Census

Analysis of the 2016 CSO Census¹ has provided key information on the Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board catchment area, which counts 313,716 people (6.6% of the State population). Changing population patterns have mostly affected the Limerick Metropolitan area, with significant population increase in parts of the City Centre. In contrast, the largest population decline was observed in Regeneration areas. In terms of **age profile**, the national trend of younger urban centres and ageing rural areas is mirrored in Limerick and Clare (+26% over 65 in Co. Clare). The age dependency ratio, which shows the ratio of people aged under 14 and over 65 to people of working age (aged 15-64) has also increased in line with national figures.

Population – 2016 CSO Census	
•	Co. Clare: 118,817 (+1.4%)
•	Limerick City and County: 194,899 (+1.6%)
•	Limerick City & Suburbs: 94,192 (+3%)

In terms of **employment and unemployment**, the Mid-West unemployment rate stood at 6.7% in QNHS Q2 2017, compared to 6.1% at national level. Unemployment rates remain higher among younger people with 21.8% of 20-24 year olds unemployed in 2016 for the Limerick area, compared to 11.3% of 45-54 year olds. In the last two years, the Mid-West region benefited from **17 FDI announcements** outperforming the rest of the country. The main employment sector in Limerick and Clare remains the services sector, followed by commerce and trade and manufacturing industries. In 2016, small and medium enterprise represented 92% of active enterprises in the Mid-West, accounting for 36% of persons in employment in the business economy.

In 2016, however, out of the 79 EDs in the country classified as unemployment blackspots² (with an average unemployment rate of 31.2%), 21 were in Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board catchment area (figure 1). Limerick City had 8 of the 10 highest unemployment blackspots in the country (17 of the 38 electoral divisions are unemployment blackspots).

Figure 1 – Unemployment Blackspots Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board Area (CSO Census 2016)

County	Number of unemployment blackspots	Average unemployment %	County unemployment rate % (@ April 2016)
Limerick City and County	18 (17 in Limerick City)	35.7	14.4
Co. Clare	3	29.2	12.4

¹Central Statistics Office <http://www.cso.ie/en/census>; Pobal Maps <https://maps.pobal.ie/WebApps/GeoprofilingReports/index.html>; Trutz Haase Deprivation Index <http://trutzhaase.eu/deprivation-index/the-2016-pobal-hp-deprivation-index-for-small-areas>

² “Unemployment Blackspots” are defined by the CSO as Electoral Divisions which have a labour market in excess of 200 people and an unemployment rate in excess of 27%.

Interestingly, in August 2017 following figures from the European Central Bank, which estimated the Irish ‘slack rate’ at 15% (compare to 6% official unemployment figure), the Central Bank of Ireland constructed a new measure of labour utilisation – the Non Employment Index (NEI). This takes into account potential additional labour supply (spare capacity or slack rate), which includes part-time workers, discouraged workers, retired, learners, stay at home parents, people not in employment or education, etc. In 2016, 972,900 people fell into this cohort nationally. This is important as a growing share of precarious work will have implications for earnings, employment outcomes, and ultimately well-being at the individual level but is also likely to undermine growth.

An analysis of the CSO findings points to a dual reality for different communities in Limerick and Clare. When examining the three dimensions of affluence/disadvantage (i.e. Demographic Profile, Social Class Composition and Labour Market situation), pockets of high disadvantage continue to exist.

In terms of education attainment, similar patterns are persisting. The 2016 CSO figures showed that over a twenty-five year period from 1991-2016, the education attainment of 15 year olds and over has greatly improved. There has been a decrease in the number of people who were educated to primary level only and an increase in those with higher levels. The % of persons aged 15+ with 3rd level education was 40.9% in Co. Clare and 38.5% in Limerick City & County, compared to 42% at national level. The percentage of persons 15+ with no formal or primary only education was 12.1% in Co. Clare, and 14.3% in Limerick County and City. However, when analysing data at electoral division level in regeneration areas and neighbouring communities, the proportion of the population who left school with just a primary education is considerably higher than the national average. In Limerick City alone, 18 EDs have a higher rate than 20%, and 9 EDs have an early school leaving rate in excess of 30%³.

Indeed, the CSO Census 2016 has recorded higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of educational attainment, higher rates of unskilled/low skilled workers, higher lone parent rates, higher age dependency rates, and decreasing populations in those areas (see Figure 2). This paradox for the Mid-West as the fastest growing region in the country, and yet one with almost one-third of the country’s unemployment blackspots must be addressed and calls for partnership and targeted interventions.

Figure 2 – Deprivation Score at Electoral Division Level⁴

ED	Kilkee	Ennis 2 Urban	Kilrush	Rathkeale	Ballynanty	Galvone B	John A
2016 Relative Deprivation index	- 13	- 17.8	- 17.9	- 21.7	- 27	- 32.8	- 35.7

³ This includes John’s A (46.8%), Galvone B (39.4%), Glentworth C (Hyde Road area) (37.2%), Kileely A (35.7%), and Ballynanty (35.3%).

⁴ The Trutz Haase Deprivation Index uses a model looking at demographic indicators, primary education only, age dependency ratio, the % of people who completed their education without progressing beyond primary school, unemployment rate, and the % of families headed by a lone parent, etc. <http://trutzhhaase.eu/deprivation-index/the-2016-pobal-hp-deprivation-index-for-small-areas>

Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board Strategy Statement

In December 2017, Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board launched its Strategy Statement 2017 - 2021, which will chart the path for our education and training programmes, youth work and other statutory functions over the next five years. It is the product of a consultative process, which gave opportunities to boards of management, staff, learners, learners, parents, community partners and representative bodies of business, industry and employers in Limerick and Clare to have a say in our future direction. It is framed by our vision to enhance the quality of learning and life in our region. This strategy statement also emphasises the role the authority will play in fulfilling the personal, social, economic and employability needs of our community.



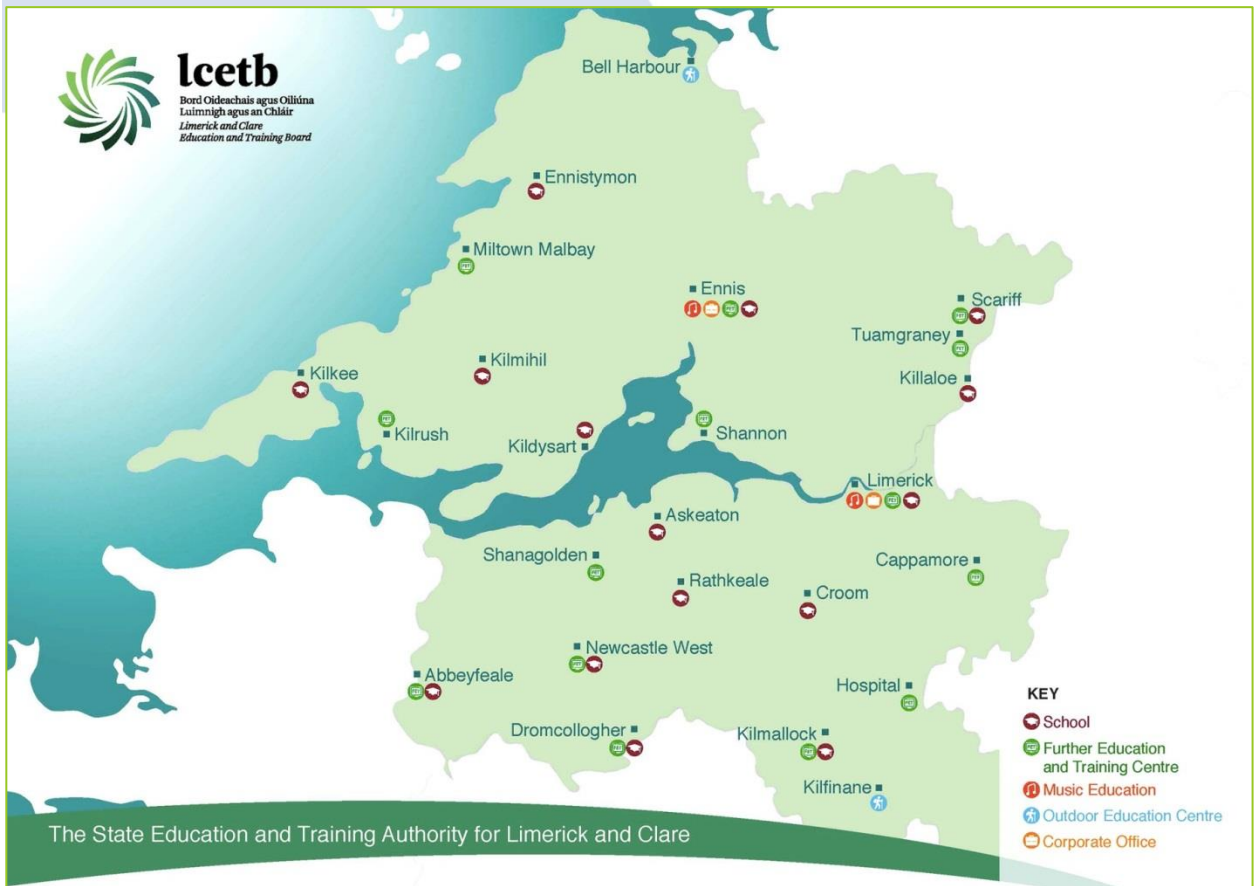
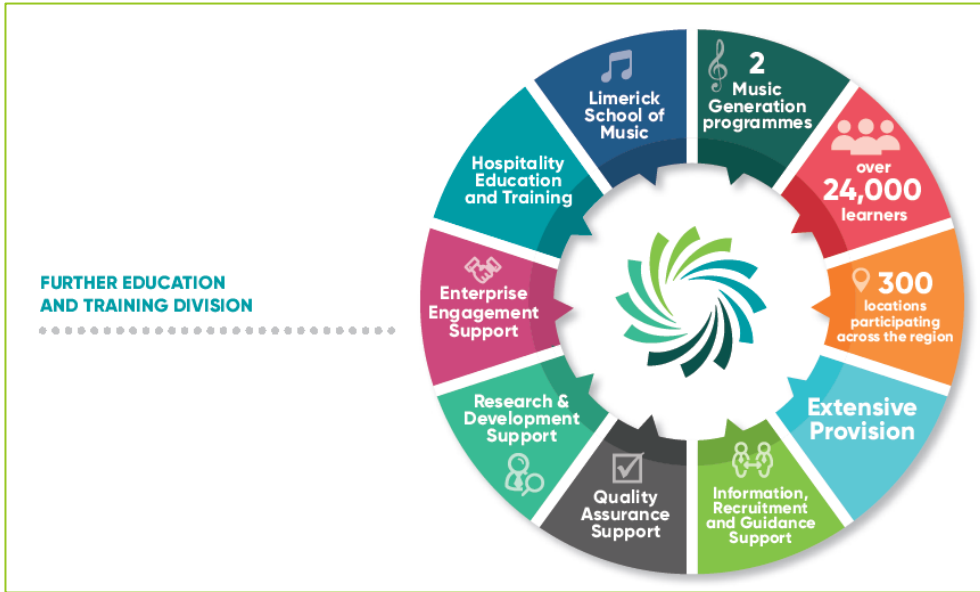
Our vision is

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board plays a leading role in the provision of high quality education and training in Limerick and Clare. The authority achieves this by transforming the lives of our learners, our learners, our communities and the social and economic prosperity of the region through responding to student/learner, community and enterprise needs.

