

Further Education and Training (FET) Progression to Higher Education (HE)

Transitions Reform Working
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Introduction

There is a wide range of Further Education and Training programmes, fulltime and part-time, available in Ireland. In 2017 FET provision encompassed circa 30,300 courses, providing for 323,308 beneficiaries across 28 different programme titles on offer by Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

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

There are a number of key policy areas that remain a focus for FET. Despite a welcome decline in overall unemployment levels, long-term unemployment remains high, accounting for over half of the total unemployment of 146,205¹. In addition a further 14% have low work intensity, working less than half of the year, or report limited working hours or very low earnings. The most common barriers to employment among these cohorts of the working-age population are low-skill levels, limited work experience and scarce job opportunities. FET is uniquely positioned to address these particular combinations of needs.

Apprenticeship

Description: The further education and training authority SOLAS is the lead agency responsible for apprenticeship on behalf of Government, working in close partnership with the Higher Education Authority, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, industry and education and training providers across further and higher education. Apprenticeship is overseen by a national Apprenticeship Council. Apprenticeship is a programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre. It is a dual system, a blended combination of on-the-job employer-based training and off-the-job training. Most of the apprenticeship programmes consist of seven alternating phases, three of which are off-the-job and four on-the-job. Since 2016, some apprenticeships have been developed that take a different approach, which

¹ Source: SOLAS FET Services Plan 2017

consists of on-the-job training for a number of days per week, while the rest of the week is made up of off-the-job and/or online training. 54 apprenticeships are currently available across the areas of Logistics, Construction, Electrical, Engineering, Finance, Hospitality, Motor and ICT.

<http://www.apprenticeship.ie/en/apprentice/Pages/ApprenticeInfo.aspx>

Location of delivery: Phase 2 is currently delivered by apprenticeship instructors in ETB training centres and Phases 4 and 6 by apprenticeship lecturers in Institutes of Technology. There is usually up to a maximum of 16 learners in a class. The apprenticeships that have developed since 2016 are coordinated by a lead industry partner or ETB and are delivered by Education and Training Boards in a range of locations throughout the country.

Eligibility: To begin an apprenticeship, an applicant must be employed by an approved employer. To be eligible, the applicant must be at least 16 years of age and have a minimum of grade D in any five subjects in the Junior Certificate or equivalent. However, higher educational qualifications and other requirements may be sought by employers. For entry to some apprenticeships, applicants are required to undergo a SOLAS-approved colour vision test.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime

NFQ level: Levels 5 to 10.

Duration: Apprentices are employed by a SOLAS-approved employer for the duration of the programme which is generally between two to four years. Apprenticeship programmes provide at least 50% workplace-based learning.

Financial support: For apprenticeships developed before 2016, the employer pays the apprentice while s/he is being trained on-the-job. A training allowance is paid by the local ETB while the apprentice is attending the off-the-job training.

For apprenticeships developed in 2016 and after, the employer pays the apprentice for the duration of the apprenticeship.

In all cases, the rate of pay is agreed between the employer and the apprentice.

Number of participants 2017: 9,435 total beneficiaries and funding amounted to €53,173,592.

Review or Evaluation: A comprehensive review of the apprenticeship system was published in December 2013. Among the recommendations is the expansion of apprenticeships to new business and industrial sectors. The role of employers in such an expansion is key, according to the review, and they should identify the occupations which would be suitable for new apprentices.

With regard to existing apprenticeships, the Review Group recommended that programmes should be continued and adapted over time, with issues such as duration and the level of qualifications being decided on a trade by trade basis. The curriculum for trades should be examined and updated as a matter of urgency and, where feasible, common modules across apprenticeships should be provided. Other skills such as literacy, numeracy, maths, science and ICT should be integrated into courses.

Staffing: Apprenticeship instructors deliver Phase 2, usually in an ETB training centre, and they are paid by the ETB. Apprenticeship lecturers deliver Phases 4 and 6, usually in an Institute of Technology and they are paid by the HEA. Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7 are work based and overseen by work based tutors. These work-based tutors and their employers must be registered with SOLAS.

<p>Progression opportunities: career progression, upward progression on the National Framework of Qualifications. Apprentice occupations and curricula prepare learners for lifelong learning.</p>

Blended Training

Description: Blended Training courses use training delivery methods which encompass traditional face-to-face instruction and web-based online learning. The mix of face to face and online support is tailored to the individual course and varies greatly by class, discipline, and learning objectives. SOLAS Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Unit supports ETBs Blended Learning training delivery through the provision of a Virtual Learning environment and learning content resources. Examples of courses include a pilot Skills for Work project in which farmers learn to register herds online and create animal movement certificates, to learners with previous IT experience working towards a CISCO Certified Network Associate certificate, Manual and Computerised Payroll and Bookkeeping.

Location of delivery: ETB training centres.

Eligibility: Learners may need some previous experience and/or qualifications for certain courses.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime, although on ETB websites they may be categorised as part-time

NFQ level: Levels 3 -5, or equivalent

Duration: Courses may run for many weeks or several months.

Financial support: The SOLAS TEL Support Unit is funded through the NTF.

Number of participants 2017: 563 total beneficiaries and funding amounted to €751,584.

Evaluation: None

Staffing: Instructors with relevant qualifications and experience

<p>Progression opportunities: employment, further education and training at higher levels on the NFQ</p>

Bridging and Foundation Training

These training Programmes are intended to bridge the gap in a person's educational development, bringing them from a low level to a higher level. They are designed to build bridges to further training / education or employment and in the process considerably strengthen links with employers. Targeted at the unemployed and persons who are socially disadvantaged, Early School Leavers and Long Term Unemployed.

Essentially a Foundation Skills Programme with the added advantage that at the end of the training period participants are given some work experience while still being monitored by their instructor. During this work experience period, participants are brought together on a regular basis to ascertain if they have become aware of further training needs as a result of their work experience. When participants go into full time employment regular contact is maintained with the Training Centre for the first 6- 12 months.

Location of delivery: ETB training centres

Eligibility: Individuals who are distant from the labour market, or who wish to return to employment or education and training after a long period of unemployment.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime.

