

**NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE  
IN EDUCATION**

**DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2000-2003**

**August 2000**

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## **FOREWORD**

This document commences with a summary of the priorities of NCGE's Development Plan 2000-2003. Section One provides background information on the National Centre for Guidance in Education. In Section Two evaluative comment on NCGE's work to date is given followed by current analysis of organisational, national and international context of the Development Plan. Section Three identifies the resources required by NCGE to deliver the Development Plan.

A set of Appendices provides details of the strategic and operational objectives of the plan, the number of person days required to deliver the plan, the annual budget for the core grant, and an external evaluation of NCGE's work arising from its first Development Plan.

The strategic and operational objectives and actions of the Development Plan 2000-2003 were compiled by the Management Committee of NCGE and approved at its meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2000.

John McCarthy,  
DIRECTOR.  
August 2000

## **SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES**

### **1. ORGANISATIONAL:**

- ❑ Establishment of NCGE as a legal entity.
- ❑ Safeguarding of NCGE's access to participation in EU Programmes and Initiatives.
- ❑ Setting-up in new premises.
- ❑ Obtaining levels of funding and staffing commensurate with its activities from the Department of Education and Science.
- ❑ Structuring of work roles at NCGE to support its activities.
- ❑ Staff development and training to deliver a quality service to customers.
- ❑ Development of its Website as both an information and learning instrument to meet its customers needs.
- ❑ Formative and summative evaluation of its Development Plan.

### **2. NATIONAL:**

With the Department of Education and Science and in collaboration with relevant agencies and organisations.

#### **Primary Schools:**

- ❑ Explore career-related learning.

#### **Postprimary Schools:**

- ❑ Mainstreaming of School Guidance Review and Development Plan.
- ❑ Revise Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools.
- ❑ Develop support materials for guidance counsellors.
- ❑ Organise relevant in-service training.
- ❑ Inform school management and principals on guidance issues.
- ❑ Enhance school-industry links.

**Further Education (Youthreach):**

- Assist in the development of guidance modules for initial and continuing staff training.
- Adaptation and development of relevant support materials.
- Support initiatives of the National Educational Psychological Service and of Youthreach National Co-ordinators.

**Adult Education:**

- Lead the development of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) in its pilot project phases.
- Organise the Educational Management of Adult Guidance course in collaboration with the Education Department of NUI Maynooth.
- Promote and pilot quality standards in the adult educational guidance pilot projects.

**Higher Education:**

- Publicise the proceedings and recommendations of the Department of Education and Science Colloquium on 'Staying Power' – retention in higher education.
- Explore the development of guidance services in higher education.

**Infrastructural:**

- Progress the review of the initial training of guidance counsellors.
- Explore the development of a national qualifications framework for guidance workers in a range of roles.
- Explore the use of a Virtual Learning Environment for the continuous training of guidance practitioners.
- Develop stronger links with FAS, the national employment and training authority.

**3. EXTERNAL:**

- Development of North-South links in the field of guidance.
- Support East-West guidance initiatives e.g. Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland.
- Actively participate in the European network of National Resource Centres for Guidance under LEONARDO 2.
- Contribute to EU policy input seminar on guidance and lifelong learning.
- Support international initiatives on policy development in the field of guidance.
- Participate in training events organised by IAEVG, AGCAS and NICEC.
- Participate in international pilot projects relevant to NCGE's national priorities.

## **SECTION ONE:**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION (NCGE)**

NCGE was established by the Department of Education in 1995. It was physically located in LEARGAS, a company owned by the Department whose function is to administer EU programmes on behalf of the Department. Employees of NCGE are currently employees of LEARGAS.

NCGE receives core funding from the Postprimary Administration Section of the Department of Education and Science. It solicits matching funding and additional funding for activities undertaken for other sections of the Department, notably Further, Adult and Higher Education to date. Guidance as a learner support activity is an integral part of education at every level from primary through to adult. NCGE acts as a focal point for the development of a uniform approach to guidance practice across these levels and advises Department policy accordingly.

The National Centre has a Management Committee and Chairperson appointed by the Minister for Education and Science. These are currently:

- Margaret Daly.
- Torlach O'Connor.
- Jim Mullin.
- Elizabeth Watters.
- Roisin Kelleher.
- Eamon Mulvihill.
- Rose Tully.
- Bernie McDonnell.
- Ed Riordan (Chair).

