



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

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board

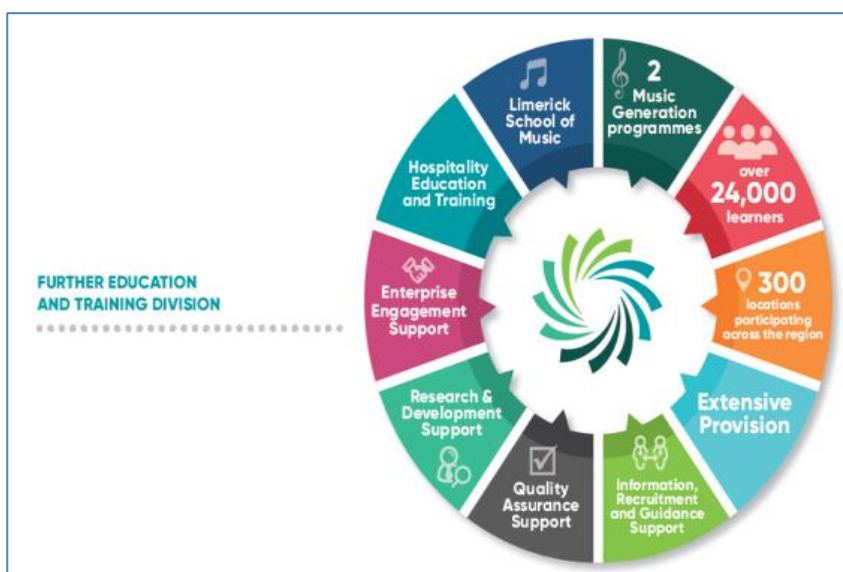


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**300 Locations
in Limerick
and Clare**

**Course
Instances
2,104**

25,583 FET Beneficiaries in 2018

Part-time Provision – 18,744

- ❖ Adult Literacy Groups – 2,988
- ❖ ESOL – 1,419
- ❖ ITABE - 157
- ❖ BTEI – 2,805
- ❖ Skills for Work - 283
- ❖ Community Education – 4,408
- ❖ Evening Training – 1,404
- ❖ CoOp Hours – 2,146
- ❖ Specialist Training Providers -225
- ❖ Justice Workshops - 30
- ❖ Refugee Resettlement programme – 22
- ❖ Self-Financing: 2,857

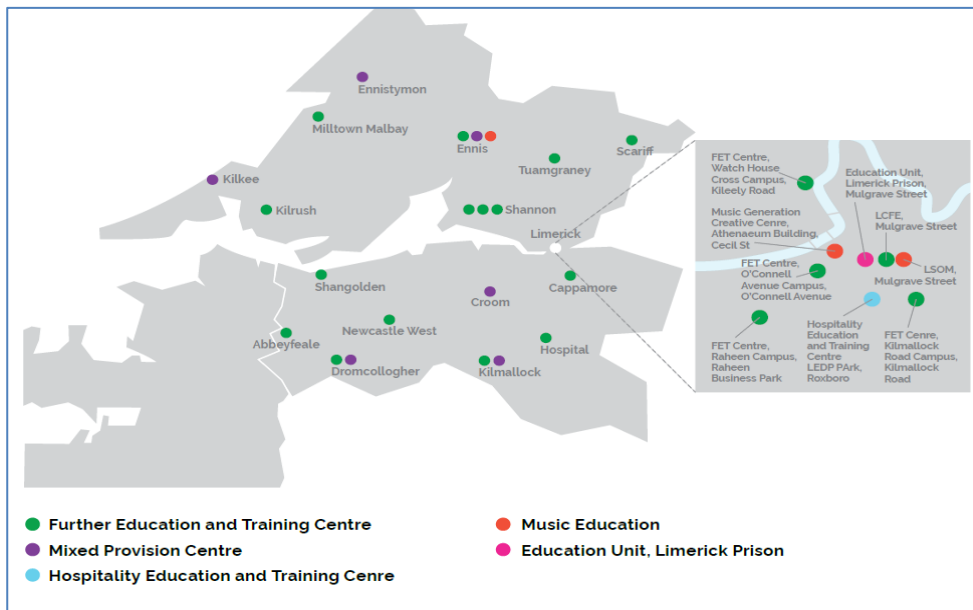
Full-Time Provision – 6,839

- ❖ Apprenticeship – 1,436
- ❖ Traineeship - 312
- ❖ Bridging & Foundation Training - 27
- ❖ Community Training Centre - 244
- ❖ Local Training Initiative - 200
- ❖ PLC – 2,575
- ❖ Specific Skills Training - 643
- ❖ VTOS – 871
- ❖ Youthreach - 531

▪ Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	16	▪ Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	29
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▪ Business, Administration	98	▪ Manufacturing	3
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▪ Engineering (IT)	2	▪ Science and Technology	2
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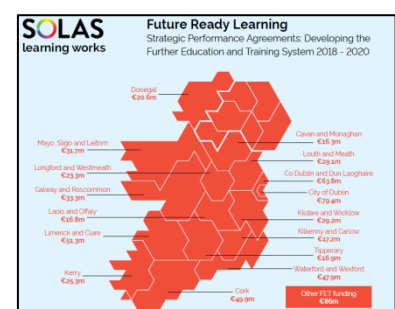
Introduction

2018 was another busy year for the FET Division, which delivers a range of learning opportunities from Level 1 to Level 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), focused on both core and specific skills development, as well as a range of learner supports to facilitate the active inclusion of people in Limerick and Clare. There are 26 FET Centres within the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Division with 33 QQI registered centres. **In 2018, the FET Division served 25,583 beneficiaries, operating in approximately 300 community-based locations, with a budget of Euros 51.3m.**



2018 marked a significant milestone in the reform of the FET sector, towards a more strategic and integrated FET system. A national framework was agreed for a new process of strategic dialogue to inform the development of three year strategic performance agreements with SOLAS. The new agreement between SOLAS and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board sets out the context, strategic priorities and the Authority's contribution to the achievement of key national FET sector targets over 2018-2020. It also articulates Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's commitment to supporting the implementation of a range of national policies and strategies relevant to FET provision and identifies the key risks and challenges which must be mitigated and addressed in order to ensure successful delivery of this agreement. The FET Division also works towards the implementation of the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Strategy Statement 2017-2021, which provides strategic directions for education and training programmes and services in Limerick and Clare.

This Annual Report 2018 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 cross-provision developments, accountability, leadership and good governance.



LIMERICK AND CLARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD FET DIVISION IMPACT IN 2018

SECTION 1 - FET PROVISION – LABOUR-MARKET FOCUS

The FET Division is committed to enhance and maximise its engagement with employers to ensure the relevance of its provision for the benefit of FET learners, and to enhance its capacity to meet the skills needs of the Mid-West region. A range of strategies have been developed to advance this work and meet the needs of the economy, communities and individuals.

Enterprise Engagement through Strategic Partnerships

In November 2018, SOLAS facilitated a review of the FET Division's Enterprise Engagement activities. It highlighted the positive impact of having dedicated staff through the Enterprise Engagement Support Service, which was set up in 2017 following the launch of its Enterprise Engagement Framework. The review pointed to the successful integrated and focused approach, which has increased the profile of Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board with employers as well as with other education partners in the region. The sectoral approach to skills development in the Mid-West was also highlighted as an innovative approach through the skills clusters (i.e. Limerick for Engineering, Limerick for Film, Limerick for Hospitality, STEM Alliance, etc.) This facilitates the sharing of regional labour market intelligence, and allows industry needs to be matched to education providers. Regional intelligence is also gathered through Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board representation on the Chambers of Commerce, LEOs, IBEC, chairing the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum, etc.

In 2018, several initiatives emerged from this strategic approach:

- **Engineering Skills:** The Limerick for Engineering Showcase (March 2018) was attended by over 1,000 people and offered learners in schools, Further Education and Training, Guidance Counsellors, Parents and Learning Practitioners an opportunity to meet more than 30 Engineering Companies in the Mid-West, witness cutting-edge technologies and demonstrations by full-time Engineers and Apprentices, and receive firsthand information about career paths in Engineering. In May 2018, the FET Division also facilitated discussions of the Talent for Engineering Group for employers to discuss how to prioritise training needs in the sector. At centre level, there are also many examples of initiatives to promote STEM subjects. For instance, the Youthreach provision at the FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus, teamed up with DELL in Raheen to enter the "national schools robotics challenge". This involved the building and programming of a robot, highlighting key cross curricular links with Maths, IT and Engineering. This provision will be the first in the country to compete in this national competition.



Hospitality: The Hospitality Education and Training Centre continues to keep up the profile of the FET sector in the region, through innovative initiatives in response to industry needs. In 2018, HETC was the first FET location in Ireland to offer a one year City and Guilds Pastry course, in response to a critical need in that industry. Several partnerships also resulted in key new courses: Diageo partnered with the Centre to deliver a Bar Operations course; a partnership with University of Limerick also led to a new L9 course in Food and Nutrition. In 2018, HETC focused increasingly on work placements, including for 8 trainees who travelled to France for a 3 week work placement. In terms of progression to employment, the Bar, Restaurant & Barista Skills programme and Culinary Skill Level 4 programme showed an overall progression rate of 63%, while 100% of trainees from the Career Traineeship gained employment.

Testimonials from Industry

'I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Ivan and your team for the opportunity to be part of yesterday's initial get together with your new group of Supervisory Management learners.

It was a pleasure to be involved and I am really impressed by the industry engagement piece that shows their commitment to the support of Limerick / Clare Education Training Board centre. I wish you, your students and your team the very best for the future. I believe that there are further development opportunities within this space and that your determination and enthusiasm will result in future initiatives involving industry / education cooperation into the future. This initiative is also an ideal opportunity to encourage, promote and enhance the fantastic offering available through the FET centre.' Oliver Sullivan, Tourism Careers Manager, Fáilte Ireland

- **Film:** The FET Division continued to support the budding film industry in Limerick through close links with the Troy Studio. With no previous large-scale film production studio in the region prior to the establishment of Troy, the studio found it particularly difficult to source riggers for film work with the right level of training. Developing a local crew base is a key part of Troy Studios growth strategy in the medium term. In 2018, a new 10-day film rigging course was launched at Troy Studios, managed through the FET Centre, Raheen Campus. There is currently no certification for training tube and fitting in Ireland, and this pilot course could be rolled out for the Irish film sector on a nationwide basis. UK-based AIS Group has been engaged to deliver a bespoke, practical course forming an introduction to tube and fitting scaffold.
- In the FET Centre, Shannon Campus, several courses were designed to respond to industry demand:
 - **An Airport Passenger Services** course was developed as a result of collaboration between the FET Division and Shannon Airport to respond to a need for a variety of personnel in the day-to-day airport operations. The first course commenced in November 2018.
 - In June 2018, the Campus also started training on **F-Gas**, for those handling refrigerant gases, through a certification process with City & Guilds. The course was developed specifically to meet a need in the refrigeration sector that the current apprenticeship does not meet, and the FET Centre is currently the only authorised centre in Ireland to deliver such training. The first cohort was made of Directors and Safety Officers in Refrigeration companies, with the view to filtering the training down to staff. Due to the demand for the F-Gas 2079 qualification from employers, the course is offered on Saturdays to accommodate work arrangements. Current discussions are taking place with the motor industry as they will have the same requirement for the qualification.
- The BTEI provision in Kilkee and West Clare identified a lack of suitably qualified **Childcare** personnel, which led to the commencement of a Level 6 programme. Similarly, there are still strong employment

opportunities throughout the county for **Healthcare** Personnel, which has led to almost 100% progression to employment or Further Education for BTEI graduates in this sector. As a number of employers only require completion of some modules, the provision of a Homecare Package programme has facilitated learners to gain employment with these employers. Healthcare programmes have or are being delivered in Ennis, Shannon, Killaloe, Scariff, Ennistymon and Kilrush.