NFQ level: Generally Levels 3 - 4 or equivalent.

Duration: The duration is determined by the requirements of each set of skills to be acquired for the occupation. Courses are usually less than six months.

Financial support: European Social Fund programme, administered by ETBs.

Number of participants 2017: 1,171 total beneficiaries. €2,715,450 funding allocated.

Evaluation: None.

Staffing: Instructors with relevant qualifications and experience.

<p>Progression opportunities: progression to Level 4, 5, and 6 certified courses</p>

Community Training Centres

Description: Community Training Centres have been in existence since 1977. When FÁS was operating under the Department of Trade Enterprise and Employment, its training provision was divided into four main categories - market-driven, client-driven, pre-market and high supports. The high supports category consisted of Community Training Centres (CTCs), Local Training Initiatives (LTIs) and Specialist Training Providers (STPs). CTCs are local community organisations with their own Board of Management made up of volunteers from the local community. Although CTC staff are employees of the centres, CTCs must report to their ETB and are funded based on an annual submission. Learners entering CTCs must register with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and must undergo a means test before they can qualify and receive their allowance.

There are 35 CTCs around Ireland, offering basic training and supports so that learners may progress onto further learning and/or employment. Like Youthreach, the aim is to equip learners with the skills, knowledge and competencies required for employment. Many CTCs offer modules leading to Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied.

Location of delivery: Community Training Centres

Eligibility: Early school leavers aged between 16 and 22.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime

NFQ level: Levels 3 – 4 or equivalent

Duration: Usually a minimum of one year and can run up to two years.

Financial support: European Social Fund programme. Learners aged 16-17 years have automatic entitlement to a training allowance. Learners who turn 18 years whilst attending a CTC will receive an automatic increase in their payment. New entrants who are over 18 are assessed by DEASP before receiving an allowance.

Number of participants 2017: 2,982 total beneficiaries and funding was €32,789,775.

Staffing: Staff members with trade or specific qualifications are paid according to nationally determined instructor/manager pay rates. They are entitled to annual leave of 21 – 23 days, plus 2 long service days after 5 and 10 years respectively

Progression opportunities: learners may progress to employment or choose to pursue further education in an ETB Post Leaving Certification College or Training Centre.

Justice Workshops

Description: Justice Workshops provide opportunities for people, referred by the probation service, to make positive choices concerning their future and to reduce re-offending through education and training. They provide opportunities for learners to gain nationally recognised certification. Services have a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration with the objective of helping people to gain/return to employment.

Location of delivery: Examples of locations - Santry Hall Industrial Estate in Santry, Tower Programme in Clondalkin and Target in Tallaght.

Eligibility: By referral through the Probation Services in prisons and the community. There is pre- and post-release basis for men and women prisoners, ex-prisoners and ex-offenders. No previous formal qualifications or experience required.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime (some attend when on day release)

NFQ level: Levels 3 – 4 or equivalent

Duration: A year or more

Financial support: This initiative is funded by the Department of Justice and Equality Probations Service, and is supported by the ETBs through provision of learner training allowances which are funded by SOLAS through the NTF.

Number of participants 2017: 219 total beneficiaries and funding was €982.329

Evaluation:

Staffing: Instructors with relevant qualifications and experience

Progression opportunities: On completion of this programme learners will have the skills, knowledge and competencies to use a range of skills and tools, under direction and with

limited autonomy, related to seeking employment or in employment. It enables the learner develop personal qualities and strengths to make informed choices to pursue a range of employment opportunities or to progress to further education or training.

Local Training Initiative (LTI)

Description: The Local Training Initiative programme (LTI) is one of 4 types of Community Training. It is a project-based training and work experience programme carried out in the local community by local community groups.

Location of delivery: LTI projects are located in a variety of settings, such as colleges, business parks, football clubs, community centres, horticultural sites and many others.

Eligibility: The programme is designed for people with low levels of education, unemployed, primarily aged 18 – 35 years and experiencing difficulty in gaining entry to the labour market due to personal, social or geographic disadvantage.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime

NFQ level: Levels 3, 4 and 5.

Duration: Duration of the projects vary.

Financial support: Learners are entitled to a training allowance

Number of participants 2017: 3,569 total beneficiaries and funding was €24,898.732

Evaluation:

Staffing: Instructors with relevant qualifications and experience

Progression opportunities: enter or re-enter the labour market, progress on to further education and training at higher levels on the NFQ

Post leaving Certificate Programme (PLC)

Description: The Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) programme is designed to provide specific vocational skills to those who have completed senior cycle, adults returning to education deemed to have the necessary competencies, and those who are unemployed and seeking to upskill. PLC courses represent the largest component of full-time FET provision in Ireland. While initially developed as a route into employment, and therefore largely as an alternative to third-level education, PLC courses have increasingly become a route into higher education for a significant number. The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) for the PLC Programme is 19:1.

Location of delivery: Courses continue to be provided within second-level school structures. This approach developed because of the initial focus of pre-employment courses on providing alternative pathways for at-risk young people, but has not changed despite the shift towards provision for those who have already completed the Leaving Certificate (and indeed, towards providing for older adults). A number of stand-alone further education colleges have emerged, while in other ETB schools and colleges, community/comprehensive schools, and voluntary secondary schools PLC students are taught in the same building as younger people taking regular junior and senior cycle courses.

Eligibility: Participants must be at least 16 years of age on commencing the course. Academic entry requirements should be appropriate to the award being offered and may include the Established Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP), Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), QQI Level 4 or equivalent. The programme also caters for adults returning to education who may not have completed the senior cycle, but are deemed by the provider to have the necessary competencies and capacity to undertake the Programme.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime.

NFQ level: Levels 5 - 6.

Duration: 1 academic year - at least 167 days as outlined in Department of Education & Skills Circular Letter 129195.

Financial support: An enhanced capitation grant (reduced in 2011 and 2014) is payable to all PLC students to cover the cost of equipment, materials and general running expenses, but otherwise PLC providers are governed by second-level structures in terms of teacher contracts and length of the school year.

