



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



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

NCGE

May 2020

Post Primary Webinar Series

Report

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Introduction and context

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is the agency of the Department of Education with responsibility for leading and shaping guidance policy and practice to enable learners to make informed and appropriate life choices. Our mission is to develop, support and influence guidance policy and quality guidance provision in the education and training sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice.

All post primary schools in Ireland were required to close from 12th March 2020 due to the Covid19 pandemic. Teaching, learning and all aspects of school business relocated from the 'normal' face-to-face of the school environment, to a new and unprecedented remote landscape. It was initially intended that school closures would be a temporary measure and that schools would reopen on 29th March. However, in line with the national context and the advice of the Health Service Executive, this date was extended, and schools remained closed until the official end of the academic year 2019/2020. In response to the initial school closures in March, NCGE distributed a survey to post-primary Guidance Counsellors to gain an insight into their needs in terms of Guidance provision during the unprecedented continuation of Guidance remotely. The survey asked Guidance Counsellors on their contingency plans to support students outside of the physical school context, and what the most pressing concerns were in relation to their student's Guidance needs. Data collected informed a comprehensive strategy of support by NCGE for the continuation of Guidance in post-primary schools. In conjunction with the Department of Education, a mainstay of this support was the development of a live webinar series, initially providing support to Guidance Counsellors following publication of the Department's 'Continuity of Guidance Counselling Guidelines for Schools'. The overall theme of the webinar series was 'adapting the Guidance plan to support continuity of Guidance provision.' This report outlines all aspects of the live webinar series.

Webinar topics and format

Four webinars were devised, presented live, recorded and subsequently made available on the NCGE website. Webinars focused on the following topics:

- Wednesday 6th May
'Whole School Guidance Provision - Focusing on 6th Years'
- Wednesday 13th May
'Guidance Matters: Maximising Guidance Related Choices for 6th years'
- Wednesday 20th May
'Whole School Guidance: Wrapping up the academic year 2019/2020'
- Wednesday 27th May
'Reflecting on Guidance Provision and Guidance Needs'

The structure of the **first three** webinars remained consistent as follows:

Part 1: Welcome and Introduction.

Part 2: Presentation by NCGE on topic.

Part 3: Updates for Guidance Counsellors on key events and from key agencies (e.g. CAO / PDST etc.)

Part 4: Live Q and A where participants could ask questions and share ideas in written format.

The **fourth and final webinar** was designed to include a greater level of participant interaction. It generally followed the same structure as the first three webinars. However, participants were invited to comment both orally and in writing at two occasions during the webinar. The purpose of changing the structure slightly for the final webinar at the end of the academic year was two-fold:

- NCGE wished to focus on inclusion of Guidance Counsellor voice at that time of the academic year to celebrate the hard work and achievements in the remote provision of Guidance from mid-March to end of May 2020.
- NCGE aimed to lead by example and demonstrate the will to embrace all aspects of operating remotely. NCGE accepted the challenge of including the oral input of participants and engaged with a feature which had not been used up to that point.

Key references & publications

In conjunction with the Department of Education, the live webinars were developed and presented in line with all relevant anterior DES circulars and publications. Other publications were cited where relevant. The [Whole School Guidance Framework \(NCGE, 2017\)](#) formed the foundation of the approach to remote Guidance and was referenced as appropriate. In addition, the following contemporary publications (*published as a direct response to Covid19 and its impact*), were focused upon:

- [Department of Education and Skills \(2020\) Continuity of Guidance Counselling - Guidelines for schools providing online support for students](#)
- [Department of Education and Skills \(2020\) Supporting the Wellbeing of Students: Guidance for Post-Primary Schools and Student Support Teams during School Closures and Public Health Restrictions arising from COVID-19](#)
- [NCGE \(2020\) Support information for Guidance Counsellors in Schools](#)
- [Monaghan Education Centre \(2020\) Supervision: Information for Supervisors and Guidance Counsellors](#)

NCGE team approach to developing the webinar series

The NCGE team worked in collaboration with the Department of Education to develop a range of supports for Guidance Counsellors. The approach to the live webinars consisted of three main stages:

(1) Preparing the webinar:

Each member of the NCGE team contributed to the development of the live webinar series. The content of the webinar and associated resources were discussed and planned by all members of the team and were subsequently developed by the Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary). The NCGE team worked in collaboration with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit of the Department (CAP) and the Inspectorate who reviewed the content, provided feedback, and made changes to the content.