- Tourism is Ireland's largest indigenous industry and continues to offer employment opportunities in Clare. In 2018, Core Skills expanded its **Culture, tourism and hospitality** provision through the Skills for Work and ITABE programmes to include: *Introduction to Tourism, Reception Skills, Introduction to Retail and Catering, Chauffeur Skills, Customer Care for Taxi/Drivers* as well as a new range of culture and heritage courses across the county. This is in line with the EUs New Agenda for Culture (*Building a Stronger Europe, EU Commission, 2018*) and Irish Tourism Industry Confederations publication (*Tourism-an industry strategy for growth to 2025*). In addition, 4 VTOS learners received a L6 Special Purpose Award in Regional and Local Tour Guiding. A joint initiative with the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Burren Outdoor Education Centre, this is the first year that this award was delivered.



Active Inclusion to address Limerick and Clare Unemployment Blackspots

Despite positive developments in recent years for the Mid-West, unemployment blackspots remain, and must be addressed. **In 2018, the FET Division provided opportunities for nearly 4,500 unemployed people; 2,261 retired people; 1,014 people engaged in home duties; 506 learners/trainees and 2,922 people 'inactive for other reasons'.**

County	Unemployment Blackspots	Average Unemployment %	County Unemployment Rate % (@ April 2016)
Limerick (incl. City)	18	35.7	14.4
Clare	3	29.2	12.4

The FET Division and DEASP have had an active Inter-agency Framework in place since March 2016 with joint meetings held quarterly to monitor, review and enable the implementation of the client-course referral process and in scheduling courses. During 2018, the FET Active Inclusion Support Service and the Enterprise Engagement Support Service worked in partnership with the DEASP and local community groups. This resulted in a number of specific purpose pilot projects, specifically targeting unemployment blackspot areas. Pilot projects were designed to offer an innovative approach to deal with unemployment in these areas.

- **Tait House Level 4 Certificate in Horticulture:** this aimed to reduce economic inactivity in the unemployment blackspot area of Galvone A / Galvone B and improve the social mobility and employability of people living in this catchment area who are furthest from the labour market by facilitating them to gain the skills, knowledge and competence to work as a general operative under supervision in the horticulture industry; Similarly, BTEI provision, Co.Clare developed and delivered a

Horticulture programme in an unemployment blackspot in Ennis, working in collaboration with DEASP and through a CE scheme with Ennis Chamber of Commerce;

- **Employability Skills Level 3 Programme in Kilrush:** this targeted learners from Kilrush Urban and Kilkee blackspot areas which aims to provide older learners who are not in education, employment and training with the skills required to gain employment in the built environment. A progression Level 4 programme has been put in place with additional literacy/ learning supports provided by the literacy provision;
- **Moyross Youth Academy (MYA) ‘Therapeutic Support and Mentoring’ project:** this pre-development support model was designed to support participants in a trauma-informed approach throughout the different phases of progression towards employment. Targeting learners in the Unemployment Blackspot areas of Ballynanty, Kileely A and Kileely B, it is designed to help prepare participants for transition phases towards training and employment through strengths based mentoring and will advocate and liaise on behalf of participants in a solution-focused approach with programme stakeholders;
- **Clenn Construction Project:** targeting learners from Galvone / Moyross/ John’s A / John’s B and Kileely, this project was designed to provide participants with a mix of on-the-job skills development, specific skills training and supervised work placements to prepare them for employment in the construction industry;
- **Kilkee Hospitality Programme:** targeting learners from Kilrush Urban and Kilkee blackspot areas, this full-time programme is linked to the planned re-opening of the Kilkee Bay Hotel in spring 2019. It provided training in Hospitality / Front of House / Barista and Café Skills, Bar / License Trade (in conjunction with Diageo), Culinary Skills Level 4 and Hospitality City and Guilds Level 2 Diploma. Daily transport was provided to facilitate West Clare learners to attend the Hospitality Education and Training Centre in Limerick City;
- **Moyross Community Based Training Hub:** working with Limerick Regeneration and the Moyross Youth Academy (MYA), FET Division are developing a ‘built environment’ training hub in Moyross targeting learners from unemployment blackspot areas of Ballynanty, Kileely A and Kileely B;
- **Limerick City Build, MYA and Limerick Regeneration:** working with the aforementioned, the FET Division is supporting learners on a Social Enterprise course building furniture for the Peter McVerry Trust and targeting learners from unemployment blackspot areas Glentworth A, St. John’s A and St John’s B;
- **Maritime Training Programme:** development of this programme in Kilrush targeting the unemployment blackspot areas of Kilrush Urban and Kilkee. The course provides learners with the skills competencies and certification required by employers in the area on workboats, passenger boats, fishing vessels and boat repair and maintenance. Learners will also be provided with the necessary skills to further progress onto 3rd level Marine Courses. A specific safepass course was also delivered in October 2018 for participants on the programme.
- **Welding Course:** FET Centre, Shannon Campus providing transport for targeting learners from Kilkee and Kilrush Urban unemployment blackspot areas to facilitate their attendance at an evening welding course;
- **A Community Enterprise initiative** in 2018 around QQI level 5 Healthcare.

Enda Finn, Deputy Principal, LCFE, Eimear Brophy, FET Manager, Leo Varadkar, An Taoiseach and Linda Ledger, Manager, St. Lelia’s with Graduates who received a QQI Level 5 Healthcare Certificate.



Alignment of FET Provision

As part of the 3-year strategic agreement with SOLAS and in order to further contribute towards the agreed national targets, the FET Division has continued to review its course provision in 2018, including:

- **Review of course content**, particularly for the FET provision with a labour-market focus, to ensure its relevancy to skills needs in each sector. Employability statements were drafted for FET courses to better inform learners, parents and employers, reflecting a more career-oriented provision, and to enhance recruitment locally. In 2018, VTOS provision, available in the FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus, offered a new Key Skills for Work course, which provides an introduction to a range of career areas including IT, Science, Animal Care, Health & Fitness, Woodwork as well as English and Maths.
- **Flexible course delivery** through increased evening, weekend and off-site options. In 2018, evening training provision reached 1,404, while self-financing provision reached 2,857 beneficiaries.
- **Alignment to industry Certification:** It is critical that the FET provision keeps current, relevant and is recognised by industry.



In September 2018, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board became a PSA (Private Security Authority) Approved Training Provider in accordance with the PSA Requirements for Training Providers (TP1:2018) Standard, to deliver security related courses in Raheen and Shannon Campuses and through BTEI provision, available in the FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus. One of the requirements learners have to satisfy is competency of English equivalent to B1 on the CEFRL. A team of FET staff comprising Core Skills and QA Support Service staff developed an assessment as part of a cross-provision initiative to develop a Language Assessment and standardised templates. This was accepted by the PSA and is now used by the various provision types to assess learners for the course. Core Skills staff now work closely with the FET Centre, Raheen Campus to provide ongoing support to learners.

Similarly, BTEI learners in Health/Community and Childcare in Clare took add-on modules such as First Aid, Patient/Manual Handling, Child Protection and Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults as well as Primary Care in Food Safety (HACCP). Employers are now looking at the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) First Aid programme as a requirement for employment, and BTEI in Co.Clare have introduced it in their provision.

- **Promotion of entrepreneurship:** The FET Division is increasingly looking at promoting entrepreneurship. As part of their Business and Enterprise studies, Youthreach Leaving Cert Applied learners undertook a major enterprise project with the assistance of the Business Teacher, Art Teacher & LCA Coordinator. The project involved making, marketing and distributing two hundred Easter Eggs in decorative baskets to customers inside and outside of the Campus. As well as the learnings gained from the project; documented in their portfolios, profits from the enterprise were returned to learners.

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

In 2018, significant efforts were invested by the FET Division to identify new apprenticeships and traineeships, in accordance to our commitment towards the national targets included in the strategic agreement with SOLAS.

Ongoing consultations for traineeships resulted in key developments in 2018 :

- An **Aircraft Structures Technician Traineeship** was developed in partnership with Lufthansa Technik, with new intake of learners in March and November 2018 in the Shannon Campus. This course meets a specific need in the aviation sector for personnel qualified to repair and maintain aircraft.
- A **Patisserie and Confectionary Traineeship** was developed to meet a need within the hospitality sector. It is an example of the FET Division working in partnership with employers within the region.
- **Office Administration and Business Support Traineeship:** Following extensive research and consultation with employers, a 42-week NFQ level 4 Office Administration Traineeship started in October 2018. A first 13-week phase of the traineeship happened in-centre, which will prepare them to start work-based learning in January 2019.
- **The Food & Beverage Traineeship** in the Hospitality Education and Training Centre has been very successful with 100% of trainees gaining employment.
- **Pilot traineeship in “Digital Skills for the Digital Age”:** The FET Division worked with Kostal Abbeyfeale to develop a pilot traineeship in “Digital Skills for the Digital Age”, piloted with a cohort of twelve learners in the FET Centre, Abbeyfeale Campus in Spring 2018.
- **Traineeship in Software Development / App Development:** Work begun in 2018 with Johnson & Johnson EDC to explore a traineeship at NFQ level 5 or 6. J&J EDC are to be the only employer for this pilot and require ten learners. Programme duration is likely to be approx. 12 months, with J&J EDC intending to employ 5-6 learners at the end of the traineeship. J&J EDC have a culture of on-the-job training and mentorship. Employment opportunities and progression for learners not employed by J&J EDC are also strong as coding and JavaScript skills are desirable elsewhere.
- Work is progressing with Screen Training Ireland & Troy studios to develop a **traineeship in Media Production**.

The new apprenticeship model places significant demand on the FET Division in terms of the management, administration, validation, monitoring and evaluation of the new apprenticeship programmes.

- The **new National Apprenticeship in Professional Hairdressing (Level 6)** is being developed by a Consortium Steering Group (CSG) with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board as ‘co-ordinating provider’. There has been significant support for this programme with all 16 ETBs committed as collaborating providers. This programme has been in development since March 2018, and the approval of the CSG of the completed programme application is a significant milestone in the project. The development of this programme has involved extensive consultation and workshops with industry experts, including three national consultation workshops, a two day writer’s symposium and a two day peer review workshops in



September and October 2018. Approval was granted for the submission of the developed Hairdressing Apprenticeship programme to QQI for validation in January 2019.

- **A new Accounting Technician Apprenticeship**, run in co-operation with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, through Accounting Technicians Ireland, involved local employers such as Grant Thornton, The Revenue Commissioners and Ballyhoura Development.



