

NCGE ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2014



National Centre *for* Guidance in Education
Lárionad Náisiúnta *um* Threoir san Oideachas

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Foreword from Chair

As the Chairman of the Management of Guidance Committee of NCGE, I welcome the Annual Output Statement Report 2014 of the National Centre for Guidance in Education. This report will also be presented on the Centre's website and will be available as published.



At a national level the NCGE, as an agency of the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operating under the aegis of Léargas, is committed to a vision of “Leading and shaping guidance practice to enable the learner to make informed and appropriate life choices.” In providing a record of activities and programme events this Output Statement Report 2014 represents how that vision is enshrined in practice. The breadth and scope of this Report, across various sectors at a national and international level, indicates the centrality of guidance in facilitating people to “reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society” (National Guidance Forum, 2007).

Although our country appears to be emerging from an unprecedented economic crisis we still face many challenges as a nation. NCGE remains, as evident in this Report, committed to providing a range of activities and programmes consistent with a coherent and holistic policy of lifelong guidance provision. While our economy is beginning to grow, as a national agency we continue to operate with diminished resources. Despite this, the commitment and hard work of NCGE staff has allowed us to deliver on and progress our goals. I would like to thank all staff for their commitment, collaboration and flexibility in meeting targets and embracing change. On behalf of the committee I also wish to acknowledge the role of Ms Jennifer McKenzie, Director of NCGE, in supporting the work of the committee and for her energy and resourcefulness in bringing the various aspects of this Report to completion.

For any organisation successfully enacting a vision is contingent on the collaboration of all stakeholders. I wish to acknowledge the contribution of my colleagues representing a wide range of organisations with an interest in guidance on the Management of Guidance Committee. Their level of professional expertise from their respective organisations greatly enriches the role of the committee in supporting the work of NCGE. The assistance and leadership provided throughout the year by Mr Jim Mullin, CEO, Léargas, and the Board of Léargas, is deeply appreciated as is that extended by the various officials of the Department of Education and Skills in advancing the work undertaken by NCGE throughout 2014.

From the number of activities outlined in this statement I wish to highlight the immeasurable value of NCGE in continuing to co-ordinate and host meetings of National Forum on Guidance (NFG), two of

which were held in in 2014 on 30th April and 13th November. At the heart of any authentic guidance process is the facilitation of meaningful dialogue leading to possibilities for exploration and change. In this regard the NFG continues to provide a forum for dialogue, exchanging information and exploring possibilities for co-operation and co-ordination. The Forum and the other activities from this Report offer evidence for how the integration of lifelong guidance strategies can be implemented in practice.

As a government agency with responsibility for guidance, NCGE looks forward to playing an active role in the future in working with other governmental departments to advise, support and assist in the implementation of a national guidance strategy for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul King". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Paul King

Chairperson

NCGE Management of Guidance Committee

Director's Note



This Annual Output Statement Report outlines the work and activities of the NCGE for the period January 2014 - December 2014. During this time, NCGE welcomed the publication of the DES FET Strategy 2014-2019 which provided, for the first time since the White Paper on Adult Education, in 2000, a focused approach to the development of guidance service for the FET sector as a whole. Funding from the EU Commission made available to Euroguidance centres across EU provided NCGE with the opportunity to further develop the ICT based system for the provision of education opportunities information to the EU website PLOTEUS.

NCGE began the process in 2014 to look further forward at our own strategic planning for 2015-2017. With ever increasing demands on the need for policy on and provision of lifelong guidance within the education and FET sector, the staff of NCGE, whether core staff or contracted external services staff, have continued to deliver a professional service to stakeholders and clients of the Centre. As Director, it is my pleasure to work with such dedicated and committed professionals.

Sharing office premises with Léargas has continued to provide an opportunity for better communication and collaboration between NCGE and Léargas programmes and for the establishment of appropriate financial, ICT, HR and other shared services and systems. The support of Board of Léargas has been essential to the recognition of the autonomous nature and operation of the NCGE as a Centre in its own right. I wish to acknowledge specifically the support of the Executive Director in this regard.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the solid commitment of the Chair, Paul King and the support of the Management of Guidance Committee for the work of the NCGE and its staff. As an agency of the Department of Education and Skills, we welcome the continued co-operation and endorsement of our DES colleagues for the work of the Centre

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Jennifer McKenzie'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a faint, light blue rectangular stamp or watermark.

Jennifer McKenzie

Director

National Centre for Guidance in Education

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills, operating under the aegis of Léargas, with responsibility to support and develop guidance practice in all areas of education and to inform the policy of the Department in the field of guidance.

The Management of Guidance Committee 2010-2013 agreed that the Mission and Vision of NCGE are:

Mission: *Develop and support quality guidance provision in the education sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice*

Vision: *Leading and shaping guidance practice to enable the learner to make informed and appropriate life choices*

In defining guidance in the education sector NCGE is informed by both the National Guidance Forum Report 2007 and DES Guidelines 2005 which state that:

'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 2007

'Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance'

Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students' access to appropriate guidance.

The strategic aims informing the work of the Centre (2012-2014) are detailed below.

