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

Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance

.....

Bríomhar / Ilchineálach / Nuálach
Dynamic / Diverse / Innovative

PROVIDER PROFILE 2021

.....

Longford and Westmeath
Education and Training Board



QQI

Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann
Quality and Qualifications Ireland



QQI REVIEW



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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

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



PREFACE

Learners and Beneficiaries

In reporting, LWETB differentiates between *learners* and *beneficiaries*.

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.

At year end, the learner is still recorded as one learner but possibly as multiple beneficiaries depending on the number of courses they commenced or support services they engaged with.

This distinction allows LWETB to more accurately record its learner activity levels.

Educators

LWETB uses the word “educator” to encompass teachers, tutors, adult educators, resource workers, FET Co-ordinators (in some instances) and instructors as a collective term.

Glossary of Terms & Standard Language

To ensure clarity and consistency in the language that we use, the FETQS Team have developed a glossary of QA language to be used throughout LWETB. We have consulted with staff and stakeholders within LWETB and reviewed legacy documentation to develop a Glossary of Terms that is inclusive and tailored to suit the needs of our service and provision.

It is our intention to continue to develop this standardisation of language across provisions and centres throughout LWETB. We recognise that there remains commonalities across legacy QA systems and so, the ongoing developments and progression will be a work in progress for some time to come.

Terminology and definitions used need to be consistent within our ETB, not only for staff and stakeholders but learners also. As policies, procedures and FETQS documentation are revised and developed, they will be approved by our appropriate governance bodies and through consultation we will develop and agree on our language and merge our provisions.



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Bríomhar / Ilchineálach / Nuálach
Dynamic / Diverse / Innovative

1. BACKGROUND



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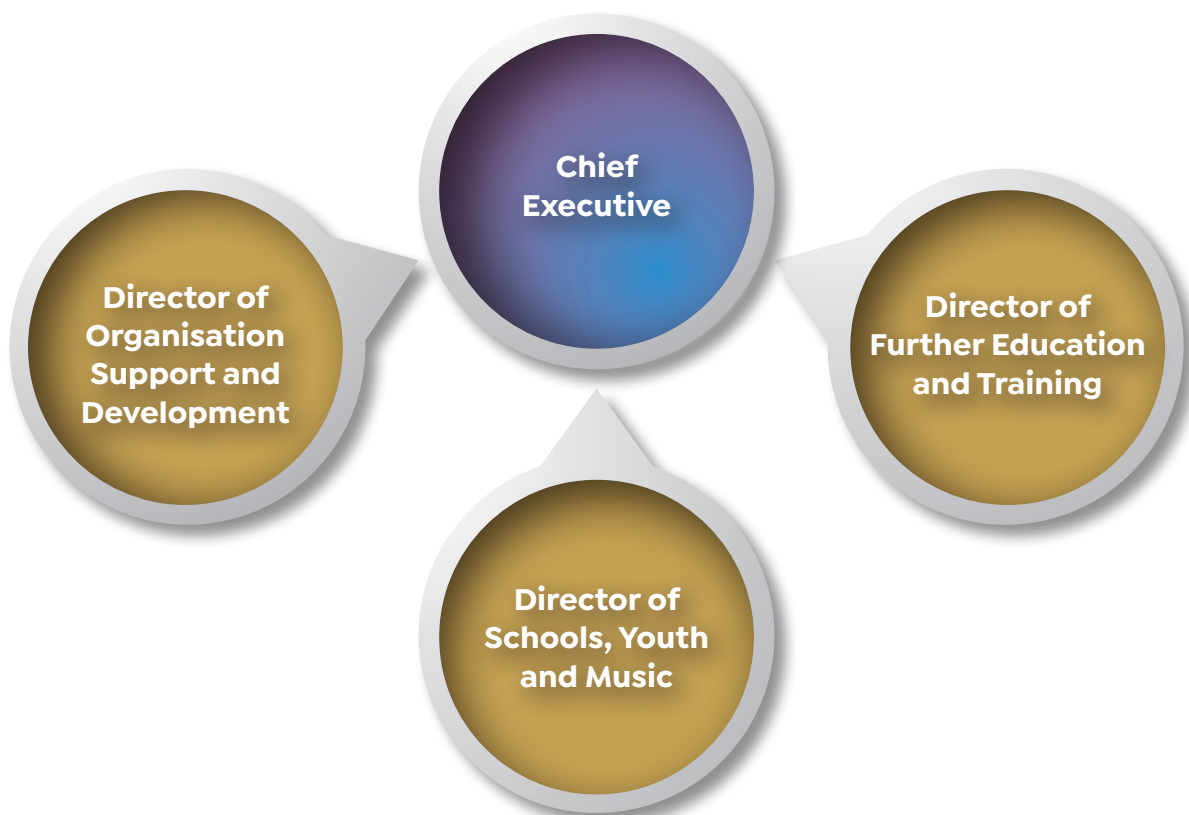
BACKGROUND

Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB) is the statutory body responsible for the provision of education and training services for the counties of Longford and Westmeath. LWETB was established on 1st July 2013 and operates under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013.

The work of LWETB is structured across three pillars;

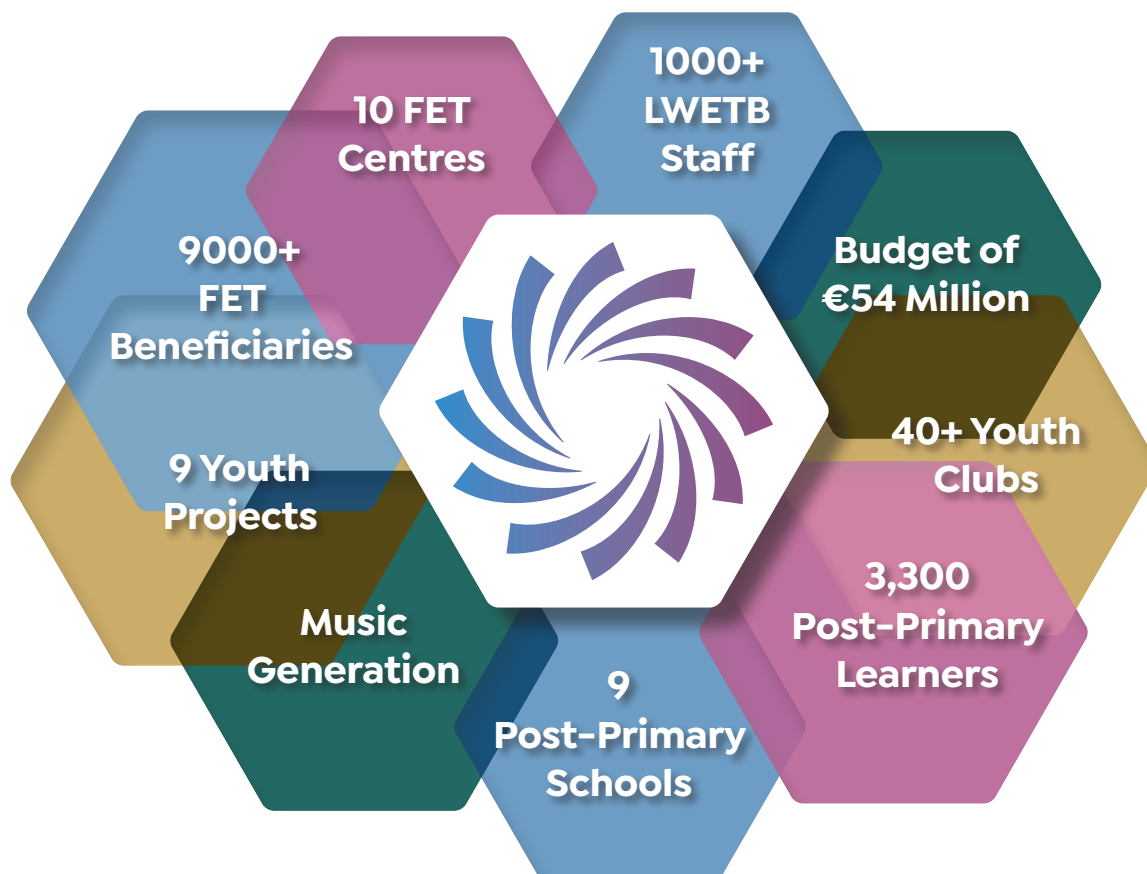
1. Further Education and Training
2. Schools, Youth and Music
3. Organisation Support and Development

Each pillar reports to the Chief Executive.





LWETB is an organisation of considerable scale with a 2020 budget of €54 million, employing over 1,000 staff with over 3,300 post-primary students and over 9,000 beneficiaries. LWETB caters for a diverse population with different educational, social and cultural needs.



Many of LWETBs Further Education and Training courses are co-funded by the Government of Ireland under the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), SOLAS and the European Structural Fund as part of the European Union:



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Co-funded by
the European Union

SOLAS
learning works



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LOCATIONS OF LWETB SERVICES (2021)

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

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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.

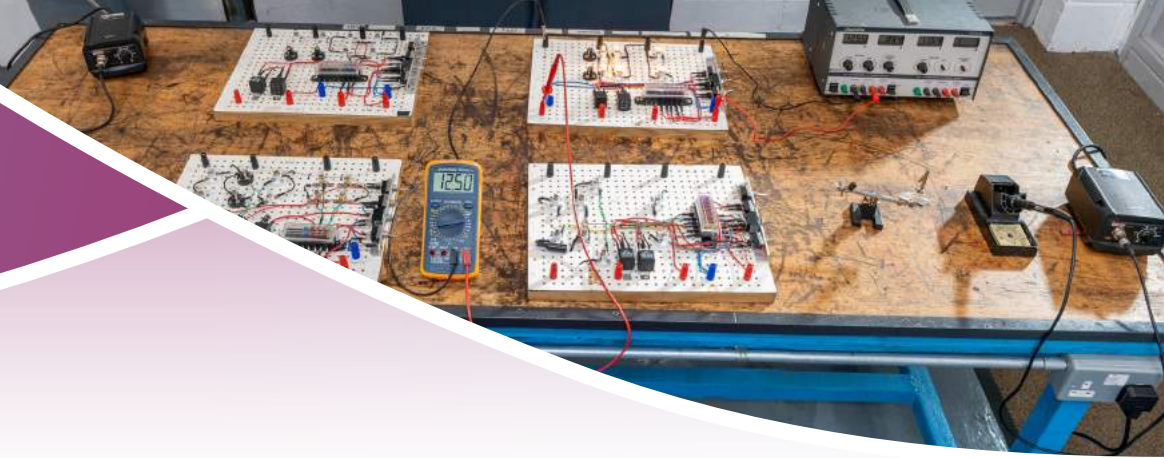


Westmeath Locations	Services
Garrycastle, Athlone Training Centre FET Centre	Bridging and Foundation Programmes, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, Specific Skills Training, Evening Training, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, FET Recruitment, Adult Guidance, Services to Business, Enterprise Engagement,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



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LWETB PROGRAMME AND SERVICE PROVISION

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 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.