Number of participants 2017: 58,778 total beneficiaries and funding was €7,133,900.

Evaluation: SOLAS awarded the contract for the evaluation of the PLC programme to ESRI and the report was published in January 2018. The report makes a series of recommendations that address:

- improving the effectiveness and quality of PLCs;
- identifying the most suitable structure for the delivery of PLC programmes;
- optimising progression to both employment/self-employment and further study/higher education;
- improving social inclusion;
- improving cost-effectiveness;
- ensuring geographical spread and diversity of programmes; and
- improving teaching and learning supports.

Staffing: Qualification specifications for PLC (as well as other further education) teachers and tutors are set by the Teaching Council in a parallel process to that used for primary and second-level teachers. To be eligible for registration as a teacher in further education (FE), a person must have a primary degree, together with a recognised FE teaching qualification.

CPD: According to the recent evaluation, 57% of colleges reported that they had policies for enhancing teacher qualifications. Staff in over 80% of colleges had access to either professional development organised through the ETB network, or direct training provision.

Progression opportunities: Many students take PLC programmes to progress to Higher Education which reserves a number of places for FE students. Other progression routes are directly to employment or to a higher level course in FET.

Specialist Training Provision

Description: Specialist Training Provision (STP) delivers training courses for people with disabilities or physical or mental health issues, who require more intensive support than would be available in non-specialist training provision. Providers include National Learning Network (NLN), the Irish Wheelchair Association, Abode, and Festina Lente.

Location of delivery: Courses are delivered in a variety of settings such as National Learning Network (NLN) centres, IWA, community settings and workplaces.

Eligibility: Entry to specialist training is open to all persons with disabilities and extra support needs, aged from 16 to 65.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime.

NFQ level: Levels 1 – 6.

Duration: Six months to three years.

Financial support: Vocational courses are funded by ETBs. The providers make the weekly payment of the allowances on a back week basis to the learners and apply to the ETB/SOLAS to be reimbursed on a monthly basis. Most students receive an allowance for participation.

Number of participants 2017: 3,594 total beneficiaries and funding was €46,785,490.

Evaluation: SOLAS will conduct an independent evaluation of STP which will commence at the 1st quarter of 2019.

Staffing: Teachers, Psychologists, Rehabilitation Officers, Resource Teachers, Instructors with relevant technical qualifications e.g., one level above the level of the programme being delivered, a training qualification and experience. Requirements vary.

<p>Progression opportunities: enter or re-enter the labour market</p>
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Specific Skills Training

Description: SOLAS/ETB training for employment activity during 2018 concentrates mainly on strongly labour market focused programmes. Specific Skills Training is one of the two largest programmes supported; the other is Traineeships. It is predominantly commercially contracted and can be deployed flexibly.

Long courses are designed to meet the needs of industry across a range of sectors and are fully certified leading to a QQI Award on the National Framework of Qualifications or certification from a recognised external accredited body. Examples of courses include: Computer Applications and Office Skills (25 weeks), Retail Skills Health and Beauty (37 weeks), Business Administration (40 weeks), IT Security Management (29 weeks), Business Process Improvement (20 weeks), Manual and Computerised Payroll and Book-keeping (20 weeks), Life Sciences Manufacturing Operations (47 weeks).

Short courses allow individuals to quickly upgrade their skills. The majority of the programmes on offer are QQI or externally certified. Examples of courses include Kerb, Flag and Paviour Laying (6 weeks), Welding MMA Flat Horizontal (6 weeks), Domestic Solar Hot Water (5 weeks), Oil Fired Appliances Servicing (4 weeks), HGV (9 weeks), IT Applications (10 weeks).

Location of delivery: ETB training centres or other settings that are administered by ETBs.

Eligibility: Different courses require stated minimum levels of attainment on the NFQ. Relevant experience and aptitude may also be required.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime

NFQ level: Levels 3 – 5

Duration: Long courses run for 6 months or more and short courses run for approximately 4 - 10 weeks.

Financial support: European Social Fund (ESF): ETB Training for the Unemployed - Priority 1 Unemployed participants on training courses are paid a training allowance by ETBs based on their DEASP payment.

Number of participants 2017: 14,286 total beneficiaries and funding was €55,902,384.

Evaluation: SOLAS has contracted Indecon Economic Consultants to carry out an independent evaluation of both VTOS and SST.

Staffing: Instructors who have relevant qualifications and experience.

Progression opportunities: access to employment, further education and training and options in the wider community.

Traineeships

Description: Traineeships are labour market focused, predominantly commercially contracted and can be deployed flexibly. They provide occupation-specific training and integrate formal training and workplace coaching with a host employer. The Action Plan to Expand Apprenticeship and Traineeship 2016–2020 aims for 19,000 cumulative enrolments on traineeship programmes between 2016 and 2020. Unlike apprenticeship, traineeship is not governed directly by legislation in Ireland. Currently there are 31 traineeships available nationally, in the Engineering, ICT, Care, Hospitality, Construction & Logistics, Business & Retail, Finance, Sports, Leisure, Fashion and Beauty sectors. ETBs support employers and trainees during their on-the-job learning via scheduled visits and practical supports on work-based assessment. Employers may avail of training for workplace coaches and mentors.

Location of delivery: Learning takes place mainly in an education and training setting and the remainder in the workplace.

Eligibility: Traineeships are open to all potential participants, of all ages and backgrounds, and are free of charge. Trainees may include school leavers, older learners, those in employment and those who are unemployed. Particular target groups include those with lower skills who are in employment and those wishing to return to paid employment following a period of working in the home.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime

NFQ level: Levels 4 - 6, or equivalent.

Duration: 6 – 20 months including at least 30% of on-the-job training.

Financial support: Traineeship is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020. People who are unemployed and wish, following engagement with their Intreo Case Officer, to access traineeship to upskill for employment may be eligible for a training allowance or income support. Groups eligible for income support include those in receipt of Jobseekers Benefit or Allowance, a One Parent Family Payment; a Jobseekers Transitional Payment or Disability Allowance.