The aims of NCGE are to:

- promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools, centres for education, and adult education settings in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998
- promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in both formal and informal settings in accordance with national priorities
- advise on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning
- provide advice, support, materials and resources for guidance counselling in education
- advise on high quality and relevant initial guidance counselling education and training and to provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for guidance practitioners

- organise the provision of guidance to Irish nationals in the European Schools
- contribute to the exchange of information on guidance counselling provision and practice with other guidance and employment services, through the National Resource Centre, (EUROGUIDANCE Centre) both in Ireland and in other Member States of the EU.

In fulfilling its aims, NCGE, as a constituent part of Léargas, is committed to working in collaboration and partnership with relevant stakeholders including the Department of Education and Skills, Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (DSGC), the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI), Higher Education Authority (HEA), SOLAS, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), Department of Social Protection and other Government Departments and National and Employer agencies where appropriate.

NCGE provides support and development for guidance practitioners in the education sector and promotes European mobility and the European dimension of guidance in education and training. NCGE is the DES designated representative at the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).

As a member of the EUROGUIDANCE network, funded by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, the Centre also assists people seeking information on education and training opportunities in Europe. NCGE provides advice and assistance to a wide range of organisations and individuals involved in education, training and employment in guidance matters.

1. Management of Guidance Committee

The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee (2013-2016)

The Minister for Education and Skills nominated the Chair and membership of the Management of Guidance Committee 2013-2016. These nominations were ratified and appointed to the Committee by the Board of Léargas.

Terms of reference for and Role of Management of Guidance Committee is available to download at:

http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/ToR_MGC_Final_Oct2013.pdf

Finance Sub Committee

The Management of Guidance Finance Sub-Committee meets quarterly. Management accounts are prepared by Léargas for the subcommittee, and a report is presented to the Management of Guidance Committee. The Finance subcommittee comprises the Director of NCGE, the Chair of the Management of Guidance Committee, the Executive Director and representative of the Léargas Finance and Audit Committee and representative of the Department of Education and Skills.

Management and Organisational Activities

The Management of Guidance Committee (2013-2016) met four times in 2014.

The NCGE shared office accommodation with Léargas in Fitzwilliam Court, Leeson Close, Dublin 2, has allowed for continued collaboration and co-operation with Léargas in the development and sharing of appropriate business administration, HR and ICT systems.

The Staff Performance Management Review system was continued in to 2014, with further HR support provided by the contracted external HR Company Peninsula.

In 2014, NCGE had 6 full time staff which includes Director, Guidance Programme Co-ordinator (Post Primary), Guidance Officer/Euroguidance Co-ordinator, Guidance Officer (AEGI), Information Officer and Office Administrator.

One staff member (Information Officer) was on Career Break for 2014, and hence NCGE was obliged to contract the services of an appropriate Information Services provider to edit and produce the NCGE News and to maintain, edit and support the NCGE and Euroguidance websites. NCGE contracted external staff and agencies to provide specific services in areas such as online CPD module development and administration

From 1st January 2014, following a change to funding provision from DES for NCGE in 2013, NCGE received funding for the AEGI programme from An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna, i.e. SOLAS.

NCGE Annual Output Statement 2014

During 2014 the MGC began the process to develop the NCGE Strategic Plan 2015-2017. External consultancy Prospectus was engaged to inform and support the Committee in this work. To inform the planning process, consultation was carried out by Prospectus with the Management of Guidance Committee, via online survey with stakeholders and focus group with staff and the participants at the National Forum on Guidance. Prospectus provided a report in November 2014 to MGC to inform the Strategic Plan for 2015-2017.

This planning process is also informed by the completion of the Internal Audit Risk Register report. The audit was carried out at the end of 2014 by Crowleys DFK with report due to NCGE and Léargas Board in 2015.

2. Post Primary Activities

Provision of resources and materials for Post Primary

The School Guidance Handbook (ISSN 2009-6801) an online handbook for guidance counsellors, launched by NCGE in September, 2013 is available to all guidance counsellors and schools at www.schoolguidancehandbook.ncge.ie.

The School Guidance Handbook provides online resources to inform and support the development and delivery of the school guidance programme. Schools can sign up to the handbook to receive content alerts. NCGE Editorial Panel, established in 2013, with representatives of the DES Inspectorate and Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling met 5 times in 2014, once via NCGE's online video conferencing facility, to review content submitted, make recommendations concerning the suitability of content, and suggest editorial changes as appropriate prior to publishing.

NCGE has continued to contract the services of the Co-ordinator, a retired Post Primary Guidance Counsellor and former tutor on the WSGP programme. In 2014, NCGE contacted all post primary schools to ensure up-to-date school and guidance counsellor correspondence email addresses for registration on the Handbook. This would ensure that all schools received the update notifications for the Handbook.

NCGE provides the articles within the Policy and Practice Guidelines section *as Gaeilge* as this section includes information, guidelines and templates to inform school guidance policy.

Statistics on usage

There were a total of over 3,000 visits to the School Guidance Handbook in the year 2014. Approximately two thirds of these were new visitors, and one third was return visitors. In total, the visitors viewed nearly 20,000 articles on the School Guidance Handbook, an average of 6-7 articles per visit.

