



**lwetb**

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
an Longfoirt agus na hIarmhí  
Longford and Westmeath  
Education and Training Board

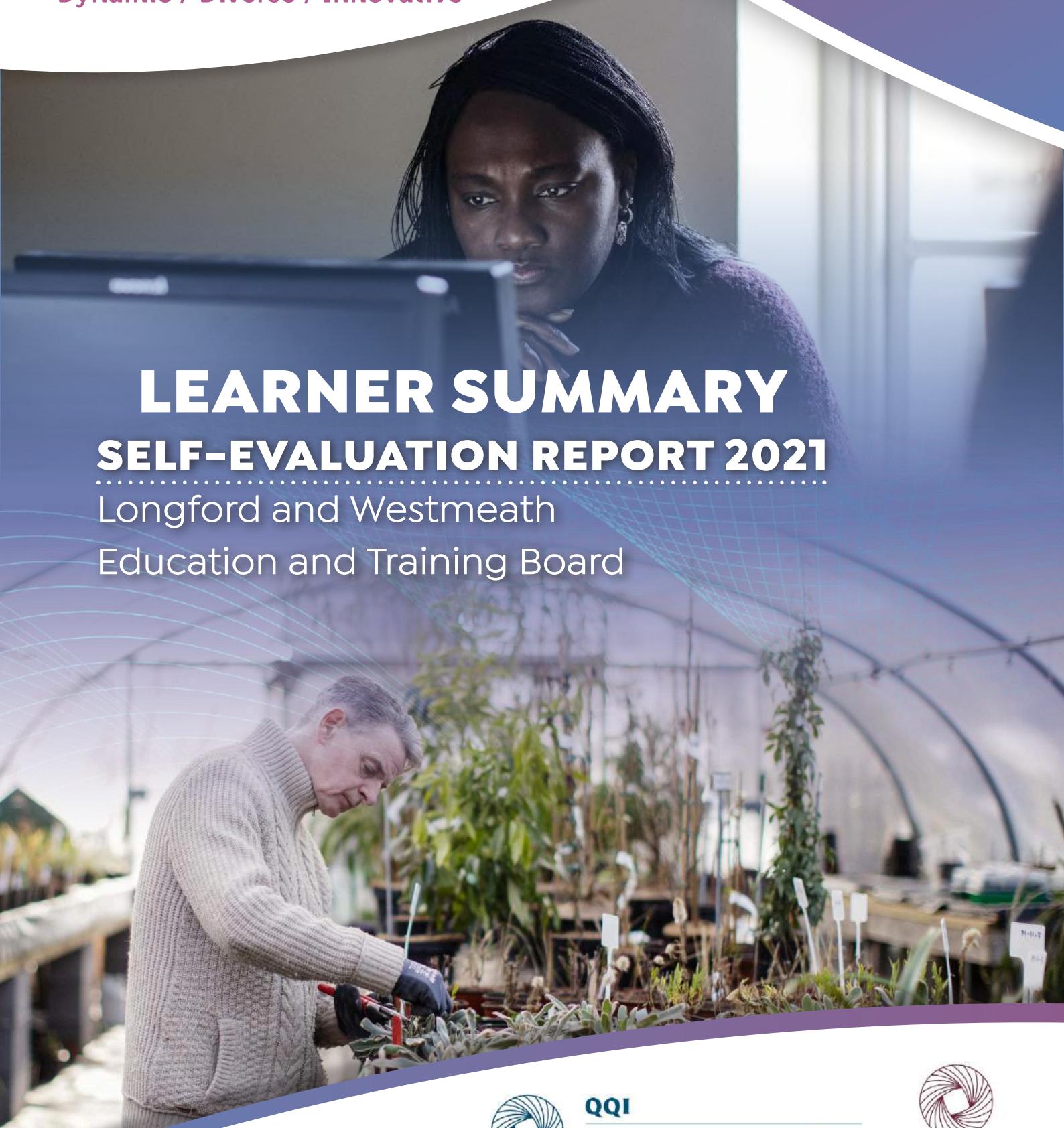
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Inaugural Review of  
Quality Assurance

# LEARNER SUMMARY

## SELF-EVALUATION REPORT 2021

Longford and Westmeath  
Education and Training Board



**QQI**

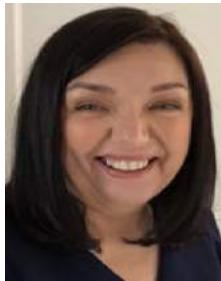
Dearbhú Cáilfchta agus Cáilfchtaí Éireann  
Quality and Qualifications Ireland



QQI REVIEW



## FOREWORD



I am very pleased to present the Learner Summary of the Self-Evaluation Report as part of the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance by Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board.

Our learners are integral to our service and are what drive us to ensure that quality is at the heart of all that we do. But how can we ensure that this is the case? By listening to our learners, staff and stakeholders and from this reflect, learn and grow. From this process we produce reports such as the self-evaluation report to ensure we create aligned goals and plans that are fit-for-purpose and add positive influence and drive to our quality culture here in LWETB.

This process has allowed us precious time to pause and consider all quality assurance processes currently in place within LWETB. This report highlights much of the excellent work that has been completed to date, goals achieved and milestones reached. Consistent monitoring and improvement is very important to us in LWETB and this report highlights the key areas that will receive increased attention in the future.

LWETB does not exist in a bubble. Participation in National Advisory Groups, support provided to National and EU initiatives provided by SOLAS, QQI and ETBI, collaboration with our ETB peers, industry, learners and other agencies has resulted in the development of a vibrant FET sector - supporting the learner as they proceed through their own learning journey.

I am humbled at how our learners have adapted to new ways of learning since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and despite considerable challenges, did not let these challenges hinder their individual goals. Likewise, our dedicated, committed and highly skilled staff have always put the learner first by adopting, overcoming and continuing to deliver a high quality service in challenging times.

This report demonstrates that LWETB is a dynamic, inclusive and exciting place for learners and staff and I am very excited for its future.