Notice of the webinars and the topics were communicated to relevant contacts and stakeholders in advance of the webinars. Participants were asked to register prior to each live event. *Further information on registrants and participants is provided in a later section of this report.*

(2) During the webinar:

Webinar 1,2 and 4 were co-presented by the Director of NCGE and the Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary). For webinar 3, the Guidance Officer (Euroguidance) substituted for the Guidance Programme Coordinator who was not available on that date.

A third member of the team (Guidance Officer (Euroguidance) /Guidance Programme Assistant) acted as host(s) and orchestrated the various background aspects of the webinar e.g. the live recording / Q&A comments.

The Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET) registered as a participant and attended each webinar reviewing all aspects from the participant perspective.

(3) Post-webinar review:

A meeting to debrief was held immediately after each session. All elements of the process were discussed during these meetings and suggestions for improvement of future webinars were noted. In deciding the topic of each subsequent webinar discussion points from the prior webinar were referenced and the tasks associated with the time of year were considered and discussed by the NCGE team and the Department of Education.

As a follow up to each webinar an FAQ list was compiled by the Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary) from the questions/comments section. Answers to these FAQs were then made available on the NCGE website in consultation with the Department of Education.

Webinar resources

The following resources were created by the NCGE team and the Department of Education to support Guidance Counsellors in their provision of remote Guidance in line with disclosed Guidance Counsellor need. These resources were introduced during the webinar series:

- [“Taking Stock”: Questionnaire for 6th year students](#)
- [“Tips Sheet” for 6th year students](#)
- ["Review of Academic Year" \(Reflection Resource\)](#)
- [“Dear Me in August 2020”](#)

Downloads statistics of these resources up to 01/07/20.

Source: Google Analytics for www.ncge.ie

- “Taking Stock”: Questionnaire for 6th year students: **171 downloads**
- “Tips Sheet” for 6th year students: **521 downloads**
- "Review of Academic Year" (Reflection Resource) - **233 downloads**
- “Dear Me in August 2020” - **105 downloads**

In addition, a process by which Guidance Counsellors could upload and share their own resources was developed and promoted during the live webinar series. This process had been in development prior to the Covid19 but was expediated.

Webinar participants

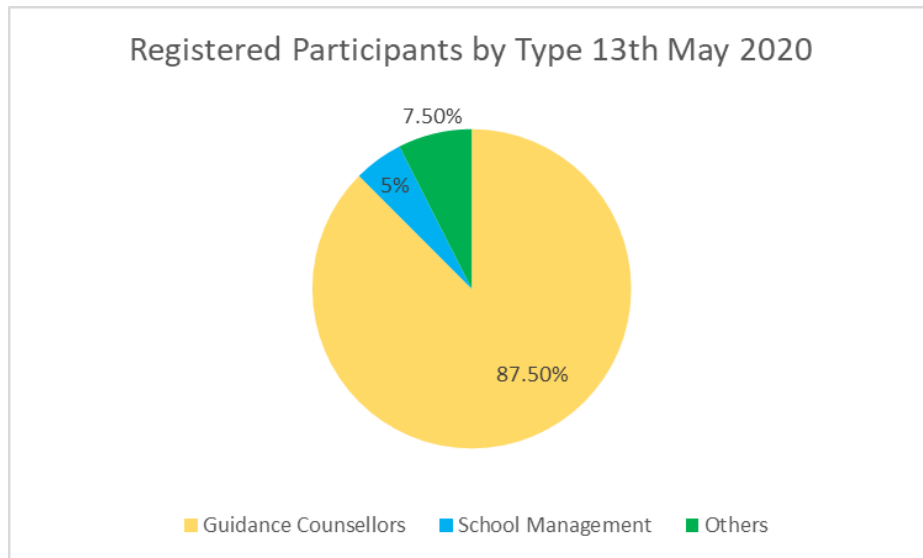
Participants included Guidance Counsellors, school management and representatives from other relevant agencies/bodies *e.g. PDST and JCT*. Numbers of participants are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Numbers registered and attending NCGE live webinar series.

Date	Registered	Attended	Rate of Attendance (compared to registrations)	Presentation Downloads (following the live event)	Recording Views (following the live event)
6th May	340	225	66%	151	110
13th May	300	194	65%	110	69
20th May	280	186	66%	63	50
27th May	271	178	66%	39	19

While geographical location was not declared by participants when registering, it was deduced from the school detail provided that the spread of participants was nationwide.

Regarding the composition of the registrants, taking the **second webinar** as an example participants could be categorized and represented as follows:



'Others' included organisations such as Department of Education, PDST, JCT and CRC.