Downloads

Visitors to the SGH site can download the various articles for future reference and use in school. The facility to analyse the number of downloads was not in place until August 2014, so this total number for the whole year would have been higher. From August – December 2014, however, 823 articles were downloaded. Of these, 2 were in the Irish language.

Committees and Working Groups

NCGE convenes and participates in committees and working groups for and on behalf of the DES. The following outlines the NCGE committee and working group activities for 2014.

FET Strategy Implementation Advisory Committee

NCGE was invited to participate in the FET Strategic Implementation Advisory Committee (SIAC) as an implementing partner of the FET strategy 2014-2019. The first of these meetings was held in

October 2014 and confirmed NCGE's position in the implementation of the FET strategy as relates to guidance in FET.

Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing

NCGE convenes the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing annually on behalf of the DES. The NCGE Director chairs this committee, hosted in NCGE in May each year. This meeting was held 26th May 2014. The Committee comprises representatives from DES, NCGE, NEPS, IGC, Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA), Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) and Church of Ireland College of Education (CIC).

The remit of the Committee is to review annually the Department of Education and Skills' list of formal assessment instruments (including tests) approved for use in guidance and/or learning support in Post Primary schools for the forthcoming academic year.

The DES approved list of tests for 2014/15 was approved by the Committee. While this was not made available on the DES website in 2014, the 2013-2014 list remained available on the DES website with a direct link also from the NCGE website:

http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Resources-Guidance/list_approved_tests.pdf

Following the May 2014 meeting of the Advisory Committee NCGE continued to inform and support the Department developments in relation to content and issues relating to use of Psychometric testing in schools for inclusion in a circular on testing.

DES Working Group on the recognition of guidance counsellors in post primary schools and other centres within the remit of the DES

This working group, established by DES in 2012, met on three occasions in 2014. Membership includes representatives of DES Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (CAP), Further Education and Skills Section, DES Inspectorate, NEPS and NCGE. The remit of the working group as agreed is to: address issues such as the criteria for recognition of guidance counsellors to work in an institution under the remit of the DES; establish protocols by which courses leading to recognition as a guidance counsellor may be approved by the Department; establish protocols by which changes to courses leading to recognition as a guidance counsellor may be approved by the DES.

On behalf of the Working Group NCGE requested a submission from the Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (DSGC) to inform the review and development of the 2006 Course Recognition Framework (CRF). The Directors made this submission to the DES in July, 2014.

With the aim to provide the revised CRF for public consultation in 2015, NCGE liaised with the members of the working group and QQI to provide a draft of the revised CRF to include criteria and guidelines for Providers of initial education programmes in guidance counselling.

Post-Primary Guidance Working Group

Following the publication of the NCGE '*Review of Guidance Counselling provision in second level schools, 2012-2013: Report of the findings*', the Management of Guidance Committee requested that

NCGE convene the Post Primary Guidance Working Group and agreed the Terms of Reference for the group .

Membership of the Working Group, chaired by the NCGE Director, includes representatives from DES Inspectorate, DSGC, IGC, NCCA, NCGE and NEPS. This group met four times in 2014, and agreed to prioritise:

- drafting guidance learning outcomes for years 1-6 in post-primary schools
- identification of key qualitative and quantitative data, plus evidence and guidance data collection in schools

Collaboration with JCT and the IGC in relation to guidance in the JC Framework

Following proposal from NCGE, in March, 2014 DES (CAP section) invited NCGE, IGC and Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) to discuss guidance within the new Junior Cycle Framework and the provision of appropriate CPD for guidance counsellors in schools in relation to the Framework.

NCGE hosted several meetings with the IGC and JCT in 2014 regarding the design and development of a CPD programme for guidance counsellors. Working in collaboration, the NCGE/JCT/IGC team agreed:

- to explore opportunities such as Short Courses and Other Learning Experiences for guidance provision in the Junior Cycle Framework.
- that a CPD programme for guidance counsellors would be provided in conjunction with JCT, the content of which would be agreed by NCGE/IGC and JCT.
- that reference would be made to Junior Cycle guidance provision in schools within the Principals Junior Cycle workshops.

The roll out of the CPD for guidance counsellors, originally planned for October 2014 was delayed due to national DES and union discussions, however the team continued to meet to collaborate on the development of draft programme and content etc.

Provision of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Post primary

Survey on the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs of guidance counsellors in schools
NCGE developed and undertook a survey of the CPD needs of guidance counsellors working in schools, through Survey Monkey in February, 2014. This survey also included reference to CPD

requirements regarding European and mobility guidance. A report highlighting the findings of the survey was published by NCGE in April, 2014 [NCGE_Report_of_the_Findings_of_CPD_Survey.pdf](#)

CPD workshops for guidance counsellors in schools: psychometric testing

In response to the findings of the CPD survey NCGE designed a CPD programme consisting of online preparatory work and three face-to-face workshops to guidance counsellors. This was co-ordinated and delivered in collaboration with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) in three centres nationally - Fermoy Education Centre, Sligo Education Centre and in Dublin (held at PSI offices).

Numbers attending: 48 guidance counsellors attended the 4 workshops in total, i.e. 35 in 2014 and 13 attended one workshop held in January 2015 as it was postponed from 2014.

Feedback from guidance counsellors who participated in the workshops was very positive and as a result NCGE will consider the continued provision of CPD in Psychometric testing in 2015.

In response to the finding of the CPD survey section on Guidance in the EU, the Euroguidance Co-ordinator liaised with Euroguidance colleagues in Sweden to begin the process to translate and adapt mobility guidance counselling modules for the Irish context. This process began in 2014 to develop this as an online CPD module for delivery in 2015.

3. Adult Education / Further Education and Training Sector Activities

AEGI Co-ordination

NCGE co-ordinates the development of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) on behalf of the DES. On 1st July 2013, the VECs were replaced by the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs). There are 39 AEGI Services nationally which were managed by 32 Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT). As a result of this change, the AEGI services are now managed in 2014 by the 16 ETBs and WIT.

NCGE met several times with the DES Further Education and Skills section to inform and advise on the issues of concern for the continued provision of the AEGI services following the VECs merge to 16 ETBs.

NCGE Director met with and provided information to SOLAS, to clarify the role of guidance in and the developments required for guidance in the FET sector, in advance of the publication of the DES FET Strategy 2014-2019.

The DES Further Education Section hosted two meetings of the AEGI National Advisory Group in June, October and December. Membership of this Advisory group includes: DES, NCGE, ETBI, AEGAI and AEOA. Following the establishment of SOLAS, a representative of SOLAS was invited to attend the Advisory group meeting in December.

NCGE continued to monitor the provision of AEGI services via the Qualitative and Quantitative reports. NCGE completed the Executive Reports, which were presented to the Advisory group and made available to all AEGI services and management for download via the AEGI Web-based Handbook.

The Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS), the client information and management database of the AEGIs, is monitored and supported by NCGE. Based on information from AEGI Services and reporting requirements of the DES, NCGE identifies changes and developments needed in the AGMS with the IT provider. In 2014 changes were made to include Statistical reports on education programmes within the various Industrial Sectors and a facility for ongoing update of the ETB AEGI publicity information.

NCGE provided technical support to the AEGI services and staff and liaised with ETB/ WIT management in relation to the AEGI services on a regular basis.

NCGE has one staff member, in the role of Guidance Officer, working specifically on the AEGI programme, reporting to the Director. In 2014, following the previous 2013 submission, NCGE was requested by the DES to resubmit a proposal for the allocation of a position of Guidance Programme Co-ordinator (Further Education and training), a role at Assistant Principal Officer level, to co-ordinate the NCGE programme for the FET sector, including AEGI services.

Further AEGI Activities

Guidelines for provision of AEGI services to 16 to 18 Year Olds – April 2014

As a result of DES AEGI Operational Guidelines issued in 2012, AEGI services were required to provide services to young people aged between 16 – 18 years who have left school early with low or no formal qualifications. DES Further Education and Skills Section requested NCGE to develop further guidelines on policies for the provision of guidance to this age group. As part of this work, the Psychological Society of Ireland, DES guidance Inspectorate, IGC and AEGAI provided feedback on key areas to be addressed in the draft Guidelines.

In March 2014, NCGE published the final AEGI ‘*Guidelines on the Provision of Adult Educational Guidance Services to clients aged 16 and 17 years old*’

[NCGE Guidelines Provision of AEGS to 16 and 17 Year Olds.pdf](#)

DES guidelines on integrating contracted guidance staff within the AEGI

The AEGI services are directly affected by the government moratorium on recruitment. In 2013 NCGE raised concerns to DES Further Education Section about the lack of quality assurance and documented evidence of guidance staff contracted by then VECs to provide guidance within the adult education and AEGI sector. DES subsequently requested that NCGE would review the situation. NCGE invited the AEOA and the AEGAI to a working group to begin to address this issue and to make recommendations to the DES Further Education Section on how to address this. NCGE supported DES Further Education Section in drafting relevant guidelines for VEC/ETBs in this regard. These ‘*Guidelines for the Integration of Contracted Guidance Staff Within the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI)*’ were issued by DES to all ETBs and WIT, and published on the NCGE website in December 2014.

http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/Guidelines_re_integrating_contracted_guidance_staff_201114.pdf

Continuing Professional Development

The NCGE co-ordinated the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for the staff of the AEGI services nationally in 2014 - 39 Adult Educational Guidance Co-ordinators, 38 Adult Educational Guidance Counsellors and 40 Adult Guidance Information Officers.

Where possible, NCGE encourages ALL staff to attend the CPD programme. However, attendance at the CPD remains at the discretion of the ETB and as the AEGI services are now within 16 ETBs, on occasion it may be decided locally that 1 or 2 staff members would represent at the CPD to bring the information back to other staff.

The CPD programme is organised for and reflects specific staff roles *and* the Service as a whole

All staff:

Careersportal: 6 regionally: Blackrock, Tallaght, Limerick and Athlone: 62 attended: use of Careersportal with adults

AGMS Database 3 regionally: Tallaght, Limerick and Athlone. 62 people attended: Changes in line with ETB developments

Adult Guidance Information Officer: Dublin: 20 people attended- day one and 20 people attended- day two:

Erasmus+, professional opportunities for AEGI staff and adult learners.

Jolanta Burke, Psychologist: self-care for the Information Officer

INOUE: Presentation on Welfare to Work and key issues for those who are unemployed.

Adult Educational Guidance Counsellors (two days centrally in Dublin). 37 people attended - day one and 28 people attended -day two.

FET facilitated discussion on issues for FET guidance development

Jolanta Burke: Positive psychology in guidance counselling

Jasmina Behan, SOLAS and Expert Group on Future Skills Needs presentation on Labour Market Trends.

AEGI staff presentations: Peer support and information exchange

Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinators Forum meeting: Dublin. 29 Attended

Focused facilitated discussions on Interim National Referral Protocols and AEGI Operational Requirements

As part of the programme of work associated with the ELGPN Testing the European Resource Kit, the Director hosted an online video conference meeting with 4 participating AEGI services in relation to the Quality Assurance and Evidence base (QAE) Framework.

AEGI Web based Handbook

NCGE manages and develops the online handbook for AEGI on behalf of the DES. Following the process begun in 2013 to update the content and information, to include reference to SOLAS and ETBs, the online Handbook was revised and relaunched in September 2014. Renamed as the *Adult Guidance Handbook* this provides public access for all. Registration is required for secure access to specific sections and resources aimed at guidance professionals only. This can be accessed directly or via the NCGE website home page. www.ncgeadultguidance.ie

4. Primary Education and Non Formal Education Sector Activities

NCGE News includes articles on guidance issues in non-formal and primary education sector

Articles were published in *NCGE News* highlighting guidance practice in primary education across the EU.

The Guidance Officer/Euroguidance Co-ordinator continued to research the level of formal guidance in the primary school system in other EU countries and to provide examples of good practice including the *Aistear* programme in Primary schools in *NCGE News*.

The Guidance Officer/Euroguidance Co-ordinator liaised with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) on their Adult Education Service mapping and Information project and participated on the advisory group of the NCSE research report '*A Study of the Access and Progression Experiences of Students with Special Educational Needs Moving from Compulsory Education to Further and Higher Education*'.

NCGE continued to establish links with individual Youth Information Centres via the National Forum on Guidance and articles in the *NCGE News* e-zine. (See Section H.)

The Guidance Officer/Euroguidance Co-ordinator established formal links with the Léargas based EURODESK and was invited to provide presentations to the EURODESK network via the Youth Information Centres.

5. Higher Education Activities

Following the success of the HEA National Access Office Springboard guidance phone-line in 2012 & 2013, HEA invited NCGE to support the process again in 2014. CGE participated with HEA in the recruitment of appropriately qualified staff for the Springboard phone-line.

The NCGE Director continued to liaise with representatives of the Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) in relation to the National Forum on Guidance and National Conference.

As an element of the NCGE EUROGUIDANCE programme, the Euroguidance Co-ordinator made presentations to post-graduate students of guidance counselling in the universities on areas of guidance policy and EUROGUIDANCE activities.

NCGE News includes articles on guidance issues in higher education and highlights examples of innovative practice and resources.

Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (DSGC)

NCGE hosted and chaired the four meetings of the committee of the Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling in 2014. This Committee represents the five Universities in Ireland which currently provides initial education and training programmes for guidance counselling. These include the Directors of the programmes in Dublin City University, National University of Ireland Manoh, University College Cork, University of Limerick and Trinity College Dublin. The remit of the Committee is to examine policy, social and practice issues in guidance counselling and the implications of these for the development, delivery, content and review of initial education and training programmes in guidance counselling.

NCGE also chaired two meetings of the Directors with the IGC 2014.

NCGE invited the DSGC to provide input to the DES Course Recognition Framework (CRF) and facilitated discussions in this regard. The DSGC made a submission to the DES on the CRF in July, 2014. NCGE provided an online work space to facilitate the discussion of the Directors via the VLE.

Sub group to discuss the development of the PSI Agreement on Psychometric Testing

NCGE and the DSGC met with the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) to progress the development of the psychometric test register for guidance counsellors. It was agreed by all parties that the redeveloped register would include guidance counsellors who qualified prior to 1999. NCGE convened a sub group in June, 2014 with representatives of DES, DSGC, IGC, PSI and NCGE to progress the redrafting of this Agreement. Three meetings of the sub group were held and the third meeting also included representatives of the AEGAI.

The aim of this revised Agreement, due for sign off by all parties in 2015, is to promote good practice in psychometric testing and to ensure that guidance counsellors signed up to the register are qualified test users. In addition the issue of public safety will be addressed as the register will reside with an

Irish based organisation. Once the redeveloped register is published all guidance counsellors will be encouraged to sign up to it.

Teaching Council Review Panel

DES requested that the Teaching Council convene a review panel in 2014, to consider the DES recognition of the programme for Guidance Counselling qualifications in NUI Maynooth (School guidance Programme) and University of Limerick. NCGE Director was invited by the Teaching Council to participate in this review panel.

6. European Guidance Sector Activities

EUROGUIDANCE

NCGE Guidance Officer (Euroguidance Co-ordinator) attended study visits in Sweden and Austria and hosted Euroguidance exhibition stands at the Postgraduate Career Fair in University of Limerick, Higher Options and the IGC Conference.

The main Euroguidance Centre meeting room is used by NCGE to host meetings, study visits from Lithuania, Austria and Slovenia and guidance counsellor focus groups.