Number of participants 2017: 3,482 total beneficiaries and funding was €26,159,261.

Evaluation: An evaluation of the career traineeship pilots was carried out in 2017.

Staffing: Instructors with relevant qualifications and experience as required on individual programme specifications.

Progression opportunities: progression to employment, progression to further study, career development and enhancements of career paths within employment i.e. company-based, cross-skilling, up-skilling, management or self-employment.

Youthreach

Description: The Youthreach programme was officially launched in 1988. It is one of three fulltime FET programmes available within ETBs, offering second-chance education and training to young people who have left school early and it aims to equip them with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to participate fully in society and to progress to further education, training, and employment. Basic skills training, practical work training and general education are features of the programme, and the application of new technology is integrated into all aspects of the programme content. There is a strong emphasis on personal development, on the core skills of literacy/numeracy, communication and IT, along with a choice of vocational options such as catering, hairdressing, IT, woodwork, photography, video, sports, art and craft, and a work experience programme. Learners have access to guidance and counselling.

Location of delivery: Youthreach is delivered through a network of 103 centres for education, in out-of-school settings distributed throughout the country, and generally serve disadvantaged areas.

Eligibility: Early school-leavers aged between fifteen and twenty years. There is continual intake.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime.

NFQ level: Mainly levels 3 – 4, occasionally Level 5 (Leaving Certificate).

Duration: 1 year with an option to do a second year, with 35 hours education and training per week for 45 weeks.

Financial support: The programme receives funding from the European Social Fund under priority 2 (social inclusion and equal opportunities) and also receives a special allocation under the Youth Employment Initiative. Resources are allocated to each ETB by SOLAS for tuition, non-pay provision (which may include payment of ancillary staff), provision for allowances and learner supports, administration and rent. Currently each ETB receives 4,200 tuition hours per group of 25 learners, with pro rata adjustments for smaller or larger groups. This allocation of hours translates into a total pay bill for centre staff which is funded by SOLAS.

Courses are free of charge for learners and a training allowance is paid, which is determined by learners' ages. The Childcare Education and Training Support (CETS) programme operated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs supports students and trainees participating in certain SOLAS and ETB further education and training programmes, including Youthreach.

Number of participants 2017: 6,950 total beneficiaries and funding was €65,960,199.

Evaluation: An evaluation was carried out by the Inspectorate in 2010. It was developed from an analysis and synthesis of the reports from the 2006 - 2007 evaluations. The sample represents 27% of the total number of Youthreach centres that existed at the end of 2007. Recommendations were made regarding attendance and retention, Individual Learning Plans, certification and progression. A contract was awarded to the ESRI for the independent evaluation of the National Youthreach programme, this work will complete final quarter 2018.

Staffing: According to the Operator Guidelines for the Youthreach programme 2015, each centre should have 1 full time Co-ordinator working 37 hours per week, made up of up to 15 hours of direct contact with learners on a group or 1:1 basis with the balance devoted to other duties as laid out in Circular 12/2003.

Each centre should have at least 1 full time Resource Person per group of 25 learners. Resource Persons work for 37 hour per week, made up of up to 20 hours of direct contact with learners on a group or 1:1 basis with the balance devoted to other duties including key working, as set out in Circular 12/2003.

With the remaining hour's allocation, ETBs may employ full-time or part-time staff, as required and appropriate. Such staff may be employed as pro-rata resource persons or part-time teachers depending on the needs of the programme. Qualified part-time teachers in Youthreach are entitled to the same conditions of service as qualified part time teachers in 2nd level schools. Contracts of indefinite duration may be awarded to all categories of staff in Youthreach.

CPD: The support of staff and the maintenance and development of their skills are the responsibility of ETBs. According to the SOLAS FET Professional Development Strategy (2017-2019), professional development activities in the FET sector are currently supported by a

relatively small CPD budget of €300,000 annually, which is distributed to ETBs as part of the annual funding for the VTOS and Youthreach programmes.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Further-Education-and-Training/Youthreach/youthreach-guidelines.pdf>

Progression opportunities: employment, progression to PLCs, apprenticeships, IoT's

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

Description: The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) was established to provide a range of courses to meet the education and training needs of unemployed people. The scheme allows successful applicants to keep their Social Welfare Allowances while attending their courses. The courses range from basic education and training to advanced vocational training and there is a wide choice of subjects.

Location of delivery: Participation in VTOS may be as a 'core' VTOS student participating in a group of up to twenty other VTOS students in a VTOS Centre or Adult Education Centre, or as a 'dispersed' VTOS student participating in a group of students some of whom may be VTOS students and some of whom will be studying through other schemes/programmes. 'Dispersed' VTOS students generally attend a Further Education College or a Post-Leaving Certificate College.

In all cases the learning centre or college will be under the management of the local Education and Training Board (ETB).

Eligibility: Applicants must be at least 21 years of age and in receipt, for at least six months (156 days), of payment such as unemployment benefit/ assistance, one-parent family payment, invalidity pension, disability allowance/benefit. They could also be signing for credits for at least six months or a dependent spouse of an eligible person. The following categories of people are also eligible to join VTOS provided they are at least 21 years of age and can satisfy the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs that they have not been engaged in paid work for at least six months and are in receipt of one of the following payments: blind person's pension, deserted wife's allowance, deserted wife's benefit,

widow/widower's contributory pension, widow/widower's non-contributory pension and prisoner's wife's allowance.

Fulltime or part-time: Fulltime. However, a learner may work part-time, provided work does not affect class attendance in any way. The VTOS allowance is not means- tested, so s/he may work part-time or during the summer without affecting his/her payment.

NFQ level: 3 – 6 or equivalent.

Duration: A person can remain on a VTOS programme for a maximum of two years. A third year may be granted in very exceptional circumstances, such as extremely low levels of education on entry to VTOS or many classes missed due to illness.

