



Final Report: June 2018

Bernadette Walsh: CareersPortal

Mary Stokes: NCGE

NCGE - MyFuture+ Pilot: March 2017-March 2018 Final Report



NCGE Offices: Final MyFuture+ Evaluation Pilot Group Meeting: March 2018

Background Information

MyFuture+ is an innovative and new career learning and development resource that aims to assist individuals to explore themselves in relation to career, education and employment opportunities. It has been developed in collaboration with staff from services who support adults in their career planning and decisions and heavily shaped by feedback from their clients. Advisory Group staff include representatives from the Department of Social Protection (Employer Engagement and Case Officers), Youthreach (Advocates and Educators), Local Employment Services (Mediators), Adult Education Guidance services and Private Adult Guidance practitioners. Following a six-month pilot study disseminated through the MyFuture+ advisory group staff members, MyFuture+ was launched in June 2016.



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Integrating ICT career learning tools into Guidance Counselling Practice

MyFuture+ has the **unique administration advantage** of allowing adult guidance counsellors to view and track their client's self-assessment results and career research including their Career Interest Profiler, Career Skills assessment, Course preferences and Career documents. Feedback on this process (see Appendices) has proven to encourage greater collaboration between the guidance counsellor and the client. This is supported by the mobile compatibility of MyFuture+ and the on-line career file can be accessed at any time from a mobile phone, tablet, laptop etc. Another unique feature available is QQI Level 4 and 5 Work Experience module templates. This allows learners in FET centres and colleges to store their assignment content and work experience diary reflections in their on-line career file that can be accessed and edited from any mobile device. The Guidance Counsellor or Tutor can instantly view their work, provide feedback and centralise their assessments.

Initial Meetings and Agreement with NCGE

After the initial launch, there was much interest from the adult education and guidance services about the potential of MyFuture+ and its potential to support their practice. It was important for CareersPortal to discuss this with the NCGE. In August 2016, Eimear Sinnott and Bernadette Walsh from CareersPortal met with Jennifer McKenzie, NCGE to discuss this and to explore the possibility of getting support from the NCGE in the continued development of MyFuture+.

In terms of exploring how the new MyFuture+ might integrate and support FET adult guidance practice a six-month pilot of different sized providers was agreed with the NCGE. The planned phase was October 2016 – until end March 2017.



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It was proposed to undertake the pilot in association with the NCGE in 3 separate Adult Education Guidance Services and 2 PLC Colleges of Further Education so that those involved in running the pilot be of varied sizes and locations around the country to capture a broad perspective. Following the pilot, it was agreed to generate a report on the findings and issue guidelines on any modification and changes going forward. It was also suggested to prepare an article for the NCGE news on the pilot with an overview of the new tool.

See the following PDF: NCGE Summer 2018:

[https://careersportal.ie/mce/plugins/filemanager/files/NN49-FET Collaboration%20and%20learning.pdf](https://careersportal.ie/mce/plugins/filemanager/files/NN49-FET%20Collaboration%20and%20learning.pdf)

Appointment of NCGE FET Guidance Program Coordinator

NCGE and CareersPortal came together to explore and evaluate how the new MyFuture+ adult guidance resource might integrate and support FET adult guidance practice. Capturing the experiences of guidance counsellors using MyFuture+ in different FET Guidance settings was a fundamental goal. At the time of the initial discussions, NCGE were in the process of recruiting a **FET Guidance Co-ordinator** due to begin the role in October 2016. Mary Stokes was appointed and commenced this new role and would become responsible for liaising with Bernadette from CareersPortal regarding the launch of the pilot and coordinating the agreed tasks involved.

Bernadette and Mary met in mid-January 2017 to discuss the beginning the pilot and establishing participating centers. Mary circulated an e-mail to all FET guidance providers informing them about the pilot and inviting interested services/centres to get involved. Over the next few weeks Bernadette and Mary worked closely and by mid-February a total of 8 centres of varied sizes and assigned Administrators were agreed to reflect and capture feedback from different FET guidance providers and perspectives. These included small Community Training Centre, AEGS providers and medium and large PLC Colleges. The adult guidance practitioners involved work with clients



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in a one-to-one setting and with groups of adult learners. Adult learners who participated represented those undertaking QQI levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 programmes.

The screenshot displays the 'My Career File' page on the MyFuture+ website. The interface is organized into several sections:

- My Career Sector(s):** Lists categories such as Accountancy & Taxation, Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry & Food, Community & Voluntary, and Education.
- My Top Career Interests:** Shows interests in Social, Linguistic, and Creative fields, taken on 29 September, 2017.
- My Personality Profile:** A circular chart showing a mix of IDEALIST, THEORIST, IMPROVISOR, and STABILISER traits.
- My Career Skills:** Lists 'People Skills', 'Task Skills', and 'Personal Skills' as most recent skills.
- Careers Library:** Includes 'Salesperson' and 'Art Therapist' with checkboxes to remove them.
- Career Apps:** A grid of tools including Career Sectors, Interest Profiler, Personality, Career Skills, Career Notepad, Work Placement, CareerDocs, CV Builder, Personal Action Plan, Personal Values, and Multiple Intelligences.
- Career Tools:** A grid of resources including Occupations A-Z, Apprenticeships, Career Videos, Career Research, Finding Jobs, Jobs in Demand, Further Ed Courses, PLC Courses, CAO Courses, Colour Blind Test, Adult Learners, and Job Seekers.
- Useful Resources:** Features 'Workplace Reflections... Learn For Others' and 'Colleges Direct...'. The etb logo is also visible.
- Job Search:** Includes a search bar for 'title, keywords', a location filter for 'city or county', and a 'Find Jobs' button.
- Current Jobs:** Lists various job openings such as 'Immigration research assistant', 'Going There - Dublin', 'Waiting Staff', 'The Jar - Dublin', 'Portfolio Construction Analyst...', 'Davy - Dublin', 'Network Infrastructure Support Engineer', 'Openet - Dublin', 'Income and Admin Assistant', 'Christian Aid Ireland - Dublin', 'Business Intelligence and Analytics...', and 'Google - Dublin'.
- Employment News:** A list of recent news items with dates, such as 'Clerical Officer Competition Now Open' (June 18, 2018) and 'Do a STAR Interview' (June 15, 2018).

MyFuture+ Sample Client/Learner Career File



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A Two-Phased Pilot Process

This pilot was divided into two phases:

Phase 1: March-August 2017

Launch of Pilot, Admin and Access Code set up, Training, Phone check-ins and Preliminary Feedback through Survey Monkey.

Phase 2: September-March 2018

New academic year with opportunity to use MyFuture+ from start, more focused approach in terms of how it fits within FET Guidance practice and supports client/learner career learning.

Participating Centres

- (1) Cavan Institute of Further Education**
- (2) Cavan Adult Education Guidance Service**
- (3) Colaiste Dhulaigh CFE**
- (4) Cork Skibbereen Adult Education Guidance Service**
- (5) Cork South Mall Adult Education Guidance Service**
- (6) Kylemore Community Training Centre**
- (7) Mayo/Leitrim Adult Education Guidance Service**
- (8) Ormonde College of Further Education**

8 Participating (FET Colleges/Centres/Services)

17 Administrators (Guidance Counsellors and Work Experience Tutors)



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Phase 1: NCGE MyFuture+ Pilot: March - August 2017

Bernadette and Mary met twice and communicated regularly by phone and e-mail to coordinate the running of the MyFuture+ pilot group. The group attended a training session in NCGE offices on 8th March 2017. A total of 13 staff members attended comprising mainly of Adult Guidance Counsellors and some Work Experience Educators. All had been e-mailed their administration and set up details in advance of this. Each attendee was provided with a training pack, an overview of the new MyFuture+ tool and information and expectations of the pilot process.

Given the delay in starting the pilot, learners involved in adult education programmes were coming to the end of an academic year. Despite this, it was agreed that it was still feasible to introduce many of these learners/clients (Users) to MyFuture+ and endeavor to gather some preliminary feedback from them and the participating adult guidance counsellors and work experience tutors (Administrators) through SurveyMonkey.

In May 2016, **two survey links** were circulated to the participating pilot staff. One for their feedback and the other for their learners/clients. A total of 10 Administrators responded and 20 clients/learners. Despite the small number of respondents, the feedback received was very rich and provided insight in terms of experience of using MyFuture+ albeit for a short period of time.

See: Appendix: Phase 1 Survey Findings.



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Phase 1: Key Outcomes

Staff Involvement and Engagement

Despite the late launch of the pilot and limited time in the remaining 2016/2017 academic year staff involved were very enthusiastic and motivated to trial MyFuture+ in their workplaces. From 8th March until June 2017 a total of **155 clients/learners** signed up to use various apps/activities in MyFuture+ and two additional Guidance practitioners came on bringing the **total number of administrators to 17**. Some involved committed to work over the summer months with small groups and individuals.

On-going Support and Communication

During this period Bernadette followed up and linked in with all staff for any queries or support required to effectively run the pilot. Also, Mary and Bernadette have worked very closely and maintained excellent channels of communication to ensure the pilot ran as seamlessly as possible. They met to design the two **Survey Monkey questionnaires** and to gather preliminary feedback for Administrators and Clients/Learners.

Qualitative data gathering in guidance practice

In May 2016, two survey links were circulated to the participating pilot staff to capture initial pilot feedback. One survey was for **staff/administrators'** feedback and the other for their **learners/clients**.



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Phase 1: Survey Monkey: Examples of Staff/Administrator Comments

“To-date the response from clients and learners has been very positive. The Apps provide a very practical way for clients/learners to build their Personal Profiles for Career Planning and while the amount of information available through the MyFuture+ Tools is vast it is designed in a way that individuals can explore the information relevant to their individual circumstances and disregard what is not. MyFuture+ provides an excellent structure for Group Guidance.”

“If I had used this programme at the beginning of the year with my Work Experience class I believe students would have produced work to a higher standard”.

“I am looking forward to our students using this system for their work experience module in Sept 2017. We have trialled it with students over the last few weeks. But, it is late in the academic year, so it is difficult to get meaningful feedback at this stage”.

Feedback included suggested additions in terms of improvements to the resource and further enhancements have been or will be integrated in the coming weeks. Overall, the comments provided indicated that the use of MyFuture+ enhanced career learning and provides a comprehensive and accessible suite of career learning and development resources in a centralised career file. There was an indication from the feedback that Administrators envisage that using MyFuture+ from the beginning of a new academic year will be advantageous for their client/learner experience and will enhance their educational programmes, with reference to the work experience module.

Phase 1: Survey Monkey: Examples of Learner/Client Comments

“Particularly found career and personality profilers and in demand jobs helpful”

“Yes, it had helped me to find courses I can apply for using my FETAC award”

“I've learned and been pleasantly surprised by the occupational results that I am suited too which gave me a lot of food for thought”

“I felt it was helpful to be matched with CAO courses and careers as it reaffirmed ideas and introduced new ideas”



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“I liked the website, I need to use it a bit more to give feedback”

Continuance of Pilot into Phase 2: Sept. 2017 – March 2018

Given the short-time frame involved in Phase 1, a second phase was agreed so that more in depth feedback might be gathered and evaluated.

Phase 2: Key Outcomes

Staff and Client/Learner Involvement

A total of **9 Staff/Administrators** remained very active throughout the pilot. Due to internal staff changes and some difficulty maintaining pilot momentum, there was a fall off in staff involvement in some of the larger participating centres. Despite this, all 8 participating centres remained involved. In terms, of students/clients a total of **650** registered and used more than one resource in their career file.

FET Practitioner Collaboration and Learning

It emerged that the coming together of this pilot group provided an opportunity and space for practitioners to explore diversity in their adult guidance practice, discuss challenges and to share knowledge and expertise. The MyFuture+ pilot, provided a unique, tangible and live resource through which discussions, the sharing of knowledge and development ideas took place. Group members travelled from around the country to meet in NCGE offices on four occasions i.e. Phase 1 and 2: March, September and December 2017 and March 2018) and reflected on their experience of using MyFuture+ with their clients and learners. In an already crowded working context, this was no easy task and demonstrates the commitment and openness of members to trial innovative resources that might further support their adult education and guidance practice.



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An Action and Reflection Approach: Adaptions to MyFuture+ from learning from Phase 1

The piloting of MyFuture+ within FET guidance offered an opportunity to learn from the group what works well and reflect on areas for improvement and development. The process of trialing it with clients and learners, and then providing qualitative feedback, then adapting it to improve application, is reflective of an action-research approach. Action research by its very nature is about working with others to make improvements in practice. In the short space of the pilot, several new developments took place and MyFuture+ continued to be shaped by guidance counsellors for guidance practice. See:

<http://careersportal.ie/mce/plugins/filemanager/files/New%20Developments%20MyFuture+%20Web%20Version.pdf>

A Reflexive Practice Process: A Case Study Approach

Towards the end of the pilot, participating staff were invited to **share their experience** of using MyFuture+ through the provision of a Case Study. This was a written reflection based on a one-to-one or group situation, where they used MyFuture+ in the context of adult career learning and development. Examples of headings were provided to serve as prompts, a guideline of content (agreed in advance with NCGE and CareersPortal) See Appendix: **NCGE MyFuture+ Case Study prompts** and a collated summary of this feedback under these headings.

End of Pilot Survey Monkey: A qualitative and quantitative perspective.

A total of **8 staff/administrators** and **42 learners and clients** completed the survey. See **Appendix Phase 2 Survey Monkey Results**.