



# Guidance in Ireland

## Background Scoping Report

**GUIDANCE  
FOR LIFE**

An Integrated Framework  
for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland

2007 National Guidance  
Forum Report

# Foreword

The presentation of this report to Minister Mary Hanafin and Minister Micheál Martin from the National Guidance Forum marks an important milestone in the development of guidance in Ireland. The National Guidance Forum was established by the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in 2004 in recognition of the need to support individuals' self-management of their lives, their learning and their career paths for their own fulfilment and to ensure continued national prosperity. The Forum brought together key stakeholders from across the education and labour market spectrum. The result is that for the first time an agreed cohesive strategy for a national lifelong guidance service has been developed.

Guidance is recognised at national and European policy levels as fundamental to lifelong learning that supports the development of human potential, social inclusion, employability and economic prosperity. Recent reports on aspects of guidance provision in Ireland by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs<sup>1</sup> and the Department of Education and Science<sup>2</sup> reveal many strengths, but also significant gaps. The voice of the general public in Ireland, captured for the first time through the Forum's consultative process, endorses lifelong guidance provision as a priority area for development.

The National Guidance Forum's report provides an opportunity for the two Departments to move forward in the provision of a guidance service that underpins national priorities in lifelong learning.

The Forum's agreed *national lifelong guidance framework* outlines the knowledge, skills and competencies that guidance aims to develop among individuals at different times of their lives. The implementation of this framework is supported by *quality standards for service delivery* and *appropriately qualified practitioners*. The proposed *framework of organisational structures* will deliver a coordinated and comprehensive lifelong guidance service.

The timing of this report is opportune following as it does the announcement at the Finnish EU Presidency guidance conference in November 2006 that the European Commission is to support the establishment of a European Guidance Network. The Network will be representative of national guidance fora and will liaise with the European Commission, Cedefop, the European Training Foundation, the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy and international agencies, such as the OECD, in developing guidance policy and practice in member states. The implementation of the recommendations of the National Guidance Forum report will enable Ireland to participate in the European Guidance Network, thus providing access to the support of international good practice and strengthening Ireland's input into European guidance policy.

It has been a great privilege for me to Chair the National Guidance Forum and to witness first-hand the members' dedication to supporting the personal, social, educational and career development of all those living in our country at all stages of their lives. This Report is the result of a wealth of expertise in guidance and I am confident that it will enable the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to continue to build on their successful initiative in setting up the National Guidance Forum.

**Professor Joyce O'Connor,  
Chair of National Guidance Forum**

<sup>1</sup> Phillips, S., Clarke, A., Classon, J. (2006) *Careers and Labour Market Information in Ireland: A Study for the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs*, Dublin: Forfas

<sup>2</sup> Department of Education and Science (2006) *Review of Guidance in Second Level Schools*, Dublin: Government Publications

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Scoping Paper sub-committee of the National Guidance Forum acknowledges the valuable contribution made to this document by a wide range of individuals, professional associations and agencies that provided key information on guidance.

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The National Guidance Forum

## BACKGROUND TO THE NATIONAL GUIDANCE FORUM

The National Guidance Forum was a joint initiative of the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, which was launched at an international guidance conference during the Irish Presidency of the European Union in April 2004. In a subsequent letter setting out the mandate of the Forum, the ministers cited the EU Commission's definition of the Forum as 'an assembly of all the relevant actors concerned with the development of policy, systems and practices for lifelong guidance' (EU Commission 2004, cited in letter from ministers, June 2004). The Forum had its last meeting in October 2006 and the final report was submitted to the two ministers in January 2007.

### Remit and Objectives of the National Guidance Forum

The remit of the National Guidance Forum was to explore how individuals, at any point throughout their lives, can access quality guidance appropriate to their needs; identify collaborative action across the guidance continuum and agree recommendations in collaboration with other stakeholders (Letter from the Minister for Education and Science and the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, April 2004).

The agreed objectives of the Forum were to:

- » Ensure that guidance becomes central to the public policy and planning process in education, the labour market and social strategies;
- » Develop, communicate and implement meaningful models of guidance that underpin a vision of personal fulfilment, a fair society and sustainable employability;
- » Urgently harness and proactively manage the wealth of existing guidance resources and agree mechanisms for measuring relevant and realistic outcomes;
- » Move from a fragmented provision of guidance to a cohesive multi-faceted professional, accessible service, responsive to the needs of the individual and society.

In its final report to the ministers, the Forum presents its proposals for a new national lifelong guidance strategy, the implementation of which will achieve all of the above objectives.

### Membership of the National Guidance Forum

The National Guidance Forum had an independent Chair and 33 members who represented the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment; professional bodies; trainers of guidance practitioners; state agencies with a remit for guidance; employer bodies; trade unions; parents; education management and practitioners from primary, post-primary, further and higher education levels, including universities and institutes of technology; consumers, and private guidance practitioners (see the list of Forum members on page ii). All of the groups represented made submissions that informed the proposals made by the Forum in its final report.

## Outline of the work undertaken by the Forum, June 2004-October 2006

The Forum met eleven times in the period from June 2004 to October 2006. During its term of office, the Forum agreed a common vision and definition of guidance across the education, labour market and community sectors. The Forum's vision for the future of guidance is outlined in its reports. The Forum's definition of guidance is as follows:

***Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society.***

In the past two years, the Forum has also:

- » Collaborated with the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs to draw up the terms of reference for a national audit of careers information and dissemination: the outcomes of this study are incorporated into the Forum's recommendations;
- » Prepared a proposal for the establishment of a National Learning Line: the Forum is working with the two departments on the development of this resource;
- » Participated in the EU Joint Actions funded project *Developing National Guidance Fora in Six Member States* (MEDSUI) 2004-2006;
- » Liaised with the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy on developments in guidance at EU level and their implications for guidance in Ireland;
- » Made a submission about funding for guidance under the National Development Plan 2007-2013. The Forum proposed measures to address the gaps in current guidance services by enabling the provision of a seamless, quality service that maximises resources, with the collaboration of guidance stakeholders.

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) provided the Forum secretariat. A Steering Group managed the work and strategic direction of the

Forum, coordinated the work of sub-committees, represented the Forum in networks with other groups and disseminated the outcomes of the Forum's work. The Steering Group also made links with the two ministers to keep them informed of progress. There were four sub-committees of the Forum, each of which was charged with a specific task that contributed to the achievement of the Forum's objectives. The following reports produced by the sub-committees are summarised in the Forum's report *Guidance for Life: An Integrated Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland* as a background to the Forum's proposals and published in full on the accompanying CD Rom.

### **Guidance in Ireland: Background Scoping Report**

The sub-committee produced a background scoping paper on *Guidance in Ireland* to outline current provision and identify gaps. This scoping paper has informed the recommendations of the Forum on policy development and coordination of guidance.

### **Perceptions of the General Public on Guidance and Guidance Services: Consultative Process Report**

The sub-committee undertook a consultative process on behalf of the Forum, to research public perception and experience of guidance. The outcomes of the research have informed the Forum's recommendations for strengthening provision to achieve a seamless guidance service across the lifespan.

### **Quality in Guidance**

The sub-committee produced a quality assurance framework for guidance that will enable policy makers and providers to ensure that they provide high-quality services to clients throughout the life cycle. It also proposes structures for evaluating services and quality improvement measures.

### **A Competency Framework for Guidance Practitioners**

The sub-committee developed a framework of competencies for guidance practitioners, which will influence the future professional education and training of practitioners who will provide guidance across the life cycle and in a range of different contexts.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The OECD *Review of Career Guidance Policies, Ireland: Country Note, 2002* commented that the Irish guidance community 'is a surprisingly fragmented one', so the National Guidance Forum (NGF) decided to investigate the current provision of guidance in Ireland and to identify gaps therein. This paper is a report on that scoping exercise.

The introduction to the scoping paper provides an overview of the National Guidance Forum including:

- » Its membership
- » Its structure
- » National and international links
- » Work carried out by the Forum

Chapter two, *The International Context: Guidance Policy and Reports*, examines the international context for guidance. This includes a summary of the main outcomes of European guidance policy, with particular emphasis given to the Resolution on Guidance, agreed by the EU Council of Ministers in May 2004. This chapter also includes an overview of the outcomes of the *OECD Career Guidance Policy Review, 2002*. In addition, there is a summary of the work of the Life Long Learning Expert Group, established by the EU Commission in 2002. The mandate of this group included four priority areas for attention. These included:

- » A common understanding of basic concepts and underlying principles for guidance;
- » The quality of guidance provision;
- » The European dimension of guidance for education, training and employment systems;
- » Guidance issues concerning social inclusion, access to lifelong learning and the links between education training and working life.

As the term of this group has come to an end, the Commission is examining the possibility of a European network of guidance Fora. National support for guidance is examined in the light of the *Report of the Taskforce for Life Long Learning (2002)* and the establishment of the NGF in 2004.

Chapter three, *Guidance in Ireland*, provides an overview of guidance in Ireland in the education, labour and community sectors. The remit and role of NCGE is outlined and a description of guidance provision from primary up to adult level is set out. The guidance elements of the primary and post-primary curriculum are illustrated. Formal guidance provision in post-primary is described, with details provided of the allocation of guidance hours by the Department of Education and Science, whole school planning and the role of the guidance counsellor.

Social inclusion measures in primary and post-primary are presented, along with a list of the major support agencies. The role of the coordinator in the provision of guidance for students in Post Leaving Cert courses is addressed under the further Education section. A description of the Advocate service is given under the section relating to guidance for early school leavers.

Guidance at third level deals with the career and counselling services. It also gives some information on access and disability services for students. Supports for all the major services are described.

The development of adult guidance as a result of the White Paper on Adult Education Learning for Life (2000) is outlined, with a list of the support agencies provided. In relation to guidance in the labour market sector, this document details the role and remit of FÁS, the national employment authority. Guidance provision by FÁS is described and includes information on the FÁS National Contact Centre, FÁS Employment Services Offices and Local Employment Services. The provision of services for people with disabilities, refugees and the work undertaken by the employment authority as part of the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance is illustrated. A brief overview of guidance within the workplace is set out, including the work of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.



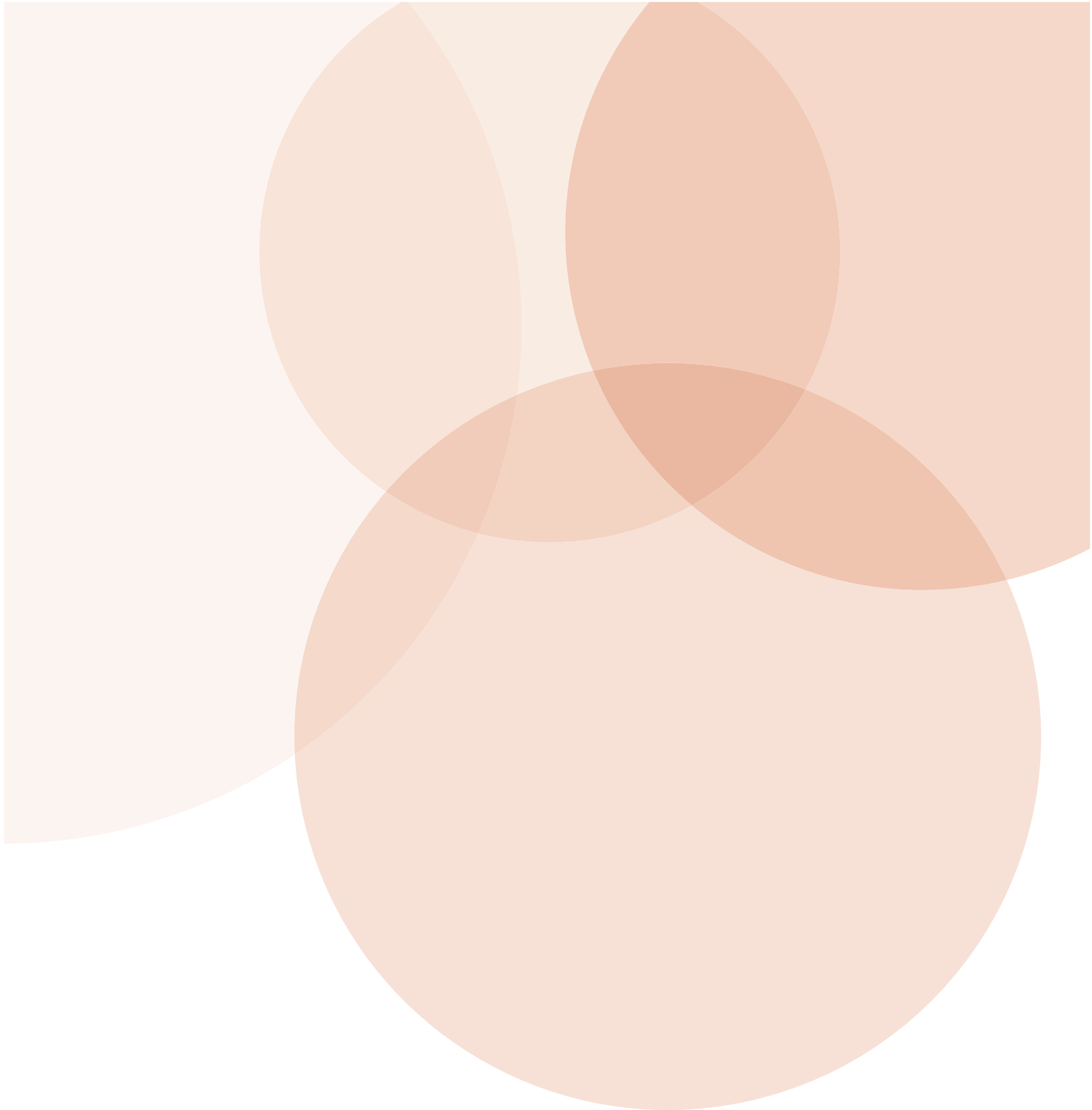
The community sector incorporates guidance provision for adults and youth and through centres such as the Citizens Advice Information Centres, Family Resource Clinics, the National Counselling Service and public libraries. Agencies which support guidance in the community are listed.