Financial support: Learners who had a prior entitlement to an unemployment assistance/benefit payment receive a training allowance from the ETB instead of their social welfare payment, at a rate equivalent to the maximum rate of unemployment benefit, including any appropriate increases due for a qualified adult and any dependent children. A person will qualify for the €31.80 bonus if they have been in receipt of an unemployment payment for 312 days directly before the course commencement date. Those in receipt of a one-parent family payment, disability allowance, disability benefit, or invalidity for 312 days directly before course commencement date will also qualify for this bonus payment. Those signing for credits, and dependent spouses are not eligible for this payment. A small lunch allowance may be available and, depending on the distance between the learner's home and the VTOS centre, there may be a travel allowance. Books and materials may be free of charge and childcare support may be available.

Number of participants 2017: 7,966 total beneficiaries and funding was €65,960,199.

Evaluation: SOLAS has contracted Indecon Economic Consultants to carry out an independent evaluation of both VTOS and SST.

Staffing: Adult education teachers, VTOS co-ordinators, assistant co-ordinators (only where there are large numbers), psychologists, adult guidance counsellors and tutors. Where Core

VTOS operates within a school, the Principal is responsible for the overall management of the school, and the VTOS co-ordinator will report to the Principal.

CPD: According to the SOLAS FET Professional Development Strategy (2017-2019), professional development activities in the FET sector are currently supported by a relatively small CPD budget of €300,000 annually, which is distributed to ETBs as part of the annual funding for the VTOS and Youthreach programmes. In general, ETBs avail of this budget to support a programme of professional development events, based on needs determined by individual staff together with programme managers and coordinators. Apart from this, agencies such as FESS, WIT, NALA and NCGE receive funding from SOLAS to provide professional development supports to the sector. The total of this funding amounts to approximately €1.3 million per year and is distributed via an existing grants system to a range of organisations.

<http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/SolasFETPDS.pdf>

Progression opportunities: higher level VTOS schemes, employment, other FET provision
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Adult Literacy

Description: Adult Literacy is the provision of basic education, including reading, writing and numeracy skills, and ICT for adults who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy competencies to enhance their participation in personal, social and economic life. It is a core service of group literacy and numeracy tuition, available during the daytime and evenings, as well as Family Literacy, ESOL and Work Based provision. One-to-one tuition may also be provided where appropriate, as this can be an important stepping-stone for returning to learning for many learners.

Tuition may be provided to groups ranging between 4 and 8 learners for up to 8 hours per week, including intensive tuition options. Courses are free-of-charge.

Location of delivery: Courses run across ETBs – some in the main FET location, others in outreach centres throughout the area. Usually, many classes operate from a range of locations. There are various names for the locations where literacy takes place e.g., adult

learning centres. There is no common brand to signify literacy service across ETBs. The word 'literacy' is rarely, if ever, used in the title of the centre.

Eligibility: The priority target cohort for adult literacy programmes are those adults with primary education or less and whose literacy and numeracy skills do not match Level 3 on the NFQ, as well as some adults with upper second level education, with literacy and numeracy skills that are less than or equivalent to NFQ Level 3.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time

NFQ level: Levels 1 – 3. However, many learners attend exclusively in order to address specific goals relating to reading, writing and numeracy in everyday life, and not with the objective of gaining qualifications.

Duration: In theory, tuition can proceed indefinitely. However literacy providers are encouraged to promote progression options for learners. BTEI tends to be the main progression route in FET for literacy and numeracy learners. There are moves towards greater provision of intensive literacy and numeracy options for learners through the ITABE programme.

Financial support: Funding for adult literacy is allocated to ETBs by the Department under the Adult Literacy, Community Education and SPIDAS Scheme (ALCES).

Pay costs are the costs of tuition, co-ordination and administration staff, including ALOs and paid tuition staff. A minimum of 50% of the Adult Literacy budget allocation must be spent on the provision of tuition i.e. direct tuition pay.

Non-pay costs include equipment and materials, overheads (such as rental) and staff training and/or Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Non-pay costs may also include the limited provision of childcare and limited additional guidance input, the latter to be arranged in consultation with the AEGS.

Number of participants 2017: 37,621 total beneficiaries and funding was €24,964,367.

Evaluation: A review of ALCES funded Literacy provision was published in January 2013

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-ALCES-funded-Adult-Literacy-Provision.pdf>

This review was the foundation of the 12-element FET Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, which is included in the Further Education and Training Strategy (2014 – 2019), Section 6.

Staffing: Within ETBs, the Adult Literacy Organiser (ALO), who reports to the Adult Education Officer (AEO) manages the delivery of adult literacy programmes. Paid tutors or unpaid volunteers deliver them.

With the approval of the AEO and CEO, ALOs should allocate tuition hours in accordance with the panel in the first instance and other factors such as availability in the second. As part of the recruitment and induction process, all paid tutors are provided with a contract of employment stating their entitlements. Paid tutors, as with all other staff employed in the ETB sector, are Garda vetted. Unpaid volunteers are engaged in one-to-one tuition and may also assist paid tutors in groups.

CPD: NALA provides training to ETB practitioners across various ETBs. NALA hosts a number of conferences annually for literacy and numeracy practitioners including Family Literacy (usually November); ESOL (usually March) and Numeracy (usually May). They also host fora for tutors as well as learners.

Progression opportunities: variety of learning and progression routes available both accredited and non accredited depending on the level of confidence gained. Current progression routes for students include accredited courses, further education and training opportunities, employment and community or voluntary activities. It is important to note, progression can also be increased confidence and better networking skills.

Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) Groups

Description: The primary target group for BTEI is adults who have not completed upper second level education, particularly the so called “hard to reach” that experience strong barriers to participation. The initiative facilitates providers to increase participation through a wider range of flexible options which are appropriate to the particular circumstances of

learners, enabling them to combine family, work or personal responsibilities with learning opportunities. Providers focus on the skills needs of unemployed people, in particular the priority groups identified in the Government's activation agenda, and develop part-time education and training opportunities for low skilled people in employment to gain qualifications. Further details of the target groups can be found in the Back To Education Initiative (BTEI) Operational Guidelines 2012.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Further-Education-and-Training/Back-to-Education-Initiative-BTEI-/Back-To-Education-Initiative-Operational-Guidelines.pdf>

Progression within and from adult education is promoted by staff members with input from Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI).

Location of delivery: In ETB training centres.

Eligibility: Anyone who has left full-time education can take part in a course, but priority will be given to those with less than upper second-level education, i.e. those most educationally disadvantaged, offering bridges from literacy and community education programmes and increasing provision at NFQ Levels 3 and Level 4 or equivalent.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time (up to 400 hours per year). It is possible to obtain a major award at NFQ levels 1-6 where part-time courses are undertaken on a modular basis over time and combined to complete the award.

NFQ level: Usually Levels 3 - 4.

Duration: Programmes should not exceed more than 17 hours per week or 400 hours per annum. They can be offered in the mornings, afternoons, evenings, at night or weekends or as intensive, sandwich or summer courses. They can be offered on a modular basis, to allow for accumulation of credits and facilitate progression and mobility.

Financial support: BTEI is co-funded by the Irish Government and the EU under the European Social Fund (ESF). Participants in certain categories are entitled to free tuition and others pay

fees. The funding mechanism used by the ETBs is explained in the BTEI Operational Guidelines.

Number of participants 2017: 33,397 total beneficiaries and funding was €26,822,212.

Evaluation: An evaluation is due to commence in the 1st quarter of 2019.

Staffing: The Adult Education Officer (AEO) is line manager for BTEI staff. BTEI staff members consult and co-operate with colleagues from the other adult education services. Staff members who deliver tuition are recruited from a panel of tutors with associated subject areas. With the approval of the AEO and CEO, staff members with responsibility for co-ordinating the BTEI allocate tuition hours in accordance with the panel in the first instance and other factors such as availability in the second. Tutors are provided with a contract of employment stating their entitlements.

Progression opportunities: employment or progression on to higher level NFQ courses on offer within the further education and training sector.

Community Education

Description: In Ireland, community education is outside the formal education sector, with the aims of enhancing learning, fostering empowerment and contributing to civic society. There are currently a variety of approaches to community education, but the main one is a 'hybrid' approach of a 'community organisation' and a 'community development' model, under which education is delivered in local areas in response to the community's identified needs e.g., programmes that combat social isolation and foster personal development. Community education can transform individual lives and contribute to social cohesion. It enables civil society to play a key role in education with local groups taking responsibility for, and playing a role in organising courses, deciding on programme content and delivering tuition. It provides opportunities for intergenerational learning, builds self-confidence and self-esteem and for those with low skills or a negative experience of formal education. It can provide a stepping stone to further learning, qualifications and rewarding work.

Location of delivery: It is located in communities which can be area-based or issue-based, or around some other value.

Eligibility: Target groups for community education programmes include individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation in adult learning, in particular those who wish to access learning locally, as a step to more active community involvement or certified learning. Learners include adults with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy levels, especially those with less than upper second level education or NFQ Levels 1-3, or equivalent, the long term unemployed, one-parent families, travellers, migrants/refugees/asylum seekers and others identified in the Community Education Operational Guidelines.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Further-Education-and-Training/Adult-Literacy/Community-Education-Operational-Guidelines-to-VECs.pdf>

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time.

NFQ level: Non accredited provision enables adults to return to the learning process at their own pace, to explore their full potential and to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of their area, but course activity should take place within an agreed time frame. Accreditation can be offered through the provision of single modules/ minor awards.

Duration: Varies but within an agreed timeframe.

Financial support:

Funding used to fund community groups to deliver particular community education programmes is normally allocated through the provision of tuition hours or small grants but should be underpinned by a written agreement, e.g. a service level agreement. These agreements should specify an agreed volume of tuition for a specific target group in a particular area. As a general rule, a minimum of 75% of grant allocated should be spent on tutor fees.

All DES-funded community education programmes should be offered free-of-charge to those who have less than upper second level education and/or who are educationally or socially disadvantaged.

Number of participants 2017: 50,414 total beneficiaries and funding was €10,836,192.

Evaluation: A review of ALCES funded Literacy provision was published in January 2013

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-ALCES-funded-Adult-Literacy-Provision.pdf>

Staffing: Community Education Facilitators (CEFs) manage the delivery of community education programmes, including staff, in consultation and co-operation with colleague co-ordinators from the other adult education services.

A panel of tutors is established, with associated subject areas where relevant. With the approval of the AEO and CEO, CEFs should allocate tuition hours in accordance with the panel in the first instance and other factors such as availability in the second. As part of the recruitment and induction process, all paid tutors are provided with a contract of employment stating their entitlements in accordance with recruitment guidelines. The maximum amount claimable for tutor hours from the grant must not exceed the current ETB tutor rate.

<http://www.cefa.ie/>

CPD: CEFs are members of the Community Education Facilitators' Association's (CEFA). Their website (see above) acts as a resource for CEFs.

Progression opportunities: pathway to work, leads to many possibilities for learners and communities, including skills development, confidence building, greater community involvement and progression to further education or employment.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Description: ESOL classes are for adults living and working in Ireland, for whom English is not their first language. This is distinct from EFL (English as a Foreign Language) which is usually delivered in private language schools. Classes aim to develop the learners' core language skills in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammatical accuracy.

Language competency levels are classified, using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, into A1-A2 (beginner), B1-B2 (intermediate) and C1-C2 (advanced). **ESOL language** focuses on English language development for students who do not have literacy difficulties in their native language. **ESOL literacy** (for students who are new to English) refers to teaching and learning that focuses on both language and literacy development in English for students who have literacy difficulties in their mother tongue to an extent that creates significant, additional challenges for the learning of English as a second language.

Location of delivery: ETB centres.

Eligibility: Referrals are made to ETBs by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP). Demand also comes from employers, Home School Community Liaison Coordinators, as well as from individual applicants. Priority target groups include asylum seekers and low-income EU immigrant or migrant workers and unemployed EU migrants. There may be a short assessment to establish the learner's level of English.

Fulltime or part-time: Mainly part-time.

NFQ level: Levels 3 - 6. Some ETBs use current QQI ESOL awards. Others use Cambridge exams or provide access to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

Duration: Varies between ETBs. The majority of ETBs provide ESOL tuition of less than 100 hours per annum. Research suggests a minimum of 200 hours of tuition over one year is required to reach A2 competence.

Financial support: Beginner and elementary ESOL programmes are free for those over 21 years of age who are in receipt of a social welfare allowance. Support for childcare is also available.

Number of participants 2017: 14,458 total participants and funding was €1,736,987.

Evaluation: Review of ETB ESOL provision and initial language assessment for low skilled and unemployed migrants March 2018.

<http://www.solas.ie/SolasPdfLibrary/English%20language%20provision%20and%20language%20assessment.pdf>

Staffing: ESOL coordinators, Adult Literacy Organisers, tutors and resource workers

CPD: NALA currently offers a series of one-day “ESOL and Literacy” courses, which look at materials and suitable tuition methods. These are known as “ESOL 1” and “ESOL 2”. NALA also offers a one-day workshop on “Intercultural Awareness” for ESOL/adult literacy tutors and ALOs and are developing accredited training with Waterford Institute of Technology on Intercultural Awareness.

Progression opportunities: progression to higher level further education and training such as BTEI, VTOS and PLC programmes. Other progression routes are employment, Higher Education, the adult literacy programme, and other ESOL providers grant aided by ETBs.

Evening Training

Description: Evening courses are designed to provide learners with a range of employability-related skills and qualifications to facilitate those entering the labour market for the first time. It also caters for those who are interested in updating or adding to their skills and/or qualifications, in their spare time.

Location of delivery: Usually in ETB training centres.

Eligibility: Open to employed and unemployed participants.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time.

NFQ level: Levels 3 – 6 or equivalent. Not all are accredited.

Duration: This varies according to the course requirements, ranging from 1 day to 26 weeks. They are delivered on one or two evenings per week.

Financial support: Those in receipt of a payment from DEASP apply for a course through an Employment Services office. Other fee-payers apply directly to the ETB training centres/locations.

Number of participants 2017: 14,562 total participants and funding was €5,743,787.

Staffing: Instructors, teachers and tutors with relevant qualifications and experience as required on individual programme specifications.

Progression opportunities: entering the workforce, progression to further and higher education

FET Cooperation Hours

Description: Extract from LOETB website: The Department of Education and Skills has, for a significant period of time, allocated additional teaching resources to ETBs under what is commonly termed the 'Cooperation Hours' scheme, to provide teaching services to other institutions and bodies as part of the remit of the ETB to provide for continuing education in their areas. Cooperation hours are allocated to a variety of services and bodies by ETBs including:

Community Training Centres, Disability Services, Youth Services and Language Support for Refugees.

The rationale and criteria for awarding these hours are largely based on historical decisions. Activity under these arrangements varies from fully uncertified/unaccredited to programmes leading to full awards at levels 1-5 on the NFQ. LOETB has identified a requirement for additional monitoring of activity under these arrangements and has commenced introducing the necessary supports.

Number of participants 2017: 20,614 total beneficiaries and there was no funding in 2017.

Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE)

Description: This programme, which began in 2006, is a model of tuition in adult literacy and basic education for adults who are educationally disadvantaged. The classes are flexible and

sensitive to participants' needs. Participants, in groups of 6 – 8, are provided with more intensive tuition than the norm, to accelerate their learning. Their literacy/numeracy skills are assessed at the beginning and end of the course. Tuition hours are mainly allocated to modules most directly related to literacy/numeracy provision. The course content usually includes a combination of the following: Communication Skills: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Numeracy; Learning to Learn: Understanding Learning Styles, Study Skills, Educational Guidance; Introduction to IT: Basic Computers, Internet.

Location of delivery: Various locations throughout the ETBs.

Eligibility: Participants are 18 years of age or older and not attending full-time second level education. They must be experiencing a severe degree of literacy or numeracy difficulties and have a literacy standard below QQI Level 3.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time.

NFQ level: Participants work towards attainment of Levels 1 – 3.

Duration: 14 weeks, with 6 hours tuition per week. Sessions are either 2 by 3 hours or 3 by 2 hours.

Financial support: The service is free for learners. It is under the Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme (ALCES).

Number of participants 2017: 2,752 total beneficiaries and funding was €1,938,124.

Evaluation: A review of ALCES funded Literacy provision was published in January 2013.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-ALCES-funded-Adult-Literacy-Provision.pdf>

Staffing: Adult Literacy Organiser (ALO), ITABE co-ordinator and group tutor.

CPD: NALA provides training to ETB practitioners across various ETBs. NALA hosts a number of conferences annually for literacy and numeracy practitioners including Family Literacy, which is usually offered in November, and Numeracy, which is usually offered in May.

Progression opportunities: progression to higher levels on the NMQ in particular broader accredited programmes with a specific vocational focus

On-line Learning (eCollege)

Description: eCollege manages, co-ordinates and supports the delivery of the National Online Learning service. Online and distance training courses are provided in business, project management, SQL, Cisco, graphic design, web design, digital marketing, software development and basic computer literacy. One of the main functions of eCollege is the support of Technology Enhanced Learning within the FET training network. Software, where applicable, is provided for the duration of the course. Exams/assessments are administered online at accredited test centres.

<http://intranet.fasoffice.com/CentralProg/Ecollege/Pages/default.aspx>

Location of delivery: Courses are available on-line with eTutor support. Clients can learn at home, place of work or other preferred location. eCollege courses are delivered through “Moodle”, a Learning Management System that contains communication and collaboration tools.

Eligibility: People who are in receipt of social welfare can ask to enrol on an eCollege course at their local Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) or Intreo office. Courses are also available, for a fee, to employed persons who wish to update their skills. Access to a computer, with certain minimum specifications, is required.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time.

NMQ level: Levels 2- 10.

Duration: Approximately 14 -20 weeks. It is recommended that learners go on-line each day and cover 2-3 topics, then come off-line and put into practice what they have covered.

Financial support: Courses are free of charge for people who unemployed. Jobseeker's in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, Jobseeker's Benefit, Disability Allowance or One Parent Family Allowance and those signing on for credits are eligible. Those on job seekers will continue to sign with the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), retain their allowance/benefit and will not receive a training allowance.