Enterprise Engagement

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

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.

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.

TEL & PL&D

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

Evening Training

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

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.

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 careers options.

Service to Business

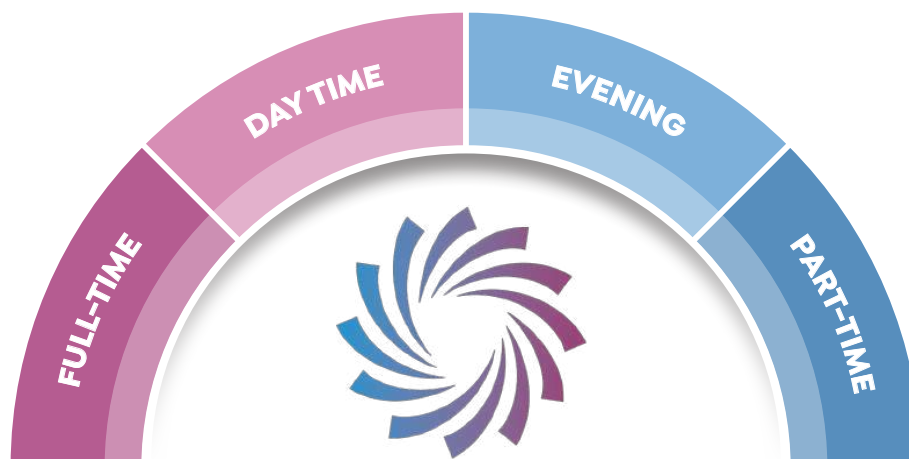
Supports learners with courses delivered with a large practical element and work experience element including: *Skills to Advance*, *Apprenticeship*, *Traineeship*, *CE*, etc.

Training Standards Team

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



LWETB PROVISION TYPES



Full-Time / Day Time

- Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)
- Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)
- Youthreach
- Bridging and Foundation
- Specific Skills Training (SST)
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships Training (Phases 2, 4, and 6)
- Local Training Initiatives (LTI)
- Specialist Training Provider (STP)
- Justice Workshop
- Community Training Centres (CTC)

Part-Time / Day Time & Evening

- Community Education
- Main Scheme Community Education
- Adult Literacy
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE)
- Refugee Resettlement
- Skills for Work
- DEIS Family Learning
- Voluntary Literacy Tuition
- Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)
- FET Co-operation Hours
- Skills to Advance (STA) & Compete (STC)
- Evening Training
- Digital Hub (Online Learning)
- Online Test Centre

2. MISSION, VALUES, STRATEGIC FOCUS, & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS





MISSION, VALUES, AND STRATEGIC FOCUS

LWETB's mission, values and strategic focus are outlined in the LWETB Strategy Statement 2017-2022¹. This report sets out the direction for LWETB over the period².

Our Mission

is to provide dynamic, diverse and innovative education and training services to the people of Longford and Westmeath.

This Mission Statement is the core purpose of our organisation. It defines what LWETB aims to accomplish in everyday work and underlines what each staff member and stakeholder strives to achieve, regardless of their job, title or occupation.

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

This applies to all services delivered within, by and on behalf of 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.

¹<https://lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LWETB-Strategy-Statement-2017-2022.pdf>

²A new Strategy Statement Report is due for publication in Q1, 2022 for the period 2022-2027.



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Values

LWETB values can be summed up in 4 key areas, and these key areas guide the organisation in providing 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



Strategic Focus

LWETB's Strategy Statement 2017-2022 charts the 5 strategic goals for the organisation:



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board Service Plan 2021³ details the Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA). Each PDA is linked to LWETB's 5 Strategic Goals:

GOAL 1: Deliver professional, high quality, learner-centred education and training services by:

Teaching and learning strategy

- Developing a Teaching and Learning Strategy
- FET Director remaining on as a member of the SOLAS National Steering Group for CPD, contributing to the National PD Plan for FET

Planning and co-ordination of programmes

- Developing and integrating the FET Service Plan into the overall LWETB Service Plan 2021
- The Service Plan 2021 will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team at least 3 times during the year
- SOLAS Funding Allocations Requests (FAR) Templates will be completed and returned on schedule (FAR 1 to FAR 4):
 - FAR 1: Confirms that LWETB has fully considered the planning and funding parameters and requirements and ensures plans are in line with its strategic performance agreement
 - FAR 2: Allows LWETB to set out summary business cases for additional funding for specific purposes e.g. capital requirements and facilitates the provision of detailed plans to deliver on specific parameters and requirements
 - FAR 3: Focuses on progress against the targets set out within LWETBs strategic performance agreements, any action required to address any variances in this regard and any revision of targets proposed
 - FAR 4: Requires the development of a detailed FET funding request / budget bid for funding. It shows how the allocation will be utilised in the context of provision, operation and staffing costs
- Funding Allocation Request and Reporting System (FARR) will be compiled and implemented on behalf of LWETB
- Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) will be used exclusively for FET programme provision. PLSS will be added to, reviewed, and updated during the year. New and existing FET initiatives identified as part of the FAR process will be included
- A strategic dialogue meeting between LWETB and SOLAS was completed in December 2019 and a progress report was issued to LWETB in Quarter 4 of 2020. A further dialogue meeting regarding LWETB's progress with the SOLAS Strategic Performance Agreements will take place during 2021

³<https://www.lwetb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Service-Plan-2021-Final.pdf>



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Quality assurance provision

- The established Quality Oversight Group (QOG) will continue in its role to provide guidance and set the direction for the new LWETB QA system. A minimum of 6 meetings will be held per annum
- The Quality Governance Group (QGG) will fulfill the roles and responsibilities delegated to it by the QOG for the oversight, planning, co-ordination, development and quality of programmes within LWETB. A minimum of 6 meetings will be held per annum
- Components of the implementation plan for the new QQI Standard for FET in LWETB will be completed in 2021. The Quality Improvement Action Plan and a Policies and Procedures Work Plan will be enhanced. Working groups will be initiated in response to goals set by the QGG
- The Programme Governance Group (PGG) will continue in its role of developing the new LWETB QA system. A minimum of 6 meetings will be held per annum
- Components of the implementation plan for the new QQI Standard for FET in LWETB will be completed in 2021. The Quality Improvement Action Plan and a Policies and Procedures Work Plan will be enhanced. Working groups will be initiated in response to goals set by the PGG
- A reengagement meeting and progress report will take place with QQI

Identify innovative responses to current and future needs

- Further work will continue with the aim of promoting and developing the relationship between FET and enterprise/ employers in the counties of Longford and Westmeath. The Enterprise Engagement (EE) Group will be reviewed and restructured in 2021 to allow for greater collaboration
- The design of the EE Teams/SharePoint site will be finalised and expanded to accommodate the sharing of information with all EE Team members
- Provide new learning opportunities to those who are in employment by engaging with the Skills to Advance initiative and delivering programmes for this cohort using strands 1 to 3
- Provide new learning opportunities to those who are in employment by engaging with the Skills for Work and Skills to Advance initiatives and delivering programmes for this learner cohort
- A Community Education Co-ordinator will be recruited for County Longford which will extend the reach of Community Education with particular emphasis on supporting areas with the greatest need for development

GOAL 2: Enhance the Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Learners

Feedback from learners and parents

- Mechanisms to establish learner feedback that inform and support delivery of quality education and training in our FET services will be established. Focus groups will be identified and setup



ICT enhanced learning

- In 2021 the LWETB Technology Enhance Learning (TEL) Co-ordinator will develop a TEL Action Plan in consultation with FET management, leaders, stakeholders and staff. The plan will encompass the following areas:
 - ICT infrastructure
 - On-going professional development for staff
 - Learning content and programme design
 - Organisation structure
- LWETB's representative on the SOLAS Technology Enhanced Learning Action Group will continue to be in place
- A number of new online resources for selected modules will be developed by FET
- The use of Moodle will be extended to more learners
- A Digital Hub will be established in County Longford

Tracking and reporting on outputs

- The use of PLSS and FARR to input data which will provide statistics on FET learner outputs for LWETB, SOLAS, DES and ESF purposes will be used exclusively in 2021 across all FET services
- Monthly management information reports on learner numbers will be circulated to FET managers and leaders
- Monthly management information reports on budgets will be circulated to FET managers and leaders

Improving facilities and resources

- A 2021 review of the physical environment will be completed and centres which require improvement works will be identified as a priority
- Projects requiring capital funding will be identified, prioritised and submitted for consideration by SOLAS as part of a new business case process
- LWETB will continue to engage with Westmeath County Council in a partnership arrangement to secure funding from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund Ireland 2040. The project is moving to phase 2 for 'shovel ready' projects in 2021
- LWETB will continue to engage with SOLAS and Westmeath County Council to progress the establishment of a new Further Education Centre for Westmeath
- LWETB will progress the establishment of a new digital hub for County Longford subject to the finalised approval of funding under the Just Transition Fund
- Improvement plans for a number of FET centres which were identified in 2020 and are currently in the planning stage will be progressed during 2021
- A number of existing lease arrangements for buildings which are due for renewal will be reviewed during 2021