The Strategy Statement sets out **four priority goals** to be achieved over the five-year lifespan of the strategy:

1. High Quality Student and Learner Experiences
2. Staff Support and Organisational Development
3. Good Governance
4. Partnership

This statement was developed to be consistent with policy directions of the Minister for Education and Skills, the financial resources likely to be available to give effect to this strategy and the SOLAS FET Strategy 2014 – 2019. These documents, together with the Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020, will guide the work of the FET Division going forward. Indeed, **in 2018 the FET Division will undergo its mid-term review**, to monitor progress towards the realisation of its vision. It will also give us the opportunity to realign our priorities to the changing policy and socio-economic contexts, and ensure that our work continues to be effective towards the implementation of our strategic priorities.



Our Impact In 2017

In 2017, the FET Division had a very busy and successful year. This report reviews the achievements of the FET Division's provision and support services in terms of their impact on labour-market outcomes, progression outcomes, and social mobility outcomes (transversal skills). It also highlights the impact of FET provision in terms of Lifelong Learning objectives, and looks back at the critical work carried out in terms of effectiveness, accountability, leadership and good governance.

FET PROVISION – LABOUR-MARKET FOCUS

Planning forward

A labour-market focus is present throughout the SOLAS FET policy landscape in Ireland. The first goal of the SOLAS FET Strategy is about Skills for the economy - *focussing on improving employer engagement / linkages and increasing FET initiated new apprenticeships/ traineeships and other forms of work-based learning and improving existing relevant FET provision to deliver high employment outcomes.*

As set out in the SOLAS Corporate Plan 2017 to 2019, national sectoral targets for Further Education and Training (FET) have been agreed with the Department of Education and Skills, and each Education and Training Board (ETB) is to contribute to the achievement of these sectoral targets.



In September 2017, Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board launched a **FET Enterprise Engagement Framework 2017 – 2020**, following extensive consultations and planning discussions by a cross-service Planning Team, comprising key managers across FET part-time and full-time provision, as well as FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service Coordinators. This coherent and collaborative approach to enterprise engagement will enhance our effectiveness, raise the FET profile with key partners and employers, and result in positive outcomes for learners and the regional economy. This FET Enterprise Engagement Framework 2017 – 2020 includes 27 actions under 5 Priority Areas:

1. Enterprise engagement structures & processes
2. Industry currency for FET learning practitioners
3. FET upskilling pathways
4. Employability skills and career planning
5. Enterprise engagement communication & marketing

An Enterprise Engagement Support Service (EESS) was set up to build up connectedness across the FET Division on Enterprise Engagement, and provide a centralised point of contact to broker the range of FET provision and services to employers. It will facilitate ongoing dialogue with employers, employees, skills fora, in responding to identified skills and training needs in the region. The service will harness regional skills intelligence to enable skills development opportunities through apprenticeships, traineeships and QQI provision.

Building Partnerships to Identify and Respond to Skills Needs

In 2017, the FET Division has enhanced its engagement with enterprise and other key partners, to identify skills needs in the Mid-West and offer innovative and effective education and training solutions to meet those needs.

At regional level, Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board chaired the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum (MSRSF previously chaired by UL and LIT), which enhances the profile of the FET sector with many partners and businesses. In May 2017, the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum hosted an Apprentice Information Event, with guest speakers including Joe Leddin, Mid-West Regional Skills Manager, Dr. Mary Liz Trant, Director of SOLAS and John Gleeson, General Manager, General Motors. The event was attended by over 80 employers in the region and dealt with the topic of *"How to Build Your Employee Talent Pipeline"* of which the ETBs, IOTs and Universities will play a pivotal role. The event was also attended by Guidance practitioners in schools and FET colleges.



Joe Leddin, Mid-West Regional Skills Manager, Dr. Mary Liz Trant, Director of SOLAS, John Gleeson, General Manager, General Motors and Eimear Brophy, LCETB, Chairperson of the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum.

The FET Division also held regular meetings with the 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.

Partnerships with other state agencies also enhanced existing protocols to share information, identify and respond to current and emerging skills needs. In 2017, quarterly meetings with DEASP continued, and the BOMI/PLSS system of referrals was introduced to facilitate referrals. PLSS briefings with DEASP case officers were also conducted, while Limerick Literacy Service staff provided Literacy Awareness Training to Turas Nua and frontline staff in the local Intreo offices.

FET staff also attended the Limerick County Council Digital Leaders Group and contributed to developing a Limerick Digital Roadmap. This partnership with LCCC and community partners will continue to work on digital inclusion measures agreed in the roadmap.

In the Hospitality & Tourism Sector, discussions and meetings took place with General Managers and Owner Managers in the Hospitality sector to determine future skill needs in the region. As a result **a new Hospitality Training Network was established** to include the Hospitality Training Centre, Irish Hotels Federation and the RAI. From meetings held to date, skills training in areas covering HR, Compliance, Digital Skills, Conflict Management, Leadership and Management have been identified.

"Shannon Heritage is very proud of our association with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. We acknowledge all the good work the Hospitality Education and Training Centre is doing, providing good placements to the wider tourism industry here in the region."

– Ivan Tuohy, Shannon Heritage –

In the construction sector, the FET Division and MWRSF have held two meetings with the Construction Industry Federation (CIF) regarding current and future skill needs. The CIF are finalising a national careers promotional

campaign to target post primary learners and Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board have agreed to support this campaign once launched nationally in early 2018.

PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION – MID-WEST STEM ALLIANCE



In 2017, Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board and the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum developed an innovative STEM Alliance pilot project, the first of its kind in Ireland, involving over 30 companies across Limerick and Clare and 19 post-primary schools. This industry-led project aims to encourage young people to become engaged and interested in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and will deliver a programme involving the Authority's Schools, Further Education and Training (FET) Centres, including Youthreach and PLC in the region. It will lead the way in developing a framework delivering on national education policy that could be adopted by initiatives and fora across Ireland and Internationally.

Examples of the activities will include: -

- Establishing relationships with STEM business and industry (through *Limerick 4 Engineering and Limerick for IT network*), schools, Youthreach, Further Education and Training (FET) Centres, and higher-level institutions, and the wider STEM community and thus fostering a culture of collaboration for professional learning in STEM education.
- CPD (**Continuous Professional Development**) for Career Guidance and teachers in the STEM disciplines delivered by STEM professionals in a variety of industrial settings.
- The '*Adopt a schools*' strategy will pair industries with schools where learners in the schools will greatly benefit from regular 'Meet a scientist/engineer/mathematician/IT expert' visits (in their schools and on-site visits to industry), **where the learners develop relationships with experts in the STEM area.**
- Encourage learners, teachers and parents to get involved in a variety of STEM initiatives led by industry and educational institutions across the region for example *Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for IT, the Limerick and Tipperary Festival of Science, Engineers Week, Code Week* etc.

At centre level, continuous efforts are made to engage with local small and medium enterprises, which make 97% of active enterprises in the Mid-West Region. These various links raise the profile of FET in the local areas, as well as providing ways for local employers to meet FET learners. Some events in 2017 included:

- LCFE's Annual Business Forum in January 2017. This year's theme was Local Employment Opportunities.
- West-Limerick Part-Time Provision (Abbeyfeale Campus) was represented at the Bank of Ireland Enterprise Week in March 2017. It was a great opportunity to meet with the wider community including interest groups, local businesses and the sporting communities to inform them of the FET Provision and activities running at the FET Abbeyfeale Campus.
- In the FET Centre – Clonroad Campus, Ennis, the Employer Focus Week is an annual event in February. Local employers come in to the centre, give talks, carry out mock interviews, etc. This helps strengthen the links between employers and VTOS.

SUCCESS STORY – KILMALLOCK TOWN

A local solicitor contacted the VTOS Coordinator, seeking CVs for a legal position within their firm. A VTOS learner and a PLC Business learner were interviewed and offered a position each. The firm wanted local people who would stay.

Innovative Responses

Intensive partnership and networking activities at both organisational and centre levels have resulted in a series of innovative initiatives in 2017:

- **FET/DEASP Response to Economic Blackspots - Enterprise Engagement Training**
As a result of the CSO data released on unemployment blackspots in Limerick, the FET Division and DEASP collaborated for an initiative in St. Munchin's Northside, Limerick City, which has one of the highest areas of deprivation and unemployment in the City. A QQI Level 5 Hairdressing Entrepreneurship Programme was organised in St. Munchin's Community & Enterprise Centre, targeting 15 participants comprising a combination of CE Scheme participants and jobseekers. Additional supports were given by the FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service and Literacy Service. Work experience in hairdressing salons was also an integral part of the training.
- **Feeding Ireland's Future**
This initiative has brought Irish companies in the retail and food industry together with the Department of Social Protection to offer pre-employment skills training to young unemployed people between the ages of 18 and 24. In collaboration with Intreo and Wyeth Nutrition, a "World of Work" seminar took place in FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus, in March 2017. This initiative provided a unique opportunity for participants to engage directly with HR and Industry professionals, to benefit from their expertise, and experience first-hand the variety of roles available in the food and retail sector.
- **The FET Centre, Shannon Industrial Estate Campus**, in conjunction with local Aircraft Maintenance company, Lufthansa Technik, has developed a new Structures repair course to meet sector demand. Welding also continues to be a popular course with both learners and employers, placement into full-time employment is at 90%.
- In the FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus, the **Baalbek Hub was launched, as a new community Co-Working Space**. The aim of this initiative is to engage with local enterprise and provide a space in the Centre for six to eight business people/entrepreneurs/start-ups to work from.
- Once again **Diageo, 'Learning For Life'** collaborated with the Hospitality Education & Training Centre for the delivery of a Bar Operations Course in 2017. It aims to equip young people with hospitality industry skills, providing real employment opportunities and facilitating future job growth. HETC are the only centre in the country that Diageo are working with at this time. The 2016 Bar Operations Course proved a **great success with 76% employment rate for this group**.
- **P.A. Bootcamp** - Troy Studios, Limerick Screen Training Ireland and the FET Division, in partnership with Universal Cable Productions, hosted a P.A. Bootcamp training programme for new industry entrants. This renowned Bootcamp is **not a course, but rather job-training**, as a two-day intensive, real-world programme designed to give participants a full and practical understanding of the role of Office, Set and Location Production Assistant. As part of the programme, participants also completed a one-day Health & Safety programme offered by BECTU, and accredited under the BBC/BECTU/PACT/Skillset Production Safety Passport Scheme.
- **The Defence Forces Employment Support Scheme (DFESS)** is a strategic collaboration between the Department of Defence, the Department of Social Protection, the Defence Forces & ETBs. The course was launched in Sarsfield Barracks in May 2017, with 14 participants, aged 18-24. The scheme encompasses a training provision of ten weeks duration, consisting of approximately four weeks of military-oriented training by the Defence Forces interspersed with 6 weeks of education-oriented training organised and delivered through the FET Centre, Raheen Campus. Certification is gained in: Safepass – delivered on behalf of Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board in the Tralee Training Centre; HACCP – delivered & issued by the Defence Force Catering Corps;

Attendance Certificate for Basic Medical Training - delivered by Defence Forces; STEPS Provision - Certificate of completion and QQI Level 5 Certificate in Information and Administration 5N1389 – Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board.