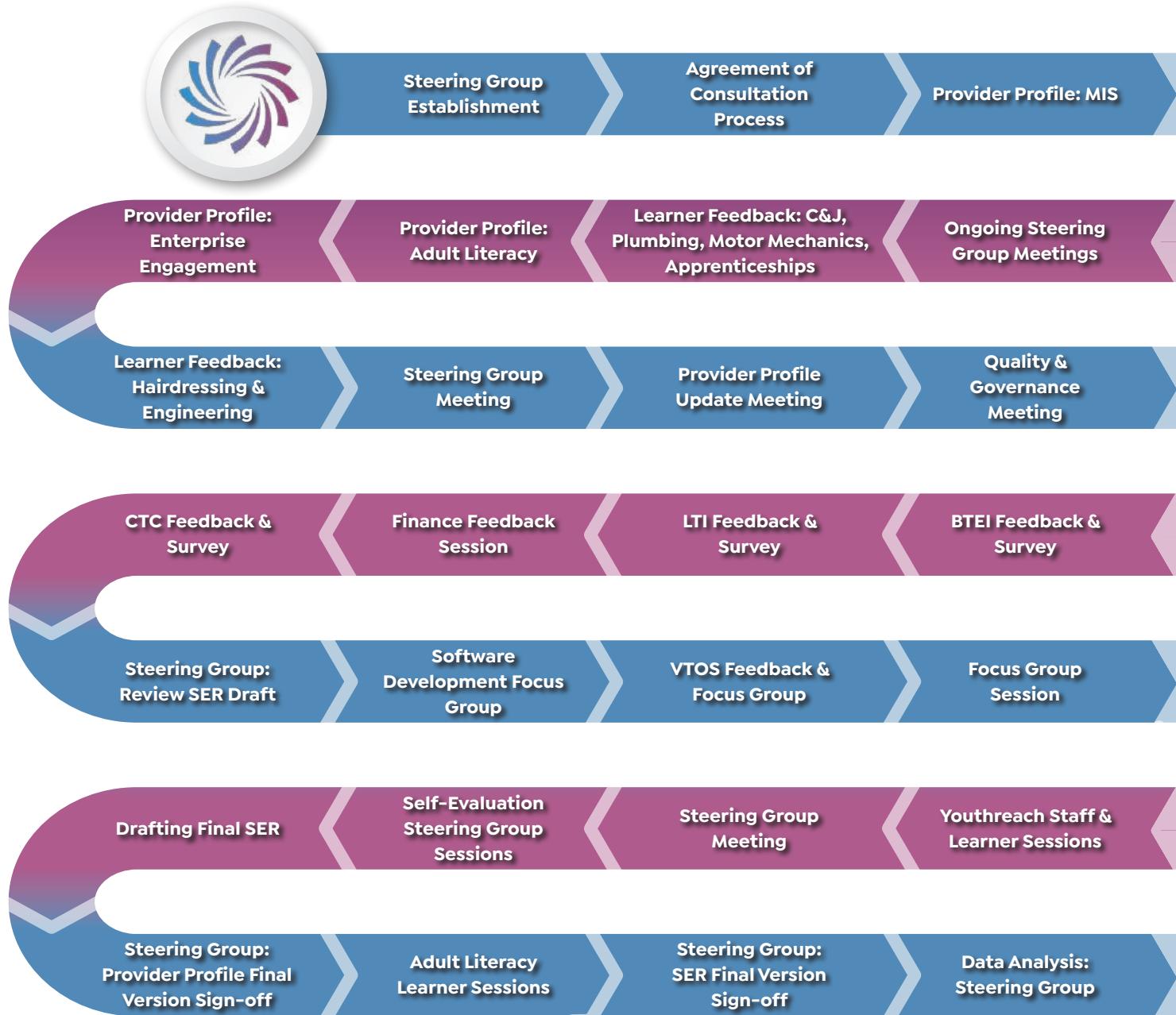
**Liz Lavery**  
Chief Executive

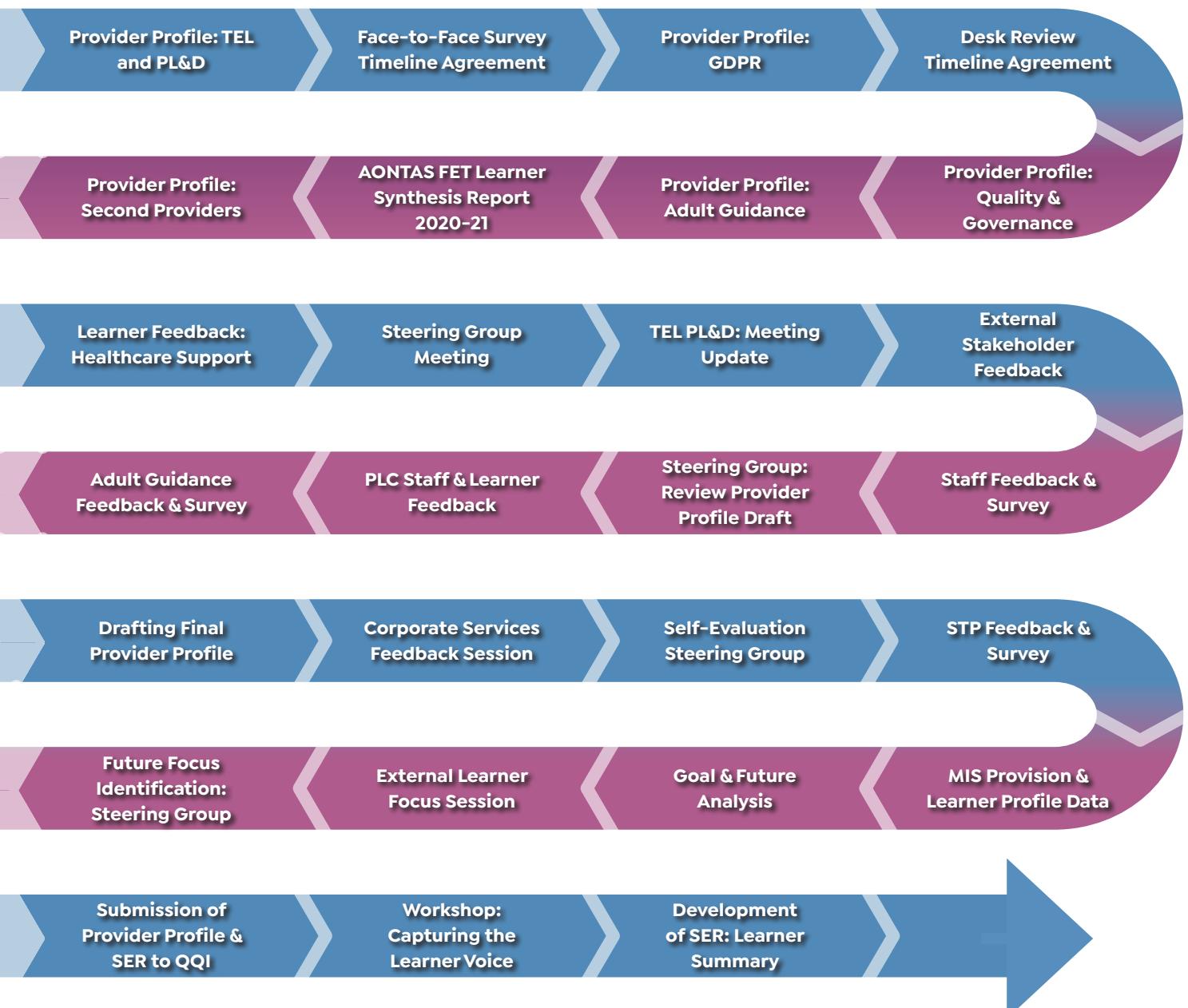
## GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AIS</b>	Assessment Instrument Specifications	<b>ITABE</b>	Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education	<b>QGG</b>	Quality Governance Group
<b>AONTAS</b>	Aos Oideachais Náisiúnta Trí Aontú Saorálach (National Adult Education Through Voluntary Unification)	<b>ITEC</b>	International Therapy Examination Council	<b>QIP</b>	Quality Improvement Plan
<b>APMG</b>	Association of Project Managers Group	<b>IV</b>	Internal Verification	<b>QOG</b>	Quality Oversight Group
<b>ATC</b>	Athlone Training Centre	<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicators	<b>QQI</b>	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
<b>BTEI</b>	Back to Education Initiative	<b>LCDC</b>	Local Community Development Committee	<b>RAP</b>	Results Approval Process
<b>CE</b>	Community Employment	<b>LEO</b>	Local Enterprise Office	<b>RAPID</b>	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development
<b>CESI</b>	Computers in Education Society of Ireland	<b>LTI</b>	Local Training Initiative	<b>RCCRS</b>	Results Capture and Certification Request System
<b>CPA</b>	Certified Public Accountant	<b>LWETB</b>	Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board	<b>RSA</b>	Road Safety Authority
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development	<b>MIS</b>	Management Information Systems	<b>RTITB</b>	Road Transport Industry Training Board
<b>CTC</b>	Community Training Centre	<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding	<b>SLMRU</b>	Skills and Labour Market Research Unit
<b>DAC</b>	Designated Activity Company	<b>MRDATF</b>	Midland Region Drug and Alcohol Taskforce	<b>SME</b>	Small to Medium-size Enterprise
<b>DEIS</b>	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools	<b>NACE</b>	Nomenclature générale des Activités économiques dans les Communautés Européennes (Statistical Classification of Economic Activities developed in the European Community)	<b>SME</b>	Subject Matter Expert
<b>DES</b>	Department of Education	<b>NALA</b>	National Adult Literacy Agency	<b>SNA</b>	Special Needs Assistant
<b>DFHERIS</b>	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science	<b>NFQ</b>	National Framework of Qualifications	<b>SOLAS</b>	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (Further Education and Skills Service)
<b>DoJ</b>	Department of Justice	<b>NLN</b>	National Learning Network	<b>SPA</b>	Service Performance Agreement
<b>DoJW</b>	Department of Justice Workshop	<b>NUIG</b>	National University of Ireland, Galway	<b>SST</b>	Specific Skills Training
<b>DSP</b>	Department of Social Protection	<b>NUIM</b>	National University of Ireland, Maynooth	<b>STA</b>	Skills To Advance
<b>EA</b>	External Authentication	<b>OSD</b>	Organisation Support and Development	<b>STB</b>	Services To Business
<b>ESER</b>	Executive Self-Evaluation Report	<b>PDA</b>	Performance Development Agreement	<b>STC</b>	Skills to Compete
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of Other Languages	<b>PGG</b>	Programme Governance Group	<b>STEAM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics
<b>ETB</b>	Education Training Board	<b>PHECC</b>	Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council	<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>ETBI</b>	Education and Training Boards Ireland	<b>PL&amp;D</b>	Professional Learning and Development	<b>STP</b>	Specialist Training Providers
<b>FE</b>	Further Education	<b>PLC</b>	Post-Leaving Certificate	<b>TEL</b>	Technology Enhanced Learning
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training	<b>PLSS</b>	Programme Learner Support System	<b>TQAS</b>	Transitional Quality Assurance System
<b>FETQS</b>	Further Education and Training Quality System	<b>PUP</b>	Pandemic Unemployment Payment	<b>TUS</b>	Technical University of the Shannon
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology	<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance	<b>UDL</b>	Universal Design for Language
<b>ILM</b>	Institute of Leadership and Management			<b>VEC</b>	Vocational Education Committee (former statutory local education body in Republic of Ireland prior to commencement of ETB's)
<b>ILTA</b>	Irish Learning Technology Association			<b>VTCT</b>	Vocational Training Charitable Trust
				<b>VTOS</b>	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
				<b>YR</b>	YouthReach



## TIMELINE OF THE THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT







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**[www.lwetb.ie](http://www.lwetb.ie)**

**#WeAreLWETB**

# ABOUT LWETB



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## LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARD (LWETB)

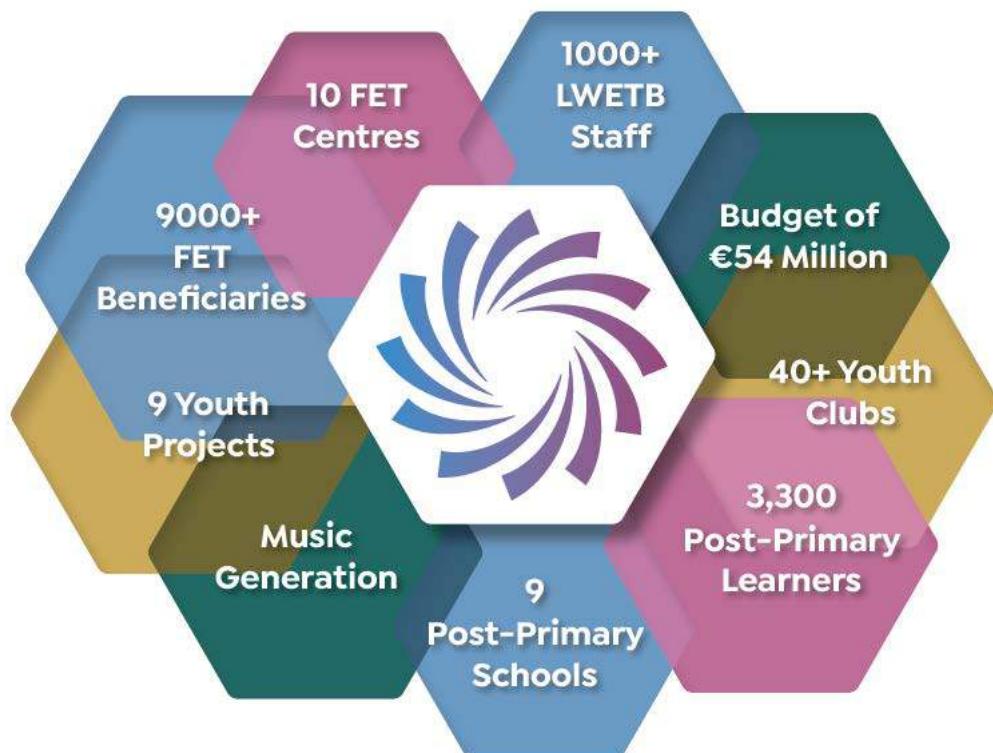
### Introduction

Longford and Westmeath Training Board (LWETB) is the statutory body responsible for the provision of education and training services for the counties of Longford and Westmeath. There are 15 other ETB's that looks after Further Education and Training for all other counties in the Republic of Ireland.

LWETB was established on July 1st of 2013 and operates under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013.

It is an organisation of considerable scale with a 2020 budget of €54 million, employing over 900 staff and supports over 14,000 learners, trainees and beneficiaries. It caters for a diverse population with different educational, social and cultural needs.

A learner is a unique individual, who undertakes a course or engages in a support service. Each time a learner undertakes a course or engages in a support service, the learner is recorded as a beneficiary within one calendar year.