The apprenticeship landscape has changed significantly in recent years with several new apprenticeship programmes launched in ICT, Finance, Insurance, Manufacturing and Hospitality as part of Generation Apprenticeship. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board worked tirelessly in 2018 to **promote traineeships and apprenticeships** as viable pathways for learners in the region. Several high profile initiatives included:

- **Inaugural National Apprenticeship Competition:** Seven HETC apprentices from the Level 6 Commis Chef programme represented the Mid-West at the inaugural National Apprenticeship Competition in April 2018. Sponsored by ESB and CIF, the Generation Apprenticeship competition challenged apprentices to construct a three dimensional letter **A** using craft and other materials. This work benefited from huge national radio and TV coverage, highlighting traineeships and apprenticeships as a route to skills development in 21st century Ireland.
- A photograph of a large, three-dimensional letter 'A' constructed from various materials, including wood, metal, and paper. It is displayed on a table in front of a backdrop that reads 'GENERATION APPRENTICESHIP COMPETITION 2018' and 'FINALISTS EXHIBITION'.
- The Shannon Chamber invited the FET Division and the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum to a **briefing on Apprenticeships and Careers in Engineering** in St. Patrick Comprehensive, Shannon Co. Clare.
 - As part of the European Vocational Skills Week and the National Apprenticeship Week, the **Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Careers Showcase** was held in November 2018 in Limerick. Over 1,000 people attended the event, which was well supported by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board schools which were facilitated with transport to attend the event. It was a fantastic opportunity to discover options in Apprenticeships and Traineeships across aviation, construction, hospitality, finance, accounting, ICT, finance, sciences and engineering for earn and learn career route options. Some feedback from teachers and learners: *"Happy I brought my students"; "Interesting and informative talks"; "So cool..."*
- A photograph of a group of people, including students and staff, gathered around a table at the Mid-West Apprenticeship and Traineeship Careers Showcase. They are looking at materials on the table, which include a laptop and various brochures.
- Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and the Mid-West Regional Skills Forum launched a **new apprenticeship App** at the Mid-West Career Guidance event in UL in September 2018. The App is to assist registered apprenticeship employers in the region connect with the future apprentices and build talent teams. Companies are currently being sourced by the FET Division personnel to build up the database. The App has proved informative to senior cycle learners, parents, guidance counsellors and those looking to return to the workplace or career changers.
 - The FET Division supported the **ICT Apprenticeship Forum** held in June 2018, to the FIT's ICT apprenticeship programmes which they anticipate may start in the region in November 2018. Several employers expressed their interest and are keen to start apprentices soon.

SECTION 2 - FET PROVISION – ACCESS, SUPPORTS AND PROGRESSION FOCUS

As the labour market situation improves, another priority for the FET sector is to develop pathways to access to learning for those who have been further from education and employment. Enhancing access and supporting learners to fully participate and complete their course has called for significant resources from the FET Division, to provide FET learners with a wider range of more intensive supports. In addition to enhancing access to FET opportunities, our priority continues to be the promotion of transitions pathways and learner progression to employment and further or higher education.

Promoting Access to priority Cohorts

Established in June 2018, the FET Active Inclusion Support Service (AISS) is responsible for the development and implementation of a range of new partnership practices, interventions and supports, to contribute to **breaking the cycles of disadvantage** that can prevent some from fulfilling their full potential and to foster an on-going organisational commitment to strengthen our inclusive practices and policies. It looks at specific supports needed to address the challenges encountered by learners from vulnerable groups seeking to engage with FET, including the under 25s, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities and members of migrant communities.

An AISS Implementation Group was established and a governance framework developed. An Action Plan is in place for the period from 2019 – 2020. Actions and working groups are focussed on the following themes: Access and Engagement; Learner Support Service (Health and Well-being); Enhancing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Practice. As well as improving access to FET provision, another significant role of the Active Inclusion Support Service will be to develop policies and procedures to increase attendance and retention rates within FET provision.

Throughout 2018, the FET Division also developed a wide range of solutions, tailored to the needs of **priority cohorts** identified at national levels for the FET Sector through our Strategic Performance Agreement. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is represented on a number of inter-agency groups targeting the needs of priority cohorts including the Inter-Agency group for Traveller and Roma communities in Co. Clare, an inter-agency traveller specific working group, inter-agency refugee resettlement group, the older people's alliance and SICAP providers, including partnerships agencies - Paul Partnership (Limerick City), Ballyhoura Development (East Limerick), West Limerick Resources (West Limerick) and Clare Local Development Company (Clare). Through the Cooperation with Other Institutions, grants (teaching hours) are allocated to a number of social inclusion projects targeting Disability projects, Lone Parents; Minority Groups; Socially Economic Disadvantaged Groups; those distant from the Labour Market; Mental Health Associations, etc. In 2018, the FET Division served 2,146 beneficiaries through Cooperation Hours. Some of the larger provision included the Limerick Youth Service; Limerick Prison Education Unit; Justice Workshop; Provision for Schools with Special Educational Needs.

In terms of promoting **women participation**, the FET Division is working with Ballyhoura Development Partnership, as part of SECAD, a partnership leading a new Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network (WREN), to deliver a Healthcare Assistant Level 5 qualification to boost employment of women in the health care sector, and support female entrepreneurs.

The FET Division also targets **older worker** and is a lead partner in the Limerick Age Friendly Strategy 2015-2020, and the Clare Age Friendly Strategy 2018-2022. In 2018, it worked with MWRSF and DES to carry out the Explore project targeted at the older worker cohort in manufacturing, to upskill older operatives in digital skills. This national initiative resulted in 46% of the cohort now registered for FET courses in 2019. In May 2018 in Limerick, the FET Division also had an information stand at the *50 Plus Expo*, Ireland's only dedicated national consumer event for older people.

Young people continued to be prioritised in 2018, through specific projects in the unemployment blackspot areas (see section on Active Inclusion projects). Links were also established between Youthreach Hospital and the Youth Development Officer, Ballyhoura Development Limited resulting in referrals to this provision. In the FET Centres – Shannon Smithstown Campus and Ennis Campus, a pre-youthreach programme was developed in conjunction with Clare Local Development Company; 16 learners took part in a six week part-time programme and have now joined Youthreach. In 2018, Music Generation Limerick City also provided support to marginalised young people from across Limerick City with access to a bespoke portable sensory room that that will foster a sense of safety, creativity and self-expression for young people. The project enabled Music Generation Limerick City to transform any space into a sensory room, with a view to fostering increased creativity and self-expression when working with Youthreach, CTC, Ceim ar Cheim, Secondary school and other groups;

Support to rural communities: Working in partnership with the Local Authorities, the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board contributed to the development of the Rural Development Strategy in Clare and have created links with the rural and community development officers in the Local Authority.

As transport is a key issue, the FET Division maintains a **network of Further Education and Training facilities** across the region, and invested significant resources upgrading its facilities in order to expand the range and quality of provision in Dromcollogher, Kilmallock, Abbeyfeale, Kilrush and Miltown Malbay. In 2018, the FET Centre, Kilrush campus celebrated its 20 years of existence at the heart of the community.



In addition, while we work with the **local accessible transport** providers in each county whenever possible, the timing and location of programmes has required the FET Division to put solutions in place. During 2018, the Shanagolden Campus benefited from a local link bus service to transport learners. A new bus was purchased for the FET Centre, Hospital Campus with the support of the JP Mc Manus Benevolent Fund. The centre delivers a bus service for Youthreach learners across East Limerick. The minibus was branded with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Logo and Art work providing a great promotional tool as it travels around the county.

In term of **provision**, a new *Delivery Van Driver's eight-week course* in driving and road skills was provided through external training in 2018. Although primarily aimed at the job market, it is a vital lifeline for social inclusion, as Kilrush has very few transport links. 14 learners took the course and all are expected to succeed in passing their driving test in the next few months.

In addition, now in its 9th year, Skills for Work's *Agriculture suite of courses* continued to grow as a nationwide success with learners/farmers accessing the courses, helping to deal with the ever growing requirement to record farm information online. In 2018, an Online Herd Register Train the Trainer CPD was delivered in 3 locations around the country to about 30 tutors. At local level, courses were offered in Miltown Malbay and Kilkee for the first time in 2018. As well as the practical skills and competences gained,

the wider benefits of the programme for participants are increased confidence and self-esteem gained by returning to education after many years, and 'outside the farm gate' work opportunities, which are increasingly essential for farmers.

Finally in 2018, the FET Division, Creative Ireland and the Local Authority ran two '*Reading the Landscape*' programmes in East and West Clare. Targeting local rurally isolated groups, learners have come together to map their local areas from a heritage perspective. Working with groups including mental health groups, men's sheds and farming communities, learning demonstrated how building capacity within a community addresses issues of rural isolation while making a contribution to local community heritage and tourism awareness. The aim of the programme is to empower local community members to discover, recognise and conserve their unique local heritage resources. It enables learners to move into other programmes within FET/HE and also to work with Leader on projects that are identified from the course leading to employment or community development. The 'Reading Your Local Landscape' initiative also marked 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage and was hosted as part of Clare Culture & Creativity Strategy 2018-2022 and the Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023.

In 2018, 1,102 FET learners were claiming a disability allowance, and the FET Division continued to offer a range of options to enhance access and participation for **people with disabilities**.

- The Fund for Learners with Disabilities (FSD) continued to be accessed by PLC programmes to support learners with disabilities to provide services such as Disabled parking space, disability toilet, ramps, lift, stair lift, Dyslexia Tutorials, wheelchair taxi service, Assistive Technologies (e.g. Dragon voice recognition software, large font size Examination papers, Examination Accommodations such as Readers/Scribes, etc.).
- Physical adaption: Disabled Parking Spaces; Disability toilets; Ramps, lift, stair lift (not all buildings); Wheelchair accessible service desk in some reception areas.
- Examination accommodations such as Readers/Scribes/Use of Computer/Separate Centre for learners who do not meet HEA criteria for funding but have a verified condition necessitating such support. Single Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET VLE (Moodle) site with Browsealoud installed to make the site fully accessible to those with dyslexia, learning difficulties, mild visual impairments as well as learners with English as a second language.
- Specialist Training Providers (STPs) who provide vocational training to target the needs of people with disabilities e.g. Rehab (formerly National Learning Network); Brothers of Charity; Headway, etc. In 2018, Headway provided job shadowing with Northern Trust: Headway Limerick Vocational clients, a Rehabilitation Officer and staff and clients from organisations Employ-Ability and Rehab (formerly National Learning Network) attended an annual job shadow day with various staff members from each department talking about their department and their individual role and allowed for questions at the end. Clients were given the option to experience a professional interview where they were asked various questions and received feedback on their performance at the end of the interview.

FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance

A pivotal element of learner progression is the provision of professional Information, Recruitment and Guidance services. Providing professional and confidential guidance support to learners is a priority for all FET provision. In 2018, **the Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Service in Co. Clare, Limerick City and Co. Limerick reached 4,585 beneficiaries** through one-to-one and group meetings, as well as through general public queries.



In 2018, continued emphasis was placed on integrating the FET career guidance and information provision with development of Information Hubs and liaison with Career Guidance staff in post-primary schools e.g. STEM Alliance. The FET Integrated Guidance Group continued to meet quarterly, working closely together 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. The priority to develop accessible and dedicated guidance spaces was highlighted with the launch of the new guidance hub in O'Connell Avenue Campus, Limerick, which includes Touchscreen kiosks. The launch was attended by Minister Patrick O'Donovan and Mayor James Collins in September 2018. Similarly in Co. Clare, a new guidance hub will soon be opened in the FET Centre, Clonroad Campus in Ennis.