SUCCESS STORY- LONGCOURT HOUSE HOTEL, NEWCASTLE WEST

This initiative is a remarkable illustration of enterprise and partners engagement in action. The FET Division and the DEASP worked in partnership with the management and owners for the opening of this 4 star Hotel in Newcastle West, Co. Limerick. 16 candidates, long-term unemployed from the local area, were identified and trained for specific roles in the hotel. HETC in conjunction with the Longcourt House Hotel trained all levels of staff from Culinary, Hospitality, Barista, Bar Operations and Accommodation Services. Specific skills were added to the different programmes to facilitate the hotel needs. In addition, a bus was provided daily to transport trainees to Newcastle West. Some of the HETC staff worked on-site for three weeks with trainees to facilitate on-the-job training, and to ensure the Hotel Grand Opening deadline of the 8th December 2017 would be met. 100% of FET trainees progressed to employment within the Hotel.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Through the National Skills Strategy 2025, the Action Plan for Education 2016-2018, the Action Plan for Apprenticeships & Traineeships and as part of the current Programme for Government, Ireland aims to significantly grow work-based learning over the coming five years using the apprenticeship and traineeship modes of learning and skills development. From 2018, SOLAS has set ambitious targets for 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship new registrations up to 2020 nationally – to which each ETB must contribute.

In 2017, there were 1258 beneficiaries on FET apprenticeships and 289 beneficiaries on traineeships. Registration figures showed an increase of 32%, with a pointed **141% increase in the number of female apprentices between 2016 and 2017.**

The FET Centre, Shannon Industrial Estate Campus expanded its apprenticeship delivery to accommodate increased numbers in Apprentice registrations. This included an additional Aircraft class and the completion of a new Electrical Workshop for an additional Electrical



course (pics attached). In addition, the Centre completed the latest iterations of Aircraft Spray painting and Aircraft Maintenance with 100% certification and placement in full-time employment at 85%.

Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board was the first ETB to commence **the new National Level 6 Apprenticeship Commis Chef Programme through HETC**. This two-year programme had a full class of 16 apprentices and featured on the RTE One News, giving it national attention. The Hospitality Campus was also chosen as the venue to launch the National Career Traineeship by Minister Bruton. Two Trainees spoke about their experience having been long-term unemployed and they spoke about their successful career path and King John's Castle talked about their working relationship with HETC.



TESTIMONIAL FROM INDUSTRY

'It was an absolute pleasure meeting your group of learners today. I found them to be motivated, enthusiastic, well trained, and I am certain they will all be employable in the areas of the hospitality sector in which they will work. The future looks bright and the programme there is exactly what the trade needs.'

M. Bill McCann, Responsible Serving Of Alcohol Workshop

In February 2017, a **significant Employer Engagement Workshop** was organised by HETC to discuss what skills and subjects are required for the hotel and licenced trade industry in 2017. For the first time, both the Irish Vintner Federation and the Irish Hotel Federation were represented through their Chairman and President. This Employer Engagement workshop for the second Traineeship was attended by employers from the Hotel Sector and Licensed Trade. The FET Division is leading the development of this new traineeship by inviting the licensed trade to become part of it, as the pilot was initially specific to the Irish Hotel Federation. In 2017, the traineeship was available to Ennis and surrounding area in Clare with 6 new employers from Ennis sponsoring placements for the programme.



In 2017, several FET staff also participated in **Occupational Skills Profile training provided by SOLAS**, and new apprenticeship/traineeship opportunities were explored in the area of industrial electrical engineering, Insurance practitioner L8, culinary skills; digital sales & marketing, engineering and hairdressing.


Planning is underway to ensure 2018 will see a significant emphasis placed on increasing apprenticeship/traineeships opportunities in Limerick and Clare, in line with a new Strategic Agreement Framework to be agreed between SOLAS and Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board FET Division.

Workforce Development

The welcome improvement in the economy and in the labour market requires ETBs to develop greater opportunities for **re-skilling and up-skilling those already in the workforce**. Work-based learning opportunities are facilitated by the part-time nature of over 70% of FET provision. This enables those in employment to up-skill and part-take in part-time, day, evening and weekend programmes and offers the flexibility to retain their employment while up-skilling. Workforce Development has also been identified as a main priority in all FET strategic frameworks and actions plans.

In 2017, several initiatives focused on workforce development, **particularly through collaboration with the Skills for Work programme:**




- **BTEI and Skills for Work targeted those who work in catering establishments in Limerick City.** The programmes piloted a new initiative, which involved engaging a staff member with a background in food preparation and production to visit a host of local small businesses i.e. pub food outlets, delis, cafes etc. This 'call out' work was done in April and May, to promote and recruit for two new classes in Culinary Skills Level 3. A follow on Level 4 Short Order Cooking course will begin in January 2018 as a progression pathway to existing learners. It will also be promoted again to the local business contacts in the food sector. This initiative marked a new approach in 'reaching out' to local employers, and also as a collaborative venture between BTEI and SFW demonstrated how success for a project such as this can be enhanced when it runs as a joint venture.
- In Clare, the Literacy Service through Skills for Work worked with local employers and the local communities to design and deliver provision which would help fill **seasonal vacancies** throughout the county. These bespoke courses were beneficial to both employers and the local community who availed of the opportunity to train and try a job on a seasonal basis, e.g. catering course for seasonal work with Cliffs of Moher/Ennistymon Day Hospital.
They also worked with a varied group of self-employed learners, struggling to sustain their businesses. In 2017, a digital media for self-employed was delivered, and they now established a business network in the area, which identifies training and education requirements needed to boost tourism and related business in the area on an ongoing basis.
- Skills for Work provision also included courses to pass the **SPSV (Limo/hackney/taxi) exam**. Through Skills for Work funding, a piece of work is being completed by a Literacy Tutor, which involves Managing the allocation and distribution of access to the SPSV online Moodle training support package; Updating the On-line Moodle Training Support System for the SPSV sector (SPSV online Website); Developing and maintaining the On-line Moodle training support package for the SPSV sector; Providing support to the SFW tutors working on the programme across the 9 SFW regions as required; Researching and providing additional appropriate and current workplace SPSV material.
- The **Skills for Work -Agriculture suite of courses was further developed in 2017**. Since its initial development in 2011, a suite of courses has been designed as follow-ons for this typically hard to reach cohort, e.g. Farm Safety Statement, Online farms accounts. In 2017, an Animal remedies recording pilot programme was developed to help farmers cope with increasing regulation. With uptake nationally across ETBs and continued support of the Department of Agriculture, CPD and ongoing support was provided to a further 50 Tutors in 2017. The wider

CULINARY SKILLS & HACCP COURSE 
UPSKILLING FOR PEOPLE WHO WORK IN KITCHENS, DELIS, CAFES ETC.
This part-time Culinary Skills & HACCP Course is designed for those who work in the catering sector in the Limerick City area. It is for the valued and effective employee, who has 'earned' on the job and performs to a high standard, who however, has had little or no 'formal' opportunities to acquire training or qualifications in the hospitality area.

Two courses are available (morning and evening).
Course 1: Starts Monday 11th Sept 9.30am - 12.30pm - 3 hrs per week for 12 Mondays
Course 2: Starts Monday 11th Sept 6.00 - 9.00pm - 3 hrs per week for 12 Mondays
Location: Further Education and Training (FET) Centre, O'Connell Avenue Limerick (Next Tech)

Culinary Skills Course, Further Education & Training Centre, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick
Email: jane.heman@ictcb.ie, Tel: 061 445700 for more information

No of available places: **20** Qualification Provided: **Level 3 Certificate in Culinary Operations Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)** **NO FEES APPLY**

benefits of the programme are the increased confidence and self-esteem gained by the learners and enabling 'outside the farm gate' work opportunities, which are increasingly more essential for farmers.

Other workforce development initiatives included exploring **the joint running of programmes with CE workers in selected sectors in Limerick and Clare**, following initial planning meetings between personnel from the Department of Social Protection (DEASP) and BTEI. This initiative was targeted at CE workers categorised as 'employed' and on a 'government scheme', but vulnerable to unemployment. The planning was given impetus by the fact that those on CE are generally now entitled to be on the programme for only a single year, however, if on an accredited learning programme, they can stay on CE for up to a three year period. By availing of such accredited training while on CE, they are reducing the risk of being back on Social Protection payments, and becoming long-term unemployed.

During 2017, two new programmes also began, one in the **Retail area** (Level 4 Retail Skills), for those on CE who are employed in Charity Shops in Limerick City, and another in the **Security area** (Level 5 Security Studies), for a group of men who are employed in Community Centres, LEDP etc., in security roles. These three programmes are innovative and interesting insofar as they are targeting a particularly vulnerable grouping in the economy, and providing practical, supported training on clear pathways to employment.

In parallel, the FET Division continues to be a key partner in upskilling HSE employees in the Mid-West area: BTEI Limerick City delivered five courses for a level 5 Health Service Skills Award to 50 HSE employees, who needed qualifications to retain their employment.

The FET Evening provision also offers a flexible access for learners who might be in employment and only available in the evenings. In 2017, there were 4,137 beneficiaries of evening provision courses, mostly provided in LCFE, Raheen and Shannon Industrial Estate Campuses.

FET PROVISION – PROGRESSION FOCUS

As the labour market situation improves, another priority for the FET sector is to develop programmes that facilitate progression and promote transitions for learners both in employment, and those who want to progress to further or higher education, so that they can fulfil their ambitions and potential.

Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service

A central element of that focus on progression is the provision of professional Information, Recruitment and Guidance services to support FET learners. Providing professional and confidential guidance support to learners is a priority for all FET provision. In 2017, the Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service in Co. Clare, Limerick City and Co. Limerick reached 4,296 beneficiaries through one-to-one and group meetings, as well as through general public queries.

The **integration of IRG services across the FET Division** was a major feature in 2017. A FET Integrated Guidance Group was set up, meeting quarterly and working closely to identify joint-objectives and initiatives, while also collaborating with the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum, the FET Enterprise Engagement Support Service and other education partners. This will facilitate the provision of information to enable skills development and career progression for potential and new learners.

In 2017, as part of the implementation of the FET Information and Guidance Strategic Framework (2017-2020), the **development of accessible and dedicated guidance spaces** was prioritised, to add to the long-established programme-based guidance provision. The forthcoming opening of a new Guidance Hub in O'Connell Avenue Campus and in Ennis, adjacent to classrooms and other learner supports will be a great addition. A new guidance office opened up in the FET Centre, Kilrush Campus, now conveniently available for learners/staff on the campus, and refurbishment of the guidance office took place in Scariff. In Limerick County, the service will now operate from Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West and Limerick City. An information kiosk is also now available in the FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus.

Other key developments took place this year:

- In April 2017, the **second annual FET Fair** took place on the O'Connell Avenue Campus, Limerick City. Planned and organised by the guidance staff of part-time programmes, Youthreach and VTOS, it was attended by over 200 learners to learn about part-time and full-time FET opportunities from QQI level 1-6 including leaving cert, apprenticeships and traineeships. Stands from LIT, UL and Mary Immaculate College also highlighted pathways to third level options, while information and advice on welfare supports and entitlements was available via DEASP colleagues.
- In September 2017, IRG staff took part in high profile initiatives at regional level including the **IGC Mid-West Careers Exhibition** hosted by Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board and SOLAS (26th September); another large-scale initiative saw 16 staff from the IRG Support Service and programmes taking part in the **FET recruitment days** (05-07th September), to make presentations to groups of DEASP clients, and hold 285



individual meetings with clients along with their DEASP Case Officers. In addition, FET stands at local DEASP Offices are held throughout the year, as effective ways to reach new learners.