In addition, this section looks at third age guidance, private practitioners and guidance developed by ITC sources.

Finally, Chapter four, *Gaps in Guidance Provision*, outlines the gaps in current guidance provision as follows:

- » Currently, in Ireland, there is no formal guidance provision available for children aged 0-6 years. There is unquestionable evidence which shows the indisputable need for comprehensive services and support, including guidance for parents with young babies in the 'primal period' of dependant infancy and early childhood (0-6) when the baby/young child is most adaptable and is in a period of accelerated mental growth. The provision of systematic support and guidance for parents during these early years is crucial in facilitating the child's optimal social and emotional development. Achieving this is the foundation for future development, and results in improved school attendance and completion, lifelong learning, satisfactory relationships and interpersonal skills
- » There is insufficient provision of counselling available in post-primary. At present, there is a significant demand for counselling services among second level students which exceeds the supply of services available.
- » The Second Level Support Service sets out a programme of professional development for second level teachers. Nonetheless, there is a gap in pre-service and in-service training for SPHE teachers, guidance practitioners and teachers in general around making choices. Such training would facilitate a whole school approach to guidance and would allow for career related learning, a form of learning that incorporates guidance into the current curriculum. This in turn would allow for more informed choices to be made prior to leaving primary and post-primary school. Were students to choose options which are best suited to them, the problem of early school leavers and the college drop-out rate could be minimised.
- » The prioritising of time for planning a whole school/institution approach to guidance has been identified as a gap.
- » Inconsistency in the level of service available in different sectors is evident, e.g., the number of hours allocated to Youthreach as opposed to the post-primary level. At present, 29 advocates work in approximately 67 centres across 16 counties, while the total number of centres in the country providing programmes for early school leavers is approximately 175. The current number of advocates is therefore not sufficient to allow access to its service by all learners.
- » The ratio of careers advisors to students is very low in third level and, as a result, there is pressure to focus on final year students.
- » At present there is widespread duplication of resources in evidence, for example in third level whereby all universities/ITs have their own website and careers information. If there were to be increased collaboration between providers, more focus could be placed on the quality rather than the quantity of resources.
- » There is an inequality of access to guidance services, for example at primary school level and for people in employment.
- » In the labour market sector, FÁS provides a guidance service to employed clients who present to FÁS offices or in the context of impending redundancies. However the vast majority of employed people do not present for guidance; hence the need for a more proactive approach, which would have significant resource implications.
- » There are many examples of good practice (refer to *Appendix 3*) which, if disseminated, could improve quality overall.

- » Private practitioners have no regulatory body and are not required to have a licence to practice. These guidance professionals need to be placed at a level appropriate to their qualifications on the competency framework, as developed by the Competencies sub-committee for the NGF.
- » There is a need for a directory of guidance services that includes the goals and aims of each service, the number of providers and of those accessing the service. The fragmented nature of the current guidance provision in Ireland is not cost efficient. A complete listing of guidance services should be developed which would allow for duplication and gaps to be clearly identifiable.
- » There is no single point of access for all existing career information websites (Careers World, Career Directions, gradireland and Qualifax for example). The establishment of a single portal would allow for connectivity of existing guidance services.
- » There is no appropriate facility for handing over clients when they move to a new environment/agency or when there is a break in the service they have been receiving. This is particularly the case for vulnerable individuals who require additional supports, especially during the summer break in the academic calendar.
- » Guidance counsellors often need to refer clients on from their service and there are very few support and referral services available to them to access on behalf of clients. In addition, there is no agreed protocol on referring clients.



**01**

Introduction

## GUIDANCE DEFINITION

*Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society. (National Guidance Forum, December 2004.)*

The National Guidance Forum was established in 2004 as a joint initiative by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE). This initiative was in response to emerging priorities in guidance at national and international level.

The remit of the National Guidance Forum was to explore how individuals, at any point throughout their lives, can access quality guidance appropriate to their needs, to identify collaborative action across the guidance continuum and to agree recommendations in collaboration with other stakeholders. The National Guidance Forum, comprising of 34 members and chaired by Professor Joyce O'Connor, met eleven times between 2004 and 2006. Membership included representation from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), the Department of Education and Science, professional bodies, education management, guidance practitioners working in the education and labour market sectors, trainers of guidance counsellors, employers, trade unions, parents and consumers.

The Steering Group managed the strategic direction of the work of the Forum, informed the respective ministers of progress, coordinated presentations by the sub-committees on the outcomes of their work and networked with other relevant groups, agencies and forums.

Four separate sub-committees of the Forum worked on specific areas to address the gaps in guidance. The Scoping Paper sub-committee developed this document to provide an overview of guidance provision while the Quality Assurance sub-committee devised a quality framework for guidance. The Competencies sub-committee identified core competencies for guidance practitioners and finally, the sub-committee for the Consultative Process carried out an investigation with the wider community on their knowledge and expectations of guidance.

The Forum was part of a network of National Guidance Forums funded by the EU Joint Actions Programme (2004-2006). Six member states (Malta, Estonia, Denmark, Slovenia, the UK and Ireland) participated in the project which aimed to develop strategic plans for establishing a national guidance forum in each country. Each of the six countries was at a different starting point in that Denmark, Ireland and Malta had existing forums at the commencement of the project. The Slovenian National Guidance Forum was later established in December 2005 and the UK and Estonia were well on their way to establishing a National Guidance Forum in their respective countries by the completion of the project.

Participation of the Irish Forum in the EU network allowed for the exchange of information and best practice. The Irish Forum also benefited from experiencing the different models of Forums employed in the other member states and how similar challenges and issues were managed. The Forums in each of the countries vary in size. Malta has 10 members, Slovenia has 22, Ireland has 34 and Denmark has 28 members. Legal standing also varies between countries, with Denmark's Forum being legally constituted while the others are not.

All Forums have representation from the major labour market and education stakeholders. It is envisaged that the European Commission will establish a network of Forums across member states in 2007 building on the success of the projects funded under the EU Joint Actions programme (2004-2006).

The Irish Forum also collaborated in a network of links with other initiatives. It was represented on the steering group coordinating a review of careers and labour market information on behalf of the Expert Group in Future Skills Needs. Outcomes of this study are outlined in *Careers and Labour Market Information in Ireland (2006)*. It has also submitted a proposal for the establishment of a National Learning Line on request from the DES/DETE inter-departmental group for the implementation of the recommendations of the Lifelong Learning Task Force.

A proposal for funding for lifelong guidance provision has been submitted by the Forum under the National Development Plan 2007-2013. In the autumn of 2006 the Forum finalised recommendations to policy makers, trainers of guidance providers, guidance providers and management bodies on mechanisms for strengthening guidance provision.

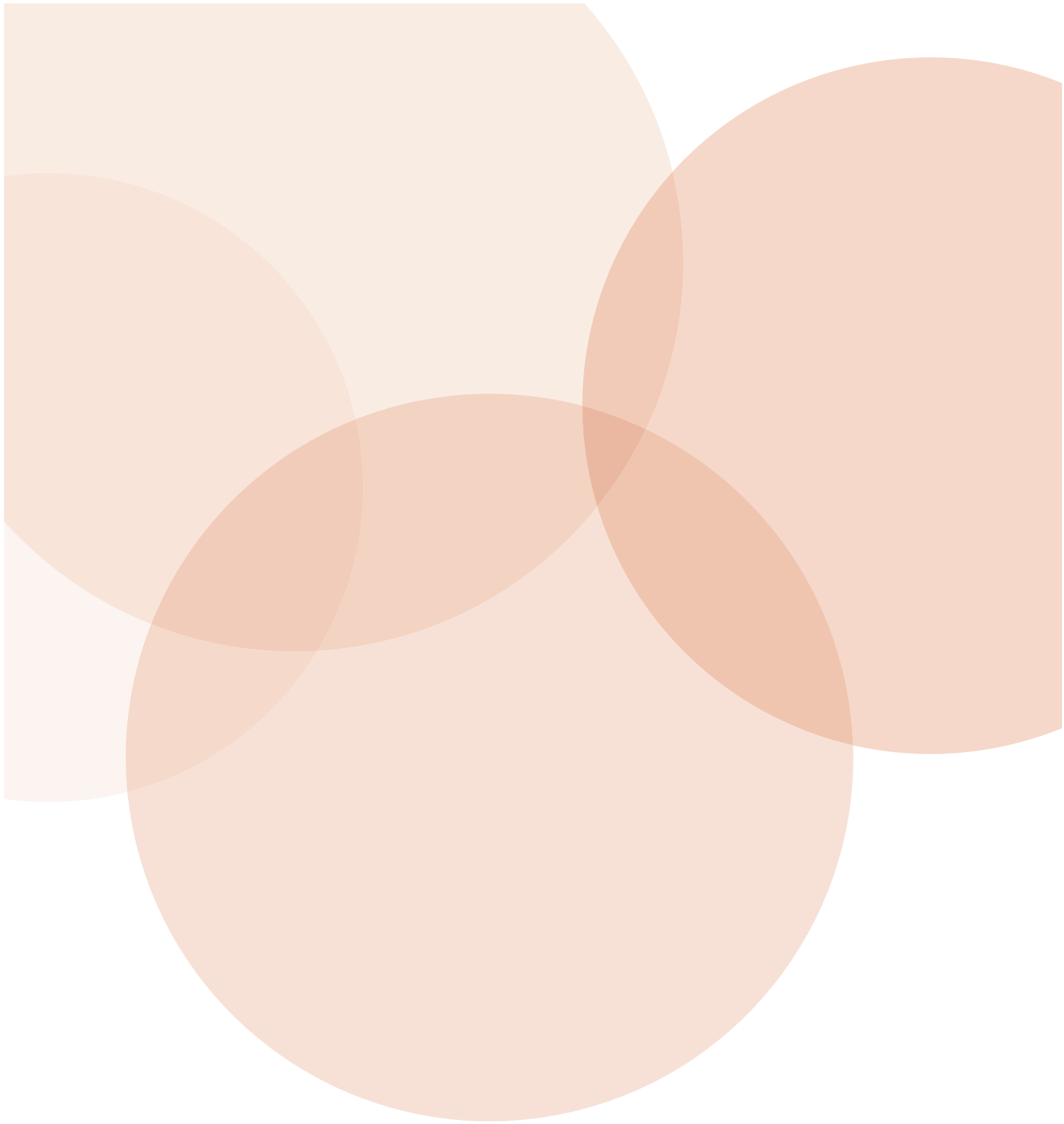
### Purpose of the Scoping Paper

The aim of the Scoping Paper is to set in context and outline current provision of guidance in Ireland and to identify gaps in provision for the Forum. In preparing this Scoping Paper, the sub-committee has been guided by the Forum's holistic definition of guidance, which encapsulates the personal, economic and social dimensions of guidance.

It is important to note that the listing of services included here is not exhaustive. There is a myriad of other professional specialist services, such as the Drugs Task Force, the Child Guidance Clinics, etc, which incorporate elements of guidance. Due to time restrictions, however, it is impossible to refer to all of these within this Scoping Paper.

### OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

This Paper will deal with a range of guidance policy across the national and international spectrum. In addition, it provides an overview of guidance practice in Ireland and finally, identifies gaps to the Forum.



**02**

The International Context

## GUIDANCE POLICY AND REPORTS

### European Guidance Policy Development

The priority target set out by the Lisbon Strategy at the European Council in 2000, states that Europe is to become *'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.'* It is envisaged that this target is to be reached by 2010.

One of the key areas identified in achieving this goal was engagement in lifelong learning. The European Commission (EC) in *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality (2001)* identified guidance as one of the fundamental components of national strategies for implementing lifelong learning policies and a priority area for action at European and national levels to attain economic prosperity and social inclusion. The Communication stressed the importance of guidance and counselling in facilitating access to learning and in motivating potential learners.

In 2003, in the context of the labour market, the EC *Employment Guidelines* translated the Lisbon Strategy into operational economic and employment actions for the European Union (EU) and for each Member State. The *Guidelines* focus on support for the unemployed and prevention of long term unemployment, encouragement of entrepreneurship, promoting adaptability of workers, investment in human capital, increasing the labour supply, promoting occupational and geographic mobility and combating discrimination. These are but two examples of the extensive range of guidance policies supported at EU level.<sup>1</sup>

A Resolution on Guidance was agreed by the EU Council of Ministers in May 2004. It aims to strengthen policies, procedures and practices in the field of guidance in Europe. The main recommendations for member states are, first, *'to examine, where appropriate, existing national guidance provision in the education, training and employment sectors, in the context of the findings of the Commission, OECD and World Bank reviews of policies for guidance'*.

Secondly, each Member State was encouraged *'to seek to ensure effective cooperation and coordination between providers of guidance at national, regional and local levels in the provision of guidance services, in order to widen access and to ensure the coherence of provision, especially to groups at risk'*.

Finally, it was deemed important to encourage schools, institutes of further and higher education and training providers to promote reflective learning techniques and autonomous learning, in order to enable young people and adults to self-manage their learning and career paths effectively.

Member States are invited to collaborate with the Commission:

- » To strengthen relevant structures and activities;
- » To ensure the integration of a gender perspective in guidance policy and practice;
- » To support good practice in initial training;
- » To provide quality information on best practice for policy makers;
- » To integrate guidance policies into reports on the follow-up of the Education and Training 2010 programme.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Appendix 1- *Key Developments in Guidance* for further details.