Evaluation and Reflections

The evaluation of the live-webinar series was comprised of three parts:

Part 1: An informal evaluation of each webinar was carried out through an overview of participants comments immediately following each webinar. For example, in the comments/Q&A section Guidance Counsellors thanked NCGE for content to date and made suggestions for future webinars.

Part 2: Informal internal evaluations were undertaken in the review of each webinar as outlined. NCGE staff observations were discussed and noted for incorporation into subsequent presentations.

Part 3: Upon completion of the webinar series, a survey was circulated to all participants for a formal evaluation. Results from the survey are provided below. The results of the survey are presented under two headings:

- (I) Evaluation of webinar series and associated resources
- (II) Feedback on future CPD

(I) Survey Results: Evaluation of webinar series and associated resources

92% of survey respondents agreed that 'the knowledge and information gained from participation in any / each of the webinars met their Guidance needs'. In addition, respondents rated the webinar series with a score between 1 (poor) and 5 (excellent), as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

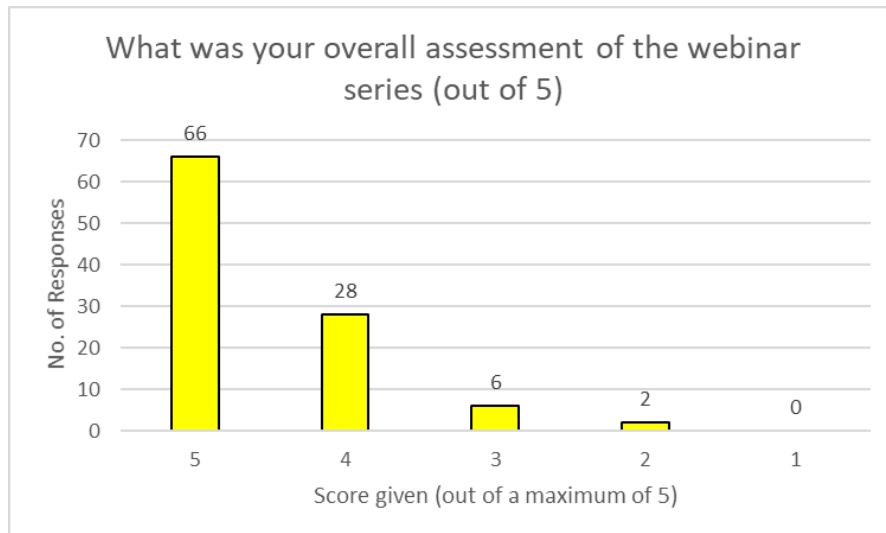


Figure1: Overall Assessment of the Webinar Series.

Respondents were also asked to rate the resources which accompanied the webinar series, again with a score between 1 (poor) and 5 (excellent) as illustrated in Figure 2.

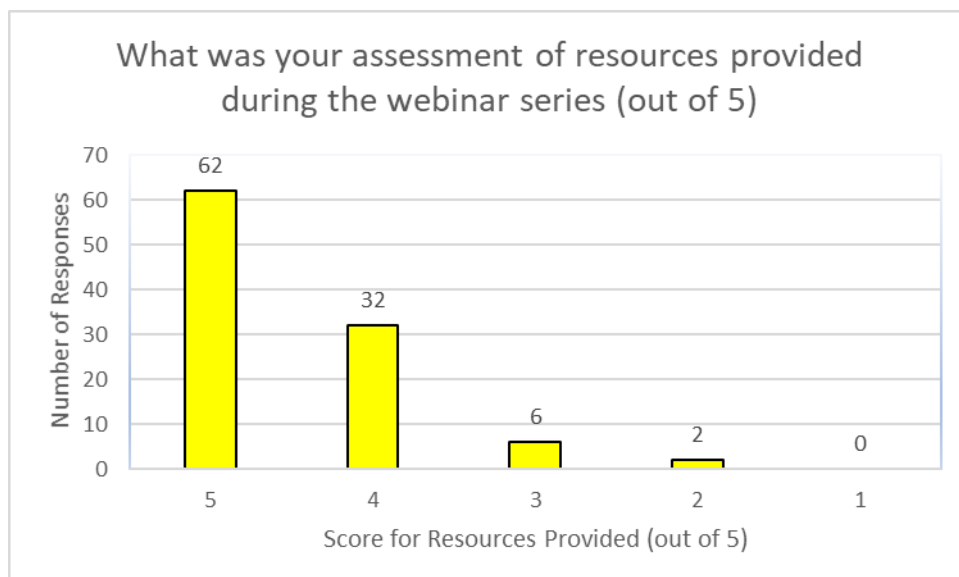


Figure 2: Overall Assessment of the Resources provided during the webinar series

Regarding the Q and A part of the webinar, 82% of respondents agreed that the interactive element was sufficient, while 18% indicated it was 'somewhat' sufficient.

(II) Survey results: Feedback on future CPD

Respondents were asked if they would you like to partake again in a future webinar series with NCGE even in the case where 'normal' schooling returns in September.

- 98 respondents agreed they would partake in a future webinar series
- 4 respondents responded 'maybe'
- 0 respondents responded 'no.'

In relation to their provision of remote Guidance, Guidance Counsellors noted their level of confidence in several areas as illustrated in Figure 3 below.

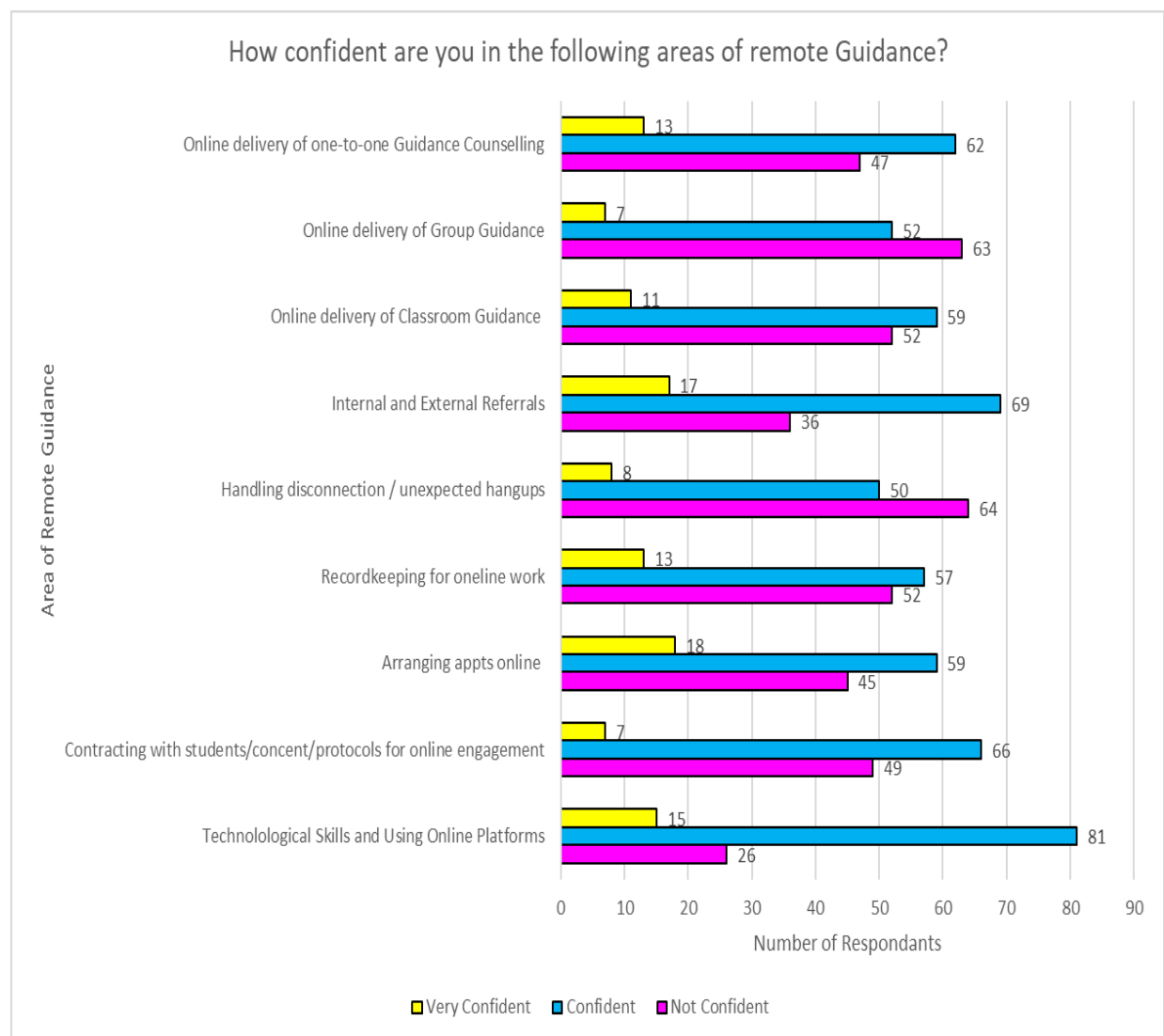


Figure 3: Levels of confidence in provision of remote Guidance

It is evident that a lack of confidence is present for Guidance Counsellors in terms of their provision of remote Guidance. However, a majority of respondents indicated they felt confident/very confident at the various aspects of online provision of Guidance.