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Staff CPD / monitoring

- LWETB will review its 2020 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plan and use it to inform the 2021 CPD plan
- The development of a FET CPD Plan for LWETB staff will be completed. 2021 will see an emphasis on the provision of:
 - Health and Safety training for all staff
 - Upskilling of staff who require it to carry out their existing roles
 - Upskilling for staff who are developing new modules or teaching new subject areas

GOAL 3: Foster Effective Communication, Collaboration and Partnerships

ICT strategy including reuse of systems and programmes

- FET management will identify Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects which will enhance communications, information sharing and networking both internally and externally
- The LWETB Senior Leadership Team and other stakeholders will contribute to an ICT Strategy

Enhance partnerships and alliances with external stakeholders and bodies

- A list of partnerships and alliances with external stakeholders and bodies will be updated for 2021. The purpose of this is to record LWETBs participation on national, regional and local forums
- In 2021, FET will respond to requests from external organisations and will participate and represent LWETB on national, regional and local forums. It should be noted that this can be onerous as the level of requests increases
- LWETB will engage with stakeholders and agencies to enhance educational and FET services

GOAL 4: Progress the Development of Effective Organisational Structures

Develop an approach that builds capacity for change management

- LWETB will provide support and professional development for staff in FET leadership roles
- The BTEI provision will be enhanced with the recruitment of two new adult educator roles to support the work
- The recruitment of a buildings and capital development officer will help LWETB to develop premises which promote the delivery of teaching and learning for learners, stakeholders and staff



Embed good governance across LWETB

- FET management will continue to work with the DOSD forum to develop appropriate Health and Safety policies and procedures in 2021
- FET management, leaders and staff meetings will be held regularly throughout 2021 with the purpose of providing updates regarding corporate governance requirements and responsibilities

Participate in national initiatives and fora

- FET management, leaders and staff will attend FET conferences, SOLAS information days and briefings to ensure LWETB presence at such events
- LWETB will plan and run events of importance to learners, employers, local and national bodies, agencies and stakeholder during 2021. The FET Adult Guidance Service and the FET Recruitment Service will continue to play an important role in this
- LWETB will be an active member of all relevant local and national bodies, agencies and stakeholder and will participate and contribute to a range of events during 2021

GOAL 5: Support a Culture of Continuous Development with Staff

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) strategy for LWETB

- LWETB will provide ongoing support to managers, leaders and staff through targeted mentoring and CPD
- An annual plan for CPD which identifies specific priority areas of development and will complement the new five-year Professional Development Strategy for the FET sector which was developed in 2020 with SOLAS
- LWETBs CPD representative on the ETBs CPD Network will continue to participate with the purpose of advancing the CPD agenda for FET

Develop cross-functional teams to promote a culture of innovation

- LWETB will consider opportunities to develop new cross-functional teams which may include external organisations

The Strategic Performance Agreements (SPA) between SOLAS and LWETB sets out the context, strategic priorities and its contributions to the achievement of key national Further Education and Training (FET) sector targets over the period 2018-2020. It also articulates LWETBs commitment to supporting the implementation of a range of national policies and strategies relevant to FET provision. Furthermore, it identifies the key risks and challenges which must be mitigated and addressed in order to ensure successful delivery of these agreements.

The SPA are the product of extensive dialogue and engagement between SOLAS and LWETB, with independent input and validation from a panel of experts who have an understanding of Irish and international good practice in further education and training systems.

3. GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES



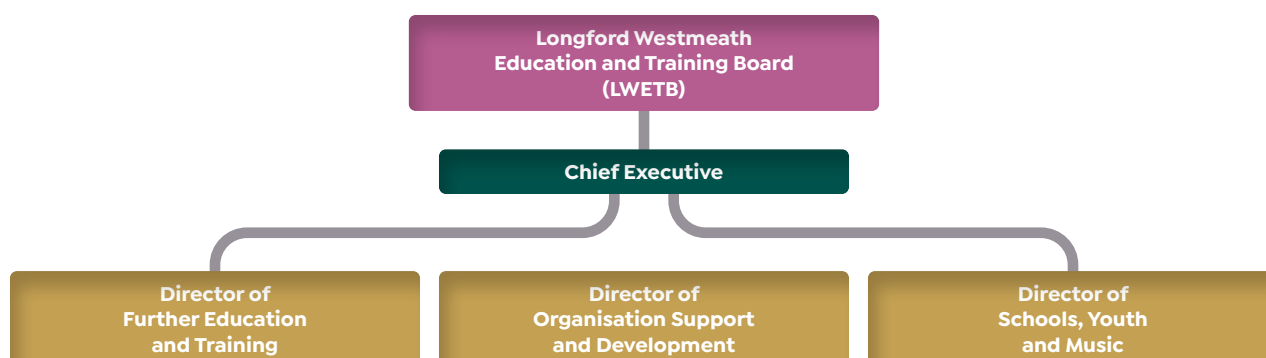
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

LWETB is governed by a Board currently with 21 members. The primary role of the Board is governance, providing direction and oversight. Executive functions are carried out by the Chief Executive (CE) and reserved functions are carried out by the Board. Reserved functions are set out in Section 12(2) of the Education and Training Board Act 2013⁴. The executive assists the members of the board in the performance of their functions as the members may require.

A brief outline of the reserved function of the board includes:

- Appoint CE
- Give opinions and adopt LWETBs strategy statement
- Adopt LWETBs Annual Report and Annual Service Plan
- Appointment/Removal of committee members
- Reviewing reports from the finance committee and the audit and risk committee and determine actions as appropriate
- Determine the terms of reference of a committee

EXECUTIVE GOVERNANCE



The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for all of LWETBs activity. The Director of Further Education and Training (FET) duties includes the delivery of high quality and responsive FET provision and its governance and management. The Director of Organisation Support and Development (OSD) is responsible for the governance and management of human resources, corporate services and finance functions. The Director of Schools, Youth and Music governs and manages post-primary schools, youth work unit and music generation.

⁴<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2013/act/11/section/12/enacted/en/html>

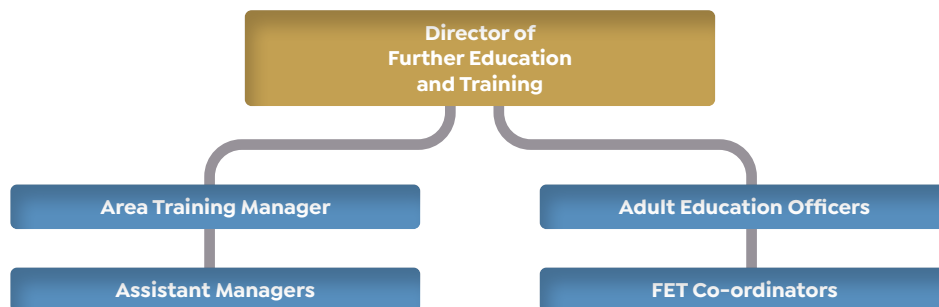


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FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING GOVERNANCE



The Director of Further Education and Training has overall responsibility for the provision of FET; providing leadership, guidance and support. An Area Training Manager and two Adult Education Officers are responsible for each of the individual FET provisions and support services. The individual functions are supported by assistant managers and FET Coordinators who manage the day to day running of each FET centre or support service.

The tiered organisation structure provides good governance, guaranteeing oversight, management and quality control of the education and training service delivered at centre level.

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (OSD) GOVERNANCE

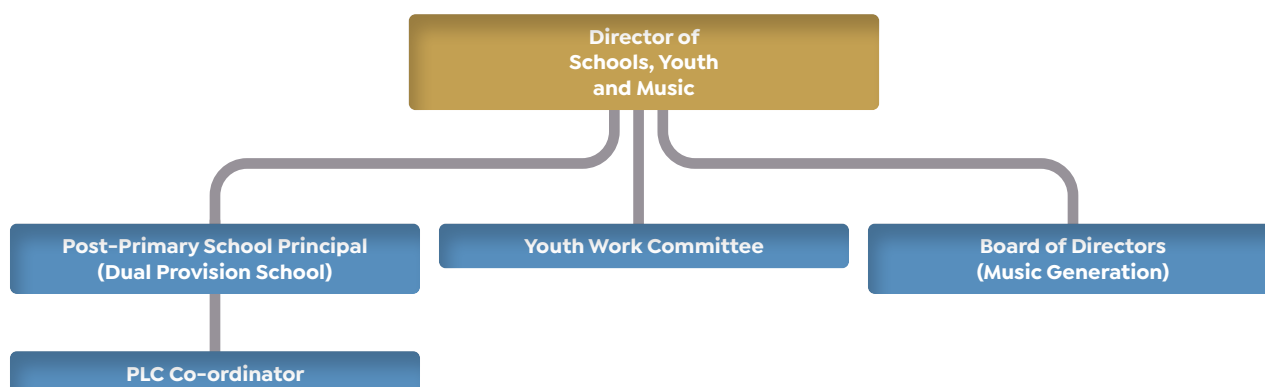


The OSD function is responsible for the design, direction and delivery of organisational governance and corporate services including:

- Human Resources
- Corporate Services (includes supporting departments such as procurement, buildings and ICT)
- Finance



SCHOOLS, YOUTH AND MUSIC GOVERNANCE



Two secondary schools offer dual provision (incorporating PLC provision) along with self-financing night classes. The School Principal manages the PLC provision and is supported by a PLC Co-ordinator. Day to day reporting is to the Director of Schools, Youth and Music. The Director of Further Education and Training provides support on FET related matters and ensures that SOLAS requirements are fulfilled.

The Youth Work Unit functions are identified by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and on the recommendation of ETBI established a Youth Work Committee. The remit of this committee is:

- Be informed of the youth work function conducted by LWETB
- Inform the Director of Schools, Youth and Music on information relating to youth work
- Provide oversight of the LWETB youth work function

Music Generation is managed by Longford Local Music Education Partnership, led by LWETB in partnership with Longford County Council and with support from Creative Ireland. It is managed by a Board of Directors of Music Generation DAC that is non-executive and independent. The Board is responsible for providing leadership, developing strategy, identifying and mitigating risk, along with monitoring the budgets and outcomes of the organisation.