Part of the remit of the Centre is to interface with the guidance systems of the EU Member States. This it achieves through a network of centres established under the LEONARDO programme and through collaboration in pilot projects and exchanges/placements of guidance practitioners. EU Programmes and Initiatives are an important source of funding to progress national priorities in the field of guidance with the benefit of the expertise and experience of transnational partners.

The core staff of NCGE are a Director, two Project Officers, and one Secretary/PA. Additional full-time and part-time staff are recruited on fixed term contracts through national and EU pilot project funding.

The Mission Statement of NCGE is encompassed in the following strategic objectives:

- (a) To act as a dynamic resource/learning centre for guidance practitioners in education settings.
- (b) To contribute to the continuous raising of guidance service standards in education settings in Ireland.
- (c) To support exchange and innovation in guidance through national and transnational collaboration.

## SECTION TWO:

### CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

This section is divided into two parts: evaluation of NCGE's work 1995-98 and current analysis.

#### 1. EVALUATION OF NCGE'S WORK 1995-98

Evaluative comment on the work of the National Centre for Guidance in Education to date is provided in Appendix Four. This historical analysis summarises much of the content of the review undertaken in 1998 by international guidance expert, Prof. A.G. Watts of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling, UK.

- 1.1 The achievements of the Centre have been extremely impressive by any standards. It has produced a wide range of high-quality publications and services, has established credibility with the Department of Education and Science, with guidance professionals and with other stake holders, and has built strong networking links both within Ireland and across Europe. References were made by stakeholders during the course of the review to the high levels of competence and commitment of the staff and to the impressive quality and quantity of the Centre's products.
- 1.2 One of the main strengths of the Centre has been to provide a focus for strategic development within the field of guidance in Ireland. It has provided new forms of support to guidance counsellors in second-level schools, and has facilitated the development of new guidance models in other sectors and with other client groups. The Centre has injected a sense of vision, and yet works in a strongly collaborative mode with a wide range of individuals and organisations, and has acted as a significant catalyst to change and growth. This has significantly re-energised the guidance field in Ireland, with creative ripples extending across Europe.
- 1.3 Its *service* role has been primarily focused on second-level schools, the area of education where guidance is most strongly developed. Its *systems development* role is also in evidence in this sector and is more prominent in other areas of education e.g. further and adult where guidance provision is less well developed.
- 1.4 The Review of NCGE 1995-98 highlighted five strategic issues for the future work of the Centre:
  - (i) The need to sustain and embed nationally developmental guidance work that the Centre has produced mainly through EU funding.
  - (ii) The need to balance systems development and support work across the five areas of education and the funding and staffing required to deliver this. Working across the five areas does not fit easily into a strongly compartmentalised Department of Education and Science structure.

- (iii) The need for a balance between the Centre's system development and service roles. The systems development role includes not only its developmental work in sectors where guidance is less developed, but also its more general objectives of raising guidance service standards and supporting innovation. The experience of the Guidance Council in the UK and of the NCDA in the USA would be helpful to the National Centre in its systems development role.
- (iv) The need for the Centre to support the career development dimension of guidance provision in the context of the holistic model of guidance embedded in the Irish education system.
- (v) The need to safeguard the sensitive path that the Centre treads in complementary roles with (a) the Inspectorate and other sections and agencies of the Department of Education and Science, (b) the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, (c) FAS, and to develop links with these.

**1.5** The Review also highlighted a number of important operational issues that the Centre needs to address:

- (i) The Centre's relationship with LEARGAS.
- (ii) Opportunities for professional development of Centre's staff and the composition of the staff to address the systems development and service roles.
- (iii) The composition of the Management Committee.
- (iv) Procedures for prioritising and for quality assurance.
- (v) The usage of a short form for the name of the Centre.

**1.6** The Management Committee of NCGE in response to Prof. Watts' review described his Report as an excellent summary of the achievements of the Centre, worthwhile and well balanced. The specifics of the response are given also in Appendix Four.

**1.7** The issues identified by Prof. Watts have been taken into consideration by the present Management Committee in drawing up the Development Plan 2000-2003.