- **Increased collaboration** with FET guidance and information colleagues in Training Centres, LDCs, DEASP, Turas Nua, etc. benefited learners, but also facilitated sharing of best practice for planning IRG provision across the Service. For instance, Clare County Childcare Committee were invited to the FET Centre, Clonroad Campus in Ennis, to clarify the new Affordable Childcare options (available in September 2018) to staff and learners.
- **Broadening of the IRG Support Service remit** in Limerick City through increased one-to-one engagement, and front line guidance to ESOL and Skills for Work groups.

The development of **new resources** is also a critical aspect of the work of IRG Support Service, to support frontline staff, tutors and service users.

- Ongoing promotion and use of online guidance resources, particularly the new www.learningandskills.ie website, where all FET courses are now available for the general public to view.
- **Frontline guidance training** in Limerick City for 35 Literacy and BTEI staff to give them tools to support their learners on their progression options. A resource pack was developed and is available on sharepoint.
- Information and Guidance newsletter for learners on literacy courses. **A calendar of Open talks and workshops** on learners' personal, educational and career development is also available.
- In January 2017, Clare Youthreach and Clare Youth service (CYS) final year learners took part in a Careers Information and support Seminar entitled '**Moving On**'. It aims to provide guidance and support to those preparing to embark in further education and training or employment.

All FET programmes have also carried out **comprehensive recruitment phases**, through the organisation of open days and awareness events. For instance:

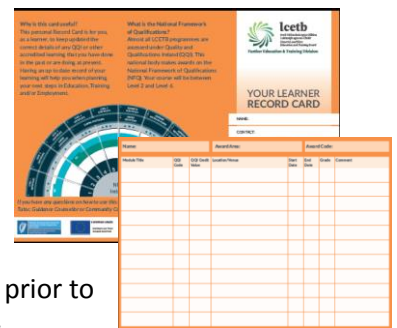
- VTOS Limerick City also started an **Access course** in March 2017 to facilitate new learners onto the scheme, offering a foundation in subjects as well as core skills development.
- The Limerick Community Education Programme also continued its successful **promotional postcards** depicting aspects of community education and bearing the caption 'Learning Happens Everywhere', with updated information on the reverse side of the card about community education venues across the city.
- **Promotional brochures**, as well as **digital marketing campaigns**, also continue to be developed by individual FET programmes, to provide attractive and informative resources for learners, to build awareness of all FET options. These are very effective as many walk-in applicants self-refer, while others are referred by partner organisations/agencies.
- Promotion of the Literacy Service has included an increase in local newspaper advertising, collaboration with NALA on a Radio advertisement and the production of postcard style flyers.



Progression Pathways

At the core of the progression priority of FET programmes, lies the ability of the FET programmes and services to integrate their provision, so that more seamless transitions and pathways can be offered to learners. In 2017, many initiatives took place across Limerick and Clare to reinforce transitions across FET programmes, and make links with other education partners, particularly with the third level sector. This is essential to support learners through their learning journey, and to highlight progression opportunities available to them.

- VTOS, Kilmallock Road Campus **Career Links programme** is to replace the traditional Junior Certificate provision and provide more flexible progression pathways to learners.
- A **pre-development project** was piloted in Co. Clare to support applicants on a waiting list for the Youthreach programme in Ennis. BTEI in Clare, in collaboration with the Clare Local Development Company funded and delivered services and activities to support learners. All 9 participants progressed to the Youthreach programme in September 2017.
- An innovative initiative in Limerick BTEI saw the introduction of a **personal Learner Record Card**, a simple tool for learners to record updated details of their QQI qualifications or any other training completed in the past or currently. A handy pocket size, this card has the potential to support learners to be more self-managing and better prepared to plan their progression pathways. In addition, BTEI Limerick City rolled out a new Progression Planning Tool in April/May 2017 for learners. This approach is supported by tutors who were trained to use the tool prior to its launch, it gives learners a chance to plan ahead their next step in their learning journey, and also enables more effective provision planning for the programme.
- **Work Experience** is an integral part of most FET provision. Work placements enable those involved to develop skills in their vocational area and competencies through periods of work-based training. In February 2017, five Limerick College of Further Education's learners undertook a three week work placement in France, as part of an Erasmus project. Work experience placements abroad provide additional opportunities to enhance linguistic capabilities, key skills and cultural awareness. In an increasingly global market place, experience of working overseas can significantly enhance prospects of employment.
- Across a number of centres in Clare, a range of innovative provision was designed for clients of the **Probation Service**. The main aim of these courses was to help participants transition back into the community and build the skills necessary for everyday living in a positive way. Already the first participants have progressed to full-time FET.



In terms of links with the third level:

- **Cross service agreements** are now in place with Limerick and Waterford Institutes of Technology.
- Several tours/visits were organised for learners by guidance staff and tutors to expose FET learners to a third level environment and progression pathways:

In 2017, 35.4% of FET learners progressed to PLC, and 28.4% PLC learners progressed to HE.

- LCFE welcomes learners and staff from Colaiste Na Trocaire (Rathkeale) as part of the Annual College Experience Week, and won a **Supporters Award for their engaging and innovative events for College Awareness Week.**
- In December 2017, the UL mature learner Access Office facilitated a visit from VTOS Kilmallock Town Campus, where they met other mature learners and discussed future opportunities.
- VTOS Limerick City leaving cert physics learners in a laboratory session in UL.
- VTOS Scariff learners visited the Limerick School of Art & Design on their open day, and met former FET learners there.
- In November, the Head of the Department of Business, LIT gave a presentation on the progression options to the VTOS and BTEI Business Administration learners in the FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis. This was organised by the IRG Support Service based on a request from the Ennis VTOS Business Administration learners after their visit to the LIT Limerick Open Day. This was the **first time that a Head of Business Department made a presentation to FET learners in the FET Centre, Clonroad Campus, Ennis.**



INSPIRING OUR LEARNERS - SINDY JOYCE VISITS YOUTHREACH

Sindy Joyce, a PhD student with the Department of Sociology in U.L. is currently researching how anti-Traveller racism shapes young people's use of and movement through urban public space. She visited the Youthreach provision, FET Centre, Kilmallock Road campus to talk about Traveller rights and her own education experience.

Sindy dropped out of school after her Junior Cert, and instead of pressuring her, her parents gave her a lot of housework! She soon realised school was easier than doing all the cleaning, and returned to finish her Leaving Cert but never applied for college. She told us how her teacher never gave her a CAO form because she said she wouldn't need it and just accepted it because she was told that Travellers don't go to college.

A few years later Sindy did go back to do a course and realised that she was really good at learning, she continued on doing her degree and masters and is now studying for a PHD. Sindy now advocates for Traveller rights and is campaigning for Traveller's Rights. She was really inspiring and her story is a very powerful example of resilience, which engaged both staff and learners.

Celebrating Learners

Many FET learners overcome great odds to access, fully participate and complete their FET courses. An increasing number are achieving accreditation, which most highly value as the evidence of their hard work. **In 2017, 6,982 certs were issued by QQI** to FET Learners in 33 centres in Limerick and Clare, i.e. 1,567 received major awards and 5415 received component awards. In all, 71% of FET learners who fully completed their course achieved accreditation.

Part of celebrating our learners is about recognising them as active stakeholders in the planning and delivery of FET provision. In 2017, efforts have been made to **empower learners to have a say in their learning experience, and to become more self-reliant** to become more self-managing and independent on their learning journeys.

Several learners took part in the **national Learner Forum** in April 2017 in Croke Park. Youtheach, BTEI learners discussed the achievements and challenges in FET. All participants welcomed the opportunity to be consulted and found the day most rewarding.



While learners' feedback is routinely sought by FET staff on their learning experience, some initiatives have formalised that process further. For instance, the **annual LCFE Learner Survey** gives current learners the opportunity to let the College know about their time and experience at LCFE as well as giving them the chance to win a €100 voucher as a thank you for their participation.

In 2017, the Literacy Service, Co. Clare also launched the **'Capturing the learner's voice'** project. This involves building on information gathered through course evaluations to capture learner's opinion and thinking by other means. A team of learners were trained in 2017 and will start facilitating learner focus groups on key topics in 2018. The findings of the focus groups will inform our provision and service. One of the team, Ann Nicholas, was elected onto the Board of Directors for NALA and the Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board. She has ably represented learners and made valuable contributions on both. The highlight of this project was meeting the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins who hosted a reception in Áras an Uachtarain for adult literacy learners and tutors in September 2017. The reception was an opportunity for President Higgins to congratulate and thank the learners and tutors for their work. ***'Each of you serves as a great inspiration to the many others whose lives have been shadowed by literacy difficulties, and I thank and commend you for your courage and the determination that has brought you to where you are today'***
- President Higgins (2017)



All the efforts of learners and staff culminate each year with **celebrations of learners' achievements** from the 'Award Season', to the organisation of special events to recognise and celebrate the fantastic achievements and progression made by learners during the year.

- In June 2017, the Literacy Service – **Co Clare launched 'Simply Said' in Glór**. This is the 29th edition of the book, written by the learners attending a wide variety of classes over the past year. A number of learners read their own stories in front of the large audience. This year, a number of digital stories recorded and some of these were shown on the night. One learner entertained those attending with magnificent music played on the grand piano. A slide show presentation showing images of the year's work across the five main centres and other community venues was shown.

- In 2017, **thousands of euros were raised during charity events** organised by staff and learners in FET centres. This is a great example of community spirit in action, which also brings out a lot of creativity from FET learners of all ages. Well done to all involved! A few examples below:
 - Shanagolden Campus Baking Charity Enterprise as part of Practical Achievement Task- Donations to UHL Children's Ark Ward.
 - With support from various staff, a group of Youthreach O' Connell Avenue Learners made Christmas Cards and decorative trees which were sold in a fundraiser in early December 2017. €300 was donated to the Simon Community in December 2017.
 - Clare Family Learning organised a very successful Coffee Morning for Pieta House, Limerick to support their work in counselling. Pieta House provides help for those affected by suicide and is a suicide and self-harm crisis centre. A total of €765.50 was raised in one hour.
 - And many more...



Spotlight!

Some learners went to extreme length to achieve their goal: In what is believed to be a first, **one learner completed paper 1 of their English exam in University Hospital Limerick**. Prior to the exam, a learner from Shannon, Donna McGettigan became ill and was hospitalised. The SEC, arranged with the hospital for her to sit paper 1 in the hospital. On completion of paper 1, Donna was released from hospital and sat paper 2 at her designated centre in Ennis.

- **Awards Season!** In 2017, all FET Centres took great pride and effort to celebrate learners' personal achievements and accreditation through the organisation of glitzy gatherings and events, where learners can meet again and enjoy their success.