4. APPROACH TO QUALITY





GOVERNANCE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance (QA) governance is placed at the heart of LWETB with all staff responsible for upholding some aspect of QA, depending on their role. The FETQS Team work under direction from FET management, bringing updated and newly developed QA arrangements to the appropriate governance group for oversight and approval before implementation.

At its core, Quality is at the fulcrum of our strategies and action plan within LWETB. The Quality Team commenced in 2019 to work on aligning FET policies and procedures. The Quality Team has developed into its own brand within LWETB of the FETQS Team. The remit of the FETQS Team is to develop, enhance and build on a quality culture/environment within our centres; for staff, stakeholders and learners. The scope of this work includes the cultivation and implementation of a strong foundation and structure of a quality system. It is the responsibility of the FETQS Team to ensure that QA integrates into the workings of our services and standards while also contributing to a continuous improvement framework.

To align to QQIs Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines, LWETB's FET service developed three Quality Assurance Governance structures which allows for oversight and collaboration of QA activities and objective separation of the QOG, QGG and PGG. The commencement of three governance structures is to provide transparency in the improvements and developments of QA structures, services and provision. These groups are as follows:

- Quality Oversight Group (QOG)
- Quality Governance Group (QGG)
- Programme Governance Group (PGG)

The Terms of Reference (ToR) are outlined within the Self-Evaluation Report on how these groups achieve objectives identified including how the FETQS Team interact and meet the needs of each governance group and objectives.

The remit of the FETQS Team is to meet the identified needs of our ETBs strategic objective, national standards and guidelines. The FETQS Team are also tasked to provide support, training and continuous improvement objectives as set by the QGG and PGG and approving these through the oversight governance group of the QOG.

It is through ensuring Quality Assurance that we guide and facilitate the delivery of LWETBs Mission and Vision statements as communicated to all stakeholders. In line with our Mission, Vision and Strategy Statement, it is our commitment to continuously improve the quality of the learner's experience. We do this by aligning our service and provision ensuring an experience that is relevant, meaningful, valid and consistent. Included in this is a fit-for-purpose assessment, whether that be through accreditation or non-accreditation.

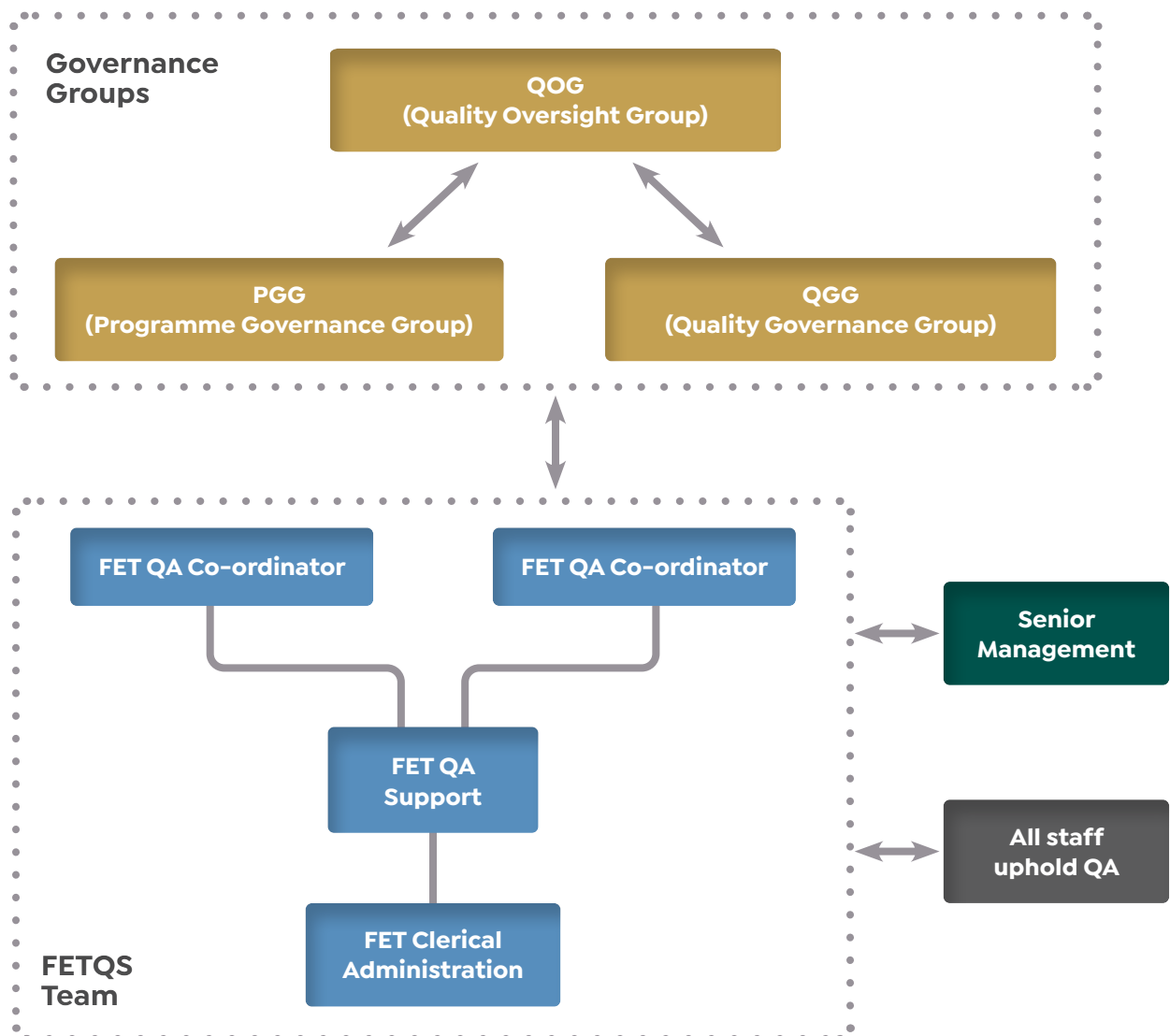


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To date the Further Education and Training Quality System (FETQS) Team are working hard to develop a suite of supporting QA policies and procedures to span across LWETB FET services and provisions and this is the main and long-term goal objective. The initial duties have been to work in alignment to the identified priorities within our Strategy Statement 2017 – 2022 and the annual Quality Improvement Plans.





There are currently 4 active⁵ QA arrangements in place:

1. FE Programme provision in Westmeath
2. FE Programme provision in Longford
3. PLC Provision in Mullingar Community College
4. Transitional Quality Assurance System (TQAS)

Identified in the Executive Self-Evaluation Report (ESER) was a need to re-evaluate the existing quality assurance framework against the requirements of the new core guidelines of QA and establish common policy across all provisions. The ESER report, along with the annual LWETB FET Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) outlines quality improvement objectives, key tasks and activities to be completed, along with timelines and benchmarking to achieve this objective. The FETQS Team was established for this re-evaluation.

Documents updated or created by the FETQS Team bear the FETQS logo. The appearance of the FETQS logo on documentation, presentations and support materials signifies FETQS approval for organisational-wide use.



It is a large scale undertaking to create common policies and seek a common agreement across FET provisions and at times this can prove to be a challenging task.

As part of this process, the Quality Oversight Group (QOG) was formed, with delegated authority to the Quality Governance Group (QGG) and Programme Governance Group (PGG).

The QOG oversee the planning, co-ordination, quality, development and improvement of all aspects of further education and training provision of LWETB.

The Quality Governance Group (QGG) oversee the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination, and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures and processes, while the Programme Governance Group (PGG), carries out the same role but for programmes.

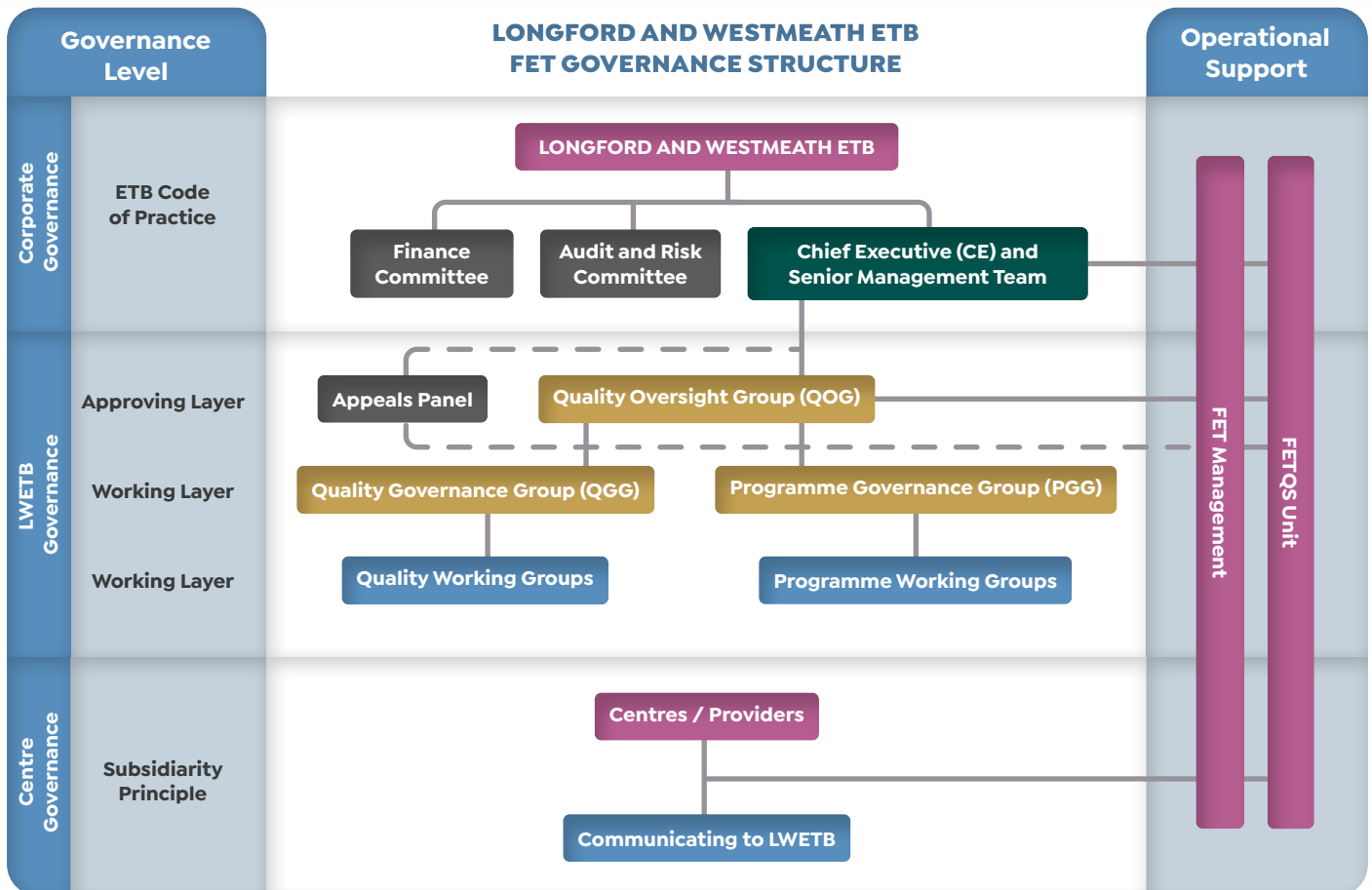
Programme and Quality working groups are established to update programme(s)/policies or procedures as needed/ identified. The working group are tasked with consulting and distributing to the relevant parties for consultation before implementation by the PGG/QGG after ratification by the QOG.