## **2. CURRENT ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 ORGANISATIONAL**

**2.1.1** The Centre is locating in No.42 Prussia Street, Dublin 7 from August 2000. This relocation from the premises of LEARGAS is designed to reinforce the perception that NCGE is a separate, dedicated agency of the Department of Education and Science and to reduce misperceptions that its core work is part of LEARGAS's work i.e. administration of EU Programmes and initiatives.

**2.1.2** It is also an important step towards establishment of NCGE as a legal entity. Because of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Education and Science and LEARGAS, the legal representative of NCGE is the Executive Director of LEARGAS. Access to EU Programme and Initiative funding for pilot projects and placements/exchanges is now threatened by the existing Memorandum. LEARGAS is the national contractor between the Commission and project promoters for the LEONARDO and SOCRATES programmes. The Commission will only permit subcontracts with legal entities. As NCGE is a part of LEARGAS and not a separate legal entity, LEARGAS will end up subcontracting to itself. This is obviously untenable from both a Commission and legal perspective. The correction of this is a priority for the Management Committee and needs urgent addressing by the Department of Education and Science.

**2.1.3** The financial base for NCGE's Development Plan and activities is core funding obtained from Post-primary Administration. This covers the salaries of the Director, Administrative Assistant and Development Officer; the operational costs of running the Centre; and publications and materials developed for the post-primary sector of education. The amount of money allocated to the latter is increasingly reducing as the overall grant is not adequate. Salaries of staff on secondment are repaid to the Department on a full recoupment basis rather than paid substitution. This hikes up the personnel costs. There is no money left from the core grant for development work. Additional tasks given by the Department to NCGE must now be paid for by the Department on a full cost recoupment basis.

An unnecessary hindrance to the progression of NCGE's activities has been the practice of the Post-primary Administration Section to pay each quarterly instalment of the grant in arrears and not in advance. This has caused regular cashflow problems for NCGE's suppliers and for NCGE's reputation with suppliers. Payment of the instalments in advance will greatly facilitate the work of NCGE in terms of meeting deadlines for its annual programme of activities based on its Development Plan.

**2.1.4** For development activities in the field of guidance in other areas of education, notably, further, adult and higher, funding for these is sought from relevant sections of the Department and from EU Programmes and Initiatives. Where NCGE undertakes international collaborative action e.g. LEONARDO pilot projects relevant to its Development Plan, NCGE requests matching funding from the relevant section of the Department. To date there has been a great level of co-operation from the Further/Adult Education Section. NCGE itself has been successful both as project promoter and project partner in applications for funding in a competitive environment for EU Programmes and Initiatives.

For EU pilot projects relevant to post-primary education, NCGE has to date not requested matching funding from Post-primary Administration but used its core grant as matching. This has put huge pressure on existing staff in terms of overtime, time in lieu, and general workload. This method of working is no longer tenable.

**2.1.5** From a personnel perspective, the hard work and commitment of NCGE staff has been regularly noted by the Management Committee and was referred to in the Review of NCGE 1995-98 by Prof. T. Watts. The practice of seeking to recruit staff from post-primary school for the post of Development Officer has been both expensive (full recoupment costs) and limiting. For the competition to replace the first Development Officer in 1999, only eight candidates applied, of which three met the criteria for interview, of which only one was able to accept the post. There is a huge gap between the responsibility, salary and conditions of a guidance counsellor in a post-primary school and those pertaining to Development Officer. The existing additional allowance of £3,500 p.a. does not compensate for longer weekly hours and greatly reduced holidays. The cost of housing in Dublin confines the recruitment pool to the greater Dublin area. It takes between 6 and 12 months for a new Development Officer from a post-primary school background to learn how to work in a different role in NCGE.

The Centre has been engaged in a internal review of roles, tasks, competencies, customer base and recruitment realities. Arising from this it is proposed to terminate the role of Development Officer, to develop Senior Project Officer roles focused on tasks and competencies, and to engage persons with guidance qualifications and experience for part-time focused roles and tasks only. This represents a more economic use of human resources and will present challenges in the management of these resources.

## **2.2 NATIONAL**

**2.2.1** Apart from the appointment of support teachers/teacher counsellors in primary schools, there has been little in the way of focused guidance activities. There is a need to establish links between primary and post-primary guidance roles. There is also a need to explore career-related learning in primary schools particularly in school retention and social inclusion initiatives. The vision and support of the primary Inspectorate will be a key factor in this development.