FET PROVISION - CORE SKILLS & LIFELONG LEARNING

Skills, competences, and qualifications constantly evolve, and to adjust to these changes, individuals need to be equipped with a range of core skills from literacy, numeracy and digital skills, to vocational or technical skills as well as entrepreneurial skills and transversal skills. As the economic situation in Ireland improves, FET staff have found that new participants present with lower skills levels at entry. Increasingly, our work is about **facilitating re-engagement in the learning process for groups who are distant from education and the labour market**, such as long-term unemployed persons, women, refugees/migrants, youth, people with disabilities, low-skilled, homeless people, and older workers. Community Education, as well as Literacy and Numeracy provisions are essential in reaching those groups if Ireland is to meet its lifelong learning objectives.

Of the 2017 Beneficiaries who started in 2017:

- 3,098 were Long term Unemployed (26%) and 77% started on Part-Time programmes.
- 1,514 were Persons with a Disability (13%)
- 1,116 Youth Guarantee (72.5% in Full-time programmes)

Core Skills

Integration of Language, Literacy & Numeracy (LLN)

The **integration of LLN into mainstream FET provision** is the main focus of the FET Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework (2017-2020). The newly set up LLN Implementation team will initially focus on identifying assessment tools to be used across FET provision, and plans for a suite of LLN CPD for all FET staff. In 2017, several initiatives were piloted to integrate LLN into mainstream programmes:

In 2017, LCETB FET Literacy Services served 2,846 Beneficiaries.

- The FET Literacy services provided **literacy, numeracy and study skills supports to the apprenticeship** provision in the FET Centres, Raheen and Shannon Campuses, with very positive outcomes for all involved.
- In July 2017, a group of Training Centre and other FET staff came together for an **Integrating Literacy Workshop facilitated by NALA**. The Literacy Service, Co. Clare framework was used to further integrate LLN into mainstream provision;
- The integration of **core skills was also part of a community-based hairdressing Level 5 two-year course**. This has helped reduce dropout rates for the course, and has now become an integral part of the courses. Learners on community education programmes have access to supports including literacy, numeracy, language assistance and broad learning supports such as time management etc.
- In 2017 the focus continued around increasing STEM (Science Technology Engineering Maths) provision. Maths Week in October presented a good opportunity to take maths on the road and promote our range of numeracy provision. A **Money Matters roadshow** was brought to 5 locations in Clare in partnership with Bank of Ireland's Digital Banking specialist and MABS. This roadshow was open to existing learners and also members of the public with a view to recruiting for personal financial classes and online banking/internet safety and everyday maths classes.

- The Literacy Service, Co. Clare ran the first Prep for work in retail and catering course, which finished in 2017. Seven learners gained a major award at level 3 and 50% of the group progressed to employment while the remaining learners continued within FET at L4. This is a remarkable achievement for this group who were very far from the labour market when this course started 3 years ago. All learners had been referred by Employability Clare. The course is being repeated in 2018 following positive evaluation by all stakeholders. Also, partnership with Clare Museum and Heritage Office resulted in the launch of **‘Mapping the Landscape’ in East Clare**. Relevant for Farmers, Fishermen, CE Schemes, Men’s Shed, Historical Societies as well as those employed in the Tourism sector, this innovative pilot project will run over 2-3 years. It will map the local areas from a heritage perspective and will build capacity within the local community, while contributing to local tourism, and helping to provide employment in the heritage/tourism/archaeology fields.

Promoting inclusion and diversity

Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board, as a state authority, has a mandate to provide education and training for non-national and refugee learners, and is represented on the two Refugee Resettlement Programme Interagency Groups hosted by the local authorities in Limerick and Clare. In 2017, there was a **strong demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** classes, due to ongoing self-referrals and DEASP referrals. In Co. Clare, approximately 50% of Literacy Learners comprised Asylum Seekers/Migrant Workers/ Programme Refugees and refugees, a huge increase over the past five years. This includes focused provision i.e. English Language or Literacy and integrated provision at higher levels. As with our mainstream learners, there is a **significant increase in numbers of migrant learners presenting with lower levels of literacy and language**, thus requiring more time and tuition to prepare learners for functioning fully in employment and society. In 2017, a key development was the exploration of enhanced linkages between literacy services and the VTOS programme, to **add coherence in the area of ESOL provision** and learner progression.

2017 LCETB FET beneficiaries:	
•	ESOL: 892
•	ITABE: 241
•	Refugee Resettlement Programme: 95

For the most part, intense provision (6 hours per week) is provided to migrant learners, with additional supports, e.g. conversation classes, etc. A key aspect of that provision is also the cultural and social trips to support the participation and integration of migrants into the fabric of Limerick society. This provision is an important social outlet, and provides structure to their week, while supporting them to integrate with people from outside of their own community.

Examples of integration initiatives in 2017 included:

- **Themed classes** are a great way to facilitate the local community to get to know the migrant community. Most classes are in IT, Maths, cookery, horticulture have an intercultural dimension.
- The Clare Family Learning programme provided **children reading books to refugee families** to encourage reading over the summer break and promoted the use of Ennistymon Library for families.
- **EDNIP** (Embracing Diversity, Nurturing Integration: Learning for Life Project) is aimed at promoting integration through strategic school-based



1 Themed literacy class in Our Lady of Lourdes NS

suite of interventions targeted at school staff, children, parents and community members. This project is funded by the Department of Justice and Equality and lead by Mary Immaculate College, and the Literacy service is actively engaging with parents, to provide supports in the rapidly changing cultural diversity in schools and communities in Limerick City.

- FET programmes are **working closely with partner agencies** (Turas nua, DEASP, and Immigrant Support Centres, etc) to design appropriate provision to secure employment locally e.g. Healthcare Agencies (TTM, Bluebird, Home-Instead etc.), retail and hospitality employers.
- Many learners from the **Shannon Refugee Resettlement Programme** progressed onto generic courses across the FET Division with a large number attending ESOL classes, and looking at QQI learning components to identify their progression pathways, e.g. setting Learning Goals, Personal Decisions Making and Using Technology.
- **The Scouts Sixmilebridge** allowed the Scouts Hall to be used for Refugee Resettlement Programme (RRP) classes and coffee mornings. Refugee Children were also invited to join the Scouts.
- The **Sixmilebridge Parish Council** was pivotal in encouraging locals to help out in a quiet and friendly manner, with plenty of voluntary help for refugees. For example, they organised a rota to drive the Syrian Refugees to the local Aldi store, and showed the families how to grow crops in their back gardens.
- **Ennistymon Family Resource Centre** provided a space where the Refugees could relax and have a cup of coffee, and organised classes in horticulture, computers and crafts. Transition Year Learners, Scoil Mhuire, Ennistymon also organised two coffee mornings and dancing lessons for the Refugee families.
- **Clare Local Development Company** organised practical classes such as Yoga and gave advice on job seeking and preparing CVs.
- The FET Community Education programme organised a **successful 'Introduction to Arabic' class** in Ennistymon, for locals interested in volunteering with the Syrian refugees in their community. These classes are popular and will continue in the new year.
- The **Central Buildings Art Group** in Limerick City held their first exhibition in May 2017. At the launch several members of the group spoke about the inclusive nature of the group that brings learners from 9 countries together, some of whom are new to the city or living in Direct Provision Centres.



Throughout the year, FET provision also celebrated diversity, through many intercultural awareness raising events, where people from various nationalities shared food and music from their native countries and many wore traditional dress.



Lifelong Learning (LLL)

The FET Division is fully committed to Lifelong Learning, recognising that the benefits of participation in adult learning extend beyond pure economic values. There are many individual and societal benefits that contribute to social inclusion, improved wellbeing, which all contribute to a social return on FET investment.

Promoting Wellbeing & Healthy Lifestyles

As seen in the Action Plan for Education 2018, the focus on learners' wellbeing is a key priority for government, and the FET Division continuously promotes wellbeing, healthy lifestyles and mental health as part of all provision.

In 2017, some wellbeing initiatives included:

- The Amber Flag Initiative, which gives a framework for developing ideas to promote positive mental health. Many full-time and part-time FET programmes embrace the initiative every year, and in 2017 the FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus was awarded the Amber Flag in recognition of the wellbeing and mental health initiatives carried out in 2016 and 2017.
- As part of the 2017 Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, VTOS programme participants from 3 FET Centres in Ennis, Scariff and Shanagolden participated in an event at King John's Castle hosted by the National Learning Network and the Limerick Focus Programme, to get practical ideas on how to create a personal Inspirational Wellbeing Diary.
- In March, BTEI Level 5 Sports and Recreation class hosted an event titled 'War of Nutrition' in the FET Centre, Clonroad Campus. Clare ultra marathon runner Keith Whyte gave a talk on his experiences as an ultramarathon runner.
- In July 2017, HETC organised a Little Cooks Summer Camp with a strong emphasis on cooking in a fun and educational environment while teaching children and young people how to properly use kitchen equipment, as they learn to make their favourite kids meals. During the course all children covered healthy eating and learned why it's important to have a well-balanced diet. Every class was hands on cooking, the age profile was 7- 13.
- Staff from Youthreach Kilmallock Road and WatchHouse Cross came together and attended a Teacher Well Being Workshop provided by PDST and facilitated by Paul Breslin in March 2017.
- Many outdoors trips and cultural outings were organised for learners as great opportunity to discover new surroundings and bonding as a group of learners.

THE AMBER TREE AT THE FET CENTRE, CLONROAD CAMPUS

"The tree is a cross-programme initiative, brings together staff from all sides of the who are looking to promote activities on the campus that promote positive mental health. On the tree are suggestions for activities that you can do which will increase wellbeing."

Helen O'Sullivan, Ennis VTOS co-ordinator



Creativity a major skill of the future

The FET Division recognises the importance of creativity as a skill of the future, and in 2017 many initiatives shone a light learners' talents, boosting their self-confidence and opening new horizons for many FET learners.

- In March 2017, three **learners from a Local Training Initiative in Abbeyfeale headed to Cinemagic Dublin Film Academy**. The learners, who are studying Digital Media Technology as part of their QQI Level 4 Pathway to Employment course with Abbey Heritage Project, entered their own short films in the competition to secure a place. They had the opportunity to work with professionals on the production of a film, attend masterclasses and get career guidance on different areas of the film and television industry. The budding filmmakers were given the chance to develop their talents and earn their credit on the local production which was screened as part of the Cinemagic Dublin Film Festival in May 2017.
- Music Generation Clare and Music Generation Limerick City joined forces in July, with support from Clare County Council, to stage **three pop-up gigs in three iconic settings on the Clare coast** - the Cliffs of Moher and the beaches of Lahinch and Kilkee. These short concerts with a mix of musical styles was a great opportunity for these young people to perform in a non-competitive setting. Leading the performances were the newly formed Clare Youth Trad Orchestra - a new initiative of Clare Arts Office and Music Generation Clare, already comprising over one hundred young musicians. The three pop-up gigs were a way for the group to warm up ahead of their prestigious upcoming slot as the first group to perform in the Shannon Aerodrome at Fleadh 2017. Performing alongside the Trad Orchestra were rappers, songwriters, producers and bands from Music Generation's celebrated Limerick Voices programme.
- In February 2017, **LCFE organised its 16th annual Photography Tour**. This year, learners travelled to Cuba, and were given a once in a lifetime opportunity to photograph and document a culture on the cusp of change. LCFE's Cuban trip coincided with President Higgins' visit to Cuba and one LCFE Learner and LCFE Tutor were invited to attend President Higgins' keynote address to the SILAS conference at Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo. The work produced from this trip was displayed at the 16th Annual Photographic Exhibition, in Limerick City in May 2017.
- BTEI Limerick City ran **two drama classes** in 2017, one in the North-side Family Resource Centre and the other in O'Connell Avenue. Both groups wrote, produced, directed and preformed original productions: "Lisdoonvarna" and "Behind the Scenes". The Hunt Museum kindly allowed learners to showcase their production in its venue. Classes and productions were thoroughly enjoyed and well attended by family and friends!
- Another group of learners involved in Art & Design in BTEI Limerick City attended the Caravaggio Exhibition in the National Art Gallery in April. They also exhibited their own work in early May in the O'Connell Avenue Campus, where they designed their own 'Ranks' Mode Building, and displayed their work from throughout the year to fellow classmates, family and friends. Learners did the catering for the exhibition themselves and any food left over was donated by them to the Simon Community.
- As part of the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2017, VTOS learners had the opportunity to paint a portrait of the Lord Mayor of Limerick, who graciously sat for them during their class.