## INTERNATIONAL REVIEWS OF GUIDANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

In 2001 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched a review of policies for career information, guidance and counselling services of 14 countries, including Ireland. Subsequently the European Commission and the World Bank conducted parallel studies in 23 other countries covering EU, EEA and acceding countries not in the OECD study, as well as seven middle income countries. The results of the three reviews were disseminated in 2003.

In the case of Ireland, the OECD *Review of Career Guidance Policies: Ireland: Country Note, 2002* outlined the strengths of the Irish guidance model while identifying gaps in the existing provision. It was noted that while the Irish guidance community is a 'wide community with many common interests and needs, it is a surprisingly fragmented one for such a small country.' Gaps included the coordination of services across government portfolios, the monitoring of clients and some areas for improvement in service delivery. Of particular concern were gaps identified in the following areas:

- » Coordination;
- » Policy steering;
- » Input monitoring;
- » Accountability mechanisms;
- » Delivery mechanisms;
- » Training;
- » Provision;
- » Weaknesses in career information.

As part of the OECD review, an Expert Group met with a specially convened group of guidance stakeholders across the education and labour market sectors. This meeting illustrated the value of bringing the key players in guidance together to address issues of common concern and to share best practice. Consequently the Expert Group called for the establishment of an Irish guidance forum that would include representation from policy makers, service providers and other relevant stakeholders.

## SUPPORT FOR GUIDANCE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### European Commission Support

At the end of 2002 the Commission set up a Lifelong Guidance Expert Group (LGEG) as part of the implementation of the Resolution of the Education Council on *Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training* and the follow-up to the *Communication on Lifelong Learning* and the *Report on the Objectives of Education and Training Systems*.

The 26 members of the LGEG were drawn from the Social Partners, from European Consumer, Parents' and Youth Associations, from education and labour ministries, as well as from international bodies. The Expert Group replaced the broad Guidance Forum envisaged in the Lifelong Learning Communication.

In line with the Education/Youth Council *Resolution on Enhanced Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training* (2002) the overarching aim of the Expert Group was to work towards the 'strengthening of policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment, particularly on issues concerning access to learning, vocational education and training, and the transferability and recognition of competencies and qualifications, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe'.

The mandate of the LGEG identified 4 priority areas for attention:

- » A common understanding of basic concepts and underlying principles for guidance;
- » The quality of guidance provision;
- » The European dimension of guidance for education, training and employment systems;
- » Guidance issues concerning social inclusion, access to lifelong learning and the links between education, training and working life.



The EU Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance is at the end of its term and it met in 2006 to consider proposals for a future European network. The Commission is now planning a way forward to have such a network set up in 2007 (Refer to Foreword on page i).

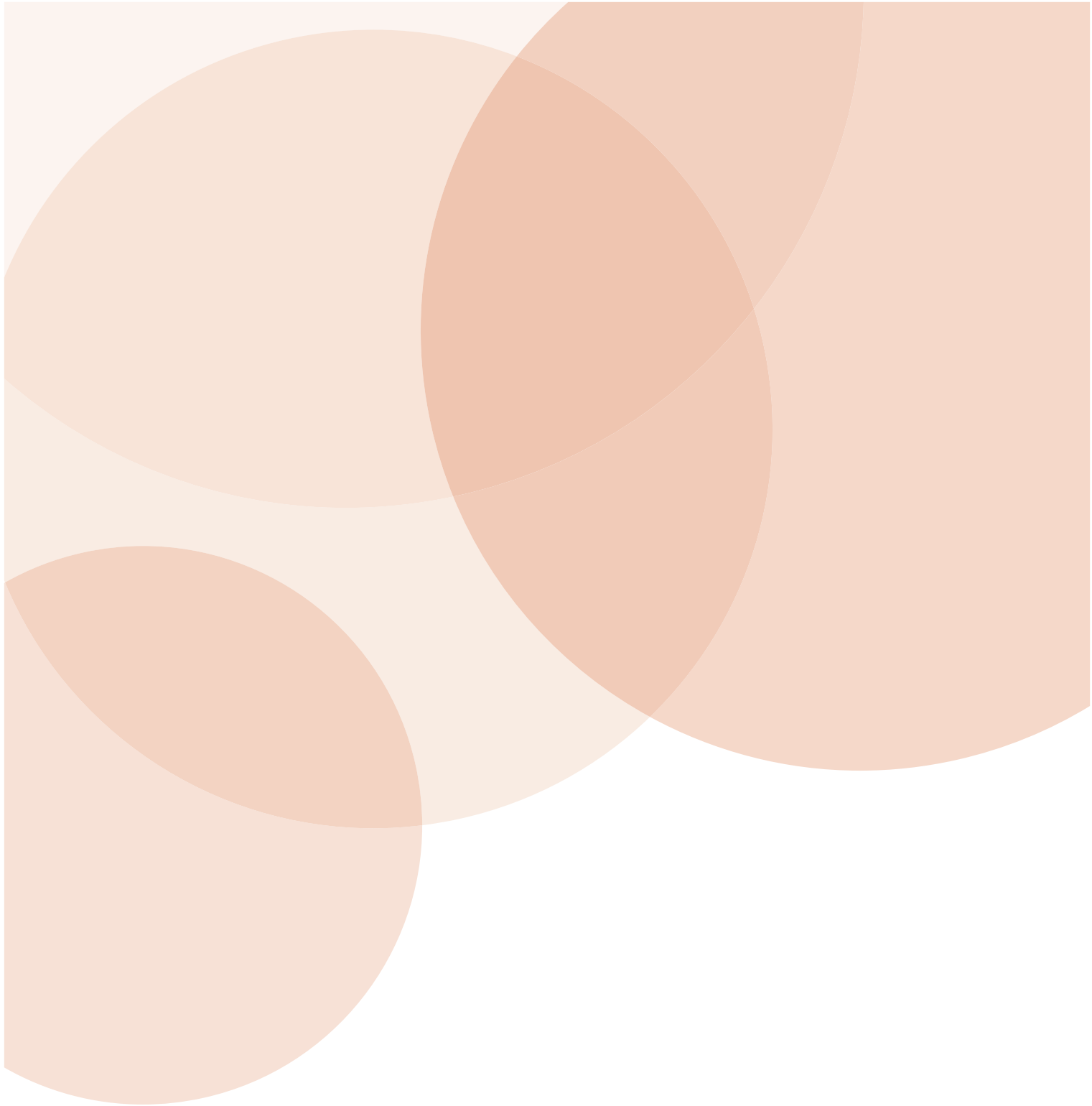
### National Support

In Ireland the *Report of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning*, commissioned by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), was published in 2002. The Report recommended the development of a single national source of learning information (the National Learning Line). The service should compile information on lifelong learning, and provide it via a telephone service, the internet and in disability friendly media. The learning website should also provide links to relevant websites (e.g. FÁS, Vocational Educational Committees, Institutes of Technology, etc.). Consideration of the potential for developing appropriate services on an all island basis was also recommended.

The Taskforce further recommended the development of an integrated strategy for guidance to underpin the provision of this information, with all the relevant agencies participating in supporting coordinated actions, in particular joint approaches by FÁS, the National Centre for Guidance in Education, second level, further and third level providers.

### Establishment of the National Guidance Forum

In light of the above developments, both the DES and DETE set about establishing the National Guidance Forum. The establishment of the Forum was announced by the Minister for Education and Science, Noel Dempsey, T.D., at the DES/NCGE hosted conference *Lifelong Guidance: Harmonising Policy and Practice*, in April 2004.



**03**

Guidance in Ireland

In Ireland guidance provision is based in the education, labour market and community sectors. Formal guidance in the educational system is provided in:

- » Post-primary schools;
- » Further Education colleges;
- » Youthreach, FÁS Community Centres and Senior Traveller Training Centres;
- » Third level;
- » Adult Educational Guidance Services.

In the labour market sector, vocational guidance and counselling is provided as a basic universal entitlement for the unemployed and other jobseekers on training and employment programmes. FÁS has recently extended its client group and is developing its provision for persons with disabilities as certain responsibilities under the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB) were passed to FÁS in April 2000. Direct responsibility for the Local Employment Scheme (LES) was transferred to FÁS in January 2000 to form a new dual standard National Employment Service.

Guidance in the community sector is provided by a range of agencies, often targeting specific groups. These include Youth Information Centres, Area-Based Partnerships, Citizens' Advice Information Centres and Family Resource Centres.

## **GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION**

### **National Centre for Guidance in Education**

The National Centre for Guidance in Education was established by the Department of Education<sup>2</sup> in 1995 to support and develop guidance across the education spectrum and to inform the policy of the Department in the field of guidance.

The Centre receives funding from the DES and the European Commission to carry out its remit. Current major projects include:

- » Provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for guidance counsellors in post-primary schools in guidance programme planning. Training is provided on a national outreach basis using a blended learning approach of e-learning and workshops;

- » Provision of the Educational Management of Adult Guidance certificate course, accredited by NUI, Maynooth;
- » Monitoring, support, training and evaluation of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative. The Centre chairs the AEGI Advisory Group that advises the DES on policy and practice relating to the AEGI;
- » Membership of the National Guidance Forum and support for the Forum through chairing the Forum Steering Group, participating at sub-committee level of the Forum, providing the Secretariat for the Forum, including drafting documents, coordinating the Forum's participation in the European network of National Guidance Forums and representing the Forum at national and European level;
- » Providing one of two Euroguidance Centres on behalf of the European Commission. The other Centre is provided by FÁS and both agencies collaborate on a number of joint activities;
- » Collaboration with various agencies, for example, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), Further Education Section of the DES (Youthreach Portfolio project), National Qualifications Authority (NQA), Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD), Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) on guidance related projects;
- » Chairing of the Centre's Committee for Directors and Representatives of Initial Training Programmes for Guidance Counsellors.

The Centre contributes to research projects on guidance policy and practice on behalf of the DES, the European Commission and Cedefop, an agency of the Commission. Most recently the Centre completed Strands 1 and 4 of the *Review of Guidance Provision in Post-Primary Schools 2003-2004*, a report on guidance indicators for Cedefop (2005) and coordinated the report on Ireland as part of the OECD *Review of Guidance Policy and Practice*. As part of the international guidance network the Centre delivers papers and presentations at conferences, seminars and workshops and hosts guidance conferences in Ireland. At national

<sup>2</sup> The Department of Education changed title to Department of Education and Science in September 1997.

level the Centre convenes working groups to participate in the selection process for nationally funded guidance initiatives and for the purpose of drafting policy documents, developing training programmes and guidance resources, and advising the DES on policy and practice issues.

The Centre keeps its stakeholders informed through the publication three times per year of NCGE News and provides on-going support for guidance programme delivery through regular up-dating of the Guidance Counsellor's Handbook and the Adult Educational Guidance Handbook. The Centre's website is also designed as a resource for information and support of guidance provision.

The specific role of NCGE in support of guidance across the education spectrum is indicated in the following section.

## GUIDANCE AT PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY

### Introduction

The Education Act (1998), in Section 9, states that a school shall use its valuable resources to:

*(c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices.*

*(d) promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.*

This section will outline current provision in the primary and post-primary sectors, under the headings of formal guidance provision, curriculum measures, social inclusion, disability and supports.

### (i) Formal Guidance

There is no formal provision of guidance at primary level. The DES allocates hours specifically for guidance in the post primary sector. The foundations of this formal guidance and counselling system were laid in 1960 when the City of Dublin Vocational Education

Committee (CDVEC) appointed an educational psychologist who had responsibility for the development of guidance in the Committee's schools. A similar appointment was made in 1965 by the Department of Education who, like the CDVEC, saw the training of school counsellors as the single most effective way of providing a good post-primary school guidance service.

In 1960, the City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee (CDVEC) appointed a psychologist to organise a vocational guidance service in the City of Dublin Vocational Schools. Training was also provided by short in-service courses run for teachers in post-primary schools by the Department of Education and these were rapidly expanded as more schools wanted to formalise provision for guidance. However the biggest influence of the time on the training of guidance counsellors was the establishment in 1969 of the one year Diploma in Guidance Counselling by the Department of Psychology in UCD. This course no longer operates, but it has influenced the approach to guidance adopted in Irish post-primary schools and in many of the training courses that were set up later.

Liam Ryan in his 1993 report described how:

*The Irish guidance counselling service tends to be a compromise between the American model which emphasises personal counselling and the European model which almost exclusively focuses on the narrower concept of career guidance. (Ryan, 1993, p.63)*

### Department of Education Funding for Guidance Hours

The Department of Education established an Advisory Committee on the future training of guidance personnel and its 1971 report to the Minister stated that students have a variety of needs: physical, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. In 1972 the Department of Education granted ex-quota status to guidance teachers in schools with in excess of 250 pupils and their release with pay during training. Courses were introduced in a number of colleges from 1973 including the Mater Dei Institute, University College, Cork, the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick.

In 1983 cutbacks reduced the quota and schools were now required to have 500 students in order to receive fulltime guidance provision (one full time guidance counsellor - 22 hours per week).

The Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) provided for the introduction of a phased programme, starting in 1992/93 and finishing in 1994/95. This aimed to provide an ex-quota half guidance post in secondary and community/comprehensive schools with an enrolment of 350 – 499 students and on a pro-rata basis in the vocational education sector.

An increase in allocation of guidance hours was partly addressed when, as Minister for Education and Science, Micheál Martin, T.D., in 1999, introduced an allocation of 8 hours for non-fee paying schools with less than 250 students. This change in allocation took into account middle/small range schools, which would otherwise not be in receipt of any guidance hours.

Under the Guidance Enhancement Initiative (GEI) in 2001, 103 schools were granted the equivalent of 50 additional whole-time teaching allocations for guidance. Unlike previous allocation of guidance posts, schools were invited to submit proposals for innovative programmes to enhance guidance for students. Priority was given to proposals to develop and strengthen formal links with business and the local community, targeting disadvantage and promoting the up-take of science at senior cycle. The Initiative was further extended to an additional 78 schools in 2004 (additional 30 whole-time equivalent posts for guidance).

The expert group to the Minister for Education and Science in its report, *The Allocation of Teachers to Second Level Schools, (2001)*, recommended that additional resources be allocated to schools in the free education scheme on the basis of a ratio of 22 hours for every 400 students, with pro rata allocations for enrolments above and below this level.

Most recently, the 2005 DES Circular, (PPT 12/05), revised the allocation as detailed below:

**FIGURE 1 SCHEDULE A AND B**

<b>A</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Allocation hours per week</b>
	<b>1000+</b>	47
	<b>900-999</b>	38
	<b>800-899</b>	36
	<b>700-799</b>	30
	<b>600-699</b>	28
	<b>500-599</b>	24
	<b>400-499</b>	17
	<b>300-399</b>	13
	<b>200-299</b>	11
	<b>&lt;200</b>	8

<b>B</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Allocation hours per week</b>
	<b>500+</b>	22
	<b>350-499</b>	11

**Note:** All second-level schools in the Free Education Scheme/Block Grant Scheme qualify for an allocation of hours in respect of guidance, in accordance with Schedule A. Schools not in these schemes qualify for an allocation in accordance with Schedule B.

FIGURE 2

Enrolment	Allocation
1000+	55
900-999	49.5
800-899	44
700-799	38.5
600-699	33
500-599	27.5
400-499	22
300-399	16.5
<300	11

**Note:** Refer to Appendix 2 for a table outlining earlier allocation of guidance hours.

Figure 2 (above), outlines the schedule of allocation of guidance hours from 2006/2007 for schools participating in the Schools Support Programme. (Refer to *DEIS*, page 23).

### Whole School Planning

The requirement for all second level schools to provide appropriate guidance for students in the Education Act (1998), Section 9 (c) marked an increased emphasis on whole school guidance and guidance programme planning. This must reflect the needs of students at both junior and senior cycle and a balance between the personal, social, educational and career guidance offered. The DES, in its publication, *Guidelines for Schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998, relating to students' access to appropriate guidance (2005)* advised that the guidance programme planning process must involve all stakeholders, including school staff, students, parents and the wider community. It is recommended that the guidance counsellor(s), who have specialist guidance skills, should coordinate the planning process. Section 21 of the Education Act (1998) states that it is a statutory requirement for the Board of Management to take responsibility for whole school planning. The school guidance plan is to form part of this overall plan and a sample template can be downloaded from the DES website.

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) developed a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme in collaboration with key stakeholders to support guidance counsellors in developing school guidance plans. Workshops and course content are facilitated using an action research approach and delivery uses face-to-face and e-learning methods.

### Role of the Guidance Counsellor at Second Level

NCGE, in its publication, *Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools (1996)* and again in *Planning the School Guidance Programme (2004)* (pg. 21-22), outlines the role of the guidance counsellor as encompassing eight main areas as follows:

**Counselling:** This involves empowering students to make decisions, solve problems, change behaviours and resolve issues in their lives. This may involve personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling, or combinations of each.

**Support:** The guidance counsellor consistently provides support to students, parents, school teachers, the school principal, Board of Management and various referral agencies in assisting the personal and social, career and educational development of students.

**Assessment:** The guidance counsellor is trained to use a range of psychometric tests and other evaluative instruments in order to support the goals and objectives of the school guidance programme.

**Information:** The guidance counsellor facilitates and helps students to acquire, interpret and use information relevant to their personal and social, educational and career development.

**Classroom Guidance Activities:** It is the role of the guidance counsellor to plan classroom based learning experiences which are relevant to the objectives of the school guidance programme, for example information and communication technologies (ICT) or skills development (e.g. planning, decision making and study skills).

**Planning and Organising Workplace Learning:**

Schools need to make provision for work based or work simulation learning experiences for students facilitated by the guidance counsellor.

**Referrals:** The guidance counsellor organises referrals for students seeking the assistance of non-school based professionals e.g. NEPS and the Health Service Executive (HSE), following standard procedures.

**Professional Development:** The guidance counsellor should remain self-informed of on-going changes in the fields of training, education, work and child welfare.

In addition to the above, the DES, in its guidelines for schools on the implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998) advises that the development of school guidance planning be led, where possible, by the guidance counsellor.

**(ii) Curriculum Measures**

Currently guidance is formally integrated into the curriculum through a number of specific programmes. The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, which began in September, 2000, is available in primary schools and is mandatory for students up to the end of the Junior Certificate in the post-primary curriculum. The specific aims of SPHE are to enable students to develop personal and social skills, promote self-esteem and self-confidence, to develop responsible decision-making, to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion and to promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. SPHE is delivered by teachers who receive in-service training by the DES. Primary teachers receive this as part of their initial training.

Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) is also mandatory to Junior Certificate level. Its general aims are to develop the pupil's personal and social confidence, contribute to their moral development and prepare them for the responsibilities of citizenship. This is achieved through comprehensive exploration of the civic, social and political dimensions of their lives. Units within the structure of the programme include: 'the individual and citizenship', 'the community', 'the state - Ireland' and 'Ireland and the world'.

The Transition Year Programme (TYP), available in many post-primary schools, has no external examinations and places more emphasis on the personal and social development of the student during the year. Students are afforded the opportunity to express their career options with visits to local enterprises and third level institutions. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) is designed to give a strong vocational dimension to the Leaving Certificate (established). The skills acquired by those in LCVP programmes are equally relevant to the needs of those preparing for further education, seeking employment or planning to start their own business. The LCVP consists of two modules: 'Preparation for the World of Work' and 'Enterprise Education'. However, these programmes are not offered in all schools.

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is a distinct, self-contained two-year programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. The vocational modules in the LCA include: 'Guidance', 'Jobsearch', 'Work Experience', 'Enterprise', 'Community Work' and 'Work and Living'.

On request from the DES, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), in its report *Post-Primary Guidance Draft Curriculum Framework (2006)*, identified a number of relevant stakeholders in order to examine the possible development of a guidance curriculum.

### (iii) Social Inclusion Measures

#### **Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)**

*Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)*, is a DES action plan aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second level education. Its frame of reference is based on the definition of 'educational disadvantage' in the Education Act (1998) as:

*...the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools.*

The activities included in the plan, as outlined below, will be carried out in 750 schools overall. These consist of 600 primary schools, comprising 300 urban/town and 300 rural schools and 150 second level schools.

One of the key measures to be implemented is the enhancement of student attendance, educational progression, retention and attainment. Enhanced guidance counselling provision, targeted as supporting junior cycle students, will be provided in second level schools with the highest concentrations of disadvantage. In addition, participating schools at post primary level will, in line with existing practice, receive priority support from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

Under the Guidance Enhancement Initiative (2001) and (2004), a total of 181 schools were given 80 whole time teaching allocations. Priority was given to proposals under three criteria including targeting disadvantage (refer to the Guidance Enhancement Initiative, page 20).

Within the DEIS there are a number of initiatives targeted at disadvantage at both primary and post-primary level. The existing schemes and programmes related to guidance provision will be integrated into the action plan, School Support Programme (SSP), on a phased basis over a five year

implementation period (refer to Figure 2 page 21 for related increase in allocation). These programmes can operate in either primary or post-primary, and as there is often overlap between these, they are difficult to separate. The various programmes are outlined in the following paragraphs.

#### **School Completion Programme (SCP)**

The School Completion Programme subsumes the 8 to 15 Early School Leaver Initiative and the Stay in School Retention Initiative and is a key component of the DES strategy to discriminate positively in favour of children and young people who are at risk of, or who are experiencing educational disadvantage. The programme, known as the SCP from 2003, is funded on a multi-annual basis under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006 with assistance from the European Social Fund (ESF). The Programme is designed to increase the retention rates of young people in primary and secondary education and encourage completion of the senior cycle or equivalent. Selected schools serving areas with the highest levels of social disadvantage are encouraged to participate, as the problem of school retention rates is most acute in these areas. At a local level, the SCP covers in-school, after school, out-of-school and holiday activities for students at risk. The Department of Education and Science specifies that programmes need to contain elements of social and personal development, various types of student mentoring (e.g. teacher, parent, other pupils, business/community person) and ongoing learning supports.

#### **Support Teacher Scheme**

There are currently 42 Support Teachers serving primary schools in 48 disadvantaged areas working with pupils who display disruptive, disturbed or withdrawn behaviour. Support Teachers also have a specific role in supporting the development of school policy in relation to children's behaviours and formulating management strategies for the support of children experiencing behavioural difficulties.



### **The National Parents Council (NPC) Primary**

The Early Learning/Starting School Programme is for parents of children from 0 to 5 years. Its aims are to look at how and why parents are the primary educators of their children, as stated in the Education Act 1998, along with the importance of play to a child's development and in particular, how children learn through play. The module is designed to be both a practical guide for parents in their child's development and a useful resource in preparing a child for school. Workshops have been designed to help parents make the transition from home to school easier for their children and for themselves and to examine their role in the primary school education of their child.

### **Home School Liaison Scheme (HSL)**

The Home School Community Liaison Scheme was established in Ireland in 1990 by the Department of Education. Teachers were initially appointed as liaison officers in a number of schools throughout the country in areas of urban disadvantage (this was later extended to all schools in disadvantaged areas). The aims of the liaison scheme are to maximise the participation of the children in the learning process, in particular those who might be at risk of failure and to promote active cooperation between home, school and relevant community agencies in promoting the educational interests of the children.

### **Early Start Programme**

The Early Start Pre-School Pilot Project was introduced in 1994 and is funded by the DES. It is a one-year preventative intervention scheme offered in selected schools in designated disadvantaged areas in Ireland. The objective of the programme is to address educational disadvantage by targeting children who are at risk of not reaching their potential within the school system.

The curriculum of the programme places priority on the four core areas of language, cognition, social and personal development. Children are engaged in structured play activities, aimed at enhancing the children's development in the core areas. Within these activities, teachers set specific learning objectives for each child.

### **(iv) Disability**

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) defines special educational needs as a '*restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition, which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition*'. Thus the meaning of *special educational needs* is synonymous with *disability*.

The Act sets out the aims and expected outcomes of education for children under 18 years who have special educational needs. It outlines the key elements of the process by which these ends are to be achieved and in particular the process whereby individual education plans (IEPs) will be developed for each student.

The Act establishes a new body, the National Council for Special Education, and provides for an appeals procedure. The Education Act (1998) also places an onus on schools to provide for talented students (section 9a).

### **School Provision**

In Ireland the majority of students with disabilities attend their local school. Supports, such as resource teaching, special needs assistants and equipment grants, are available to students with disabilities to allow them to attend and participate in mainstream schools.

### **Special measures**

There are special classes and units for students with more significant disabilities attached to some mainstream schools. These allow for some degree of integration for these students in a mainstream setting. In addition, there are also a number of special schools, usually for students with the most significant forms of special need, including moderate and severe/profound learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, physical disabilities, emotional and behavioural disturbance and autistic spectrum disorders.

## (v) Supports

### **Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)**

The Association of Guidance Teachers, formed in 1968, was amalgamated in 1976 with the Institute of Vocational Guidance and Counselling of Ireland, an umbrella group established in 1973 for all trained personnel. The new body, established in 1976, was called the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). The IGC is the professional body representing over 1200 practitioners in second level schools, third level colleges, adult guidance services, private practice and in other settings.

The Institute has a liaison and advocacy role with government departments, management and trade union organisations, national parent bodies, higher and further education institutions, and employment and training agencies. The Institute offers a comprehensive range of services to its members and directly to the public.

The Institute has developed and manages the Qualifax website, which provides a comprehensive outline of over twelve thousand courses available in Ireland, to both part time and full time students, ranging from literacy programmes to doctorate and post-doctorate programmes. It also provides users with information on the educational implications of subjects chosen at second level schools, a daily calendar of career and course related events, information on grants available to prospective students and a section with relevant educational information for those with a disability. Qualifax also contains a comprehensive list of links to other appropriate websites, and is funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES).

The Institute is currently piloting a number of primary school, second level and adult versions of the 'Real Game', an internationally recognised classroom based resource for use in career guidance. An Irish version of the 'Be Real Game' has been developed through the support of Second Level Support Services, funded by the DES, and rolled out in a wide range of schools in September 2006 and nationally in 2007.

The Institute is managing a national programme of in-service on behalf of the DES, through the national network of education centres, to provide all second level guidance counsellors with professional counselling supervision to ensure that the highest standards are adhered to in the counselling service provided to second level students.

The Institute also provides a series of two-hour in-service workshops annually, through the education centres network, while at its annual conference it provides additional in-service workshops, also funded by the DES.

The Institute, through its annual publication, yearbook and diary, calendar of career events, member's handbook and its directory of leaving certificate college entry requirements, keeps its members and their clients informed on educational opportunities. The Institute also publishes a quarterly journal *Guideline*, aimed mainly at its own members. Through its website and its national head office, the Institute provides its members and the general public with comprehensive information on career related issues, including a list of private practice practitioners.

In cooperation with the National Parents Council (Post-Primary) and a number of national newspapers, the Institute provides a comprehensive helpline service to members of the public in August each year, when the Leaving Certificate results are published and college places are offered.

### **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) is a service to schools provided by the Department of Education and Science. NEPS Psychologists are available to support schools in facilitating all students to develop their full potential and to maximise the benefits of their education and other life experience, having particular regard to those with special educational needs.

NEPS offers a range of services to schools including consultation, casework and work of a more preventative and developmental nature. NEPS is committed to providing a psychological service to school communities, to supporting teacher networks e.g. guidance counsellors and learning support/resource teachers and to working collaboratively with the education partners.

NEPS psychologists are also available to advise on support for students with special educational or counselling needs and to support schools in promoting inclusion, fostering a positive school climate, developing support teams and critical incident plans, facilitating the personal, social and emotional development of all learners and promoting positive mental health.

#### **National Education Welfare Board**

The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) is a national agency with responsibility for encouraging and supporting regular school attendance. Specifically, the NEWB was established to ensure that every child either attends school regularly, receives an education by another appropriate means, or participates in training.

#### **Education Centres**

There are 21 full time and nine part-time centres nationwide, supported principally by the Department of Education and Science. These centres are a network of learning communities where teachers and other partners in the local school community are facilitated in meeting their training needs so that they can perform their roles effectively.

#### **Pastoral Care in Education**

Many schools, particularly those at post-primary level, have a pastoral care programme. Some school staff have additional formal responsibilities as part of these programmes, for example chaplains, tutors, year heads and coordinators. The Irish Association of Pastoral Care in Education (IAPCE) supports those working in these roles with services including seminars and regular newsletters.

#### **National Council for Special Education (NCSE)**

The National Council for Special Education was established in January 2005. Its function is to carry out research and give expert advice to the Minister for Education and Science on the educational and service needs of children with disabilities. It also provides services at both national and local level to identify and provide for the educational needs of these children. The NCSE cooperates with health authorities and schools to make sure that these children have access to education and related support services using a network of Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs). SENOs are responsible for delivering services at local level, and currently 70 such posts have been taken up around the country. SENOs are the point of contact for parents/guardians and schools and they process applications for children with disabilities at both primary and post-primary levels..

#### **National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education**

There are a number of support schemes for primary schools and for the guidance programme at post-primary level. These are often organised in collaboration with the local higher education institution, with an aim to increase the participation rate of early school leavers in third level education. The institution often organises activities such as campus tours and study incentives to help achieve this long term goal.

The National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education facilitates educational access and opportunity for groups who are under-represented in higher education, i.e. those who experience socio-economic disadvantage, those with a disability and mature students. The National Office incorporates eight staff and forms part of the HEA executive. The National Office, in consultation with the education community, learners and social partners has devised and published a national, multi-annual plan to achieve equity of access to higher education. The National Office monitors the implementation of the national Action Plan 2005-2007 and progress in improving access and educational opportunity for under-represented groups.

## FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

### Introduction

There are currently over 29,000 students enrolled in Further Education Colleges. The guidance and counselling provision in this sector is within the VEC system and comes under Schedule A of the DES allocation of hours (refer to Figure 1 on page 20). In addition to the work of the guidance counsellor, information regarding Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses is provided to students by the course tutor. The PLC programme integrates training for vocational skills in particular disciplines, and the development of general skills, such as adaptability and initiative. It also provides for work experience to give relevance to the skills learned and an appreciation of working life.

### The role of the coordinator

The role of the coordinator/tutor in the provision of guidance to this sector can vary greatly from school to school and centre to centre. This is often dependent on the size of the school/centre, the existing allocation of guidance and counselling to that school/centre, and the number of PLC students in relation to the cohort of students in mainstream education in the school/centre.

- » All PLC students have mandatory modules in Work Experience and Communications. In some schools/centres the guidance counsellor delivers this, in others the coordinator/tutor or another teacher;
- » Often the guidance counsellor may, at the request of the coordinator/tutor, play an intermittent role in delivering modules on employment resources and applications, work experience preparation, interview techniques and/or any other areas where the coordinator would feel the guidance counsellor could make a contribution. In many cases the coordinator/tutor will deliver some or all these modules themselves;
- » The coordinator/tutor may also have an involvement in work placement and employment or work referrals;
- » The coordinator/tutor may be involved in initiating new courses and programmes, often with the assistance of the guidance counsellor;
- » The coordinator/tutor may offer information on access to third level education through the higher education links schemes, or refer students interested in this information to the guidance counsellor;
- » The coordinator/tutor may make referrals to the guidance counsellor for students requiring personal counselling on a 'need arises' basis.

## PROGRAMMES FOR EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS

The generic title used for full-time programmes for early school leavers in Ireland is Youthreach. These programmes were established to provide second chance education and training to young people who leave school without any formal qualifications and they are delivered through a network of about 175 centres nationally. In total, the programmes have approximately 7000 places distributed between a number of different strands: FÁS funds 2700 places in Community Training Centres (CTCs) and Department of Justice Workshops (DJWs) while the Department of Education and Science through the VECs provides for 3258 places in their Youthreach centres and a further 1076 places in Senior Traveller Training Centres (STTCs). The majority of participants in the CTCs, DJWs and VEC Youthreach centres are under 19 years, while the focus of the STTCs is more on adult education.

Support services generally are provided to learners in Youthreach under two schemes:

1. A small fund, of over €1m, established in 1998 and administered by the VECs, is available to all centres for accessing guidance, psychotherapy or psychological services. In practice centres usually have to choose between these services, with the majority tending to opt for psychotherapeutic counselling. A survey in 2003 found that only 30% of centres cited *guidance* as the form of service they received.
2. A community-based Advocate Service piloted from 1996 to 1998 and mainstreamed in 2000, is funded by FÁS. It employs 29 full-time advocates who work with early school leavers in 16 out of the

<sup>3</sup> Martin, T. and Associates (2005). Evaluation of the Advocacy Service. Unpublished report commissioned by FÁS

26 counties. Advocates provide a guidance service, organising work experience and preparing young people for progression to employment or further training. Most of the young people supported by this Service are attending a Youthreach centre.

A recent evaluation of the Advocate Service<sup>3</sup> concluded that the Service was meeting its objective of providing a tailor-made approach to career path planning to meet the specific guidance, training and work-related experience needs of disadvantaged early school leavers. It recommended that the emphasis of the work of the Service should be firmly placed on *progression* and *career guidance*, through the provision of individual career path plans which outline the training and work experience elements that are necessary to enable the client to progress successfully to mainstream education, vocational training or employment.

The consultants further recommended that the job specification for advocates should indicate the desirability of a third level diploma qualification in career guidance counselling. Alternatively, FÁS should employ people with a track record in early school leaver training and offer access to appropriate third level training in guidance counselling.

Teaching staff working in Youthreach centres have tended to see their brief as incorporating a support or mentoring role. As a result, there has been a tradition of providing staff with in-service training in frontline guidance and counselling skills, under the aegis of NCGE, the Department of Education and Science or the local VEC. In a limited number of VECs a system has also been established for staff support and professional supervision.

## **GUIDANCE AT THIRD LEVEL**

### **Introduction**

There are currently 143,271 full-time and 61,452 part-time students enrolled in third level education. In many colleges student services incorporate such support services as careers advice, counselling, chaplaincy and pastoral care, guidance and welfare, health, accommodation and disability liaison officers. Mentoring services are available to students in many third level colleges. The type of provision and location is generally specific to each individual college. This may be due to funding, needs analysis and the student support service structures within the college. Learning support services provide students with learning strategies necessary to assist them in their studies. This is delivered through the provision of a variety of courses, workshops and related programmes.

The development of formal guidance services in third level colleges in Ireland can be traced back to the establishment of a University Appointments Association in Trinity College Dublin in 1902 *'to assist students and graduates of the University to obtain appointments and employment at home and abroad'*. Similar steps were taken by Queens University Belfast though not until 1920. In 1953, Trinity College Dublin established the First Appointments Office with full-time staff, followed by University College Dublin in 1968, though services had been provided on a part-time basis for a number of years.

From the outset, services developed their own programme on a college by college basis. Over time, informal collaboration became more formalised and eventually led to the establishment of a professional association, the Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland (AGCSI).

## (i) Guidance Delivery

### Careers

Initially the guidance model used was the traditional face to face interview with students. The 1990s saw major changes in the delivery of services, with a move away from the pre-scheduled interview and the introduction of 'drop-in services' provided by 'duty advisers'. This is complemented by 'quick-query desks' which cater for consultations of a purely informational nature while a range of seminars provide advice and information on a group guidance basis.

There are currently approximately 65 careers advisers working at third level nationwide (including Northern Ireland). Within the careers advisory services, occupational roles include: director of careers service, careers advisers/careers and appointment officers, placement officers, careers information officers and employer liaison officers. This provision may be dependent on resources in the individual universities and institutes.

Careers services provide one-to-one interviews, psychometric testing, e-guidance, workshops, seminars, presentations, liaising with academic staff on student career management and skills highlighting, mentoring and volunteering schemes and career fairs. According to the Institutes of Technology Careers Advisers' Network (ITCAN), all careers advisers have a third level qualification and there is an increasing expectation that advisers have a post-graduate qualification in career guidance and counselling.

Most careers services have their own website and some services enable students to email queries and receive 'virtual' careers advice. Some colleges also have specific career advisers for students with disabilities (for example University College Cork, University of Limerick).

Embedding guidance into the academic programme has become a strategy for many careers services, some of whom have already established accredited career modules. Many services' websites now incorporate an e-learning module on career management skills and most, if not all, offer an e-guidance service to both current and former students.

### Counselling

Each college in the university and IT (Institute of Technology) sector provides a counselling service for students on campus. The Irish Association of University and College Counsellors (IAUCC) defines counselling in third level as a specialist service which is particularly sensitive to the developmental path of students and which provides appropriate support during this process. The main task of this counselling service is to explore issues of importance to a student and to enable them to deal with these more effectively. Each counselling service also has a role in identifying and highlighting any facility which would assist the wellbeing of students, such as preventative and educational programmes, for example.

The counsellor may work with individuals or groups on issues in the following areas: therapeutic, developmental, preventative and practical. This can encompass support in personal issues, transitions, stress management, study and exam skills, and peer mentoring programmes. Dependent on resources in the individual colleges, counsellors may also be involved in a wider range of activities such as tutor support, institutional policy development and research.

### Private Colleges

A number of private colleges have a career and/or counselling service. Provision varies from college to college.

## (ii) Social Inclusion

### Access

The aims of access in third level, as outlined by the Higher Education Authority, are

*to foster the development of a higher education sector which is accessible to all potential students and which is recognised internationally for the high quality of teaching, learning and research and which has the capacity to address the changing needs and challenges in our society.*

As with student services at third level, provision differs from establishment to establishment. In universities, for example, there are often a number of access officers, each one focusing on a particular group of students, e.g., mature students, the travelling community, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, etc. In the IT sector, however, one access officer may deal with all relevant groups of students with access issues within that college.

Access officers at third level often initiate programmes with the local community and primary schools in order to foster a culture of education and to increase the number of students entering third level who have been previously unrepresented due to their own particular access issues.

## (iii) Disability

All third level institutions in the university/IT sector have disability services for their students. The range and extent of provision varies according to the funding allocated to the institution in question. Nonetheless, many would incorporate such facilities as assessments, assistive technology, individual examination arrangements, and lecture aids for students with visual/hearing impairments.

## (iv) Supports

### Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland (AGCSI)

The first record of an appointments officers meeting, attended by some two dozen representatives of Irish industry and commerce was in 1964. However it was not until 1969 that the Association of Irish University Careers and Appointments Services (AIUCAS) was founded. Coordinated through a standing committee, AIUCAS was founded as an all-Ireland body made up originally of two regional groups, a Republic of Ireland group and a Northern Ireland Group. 1986 saw the Association change its name to the Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland (AGCSI) which allowed flexibility to extend membership beyond the university sector and emphasised the role of services to students and graduates.

AGCSI is the professional association for careers services in higher education in Ireland. Its mission is to be an effective association representing third level career services in Ireland by promoting and facilitating best practice. Since its beginning, AGCSI has relied heavily upon the goodwill of its members to improve third level careers service. Equally, its long-standing partnership with GTI Ireland (Graduate Opportunities Ireland is a division of GTI Specialist Publishers, one of the leading graduate career publishers in Europe) has benefited the association over time. Cooperation and goodwill between the two will continue to play an important role in the future success of AGCSI. Currently, there are five subcommittees that meet on a regular basis. These include training; careers education; information and publications; employer opportunities and information technology.

From its establishment, AGCSI has developed a range of resource materials including the Register of Employers of Graduates in Ireland (REGI), Graduate Opportunities in Ireland and a series of careers information booklets. By 1998, the Association's

website went live and was re-launched soon after as *Graduate Careers Ireland (GCI)*, developed collaboratively by all member services as a key resource for students and graduates. In 2002, AGCSI products were launched, including its website, under the 'gradireland' and 'postgradireland' brands.

All members of AGCSI are eligible to become members of the UK-based professional Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). The model of careers and educational guidance, as distinct from personal and social guidance in the higher education sector, has a very strong ethos of sharing resources, good practice and training methods and has a shared, agreed set of quality standards as the AGCAS model.

In 2004 with the opening up of full membership status to all publicly funded third level institutions, members of the recently formed Institutes of Technology Careers Advisers' Network (ITCAN) joined.

#### **Institutes of Technology Careers Advisers' Network (ITCAN)**

There are currently 14 Institutes of Technology throughout Ireland. The Institute of Technology Careers Advisers' Network (ITCAN) was launched in spring 2004 to develop a formal network which aims to promote and enhance the operation of careers advisory services within these institutes. Careers services within the ITs have an open access policy to assist students before, during and after qualification. The establishment of ITCAN has introduced a forum for the sharing of best practice and ideas.

#### **The Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD)**

AHEAD, founded in 1990, undertakes research in areas relating to disability and third level education and acts in a consultative capacity to the Higher Education Authority (HEA), educational institutions and other bodies in the education sector. AHEAD strives to inform and change national policy in the areas of education and employment of graduates with disabilities. It also lobbies to improve access to and increase the participation of students with disabilities in higher and further education in Ireland.