It is widely acknowledged that a joint approach from agencies offering information and guidance will yield better results for learners in the region. In 2018, a new network was established to bring together front-line workers from SICAP and FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Support Services, who work with individuals on a one to one basis in Limerick City, at the social inclusion pre-development phase. The objectives of the network are to explore and build on how agencies work together to enhance complementarity; to share best practice and identify collaborative projects to benefit service users at risk of social exclusion or living in disadvantaged areas of the City.

Other key developments this year included:

- In February 2018, the **third annual FET Fair** took place at the FET Centre, O'Connell Avenue Campus, Limerick City. Planned and organised by the guidance staff of part-time provision, 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 March 2018, IRG staff took part in high profile initiatives at regional level including the **IGC Mid-West Careers FAIR** in Limerick, where jobseekers had an opportunity to meet with local companies, while career advice was on offer from a panel of DEASP Officers and FET personnel. In addition, FET stands at local DEASP Offices are held throughout the year, as effective ways to reach new learners
- In Clare, bi-annual meetings between the IRG staff and programme co-ordinators and resource workers have led to better integration with FET provision, access to learners and sharing of resources such as the BTEI and Community Education Course Timetable spreadsheets



- **Increased collaboration** with FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance 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.
- Limerick City FET Guidance Counsellor took up position as the PRO for the Adult Educational Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI). The association launched its Client Stories booklet 'Every Step of the Way' during the year (including that of a former Co Clare VTOS learner), and demonstrated how the ETB IRG services support people into and through education/towards work.

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

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



education venues across the city. Similarly, the Literacy Service has increased its local newspaper advertising, collaboration with NALA on a Radio advertisement and the production of postcard style flyers.

- **Promotional brochures**, as well as **digital marketing campaigns**, also continue to be developed by individual FET provision, to provide attractive and informative resources for learners, to build awareness of all FET options. For instance, VTOS, Kilmallock Road Campus made substantial efforts to recruit new learners using an 'An Post' leaflet drop in local housing estates, advertisements in the Limerick Post newspaper and several successful recruitment campaigns at INTREO offices. A new promotional booklet was launched in 2018 to promote Limerick West FET provision for Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.
- **Social media** is very popular with FET learners, and Facebook pages are maintained and well followed. These are very effective as many walk-in applicants self-refer, while others are referred by partner organisations/agencies.



As part of preparing FET Learners to progress on their journey, informed educational and career choices are critical and a strong connection between the FET sector and the world of work is essential. The FET provision, in partnership with the Information, Recruitment and Guidance personnel offer **great exposure for FET Learners to the world of work**:

- In 2018, LCFE learners (IT Department) engaged in a 2-part Workshop, facilitated by Dr Janice O'Connell - Tech Ambassador for the Mid-West region, and Darren O' Dwyer, Senior International Recruiter at WP Engine. CV and Interview preparation advice were very helpful to learners preparing to seek employment.
- In collaboration with guidance personnel and employers, many programmes organised site visits for learners. In March 2018, learners from the VTOS Kilmallock Campus visited Teamwork in Cork. FIT (Fast track Information Technology) helped to facilitate this visit. This company develops software to enable more efficient team working. Learners were shown around the company headquarters, and were able to see first-hand, programmers working, writing code within a relaxed atmosphere, similar to Google headquarters.



Other FET Learners Supports

Once learners have joined a FET programme, it is critical that all supports are provided to ensure they can stay and fully participate and complete their learning. The FET Division is constantly reviewing its range of supports, to respond to an increasing numbers of learners presenting with a wide range of needs that must be addressed in order for them to maximise their participation and fulfil their potential.

- A network of self-access learning centres provides FET learners with access to resources, material, software and ICT facilities which support their learning goals. Study periods are built into course timetables and learners can access Open Access Learning facilities outside of normal contact times in many FET Centres.
- VTOS provision, at the FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus, has a part-time Attendance Support Officer who monitors attendance on a weekly basis and who also provides support to learners who experience barriers to full participation.
- Significant professional development investment was made in 2018 to support those working with FET Learners, mainly in the area of pedagogy/andragogy and working with learners who have diverse

needs. Staff have attended a variety of workshops e.g. Disability Awareness, Dyslexia Training, Integrated Literacy, Numeracy Awareness, Family Learning, Intercultural awareness, etc.

- In 2018, integrated supports were also provided by Core Skills programmes around language, literacy and numeracy support for learners. Maths and technical supports are an integral part of the apprenticeship programme at the FET Centre, Raheen Campus, with consistent demand throughout the year. Literacy Support was also put in place in January 2018 for a Level 5 Hairdressing class in St. Munchin's community, which proved very successful with an 85% retention rate on the course.
- Listening to the voices of our learners is critical to adapt and improve our provision and support services. Two BTEI learners from Limerick, and one Core Skills learner from Clare represented the FET Division at the AONTAS National Learner Forum in Croke Park in 2018, where they were given the opportunity to speak about their experiences as adult learners.



Learner Testimonial – The untold importance of supporting FET Learners

'You might remember me from the level 4 culinary skills programme which I was asked to leave 2 years ago due to alcohol abuse. I was given a second chance and completed the course following this, landing a job in a great Limerick restaurant which I lost on the first day of work, again because of alcohol abuse. Clearly there was an issue which I was not dealing with, which I know is common enough in the hospitality industry.

Fast forward to nearly three years later, and I am delighted to say that I took some serious time out to address this issue in a proper way, getting necessary help and using support structures. My life has totally changed because of this. Far from merely stopping drinking, I have a totally new outlook and perspective on life because I have worked through issues and come out the other side far more balanced and in possession of a strength I did not know I had.

You and Chef John Sheehan showed me great kindness and compassion during my time training with you. It meant far far more than you know and I'm taking this opportunity to acknowledge the role that you both, and indeed all the staff at Roxboro played. Your humanity and understanding gave me a particular viewpoint on industry professionals, and were part of my decision (not taken lightly) to re-enter the culinary world and pursue the passion for food which brought me to Roxboro in the first place. I am currently stage training at the Michelin starred Aniar restaurant in Galway, working with team and at a level I genuinely would not have thought possible while training with ye. I am healthier, happier and more successful than I have ever been in my life, and while I know I honestly would not have bothered with a cooking career had it not been for you and Chef John's attitudes towards me as a person and as a cook. I owe him far more than he knows and hold in him the highest regard. My attitude towards professional cooking was, in no small part, shaped by your attitude towards me and here I am in a Michelin starred kitchen. The fact that I have overcome immense personal difficulties with addiction at the same time is probably miraculous, yet here I am, and I sincerely thank you for it'. Gavin Dillon

Learner Progression



Learner Testimonial- BTEI and Training Centre secure one learners Pathway to Employment

'Unemployed for five years following redundancy from a local manufacturing company affected my confidence. I heard about a First Step-Return to Learn course from a friend and joined it in Summer 2016, the course helped me to put a plan together and gave me the confidence to move forward. I enrolled in a QQI Level 3 Communications and Personal Effectiveness course in September in O'Connell Avenue. I was nervous at first being back learning but through the support and encouragement of the tutor, staff and others in the class my confidence grew. I uncovered skills I never knew I had. I then enrolled in two QQI Level 4 PSA Licence evening courses in the Training Centre Raheen Campus as I was interested in getting employment in Security. Having successfully completed the Security licence courses I was delighted to be offered a full-time role working with G4S firstly in Adare Manor and currently in Troy Studios. I have since gone on, through work to complete the QQI Level 6 Supervisory Security Management course and have been promoted to Security Manager. I love my job and am so glad I took the first step back to education.'

Former BTEI learner Kevin Keogh

One of the priorities for the FET Division is to identify and provide seamless transitions and pathways to learners both within the FET sector, and towards higher education and employment. **In 2018, 16,445 beneficiaries completed their learning with the FET Division. Where progression data was available, it showed that 8,164 progressed to other FET provision; 446 progressed to Higher Education; 951 progressed to full-time employment and 332 to part-time employment, while 46 reported progressing to self-employment and 142 to a CE scheme.** One of the FET Division priorities is to enhance our progression tracking mechanisms to fully reflect learners' outcomes. Indeed, learner progression is supported by all FET provision in various ways.

In 2018, BTEI provision in Limerick City actively encouraged learners to look at other FET and Volunteering options. Pictured are a group of Engineering Workshop Skills Level 3 learners who visited the FET Centre, Raheen Campus, for a tour of the Centre. These learners came away with a better understanding of available options for them to progress to in that Centre. A group of Art & Design Level 3 learners also visited VTOS to get a clear idea of what Art & Design at Level 5 would be like. The Woodwork learners visited the ILEN School & Network for Wooden Boat Building and discovered how they could get involved in this community project and put the practical skills they have been learning in the last year to good use.



In addition, following the success of the Pathway to Engineering course, which allows for an alternative entry route for people who wish to pursue a career in engineering, a working group was formed within the

FET Division to work on the development of further Pathway Programmes, particularly programmes designed to facilitate the transition for learners coming from full-time and formal Education or Training (such as from schools or Youthreach). These programmes will form part of a response to the need to develop and provide pre-apprenticeship type programmes.

In terms of **progression of FET Learners to higher education**, 446 FET learners progressed to HE opportunities in 2018. The FET Division continued to develop progression links to various Higher Education institutions e.g. Universities (UL; MIC); Institutes of Technology (Limerick; Tralee; Waterford; Galway-Mayo etc.) in 2018. Memoranda of Understanding have been developed in areas such as Engineering to ensure learners from FET courses can avail of places on LIT courses while also ensuring that students from LIT who drop-out of courses there can be referred to apprenticeship and traineeship courses within Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

Other examples of partnerships included:

- The VTOS Leaving Certificate Science programme, based at the FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus, provided a **progression route to both LIT and UL**. VTOS offers both Physics and Biology and continues its excellent partnership with UL by using their laboratories. In January 2018, UL President Des Fitzgerald joined the Biology group (photo) and showed great interest in their backgrounds and studies, and highlighted how this constructive partnership was valued by the University.
- The **Teacher Education Access Programme (TEAP)** started five years ago, the first cohort in the country to do so. This innovative course, delivered in partnership with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (through BTEI Limerick City) and Mary Immaculate College (MIC), commenced in 2013 as a pilot programme aiming to increase diversity within the teaching profession by providing a direct entry route for mature students. They are graduates now and in the workplace as teachers.
- **Maths for STEM – Collaborative Initiative with University of Limerick** - BTEI Limerick City launched a Maths for STEM Level 5 Certificate in collaboration with UL in September 2018, following a successful Leaving Cert Maths joint initiative, which ran in 2016 and 2017. The Maths for Stem course is aimed at anyone who is interested in improving their competency & knowledge in mathematics, potentially with a view to progressing to programmes in the Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Most importantly the award is recognised by UL as equivalent to Higher Level Leaving Certificate Mathematics for mature student applicants, for entry to relevant Science & Engineering degree programmes. This 30 credit course is tapping in to the shortage of STEM skills in the region.
- In collaboration with IRG personnel, many programmes organised **visits to higher education institutions** to familiarise the learners to a new environment and expose them to a future in education many never thought they could aspire to.



Figure 1- Learners from VTOS Clonroad Campus at an LIT Open Day

Celebrating Learners

Many FET learners overcome great odds to access and complete their FET courses. An increasing number are achieving accreditation, which most highly value as the evidence of their hard work.