The Euroguidance Co-ordinator contributes to Euroguidance activities via editing of the Euroguidance network newsletter, active participation in Network working groups, responding to all Euroguidance queries and active involvement in the Euroguidance website with other network partners. The Euroguidance co-ordinator co-ordinated the provision of a guidance stand representing Ireland at the Amiens conferences in France.

As part of the Euroguidance Digital Marketing Strategy, the Euroguidance Co-ordinator established a Pilot Blog Project in 2013, whereby students who were studying in Europe via the Erasmus programme submitted blog updates on their experience. This was disseminated through NCGE News, Higher Options, the Euroguidance website www.euroguidance.ie, the Euroguidance Network meeting and at student presentations nationwide. The Euroguidance Co-ordinator invited the students involved to continue with the blog on returned from their Erasmus programme to end 2014.

<http://www.euroguidance.ie/news/euroguidance-blog-project#sthash.k8JyxyGb.dpbs>

Euroguidance Centre continued to provide information to clients via social media Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/EuroguidanceIreland>

Euroguidance Co-ordinator collaborated with the National Europass Centre in UK and Ireland (QQI) and Euroguidance Centre in the UK to develop the first joint resource production of a film '*Showcase your skills with the Europass CV*'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LS71ceOh7jk&feature=youtu.be>

Irish Reference Group for EU Initiatives in Education and Skills

The Euroguidance Co-ordinator worked in collaboration with NCGE Director, QQI/Europass and Léargas to develop and establish the Irish reference Group for EU Initiatives in Education and Skills. Two meetings were held in the DES Clock Tower to provide an opportunity to showcase a range of EU initiatives, working groups and projects in the education and training sector in a broad policy context.

<http://www.europass.ie/europass/IrishReferenceGroupforEUInitiativesinEducationandSkills.html>

Ploteus

Euroguidance Ireland has been a member of the EU Commission PLOTEUS EQF co-ordination group for several years. In 2011, NCGE successfully completed a pilot project with Qualifax (NQAI) to develop the national data source provision to the EU Commission PLOTEUS site. <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/>

Following the successful application for and allocation of funding from EU Commission, NCGE launched a tender process in 2014 for the '*Development of Cloud- based solution for interconnection of national data sources to PLOTEUS II*'. Following the tender process, in line with public procurement guidelines, a contract was agreed with Dublin Institute of Technology to develop the system.

NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland hosted two study visits from Austria and Slovenia specifically to discuss the Ireland plans for the PLOTEUS developments.

European Schools

On behalf of the Department of Education and Skills, NCGE supports and co-ordinates the guidance service to the European Schools (www.eursec.org). The guidance provision includes various methods of guidance delivery including group and one-to-one guidance for students, information evenings for parents and a phone and on-line service.

The Euroguidance Co-ordinator manages the provision of the service to Irish students each year via direct provision and Skype online guidance service. Two guidance counsellors are contracted to visit and work with relevant European Schools in Brussels and Luxembourg. Guidance provision to smaller schools via Skype (i.e. online video calling from Ireland) was provided to ensure Irish Students have the opportunity to access guidance sessions with an Irish guidance counsellors. This Skype service was offered to and co-ordinated with European Schools in Frankfurt, Mol, Varese, Alicante, Bergen, Culham, Karlsruhe and Munich.

ACADEMIA

NCGE co-ordinates Academia (the European Exchange of Guidance Counsellors) in Ireland, which is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, as part of the Leonardo da Vinci (VET Pro Mobility) action.

As part of the Academia 2013/2014 programme, NCGE co-ordinated 11 Irish guidance counsellors to participate on exchange visits to Denmark, Spain, Finland, Luxembourg, Latvia, Sweden and Slovenia.

NCGE arranged the hosting, in Cork in collaboration with Cork ETB, of 11 European Guidance Counsellors as part of the Academia exchange from Spain, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and France. The study visit involved site visits to adult education and guidance programmes across Cork in Youghal, Mayfield, the Maritime College in Ringaskiddy and presentations and group facilitated meetings in Cork ETB and University College Cork.

NCGE Director attended the Academia Co-ordinators meeting in Leeds, UK in December to discuss possible future activities for the Academia network.

EU Conferences

NICE Network Conference in Canterbury, 3-4th, September, 2014

The Guidance Programme Coordinator attended the NICE Network Conference in Canterbury with representatives from the IGC, the DSGC and the DES. The aim of this conference was to present and gather feedback on the draft NICE guidelines on competence standards for guidance counselling.

NCGE Director was invited by CEDEFOP to speak at the guidance workshop at the Conference ‘*Stepping up the pace: the next stage of European tools for transparency, recognition and quality for learning and work*’ held at Cedefop premises in Thessaloniki, Greece on 27 and 28 November 2014.

European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)

The DES appointed NCGE as the designated representative for Ireland to ELGPN for the phase 2013-2014. As Ireland held the EU Council Presidency in 2013, Ireland became members of the ELGPN Steering group 2013-2014, working closely with the ELGPN Co-ordination unit in Finland. Ireland continued as member of the ELGPN Steering group for 2014 and as lead country for the policy review cluster working group on *Quality Assurance and Evidence Based Practice*. This involved chairing and leading the 14 member countries in this group on the discussions and exchange of information, along with the ELGPN expert Consultant Dr Deirdre Hughes (UK). NCGE also continued to actively participate in the Career Management Skills (CMS) Policy review cluster group in order to support and inform national guidance developments.