LWETB Further Education and Training programmes are co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union:



Ríaltas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**SOLAS**  
learning works



## LOCATIONS OF LWETB SERVICES IN LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH

### Longford Locations      The services LWETB offer

<b>Ballymahon, FET Centre</b>	Adult Literacy, Back to Education Initiative
<b>Ballymahon, Vocational School</b>	Secondary School
<b>Ballymahon, Youthreach Centre</b>	Youthreach
<b>Edgeworthstown, National Learning Network</b>	Specialist Training Provider
<b>Granard, Ardscoil Phádraig</b>	Secondary School
<b>Granard, FET Centre</b>	Adult Literacy, Back to Education Initiative
<b>Lanesboro, Community College</b>	Secondary School
<b>Longford Town, FET Campus, Battery Road and Church Street</b>	Adult Literacy, Back to Education Initiative, Community Education, Adult Guidance, Post Leaving Certificate Courses, Evening Training, Community Education, Administrative Offices, Music Generation
<b>Longford Town, National Learning Network</b>	Specialist Training Providers
<b>Longford Town, Youthreach Centre</b>	Youthreach
<b>Longford Town, EDI Centre</b>	Local Training Initiatives
<b>Longford Town, Templemichael College</b>	Secondary School, Post Leaving Certificate Courses
<b>Various County Locations</b>	Contracted Training Community Education

### An Longfort LONGFORD



#### Note:

Specialist Training Providers, Local Training Initiatives, Community Training Centres, Department of Justice Workshops, Community Education and Contracted Training are second providers of FET provision which are contracted, funded or grant aided to deliver programmes on behalf of LWETB.



## Westmeath Locations

## The services LWETB offer

### Garrycastle, Athlone Training Centre FET Centre

Bridging and Foundation Programmes, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Specific Skills Training, Evening Training, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, FET Recruitment, Adult Guidance, Services to Business, Enterprise Engagement, Online Test Centre

### Athlone, Community College

Secondary School

### Athlone, Community Training Centre

Vocational Training and Educational Opportunities for Early School Leavers

### Athlone, FET Centre, Clonown Road

Adult Literacy, Back to Education Initiative, Community Education

### Athlone, National Learning Network

Specialist Training Provider, Department of Justice Workshop

### Athlone, St. Anthony's School

Secondary School

### Castlepollard, Community College

Secondary School

### Delvin, Youthreach Centre

Youthreach

### Kilbeggan, Youthreach Centre

Youthreach

### Killucan, Columba College

Secondary School

### Mullingar, Belvedere House

Local Training Initiative

### Mullingar, Community College

Secondary School, Post Leaving Certificate Courses

### Mullingar, Community Training Centre

Vocational Training and Educational Opportunities for Early School Leavers

### Mullingar, FET Centre, Ashe Road

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, Back to Education Initiative

### Mullingar, FET Centre, Marlinstown

Adult Literacy, Back to Education Initiative, Community Education, Adult Guidance

### Mullingar, LWETB Head Office, Marlinstown

Head Office Functions, Youth Service

### Mullingar, National Learning Network

Specialist Training Provider

### Various County Locations

Contracted Training, Community Education, Back to Education Initiative (Community Strand), Main Scheme Community Education



## LWETB PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES WE OFFER

### Adult Literacy

Supports learners with classes in literacy, numeracy and digital skills including ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), ITABE (Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education), etc.

### Youthreach

Supports early school leavers with educational and development courses in and out-of-school setting.

### Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)

Supports learners who completed a Leaving Certificate with vocational and technological courses.

### Traineeship

Traineeship combines learning in an education and training setting and in the workplace.

### MIS / PLSS Support

Supports for staff in management and IT systems tracking programme advertisement, learner enrolment, certification, etc.

### TEL AND PL&D

Supports staff in being an advocate for *Professional Learning and Development*, and *Technology Enhanced Learning*.

### FET Finance Support

Supports for staff and stakeholder in accessing and managing funding, budgets and payments, etc.

### Contracted Training

Supports learners with the use of external contractors to deliver programmes on behalf of LWETB across a variety of specialisms.

### Community Education and Training

*Education:* Supports learners in formal/non-formal education.  
*Training:* Supports communities to deliver training locally as second providers including: STPs (Specialist Training Providers), CTCs (Community Training Centres), LTIs (Local Training Initiatives), NLNs (National Learning Networks), DoJWs (Department of Justice Workshops), etc.

### FET Recruitment

Supports for learners and staff in induction, enrolment, access, transfer and progression.

### Enterprise Engagement

Supports to address the needs of FET learners, local communities, industry and business.

### Training Standards Team

Supports staff and second providers in the quality assurance delivery of programmes and service.

### Apprenticeship

Supports training of learners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training and phased in-house practical and theory-based assessments for certification.

### Evening Training

Supports learners with modular courses delivered outside of normal working hours.

### Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

Supports learners with flexible opportunities for adult education facilitating learners' other personal commitments.

### FET Adult Guidance

Supports learners looking for information, advice and guidance on training, education and career options.

### Service to Business

Supports learners with courses delivered with a large practical element and work experience element including: *Skills to Advance*, *Apprenticeship*, *Traineeship*, *CE*, etc.

### FETQS Team

Supports staff in the immersion of a quality culture through all service and provision to meet standards at every stage in the process of delivery.



## KEY POINTS FOR LEARNERS

At its core Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) aims to provide a high-quality further education and training (FET) services to all learners. Our work on the development and production of the LWETB Self-Evaluation Report has meant we have critically evaluated our centres and services including how we serve Longford and Westmeath people, communities and businesses. This process has allowed us to both reflect on our work to date, absorb the data and feedback we have received and in-turn make a plan for future engagement and service provision to ensure consistency in all we do. We are very proud of this report and the opportunity it has given us to continue to develop a culture of quality which will ensure that anyone participating in programmes of further education and training, at any of our locations, can experience a course that meets their needs and standards.

## EDUCATIONAL LEVELS IN LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH

According to the Irish Census 2016, Longford has the lowest level of 3rd Level qualifications nationally at 32.5% (42% nationally) and also the second lowest age to cease education at 19.3 years (19.9 years). Westmeaths' average age to cease education at 19.7 years is comparable to the national average.

### % age of persons aged 15 years and over with no formal education and primary-only education, 2016



Source: CSO 2016

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rsdgi/regionalsdgsireland2017/nt/#indicatorTitle\\_175170](https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rsdgi/regionalsdgsireland2017/nt/#indicatorTitle_175170)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.cypsc.ie/\\_fileupload/Documents/Resources/Longford%20Westmeath/Longford%20Westmeath%20CYPSC%20CYPP%202020%20-%202022.pdf](https://www.cypsc.ie/_fileupload/Documents/Resources/Longford%20Westmeath/Longford%20Westmeath%20CYPSC%20CYPP%202020%20-%202022.pdf) pg.16

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LWETB-Service-Plan-2020-ENG-Final-.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LWETB-Service-Plan-2020-ENG-Final-.pdf>



## UNEMPLOYMENT

Historically, Co. Longford has recorded the highest rate of unemployment in the state (19.6% compared to 12.9% as of the last Census), with urban unemployment particularly high at 29.3%. Westmeath having the 7th highest rate of unemployment in the country.

At the time of Census 2016, 1.45% of the population of the 2 counties held no formal education, with the average age ceasing education at 17.5 years of age, compared to a national figure of 19.9 years.

Longford has the lowest level of professional workers (4.8%) and the highest level of unskilled labour (27.7%) in the state, with Westmeath mid-range in both.

## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Within the environs of Longford Town there are 970 active businesses employing 5,050 people. A quarter of these businesses are in less conventional sectors, with emerging business clusters such as Med-Tech, R&D and manufacturing industries. Longford has a strong manufacturing and food processing sector.

In Westmeath, Athlone and Mullingar are the 2 largest economic hubs. Athlone has 1,115 active businesses, with growing industries in Life Sciences, R&D, Med-Tech and Global Business Services Sectors. Mullingar has 1,410 active businesses with growing industries in Engineering, ICT, FinTech, Robotics Advanced Manufacturing and R&D.<sup>5</sup>

### Industry of Employment (Economic Hubs)

	Manufacturing, Engineering, Building and Construction	Commerce and Trade	Transport and Communications	Professional Services	Other Industries
Longford	20%	21%	6%	23%	31%
Westmeath	18%	23%	8%	24%	28%

## IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on the labour market. As of April 2021, the national adjusted measure of unemployment (assuming PUP<sup>7</sup> claimants are considered unemployed) stands at 22.4%. Given the skill level of the labour force, Longford and Westmeath would be expected to exceed the national unemployment rate. This adjusted unemployment rate is falling as the economy reopens (down 8% from April 2020)<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/en/consultation/draft-westmeath-county-development-plan-2021-2027/chapter/05-economy-employment>

<sup>6</sup> PUP refers to the social welfare COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment for employees and self-employed people who have lost employment due to the public health emergency

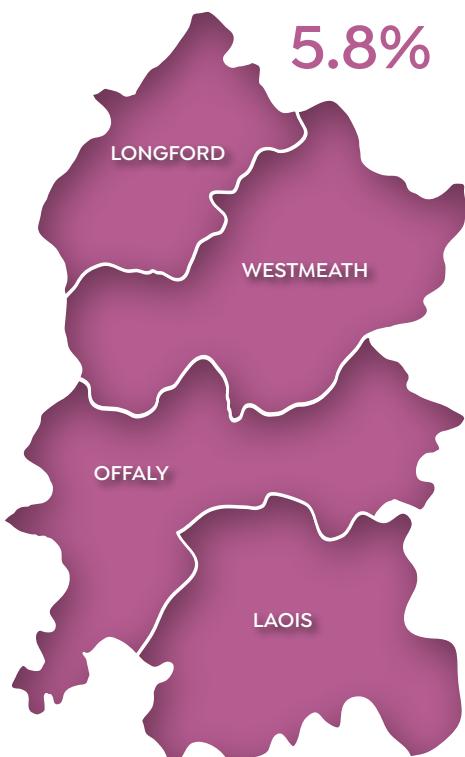


Data from the SOLAS Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) and the Midlands Regional Skills Forum<sup>7</sup> demonstrates the following effects of Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly (Q1 2020 – Q3 2020):



## Employment

The Midland region accounts for 5.8% of employment in Ireland (134,000 persons).