Some examples of excellence included in 2018:

- Learners from An t-Ionad Glas, the Organic College in Dromcollogher won several prizes for their organic vegetables at the local Summer Horticulture Shows in Charleville, Cappamore, Newcastlewest and Limerick.
- Ronan Daly, Youthreach learner, FET Centre, Watch House Cross Campus, received 3rd place in the Leaving Certificate Applied Graphics and Construction Studies. He received a commemorative piece in recognition of his exceptional achievement at an awards presentation in GMIT Galway in March 2018, and is now furthering his studies in LCFE.
- LCFE Arts and Design learner, Gery Hayes received first place in the Limerick Smarter Travel poster design competition;
- The Limerick FAI/Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Player Development Course celebrated with all twenty trainees receiving a full Level 5 award with five learners achieving distinctions in all nine modules, totalling 400 CAO points. Also Joel Coustrain signed a professional contract with Shamrock Rovers and Jason Cross from Ballysimon, Co. Limerick progressed to the first team with Limerick FC.
- Two former HETC trainees were awarded employee awards with the Strand Hotel in Limerick. Daniel Leamy was voted employee of the quarter for quarter 4 (photo) and Alan O'Brien won overall employee of the year for 2018.
- Jamie Bridgeman who studied on our LCFE ICM Graduate Management Diploma course won the Industry Professional of the Year – Support Professional with CCMA - The 2018 Irish Customer Contact & Shared Services Awards
- 30 Years of Simply Said: Core Skills Clare celebrated 30 years of the learner publication Simply Said in June 2018 in Glór, Ennis. An art installation was created by learners to mark the 30th issue. Learners created six word stories and developed individual tiles to represent these. This annual event is a celebration of learners work over the past year. A digital version is available online also for 2018. To mark the 30th issue of Simply Said, a piece of collaborative art was commissioned.
- In Limerick, Cores skill's annual Learner writings event took place in the Granary in May 2018, this year included contributions from Literacy, BTEI and Youthreach learners, with special guest Roisin Meany.



- In 2018, **thousands of euros were also 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



- **Awards Season!** In 2018, 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.



SECTION 3 - 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 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**. Community Education, as well as Literacy and Numeracy provisions are essential in reaching those groups if Ireland is to meet its lifelong learning objectives.

Core Skills

Integration of Language, Literacy & Numeracy (LLN)

The integration of Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) into mainstream FET provision is the main focus of the FET Language, Literacy and Numeracy Framework (2017-2020) launched by the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board in 2016. A FET LLN Implementation Team was set up in 2017 to lead and monitor the implementation of the Framework, with an initial focus on identifying assessment tools and professional development for all FET staff. In 2018, a sub-group on LLN Initial Assessment was established to lead the work in this area across the FET Division, with a special focus on the implementation of the ETBI / SOLAS *Initial And Ongoing Assessment Of Adult Literacy And Numeracy At NFQ Levels 1-3 – Guidelines, Toolkit And Research Report (2018)*. In June 2018, the sub-group worked with the FET Planning and Evaluation Officer, to carry out:

In 2018, FET Core Skills served 2,988 Beneficiaries.
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- A pilot exercise for the FET literacy services (Core Skills provision) to evaluate the usability and feasibility of the roll out of the ETBI / SOLAS Initial and Ongoing Skills Assessment for Adult Literacy and Numeracy Learners – Guidelines (2018). This report presents the findings of the internal evaluation to inform the FET Division's approach to the implementation of the guidelines.
- An internal audit of all LLN initial assessments processes and procedures across the FET full-time and part-time provision in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to provide a baseline from which to plan for the introduction of LLN initial assessment into all FET provision, with an objective to enhance the consistency of initial assessment processes across the service.

Several innovative initiatives were developed in 2018 that deliver integrated and themed literacy:

- The FET Core Skills provision continued to provide **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. One to one ESOL classes were piloted in Shannon and Ennis, to support Training Centre learners for literacy and/or language support. Requirements for entry to certain training courses have recently changed in relation to non-native speakers, and Core Skills has offered

guidance on how to test these learners, and where to refer them if they do not meet the required language level.

- **Using Culture and Heritage to Integrate Literacy:** A genealogy taster workshop was delivered and by popular demand, an 8 week introduction to Genealogy course was then developed for the first time in Ennis.
- **From hatchet throwing to.....** To celebrate 100 years of Votes for Women in Ireland, a joint initiative was delivered to mark International Women's Day in March 2018. It involved a presentation on what led to women getting a vote, followed by a sewing class making a quilt to commemorate the event. The group created a good info-graphic to tell the story and this was developed and created into a wall hanging in the sewing class to capture this historic event. The class embedded active citizenship topics, numeracy and literacy alongside sewing skills. The Ennis Museum will launch the quilt on International Women's Day in 2019.
- **My Baby and Me:** In April 2018, Core Skills Family Learning in Clare successfully received €30,000 from the FET Division, to run a 'My Baby and Me' pilot across Co Clare.



This included radio, print and social media advertising, the development of a new book for parents and baby to add photos to, and a

I didn't know I am my baby's first teacher. I was waiting for her to go to school so she would start learning. I can see now how she has already started her learning.

baby reading book for the family each week. A short video was created to promote My Baby and Me courses via social media which had over 12,000 views in the first two weeks. Promotional leaflets and posters were created and distributed across the county. Six locations were used, including five libraries and a school. 41 parents participated in the 6 pilots across Clare, comments from parents included that the course ...'was a lifesaver,' 'was an opportunity for parents to meet up and for children to socialise with other children.' Evaluations showed the parents were hungry to learn how to support their babies and do the best they can for them. A two day Train the Trainer Tutor Training also took place in November 2018, with 15 participants attending, from Wexford, Cork, Dublin, and Kilkenny while others attended from across the FET Division.

- Following an invitation by DEASP to 150 clients to participate in an English Language Programme, Core Skills provision in Limerick City met with a number of groups outlining the purpose, duration of the course, followed by a written assessment (administrated by Core Skills staff) and a one to one joint interview with a FET and DEASP staff member. This led to the development of **two intensive ESOL Courses** for a 5 week period in May/June 2018. 53% of those that started the class completed it and 62% of those moved on to further classes within the FET Division either with Core Skills, BTEI or VTOS.
- Working closely with LES (Local Employment Service) **Driver theory Support** was offered by Core Skills Limerick City to a cohort of young travellers under 24 age group. Of the 69 learners that applied for the courses, 60 completed it.
- While **SPSV support classes** have been organised for some time through the SFW programme, it has now been introduced to a number of communities with robust numbers applying and completing the courses.
- In April 2018, Core Skills Family Learning in Clare worked with Clare Library Service and Scoil Chríost Rí, Cloughleigh, Ennis, on a Right to Read Campaign pilot project, which led to the design of a **Storytime Parent and Child course** in the local primary school.

- **IT for Active Citizenship Using Smart Technology**, this new course was piloted in Shannon and proved popular with learners. Designed to be responsive to individual learner needs, learners worked with the tutor to identify their own needs to help them to be independent users of smart technology. For many learners, this is the springboard they need to build the confidence to go on to pursue accredited IT programs.
- **Getting Active to Keep Well:** There was a great response to the new course introduced in 2018 to facilitate older people (to) explore the benefits of physical activity for health and wellbeing. Learners tried out some exercises in a well-structured but fun environment. They used safe exercise practise in line with the NALA “Well Now” and the Go for Life national programme for sport and physical activity for older people.

‘Now in my 70th year I have come to realise that the fitness project as a weekly activity has greatly increased my level of suppleness. I find I am more able to undertake what before would have been a challenge. I can, as a result, care more effectively for my grand-daughter who has special needs and continue to help more in my community. I very much hope that we can continue with these classes into the future as my quality of life has improved. Tracy has always been both cheerful and helpful and I know that we have all benefited from her expertise and encouraging manner’. Barbara – Killaloe Health and Fitness

- **Supporting your Teenage Children:** This was a short 6 week pilot Family Learning course delivered in Tulla in response to secondary school parents reporting the difficulties of bringing up children in this fast changing world with minimal supports available.
- **Supporting your Primary School Child:** Following on from the success of Supporting your Teenage Children, an 8 week Family Learning course Supporting your Primary School Child in Tulla Primary school was piloted.

In addition outreach provision is facilitated through a range of partnership arrangements in other venues including Family Resource Centres, Community facilities, libraries etc.

Facilitating integration and inclusion

FET provision is a powerful way of integration for migrants through combined FET opportunities, and language and intercultural training with Irish learners and partners.

Partnerships for Refugees and Asylum seekers:

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, as a state authority, has a mandate to provide education and training for non-national and refugee learners. It is represented on the two Refugee Resettlement Programme (RRP) Inter-agency Groups hosted by the Local Authorities in Limerick and Clare.

2018 FET beneficiaries:

- ESOL: 1,419
- ITABE: 157
- Refugee Resettlement Programme: 22

County Clare has a higher than average proportion of Asylum Seekers and Refugees and has the 4th highest percentage of the population from this group across the 26 counties. Indeed, the opening of the new Direct Provision Accommodation Centre in Lisdoonvarna in March 2018 when combined with delivery in Knockalisheen Reception Centre, Hanrattys Hotel Direct Provision Centre and Mount Trenchard Reception centre in Foynes placed additional demands on the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to

provide English Language tuition. We worked in partnership with Clare Immigrant Support Centre to discuss educational options and ways to enhance social connectedness for refugees, and co-ordinated educational activities for asylum seekers in Lisdoonvarna with Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Clare Local Development Company, Fáilte Isteach and King Thomond Hotel (Direct Provision Centre). In 2018, an application for funding from NALA Student Development Fund was successful to take learners from Knockalisheen Direct Provision to Killarney National Park.

FET Centres in Shannon, Ennis, Ennistymon and Lisdoonvarna offer a welcome space for migrants and refugees to seek information about classes and career opportunities. ESOL classes are available day and night, and this service is being expanded to include higher level learners. These learners are strongly encouraged to join other classes to assist them in the integration process. ESOL learners are enrolled in IT, craft, horticulture and family learning classes where they have the opportunity to improve their English language skills.



Several of the recent refugees from Syria have progressed to vocational courses within Shannon Training Centre and are receiving ongoing literacy/language support to aid the transition.

Also supporting integration, members of the community of Ennistymon and surrounding area have come together to learn basic Arabic, through the Community Education provision. They are doing this with the aim of supporting, providing skill and facilitating the integration of a number of Syrian families who have recently moved into their community, e.g. one on one literacy and numeracy support and homework club support. This group will progress to Core Skills in the new year where they will pursue a QQI qualification in Arabic – first ever in the country.

Refugee

If I want or not, If you want or not,

Whether I like it or not, Whether you like it or not

I am here in your country, on your land, in your city.

Maybe I am your neighbour, your friend or your colleague,

or maybe someone in the way.

I did not decide that; neither did you.

It is my destiny; it brought me here to see you, for you to see me,

to learn your language and perhaps, if you like, for you to learn my language.

You hear my story and I hear your story.

Maybe we will drink coffee together some day.

So smile, and I have to smile, for we live together in peace.

Believe me this is why I came.

Really, I thank you for your smile. It gives me hope.

By Fatima for Simply Said 2018

English for Speakers of Other Languages

In 2018, there was an increase in ESOL learners looking for workplace English classes. There is a growing demand for this type of specialist provision for this group who are distanced from the labour market and unable to engage fully within the local community. In response to the need for language classes for the workplace, the FET Division provided preparation classes for the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) and First Certificate English test (FCE). In 2018, over 30 learners took these exams, which are internationally recognised by businesses and other potential employers as well as in higher education and further education and training routes.