#### **Irish Association of University and College Counsellors (IAUCC)**

The Irish Association of University and College Counsellors, officially launched in 1994, is the professional association for counselling services in third level. It includes participants from colleges/universities from both the Republic and Northern Ireland. Its aims include developing and safeguarding professional standards of practice for counsellors at third level.

#### **Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN)**

The Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) is a forum for the exchange of information and expertise among Disability Officers working in third level colleges in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

#### **National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education**

Refer back to Page 26.

## **ADULT GUIDANCE**

### **Introduction**

In 1996 the *Report on Recent Developments in Adult Education in Ireland*, prepared for the European Commission, highlighted:

*...a need for support services in a number of key areas – one of the most important being that of a guidance and counselling service for adult learners...In addition, there is a growing realisation throughout Europe, that what many unemployed people require of adult education is a provision that combines education and training with a guidance and counselling service.*

Adult Education Officers have responsibility for organising and developing education opportunities for adults. Subsequent to the report, the Adult Education Officers' Association consulted NCGE with a view to examining existing provision for adult participants in education. NCGE commissioned



national research on the experience and attitude of adult learners and adult education providers of educational guidance and proposals for an effective delivery structure. The report *Guidance in Adult and Continuing Education (1998)* indicated that information provision was the main guidance activity available to date and it was generally related to recruitment. In addition, it was ascertained that participants and providers were seeking a professional adult education guidance service and that students were willing to pay higher course fees if this guaranteed them such a service.

### (i) Guidance Delivery - Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (1999-2006)

The White Paper, *'Learning for Life'* (2000), addressed this fact, highlighting the need to establish a supporting service in guidance and counselling for adults. At that point, in excess of 210,000 adults were availing of programmes in adult literacy, the Vocational Training Opportunity Scheme (VTOS) and other adult and community education programmes (including BTEI). In 2005 adults and their children in receipt of funding from the Education Finance Board were included as an additional target group. The Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI), as part of the VEC and other educational management bodies, was funded by the National Development Plan (NDP), 2000-2006 to serve the needs of these priority target groups.

The pilot programme proceeded in four phases - Phase 1 commenced in 1999, Phase 2 in 2001, Phase 3 in 2002 and Phase 4 in 2005, bringing the number of services nationwide to 36. The role of the guidance service is to assist people to make the best choices for learning. The service comprises personal, educational and career guidance and covers the pre-entry, entry, on-going and pre-exit stages. Individual projects network locally with the employment, welfare, training and health services in their areas. Each service generally comprises a guidance coordinator, a guidance counsellor and an information officer.

The number of clients receiving support from AEGI services has risen from 2,300 in 2000 to 30,000 in 2006 with an increase in financial allocation from €3.2m in 2004 to €4m in 2005.

### (ii) Supports

#### Adult Educational Guidance Association (AEGA)

The Adult Educational Guidance Association (AEGA) was set up in 2001 to represent staff of the AEGI pilot projects. The role of the AEGA includes representing these staff members at the AEGI National Advisory Group meetings. Since its inception, the AEGA has worked closely with NCGE to identify staff training needs, adult guidance developments, and in various working groups.

Many guidance professionals working in the adult sector are also members of the IGC. The AEGA also works closely with the IGC to establish a comprehensive understanding of adult guidance and support the IGC recognition of the NUI Higher Diploma in Adult Guidance. (Refer to *Institute of Guidance Counsellors* Page 25).

#### National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)

NCGE was given a lead role in managing and supporting this Initiative. In 1999 it established the AEGI Advisory Group, whose remit is to advise the Department on the overall development and management of the Initiative. NCGE monitors and coordinates the evaluation of the services provided nationwide. Its role includes the provision of induction and in-service training, resource materials and quality guidelines for staff. It has also coordinated the development of a client database, enabling services to provide feedback to all the stakeholders on the extent and nature of the guidance services provided.

### **Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)**

The Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is a European Social Fund supported intervention in the Irish labour market to enable unemployed people who have been on the Live Register for at least six months to access education and training with a view to progression to employment. Ten per cent of places may also be allocated under certain conditions to a wider category of people including lone parents and people in receipt of Disabled Persons' Maintenance Allowance who are seeking employment. The minimum age for participation in VTOS being 21 years. VTOS is represented on the AEGI advisory group and the VTOS Coordinator collaborates regularly with the staff of the AEGI centre in ensuring a suitable place for clients on a VTOS course.

### **National Adult Literacy Association (NALA)**

The National Adult Literacy Association (NALA) was established in 1980 and has operated as a national office since 1985. It is a membership organisation with voluntary status, whose priorities include national coordination, training and policy development in adult literacy work in Ireland. NALA's mission statement is to ensure that all adults with literacy difficulties have access to high quality learning opportunities. NALA is represented on the AEGI advisory group, has presented training sessions for the new AEGI members and has provided training on facilitating adults with literacy issues.

### **AONTAS**

AONTAS, a voluntary membership organisation, is the Irish National Association of Adult Education. Its aim is to promote the development of a learning society through the provision of a quality, comprehensive and inclusive system of adult learning and education which is accessible to all. There are currently over 550 members of AONTAS, incorporating statutory and voluntary providers of adult and community education nationwide, along with individual members who are generally tutors and learners. AONTAS assists the AEGI

through its promotion and support of adult guidance both in the form of regular events highlighting this focus and the publication of information for adult learners, as well as its representation on the AEGI advisory group.

## **GUIDANCE IN THE LABOUR MARKET SECTOR**

### **Introduction**

Within the labour market sector, the provision of guidance services can be traced back to the early 1970s with the establishment of the National Manpower Service under the responsibility of the Department of Labour.

## **FÁS EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

### **Introduction**

Currently the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) has administrative responsibility for guidance services in the labour market area. The Labour Services Act of 1987 provided for the dissolution of AnCO (An Chomhairle Oilíúna) established in 1967, the Youth Employment Agency, established in 1981, and the National Manpower Service, established in 1971. Their functions were then transferred to a new body established in January 1988 – FÁS (An Foras Áiseanna Saothair).

DETE's responsibility for guidance is mainly discharged through FÁS, the National Training and Employment Authority and through Local Employment Services (LES) set up in the mid 1990s. FÁS has a statutory obligation to provide careers information and guidance services to employed and unemployed adults. Funded by the Irish Government, the National Training Fund and the European Union, its Employment Services are provided through a network of offices located throughout the country in visible city centre and community locations.

### (i) Provision

FÁS offers a range of services to guide and support people accessing training or employment. In addition, the FÁS National Contact Centre provides a free-phone information and advice service to jobseekers who have registered with FÁS, on all job vacancies, training and employment programmes. FÁS also has statutory responsibility for the provision of training and employment services to people with disabilities and, in this regard, has developed a range of programmes and supports designed to assist disabled people access employment or training.

Guidance is provided at all FÁS Employment Services offices by an Employment Services Officer (ESO). There are approximately 270 ESOs based in FÁS offices throughout the country. One of the key tasks of the ESO is to provide a career guidance and counselling service to job seeking clients. This involves identification of needs, exploration of a range of options and the development of an agreed action plan which may result in a direct placement into employment, for example, a referral to a vocational training programme or another related labour market option. FÁS interviewed and registered 76,893 new clients in 2005. In addition to this, it is estimated that a further 100% of clients previously registered with FÁS returned for an interview and guidance service. On average, FÁS clients have at least 3 interactions with an ESO.

Advocates are also funded by FÁS to work with clients in the non-formal education and training sector, for example in Youthreach centres and Community Training Centres (Refer to *Advocate Service* Page 27).

FÁS contracts with a range of community organisations to provide locally delivered training and employment programmes. Examples include Community Training Centres (CTCs) which are community owned and managed, but which are almost entirely funded by FÁS to provide flexible training to young early school leavers. In addition, FÁS in conjunction with NUI Maynooth, developed a Distance Education Certificate and Diploma/Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Guidance and Counselling aimed specifically at the needs of Employment Services Officers.

### National Employment Service

Ireland's National Employment Service (NES) consists of two strands, the Employment Service (ES) operated by FÁS and the Local Employment Service (LES), which are, in the main, funded by FÁS on contract through Area Partnership Companies. The objective of FÁS ES is to provide a range of employment services to jobseekers, employers, unemployed and other socially excluded groups through its national network.

The objective of the LES is to focus on the provision of services to the most disadvantaged in the labour market and to provide these as a direct response to the local context within which it operates.

The LESN is a network of area-based response to disadvantaged people who are unemployed. The majority of LES (Local Employment Services) are allied to area-based partnership companies (Refer to *area-based partnerships* Page 37). Client focused strategic mediation and guidance is provided by the LES for disadvantaged individuals who are seeking to return to the workforce. The services would also often liaise with the AEGI (Adult Educational Guidance Initiative) and were also part of the consultative process regarding the selection of AEGI centres throughout Ireland.

## (ii) Disability

People with disabilities have priority access to FÁS training courses, Apprenticeship, Traineeship, e-college and participation on Community Employment Programmes. Supports which have been introduced to assist people with disabilities secure employment include the interview interpreter grant, personal reader grant, workplace equipment/adaptation grant, wage subsidy scheme, supported employment, job coaching and employee retention grant scheme. In addition and where appropriate, referral to a specialist training provider may be considered.

### **Euroguidance Centres**

In Ireland there are two Euroguidance Centres, one based in FÁS and the other based in the National Centre for Guidance in Education (Refer to *NCGE*, Page 18). The Euroguidance Centres provide information on educational and vocational training opportunities within the European Union and receive funding from the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, which is the European Vocational Training Programme. The FÁS Euroguidance Centre operates under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. It provides and sources information on vocational training and labour market opportunities within the EU. During the 1990s computer assisted guidance was gaining popularity and FÁS noted the advantage of producing careers information in electronic format. Thus saw the birth of *Gairm*, later to be incorporated into *Career Directions*, an integrated and interactive tool containing information on over 720 careers, which is updated annually.

### **Refugee Information Service (RIS)**

The RIS is a free, confidential and independent information, advocacy and referral service for the refugee and asylum-seeking community. The service is provided on an outreach 'clinic' basis in areas of Dublin and Galway where refugees and asylum-seekers live in significant numbers. Currently the RIS operates seven clinics in Dublin; Meath Street, Amiens Street, Green St, Blanchardstown, Tallaght, Rathmines and Aungier Street. The RIS operates two clinics in Galway city.

## **WORK-RELATED GUIDANCE PROVISION**

The main focus of this guidance in Ireland is to improve the performance of the worker within the company. Self development and individual career management are subsidiary outcomes. Work based guidance provision relates to advice and assistance services which are offered to employees in order to help them grow and develop the necessary skills for future development.

### (i) Provision

#### **Small Firms Association (SFA)**

The Small Firms Association (SFA) offers a number of training programmes aimed at assisting the owner manager and, while owner managers may send staff on the programmes, the Association does not formulate programmes specifically for staff.

#### **Enterprise Ireland**

Enterprise Ireland offers a mentoring service to new start-up businesses to provide them with advice and assistance to help them grow and develop the necessary skills for future development. Known as the Mentor Network, it is a voluntary service, and all mentors are senior executives with a proven track record of business success.

#### **County Enterprise Boards**

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE), provides funding to City and County Enterprise boards to support new businesses. This may include mentoring programmes to individuals to help them get their new business established (e.g., Area Partnership Start Your Own Business programmes).

#### **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs)**

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) originated in the US and are becoming increasingly popular in Ireland to enhance human resources employee relations strategy. The aim of any EAP service is to help alleviate workplace stress by preventing absenteeism, high recruitment costs and staff turnover, poor performance and poor productivity. The programme provides counselling for a wide range of work-related and personal worries.

## Individual Companies

Individual companies have their own mechanisms of induction and training of new staff operated through personnel or training departments that may involve individual mentoring, (Refer to *The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)*).

## Supports

### Skillnets

Skillnets is an enterprise led support whose mission is to enhance the skills of people in employment in Irish industry in order to support competitiveness and employability. Skillnets is funded from the National Training Fund and its stakeholders include leading employer and employee representative bodies - IBEC, CCI, CIF, SFA, and ICTU.

Through the creation of enterprise-led Learning Networks, Skillnets supports groups of firms to come together and devise training and development initiatives to meet their collective skills needs. Networks receive grant aid and other forms of assistance from Skillnets through the Training Networks Programme. The Training Networks allow enterprises to identify staff training needs and guides them in terms of accessing flexible and relevant learning suitable to their skills development at a local level.

Between 1999 and 2005 Learning Networks supported the activities of over 6,100 companies and 35,000 trainees. These networks encompass a wide variety of sectors and regions in Ireland, with a particular focus on the needs of small and micro enterprises. Currently 54 learning networks are being funded under the 2006-2008 Training Networks Programme. The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Micheál Martin, T.D., announced a new mandate for Skillnets in March, 2005 which makes available a new €55 million fund for industry training from 2005-2010.

## The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is the professional membership body for the HR and Training professions in Ireland. The Irish branch has represented members since 1937 and currently has over 5,200 members in Ireland. The aims of CIPD Ireland are to advance the management and development of people to the benefit of individuals, employers and the community. HR professionals who have completed a CIPD course acquire skills in areas such as employee appraisal and staff development. It remains the remit of the individual HR department as to the level of work related guidance that is practiced in their organisation.

In addition to the above, the CIPD promotes Performance Management and Development Systems (PMDS) in the workplace to improve productivity and maximise efficiency. Performance management concerns the establishment of a culture where individuals and groups take responsibility for the continuous improvement of business processes, individual skills, behaviour and contributions. Effective performance management can benefit the individual in terms of personal development, learning and progression in the workplace if it is well structured.