Top 5 Sectors	Total Employed	Q1 – Q3 2020
Industry	20,900	+7%
Wholesale and Retail	19,400	-10%
Health	16,700	-4%
Public Administration	10,100	+33%
Accommodation and Food	9,700	-10%

## Impact of COVID-19 on the Midland region (from Q1 2020 to Q3 2020)

### EMPLOYMENT



Employment fell by 1,100 persons (0.8%)

### WORKFORCE



The labour force participation rate increased from 60.4% in Q1 to 61% in Q3

### GENDER



Male employment grew by 2,200 (3.0%) whereas female employment declined by 3,200 (5.3%)

### WHOLESALE AND RETAIL SECTOR



The wholesale and retail sector saw the largest absolute decline in employment (2,100 persons or a 10% decrease)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.regionalskills.ie/regions/midlands/regional-national-news-special-reports/15499\\_solas\\_slmru\\_info\\_2020\\_midlands.pdf](https://www.regionalskills.ie/regions/midlands/regional-national-news-special-reports/15499_solas_slmru_info_2020_midlands.pdf)

# LWETB PROVIDER PROFILE AND SELF-EVALUATION



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## THE QQI INAUGURAL REVIEW

### *What is the Inaugural Review?*

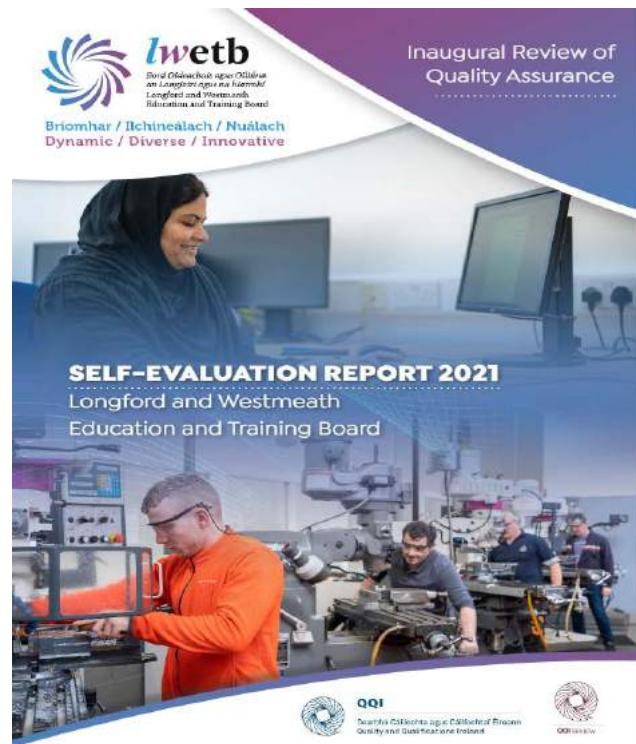
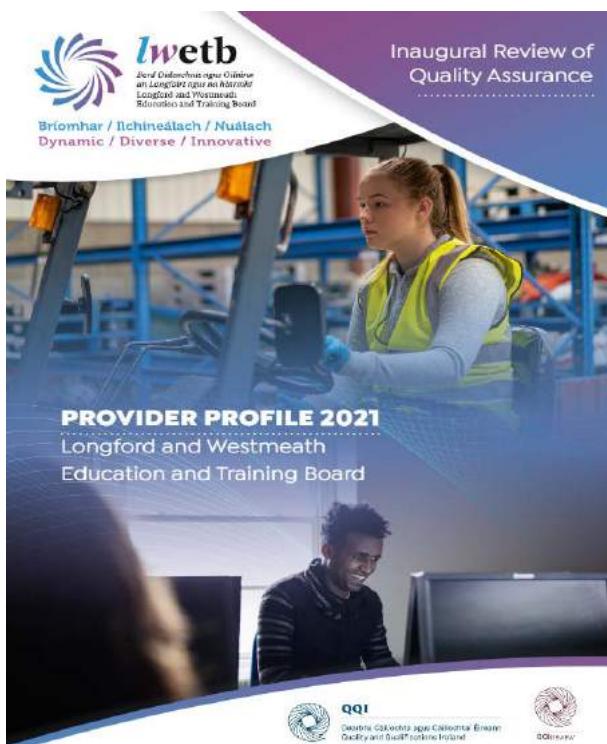
Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) is responsible for education and training services for the counties of Longford and Westmeath. All ETBs in Ireland are currently involved in a programme of monitoring and improvement of their Quality Assurance (QA) in relation to their work, a process termed the Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance in ETBs. Throughout 2021, LWETB has been taking part in Phase 1 of the Inaugural Review.

The Terms of Reference for the review are available<sup>8</sup>

This review has given LWETB a great opportunity to pause and reflect on its Quality Assurance processes. We have seen what works well and what we can improve upon. We've also done important work to help us in monitoring quality by setting out our goals and how we plan to achieve these in our quality journey.

LWETB set up its own Self-Evaluation Steering Group to support and speak to learners, managers and educators, our partners across the wider ETB sector, local employers and other stakeholders. We have surveyed staff, had one-to-one video sessions and brought together all of this feedback and information. Working together in this way and involving a wide group of people and points of view has allowed us to have a strong debate on how we work and how Quality Assurance can be enhanced within LWETB.

This process has allowed us to develop and produce two reports:



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2021-10/review-terms-of-reference-inaugural-review-of-quality-assurance-in-etbs.pdf> [www.regionalskills.ie/regions/midlands/regional-national-news-special-reports/15499\\_solas\\_slmru\\_info\\_2020\\_midlands.pdf](http://www.regionalskills.ie/regions/midlands/regional-national-news-special-reports/15499_solas_slmru_info_2020_midlands.pdf)



### What does the Self-Evaluation involve?

Quality is important in every part of our lives - we expect quality products and services in all areas of our lives and the training and education sector is no exception. In common with all other Education and Training Boards (ETBs) throughout Ireland LWETB has worked hard and will continue to do so to deliver on this review and take from it a true reflection of Quality Assurance (QA) within LWETB. Our focus has been on:

- Celebrating our achievements in quality
- Being open to learning from past experiences
- Looking for opportunities to improve on how our quality works in practice
- Support our learners, staff and stakeholders in delivering quality on a day-to-day basis

The self-evaluation explores and looks at the quality of our teaching, learning and service activities from every aspect with particular focus on:

- Governance and Management of Quality
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

### Who are Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI)?

QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) is the independent state agency responsible for promoting quality across education and training services in Ireland. QQI validate LWETB programmes, make awards and are responsible for the promotion, maintenance, development and review of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). QQI also inform the public about the quality of education and training programmes and qualifications, and advise the government on national policy regarding quality assurance and enhancement in education and training.<sup>9</sup>

 <p>Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Statement of Strategy 2022-24</p> <p>Read our new strategy  <a href="#">QQI statement of strategy 2022-24</a>  <a href="#">Our mission, vision and values</a>  <a href="#">Our new organisational structure</a></p>	 <p>Learner information  <a href="#">Raise a query</a>  <a href="#">Replacement certificates</a>  <a href="#">Verifying your qualification</a>  <a href="#">Qualifax</a>  <a href="#">Learner Protection</a></p>	 <p>Academic integrity  <a href="#">National Academic Integrity Network</a>  <a href="#">My Own Work Student Campaign</a>  <a href="#">Prosecuting Contract Cheating</a></p>	<p>Our role QQI is the state agency responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland.</p> <p>Organisational structure QQI employs more than 80 staff across 4 directorates and 1 division.</p> <p>Governance We are committed to adopting and maintaining best practice in governance.</p>	<p>Working at QQI A career at QQI offers you a unique opportunity to deliver important services and regulation across the further and higher education and training sector.</p> <p>Planning and reporting We are committed to providing transparency and observing public accountability in everything that we do.</p> <p>Corporate calendar Upcoming meetings of our Board and governance committees</p>
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<sup>9</sup> <https://lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LWETB-Strategy-Statement-2017-2022.pdf>

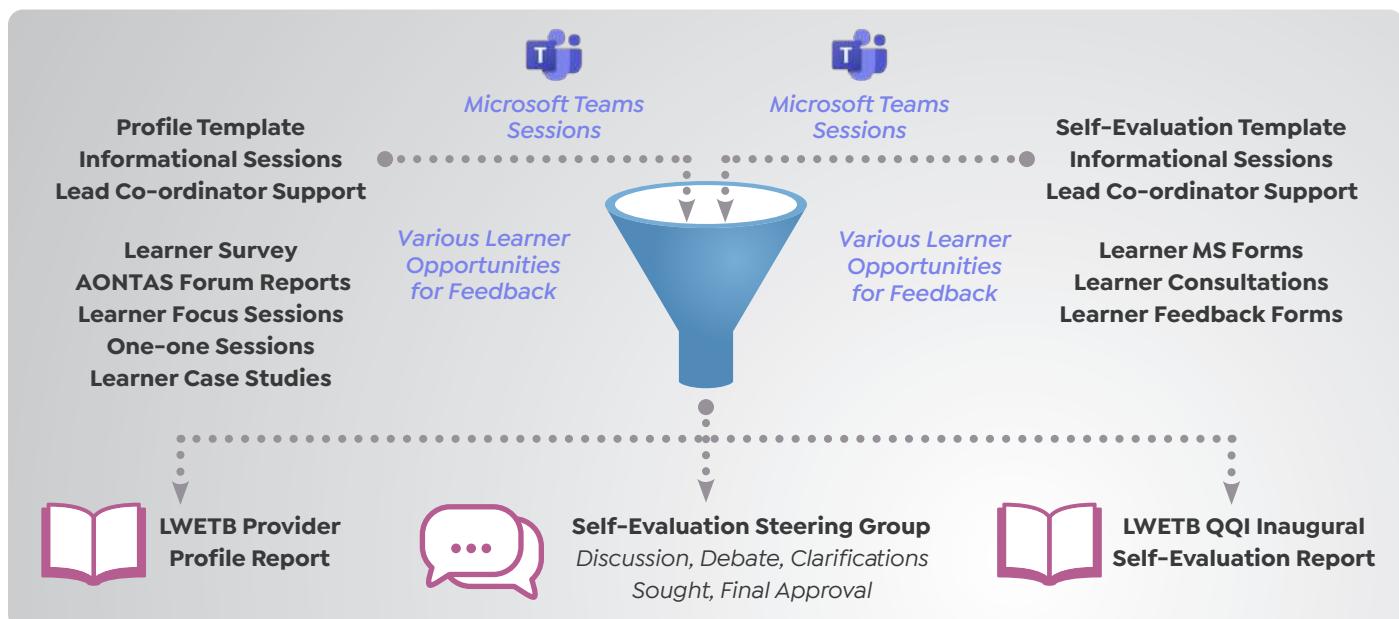


This easy-to-read learner summary of the full self-evaluation report highlights the key points for learners that we have taken from The Self-Evaluation Report and Provider Profile.