This tour was also the first ever public appearance of the Music Generation Limerick City creativity pod – a mobile performance, recording and workshop space with a pop-up outside stage and PA.



- **'Lights, Camera Action, Community Education Attraction'** was an event during Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival, which was held in St. Munchin's Community Enterprise Centre. Ten groups performed on the night. They were The Northside Misfits Drama group, the Red Tech Drama Group, St. Munchins CDP Womens Group, Southill FRC Mens and Womens Group, Queen of Peace/St. Saviours Creative Writing Group and a choir made up of learners from Irish classes across the city. They entertained an audience of 120 people from across the city. It was a successful cross-community initiative which **reflected the creativity and confidence** on the part of community education learners and tutors.



- **The Shannon Creative Writers group** continues to grow and develop as an independent writing group publishing and hosting many literary events throughout the year culminating in Christmas Themed stories and poetry in December. This group started as a literacy group and have since welcomed participants from the Men's Sheds and Syria so is becoming truly inclusive and reflective of the local community.
- **'Learning, Living, Looking after Yourself'** is a photographic depiction of the experiences of six Youthreach learners in Limerick City. The photographs and accompanying messages represent the possibilities and outcomes available to those attending Youthreach, O'Connell Avenue Campus. These powerful images and accompanying statements are the creative output from a project involving Youthreach learners, and staff members and displayed on the FET Campus.

- **'Sights and Sites'** was launched in December 2017 at Scariff Public Library. This is a collaborative photographic exhibition featuring work from a senior Special Needs Group and a Men's Shed class who completed QQI L3 Digital Photography and an Introductory Photography class. The main aim of the classes was for learners to develop awareness of both their surroundings and aspects of the natural environment and in turn develop creativity through the medium of photography.



- **Bedford Row Family Project (BRFP)** works with prisoners, former prisoners and families of prisoners. They ran two community education courses, Art and Creative Writing in 2017. Research into the impact of engagement with BRFP for individuals and families which was carried out by the TED Project in Mary Immaculate College was launched in 2017. The **value of the art class as a creative outlet was identified in the research** which quoted one of the participants 'We were all useless (at art) but then we started expressing ourselves in the art (session) and the art stuff ended up in a gallery and everything'.

OPENING OF AN MS IRELAND MID-WEST REGION ART IN DOORADOYLE LIBRARY



Artist Noreen O'Shea pictured with her work.

In July 2017, the MS Ireland Mid-West Region Art Exhibition is made up of 35 pieces of work by 7 artists who have been attending art classes funded through Cooperation Hours, for the last number of years in the MS Ireland Mid-West office. The classes are supported by the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. The artists that are presenting their work in their exhibition are living with MS. The purpose of the art group is to provide a space for people to meet and to express themselves in a way that they feel most comfortable. According to class tutor Hugh McMahon "It is a big deal to have your art exhibited, this group have done an excellent job, they are an example to all of us." **In 2017, 1,967 beneficiaries took classes funded through Cooperation Hours.**

Engaging Local Communities

The aim of the FET Community Education programme is to enhance learning, foster empowerment and contribute to civic society while maintaining an ethos appropriate to adult education. While most modules are themed, e.g. art and craft, cookery, etc - all modules delivered incorporate social and personal development, team building, communication skills, active citizenship and community development/participation. Community education provides both accredited and non-accredited opportunities for people in local communities. Going beyond skills attainment, it champions community cohesion and social inclusion, while widening participation in learning for disadvantaged communities.

In 2017, there were 4,160 beneficiaries from Community Education programmes, 313 beneficiaries from Local Training Initiatives, and 1,917 beneficiaries from tuition hours funded to groups active in communities as cooperation hours.

Experience of generational long-term unemployment points to the need for a broad range of initiatives that support engagement with local services, provide positive role models and raise life expectations. The Community Education programmes have long established presence and partnerships in disadvantaged areas, and while often not regarded as an active FET labour-market focus programme, it plays a recognised role in re-engaging in lifelong learning those who are most distant from education and the labour market. It does this through engaging parents, providing positive experiences of learning and connecting people with other learning opportunities and other services.

Integrated part-time provision planning has been a feature in Limerick City and Co. Clare over the last few years to organise the planning and delivery of part-time programmes in communities. The Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN), which will celebrate its 25th Anniversary in 2018, supports this process in Limerick, and FET guidance, community education, literacy and BTEI provisions are represented on the group.

PLANNING AHEAD: NEW REVIEW PROCESS FOR LIMERICK COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

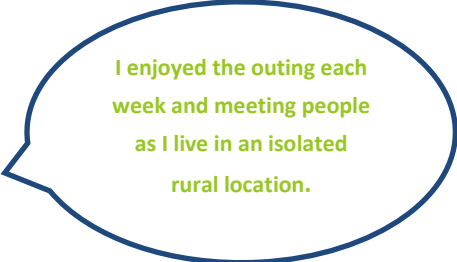
The model of Community Education in Limerick City has developed organically over a number of years in response to local and national initiatives in education and local development. The underlying premise has been community development with flexibility in terms of courses (content), delivery (duration of courses), tuition (choice of tutor) and location (community venues) being a key feature of the programme to support community involvement and to respond to changing needs/interests in communities.

In 2017, the programme started a review process to review both the national context and the one within which Community Education is delivered in Limerick. A key element of the review is an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges associated with the current model, including funding model. Focus group discussions and interviews with key stakeholders will be held as part of the review process. Stakeholders: Learners, Tutors, Part-Time Programmes, FET Director, Operations Manager, Community Co-ordinators & LCEN. It is expected to develop a new/revised model based on the findings from discussions and consistent with evolving changes in the Further Education and Training sector. Conclusions and recommendations from the review will inform the future development and operation of the programme.

Engaging with Communities


Examples of projects funded and supported by FET Community Education provision in 2017 included:

- Co. Clare approved grant aid to over 90 groups across the county, engaging with new communities in Killaloe, Kilrush and Sixmilebridge. A percentage of the overall budget was invested in ongoing partnership activity/community development.
- A **wide variety of learning opportunities in local venues** from arts and crafts, local history, woodcraft, metalcraft, personal development, personal /interpersonal skills, food and cookery, horticulture, health and fitness, mindfulness, beginners computers, creative writing and boat building.
- **Men's sheds** provide a safe, friendly, inclusive space where skills are learned, community links identified, friendships made, and support networks created at the men's own pace. The FET Division supports Men's Sheds in Kilrush, Ennistymon, Ennis, Clarecastle, Shannon in Co.Clare and Southill, our Lady of Lourdes in Limerick.
- **Cruinniu na mBan** is a women's group based in Kilrush, which welcomed 10 new members in 2017, and provides a space where women can come together, feel that they are not alone, and hear about supports available. Kilrush suffers from a high rate of unemployment and associated issues such as anti- social behaviour, violence, etc. Based on needs identified, 5 courses were organised with this group in 2017, 4 in cookery and 1 in yoga and mindfulness.
- **Active Age:** Paintings and crafts were made and sold by the Kilmihil Active Retired Group – funds raised were used for the ongoing continuation and development of the group. The Shannon Active Agers were delighted to take part in the local Christmas shoe box appeal, and commented that they can sometimes be forgotten in the rush of life.
- In 2017, the FET Centre, Raheen Campus provided a range of **local training initiatives (LTI)**. These are community-based training programmes targeted at learners who are economically, socially, geographically or educationally disadvantaged. The overall aim of the LTI provision is to assist unemployed people, not otherwise catered for through FET interventions, to move towards employment by providing community-based training and work experience leading to nationally recognised qualifications. LTIs are primarily targeted at specific individuals and groups who are distanced from the labour market, including, for example, people who are long-term unemployed, early school leavers, homeless people, those who are recovering from substance dependence, prisoners and Travellers.



I enjoyed the outing each week and meeting people as I live in an isolated rural location.

In 2017, several learners progressed to certified learning. Progression to certified learning is on the increase within the Community Education provision in Co.Clare, as a result of working in partnership with other FET part-time provision and also as a result of the huge input and ongoing support the courses and our learners receive from the IRG Support Service. The Community Education provision, Co. Clare also supports county-wide networks, through the facilitation of network meetings and the dissemination of information on the Clare Lifelong Learning Network Website www.clarelearningnetwork.org.



I am going to speak to a guidance councillor about starting a VTOS course in September.

In 2017, community-based provision continued to address the learning needs of many groups:

Family Learning

The Family Learning programme in Co. Clare is leading the field in terms of supporting parents to engage in school life and be positive role models for their families. In October 2017, a two day training on 'Delivering Family Learning Programmes – a practical approach' was organized to provide professional development to 24 participants from across the country.

In 2017, a new pilot programme was completed with St. Vincent de Paul: The 'Looking after your family, Looking after me' programme is to be rolled-out across the Country.

In Limerick City, important links continue to be made with schools through the Home School Community Liaison Programme. Community education courses for parents were offered in 10 schools in 2017 as a means of engaging parents in school life. Family learning and specifically Mams & Gals/Dads & Lads was concentrated in four primary schools. Popular family learning subjects include woodwork, cookery and beauty & skincare.

Homeless People

As the homeless crisis continues to deepen, a lot of work was done in 2017 to network with partner agencies. Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board is represented on the Mid-West Homeless Forum and links with Focus Ireland and other homeless organisations have grown from strength to strength. A lot of efforts went into increasing the number of homeless people attending the Literacy Provision in Limerick City, and a new programme (based on a Clare model) centred on the theme of home management ran from Sept-Dec 2017 with great success and progression opportunities for learners.

Enhanced links with Focus Ireland in relation to their PETE Project (Preparation for Education, Training and Employment) resulted in the provision of a variety of courses including confidence building and independent living. The purpose of these courses is to provide the foundation for those at risk of homelessness for further study or employment, get their life back on track and to work towards finding and maintaining secure accommodation.



Limerick and Clare - a Learning Region

In 2017, Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board continued to chair the Learning Limerick Steering Group, a multi-sectoral partnership group committed to advancing Limerick as a Learning Region. In September 2017, **Limerick was one of 16 other cities, including just five others from Europe, to receive the UNESCO Learning City Award** at the third International Conference on Learning Cities, in Cork. The award recognises collaborative efforts to increase overall education levels in Limerick, reduce the region's high long-term unemployment, and improve living conditions.