**2.2.2** Guidance has a very strong base in post-primary schools which needs nurturing and support particularly in Whole School Planning and School Guidance Review and Development Planning. The Department proposes to allocate additional guidance resources to schools based on sound plans for improvement. A new Department circular on guidance provision is about to be introduced. A revision of the 1996 Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools will also be undertaken to complement the other initiatives. (Much remains to be done to assist school principals to manage the guidance services in schools. Another area for review and development is School – Industry links.) The review of guidance counsellor training in the 6 universities and institutes will continue. This is a key part of a quality system.

The strengthening of the guidance Inspectorate should enhance developments in the post-primary sector, particularly in the policy area.

**2.2.3** Increasing attention is being paid to the need for guidance provision in further education, particularly YOUTHREACH. The YOUTHSTART pilot project undertaken by NCGE(1997-2000) highlighted the need for guidance training as part of induction and continuous training for all YOUTHREACH staff in addition to the provision of specialist services and referral pathways. The new National Educational Psychological Service should greatly benefit the Centres of 'second chance' education.

**2.2.4** The concept of adult educational guidance to support lifelong learning is firmly embedded in the White Paper (Learning for Life) just published. The Educational Management of Adult Guidance course run by NUI Maynooth for the Department has and continues to provide a standard framework for the development for adult educational guidance services nationally. Phase One of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative has commenced with 11 pilot projects. Phase Two is to start in January 2001. The development of (i) quality standards for adult educational guidance, (ii) a framework for ICT support, and (iii) evaluation of the pilot services will be key building blocks of lifelong guidance for lifelong learning.

**2.2.5** Guidance services in higher education are contingent on the vision of individual universities and colleges. The presenting picture is of a quite uneven/non-standardised provision across the higher education sector. The current concern at non-completion rates in higher education has highlighted some of the student needs and how they could be addressed. An exploration of the development of the guidance services is timely.

**2.2.6** The Department has provided hardware, software, training and support as part of infra-structural improvements to guidance in post-primary schools. The time is now opportune to further explore the use of these for the continuous training of guidance counsellors through a Virtual Learning Environment.

A further infra-structural issue is the development of a national framework of qualifications and training for guidance workers acting in different roles particularly in further/non-formal and adult education.

**2.2.7** The development of strong links and networks, both at central and local level, between education, FAS and LES will greatly assist users of guidance services in meeting their needs.

## **2.3 INTERNATIONAL**

**2.3.1** Work commenced in 1999 to engage the five 'home' countries – Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England – in mutual exchange of information and ideas in the guidance field. The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (UK) played a lead role in this activity. The development of strong North-South links in guidance is logical. There are existing links in the higher education sector through AGCSI (Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland) and AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services). There is much room for development in other areas of education.

**2.3.2** The European Network of National Resource Centres for Guidance under the LEONARDO Programme has acted as a very good source for identifying appropriate partners for EU collaborative action/pilot projects in the field of guidance. The rationale of the network is to support spontaneous mobility in education and training within the EU and to create a European guidance space. (An ICT platform has been developed to support these aims.) Currently the provision of guidance to support lifelong learning is seen as a key policy area by the Directorate for Education and Culture.

**2.3.3** International guidance networks have proved a rich source of ideas for national developments in guidance policy and practice. The first international conference in Public Policy and Career Development took place in 1999. The International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance continues to provide annual overviews of developments in the field.

In the context of the situation analysis presented above, the Management Committee of NCGE defined the Strategic and Operational Objectives of NCGE's Development Plan 2000-2003. These are presented in detail in Appendix One and form the basis of the Summary found at the beginning of this Plan.

## **SECTION THREE:**

### **RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.1 Staff**

Appendix Two provides a summary of the number of person days required annually to meet the strategic and operational objectives of this Development Plan. The number of person required is 8.4. These can be broken down as follows:

- Director
- Senior Project Officers (2)
- Project Officers (4.4)
- Secretary/PA (1)

The Project Officer posts can be full-time or part-time. It is envisaged that 3.4 will be part-time. A recruitment campaign is currently underway. For existing staff continuous training is required to develop their skills in writing, editing, negotiating, networking, managing groups, and ICT. This will also apply to new staff being recruited. A significant time investment in in-house training for new staff will be required.