ELGPN meetings were hosted by Greece and Italy in 2014. NCGE designated representatives attended both meetings and the NCGE Chair, Paul King attended the Rome ELGPN meeting in October. Further Steering group meetings were hosted online by the Co-ordination Unit in Finland.

NCGE/Ireland representatives attended the Italian EU Presidency hosted: *5th European Conference on Lifelong Guidance Policies*

<http://www.ncge.ie/europe/european-lifelong-guidance-policy-network>

ELGPN related meetings

NCGE Director was invited to present to and participate as moderator at the Twinning Event of ELGPN representatives from Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania, on Quality assurance and evidence base in Riga, Latvia in November 2014.

National Forum on Guidance

NCGE co-ordinated and hosted two meetings of National Forum on Guidance in 2014 on 30th April and 13th November. The aim of the National Forum on Guidance (2013-2014) would be to continue to provide a forum for dialogue, exchanging information and exploring possibilities for co-operation and co-ordination. At these meetings, participants were provided with opportunity to discuss and provide input to the ELGPN draft documents for QAE and Guidelines. Participants were also provided the opportunity to meet with external consultant to inform the NCGE Strategic plan for 2015- 2017.

<http://www.ncge.ie/about-us/national-forum-on-guidance-3rd-meeting-of-2013-2014>

<http://www.ncge.ie/news-article/4th-meeting-of-the-national-forum-on-guidance>

7. GENERAL

Publications, Resources and Materials

The *NCGE Website* www.ncge.ie provides information to clients and stakeholders on the role and activities of NCGE, with direct access to the School Guidance Handbook, the Adult Guidance handbook and sections such as ‘*how to become a guidance counsellor*’, policy documents and research, and guidance policies and provision in the education sectors. The website features a rotating carousel of images on the home page to highlight ‘what’s new’ information. In the absence of the Information Officer due to approved career break in the 2014, NCGE contracted the services of an external Information Services consultant to ensure monitoring, administration and updates content editing.

NCGE internal 2014 reports show (via ‘google analytics’) that there were 13,179 visitors to the website, recording 50,357 “page -views”. Of these 75.4% were first time visitors to the site and 24.6% returning visitors.

The NCGE Euroguidance Ireland Centre website is maintained as a microsite of the main NCGE website www.euroguidance.ie

NCGE News (ISSN 2009-6941) is the NCGE online interactive newsletter /magazine which provides articles and reviews on guidance provision across the education sector. NCGE publishes the *NCGE News* e-zine twice per year. *NCGE news (Dublin. Online)*

Each publication of *NCGE News* highlights examples of guidance policy and practice both nationally and internationally to inform guidance providers in post primary schools, higher education, adult guidance and non-formal sectors. Focusing on a particular theme for each edition, the *NCGE News* e-zine includes articles on good practice from our international colleagues as well as updates on activities of the Euroguidance Centre, ELGPN and the National Forum on Guidance, reviews of websites, smart-phone apps and relevant books.

In 2014 these themes included:

Summer edition: *A spotlight on e-guidance*

<http://twelvehorses.ie/ncge/news/summer-2014.html>

Winter edition: *Building networks – collaborative practice*

<http://twelvehorses.ie/ncge/news/winter-2014.html>

As the editing and publication of the *NCGE News* remains within the role of the Information officer, on career break in 2014, NCGE contracted the services of an external Information Services consultant to co-ordinate this process.

Internal NCGE statistics available (via “google analytics”) show an “Open “ rate, i.e. the numbers of *NCGE News* e-zine accessed online as: Summer edition: 1640 opens and Winter edition: 1753 opens

Information Provision and Conferences

NCGE hosts stands each year at conferences of both the Institute of Guidance Counsellors in March, and Higher Options in September. This provides direct access to NCGE for guidance counsellors and other clients of the Centre.

ICT Developments in NCGE

NCGE makes use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support the work of committees convened by NCGE, such as the School Guidance Handbook Editorial Panel, the Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling and other relevant programmes. The VLE is accessible through <http://vle.ncge.ie>.

NCGE continued to use Survey Monkey™ questionnaires for online feedback and evaluation of the CPD workshops and AEGI activities.

NCGE continued to use the NCGE Vimeo channel to host video based resources in the NCGE website.

Video conferencing facilities via Adobe Connect - NCGE purchased a licence for Adobe Connect in order to facilitate online synchronous meetings and CPD. A number of meetings were hosted by NCGE through Adobe Connect and resources were developed to support NCGE staff and external users with using the Platform.

General Activities

Throughout 2014, NCGE continued to provide briefing documents and information on guidance counselling and guidance related issues for the education and FET sector to the Ministers' office and various sections of the Department.

DES strategy on digital learning for schools

In 2014, NCGE made a submission during the consultation process for the DES Digital strategy for schools.

8. Financial Report

NCGE funding

Core funding for the National Centre for Guidance in Education is provided directly from the Department of Education and Skills. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (CAP) provides funding for the core NCGE programmes; from 1st January 2014, SOLAS provides the grant to NCGE to fund the AEGI and FET programme within NCGE; the DES International Section funds the European Schools programme; EU funding via the Erasmus + (formerly Lifelong Learning programme) supports the Euroguidance Centre, ELGPN, and Academia programmes within NCGE.