Current membership is representative of Local Government, Higher Education, Further Education and Training, Local Development, Community Education, Youth Work, Social Welfare, Childcare, Migrant Integration and Limerick

Chamber Skillnet. The purpose of Learning Limerick is articulated in its new ***Learning Limerick Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022: Helping to Grow Limerick as a Learning Region***, which was launched in November 2017. It is about:

- Promoting awareness of the importance of lifelong learning for every person, family, community and workplace in Limerick.
- Influencing education and skills policy; locally, nationally and internationally.
- Positioning learning at the centre of development planning in the Limerick region, in all communities, sectors and settings.

One of the flagship activities of Learning Limerick is its annual Learning Festival, which took place in April 2017 for the 7th consecutive year. With over 250 events, all free of charge and available to everyone, the festival was a huge success.

Similarly the annual Adult Learner Week is an opportunity for FET Centres in Co. Clare, to take part in many celebrations of learning throughout the county.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING, GOOD GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Raising the Profile of FET

One of the goals of the SOLAS FET Strategy is to raise the profile of the FET sector through recognising and promoting the high quality of FET Teaching and Learning, its good governance and leadership, towards a parity of esteem with other education sectors in Ireland.

LCETB Rebranding

In 2017, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board went through an **extensive rebranding process**. Since its amalgamation in 2013, and the transfer of the SOLAS training centres in 2014, significant work had been undertaken internally to communicate our work. However, there was still confusion with the general public and external stakeholders. This led us on a journey to update and communicate our name, and a new single corporate identity for our provision and core business: Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board. A key component of this is brand guardianship to ensure it was consistently applied across all marketing/communications collateral and all our locations. As a result all FET Campuses received a new sign in line with the corporate brand.



In addition, a new website was launched in November 2017 (www.learningandskills.ie) exploring the scope of the Authority's provision across Limerick and Clare and targeting Learners, Communities and Enterprise. It is built on WordPress platform, is mobile responsive and integrates capability with all key social media platforms. One of the key features of the website is an integrated facility that enables potential learners to search all FET courses being offered by Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board.

Investment in facilities

This rebranding effort was compounded by significant investments in FET facilities across Limerick and Clare. In 2017, 1.7 million Euros were invested in capital expenditure. This was allocated to improvements in all FET facilities, to make **FET learning spaces fit-for-purpose and excellent for both staff and learners**. Cross-programmes FET campuses have also provided hubs for communities, and provide valued opportunities for staff and learners to share experiences and good practice.

Some examples of facilities improvements in 2017 include:

- In April 2017, the Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, Patrick O'Donovan, T.D., opened the newly refurbished state-of-the-art Further Education and Training Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus. Extensive refurbishments have transformed the old and dated college into a spacious and fully accessible facility for FET learners in Kilmallock and the surrounding localities. A wide range of full-time and part-time courses are offered in the centre including: Post-Leaving Certificate, VTOS, Literacy, Community Education and Back to Education

Initiative provision. It is envisaged that the new Kilmallock campus will accommodate up to 150 learners and will serve as a hub for community learning and development in the area.

- LCFE underwent some refurbishment work and the old Eircom site on Mulgrave Street is now leased with the long-term view of expanding the College.
- An Information Kiosk has been installed in the FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus;
- Technology upgrades took place in three FET Centres in West Limerick – Abbeyfeale, NCW and Shanagolden;
- Screens for Signagelive were installed in 3 Centres in West Limerick;
- After extensive renovations during the summer, the FET Centre, Scariff Campus, received a new roof and an insulated outside wall. The interior was painted with the uniform corporate colours.
- Kilmallock Road Campus has had a number of improvements including the demolition of the old Sports Complex.



Celebrating FET Staff

The reputation of the FET sector is as good as its staff and learners. Huge commitment, professionalism and efforts have been displayed by all our FET teachers, tutors, instructors, resource workers, managers, admin staff and volunteers. Some colleagues have been locally, nationally and internationally recognised for their expertise and talent in 2017, some of which is illustrated below:

- **Partnership with UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning:** 2017 saw Clare Family Learning collaborating with various international Family Literacy staff on an intergenerational approach to literacy and learning resource project to support families. The resulting publication titled ‘Learning Together Across Generations: Guidelines for Family Literacy and Learning Programmes’ is now available online at <http://www.uil.unesco.org/literacy-and-basic-skills/engaging-families/learning-together-across-generations-launch-new-uil>.
- Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board were delighted to congratulate **Rusangano Family who won Irish Album of the Year 2016** at the RTE Choice Awards for their album “Let the Dead Bury the Dead”. Rusangano, a Limerick/Shannon based African-Irish hip hop trio has close links with the FET Division through LCFE and the Music Generation programme. Through their involvement in Music Generation, they have delivered many workshops to FET centres across Limerick and Clare.



2- Godknobs, Murli and John receiving their RTE Award, and performing 3 Christmas Concerts for FET Learners in Limerick Prison

- FET Staff facilitated two workshops at the **NALA ESOL Conference** entitled "Ways for ESOL learners to improve their English outside the classroom", in March 2017 in Dublin. A workshop, entitled “blended learning and the flipped ESOL classroom” was delivered by Ana Marques, Learning Practitioner, VTOS and Literacy Provision, Co.

Clare. The second workshop "Education for refugees: The ESOL experience from Co Clare" was delivered by Kerry O'Sullivan who gave an insight into the delivery of ESOL provision to learners who have come to Ireland under the Refugee Resettlement Provision.

- The Literacy Service, Co. Clare Roma Families Learning Comenius Project was showcased with six other FET projects at a **Leargas Event** in University of Limerick in December 2017.
- The Literacy-Community Education partnership programme: 'East Clare Learning in Action' was shortlisted from more than 70 projects for an **Aontas Star Award in the Social Inclusion category**. The programme was a prime example of partnership and social inclusion: based in Scariff, Co. Clare, it offered a diverse range of courses to equip learners with skills required for the different stages of life in a rural community, including Family Learning, Skills for Work and Age Friendly Education.
- The Hospitality Education and Training Centre scooped another award at the Irish Accommodation Service Institute in Wexford in January 2017. The award recognises those who are driving high standards within the Hospitality industry and the judging criteria focused on the hygiene standards, cleanliness and tidiness of the applicant buildings. HETC also won the Excellence in Local Government Awards in November 2017, in partnership with Limerick City and County Council for their **Regeneration Programme: Model of pathways to employment in the hospitality and catering industry**. Excellence in Local Government Awards showcase best practice in local government and recognise the skills, hard work, innovation and enthusiasm within local government.



SPOTLIGHT – EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL SKILLS WEEK

In November 2017, as part of the celebration of European Vocational Skills Week 2017, the FET Division held a series of awareness raising open days and events to promote Further Education and Training in Limerick and Clare, with a particular focus on Apprenticeships and Career Traineeships. About 200 people attended a range of activities, through 18 separate awareness raising events, including open days and events held in centres that included skills demonstrations and tours in some of our FET centres. Young people progressing from post primary education, as well as to guidance personnel in schools and for groups who might be thinking of progressing on to apprenticeships, traineeships or in to vocational courses in PLC, took part in the open days.

The week culminated with a **flagship event to celebrate vocational education and training and to promote it as a viable first choice option for learners**. The target audience for the event were learner advocates (guidance counsellors, school principals, school leaders from the mid-west); Statutory/community/voluntary/employer stakeholders. All schools and guidance counsellors in Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board were invited along with the LCETB Board.

Dr John Sweeney spoke about *'Globalisation-Proofing the Mid-West: the Role of Further Education and Training'*, and David Ward, Aviation Training and Business Development Specialist, Lufthansa Technik Shannon provided an *'Employer Perspective: 27 years of Traineeships- a look at outcomes for learners and Lufthansa Technik Shannon'*. A discussion Panel (*Shauna Dunlop, Director of Work-Based Learning, SOLAS; Des Murphy, Project Manager– Pre 2014 Apprenticeships (Development and Enhancement), ETBI; David Ward and Dr John Sweeney, Labour Market Council*) then presented viewpoints on the opportunities presented by Further Education and Training in the Limerick and Clare region, both as a progression choice for learners and also in terms of partnerships with employers in the provision of work based learning.

Cross-Service Development

Underpinning the education and training provision are support and professional services, which support the planning, development and delivery of high quality educational responses.

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is supported by the FET Quality Assurance Support Service, a team responsible for the development, implementation, evaluation and review of an effective Quality Assurance system across all Further Education and Training centres. In 2017, key developments took place both at governance level and at operational level.

At governance level, an Executive Self-Evaluation of the FET Division was submitted in October 2017 to evaluate the governance and management of quality assurance and the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures. An improvement plan comprising 20 actions for completion by the end of 2018 was also developed to support the Authority in meeting its statutory requirements for the establishment and operation of internal quality assurance procedures.

These documents formed the basis for an Initial Quality Dialogue Meeting between QQI and Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board in November 2017. This provided an opportunity to consider a range of issues relating to the development of the quality assurance infrastructure that will clarify and define the relationship between QQI (as an external quality assurance and qualifications body) and the ETBs as they evolve. Following this meeting, a formal request for approval of QA procedures was submitted to QQI and will be presented to the next QQI Programme and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) meeting in February 2018.

At operational level in 2017, the QA Support Service continued to cascade training right across the FET Division and supported practitioners in quality assured related matters. 386 staff attended more than 39 training sessions which ranged from Assessing Evidence in FET Workshops to IV Training. A number of communities of practice were also set up. The information gathered at these sessions will help with the development of a set of exemplar assessment briefs and marking schemes for the new Work Experience modules and four Healthcare modules (Care Skills, Care Support, Care Provision and Practice and Care of the Older Person). The QA Support Service also piloted an innovative new model of mentoring for a centre new to QQI delivery.

The QA Support Service also took part in an ETBI National Assessment Procedures Handbook Working Group, to develop a new sectoral assessment handbook. The Working Group initially developed four draft assessment procedures and sought feedback directly from the ETB sector and other stakeholders through a consultation process. These four procedures have now been finalised following this consultation and include - Assessment Deadlines, Assessment Malpractice, Compassionate Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances and Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment. Three further procedures are being developed. These are - Secure Storage, Learner Assessment Appeals and Assessment Events.

Professional Development

As we continue our development as an integrated FET Division, networking and practice sharing events remain a high priority. The nature of the professional development organised in 2017 reflects this with the majority of events on our calendar bringing staff together from different centres and different geographical locations.

CPD events were organised by a variety of internal stakeholders often in collaboration, including the Professional Development Officer, Senior Managers, existing FET CPD Networks and other

Development Officers. The FET Division also have 5 Implementation Groups who are tasked with rolling out different strategic areas-i.e. TEL, Integrated Language Literacy and Numeracy. Each Implementation Group has a CPD working group who look at professional development needed to rollout their actions; this includes proposing and developing innovative new cross-service interventions and is done in conjunction with the professional development officer.

Expenditure on cross-service professional development in 2017 was in the order of €55,000 euros spent on facilitators, tutor hire, venue hire, resources, refreshments etc. and subscriptions to services. A further €24,000 of Erasmus plus funding was used to send staff to international conferences related to Technology Enhanced Learning in 2017. Below are a highlight of some of the key initiatives that took place in 2017, they are presented under headings related to strategic priority areas identified in the SOLAS Professional Development Strategy which also mirror our own. We can estimate an in-kind contribution of staff hours to approximately over 200,000 euro. It is also worth noting that the figures here only partially reflect the total investment made by individual centres in the development of their staff. Nor do they reflect staff self-managed learning and informal learning that is encouraged and takes place.

- **Working with and Supporting FET Learners:** A significant investment was made in 2017 to support those working with FET Learners, mainly in the area of pedagogy/andragogy and working with learners who have diverse needs. 493 staff attended a variety of workshops e.g. Disability Awareness, Dyslexia Training, Integrated Literacy, Numeracy Awareness, Family Learning, Intercultural awareness, Anti-Racism Training and Working with Survivors of Torture. Three staff members were supported to complete the AHEAD Start Disability Awareness Blended Learning Module.
- **Leadership and Management:** Much of the leadership professional development support provided to managers in 2017 centred on the continued rollout of FARR and PLSS and in the areas of legislative compliance e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management and General Data Protection Regulations as well as sessions on using pivot tables for Data Analysis and Reporting.
- **ICT and Planning and Reporting Systems:** 2017 saw further development and roll out of the FARR/PLSS. This was accompanied by training and development sessions around PLSS, FETCH and new enrolment procedures attended by 214 staff. Approximately 70 staff received training in Excel and Powerpoint at different levels. This was organised in collaboration with LCETB Head Office and HR.
- **TEL:** Almost 42 TEL related CPD events were held in 2017, reflecting the priority placed for development in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. These workshops were attended by more than 188 staff. As part of the Limerick Learning Festival and the All Aboard initiative over 20 Show and TEL events were delivered by in house staff across Limerick and Clare. This highly successful event was awarded a national golden badge by the Teaching and Learning Forum.

In 2017, **169 individual professional development events** took place across the FET Division **attended by 1,978 staff**. This is equivalent to **7,319 hours of upskilling** through structured professional development. These events account for CPD which was centrally organised or funded through the CPD budget.

- **Compliance-Health and Safety:** 2017 saw increased collaboration with LCETB Corporate Affairs around the delivery of Health and Safety related training. Approximately 56 people participated on a number of Basic and Occupational First Aid Training Programmes. 112 staff including ancillary and general assistants and learning practitioners from across LCETB attended Risk Management Workshops with IPB. The FET Division and Corporate Affairs and the TEL Support Service collaborated on the development of a blended learning programme for the delivery of GDPR Training.
- **European Projects:** LCETB FET Division successfully concluded the *'Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL): Supporting Quality Teaching and Learning through use of New Technologies'*. This secured in the region of 25,000 euro and supported 17 staff to attend structured professional development mobility events on the theme of TEL, in the form of conferences and training programmes in Europe. In 2017 staff attended BETT, JISC, EDEN and the Learning Technologies Conferences.

The FET Division also took part in a regional showcase to celebrate 30 years of Erasmus Plus in the University of Limerick. Seven of the FET Division's previous projects were exhibited and the Professional Development Officer participated on the panel discussion. It is expected that Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board will engage in any regional forums that are set up as a result. The FET Division had highly successful European Vocational Skills Weeks 2017 event with 18 separate awareness raising events organised including a very high profile EVSW Seminar with 80 attendees and keynote speakers with national/international profile.

- **Moodle Open Badges for CPD:** As part of the commitment made by the FET Division to mainstream the work of the E+ EDGE project more than 700 CPD badges have been awarded through Moodle since the end of 2016. These badges reward staff who take part in centrally organised professional development of a minimum of 2 hours.
- **CPD provided by FESS:** 30 FET staff attended training delivered by the Further Education and Support Service such as Project Management, Time Management, Supporting the Wellbeing of FET Staff. At least 5 members of staff got the opportunity to participate on the Professional Diploma in Digital Marketing pilot online course.
- **Staff Professional Development Fund:** Following reviews in April and November 2017, four staff were awarded funding towards their professional studies with a further 3 receiving support once their qualifications have been awarded. This fund is co-ordinated by the Authority's Human Resources Department, and open to all FET staff to apply twice a year.
- **Individual FET Centres CPD:** In addition to the centrally organised professional development, many FET centres organise local CPD sessions to meet their individual needs. For example, a meeting was held in June 2017, in the Hunt Museum for all Community Education Tutors in Limerick. The annual meeting was attended by over 90 FET Staff and representatives from the local networks and LCEN. The purpose of the meeting was networking, provision of FET policy information updates and dialogue about core purpose in FET using a world Café format.
- **Communities of Practice** are becoming increasingly popular as effective ways for teachers/tutors to share ideas and best practice. The QA Support Service organised Communities of practice in the areas of Work Experience modules and four Healthcare modules; while Co. Clare & Limerick City Literacy provision organised two Communities of Practice sessions for tutors around QQI L3 Personal Finance, QQI L3 Desserts, Breads & Pastry, L3 Breakfast Cookery and L3 Desktop Publishing.



Technology-Enhanced Learning

Following on from the launch of the FET **Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plan** (2017-2020), an implementation team was set up to support and monitor new TEL developments across the FET provision. The team decided to establish two TEL sub-groups to drive the implementation of the TEL Action Plan. Sub-group 1 work on actions focused on Staff and Learners digital capacity whilst the focus of Sub-group 2 is on innovation and collaboration. The groups meet monthly and provide leadership on the implementation of the tasks from the plan. They also monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan identifying challenges and removing barriers as they arise. A key focus in 2017 was on promoting the plan with the production of posters, videos as well as spreading the word by meeting with staff across the region at staff meetings and fora.

A key initiative in 2017 was the organisation of 'Show and TEL', involving 22 events aimed at building confidence in digital skills for learning (see box). The events were delivered as part of the TEL Action Plan priority to develop 'Staff and Learners' digital capacity, and met a number of key strategic objectives in relation to both CPD and TEL. The focus on Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) was also a response to the SOLAS 2016 staff skills survey which identified a real and current development need in this area of TEL. As well as promoting digital skills and sharing best practice, the initiative proved to be an invaluable promotional opportunity for centres, programmes and colleges. All workshops and seminars were delivered by FET staff. The event showcased FET staff at the forefront of using technology to promote innovation, creativity and collaboration.

At organisational level, several initiatives were carried out in 2017 as part of the implementation of the TEL Action Plan:

- New tools were piloted to enhance the teaching and learning experience, including the use of Open badges, which was initiated by the EU EDGE project, which ended in 2017. A key outcome of that project was the commitment by the FET Division to mainstream the work initiated by VTOS Limerick around Open Badges for CPD.
- Work commenced on the use of Urkund, an anti-plagiarism tool which was piloted in 2017.
- The FET Division StaffConnect site upgrades were completed & New User Guidelines developed, enabling more efficient communication and information sharing across the FET Division.
- A cross-service survey was carried out to centrally plan for the use of Assistive technologies, in order to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a person with a disability. It is planned that this initial work will enable the establishment of a central FET budget, centralised purchasing of licenses etc., together with a mechanisms for sharing best practice on the use of Assistive Technology.



LCETB FET STAFF SHOWCASE

TECHNOLOGY AT 'Show and TEL'

During Digital Skills Week (April 3rd – 7th) FET Centres participated in 22 events aimed at building confidence in digital skills for learning. Hundreds of staff and learners attended the workshops and seminars exploring the use of a diverse range of technology tools for learning.

Workshop topics covered included: ePortfolios, digital badges, MOOCs, animation, desktop publishing, programming and a wide range of interactive and collaborative classroom technologies. Whilst themes explored in seminars included: the potential and challenges of Social Media, flipped classrooms, the changing role of the Learning Practitioner and the role of robots in the future.

The event proved to be a huge success, and was part of a national initiative called 'All Aboard' organised by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Events within Limerick City and County were also part of the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2017 and were open to the public as well as FET staff and learners.

In recognition for work on Show & TEL, the FET Division was awarded an All Aboard 2017 Gold Badge.

- As described in the Professional Development section, several TEL CPD opportunities were available to staff in 2017. Of note was the Erasmus + funded conferences in the UK- namely BETT and Learning Technologies, which five FET staff attended. This CPD initiative ‘Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL): Supporting Quality Teaching and Learning through use of New Technologies’ offered FET staff the chance to attend structured professional development events on the theme of TEL, in the form of conferences and training programmes in Europe.
- Staff in Ennis Youthreach also commenced a professional development programme to integrate the effective use of technology into teaching and learning. The programme consists of monthly workshops focused on supporting staff to introduce technology with a focus on evaluation and critical reflection.

Accountability – Planning and Reporting

Organisational systems & Facilities

Much efforts and resources were placed in 2017 into looking at the data infrastructure model of FET. Much time and efforts were invested by the FET division in the rollout and embedding of national data gathering systems –PLSS and FARR. In 2017, the FET Division participated in the new Learner database as the first pilot site in the country. Much of the leadership professional development support provided to managers in 2017 centred on the continued rollout of FARR and PLSS and in the areas of legislative compliance e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management and General Data Protection Regulations as well as sessions on using pivot tables for Data Analysis and Reporting. Training and development sessions around PLSS, FETCH and new enrolment procedures were attended by 214 staff. The availability of PLSS and FARR reports have facilitated organisation integration and provision planning , and will be key to the development of the new Strategic Framework Agreement between the FET Division and SOLAS in 2018.

Other legislative requirements to be implemented include: risk management; child protection and GDPR legislation.

Following training, as part of a joint initiative between Corporate Services and the FET and Schools Divisions over 100 staff members attended workshops facilitated by IPB in Risk Management. The categories of staff who attended were Health and Safety Reps, Ancillary and General Assistance Staff, Woodwork, Technology, Science and Home Economics Learning Practitioners. The training was held in Kilmallock Road Campus. Risk Register forms will now be rolled out in 2018.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2017, continued efforts were put into articulating FET priorities going forward. Following an extensive consultation process, the new FET Enterprise Engagement Framework was launched in June 2017. New implementation structures were also put in place to provide leadership on implementation priorities for all the FET plans developed over the past couple of years, i.e. the Integrated Guidance Strategic Framework (2016-2020), the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework, and the FET Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plan (2017-2019).

The FET Division also played an active part in supporting the consultation and planning process for the Authority’s new Strategy Statement and the Youth Plan, which will be published in 2018. In March 2017, the FET Planning & Evaluation Officer also carried out an Integration Planning meeting between Limerick BTEI and Literacy provision

staff to raise awareness about the opportunities for connections between the two programmes. This was a very successful model of integration planning, which resulted in practical changes for the benefit and progression of learners.

In 2017, the FET Division also complied with statutory requirements by producing its 2016 FET Annual Report and the 2017 FET Service Plan, which were submitted to Corporate Affairs. In terms of monitoring the work carried out by the FET Division, the annual Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP) continues to be used by Senior Managers to capture higher level goals/actions planned by the FET Division, in line with the SOLAS FET goals.

A new initiative in 2017 was the regular publication of FET Policy Updates, an internal newsletter summarising in one place key relevant policies/research documents at EU and national level. This has proved popular with FET Managers, who need to keep up with the vast range of policies and strategies impacting their work.



In 2018, the FET Division will benefit from these monitoring mechanisms to conduct the mid-term review of its Strategic Framework 2015-2020.





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