Learners from all over LWETB have had an opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts and highlight what positive outcomes came from their involvement with LWETB. This self-evaluation process has allowed learners an opportunity to see, hear and document what we can do better and how we might progress going forwards. Learners who took part in this process were representing their own views and experiences of LWETB, its centres, interactions with staff and stakeholders including facilities and resources. It allowed LWETB to look at how our services live up to the needs of learners in hearing about learner engagement in teaching, learning and services we provide day-to-day.

Staff and stakeholders were all involved in this process too with one-to-one and group MS Teams sessions carried out by the lead Co-ordinator, This meant that we could question Centre Managers and Co-ordinators for further detail as they progressed through the various areas covered in the report.

Managers/Co-ordinators and stakeholders are representing the views of their department, centres, interactions with other staff and learners including facilities and resources etc. The experience was one of positivity for centres to allow them to reflect, acknowledge strengths, identify challenges and converse with peers.



# OBJECTIVE 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY



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## LWETB MISSION AND STRATEGY

# OUR MISSION

***IS TO PROVIDE DYNAMIC, DIVERSE AND INNOVATIVE  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE PEOPLE  
OF LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH***

The LWETB Mission Statement is the core purpose of our organisation. It defines what it is LWETB aims to accomplish in everyday work for and on behalf of learners, staff, stakeholders, employers and community. Our Mission Statement underlines what each staff member strives to achieve, regardless of their job title or occupation.

It outlines what those who utilise our services can expect and how LWETB seeks to enhance their experience.

This applies to all services delivered within and by LWETB.

# OUR VISION

***IS TO DEVELOP AND DELIVER NATIONALLY AND  
INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED HIGH QUALITY, VIBRANT,  
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES***

This Vision Statement outlines what LWETB as an organisation needs to do to achieve our mission.

LWETB endeavours to ensure that the dynamic and innovative services meets the needs of young people and adults across the counties of Longford and Westmeath.

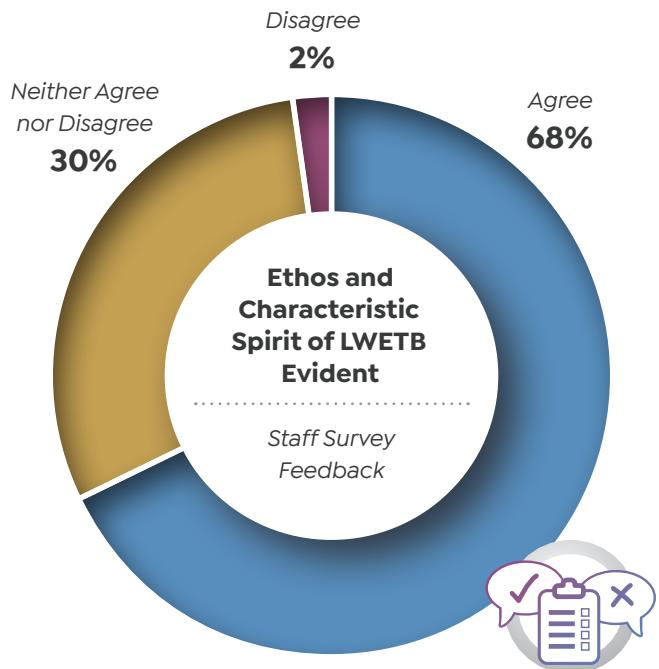
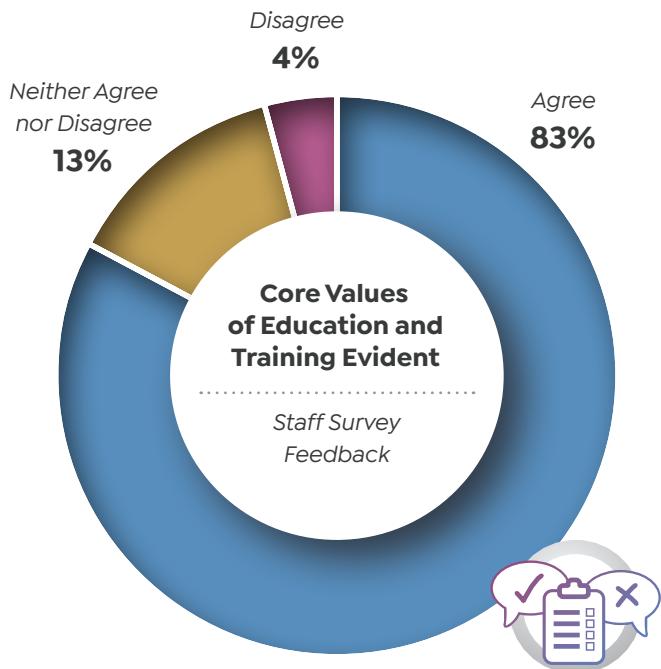
LWETB adheres to the essential operational values which guide the organisation to provide a progressive range of services.



## VALUES

LWETB values can be summed up in 4 key areas and guide the organisation in providing such a range of services:

- Learner Centred - We place the learner at the centre of everything we do
- Celebrates Diversity - We celebrate equality and welcome all learners
- Acts with Integrity - We operate in a manner that is ethical, transparent and accountable
- Leads with Innovation - We lead innovation by fostering new ideas and promoting creativity



Bríomhar / Ilchineálach / Nuálach  
Dynamic / Diverse / Innovative



## STRATEGIC FOCUS

LWETB's Strategy Statement 2017-2022<sup>10</sup> charts the 5 strategic goals for the organisation:



LWETB developed a Strategy Statement 2017-2022. This statement was the first of its kind for LWETB and is a high-level service document that sets out the direction for LWETB over a 5 year period. This Strategy Statement outlined the vision, mission and goals of LWETB as a new organisation and has progressed our service and provision throughout Longford and Westmeath over the years.

This Strategy Statement was guided by a number of national policy documents from both the Department of Education and SOLAS. The strategy was grounded in socio-economic and educational of 2017 and the reality of life for people living in the region at that time. This Strategy Statement guided us through an effective time management period. LWETB is continually committed to working with all our learners, partners and stakeholders to improve the delivery of education and training services for young people and adults in Longford and Westmeath.

The key to this strategy was a focus on the development of continuous improvement processes and enhancing the quality of learning experiences for all learners.

Our next Strategy Statement 2022-2027 is currently in consultation with all learners, staff and stakeholders both internal and external to LWETB.

<sup>10</sup> <https://lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LWETB-Strategy-Statement-2017-2022.pdf>



The strategic focus from another document called the LWETB Annual Report 2020 allowed for a number of quality assurance measures to be identified to achieve each goal:



## **Goal 1: Deliver professional, high quality, learner-centred education and training services**

- 1.1** Create a learner charter
- 1.2** Develop a teaching and learning strategy
- 1.3** Enhanced planning and coordination of programmes
- 1.4** Expanding quality assurance provision by establishing QA Teams in all sectors to ensure quality provision and results
- 1.5** Identifying innovative responses to current and future needs

## **Goal 2: Enhance the learning experiences and outcomes for learners**

- 2.1** Enhancing feedback from learners and parents
- 2.2** Investment in ICT enhanced learning
- 2.3** Tracking and reporting on inputs (learner attendance, retention and attainment)
- 2.4** Improving facilities and resources
- 2.5** Enhanced Staff CPD/mentoring

## **Goal 3: Foster effective communication, collaboration and partnerships**

- 3.1** Develop an ICT Strategy including reuse of systems and programmes
- 3.2** Develop a communication strategy
- 3.3** Create Collaborative Teams
- 3.4** Enhance partnerships and alliances with external stakeholders and bodies

## **Goal 4: Progress the development of effective organisational structures**

- 4.1** Develop an approach that builds capacity for change management
- 4.2** Embed good governance across LWETB
- 4.4** Participate in national initiatives and fora

## **Goal 5: Support a culture of continuous development with staff**

- 5.1** Develop a CPD strategy for LWETB

# OBJECTIVE 2: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



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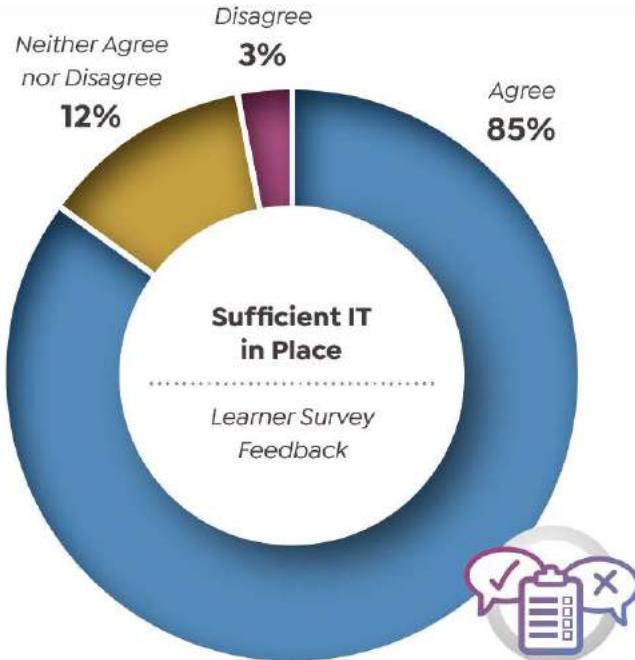
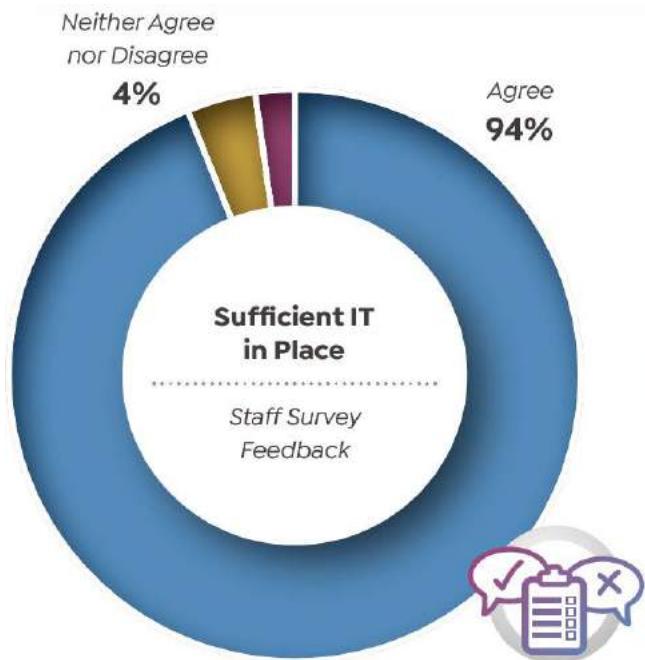
## THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

*Learners can expect to be supported academically, vocationally and personally as they progress in their learning journey.*

We know that the learning environment is important in helping our learners achieve their best. We aim to provide high-quality classrooms, centres and equipment, with the knowledge on how best to utilise them while being supported to do so in a learner-centred environment, supported by expert educators and staff at centre level. Feedback from the learner survey confirms that there are adequate facilities and equipment to support further education and training within LWETB.