## COMMUNITY SECTOR

### Introduction

There is a wide range of guidance provision in the community sector; however it can prove difficult to get information about the services available. This is due to the fact that they are funded from many different sources and they serve several diverse groups within the community.

## i) Provision

### **Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI)**

The Adult Educational Guidance Initiative provides guidance to community education centres around the country. Guidance is provided on an outreach basis both in group settings and on an individual basis with clients. (Refer to *Best Practice*, Appendix 3)

### **Youth Information Centres**

There are over 30 Youth Information Centres (YICs) nationwide managed by a variety of youth organisations. YICs offer an information service on a wide number of issues including employment matters, local community services and education and training to young people.

### **Libraries**

Public libraries nationwide stock a wide range of career guidance books. Borrowers can do a catalogue search under 'career guidance' and locate over 100 titles on the subject matter from Dublin City Library, with almost 70 titles being listed under a similar search in Cork City Library. The public can borrow these books.

### **Citizens' Advice Information Centres**

The majority of Citizens' Advice Information Centres provide information on educational opportunities, but, similar to Public Libraries, are not formal service providers of individual career advice. Many provide information on all levels of education and, in particular, on the financial and legal rights of students re-entering education. Dun Laoghaire Citizen's Advice Information Centre, for example, provides information on all levels of Irish education, with additional sections on Adult and Special Education. Information relating to the former takes the form of facts and contacts with regard to the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative. Special Education information includes Department of Education and Science and Comhairle articles relating to Special Education initiatives and educational supports for students with disabilities, along with details of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004.

### **Family Resource Centres**

In 1994, an allocation of £250,000 was made available by the Department of Social Welfare to fund a number of Family Resource Centres. The decision was motivated by the perception of a possible gap in statutory support for community development activities focused on support for families and tackling child poverty. Ten Centres were funded on a three year pilot basis. Family Resource Centres often host a variety of courses including classes in several different areas ranging from courses in computers to those in movement and dance. These centres can also provide personal counselling services in areas like anxiety and depression, relationships and self-esteem, for example. Centres do not provide formal career guidance to individuals.

### **National Counselling Service**

The National Counselling Service, provided by the Health Service Executive, is a community based service for adults who were affected by childhood abuse in Ireland. The service offers individual counselling, couple counselling, counselling for family members, group therapy and information about other services within the community.

## (ii) Supports

### **Area-Based Partnerships**

Under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress in 1991, 12 partnership companies were established as an area-based response to long-term unemployment. The number of partnership areas was increased to 38 in 1995 under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The function of partnership companies is to prepare a local development plan to tackle disadvantage in the related area and to place emphasis on the need for social inclusion. The programmes encompass three action areas including services for unemployed people, community development and community based youth initiatives. In addition, there are a number of community projects and European funded short-term projects in existence.

### **The Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOUE)**

The INOU was set up in 1987 as a national federation of local centres and groups with the common aim of combating unemployment. It now comprises over 170 local unemployed centres, community development organisations and branches of unemployed people throughout Ireland. The organisation provides information on welfare rights, providing a telephone advice service to individuals and affiliated organisations. Practical information about social welfare and other entitlements is also provided in leaflet form. A bi-monthly publication, called *The Bulletin*, is also widely circulated. The INOU supports local groups through services such as training, information and analysis of Government policies. Members of the organisation are also involved in a wide range of activities from enterprise support and training to community development and employment.

### **EQUAL Community Initiative in Ireland**

EQUAL is one of four Community Initiatives co-financed by the European Union (2000–2007). The programme is co-funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) and is operating between 2001 and end 2007, with a total ESF budget for Ireland of €34m. EQUAL seeks to identify and address fundamental forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market through the development of new and innovative policies and practices initiated by EQUAL Development Partnerships.

## **THIRD AGE GUIDANCE**

### **Introduction**

As is the case with the community sector, it is difficult to gather documented information or a listing of guidance provision in this sector. Some provision does exist, nonetheless, as highlighted in this section.

### **Age Action Ireland**

Age Action Ireland is the national independent organisation representing ageing and older people. It acts as a network of organisations and individuals that includes older people and carers of older people. Its remit is to promote better policies and services for older people in Ireland. Through its national development of the University of the Third Age (refer to U3A at [www.ageaction.ie](http://www.ageaction.ie)), it aims to promote participation in formal and non-formal education. Age Action Ireland and the U3A programmes do not provide a guidance service for older people. Its General Information Service is an information and referral service only. If an older person is seeking guidance he/she is referred to the local VEC or a private practitioner, if available.

### **Retirement Planning Council**

The Retirement Planning Council has been in operation for 30 years and its aim is to support people to effectively plan and manage their retirement. It provides a number of training courses including Retirement Planning and Mid-Career Change. The Retirement Planning course deals with the 'nature of change, particularly in relationships, money, health and time'. The Mid-Career Change course offers 'guidance in planning for, and dealing with the social and operational changes in the workplace'. It focuses on changes in modern life, managing personal choices and financial considerations relevant to the individual. Within the context of lifelong learning and continuous career management throughout the lifespan both of these agencies are offering support to the older person.

## Private Practitioners

### Introduction

The OECD Career Guidance Policy Review stated that little is known about the extent of career guidance provided by the private sector in Ireland. At the present time, the available data on private practitioners in career guidance in Ireland remains limited and fragmented. There is no separate association of private practitioners in the field, and no comprehensive listing of private practitioners in career guidance, of the areas in which they work, or what their qualifications might be.

However, some information about private guidance practitioners may be gathered from sources such as the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and the Golden Pages (classified telephone directory). Since 2004, in response to queries from the public, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors compiled a list of private practitioners who provided evidence of professional indemnity. The IGC invited those of its members who were engaged in private practice to look for inclusion on this published list for an annual fee.

### Provision

As of June 2006, 23 members appear on that list. Some IGC members are engaged exclusively in private practice but do not choose to be included on the published list, and they are described in the IGC membership listing as 'guidance counsellors self employed'. Qualified members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors are usually (but not exclusively) recognised second-level teachers, with a primary degree, a teaching qualification, and a recognised guidance and counselling post graduate qualification. The Golden Pages (01 area) telephone directory contains 35 entries under the heading 'Career Guidance'.

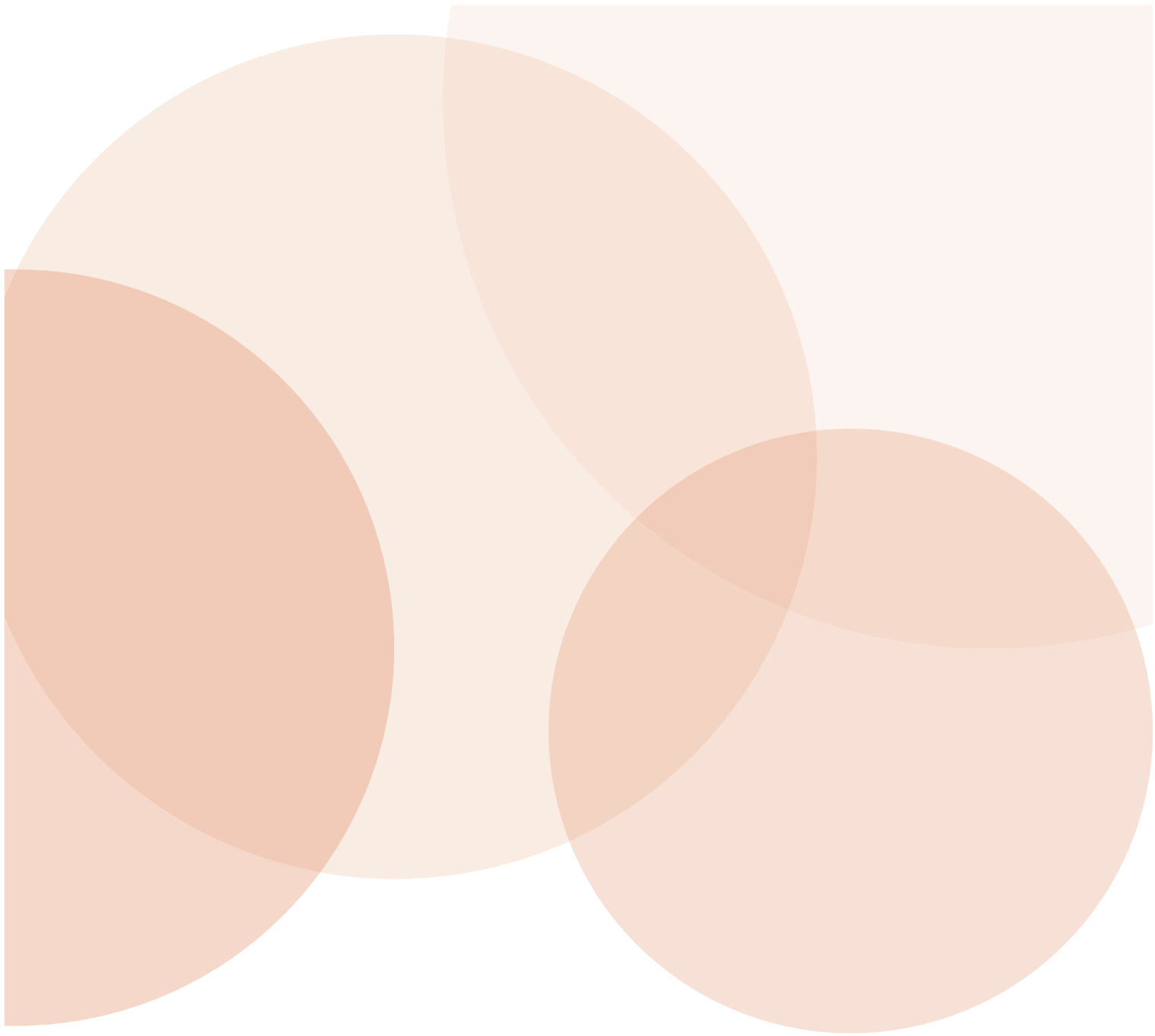
The Golden Pages also contains another category of entries relevant to career guidance counselling, under the heading 'Life Coaches'. This list consists of about 70 entries, largely focussed on the business market. They use such descriptive phrases as 'Coaching for Personal and Business Success', 'Professional Coaching', 'Executive and Personal Coaching', and other similar phrases. Approximately 300 entries appear in the Recruitment Specialists section, which inevitably has some career guidance element. A section headed 'Personal Development' contains over 20 entries, some of which have a career guidance bias. More than 40 psychologists are also listed in the Golden Pages, and undoubtedly some of these are approached on educational and career guidance issues. The numbers offering guidance services of one sort or another have all increased slightly in the past couple of years.

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF GUIDANCE PROVISION

There are additional categories of information and guidance provision. Parents, family members and friends, for example, are informal sources of guidance and information.

Guidance and information is also available from a variety of ICT sources, for example, websites such as Career Directions (FÁS), Qualifax (IGC), gradireland (AGCSI) and a myriad of other services on the internet.





# 04

## Gaps in Provision

A number of gaps were identified by the Scoping Paper sub-committee, as outlined below.

- » Currently, in Ireland, there is no formal guidance provision available for children aged 0-6 years. There is unquestionable evidence which shows the indisputable need for comprehensive services and support, including guidance, for parents with young babies in the 'primal period' of dependant infancy and early childhood (0-6) when the baby/young child is most adaptable and is in a period of accelerated mental growth. The provision of systematic support and guidance for parents during these early years is crucial in facilitating the child's optimal social and emotional development. Achieving this is the foundation for future development, and results in improved school attendance and completion, lifelong learning, satisfactory relationships and interpersonal skills.
- » There is insufficient provision of counselling available in post-primary. At present, there is a significant demand for counselling services among second level students which exceeds the supply of services available.
- » The Second Level Support Service sets out a programme of professional development for second level teachers. Nonetheless, there is a gap in pre-service and in-service training for SPHE teachers, guidance practitioners and teachers in general around making choices. Such training would facilitate a whole-school approach to guidance and would allow for career-related learning, a form of learning that incorporates guidance into the current curriculum. This in turn would allow for more informed choices to be made prior to leaving primary and post primary school. Were students to choose options which are best suited to them, the problem of early school leavers and the college drop-out rate could be minimised.
- » The prioritising of time for planning a whole school/institution approach to guidance has been identified as a gap.
- » Inconsistency in the level of service available in different sectors is evident, for example the number of hours allocated to Youthreach as opposed to the post-primary level. At present, 29 advocates work in approximately 67 centres across 16 counties, while the total number of centres in the country providing programmes for early school leavers is approximately 175. The current number of advocates is therefore not sufficient to allow access to its service by all learners.
- » The ratio of careers advisors to students is very low in third level and, as a result, there is pressure to focus on final year students.
- » At present there is widespread duplication of resources in evidence, for example, in third level whereby all universities/ITs have their own website and careers information. If there were to be increased collaboration between providers, more focus could be placed on the quality rather than the quantity of resources.
- » There is an inequality of access to guidance services, for example at primary school level and for people in employment.
- » In the labour market sector, FÁS provides a guidance service to employed clients who present to FÁS offices or in the context of impending redundancies. However the vast majority of employed people do not present for guidance; hence the need for a more proactive approach, which would have significant resource implications.
- » There are many examples of good practice (refer to *Appendix 3*) which, if disseminated, could improve quality overall.