⁵ There are 2 additional inactive QA arrangements where no accredited courses currently take place (PLC provision in Athlone Community College and Columba College, Killucan). There are currently no plans to offer accredited courses in these centres in the future and hence excluded from this report.



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ETHOS OF FETQS

The ethos of policies, procedures and documentation is always about serving the learner by:

1. Having one fit-for-purpose set of core guidelines that covers all 11 core areas of quality assurance
2. Having documentation and forms that are easily understood, non-discriminatory and learner-centred at its core
3. Having policies, procedures or documents that improve the integrity and quality of process
4. Having policies, procedures or documents that add efficiency and structure to a process

5. REGIONAL PROFILE



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REGIONAL PROFILE

Despite the close geographical locations of Longford and Westmeath, they have quite different economic profiles.

Westmeath

County Westmeath is located in the centre of the midlands, with a population of 88,800⁶. The county has quality transport connections making it highly accessible to Dublin. This has helped the county grow. The county is already home to a number of high profile employers such as, Ericsson, Steripack Group, Neueda Technologies, 3M and Teleflex. It has the capacity to attract more industry and business which would further enhance the economic and social prospects of Westmeath.

The population of the county is expected to grow to between 37,000 and 45,500 by 2030⁷ with Athlone and Mullingar as the main population centres.

Athlone is designed as a 'Regional Growth Centre' meaning it will act as a regional economic driver for a wide catchment area and Mullingar as a 'key town', able to provide employment for the surrounding area.

Longford

Longford has the second smallest population nationally with a population of 40,900⁸. It is expected to increase by 5,600 by 2022⁹. Historically, County Longford has recorded the highest rate of unemployment in the state (19.6% compared to 12.9% as of the last census of County Longford), with urban unemployment particularly high at 29.3%. Longford has the lowest level of professional workers (4.8%) and the highest level of unskilled labour (27.7%) in the state. It has the highest number of members of the Travelling Community per head of population.

Major organisations such as Abbott, Avery Dennison Tool & Plastic, C&D Foods and Centre Parcs are its key employers, but it also has a strong engineering sector and a rapidly growing food processing sector with a specialism in baked consumer products for the multiples.

Active Businesses

	Active Businesses	Employment
Westmeath (Athlone)	1,115	13,100
Westmeath (Mullingar)	1,410	5,050
Longford	970	5,050

⁶Census 2016, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rsdgi/regionalsdgsireland2017/nt/>

⁷<https://consult.westmeathcoco.ie/system/files/materials/5/Chapter%205%20Economic%20Dev.pdf>

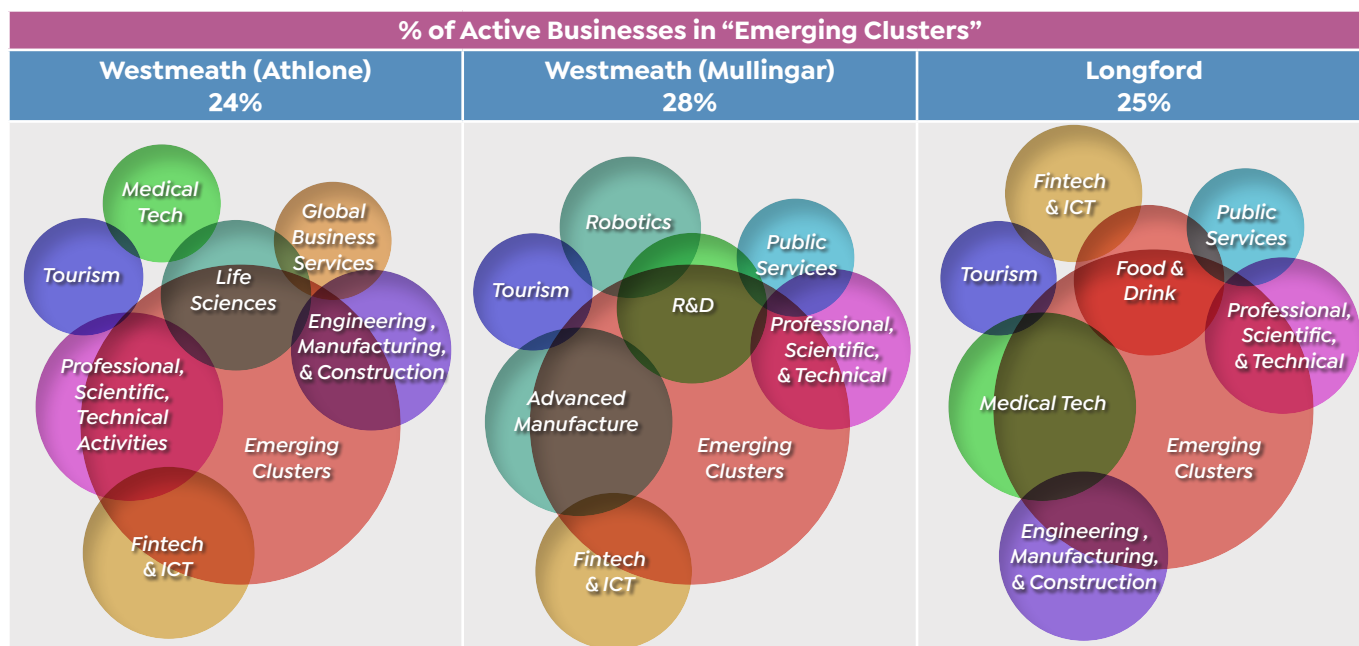
⁸Census 2016, <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-rsdgi/regionalsdgsireland2017/nt/>

⁹<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/healthy-ireland/partnerships/longford.pdf>



EMERGING CLUSTERS

The following represents growth areas for employment¹⁰:



INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT¹¹

	Manufacturing, Engineering, Building & Construction	Commerce & Trade	Transport & Communications	Professional Services	Other Industries
Westmeath (Athlone)	21%	21%	6%	24%	28%
Westmeath (Mullingar)	15%	25%	9%	23%	28%
Longford	20%	21%	6%	23%	31%

¹⁰ <https://www.regionalskills.ie/regions/midlands/our-region-profile/>

¹¹ Within 1 hour driving distance



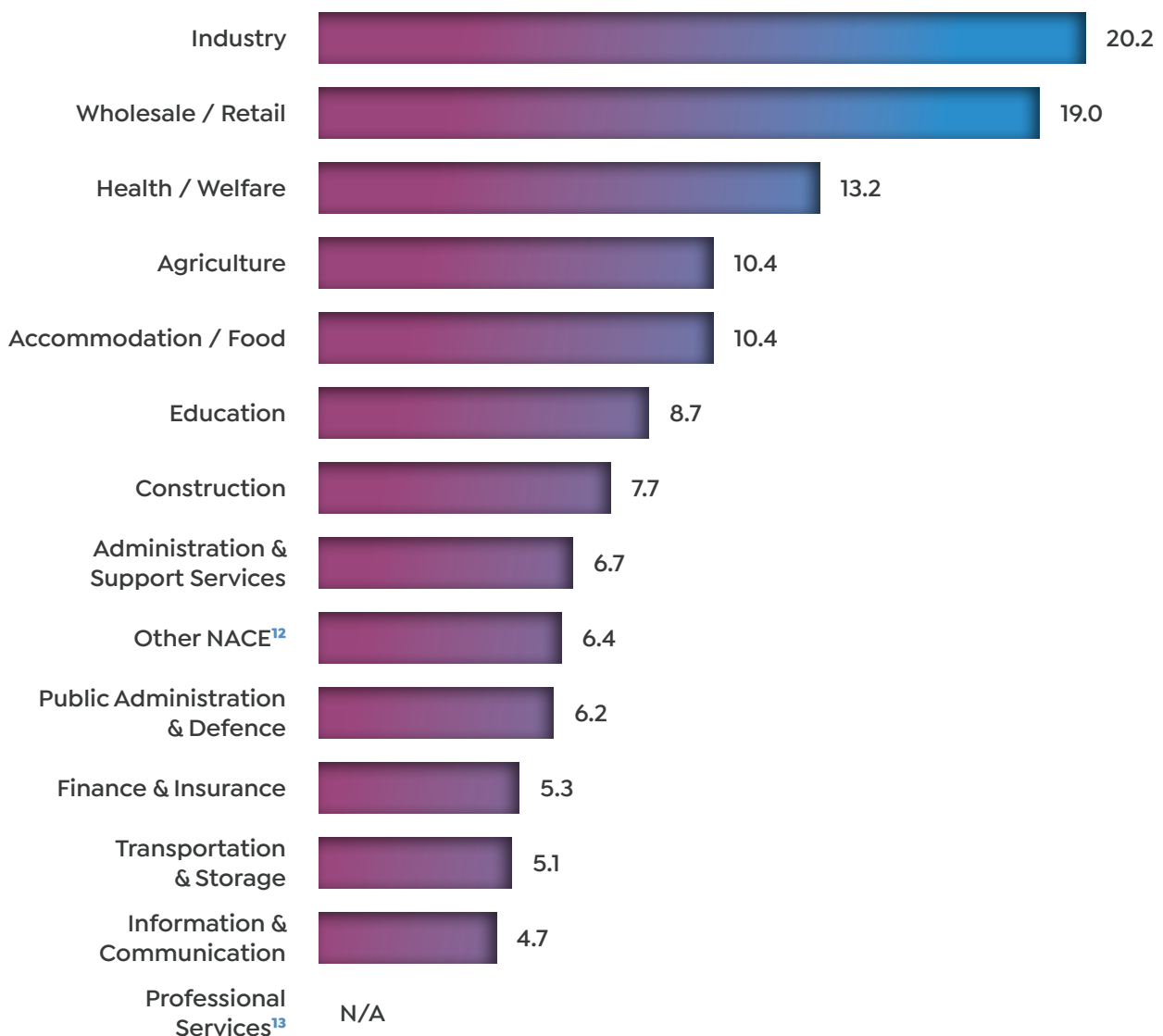
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The SOLAS Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) analysis of CSO Labour Force Survey for Q2 2019 shows that the public service employment in the Midlands forms a sizeable portion of the labour market, at approximately 15,000 (education & public administration and finance):

Midlands employment ('000s) by sector, Q2 2019



¹² Nomenclature générale des Activités économiques dans les Communautés Européennes (Statistical Classification of Economic Activities developed in the European Community)

¹³ Numbers for Professional Services were too small to report for the Midlands region



IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

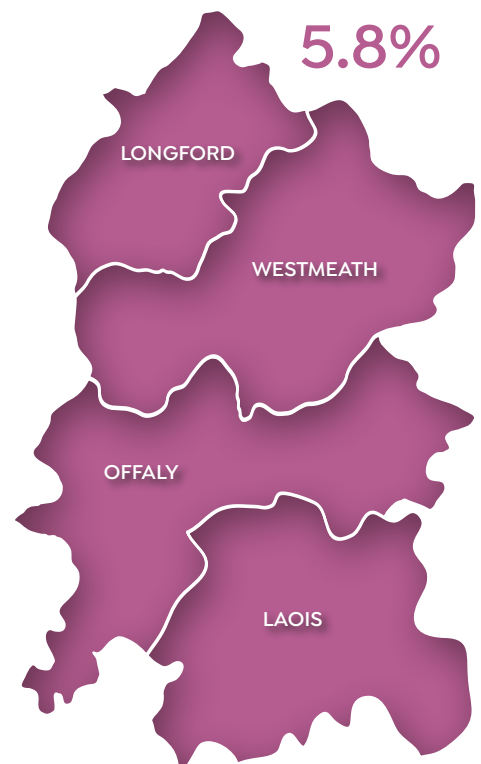
The pandemic has continued to have a significant impact on the labour market. As of September 2021, the national adjusted measure of unemployment (assuming PUP¹⁴ claimants are considered unemployed) stands at 10%. Given the skill level of the labour force, Longford and Westmeath would be expected to exceed the national unemployment rate. This adjusted unemployment rate is falling as the economy eases restrictions (down from 12.4% from August 2021)¹⁵.

Data from by the SOLAS Labour Market Research Unit (SLMRU) and the Midlands Regional Skills Forum 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 & Retail	19,400	-10% ▼
Health	16,700	-4% ▼
Public Administration	10,100	+33% ▲
Accommodation & Food	9,700	-10% ▼



¹⁴ PUP = Pandemic Unemployment Payment

¹⁵ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/mue/monthlyunemploymentseptember2021/>

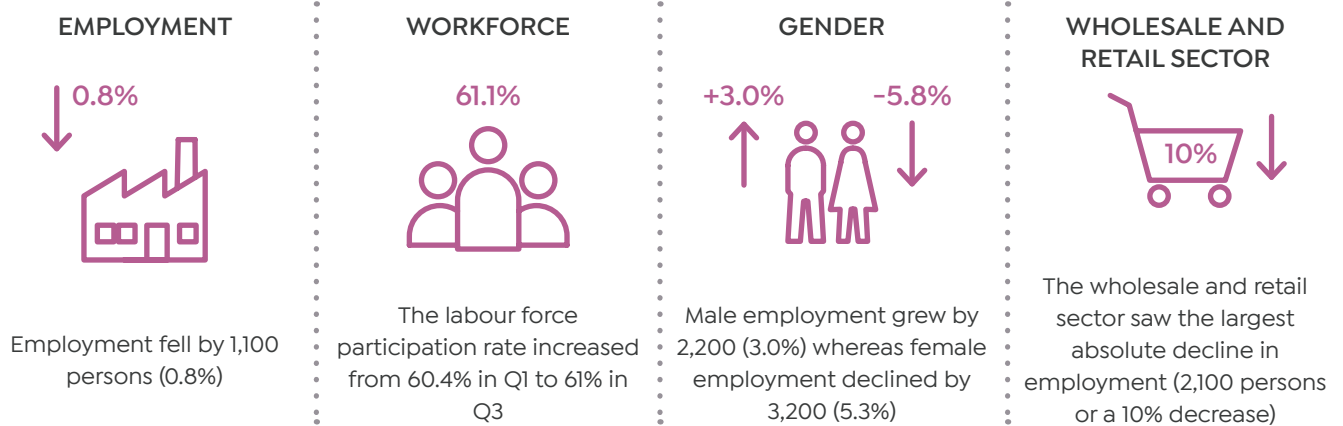


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Impact of COVID-19 on the Midland region (from Q1 2020 to Q3 2020)



CHALLENGES FOR LONGFORD AND WESTMEATH IN THE FUTURE

1. Reliance on a major employer – because the region has relied on large employers where initial employment requires low skill e.g. Bord Na Móna with the closure of bog lands for peat production, there is a lack of incentive to reskill/upskill to maintain employability. Many lack up-to-date skills to seek work elsewhere
2. Infrastructure challenges – public transport and fast internet are an issue for many. This also impacts skills training initiatives
3. Foreign Direct Investment – is the lowest in the country (with the exception of Athlone) for job creation
4. Skills mismatch – the region has good mechanical skills but there are particular skills shortages in ICT, renewable energy technologies and construction
5. Encouraging entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship training – many initiatives particularly by Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) have been active in encouraging new businesses but it continues to need attention
6. Skilled workers opting to move or commute to areas such as Galway or Dublin rather than work locally. This is creating 'brain drain' within the region

6. PROVISION PROFILE



Bríomhar / Ilchineálach / Nuálach
Dynamic / Diverse / Innovative

LWETB Test Centre

CONTEXT

The pandemic impacted 2020 and 2021 greatly for learner participation in the FET sector. In line with national FET trends, new learner referrals dipped along with certification levels. LWETBs growth in remote learning grew with learners at NFQ levels 1-4 particularly disadvantaged due to low technical skills and/or finding learning outcomes more difficult to master while studying from home. Following the government imposed restrictions, home working and remote online classes became the norm for most, with some (reduced capacity) reopening of centres throughout 2021.

Nationally in 2020, the pandemic reduced the number for FET learners by 20.5%¹⁶. LWETB experienced a similar pattern - a reduction in learners by 26% and beneficiaries of 30%.

	2019	2020	Difference
Learners	5,637	4,147	-26%
Beneficiaries	8,094	5,629	-30%

FET SECTOR - QQI AWARDS ACHIEVED IN 2020 COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS

Technical Indicator *Simple Moving Average (SMA)*

The SMA on the time series years 2014-2020 provides an estimation of the 2020 long-term trend value for the total number of QQI learners and awards achieved in the FET sector across the Republic of Ireland, whilst smoothing the short-term fluctuation due to COVID-19 disruptions.

FET Sector	Long-term estimated value 2020	Actual numbers 2020	% Change 2019 and estimated long-term value 2020	Actual % change 2019 and 2020	Difference - Estimated % change due to COVID-19
Number of Learners	114,401	95,781	-5.1%	-20.5%	-15.4%
Number of Awards	194,627	156,704	-7.1%	-25.2%	-18.1%

The long-term estimated value for 2020 suggests that the disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic affected the FET sector significantly:

- A decline of about 5% in the number of learners and 7% in the number of awards made is part of the general downward trend that the FET sector has experienced since 2014.
- The pandemic accelerated this trend by an estimated 15% in the number of learners and 18% in the number of total awards made from 2019.

¹⁶ <https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/QQI%20Certification%20Data%202020.pdf>, p.g.18.



LWETB CENTRES (2020)

Centre Type	Name of Centre	Full-time Beneficiaries		Part-time Beneficiaries (classroom or remote learning)		Total Beneficiaries	
		Number	%*	Number	%	Number	%
FET Centre	ATC** Evening Training (Athlone)	-	-	591	17.99	591	13.43
	ATC Evening Training (Longford)	-	-	38	1.16	38	0.86
	ATC Daytime Training (Athlone)	333	29.89	-	-	333	7.57
	ATC Daytime Training (Longford)	32	2.87	-	-	32	0.73
Adult Literacy	FET Centre (Longford)	-	-	675	20.54	675	15.35
	FET Centre (Mullingar)	-	-	460	14.00	460	10.45
	FET Centre (Athlone)	-	-	555	16.89	555	12.61
VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme)	Athlone Training Centre (ATC)	72	6.46	-	-	72	1.64
	FET Centre (Longford)	16	1.44	-	-	16	0.36
	FET Centre (Mullingar)	31	2.78	5	0.15	36	0.82
BTEI (Back to Education Initiative)	FET Centre (Longford)	-	-	293	8.92	293	6.66
	FET Centre (Mullingar)	-	-	123	3.74	123	2.80
	FET Centre (Athlone)	-	-	258	7.85	258	5.86
Community Education	FET Centre (Athlone)	-	-	150	4.56	150	3.41
	FET Centre (Longford)	-	-	138	4.20	138	3.14
Youthreach	YR Centre (Ballymahon, Longford)	56	5.03	-	-	56	1.27
	YR Centre (Kilbeggan, Westmeath)	33	2.96	-	-	33	0.75
	YR Centre (Longford)	55	4.94	-	-	55	1.25
	YR Centre (Delvin, Westmeath)	38	3.41	-	-	38	0.86
PLC (Post-Leaving Certificate)	Community College (Mullingar)	126	11.31	-	-	126	2.86
	Templemichael College (Longford)	322	28.91	-	-	322	7.32
Total		1,127	100%	3,286	100%	4,400	100%

*% denotes to the breakdown of 100% of total beneficiaries across all provisions. The *Total Beneficiaries* percentage is full-time and part-time representation.

** Athlone Training Centre



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CONTRACTED / SECOND PROVIDER PROVISION (2020)

Centre Type	Provider / Provision Type	Full-time Beneficiaries		Part-time Beneficiaries (classroom and remote learners)		Total Beneficiaries	
		Number	%*	Number	%	Number	%
Specialist Training Provider (STP)	National Learning Network (Athlone, Edgeworthstown, Longford and Mullingar)	205	41.67	-	-	205	17.54
Community Based Training	Community Training Centres (Athlone and Mullingar)	124	25.20	-	-	124	10.61
Department of Justice Workshops	National Learning Network (Athlone)	10	2.03	-	-	10	0.86
Local Training Initiatives	EDI Centre (Longford) and Belvedere House and Gardens (Westmeath)	72	14.63	-	-	72	6.16
Skills To Advance	Contracted Training	-	-	64	9.45	64	5.47
Specific Skills Training	Contracted Training	-	-	613	90.55	613	52.44
Traineeship Training	Contracted Training	81	16.47	-	-	81	6.92
Total		492	100%	677	100%	1,169	100%

APPRENTICESHIPS

In addition to the centre figures above, Athlone Training Centre also had learners complete the final phases of their craft apprenticeships:

Name of Centre	Learners		
	2018	2019	2020
Athlone Training Centre	52	73	60

The Athlone Training Centre figures below depict learners who are not fully certified but attended Athlone Training Centre in Phase 2 of their apprenticeship. Apprenticeship figures include the following: Metal Fabrication, Motor, Mechanical Automotive Maintenance Fitter, Plumbing, Electrical, Carpentry and Joinery.

Name of Centre	Learners		
	2018	2019	2020
Athlone Training Centre	208	234	113

* % denotes to the breakdown of 100% of total beneficiaries across all provisions. The Total Beneficiaries percentage is full-time and part-time representation.



LWETB SERVICES

FET Adult Guidance

Offers impartial information, advice and guidance on training, education and careers to adults who are interested in returning to education. This service is offered before, during or after their course.

The Guidance Service helps to:

- Identify skills, interests and goals in life
- Explore learning options and ways of moving forward
- Overcome issues that may be holding a learner back
- Finding the support needed to achieve goals

Adult Guidance 'Snapshot' for 2018-2020:

	No. of Primary Locations	No. of Beneficiaries
2020	3	1,127 ¹⁷
2019	3	3,656
2018	3	3,486

FET Recruitment

The service registers learners to courses, provides information, interviews prospective learners and informs learners of start dates.

Adult Learning

Provides Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Skills support. Courses can be non-accredited or accredited to NFQ levels 1-3. Adult Learning services are available to all, but they particularly target hard-to-reach learners, early school leavers, referrals from the probation service or otherwise disadvantaged learners. Such courses include:

- Reading & Writing
- Spelling & Grammar
- English Language Classes
- Everyday Maths
- Computer Skills
- Cookery and Art/Craft
- Personal Development
- Childcare
- Gardening Skills
- Driver Theory Preparation

¹⁷ The reduced uptake in Adult Guidance is attributed to reduced learners numbers, limited access to learner groups and diminished referrals from Department of Social Protection (DSP) in 2020.



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Community Education

Provides formal and informal education for hard-to-reach adults. It aims to build the capacity of local communities to engage in diverse, dynamic and accessible learning in a non-threatening, safe environment. Such courses include flower arranging, basket making, pottery, group development, woodwork or horticulture.

TEL / PL&D

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) combined with Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) initiatives have provided and supported:

- Remote/Blended learning approaches
- Use of technology to support remote and classroom based learning
- Development of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in programme design
- Online assessment development

Service to Business

The service has responsibility for the registration and monitoring of employers and apprentices registered to the standards based apprenticeships and the new 2016+ apprenticeships.

Enterprise Engagement Services

This service builds and maintains relationships with employers in the region, educating the business community on FET provisions that are available, especially under Skills to Advance, Skills for Work and Explore initiatives.



PROVISION BY FIELD OF LEARNING

Fields of Learning	Beneficiaries		
	2018	2019	2020
Agriculture, Horticulture and Mariculture	105	113	98
Animal Science	7	-	-
Arts and Crafts	170	142	97
Built Environment	106	104	127
Business, Administration	662	547	443
Core ICT	180	172	110
Core Personal	2,768	3,067	2,042
Engineering	43	63	64
Engineering (IT)	45	19	-
Engineering (Mechanical)	282	261	127
Engineering (Transport)	22	18	18
Entrepreneurship	8	-	-
Financial Services	25	21	9
Food and Beverage	77	59	50
General Learning	1,258	1,427	705
Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapies	224	227	204
Health, Family and other Social Services	500	443	428
Information Technology	270	295	253
Management	65	68	113
Manufacturing	48	35	11
Media, Graphics, Communications	40	23	8
Research and Education - Training	63	57	35
Sales and Marketing	127	82	85
Security, Guarding and Emergency Services	138	113	34
Skills Sampling	100	412	312
Sports and Leisure	54	41	15
Tourism	60	88	83
Transport, Distribution and Logistics	71	103	86
Web Development and Design	35	21	12
Total	7,552	8,021	5,569



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AWARDING BODIES

QQI	Beneficiaries					
	Full	Partial	Full	Partial	Full	Partial
NFQ Level	2018	2018	2019	2019	2020	2020
1	43	2	38	27	0	8
2	146	4	186	49	19	10
3	453	54	328	93	131	25
4	502	71	329	95	141	80
5	708	107	653	123	383	218
6	182	17	212	3	60	76
Total	2,034	255	1,746	390	734	417

Other Awarding Bodies

Awarding Bodies	Beneficiaries					
	Awards 2018		Awards 2019		Awards 2020	
	Number	%*	Number	%	Number	%
APMG - International	-	-	-	-	41	2.49
Approved EN Certifying Body	123	4.05	156	5.44	50	3.04
City and Guilds	74	2.44	35	1.22	50	3.04
CompTIA	41	1.35	9	0.31	24	1.46
CPA Ireland	13	0.43	9	0.31	9	0.55
Department of Education and Skills	-	-	-	-	16	0.97
ICS Skills	127	4.18	54	1.88	4	0.24
ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management)	20	0.66	10	0.35	7	0.43
ITEC (International Therapy Examination Council)	1	0.03	12	0.42	11	0.67
Microsoft	14	0.46	28	0.98	38	2.31
Oracle	-	-	7	0.24	-	-
PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council)	69	2.27	99	3.45	31	1.88
RSA (Road Safety Authority)	15	0.49	16	0.56	12	0.73
RTITB (Road Transport Industry Training Board)	19	0.63	23	0.80	16	0.97
Solidworks	-	-	6	0.21	66	4.01
VTCT (Vocational Training Charitable Trust)	162	5.33	-	-	7	0.43
Unspecified	108	3.55	309	10.77	168	10.21
Total	786	100%	773	100%	550	100%

*% denotes to the breakdown of 100% of total beneficiaries across all provisions on a per year basis.

7. LEARNER PROFILE





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LEARNER PROFILE



Learners & Beneficiaries

	2018	2019	2020
Learners	5,444	5,564	4,087
Beneficiaries	7,552	8,021	5,569



Learner Age

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



Learner Gender

	2018	2019	2020
Male	2,832	2,791	2,238
Female	2,612	2,773	1,849
Total	5,444	5,564	4,087



Learner Nationality

	2018	2019	2020
Ireland	2,551	2,855	2,206
Great Britain/Northern Ireland	96	84	59
Europe	703	739	556
Africa	207	222	157
Asia	165	241	167
North America	2	6	8
Oceania	1	0	1
South America	90	102	65
Central America	1	4	1
Unknown	1,628	1,311	867
Total	5,444	5,564	4,087

All data sourced from End of Year Reports – PLSS. Correct as of October 2021

8. STAFFING PROFILE





STAFF PROFILE

There were 901 staff employed in the totality of LWETB as of December 2020 covering a varied range of roles within the organisation.

Some of the roles which exist within FET include:

- Director of Further Education & Training
- Adult Education Officers
- Area Training Manager
- Assistant Managers
- Assistant Co-ordinators/Resource Workers
- Assessors/Educators
- Adult Guidance Co-ordinator
- Adult Guidance Counsellors
- Information Officer
- FET Co-ordinators
- FET Quality Co-ordinators
- Training Standards Officers
- Assistant Training Standards Officers
- FET Recruitment Officer
- Contracted Training Officer
- Purchasing Officer
- Senior Training Advisors
- Administration
- Auxiliary Staff
- FET Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) Co-ordinator

LWETB Staff	2018	2019	2020
Post Primary Teachers	341	433	434
FET Educators	145	223	163
Administration Staff	82	120	120
Co-ordinators / FET Managers	28	21	25
Assistant Co-ordinators /Resource Staff	11	12	11
Exams	70	71	0 ¹⁸
External Authenticator	21	15	25
Support Staff (SNA)	34	62	78 ¹⁹
Maintenance Staff	30	30	30
Music Generation	-	-	15
Total	762	987	901

¹⁸ Exams staff 0 because no state exams took place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁹ Support staff (SNA) includes COVID-19 Supervisors as Support Staff.

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EDUCATOR : LEARNER RATIO²⁰

Provision	Educator:Learner Ratios (Average)
Adult Learning (Literacy)	1:6
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)	1:10
Back To Education Initiatives (BTEI)	1:12
Community Education	1:10
Post-Learning Certificate Courses (PLC)	1:20
Apprenticeships	1:14
Specialist Training Providers (STP)	1:10
Community Training Centres (CTC)	1:12
Department of Justice Workshops (DoJW)	1:6
Local Training Initiatives (LTI)	1:15
Skills To Advance (STA)	1:10
Specialist Skills Training (SST)	1:20
Youthreach	1:10
Contracted Training (External Provision)	1:20

²⁰ Ratios stated are pre-COVID-19 pandemic. Where learners are in class during COVID-19, Educator:Learner ratios are typically 50% less, depending on the classroom size/layout and equipment needed.

9. COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS





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LWETB has an extensive network of partners. Cooperation, collaboration and partnerships at local, regional and national levels allows LWETB elevate its offerings and facilitates learning from peers; better serving the needs of the FET sector in Longford and Westmeath. Membership of advisory and working groups allows LWETB to share its insights and knowledge for others to benefit. The following is a selection of national, regional and other partnerships with whom LWETB engages.

NATIONAL AGENCIES



AONTAS – Aos Oideachais Náisiúnta Trí Aontú Saorálach

AONTAS advocate and lobby for the development of a quality service for adult learners. AONTAS promote the value and benefits of adult learning and builds organisational capacity. LWETB supports many ventures promoted by this agency.

Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)

DFHERIS funds and creates policy for the further education sector to encourage Ireland's social and economic development. They also ensure that public investment and policy in these areas gives opportunities to everyone, including the most vulnerable in society. LWETB (often in conjunction with SOLAS) supports these initiatives such as the recent announcement of the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy.

Department of Justice

LWETB work with The Department of Justice in the delivery of workshops based on key themes. Theme 2 focuses on financial, education and health of participants identified within the Terms of Reference: *'Improved supports for protection applicants aimed at showing greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system and improving their quality of life'*.



DSP – Department of Social Protection

LWETB and DSP work closely together at many levels. The Group Engagement (GE) process allows those on jobseeker's payments to attend information events to decide on the most suitable educational/training option for them. Working closely with the DSP has served to improve the mutual understanding of each others areas, systems, services and supports. This enables both the DSP and LWETB to offer a more comprehensive, informed and integrated system for the adult learner.

ETBI – Education and Training Boards Ireland

ETBI represents all 16 ETBs, at a national level with Government Departments and other relevant bodies and authorities. ETBI promotes the development and implementation of appropriate education and training policies, procedures and guidance for ETBs. It conducts research, devises and delivers education and training programmes for its members. LWETB actively participates in many advisory, networking and working groups run by ETBI.

NALA – National Adult Literacy Agency

LWETB has a memorandum of understanding with NALA, providing literacy and numeracy training and support to the community.

QQI – Quality and Qualifications Ireland

QQI is responsible for promoting the quality and accountability of education and training in Ireland. Among other duties, QQI promote, maintain and develop the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). At present, LWETB is undertaking a Self-Evaluation of Quality Assurance as part of the QQI Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance for ETBs. A legacy agreement from SOLAS has enabled both organisations to work together towards implementing the new QA guidelines and to establish a formal linkage between both institutions.

SOLAS – tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna

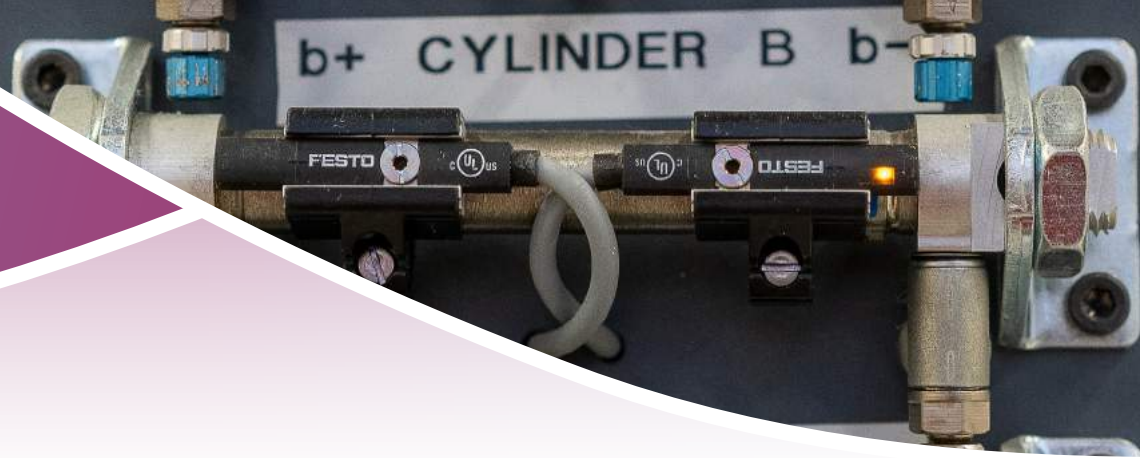
SOLAS is the state organisation with responsibility for funding, planning and coordinating Further Education and Training in Ireland. LWETB has a cohesive relationship with SOLAS with an agreement that outlines the context, strategic priorities and ETB contribution to achievement of key national further education and training (FET) sector targets²¹. LWETB strives to achieve these on a daily basis.

²¹https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/070780d0c2/14717_solas_etb_longford_westmeath_web.pdf



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REGIONAL PARTNERS



Department of Social Protection (DSP)

Department of Social Protection (DSP) LWETB provides certified training programmes for Community Employment (CE) programmes run by the Department of Social Protection. These training programmes are for long-term or otherwise disadvantaged people to assist and support to get back into employment.

Explore

Explore is a Regional Skills initiative developed to help address the issue of Ireland's low level of participation in lifelong learning, particularly targeting persons over 35 years of age in the manufacturing employment sector. It is an innovative and fully funded initiative, offering an opportunity to boost employees' digital skills through LWETB while also helping drive employers' production efficiency. Provision of the course through LWETB is highly flexible and can accommodate any work shift patterns.



Interagency Committees

LWETB is represented on numerous inter agency committees such as Longford Community Resources Ltd, County Enterprise Board, Employment Development and Information (EDI) Centre, Library Services and County Councils in Longford and Westmeath, where the agencies work collaboratively to address the needs of the unemployed. Initiatives include outreach provision, information days and pre-employment courses.

Mullingar Chamber

Mullingar Chamber actively works to shape, manage and promote the business and community environment of Mullingar. LWETB provides training to its members. In May 2021, after a skills shortage analysis, LWETB launched Leadership and Management Training to assist local businesses. This online training offered up-to-date skills training and internationally recognised qualifications.

Mullingar Community Development

Mullingar Community Development empowers people and communities to overcome disadvantage and enhance the quality of their lives by offering a range of programmes to achieve this objective. Specifically, LWETB in conjunction with Mullingar Community Development and Belvedere House and Gardens run a local training initiative offering QQI certification at level 5 in horticulture.

Regional Skills (Midlands)

The Regional Skills Fora facilitates employers in the Longford and Westmeath regions to work with LWETB to meet their emerging skills needs. Regional Skills also provides robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs to assist in programme development.

TUS: Technical University of the Shannon ***(now incorporating the campus formally known as Athlone Institute of Technology)***

LWETB and TUS have a Cooperative Agreement between both organisations. A feature under this agreement is the TUS commitment to assisting in the design, development and monitoring of specific PLC programmes to be provided by TUS in conjunction with LWETB. The LWETB and TUS formal linkage enhances the access and progression opportunities for FET learners to progress into higher education.



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OTHER PARTNERSHIPS / NETWORKS



CESI

The 'Computers in Education Society of Ireland' (CESI) aims to promote Information Technology (IT) in education in a manner that is consistent with best principles and high standards in education.

Community Training Centres (CTC)

LWETB supports second provider community training centres with programmes and administrative support to provide integrated training, further education and work experience to young people aged between 16 and 21 years.

HSE Mental Health Services

The HSE mental health services provide a range of supports to adults including access to mental health nursing, counselling and occupational therapy. LWETB FET Adult Guidance Service has observed an increase in the referrals from the Mental Health services across Longford and Westmeath in 2020 and 2021, with many now accessing our courses in FET



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ILTA – Irish Learning Technology Association & CESI – Computer in Education Society of Ireland

LWETB continue to engage at a national level with both ILTA and CESI. They promote the use of technology to enhance the teaching and learning experience for all involved in education.

Industry Links

The Service to Business Initiative and the Enterprise Engagement team liaise with employers on supporting training and upskilling needs of local industry. These services foster and strengthen links with local employers by providing training courses that align to employer needs. These links secure work placements for learners completing in-company training as part of their courses such as traineeships, apprenticeships and other courses requiring work experience and work practice. Working closely with industry also allows some learners to be placed directly into employment.

National Learning Network (NLN)

LWETB support and assist the NLN in the delivery of educational programmes for the inclusion of people with disabilities or where there is disadvantage in the community within Longford and Westmeath.

National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI Galway), National University of Ireland (Maynooth), and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth and WIT in conjunction with Community Education participate in various research projects. Academic skills, literacy, mentoring and assignment supports for members of the travelling community undertaking third level training in Community Development in NUIG are also provided. LP&D training in Community Education is also completed in conjunction with Maynooth University.

Other local and regional groups and fora LWETB are involved with include:

- Community Employment Schemes across Longford and Westmeath
- Employment Development and Information Centre (EDI), Longford
- Killucan Area Services CLG
- Longford Women's Link
- Midland Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce (MRDATF)
- Mullingar and Athlone RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) Teams
- Westmeath Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
- Women's Community Project, Mullingar

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