We have used Technology Enhanced learning (TEL) to improve learning environments to support both classroom and remote learning environments through:

- Using the most up-to-date teaching methods and course creation tools
- Offering high-quality Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) for both classroom and remote learning



Expansion of the Carpentry and Joinery Apprenticeship facilities; two classrooms, office spaces, stores and large multi-use area. This will cater for an additional 104 apprentices.

Athlone Training Centre, 2020



## In the Spotlight



### FET Digital Learning Hub, Longford

Supported by the Just Transition Fund, LWETB is in the developmental phase of an FET Digital Learning Hub for Longford.

Facilities will include audio/visual conferencing facilities, shared learning spaces, individual study areas, open areas to meet other learners, a canteen and a PearsonVue testing centre.

This will provide many additional benefits to the community including fast broadband, encourages modular learning, supports and encourages learning and education, and provides access to the latest technology. This is due to be operational by 2023.

## The Learner Charter

The Learner Charter<sup>11</sup> was formalised in 2020, documenting what learners can expect from an education and training provider and what LWETB can expect from its staff and learners in line with our partnership approach to teaching and learning. The learner charter is aligned with LWETB's Mission and Vision statements.

## Learner Grievances

The LWETB Complaints Procedure<sup>12</sup> gives learners the opportunity to express a grievance, where relevant and necessary, relating to an LWETB staff member performance or, a work related approved activity. Any complaints received will be dealt with in a responsive, fair, transparent and consistent manner that affords all concerned the full rights in accordance with natural justice.

## Learners With Additional Needs

LWETB welcomes learners with additional needs. Where possible, all classrooms and buildings are wheelchair accessible, including those provided by external provision. Learners with a visual impairment can be accommodated with modified coursework and assessments. Where practical, all coursework and assessments are compatible with JAWS (text to speech software). Where a learner has a disability that cannot be reasonably accommodated for, FET Recruitment and/or the FET Adult Guidance Service will assist in directing the learner to an alternative service. In 2018, LWETB had 469 learners categorised as having a disability. Published LWETB reports can be made available in alternative formats upon request to support a learner with a disability.

## Teaching and Learning Strategy - Information and Technology

A combination of PL&D and TEL policies strives to develop technological integration and skills development for all LWETB staff, learners and stakeholders. To achieve this, the Teaching and Learning Strategy – Information and Technology Policy outlines LWETB's goals.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/LWETB-Learner-Charter-2020.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/LWETB-Complaint-Procedure-Approved-for-Sectoral-Use-2018-1.pdf>



## The Learner Voice

LWETB participated in the National AONTAS FET Learner Forum in February 2021, with focus groups and surveys completed with 130 learners across all LWETB FET programmes and levels (NFQ Level 1 to 6).

These findings formed part of the AONTAS Annual Synthesis Report 2020-2021<sup>13</sup>. Our learner voices are important to us and, where possible, are recorded and taken into consideration in many differing formats so as to capture as many opinions and perspectives as possible. How we gather the learners voice has changed over the years and ways in which we do this include:



**Survey Responses**



**Classroom Feedback**



**MS Forms**



**Focus Groups**



**Face-to-Face Sessions**



**Virtual Events**

"It's good, but if we were in school it would be better. I prefer when I go to school."

"I love my class! The tutor devises quizzes for us and we share answers and it's entertaining and fun."

"If we don't understand online, they send us a worksheet to our home. It's good."

"I am learning to use new applications such as Teams. I can do or complete assignments at my own pace and within a set deadline."

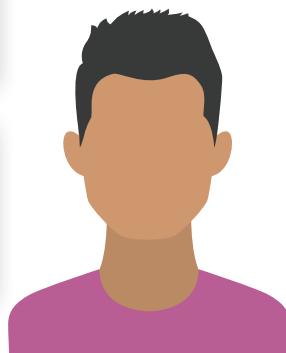
"[Remote learning] was relaxing. I don't have to spend money on transport or walk out during the cold. I enjoyed the online course because I was home and warm."

"The assessment sheets could us a bit of work. They are often left up to interpretation, which can make it difficult for first time learners or teachers of the module when needing to start and complete assignments."

"In the classroom the discussion, it would be different. You can't talk to three people online; it will be too confusing."

"It's ok online, but I miss going to class. It's really difficult practicing my language with others during COVID, as I don't meet other people."

"[The decision to take my course was] as much for social interaction as it was for learning and moving online hindered that."



<sup>13</sup> [https://www.aontas.com/assets/resources/AONTAS-Research/Annual\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_2020-2021.pdf](https://www.aontas.com/assets/resources/AONTAS-Research/Annual_Synthesis_Report_2020-2021.pdf)



AONTAS Synthesis Report findings:

#### Areas Working Well (NFQ Levels 1-6)

Communications	Learners are happy with the diverse communication methods used by LWETB.
Tutors	Learners feel well supported by educators and staff.
Access to Devices	93% of application survey responses from learners agreed they have access to the necessary IT devices and software to complete their learning.
Digital Skills	Learners feel that remote learning has helped to improve their digital skills.

#### Areas Working Well (NFQ Levels 1-4)

Transition to Remote Learning	Felt supported by LWETB staff in their transition to remote learning.
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#### Areas Working Well (NFQ Levels 5-6)

Flexibility of Remote Learning	Some learners appreciated the flexibility afforded by remote learning and would like to see it retained in the future.
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#### Areas for Improvement (NFQ Levels 1-6)

Assessment	Learners would like assignments to be evenly spaced out. Learners would like more support and guidance interpreting assessment briefs.
IT Support	Learners would like more ongoing support and/or courses on platforms used in remote teaching and learning.
Peer Contact	Learners would like more opportunities to connect socially with their peers as part of their learning.
Face-to-Face Learning	Many learners would like to return to face-to-face learning as soon as possible.
Learning Environment	Learners find the home learning environment challenging. Learning from home is particularly difficult for learners with childcare responsibilities.

#### Areas for Improvement (NFQ Levels 1-4)

Learning Engagement	Learners at Levels 1-3 report that overall learner engagement has decreased as a result of COVID-19, particularly among ESOL learners.
Learners with Disabilities	Would like more options for “creative” and “fun” learning opportunities.
Isolation	Some learners feel isolated and disconnected from their peers.

#### Areas for Improvement (NFQ Levels 5-6)

Practical Learning	Learners would like to see practical learning prioritised in a return to face-to-face learning.
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## FEEDBACK OUTCOMES – WHAT WORKED WELL FOR LEARNERS

- Learners feel that they were well supported by educators and centre staff
- Felt that there is a high levels of access to IT resources to help learners progress through their programmes/courses
- Learners felt they were supported in the transition to digital learning
- Remote learning has helped improve learners' digital skills
- Learners enjoy the flexibility offered by remote learning

## FEEDBACK OUTCOMES – WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The chance to connect with other learners in their peer group as they miss out on the social part of learning
- Assessments to be more evenly spaced out
- More guidance in interpreting assessment briefs

### FET Learner Feedback Survey and One to One Sessions – Teaching Learning and Assessment and the Impact of COVID-19<sup>12</sup>.

Question 20 asked: "My Teachers/Tutors/Instructors' online teaching skills improved over the year":

"Excellent teacher ... always goes above and beyond. Lack of internet co-operation was definitely a problem but despite this [the teacher] ploughed on and we completed all our assignments as a team. We all had to get used to doing things a different way and [the teacher] guided us through brilliantly."

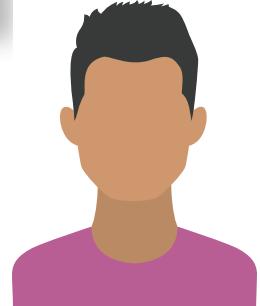


"As time went on the tutor was more comfortable with online as oppose to being present in class setting."

"My Tutor was very good at teaching us. As well as that, she also touches on every element of the course. She was very good at answering my questions as well as accommodating when needed. Finally, I have no doubt in my mind that her online teaching skills improved and she knows her subject very well."

"Yes very much so, I had the best tutors and was very happy with the help I got throughout the course."

"Most definitely and my shortcomings were taken into account to work around a solution that benefitted me."



<sup>12</sup> Sample size of 18 learners across plumbing, carpet and joinery and motor mechanic apprenticeships.



## LEARNING DURING CHALLENGING TIMES

Both learners and educators alike have had to adapt quickly and as smoothly as possible and at times this has been a challenge for us all. In addition, COVID-19 has meant that it was unavoidable that some learners were not able to carry out planned practical learning or work placement opportunities. This type of learning could not be delivered in the same way through remote learning.

While remote learning at home was popular with so many learners, there were many where it was not always ideal compared with learning in one of our centres. LWETB recognise that supporting learner wellbeing will continue to be a priority and part of our future service delivery goals. The downside of remote learning has included barriers that at times is out of LWETBs control such as poor internet access, balancing family and childcare responsibilities, plus the impact of isolation on mental health and wellbeing whilst at home.