- » Private practitioners have no regulatory body and are not required to have a licence to practice. These guidance professionals need to be placed at a level appropriate to their qualifications on the competence framework, as developed by the Competencies sub-committee for the NGF.
- » There is a need for a directory of guidance services that includes the goals and aims of each service, the number of providers and of those accessing the service. The fragmented nature of the current guidance provision in Ireland is not cost efficient. A complete listing of guidance services should be developed which would allow for duplication and gaps to be clearly identifiable.
- » There is no single point of access for all existing career information websites (Careers World, Career Directions, gradireland and Qualifax for example). The establishment of a single portal would allow for connectivity of existing guidance services.
- » There is no appropriate facility for handing over clients when they move to a new environment/ agency or when there is a break in the service they have been receiving. This is particularly the case for vulnerable individuals who require additional supports, especially during the summer break in the academic calendar.
- » Guidance counsellors often need to refer clients on from their service and there are very few support and referral services available to them to access on behalf of clients. In addition, there is no agreed protocol on referring clients.



05

Acronyms, References and Appendices

## Acronyms used in this report

<b>AEGA:</b> Adult Educational Guidance Initiative	<b>EAP:</b> Employee Assistance Programmes
<b>AEGI:</b> Adult Educational Guidance Initiative	<b>EC:</b> European Commission
<b>AGCAS:</b> Association of Graduate Careers Advisory	<b>ES:</b> Employment Services
<b>AGSCI:</b> Association of Graduate Careers Services	<b>ESF:</b> European Social Fund
<b>AHEAD:</b> Association for Higher Education Access in Disability	<b>EQUAL:</b> A Community Initiative co-financed by the European Union
<b>AIUCAS:</b> Association of Irish University Careers and Appointments Services	<b>EU:</b> European Union
<b>AnCo:</b> An Chomhairle Oiliúna	<b>FÁS:</b> Foras Áiseanna Saothair (Training and Employment Authority)
<b>AONTAS:</b> Irish National Association of Adult Education	<b>GCI:</b> Graduate Careers Ireland
<b>BTEI:</b> Back to Education Initiative	<b>GEI:</b> Guidance Enhancement Initiative
<b>CAO:</b> Central Applications Office	<b>GTI:</b> Graduates to Industry
<b>CDVEC:</b> City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee	<b>HEA:</b> Higher Education Authority
<b>CIPD:</b> Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development	<b>HSE:</b> Health and Safety Executive
<b>CPD:</b> Continuing Professional Development	<b>HSL:</b> Home School Liaison
<b>CSPE:</b> Civic, Social and Personal Development	<b>IAPCE:</b> Irish Association of Pastoral Care in Education
<b>CTC:</b> Community Training Centres	<b>IAUCC:</b> Irish Association of University and College Counsellors
<b>DAWN:</b> Disability Advisors Working Network	<b>IBEC:</b> Irish Business and Employers Federation
<b>DES:</b> Department of Education and Science	<b>ICT:</b> Information Communication Technology
<b>DEIS:</b> Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools	<b>ICTU:</b> Irish Congress of Trade Unions
<b>DETE:</b> Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment	<b>IGC:</b> Institute of Guidance Counsellors
<b>DSFA:</b> Department of Social and Family Affairs	<b>IEP:</b> Individual Education Plans
<b>DJW:</b> Department of Justice Workshops	<b>INO:</b> Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

**IT:** Institute of Technology

**ITCAN:** Institute of Technology Careers Advice Network

**LCA:** Leaving Certificate Applied

**LCVP:** Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

**LES:** Local Employment Scheme

**LR:** Live Register

**NALA:** National Adult Literacy Association

**NCCA:** National Council for Curriculum Assessment

**NCGE:** National Centre for Guidance in Education

**NCSE:** National Council for Special Education

**NDP:** National Development Plan

**NES:** National Employment Service

**NEPS:** National Educational Psychological Society

**NEWB:** National Education Welfare Board

**NPC:** National Parents Council

**NQAI:** National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

**NRB:** National Rehabilitation Board

**NUI:** National University of Ireland

**OECD:** Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

**PAUL:** Name given to a Limerick-based Community Enterprise Support Programme

**PESP:** Programme for Economic and Social Prosperity

**PLC:** Post Leaving Cert

**REGI:** Register of Employers of Graduates in Ireland

**RIS:** Refugee Information Service

**SCP:** School Completion Programme

**SENO:** Special Education Needs Officer

**SFA:** Small Firms Association

**SPHE:** Social and Personal Health Education

**STTC:** Senior Traveller Training Centres

**TYP:** Transition Year Programme

**U3A:** University of the Third Age

**UK:** United Kingdom

**VEC:** Vocational Education Committee

**VTOS:** Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme

**YIC:** Youth Information Centre

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# Appendix 01

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN GUIDANCE

### National

White Paper on Human Resource Development 1997;  
Labour Services Act 1987;  
Education Act, 1998;  
Green Paper on Adult Education: Adult Education in an Era of Life Long Learning 1998; Establishment of the National Educational Psychological Service (1999);  
Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (2000-2003);  
Education (Welfare) Act, 2000;  
National Development Plan (2000-2006);  
White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life, 2000;  
Establishment of National Qualifications Authority (2001);  
'Building Our Vision'- FÁS Statement of Strategy 2006-2009.

### European

Bologna Declaration (1999);  
Lisbon Strategy - European Council Meeting 2000;  
Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality (European Commission Communication, 2001);  
Future Concrete Objectives of Education and Training Systems (European Council, 2001);  
OECD, European Commission and World Bank Career Guidance Policy Reviews (2001/2002);  
Action Plan for Skills and Mobility (European Commission, 2002);  
European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning (European Commission, 2002)  
Copenhagen Declaration (2002);  
Joint Statements of the European Public Employment Services (2002);  
Establishment and publications of the EC Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance (2002 - 2006) see [www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects\\_Networks/Guidance/expertgroup](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/Guidance/expertgroup) ;  
The European Employment Guidelines (European Union, 2003/2005);  
Guidance Resolution (May 2004);  
Establishment of the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (2005).



# Appendix 02

## ALLOCATION OF GUIDANCE HOURS IN POST-PRIMARY

Prior to 2005, guidance hours were allocated as follows:

**Schedule A:** Schools in the Free Education Scheme.

Enrolment	Allocation (hours per week)
1000+	44
800-999	66
500-799	55
250-499	11
200-249	8.8
<200	8

**Schedule B:** Schools not in the Free Education Scheme.

Enrolment	Allocation (hours per week)
500+	22
350-499	11

# Appendix 03

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

### Primary

The role of the Support Teacher is to work with a maximum of 12-15 targeted children who have been identified as having special social and/or emotional needs. According to the DES job description these children are identified as being 'disruptive, disturbed or withdrawn'. Children may be worked with on an individual basis or in small groups. The SPHE curriculum forms the basis of work done with these children. Work may include forms of behaviour modification, decision making, problem solving and learning to cope with a variety of feelings.

Support Teachers work closely with class teachers and other school personnel involved with the child, parents and other relevant outside agencies in preparing and implementing a programme of work which has been designed to meet the individual's particular needs. (Refer to *Support Teacher Scheme* Page 23).

### Post-Primary

An example of where guidance plays a fundamental role is illustrated by the school transfer programme in St. Dominic's school in Ballyfermot, Dublin. The school transfer programme has been devised and organised by the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) Coordinators in St. Dominic's in conjunction with the HSCL Coordinator in three primary schools in Ballyfermot, Dublin.

The transfer programme involves a whole-school approach involving management, staff, parents, guidance counsellors, transition year students and the Ballyfermot Youth Federation. It aims to prepare students for the challenges they will experience in the transfer from primary to secondary school. The transfer programme consists of group work for first year students in which topics such as change, friendship, choices and consequences are explored.

There is also a visit to primary schools by the HSCL Coordinator and transition year students, which is aimed at informing sixth class students about secondary school and questions relating to day-to-day activities, staff roles, etc., are addressed. During the month of May, all incoming first year students are brought on a tour of the school and, once in, secondary school, tutors and year heads meet on a weekly basis to discuss the progress of these new students.

Parents are also included in the programme whereby an information meeting for parents of incoming first year students is held, covering many topics including self-esteem, the role of tutors and year heads, the range of subjects, guidance counselling and other supports, and after-school activities.

## Programmes for Early School Leavers

### Youthreach Portfolio Project.

The Youthreach Portfolio Project was established in June 2003 by the Further Education section of the DES, with the support of agencies such as NCGE, the National Adult Literacy Association, the Dublin City VEC Psychological Service, the Advocate Service and practitioners in the field.

The Project has devised a holistic assessment instrument called the Profiling Web for use by staff with students who are attending the Youthreach or Senior Traveller Training programmes. This profiling tool comprises sixteen factor areas, which address educational/vocational progress, personal and social development and practical factors which might be acting as barriers to participation or success in the programme. Key features of the theoretical approach underpinning this assessment process include the involvement of the student in their own assessment, educational planning and review; the use of a key worker or mentoring system within the centre; and engagement in inter-agency work with other services to address any factors that may be acting as practical barriers to learning and progression.

The assessment is itself a type of guidance intervention, and takes the form of an interview between the key worker and the student, where the student is invited to reflect on themselves and to identify relevant information for use by the centre in working with them. They rate themselves in each of the factor areas and identify their own long-term and short-term goals. The individual educational plan that follows is based on the student's expressed personal, educational and vocational goals and identifies the interventions (subjects, activities, methods) that will take place to pursue their goals, the supports that will be provided to them in the centre and, if appropriate, the external services or agencies that will be contacted and worked with.

Staff in centres nationally are currently undergoing training in the Portfolio assessment and intervention approach (refer to *Youthreach*, page 27).

## Third Level

### Targeted Initiatives Programme

The Higher Education Authority introduced a Targeted Initiatives Programme in 1996 to provide dedicated funding to support new developments in areas of strategic importance in higher education including the provision of guidance to targeted groups such as mature and access students.

(a) Funding has been allocated to Access Offices in each university to fund programmes such as *Fun to Learn* in University of Limerick, which was piloted in 2000. The *Fun to Learn* programme targets students in the Limerick City area. Pupils attend an on-campus educational and sports programme, four days a week. The programme is designed to improve literacy, numeracy, sporting, social and teamwork skills. This is a long-term, development plan, designed to enable the University Access Office to complement efforts being made by other agencies to ensure those most at risk of dropping out of the education system are equipped to benefit from this educational experience.

(b) AHEAD, in partnership with Trinity College Dublin and the Institute of Technology Tallaght, launched a new web service, Able4College in December 2005. The website provides advice and support for second level guidance counsellors and students with disabilities. The web pages are the end result of a Trinity College Dublin and Institute of Technology Tallaght joint three-year research project, funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), on improving the retention rate of students in third level education and supporting students with disabilities in their career choices and employment options. The project was established to help identify issues that exist for students with disabilities in the third level sector.

A distinct feature of the project was the partnership established between TCD and IT Tallaght, which allowed access to a cross section of students, teachers and third level staff, with a range of different experiences. The website can be found at [www.ahead.ie/able4college](http://www.ahead.ie/able4college). The Inclusive Education Information Centre is an online repository of accessible education information for Ireland (refer to *AHEAD* Page 31.)

## Adult Educational Guidance

### Adult Guidance in Community Education

The Adult Educational Guidance Initiative provides guidance to community education centres around the country – as one of the four Target groups for the services. The AEGIs work closely with community education groups to identify the needs of the adult learners. Guidance is provided on an outreach basis, both in group settings and in one-to-one sessions with clients. Education information and exploration, vocational preparation, career path planning, study skills, assessment, and CAO applications are just some of the services offered.

By bringing this service to the adult learners in their own community centres/education groups, guidance is accessible to all those who wish to avail of a group or one-to-one guidance session with a qualified guidance counsellor. For many adult learners, guidance within the community involves an awareness of what exactly guidance is. This awareness helps the adult learner to then engage with the guidance process when it is appropriate for them - that is when they are ready to look at and consider future options.

Examples of community groups include those connected to AONTAS, those receiving funding from local VECs, NALA, Women's Network groups, local partnership and voluntary groups.

## Labour Market Sector

### National Employment Action Plan

The Irish National Employment Action Plan which was adopted by the Government as its response to European Employment Guidelines, included a commitment to a more systematic engagement of the Employment Services with the unemployed. Implementation of this commitment commenced in September 1998. From that date, all persons under 25 who had reached six months on the Live Register (LR) were referred by the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) to FÁS for interview.

As the National Employment Action Plan progressed, the program was extended to include other groups crossing nominated thresholds of unemployment. At present all individuals under 25 are being referred when they cross the 6 months unemployment threshold as before. The timing of referral (*previously 12 months and 9 months*) by DSFA to FÁS for all other age groups was reduced to 6 months in March 2003.

When a client is referred to FÁS under the National Employment Action Plan, s/he is offered a guidance service by FÁS Employment Services. This guidance service commences when the jobseeker first presents to FÁS. The first meeting aims to assist the jobseeker by offering practical advice, support and information to facilitate entry/re-entry into the active labour market.

## Community

### Konnecting U

There are a number of nationwide projects underway which focus on young disadvantaged youth in the community. One such project is 'konnecting.u' in Wexford. This project is part of the Wexford Area Partnership since March 2004 with a target group including, amongst others, young people (aged 12-25 years) affected by poverty, those who have been in contact with social services/probation officers or those with physical disabilities. The guidance element of the work involves, as a priority, assessing the needs of young people, whether they are health-related, social, economic or emotional; and directing these clients towards the relevant services which they require within the Wexford town district area. The project also aims to facilitate young people in developing positive strategies to meet the needs which they helped identify.

### PAUL Partnership

An example of an area-based partnership is the PAUL Partnership in Limerick. This is an organisation made up of communities, state agencies, social partners, voluntary groups and elected representatives. The Local Employment Service (LES) in Limerick provides a guidance service to the local community. There are two guidance counsellors working through this LES, one of which is funded fully by the PAUL Partnership, while the other is funded in part by the PAUL Partnership and partly by the City of Limerick Vocational Educational Committee (VEC) (refer to *Area-Based Partnerships*, page 37).



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