NCGE continued to ensure compliance with completion of various reports to DES and other government departments on issues such as finance, environment, energy efficiency, procurement and parliamentary questions, etc.

NCGE Summary Accounts 2014

Expenditure as detailed below includes co-ordination and delivery of programmes across the guidance in lifelong learning spectrum, staff salaries and Centre overheads.

Detailed financial reports are provided quarterly and annually via Income and Expenditure returns to DES, Board of Léargas and annual financial returns to EU Commission for EU funded programmes.

In 2014, NCGE agreed new format for such financial returns to DES.

NCGE Summary Accounts as detailed in the Léargas audited accounts 2014

Funding Source	Income	Expenditure
DES CAP unit	506,000	433,372
SOLAS	188,420	188,420
Other Total: (to include: NRC – EUROGUIDANCE, Academia, European Schools, ELGPN)	86,554	159,182
TOTAL	780,974	780,974

NCGE STAFF IN 2014

Jennifer McKenzie	Director
Linda Darbey	Guidance Programme Co-coordinator
Hilary Lynch	Guidance Officer (EUROGUIDANCE Co-coordinator)
Ursula Kearney	Guidance Officer
James Hogan	Office Administrator
Shivaun Gallagher	Information Officer

Management of Guidance Committee July 2013 – 2016

Paul King	
Breda Naughton	Department of Education and Skills (DES)
Jim Mullin	Léargas
Fidelma Collins	Léargas
John Wynne	Adult Educational Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI)
Gerry Flynn	Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)
Ursula Finnegan	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
Colum Layton	Department of Education and Skills (DES) (until August 2014)

Peter Brown	Higher Education Authority (HEA)
Shira Mehlman	SOLAS
Elaine Quinn	Department of Social Protection - DSP
Jennifer McKenzie	Director of NCGE (ex-officio)

Members of the Management of Guidance Committee 2013-2016

Left to Right – Back row: Paul King; John Wynne; Colum Layton; Jennifer McKenzie

Front Row: Breda Naughton; Shira Mehlman; Gerry Flynn; Ursula Finnegan; Elaine Quinn



8-1: MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF GUIDANCE COMMITTEE 2013-2016

Glossary

ACCS	Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
AEGAI	Adult Educational Guidance Association Ireland
AEGI	Adult Educational Guidance Initiative
AEOA	Adult Education Officers Association
AGMS	Adult Guidance Management System
CFE	College of Further Education
CIC	Church of Ireland College of Education
DEIS	Delivering Equality Of Opportunity In Schools
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DSGC	Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling
DSP	Department of Social Protection
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
ETB	Education and Training Board
FÁS	Training and Employment Authority
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IAEVG	International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance
IGC	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
ILSA	Irish Learning Support Agency
IVEA	Irish Vocational Education Agency
JMB	Joint Management Board
LCAGP	Limerick City Adult Guidance Partnership
NAPD	National Association of Principal and Deputy Principals
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Services

NESC	National Economic Social Council
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
PSI	Psychological Society Ireland
QCAP	Qualifications, Curriculum, Assessment
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna.
VEC	Vocational Educational Committee
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WSGP	Whole School Guidance Planning

APPENDIX A

NCGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2014

Key objectives

MISSION

Develop and support quality guidance provision in the education sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice

VISION

Leading and shaping guidance practice to enable the learner to make informed and appropriate life choices

Definition of Guidance

‘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 Report 2007)

Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence that assist students to develop self- management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance. (pg. 4 Department guidelines, 2005)

THE AIMS OF THE NCGE ARE TO:

Promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools, centres for education, and adult education settings in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1998

Promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in both formal and non-formal settings in accordance with national priorities

Advise on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning

Provide advice, support, materials and resources for guidance and counselling in education

Advise on high quality and relevant initial guidance counselling education and training and to provide Continuing professional development (CPD) for guidance practitioners

Organize the provision of guidance to Irish nationals in the European Schools

Contribute to the exchange of information on guidance and counselling provision and practice with other guidance and employment services, through the National Resource Centre, (EUROGUIDANCE Centre) both in Ireland and in other Member States of the EU.

In fulfilling its aims NCGE, as a constituent part of Léargas, is committed to working in collaboration and partnership with relevant stakeholders including the Department of Education and Skills,

Directors of Studies, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland, Higher Education Authority, FÁS, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals and other Government Departments and National and Employer agencies where appropriate.

THE OBJECTIVES OF NCGE ARE TO:

Develop and contribute to DES policy. Standards and best practice in Guidance in collaboration with key stakeholders

Enhance the profile of the NCGE as a support service for guidance in education

Promote an integrated approach to guidance in the evolving structures and developments in the FET sector

Promote, co-ordinate and/or deliver professional development for guidance practitioners

Develop and contribute to DES policy, standards and best practice in guidance in collaboration with key stakeholders

Strengthen organisational capacity to enable NCGE to perform in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner

Enhance the profile of the NCGE as a support service for guidance in education

Contribute to European developments in Guidance