In line with our core values, LWETB remain committed to removing barriers to education and supporting learners and community within the regions of Longford and Westmeath to develop as confident and independent people. To assist learners we will continue to raise awareness and promote learner supports in these areas:



**When you're feeling in distress,  
there's always somebody to talk to...**

**EMERGENCY / CRISIS NUMBERS:**

Call your Local GP or Emergency Services: **999 or 112**

**MIDOC:** Urgent Family Doctor Out-of-Hours Service  
Locall: **1850 302 702**  
Mon - Fri: 6 pm - 8 am  
Weekends/Public Holidays: All hours

Resource Officer for Suicide Prevention: **043 335 0169**  
Longford/Westmeath (Eddie Ward): **086 380 1152**

**NATIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICES:**

<b>Samaritans</b> Support 24/7 for anyone going through a crisis or at risk of suicide Freephone <b>116 123</b> Text <b>087 260 9090</b> (standard text rates apply) Email <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.ie">jo@samaritans.ie</a> <a href="http://www.samaritans.ie">www.samaritans.ie</a>	<b>Pieta House</b> A free, 24/7 therapeutic approach to people in suicidal distress or engaging in self-harm Freephone <b>1800 247 247</b> Text <b>HELP</b> to <b>51444</b> for one-to-one text support <a href="http://www.pieta.ie">www.pieta.ie</a>	<b>Turn2Me</b> Online one-to-one counselling and moderated peer support forums <a href="http://www.turn2me.org/engage">www.turn2me.org/engage</a>	<b>MyMind</b> Community mental health services <a href="http://www.mymind.org">www.mymind.org</a>
<b>Connect</b> National Adult Counselling Service Freephone <b>1800 477 477</b> Wed - Sun: 6 pm - 10 pm <a href="http://www.connectcounselling.ie">www.connectcounselling.ie</a>	<b>SafeTALK</b> A 3½ hour suicide alertness programme that prepares participants to identify and engage with suicidal persons Tel <b>086 380 1152</b> Email <a href="mailto:eddie.ward@hse.ie">eddie.ward@hse.ie</a>	<b>ReachOut</b> Helping young people get through tough times by providing quality mental health information <a href="http://www.reachout.com">www.reachout.com</a>	<b>SpunOut</b> Health information for young people, including mental health, sexual health, exam stress and general lifestyle information <a href="http://www.spunout.ie">www.spunout.ie</a>
<b>Text About It</b> A free, anonymous, 24/7 messaging service providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support Text <b>50808</b>	<b>Esker House Refuge</b> Emergency accommodation and support services for women and their children who are or have experienced domestic violence Tel <b>090 6474 122</b>	<b>BeLonG To</b> Supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people in Ireland Email <a href="mailto:info@belongto.org">info@belongto.org</a> <a href="http://www.belongto.org">www.belongto.org</a>	<b>Aware</b> Free support, education and information services to those impacted by anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder and related mood conditions Freephone <b>1800 80 48 48</b> Mon-Sun: 10 am - 10 pm Email <a href="mailto:supportmail@aware.ie">supportmail@aware.ie</a> <a href="http://www.aware.ie">www.aware.ie</a>
<b>M.A.B.S.</b> Money Advice and Budgeting Service Helpline <b>0761 07 2000</b> Mon-Fri: 9 am - 8 pm <a href="http://www.mabs.ie">www.mabs.ie</a>	<b>YourMentalHealth</b> Search for supports in your local area <a href="http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie">www.yourmentalhealth.ie</a>		

More help and information available at [www.lwetb.ie/wellbeing](http://www.lwetb.ie/wellbeing)



## ASSESSMENTS – HOW WE CHECK ON LEARNER PROGRESS

AggYgga Ybhg' UfY' i gYX' hc' hfUW\_ U' YUfbYfg' dfc[ fYgg' hfc i [ \ hY]f' ZI fthYf' YXi WU]cb' UbX' hfU]b]b[ ' cí fbYm' HfYfY' UfY' a Ubm X]ZYfYbh' hmdYg' cZ' UggYgga Ybhg, for example: Assignments, Projects, Skills Demonstrations, Examinations – Practical and Theory based etc.

We take great care to ensure that every learner has full knowledge on their assessment process and learners receive details on the assessment methods with regular updates from their educator(s) during course delivery.

Fairness, consistency and validity are key to assessments so that learners are able to access additional supports if needed through our Reasonable Accommodation facilities that ensure that a learner is not placed at any disadvantaged due to any impairment or disability.

Learners also receive guidance on academic integrity in order to avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism or any other potential misconduct. This rigorous process and systems put in place support learners and LWETB staff and ensure standards are met at every stage. We ensure that all assessments are fair and that they meet both ethical and academic standards. Moving forward, as part of our learning tools, LWETB are developing a facility for learners to submit assessments online with specialist software that safeguard against plagiarism.

## SUPPORTS FOR LEARNERS

A wide range of supports are available to learners across all programmes. These supports can differ in each provision and some of these supports are unique to each provision. Ongoing supports are made available to learners on a day-to-day basis by Co-ordinators, Principals, Educators and Resource Workers etc. Identification of supports required by the learner is typically made during course registration/induction where possible. Such supports include:

### Learners with Additional Needs

Learners are welcomed who have an additional need or medical condition. For PLC learners, funding through the FSD (Fund for Students with Disabilities)<sup>13</sup> can be sought if needed. Supports include assistive technology equipment, non-medical helper, transport support etc.

### International Learners<sup>14</sup>

Eligible international learners are welcome to avail of all our service offerings. ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses, including Cambridge English Preparatory Courses are available. Specific international learner groups such as Refugee Resettlement and Direct Provision learners include customised modules such as Irish culture and customs, along with other skills for living in Ireland as part of their programme.

<sup>13</sup> <https://hea.ie/funding-governance-performance/funding/student-finance/fund-for-students-with-disabilities/>

<sup>14</sup> Taking guidance from QQI Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners (<https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>)



## Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills Supports

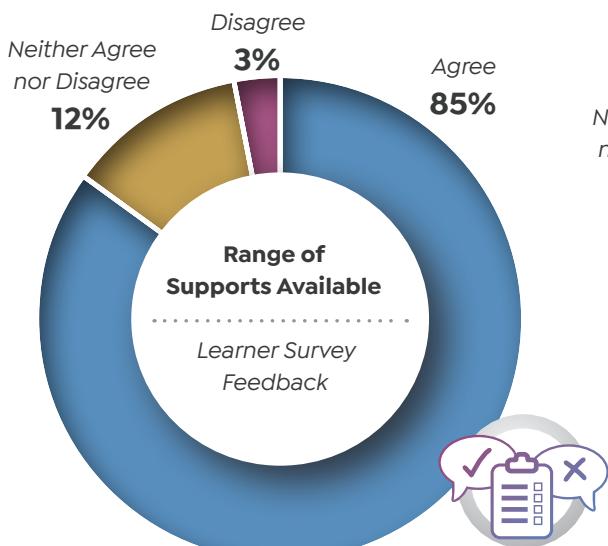
Adult Literacy and Special Training Providers (National Learning Network) specialise in providing these supports – either through informal education or courses at NFQ Level's 1 to 3. Strong inter-provisional team working within LWETB ensures learners are placed on suitable courses.

## Bus Service

Public transport links are an issue for course access. Athlone Training Centre operates various bus services, collecting and returning learners from more rural parts of Longford and Westmeath as well as surrounding counties to attend class in Athlone on a daily basis.

## IT Loan Scheme

For learners who do not have the required IT equipment for home learning, a Laptop Loan Scheme is in place to facilitate remote learning following funding by SOLAS and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).

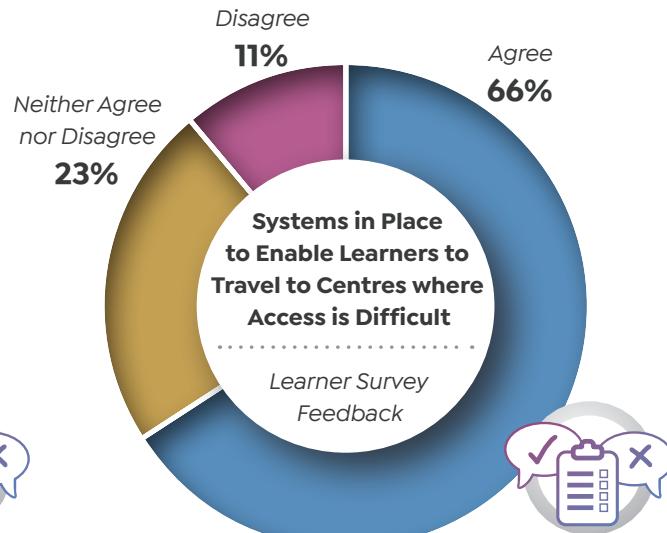


## Career Guidance

A comprehensive FET Guidance Service is available, staffed with trained guidance counsellors who offer impartial academic advice and career options to learners. Learners may also be helped overcome personal issues (or referred to other professional support agencies where specialist knowledge is required). Learners may access these services before, during or after course completion.

## Reasonable Accommodation

A robust Reasonable Accommodation Policy allows for assessments to be adapted for learners where it's believed they would be at a disadvantage because of an impairment / disability. Each centre manager/Co-ordinator carries out this policy and liaises with the FETQS Team / TSO Office if clarification is needed.





## LEARNER PROFILE



### Learner Gender

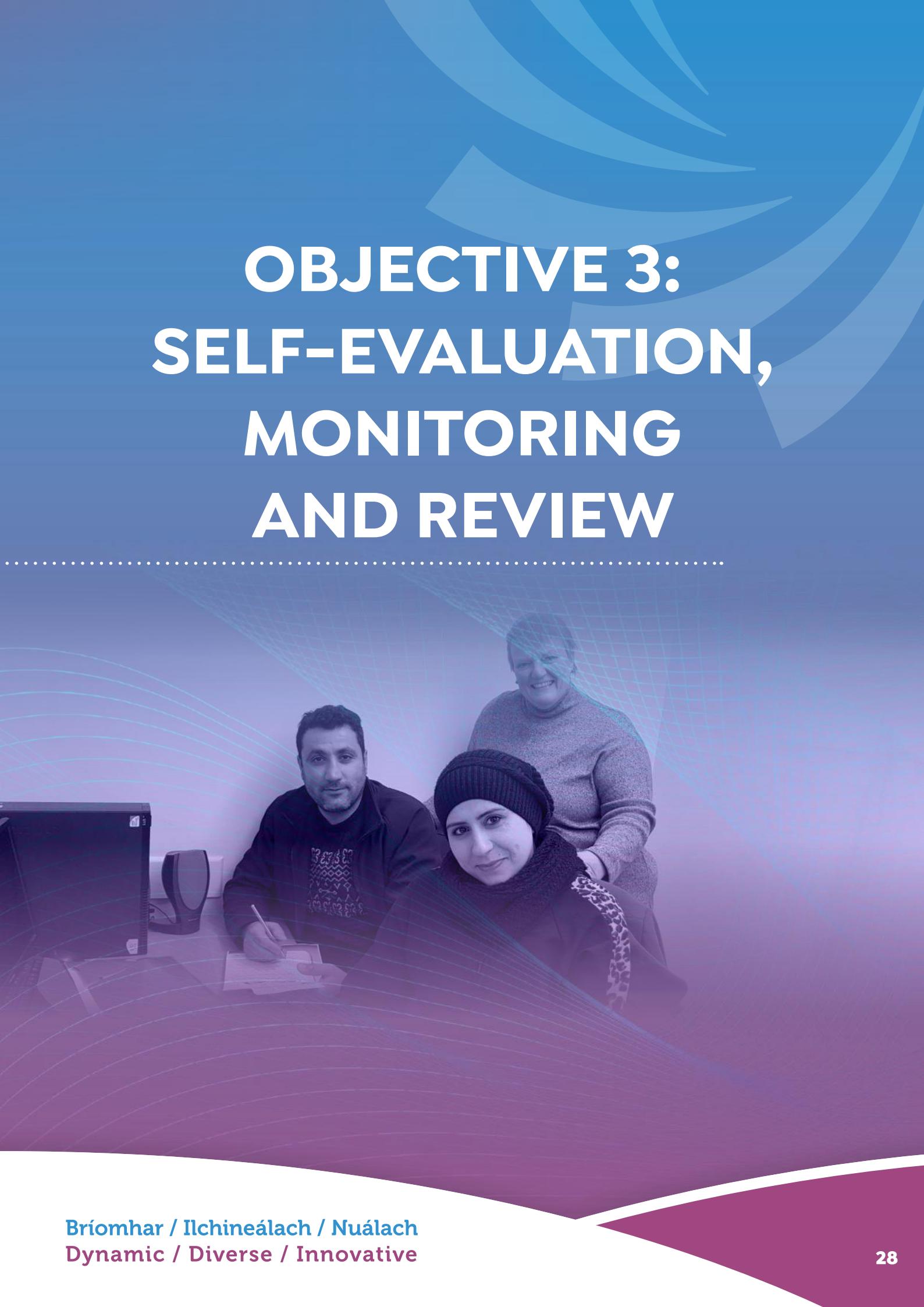
	2018	2019	2020
<b>Female</b>	2,612	2,773	1,849
<b>Male</b>	2,832	2,791	2,238