ESOL learners at the FET Centre, Scariff Campus, learned English through song in 2018; they also took on volunteering in the community both to complement their English class and to share their talents with a local charity shop, Brothers of Charity and Watermans Alzheimer Care Centre.

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. VTOS held its annual intercultural day in the FET Centre, Kilmallock Road Campus, where learners performed and demonstrated their native foodstuff on what is always a truly unique and inclusive occasion, given the many diverse nationalities involved on the Scheme

Testimonial - *The Irish Times newspaper published an excellent article on one of the VTOS Kilmallock road campus in its 'New to the Parish' series. The article featured the story of Gedeon who is from Rwanda and who expressed his deep appreciation for the skills he acquired on VTOS. The accompanying photograph also featured his wife, who is an ex-VTOS learner now working as a Care Assistant.*



In 2018, a number of European projects also offered innovative partnership to promote integration and inclusion on non-Irish nationals.

- EDNIP – Embracing Diversity, Nurturing Inclusion, learning for life project is led by Mary Immaculate College, co-funded by the European commission under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and supported by the Department of Justice and Equality. Core skills in Limerick worked closely with the team in 2018 to enhance the integration process providing formal and informal classes in the CBS Campus.
- HEALTHNIC - *Healthy and Ethnic Diet for Inclusion* is a project which aims to promote intercultural awareness and co-operation through the creation of healthy and nutritious food dishes from a broad range of cultures. The project allows the participants to have direct and active involvement with different cultural backgrounds in activities such as cooking, language and ICT learning. VTOS Newcastle West Campus worked with the IT Tralee, by providing a venue and participants for the project from Russia, Moldova, Lithuania and Brazil along with a small cohort of Irish learners. It was fascinating and inspiring to witness people from different cultural backgrounds become a more cohesive group because of cooking and eating together.

In June 2018, a new **ESOL Professional Development Group** was formed in the FET Division, to share best practice and disseminate information to the FET ESOL teaching body. Indeed, many FET tutors don't have formal qualifications in English Language Teaching, and this internal professional development initiative seeks to address this deficit. Its first action was to conduct a needs analysis with 120 staff completing the questionnaire. The findings were used to scope out a series of PD events including a first ever ESOL Community of Practice full day workshop attended by over 40 people. This was held in November 2018 and included a workshop for tutors who are teaching non literate ESOL learners, as well as sharing information and resources on assessment approaches, the changing regulations around work for Asylum seekers and the Scottish assessment approach. The use of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) among ESOL tutors, guidance staff and managers was also recommended, in line with a recommendation from the ETBI/SOLAS 2018 report on English Language Provision and Language Assessment for Low-Skilled and Unemployed Migrants.

Community Education

The aim of the FET Community Education provision is to enhance learning, foster empowerment and contribute to civic society while maintaining an ethos appropriate to adult education. While most modules have themes, *i.e. art and craft*, all modules delivered incorporate individual learning, peer learning, social and personal development, team building, communication skills, active citizenship and community development/participation.

In 2018, there were 4,408 beneficiaries from Community Education programmes, 200 beneficiaries from Local Training Initiatives, and 2,146 beneficiaries from tuition hours funded to groups active in communities as cooperation hours.

"I feel less afraid of attending a course now, I decided I want to learn more".

In 2018, a strong social inclusion focus was maintained through targeting areas of relative disadvantage in Limerick and Clare. The provision addressed the lifelong learning needs and interests of adults in these communities by providing a broad menu of unaccredited and accredited learning opportunities that are accessible, low cost and enable people to participate in society/community life. This approach provides learners who are referred

to as 'economically inactive' in the SOLAS FET Services Plan with accessible entry points to learning. 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.

Learners on community education programmes have access to supports including literacy, numeracy, language assistance and broad learning supports such as time management etc. FET Tutors know and use inclusive literacy methods and materials, they take account of specific language, reading, writing and numeracy needs of their learners, and all learners engaging have access to the FET Information, Recruitment and Guidance Service both as groups or as individuals. This has led to an increase in progression to certified learning in Clare, due to continuous access to information and guidance, and an integrated approach between learning networks and FET part time/full time provision.

The reach of the FET community education into areas of relative disadvantage City is facilitated by a long-standing partnership between the FET Division and community organisations and schools working in these areas.

In 2018, Community Education provision worked with 40 community organisations and schools in the Limerick City, while grant aid was approved to over 127 groups across County Clare, reaching 4,408 beneficiaries across Limerick and Clare.

There are well established needs analysis and planning processes in place to plan, coordinate and deliver FET courses in communities.

- In Limerick City, courses' structure, content and duration are revised on an ongoing basis to meet the needs of diverse communities and target groups. In 2018, 50 course descriptions were updated by Tutors and distributed to community organisations and schools. The **annual Cluster Planning meeting** for community-based part-time provision in Limerick City was held in November 2018 in the UL Access Campus in Roxboro. This key planning event was moved from April to November to better match the FARR funding and reporting calendar-year schedule. 30 people attended the meeting including representatives from community organisations and Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators. The agenda included inputs from Community Education, Core Skills, BTEI and Guidance service about SOLAS/Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board targets, the LCEN, the AISS and Apprenticeships and Traineeships. The spread of community education (around 300 courses across 40 locations in the city) is now also supported by online systems as much as possible. A new online form facilitates communication about courses between the FET Division and community organisations and schools. The form is available on the Learning and Skills website.

In 2018, a **Review of Community Education Provision** was carried out to explore the resourcing, planning and delivery of Community Education in Limerick City, and to inform and strengthen its future development. A report was launched and presented to Community Education tutors and representatives from community organisations in December 2018, highlighting 15 recommendations. These included developing a framework document which charts the strategic direction of community education, putting in place a Memorandum of Understanding with community education partners, creating an areas-based planning and application model, ensuring resources are aligned to workload and priorities, strengthening evidence-based planning, outcomes tracking and creating and resourcing specialist community education outreach roles.

- In Clare, all community education provision is planned in consultation with learners and communities. In 2018, three **Clare Learning Network meetings** for Ennis, North, South, East and West Clare were facilitated, and well attended by members such as the Clare Library, Turas Nua, DEASP, Employability Clare, local FRC's, local Co-Op's, CE Scheme Supervisors, Citizens Information Service, Brothers of Charity, Clare County Council and the FET Division. These meeting provide a fora for local planning and discussions.

Examples of projects funded and supported by FET Community Education provision in 2018 included:

- 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.
- **Community Gardening** - Community gardens were busier than ever, from Scarriff to Kilrush, Ennistymon and Miltown Malbay. Classes involved engaging local men and women from the community in a local community initiative. A group of BTEI adult learners, studying garden design at

Kilrush have also worked on renovating a rest and relaxation area of the Community Garden for all workers and visitors to use and enjoy.



- **Community Learning in South Clare** – In collaboration with Shannon FRC, Shannon Library, Obair Newmarket on Fergus, Carrigoran Wellness Centre, The Bridge Complex, Sixmilebridge Men's Shed and Core Skills, several courses from painting and drawing, sewing, creative writing, local history, mindfulness, yoga, singing, IT and horticulture were delivered in a multitude of venues throughout South Clare in 2018.
- Collaboration with LCEN on the **Journeys Art and Craft Trail to mark 25 years of the Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN)**. Over 100 people gathered at The Engine, Innovate Limerick to see samples of the crafts which are made in community education classes. From there they travelled on community buses to 5 community venues to see the full exhibitions of arts and crafts.
- **Men's sheds** continued to provide safe, friendly, inclusive spaces where skills are learned, community links identified, friendships made, and support networks created at the men's own pace. In 2018, a Shannon Men's Shed/Duchas Na Sionna partnership led to many innovative programmes ranging from Woodwork to Fused Art to Computers. A Clare People article **'Finding Sanctuary in a Men's Shed'** featured the FET Centre, Kilrush Campus speaking to how the Kilrush Men's Shed has truly appealed to the community in rural West Clare, providing not only a place to learn new skills but a meeting place for people in an area often associated with isolation. In June 2018, Clare Community Education Service in collaboration with the Clare Men's Shed Network also provided Health and Safety Awareness training to 16 men represented a range of Clare Mensheds.
- **Kilrush Celebrations:** The FET Centre in Kilrush was 20 years old in 2018, the local community; past and present learners and staff were invited to the celebrations.
- Several programmes were delivered to our **active agers** in 2018. While these programmes are themed, all modules delivered incorporate the enhancement of self-esteem, social personal development, communication skills, trust, confidence, active citizenship and positive group experience. Produce from classes were sold at local events to raise funding for ongoing sustenance of other groups in the community.



"this class was the highlight of my week, when we were in class we talked about the class and what we would like to do next and when we were not in class, we talked about going to class, it brought us together and it is great to learn something new and make friends"

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.

Limerick and Clare - a Learning Region

In 2018, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board continued to chair the Learning Limerick Steering Group, a multi-sectoral partnership group committed to advancing Limerick as a Learning Region. Learning Limerick is a member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities.

One of the flagship activities of Learning Limerick is its annual Learning Festival, which took place in March 2018 for the 8th consecutive year under the theme 'Limerick Together for Equitable and Inclusive Learning'. With over 250 events, all free of charge and available to everyone, the festival was a huge success. An International Learning Cities seminar was held in March 2018, with guest speakers from partner learning cities and regions including Cork, Belfast and Bristol.



The Limerick City Community Education Facilitator, members of LCEN and the Limerick Lifelong Learning Facilitator then went on a study visit to Cork to learn about the Learning Neighbourhood concept with a view to piloting it in Limerick. The Learning Neighbourhood initiative aims to assist local education networks and organisations to showcase and develop lifelong learning opportunities through a range of initiatives including raising awareness of opportunities for learning, developing new initiatives and supporting promotional activities.

Similarly the annual Adult Learning Week took place in Clare in March 2018, is an opportunity for FET Centres in Co. Clare, to offer a wide range of demonstrations and organise many celebrations and awards nights throughout the county.

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. The extracurricular dimension of the FET provision cannot be underestimated in terms of satisfaction and reward for learners and staff.

In 2018, 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. As part of this initiative a Health and Wellbeing



morning was organised in O'Connell Avenue Campus, where 11 services from across Limerick City attended on the morning and two mindfulness workshops were offered. Learners also volunteered and helped to organise the event. This event was very well attended highlighting our learners' interest in this area. As a result of this a Walking Group and Choir were formed to encourage learners to interact and socialise more with each other.

- Many centres took part in the national Wellbeing at Work day, with smoothie stands and talks taking place in FET centres. International Day of Happiness 2018 was also celebrated with staff and Students created Happiness poems judged by the Clare Library Service, who attended the Happiness Day event in April, 2018.
- Many outdoors trips and cultural outings were organised for learners as great opportunity to discover new surroundings and bonding as a group of learners. As part of Mental Health week, learners from Ennis & Shannon Youthreach Campus had a full day activities in the Burren Outdoor Education centre. Learner participated in Team Building activities, Kayaking and Rock Climbing.



Creativity is promoted and recognised in FET Centres

The FET Division recognises the importance of creativity as a skill of the future, and in 2018 many initiatives shone a light on learners' talents, boosting their self-confidence and opening new horizons for many FET learners.