Survey participants were asked If they would like to participate in future NCGE CPD (either via webinar or face to face) and to indicate (from a list) area(s) of interest to them. Figure 4 outlines the most popular responses received.

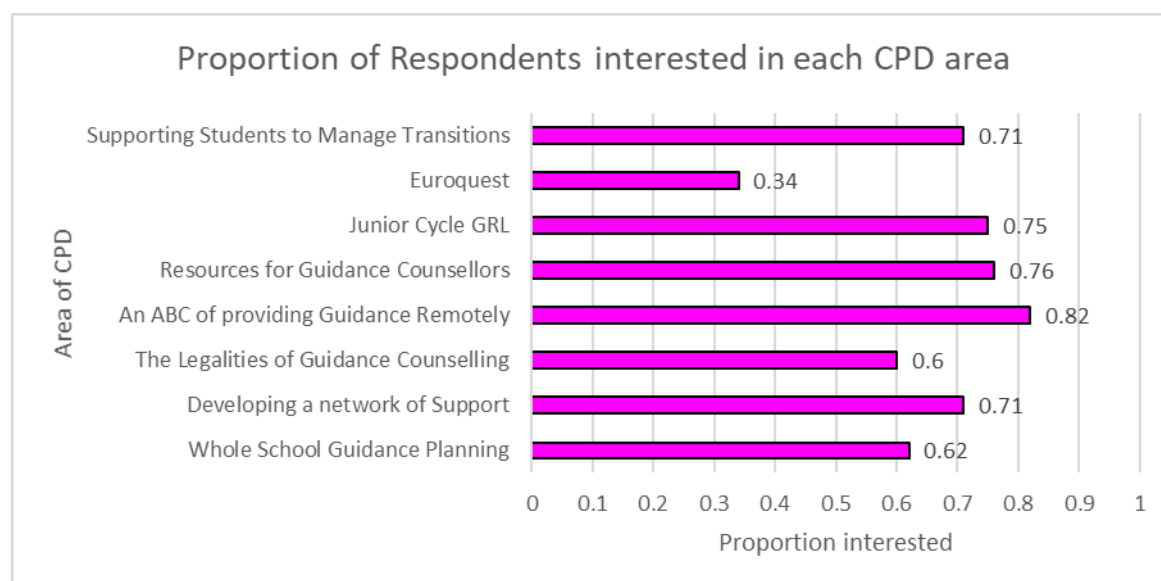


Figure 4: Levels of CPD interest. The proportion of respondents interested in each CPD area are provided in decimal form. For example, where 0.71 is indicated on the graph, this indicates 71% of respondents were interested in the CPD area

Additional areas of interest, as suggested by participants, include:

- Guidance Counselling Skills
- Psychometric testing
- Dealing with parents
- Education abroad (UK and Europe)
- CBT Skills

Survey participants were also asked what resources could be developed by NCGE to support their guidance practice? A sample of the responses is as follows:

- Rule of Engagement & Online etiquette for students partaking in class and one-to-one Guidance.
- Sample online consent form and contract for online engagement.
- Examples of Best Practice in Online Guidance
- Guidance Counselling related resources.
- Covid19 related materials (transitioning back to school).
- NCGE should Coordinate groups of Guidance Counsellors to create class content and share nationally
- Behavior Management
- Guidance Counsellor Wellbeing post-Covid19.
- CV, Cover letter and Interview
- Guidance Curriculum for all year groups
- 1st year induction content
- Guidance Related Learning for Senior Cycle
- Managing the Student Support Team
- Template for how to ad remote Guidance to Whole School Guidance Plan

Additional recommendations (by NCGE):

- Future webinars could add a Mentimeter / Zoom Poll to gauge opinions of participants
- Use breakout rooms in Zoom
- Have a webinar aimed at each year group
- Differentiate between DEIS and non-DEIS provision

Conclusion

The webinar series was developed in response to Covid19. Strong numbers registered for and attended each of the four webinars. Feedback from the survey was very positive with a strong cohort agreeing that they would be interested in a future webinar series. As a result, webinars will feature in planning for future CPD.

For further details on this Report or NCGE programme of CPD, please contact ncgeinfo@ncge.ie

NCGE

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