### Learner Age

	2018	2019	2020
<b>15-19</b>	833	794	637
<b>20-24</b>	664	610	454
<b>25-29</b>	481	473	332
<b>30-34</b>	545	566	380
<b>35-39</b>	575	623	491
<b>40-44</b>	548	569	443
<b>45-49</b>	511	555	410
<b>50-54</b>	448	467	344
<b>55-59</b>	384	412	280
<b>60-65</b>	267	270	212
<b>&gt;65</b>	188	225	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,444</b>	<b>5,564</b>	<b>4,087</b>

# OBJECTIVE 3: SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW





## SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

LWETB uses wide range of reports, plan, monitoring processes and review to ensure that we deliver programmes that are fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of learners, communities and employment opportunities within Longford and Westmeath. We place great importance on the information that these reports produce as they allow our management structures to focus on achieving targets set while also meeting the needs of learners, staff and other government bodies and the wider community on its achievements. These reports demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement, how we as LWETB are changing to meet learner and local enterprise demands and how we are fulfilling the statutory requirements bestowed upon us as an ETB.

Each offer valuable evaluation, monitoring and review feedback to assist LWETB in its operations. A selection of these reports include;

- **Strategy Statement 2017-2022 and Annual Service Plan**
- **Executive Self-Evaluation Report (ESER) 2017**
- **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2017-Present**
- **Strategic Performance Agreement (SPA) 2018 – 2020**

## DEVELOPING SKILLS TO SUPPORT LOCAL JOBS

It is important that LWETB supports local skills development and responds to the needs of community employment, industry and other sectors. We have done this by reaching out directly to businesses to help support jobs in the regions of Longford and Westmeath through training and up-skilling.

“We needed some bespoke welding training ... we contacted LWETB and they didn’t hesitate to create the required training to meet our needs. The tutors and facilities are excellent and we would highly recommend them, and will be using them again in the future.”

**Services to Business Support, 2021**  
**Owner, Colm Quinn BMW Dealerships**



# LOOKING AHEAD



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Dynamic / Diverse / Innovative



The Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance arrangements within Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board created an opportunity for LWETB as a provider of Further Education and Training Service to review itself as an organisation. It allowed LWETB to fully evaluate individual FET centres, services provided and review the effectiveness of systems that have been developed and implemented for the governance and management of Quality Assurance over the past number of years.

This process has allowed us to highlight areas of good practice and modernisation which very often go unnoticed or unpublicised. It has also provided the opportunity to identify areas where improvements are necessary, and these will inform our strategic response from the review. LWETB placed emphasis on all its learners, its centres and its services. We are aware that the self-evaluation process is a point in time and that quality assurance is a continuous process. Our approach and processes will adapt and change following this review, but there is a new sense of understanding and ownership as a result of our self-evaluation of LWETB.

Instances of such good practice that are hard to capture through surveys/consultation include services and or supports given to learners or programmes that staff and stakeholders provide as a standard practice. Linking into and providing educational opportunity into rural communities. Reaching and supporting learners regardless of age, cultural background or those requiring additional assistance. Guiding, supporting and delivering options for learners to find self-confidence while gaining skills, knowledge and competencies within our programme offerings. Supporting the individual while allowing them to take control and self-autonomy. These are themes that have been heard by steering group members throughout this process and must also be considered and taken into consideration when developing future plans.

Our self-evaluation has evolved from previous strategy statements and plans meant for a different world but still aligned to our core values and mission.

LWETB are moving towards a new phase where real reform and performance improvement can deliver a more strategic and integrated service and provision. As we challenge our scope of provision, we take this as an opportunity to deliver an even more cohesive approach to FET and establish a range of new, fit-for-purpose commitments and future focus contributions over the next few years.

#### 1. Further Education and Training

Our approach is and always will be aligned and in sync with our 3 pillars:

#### 2. Organisation, Support and Development

#### 3. Schools, Youth and Music

Learning from this review process will assist LWETB in the development of our new Strategic Statement for the period 2022 to 2027.

The way that LWETB engages in the social, economic and educational fabric of our counties has fundamentally changed over the last number of years as technology has advanced and COVID-19 has only accelerated the pace at which we need to mobilise, grow and respond. People are choosing different career path choices, industry is adopting new business models and LWETB must respond with accredited, non-accredited and specific programmes to meet these opportunities.

We would like to take this opportunity to note our thanks and appreciation to all our learners, educators, co-ordinators, managers, and colleagues who made a huge contribution to the quality of this report. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the commitment, hard work and central role that the Quality Assurance and TQAS Teams have played throughout this process.

**Antontine Healy - FET Director**



When self-evaluating our teaching, learning and services and gathering feedback we have identified many areas as future focus. Areas identified have spanned over 9 of our 11 QQI Core Guidelines and we will work towards addressing these areas and continue to develop a culture of quality assurance throughout LWETB. The full breakdown of the areas identified can be located within the full Self-Evaluation Report and we have collated together the learner specific areas below for you:

SER Section	Areas Identified as Future Focus
<b>Programme Development, Approval and Submission for Validation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A complete review of work based learning (WBL) for work experience and work practice needs attention at NFQ levels 3-6 to ensure a quality structured learning at all times</li><li>• Continue to develop flexible learning pathways to cater for the diverse range of learners across the region</li><li>• Possible expansion of the Erasmus+ programme. This EU programme supports education, training, youth and sport in Europe with a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions and promoting young people participation in democratic life. International FET learners working together would potentially be an excellent opportunity for learning and growth. PLC learners studying beauty therapy did engage in this with great success</li></ul>
<b>Integrity and Approval of Learner Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How assessments promote and supports effective learning and teaching needs continual training</li><li>• For courses where certification is not an aim, little recognition of the subjective positive outcomes of a course are captured e.g. improved self-confidence. This is particularly an issue in provisions such as community education and adult literacy where many learners do not wish to undertake programmes on the NFQ framework</li></ul>
<b>Information and Data Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scrutinising of security features and conducting user access audits of existing information systems within our control to maintain secure learner (and staff) records. Appointing external experts to aid this if necessary</li><li>• Keeping abreast with changes in Data Protection Commissioner Directives along with continued compliance by all staff</li></ul>
<b>The Learning Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For blended and online programmes, more information must be provided on the technology the learner is expected to have at home, broadband speed required and platforms supported</li><li>• For blended and online programmes, LWETB must endeavour to ensure that it's not unintentionally discriminating against learners who don't have fast Internet speeds, have limited access to technology at home or where any expense needed to join a programme prohibits participation – equitable, fair and realistic opportunity to all</li><li>• There is no formal mechanism for learners to make representations to LWETB about matters of immediate concern to the learner body, such as a learner council or learner representatives. Formal and informal feedback and questionnaires are post-event activities. Since courses offered are short in duration alternative mechanisms to learner councils needs to be considered</li></ul>

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SER Section	Areas Identified as Future Focus
<b>Public Information and Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Many of the service/centre provision maintain their own websites/social media. There is a lack of uniformity between these sites and inconsistent brand representation online. This may cause learner confusion and a more consolidated approach is needed</li><li>Social media presence, most notably, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is ad-hoc with many service/centre provisions maintaining their own social media presence. A more consolidated approach is being considered</li><li>LWETB's current profile on LinkedIn is weak. LinkedIn will allow past learners in employment to engage with LWETB into the future, assist with employer/industry engagement and attract human resource talent for vacant positions</li><li>LWETB needs to engage in newer social media platforms used by the young adult demographic e.g. TikTok</li><li>Information across LWETB's website can sometimes be outdated, and needs to be reviewed on a more regular basis by designated personnel to ensure that it is current</li><li>At times, there can be a lack of general awareness of the range of courses and services that LWETB provides. Name recognition is not as forefront in people's minds as LWETB would like. Marketing campaigns will be developed to attempt to address and rectify this</li></ul>
<b>Other parties involved in Education and Training (oversight, monitoring and review of relationships with external/third parties)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With a new Contracted Training Framework due in 2022, new contracted training companies may be providing the service. A concerted effort will be made by LWETB to ensure these companies provide the professional service that LWETB expects of its contractors and comply at all times to the Operating Guidelines</li><li>Feedback is received from feedback forms and questionnaires the majority of the time. These don't always provide a true reflection on how an employer or learner feels about the service received. A more multi-faceted approach will be adopted where world cafés, focus groups and other feedback approaches will be adopted to provide a more rounded approach</li><li>Contracted training companies are not currently encouraged to participate in Communities of Practice and other quality networks run by LWETB. External contribution by companies who have significant SME and delivery experience would be beneficial. This would also strengthen the relationship between the contracted training companies and LWETB</li></ul>

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