- The Education Centre in Limerick Prison featured in the IPEA (Irish prison Education Association) stand at the FEILTE festival in Mary Immaculate College, displaying photographs of public artworks designed and produced by Limerick and Clare Education and Training art teachers, and sited in the prison grounds. Two metal sculptures, a stained glass in the circle door of the prison and stained glass window in the prison chapel were on display. The public art pieces are a result of effective partnership between FET teachers working in the prison and the Irish prison Service.



- MGLC Creative Centre was host to a special visit from international delegates from The Ireland Funds 2018 Conference. The delegates were taken on a tour of the building and saw first-hand the talented young musicians who performed a special showcase for them.
- In September 2018, combining QQI work and course work with art exhibitions that benefit the whole community, VTOS Scarriff Campus organised an exhibition of work, featuring the work of current and past learners of the QQI Level 5 award in Art, Craft and Design. Titled "Le Cheile" and exhibited in the exhibition space at the local library and council offices in Scarriff, it featured a rich selection of work from the modules of the award including ceramics, embroidery, drawing, painting, combined materials and design. The exhibition ran for a week and a half and was well received by learners, staff and the local community, also receiving media coverage by Scarriff Bay Radio and the Clare People. "



- As part of the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2018, many FET programmes offered a range of events in creative skills as an enticing way to re-engage with learning.



SECTION 4 - 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.

Investment in facilities

A rebranding effort continued to be rolled out in 2018, and was compounded by significant investments in FET facilities across Limerick and Clare. In 2018, significant investments were allocated to improvements in all FET facilities, to make **FET learning spaces fit-for-purpose and excellent for both staff and learners**. Cross-provision 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 2018 include:

- Key developments of centre upgrade- newly painted centre and new canteen furniture added to an improved learning centre environment.
- New windows in the FET Centre, Kilmallock Town Campus.
- Change-over of oil heating system to gas for energy efficient SEI improved building.
- Purchase and branding of a new minibus for the Youthreach provision, FET Centre, Hospital campus, in October 2018, through funding from Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board and a contribution from the JP Mc Manus Benevolent Fund.



Youthreach Hospital FET Centre, Tidy Town Winner

In 2018, the Youthreach Hospital centre was presented with the Hospital Tidy Towns Perpetual Trophy for 'Best Overall'. Leaving Certificate Applied learners took up the challenge as part of their Practical Reflection Task. Work included creating and maintaining window boxes, making wooden signage and name signs for trees planted on centre grounds, research project on butterflies and information sign erected with research results and taking part in a Bee Hotel making project.

The FET Centre was chosen to be part of an energy efficiency and conservation project which attracted a substantial amount of funding. This entailed a significant upgrade of the centre to improve our energy rating and efficiency. The building was then painted and coupled with magnificent flower box arrangements, the building had an impressive look during this summer and as a result scooped the 'Best Overall' prize in the Hospital Tidy Towns competition.

Celebrating Best Practice with 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 2018, some of which is illustrated below:

- The FET Division continued to partner with NALA, providing speakers for their annual conferences and events and articles for their publication Literacy Matters this year: <https://www.nala.ie/resources/138>. Clare Family Learning was selected as a case study for **SOLAS/NALA Family Learning** research. Two researchers visited the county in November 2018, visiting Family Learning in action in classes and met with learners, tutors, managers and external stakeholders. The National College of Ireland also hosted a conference in June 2018, where the FET Clare Adult Literacy Officer, Mary Flanagan, presented Clare Family Learning work.
- Michelle Benson, a VTOS teacher, was selected by LEARGAS to be the **national ETB representative at an international ESOL conference** in Austria.
- The **Community Care Integrated Learning Programme** with the Brothers of Charity Ennis was shortlisted for the AONTAS Awards 2018, under the small/medium organisation category.
- Art & Design teacher, Audrey Fitzgerald won the **Smarter Travel Curriculum Development Award 2018** for Multimedia.
- **ETBI News Spring 2018** published an article 'Understanding Literacy Provision within the Further Education and Training Service' written by Mary Flanagan, FET Clare ALO.

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 in the FET Division 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 2018, key developments took place both at governance level and at operational level.

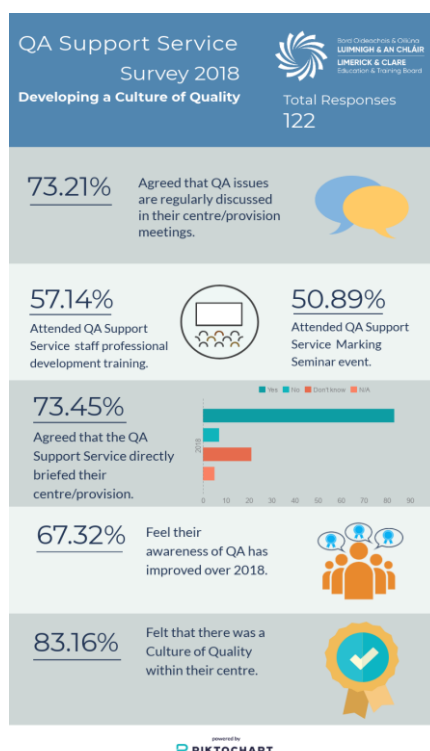
- **Significant progress was made against the 2018 Quality Improvement Plan** agreed between QQI and the FET Division.
 - Quality Assurance Governance structures were reviewed and updated as per sector governance framework.
 - A City and Guilds Supercentre was established, with a single provider structure and QA governance approved by City & guilds. A pilot satellite programme is underway.
 - A QA marking seminar was held with 250 learning practitioners attending.
 - Exemplar bank is in development,



four Level 5 module examinations have been developed.

- Work took place to develop Quality Assurance Assessment procedures in implementation planning, working with centres, to be introduced from September 2019.
- Broadening of staff professional development, “Assessing Learner Evidence”, “Internal Verification”, “Academic Referencing”, and in particular “QA Induction Training for New Tutors”.
- A working group agreed model for formalising provision of Mentors to Further Education and Training staff.
- Broadening of Quality Assurance communications platforms –Newsletter, Signage Live, Twitter, Learning and Skills web page, QA Support Service survey, etc.
- TOBAR RPL project –Limerick City Core Skills/BTEI in conjunction with Defence forces –first ever cohort of Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPL) to achieve certification in Limerick and Clare.
- The QA Support Service continued cascade training right across the FET Division and supported practitioners in quality assured related matters. 389 staff attended more than 25 individual training sessions which ranged from Marking Seminars, to Assessing Evidence in FET to IV Training.

The FET Quality Assurance Support Service also invited all FET Learning Practitioners to complete a short survey in December 2018. The findings highlighted a positive improvement in the development of a Culture of Quality across the organisation (see info-graphic below).



Professional Development

2018 was a significant year in terms of professional development, due to the development of the **FET Professional Development Action Plan 2019-2021**. The action planning process was facilitated by the FET Planning and Evaluation Officer, working with a FET Planning Group, comprising 18 learning practitioners (managers, guidance personnel, administration and ancillary staff) from full-time and part-time FET Provision. They identified four priority areas for this Action Plan, which will be rolled out in 2019:

1. Strong Commitment to Professional Development for all FET Staff
2. Professional Development for Teaching and Learning
3. Professional Development Structures and Systems
4. Transparent and Consistent Professional Development Policies and Procedures

In 2018, 97 professional development events took place across the FET Division, attended by 1541 staff. These events account for structured PD events which were centrally organised or funded through the PD budget. 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 reflects this with the majority of events on our calendar bringing staff together from different centres and different geographical locations.

In 2018, **97 individual professional development events** took place across the FET Division **attended by 1,541 staff**. These events account for CPD which was centrally organised or funded through the CPD budget.

PD events were organised by a variety of internal stakeholders often in collaboration, including the Professional Development Officer, Senior Managers, existing FET PD Networks and other Development Officers. The FET Division also have 5 Implementation Groups who are tasked with rolling different strategic areas-i.e. QA, TEL, Integrated Language Literacy and Numeracy. Implementation Group has a PD 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 2018 was in the order of €70,000 euro spent on facilitators, tutor hire, venue hire, resources, and refreshments etc. Approximately €70,000 of Erasmus + has been secured through 4 separate projects which will run between 2018 and 2020.

Below is a highlight of some of the key initiatives that took place in 2018. They are presented under headings related to strategic priority areas identified in the SOLAS Professional Development Strategy.

Working with and Supporting FET Learners

A significant investment was made in 2018 to support those working with FET Learners, mainly in the area of pedagogy/andragogy and working with learners who have diverse needs. 437 staff attended a variety of workshops e.g. Disability Awareness, Numeracy Awareness, Family Learning, Mental Health and Wellbeing. Two really important accredited initiatives rolled out as part of the Integrating Language Literacy and Numeracy Framework. 5 FET staff received accreditation at Level 7 for the Transformative Community Education Module, a blended learning programme delivered by An Cosan and Carlow IT. 16 staff completed Level 6 Level Integrating Literacy Programme.

A new ESOL PD Subgroup was also set up in June, the first action was to conduct a needs analysis with staff which 120 people completing. The findings were used to scope out a series of PD events including a first ever ESOL Community of Practice full day workshop attended by 40 people.

Leadership and Management

Much of the leadership professional development support provided to managers in 2018 centred on the SOLAS Strategic Planning Process along with the continued rollout of FARR and PLSS with 215 staff attending workshops. Training was also provided in the areas of Project Management and legislative compliance e.g. Health and Safety, Child Protection and General Data Protection Regulations. In terms of developing Leadership, 3 members of the Senior Management Team were enrolled on the pilot of the Level 8 Change Management Programme with NUIG with an expectation that there will be further rollout in 2019. This is one of the suite of national programmes by SOLAS.

ICT and Planning and Reporting Systems

2018 saw further development and roll out of the FARR/PLSS. This was accompanied by training and development sessions around Strategic Planning, PLSS Updates and Enhancements and Using PLSS Reports as well as workshops on signage live, surface pro and one note.

TEL

Almost 20 TEL related PD events were held in 2018, reflecting the priority placed for development in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. These workshops were attended by almost 200 staff. A variety of other events took place including Whiteboard Training, Office 365, Adobe Creative Suite, Moodle etc. 2 members of staff are on the pilot of the Level 8 TEL programme with NUIG with an expectation that there will be a more extensive rollout in 2019. This is one of the suite of national programmes by SOLAS.

Moodle Open Badges for PD

As part of the commitment made by the FET Division to mainstream the work of the E+ EDGE project more than 1280 PD badges have been awarded through Moodle since 2016. It is hoped in 2019 to address the challenges around developing and awarding badges in 2019 by allocating more resources to the process.

In kind contribution

We can estimate an in-kind contribution of staff hours to approximately over 180,000 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.

European Projects

The FET Division is involved in 6 Erasmus Plus Projects, 2 for learners and 4 related to staff development.

- DEMOS (Democracy and Equality Matters for Our Society): The DEMOS project's main aim is to increase social and political participation among marginalised groups in society by encouraging discourse and awareness around complex societal issues, thereby offering alternative democratic





Erasmus+
At a Glance:
European Projects in the
FET Division

6 Erasmus+ Projects
in total running between
2018 and 2020

4 Staff Mobility Projects

Key Action One Projects-Mobility of Individuals

1. Integrated Language, Literacy and Numeracy for Adult Ed Staff
2. Learning from Best Practice for VET Staff

Key Action 2 Projects- Cooperation for Exchange of Good Practice

1. RISE- (Realising Integration through Social Enterprise)
2. DEMOS (Democracy and Equality Matters for Our Society)

2 Learner Mobility Projects

1. LCFE Learner Mobility
2. HETC Learner Mobility



ways of being heard. The target group for the project are new and hard to reach migrant groups and refugees; younger learners especially those from marginalised and under-served communities and adults from marginalised and under-served communities.

- RISE (Realising Integration through Social Enterprise): The RISE Project aims to support the integration of long-term unemployed and immigrants into the labour market through the mechanism of social enterprise. The particular appeal of the social enterprise model relates to its strong social purpose while also operating as a sustainable commercial entity. It is a model that is particularly relevant in the further education sphere as it facilitates learners to gain autonomy through creativity, co-operation, innovation and risk-taking all of which are necessary for the implementation of a successful social enterprise.

- Learning from Best Practice: Modernizing and Improving VET: The overall aim is to give staff the opportunity to compare and contrast responses from VET organisations in Europe around a range of key themes that are of particular interest and relevance to us currently. We would like to expose participants to new and innovative responses to issues and to identify learning which can be transferred to our own con-text thus helping shape policy and practice.

- Integrating Language Literacy and Numeracy in Adult Education: The overall aim of this project is to build staff capacity in a) integration of language, literacy and numeracy in teaching and learning and support services for adult learners and b) the development of deeper intercultural awareness through attending high quality training workshops and conferences in Europe.

Technology-Enhanced Learning

The year saw a focus on the implementation of the TEL Action Plan led by our TEL Implementation Team and its sub-groups with Sub-group 1 working on actions focused on Staff and Learners digital capacity and Sub-group 2 focusing on innovation and collaboration. The Plan has four themes and significant progress was made in each of the four thematic areas.

Staff & Learners Digital Capacity

The development of Staff digital skills was a key focus with a number of targeted initiatives including

- A FET TEL Initiative delivered for staff at Initial Level on TEL which was piloted with staff in part time programmes in Limerick County. It involved a training needs analysis followed by a programme addressing the specific needs identified.

- Delivered targeted TEL Professional Development programme on integration of TEL in programme planning with Ennis & Shannon Youthreach Staff. This programme which is ongoing focuses on developing the skills of teachers to critically engage with the use of technology in teaching and learning.
- In Limerick City, a NALA Webinar on Digital Media training took place for tutors of adult learners.

In addition to these targeted programmes a comprehensive range of local TEL PD Workshops were delivered in a diverse range of topics including Moodle, Sharepoint, TEL tools for teaching and Learning, Interactive Whiteboards, Office 365 & Teams, Safely Sourcing resources online, ePortfolios and Digital Badges for Learning. We continued to award digital badges to staff attending CPD and have now developed badges for 45 programmes with the number growing on an ongoing basis.

TEL Infrastructure

Providing Fit-for-Purpose TEL Infrastructure continues to be a fundamental requirement for the effective use of technology in teaching and learning. Among the key infrastructural/hardware investments in 2018 were:

- Upgrading works completed in key centres identified by TEL IT Audit including our FET Campuses in Shanagolden, Miltown Malbay and Dromcollogher.
- The continued development of coherent integrated regional TEL Infrastructure with a single FET Moodle Site (synchronised with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Active Directory), StaffConnect (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Sharepoint site) and Office 365.
- The opening of a Learner Information Hub opened (O' Connell Ave. Campus) & Learner Kiosks/Information points installed in a number of our FET Centres (Raheen, Shannon, Kilmallock and Kilmallock Road campuses)
- The continued rollout of SignageLive digital signage across the FET Division. There are now 33 Players & screens in our centres across the region.

One of the key actions from our Tel Action Plan is to work with community partners in relation to TEL. In 2018 we organised an initial pilot on recycling of FET PCs into Community Centres. An application process was developed and PCs were recycled to be used in a Community Centre in Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Limerick.

In 2018, we also began to centralise the procurement & management of a number of TEL resources including software licensing bringing better value for money and enabling sharing of best practice.

Internal Resource sharing, Collaboration and Innovation



The **first edition of 'talk TEL'** was launched during the Summer 2018. This high quality digital publication showcases examples of best practice in the use of technology by Further Education and Training staff across Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

The publication has been recognised nationally as an exemplar of best practice and is highly recommended reading for all those working in Further Education and Training.



The development of **blended/online courses** as part of Staff Professional Development continued to be a focus of our work in 2018. We developed online programmes for GDPR compliance & Child Protection. These badged programmes ensure all staff can access learning opportunities at times suitable to their needs as well as showcasing the potential for teachers to use Moodle. In addition we continued to work to promote the development and sharing of Courses in key areas. The LCFE Study Skills support pack was developed into an online programme which can now be used across all FET programmes.

This Model of developing high quality online resources and sharing them across FET will continue to be a key focus of our work.

External Partnerships

The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Division was asked to chair the newly established **Digital Inclusion Working Group** as part of the Limerick Digital Strategy (2017–2020). The purpose of the group is to ensure that the actions relating to digital inclusion in the Limerick Council's Building Ireland's First Digital City - Smart Limerick Roadmap are achieved. The group agreed Terms of Reference in 2018 and will be working to deliver key inter-agency actions in 2019.

FET staff also played an important role in the development of a number of national TEL PD programmes. 2018 saw this work come to fruition with the commencement of Level 8 Diploma in Technology-Enhanced Learning at NUI Galway. Two staff from the FET Division are enrolled on this programme, which commenced in September 2018.

In 2018, the FET Division initiated a pilot project recycling PCs into Our Lady of Lourdes Community Service Group. This involved an application process, assessment & approval followed by recycling of used PCs into the centre. Following the success of this initiative a full project of re-cycling is planned for 2019.

Governance – Facilitating the Reform of the FET Sector

During 2018, the **newly established 3 Year Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA)** target commitments were fully embedded alongside the annual planning cycle in terms of both operational delivery and analysis. They are used to directly influence business decisions around the selection and introduction of renewal programmes to ensure maximum alignment with the various commitments made whilst meeting the needs of the learner, enterprise and the community.

This was a significant process to undertake, given the need to upskill staff and to manage the change process associated. It is led by all operational managers/coordinators at local level. To that effect, extensive training and analysis meetings took place. This outcomes-based planning and reporting is overseen by the FET Steering Group, and significant efforts were made to ensure that all provision managers/coordinators were briefed on strategic planning requirements, and actively participated in the planning and delivery processes, so that individual and collective ownership of outcomes would be established at local/regional level. A focus is maintained throughout on monitoring and reviewing progress to ensure that corrective measures/actions are taken in a timely manner to achieve agreed targets.

In terms of **Corporate Compliance**, extensive training was provided in 2018, in collaboration with Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board Corporate Affairs around the delivery of Health and Safety, GDPR and Child Protection legislative requirements. 27 people participated on a number of Basic and

Occupational First Aid Training Programmes. 88 took part in awareness raising on the New Children First Legislation and 156 attended GDPR Awareness Raising Training.

- *GDPR*: programme category specific sessions were held in 2018 with all Programme Managers in relation to an initial Working Group effort to review the various types of learner records being held in order to increase awareness and determine gaps in relation to GDPR compliance in this area. Programme category templates have been completed by each group.
- *Child protection Policy Development and Compliancy*: Training was provided for all Youth and Community staff centres in 2018. A Child Protection and Safe Guarding Oversight Monitoring Group was put in place. DLP Training was provided and each provision now has a DLP and DDLP in place. All centres have safe Guarding Statements in place.

In terms of **management structures**, a number of changes were carried out in 2018 towards the rationalisation of FET operations and systems.

- A dedicated Active Inclusion Support Service was established in June 2018.
- New appointment in LCFE at Assistant Principal level.
- Review of Youthreach operations to form a West Clare Youthreach and Mid-Clare Youthreach through consultation meetings with key stakeholders, facilitated SCOT analysis and specific CEIP Process Planning Sessions.

The Internal Audit Unit (IAU) also carried out an audit across the FET Youthreach centres in September 2018, following the completion of an Audit Compliance Checklist. Following briefing meetings, a schedule for centre visits was developed and auditors completed a two day visit to each Youthreach centre.

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

2018 marked the half way point for the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020. The **Mid-Term Review of the LCETB FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020** was carried out in June 2018 and brought together 39 participants comprising the FET Steering Group, as well as all managers of FET full-time and part-time provision and coordinators of FET key support services in Limerick & Clare (Information, Recruitment and Guidance Services, Quality Assurance Support Service, Enterprise Engagement Support Service, Active Inclusion Support Service, TEL Support Service, Professional Development Support Service). The Mid-term Review was carried out by the FET Planning & Evaluation Officer, as part of the FET Monitoring and Evaluation Framework designed to monitor the implementation of the FET Strategic Framework 2015-2020. The purpose of the review was to assess progress of the FET Division towards the implementation of the Framework and planned outputs and outcomes. This was facilitated by ongoing monitoring tools used in the FET Division, including Chief Executive monthly FET reports, FET Annual Reports, FET Steering Group Detailed Implementation Plans, etc. The mid-term review also allowed staff to reaffirm a common purpose and identify priorities for the remaining period of the Framework. Key priorities included:

- Renewed focus on learners IN employment with low skills.
- Renewed focus on those harder to engage and active citizenship (building community capacity)
- Increase learner supports for those with disability, and psychological supports for those with complex needs. Find better ways to respond to groups most in need, i.e. women/youth/travellers/rural areas/migrants
- Need for effective progression tracking systems.

- Renewed focus of professional development on the core FET business of Teaching and Learning, ensuring basic methodologies are promoted across all centres, regardless of size.
- Celebrating learners' and staff excellence

In 2018, the FET Division also complied with statutory requirements by producing its 2017 FET Annual Report and the 2018 FET Service Plan, which were submitted to Corporate Affairs. A regular internal publication of FET Policy Updates also continued in 2018 - 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.

Capturing the voices of Learners

At local level, most centres and individual programmes carry out in-centre monitoring and evaluation exercises to get feedback from their learners and review provision and delivery accordingly. One of the more formal processes is the Youthreach Centre Evaluation and Improvement Planning (CEIP) process, which is facilitated every year. The whole staff team take responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of the ensuing action plan. Special Education Needs (SEN) funded centres are also engaging in a one day facilitated review process with the Youth Provision Coordinator which follows the same format as CEIP process and results in an annual strategic plan being produced for the year ahead.

Core skills provision in Co. Clare involved learners in the decision making process through planning meetings and learner focus groups to capture learner views around the FET provision. Focus groups were organised around themes such as 'access and promotion - how should we inform the public about our classes' etc.

In 2018, the FET Division also took part in **national evaluation** processes of the FET provision. Following the PLC review in 2017, a national ESRI/SOLAS Youthreach Evaluation process took place in 2018, and Youthreach, Kilmallock Road Campus was the only Youthreach in the region selected for consultation. A formal Presentation was given to the Advisory Group by the ESRI in November 2018 at SOLAS Headquarters, and the Youth Provision Coordinator subsequently presented the information provided at this meeting to the Youthreach Management team at their December meeting at the FET Training Centre. A similar consultation process carried by INDECON on behalf of SOLAS commenced in 2018, for the national evaluation of the VTOS provision.