Number of participants 2017: 8,556 total beneficiaries and funding was €1,685,000.

Evaluation: No comprehensive evaluation of eCollege has been conducted. A review of the 4-year contract with CENIT has recently been carried out and findings will emerge from this.

Staffing: Currently eCollege contract a company called CENIT who recruit eTutors. There are 20 eTutors available from Monday to Friday to assist learners in activating their account and encourage them to progress through their course, including setting and correcting assignments. When an individual learner completes their course, their eTutor identifies an Approved Test Centre where they can complete their certification and then assists them in progressing to further education, training or employment.

CPD: The maintenance and development of eTutors' skills are the responsibility of CENIT as specified in their contract with eCollege.

Progression opportunities: employment and ecollege courses at the next level

Refugee Resettlement

Description: Refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution. Refugee Resettlement under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State that has agreed to admit them with permanent residence status. Under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) in 2015, the Irish government pledged to accept a total of 4,000 persons through EU Relocation, Refugee Resettlement and other mechanisms. This programme is operated by the Office for Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI). Under the resettlement strand, Ireland resettled 1,040 refugees from Lebanon by the end of 2017.

Adult programme refugees have access to an initial 8 week language training and orientation programme in a number of ETBs for a period of 8 weeks under the resettlement strand of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. Following resettlement in the community, a full language and training programme is put in place by the ETB for up to 20 hours per week, for a period of one year. There is currently no support at national level for ETBs offering language

provision as part of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. One ETB reported that there is particular difficulty for those refugee learners progressing from a 12 month intensive programme to provision of only two hours weekly.

The Tipperary ETB provides tailored English instruction to three groups of Programme Refugees at three different levels based on initial language assessments. In 2013, the Cavan ETB provided language instruction for thirteen adult Programme Refugees 15 hours per week for a year. In addition, the ETBs in Laois and Offaly, Kildare and Wicklow, City of Dublin and Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim all reported having language programmes built into their service for Programme Refugees specifically.²

www.integration.ie

Location of delivery: ETBs

Eligibility: Asylum seekers (families and individuals) who have received refugee status and are available for settlement in communities around Ireland.

Full-time or part-time: Part-time

NFQ level: NA

Duration: Ongoing.

Number of participants 2017: 1,035 total beneficiaries and funding was €2,058,312.

Evaluation: None

² Gusciute, E., S. Arnold and E. Quinn (2016). *Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection into the Labour Market: Policies and Practices in Ireland*. European Migration Network. Research Series No. 52, Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute.

Skills for Work

Description: The Skills for Work programme provides educational training opportunities to help employees in the workplace. It aims to raise the competency levels of those with low levels of educational qualifications, enhance their communication and basic IT skills, and enable them to cope with frequent and ongoing changes in work practices. All SFW courses include literacy and numeracy elements integrated into a variety of subjects ranging from communications, computing, interpersonal skills, problem-solving and report-writing. To date, the programme has engaged with over 3,000 employees with the support of their employers throughout a wide range of sectors including Industry, Hospitality, Food and Beverage, Retail, Farming Community and Transport.

<http://skillsforwork.ie/>

Location of delivery: On company premises where possible, the local ETB Adult Education Centre, or an alternative convenient location.

Eligibility: People who over 18 years of age and not in full-time second level education, in part-time or full time employment, with work skill needs and with few, out-dated or no educational qualifications.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time.

NFQ level: Courses may lead to Level 3 awards. This is optional.

Duration: 35 hours, with 2-3 hour long sessions that can be arranged for mornings, afternoons or evenings.

Financial support: There are no tuition fees. Employers must be willing to release staff to participate in the programme.

Number of participants 2017: 3,460 total beneficiaries and funding was €2,800,000.

Staffing: The project is managed nationally by Dublin Dún Laoghaire ETB (DDLETB) and there are a number of regional co-ordinators. Programmes are generally delivered by a qualified

tutor to groups of 6 – 8 people within a single company, where there are sufficient numbers, or to employees in a cluster of companies.

Progression opportunities: progression to higher levels on the NFQ

Voluntary Literacy Tuition

Description: Over the past 30 years, voluntary literacy tuition has been part of the adult literacy service. Volunteer tutors generally provide one-to-one tuition, while paid tutors work with small groups. Volunteers do not need specific formal qualifications. However, they need to be good readers and communicators, and to have an ability to empathise with and understand adults with literacy difficulties. Voluntary work does not mean that the work is free of standards and regular commitment. When initial training has been completed, the Adult Literacy Organiser from the ETB then tries to match each volunteer with an adult learner.

Location of delivery: Local adult education centres and outreach centres nationwide.

Eligibility: Adult literacy programmes are for adults over 16 with less than upper second level education. Volunteers work with adults from this group who are in need of one-to-one literacy tuition.

Fulltime or part-time: Part-time.

NFQ level: Levels 1-3.

Duration: Most services offer a minimum of 2 hours tuition per week and this can be arranged in the morning, afternoon or evening.

Financial support: Tuition is offered free of charge to eligible participants.

Number of participants 2017: 1,338 total beneficiaries and no funding.

Evaluation: A review of ALCES funded Literacy provision was published in January 2013.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Review-of-ALCES-funded-Adult-Literacy-Provision.pdf>

Volunteers may provide an important role in supporting Adult Literacy participants but their roles should be clarified by the development of written volunteer protocols with more emphasis placed on supporting group tuition. The emphasis on the use of volunteers in some VECs (now ETBs) is decreasing with a number reviewing their volunteer recruitment policies as well as developing formal protocols.

Staffing: Volunteer tutors. A suggested volunteer charter was circulated to VECs in 2004 as part of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Implementation plan.

CPD: Tutor training usually involves attending a class with other volunteers for one evening a week for about 6 weeks. Varies between but some keep in constant contact with their volunteers, offering mentoring support and occasional in-house training. Each ETB should have a volunteer tutor policy in place which should cover the recruitment, vetting, initial and on-going training, selection, supervision and support of volunteer tutors.