#### **3.2 Fixed Assets**

NCGE has a very limited range of fixed assets, mainly office equipment and furniture. Every effort is being made to ensure that the telecommunications and other relevant equipment e.g. server, currently being purchased or leased for the new premises will have the potential to be useful beyond the time frame of this Development Plan. NCGE will relocate its existing furniture in LEARGAS to the new premises.

#### **3.3 Information Technology**

The hardware purchases in the past two years currently supports the activities of the Centre. In order to print and publish its publications more efficiently, the Centre needs to acquire Quark Express software and update its AppleMac equipment for using Quark. Depending on decisions by its project partners, NCGE may also require other software to support Virtual Learning Environment training activities.

#### **3.4 Distribution**

NCGE will continue to distribute its publications by hardcopy. However, it has commenced and will place increasing emphasis on the development of its Website as a major channel of distribution of its publications. E-mail and telephone will continue to be key distribution/communication channels.

### **3.5 Finance**

The current financial concerns of NCGE have been highlighted in 2.1.3 to 2.1.5 above and include: under-resourcing by Postprimary Administration, cash flow problems of grant payment in arrears instead of in advance, and absorbing the set up costs of £22,000 out of existing budgets for the move to 42 Prussia Street. In order to support the section of the Development Plan for the postprimary area, funding of £33,000 annually for an additional Project Officer post and materials development is required. The Further and Higher Education sections of the Department are and will be paying their way for the services requested of and or provided by NCGE. The Centre will request appropriate funding from the Primary Section for developmental work in its area.

The Centre will continue to compete for funding from EU Programmes and Initiatives but will only be able to access these provided the Department corrects the irregularity from a Commission perspective of NCGE's relationship with LEARGAS.

Budget forecasts for core funding from the Department's Postprimary Administration Section are provided in Appendix Three. In Appendix One certain operational objectives are referenced subject to the availability of funding from other Sections of the Department and from EU Programmes and Initiatives.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### ***NCGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2000-2003***

#### ***STRATEGY AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS***

- NOTE:**
- 1.** Numbers give in round brackets, for example, (323) denote the total number of person days required to address a Strategic Objective.
  - 2.** Numbers given in square brackets, for example [89] denote the number of person days required to address an Operational Objective.
  - 3.** Numbers given for Actions, for example, 31...3P denote that this Action requires 31 person days involving 3 people.



## **APPENDIX TWO**

### ***SUMMARY OF PERSON DAYS REQUIRED ANNUALLY TO MEET STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN***

**APPENDIX THREE**

***BUDGET FORECASTS FOR CORE FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FROM THE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE POST-PRIMARY  
ADMINISTRATION SECTION.***

**NCGE BUDGET FORECASTS FOR CORE GRANT FOR 2001-2003**

**EXPENDITURE**

	2001	2002	2003
1. SALARIES			
Director	54,000	55,000	56,000
Senior Project Officer 1	30,000	31,000	32,000
Senior Project Officer 2	27,000	28,500	30,000
Project Officer	24,000	25,500	27,000
Secretary/PA	20,000	21,500	22,000
2. OPERATIONS			
Training and Support	15,000	16,000	17,000
PR/Publications	37,000	38,000	39,000
Direct Admin.	15,000	16,000	17,000
Stationery	3,000	3,000	3,000
Training/Recruitment	7,000	8,000	9,000
Equipment	6,000	6,500	7,500
Consultancy	3,000	4,000	6,000
Rent and Rates	30,600	31,600	33,000
General Reports	2,000	2,000	2,000
Service Charges	2,500	3,000	3,500
Insurance	2,000	2,300	2,500
Light and Heating	3,000	3,300	3,600
Phone Leasing/IT	5,000	5,500	6,000
LEARGAS Account and Audit	11,500	12,500	13,500
Contingency	2,000	2,100	2,200
Sundry Supplies	1,800	2,000	2,100

TOTAL OPS

Summary: Salaries Total  
Operational Total  
Total

## **APPENDIX FOUR**

### ***NCGE REVIEW 1995-98 BY PROFESSOR. T. WATTS AND THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE***