



***ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE INITIATIVE
(AEGI)***

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES 2012

Purpose of these Guidelines

These guidelines are for Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and Waterford Institute of Technology staff managing, administering and delivering adult education guidance services funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) under the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI).

These guidelines are set out in three sections:

- Aim and Objectives
- Terms and Conditions
- Guiding Principles

General queries on these guidelines or the AEGI should be addressed to:

Further Education Section,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
County Westmeath
Kevin.Hogan@education.gov.ie

Guidance queries should be addressed to:

Jennifer McKenzie, Director
National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE),
Prussia Street,
Dublin 7

Section One

Aim and Objectives

1. The overall aim of the AEGI is:

To offer a guidance service to adults which includes impartial adult education information, one-to-one guidance and group guidance, which will help people to make informed educational, career and life choices.

2. The AEGI is based on an integrated model of adult educational guidance counselling which is:
 - inclusive of the pre-entry, entry, ongoing and pre-exit stages and is
 - inclusive of personal, educational and vocational guidance;
 - working in partnership at local level, meeting a spectrum of guidance needs of the target groups, employing a range of methodologies including information provision, one-to-one guidance, group guidance and outreach provision;
 - based within the VECs/other managing providers;
3. Guidance is a key aspect of further education programmes and should be available at all stages including pre-entry and pre-exit on an integrated basis. Under the AEGI, individual AEG Services (AEGS) provide personal, educational and vocational guidance which supports learners to make informed decisions (for example, about course choice and certification if required, progression plans, recognition of prior learning, etc). AEGS provide ongoing guidance which also supports the learner's motivation to continue with a programme, especially where previous educational experiences may have been negative.
4. All AEGS should be offered free-of-charge to any person who is in one of the target groups identified at (20) below.

Section Two: Terms and Conditions

- **Administration**
- **Management Structure**
- **Role of the NCGE, the National Advisory Group and the DES**
- **Integrated Service Approach**
- **Target Groups**
- **Eligible Costs**

Administration

5. The AEGI is administered by the DES on an annual calendar year basis.
6. The VEC/WIT submit financial reports to the DES three times annually. AEGS complete twice yearly reports via the Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS) for DES which is co-ordinated and monitored by NCGE. These reports provide quantitative and qualitative reports for quality assurance purposes. NCGE publish the Executive report of these twice yearly reports onto the AEGI Web based-Handbook for review and reference purposes

Management Structure

7. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Head of Student Life and Learning in WIT has overall responsibility for all VEC activities including the AEGS. The AEG Coordinator has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the staff of the AEGS, including supervision of Information Staff and/or other guidance counsellors, and for planning and evaluation of the service as deputed by the management structure.
8. The AEG Coordinator (and in WIT, the REGSA Coordinator) should work as part of an integrated Adult Education Service which may also include Adult Literacy, Community Education, Intensive Tuition in Adult Basic Education (ITABE), DEIS Family Literacy, Skills for Work, the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) or the Prison Education Service.
9. The AEG Coordinator should develop and agree appropriate adult education guidance programmes for these programmes and AEGS staff should deliver those programmes in consultation and co-operation with staff in the further education programmes listed above. AEG Coordinators and staff should also liaise with staff in the other further education programmes (Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) and Youthreach).
10. The organisation of the AEGS and its management, e.g., in relation to “catchment areas”, is a decision for the CEO/Head of Student Life and Learning in WIT. The CEO/Head of Student Life and Learning may delegate responsibility for the management of the funding allocated under the AEGI to relevant adult education service managers.
11. **AEGS staff should be recruited in line with Circulars 70/2004 and 15/2007 and the provisions of Circulars 22/2009 and 23/2009 on public sector appointments must be adhered to.**

Role of the NCGE, the National Advisory Group (NAG) and the DES

12. The DES provides funding for the AEGI through VECs and WIT and provides funding for the NCGE. It appoints and chairs the NAG.
13. The NCGE is an agency of the DES whose role is to develop and support quality guidance provision in the education sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice. NCGE provides advice, support, materials and resources for guidance counselling in the education sector and provides continuing professional development (CPD) for guidance practitioners.
14. The NCGE's role with regard to the AEGI is to:
 - support AEGS nationwide in partnership with the DES, VEC/WIT, AEG staff, external evaluators and other relevant organisations and agencies at local and national level;
 - provide advice as appropriate to AEGI staff to assist them in resolving operational and strategic issues;
 - Provision of CPD for AEGS staff
15. The NAG comprises representatives of DES, NCGE, IVEA and the AEGAI. Its terms of reference are:
 - To identify policy issues emerging in adult guidance and to discuss solutions with a view to informing the policy decisions;
 - To build on the experience and to continue to support the development of models of good practice for provision of guidance to hard to reach groups;
 - To consider how best practice outcomes can inform policy, practice and evolution of the service; and
 - To review and evaluate relevant AEGI reports.
16. A wider group of interested stakeholders will meet less frequently, but at least once a year. The purpose of this group will be to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to input into the direction of Adult Guidance policy. The group will comprise NAG members and:
 - National Co-ordinators of Further/Adult Education Programmes
 - The NCGE Management Committee
 - FÁS
 - DSP
 - National Educational Welfare Board
 - AEOA
 - AONTAS
 - NALA

Integrated Service Approach

17. The AEG Co-ordinator, the AEO and other relevant service managers should ensure that a comprehensive plan is in place to ensure that adult education services work co-operatively together on an intra-agency basis (Local Area plans drawn up between AEGS and Adult Literacy Organisers under ITABE could inform the plan). This plan should be developed and agreed with the CEO and relevant members of the VEC senior

management team and the AEO should report to the CEO on its implementation on a regular basis. The foundation of such an integrated approach includes communication, information sharing and joint planning and reporting and a formal forum for this should be established.

18. Within approved centres a team approach by staff to planning, development and review should be adopted to maximise the coherence of the overall programme. This should apply both *within* individual programmes and between *different* programmes.
19. An integrated service model depends on more than 'regular meetings'. Examples of features of such an integrated model include a common VEC database (recognising that the AEG Services currently have a separate confidential client information database), pre-course placement sessions, operational planning meetings, joint brochures and publicity, generic course descriptions and outreach meetings.
20. AEGS staff (in collaboration with other VEC personnel and as designated by the AEG Co-ordinator) should participate in networks and partnerships with other local organisations including key community and voluntary interests, employers, employment services and relevant state agencies, including the Department of Social Protection.
21. AEGS, under the direction of the CEO/AEO/AEGS Coordinator, should make sure that there is appropriate liaison with local and regional welfare offices to ensure the referral of unemployed people to further education programmes in accordance with Circular 76/2011 - Interim Protocol to enable referral of unemployed people to Further Education programmes funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

Target Groups

22. The AEGI targets individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation and are more difficult to engage in the formal learning process. A list of these groups (which are the same target groups listed in the BTEI and ALCES operational guidelines and should be understood to include VTOS participants) is set out below.
 - Adults and young people aged over 16¹ who left school with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy levels
 - The unemployed, particularly the priority groups identified as part of the Government's activation agenda.
 - The long-term unemployed and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, especially those in the older age groups
 - Those not in work but not eligible to be on the Live Register
 - Those in the workplace with basic skills needs
 - Disadvantaged women who have particular experience of barriers to participation
 - Disadvantaged men, including those experiencing rural isolation
 - Lone Parents and others with caring responsibilities that may prohibit their participation in full time courses

¹ Young people aged over 16 years of age are eligible to participate in BTEI and Adult Literacy programmes. Community Education programmes are open to those over 18 years of age and VTOS for unemployed people over 21 years of age. Where a young person aged between 16-18 years of age presents, AEGS staff should deal with them appropriately and in line with VEC child protection guidelines.

- Travellers
- Homeless People
- Substance Misusers
- Ex-offenders
- People with Disabilities
- People for whom English is not the mother tongue, who require language and literacy supports
- Former residents of designated education institutions and eligible family members.

Eligible Costs

23. The Department's AEGI allocations may be used for the following pay and non-pay costs:
- Pay of staff
 - Co-ordination, management and administration
 - Technical support
 - Overheads using existing premises, equipment and materials
 - Outreach provision
 - Publicity
24. Pay costs may include costs related to co-ordination and administration and the provision of supports such as staff training and supervision of guidance counsellors as set out in Appendix 5.
25. Any transfer of AEGI funding to any other programme must have the prior written approval of the Department. Such a decision should be formally recorded in the committee's proceedings and be identified in the Financial Returns

Section Three: Guiding Principles

26. The AEGI is underpinned by the following Code of Principles as outlined in the National Guidance Forum Lifelong Guidance Framework Quality Guidelines (2007):
- Accessible;
 - Appropriate;
 - Confidential;
 - Equality of opportunity;
 - Impartial;
 - Individual Ownership and Opportunity;
 - Integrated;
 - Quality Standards and delivery;
 - Team Approach;
 - Transparent
 - Complaints handling.

Quality Standards and delivery

27. The AEGI web-based Handbook, managed by NCGE provides detailed national guidelines for AEGS staff and management on good practice in quality service provision and resources to support provision (www.ncgeaegihandbook.com).

28. The AGMS is provided to all AEGS and completion is mandatory for good practice in guidance client information management and for national qualitative and quantitative reports to DES/NCGE. This is a confidential guidance database with access to client information for AEGS staff only.

CPD for AEGS staff

29. NCGE provides an annual programme of CPD for AEGS staff, focusing on adult guidance provision to the designated target groups, in line with national priorities. Alongside this CPD programme, AEGS guidance counsellors and co-ordinators are required to attend regular guidance counselling supervision.

Guidance awareness CPD for further education staff

30. In-service training for further education staff (paid and voluntary) should include guidance awareness training in consultation with the AEGS Co-Coordinator

Equality

31. Equality legislation is designed to counter discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community. Applied to adult education, the principle of equality requires that all learners be afforded the opportunity of reaching their potential in their social, cultural, political, economic and other roles.
32. Accordingly, the VEC are expected to develop a pro-active strategy or proofing mechanism to target and prioritise those most at risk, e.g. setting out an Equality Checklist. This will assist in optimising client access to, participation in and benefit from AEGS, and in counteracting barriers arising from differences of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and disability. Guidelines on Equality Mainstreaming for the VEC sector are available from the Equality Authority: www.equality.ie

Accessibility and Inclusiveness

33. The principle of access and inclusiveness means that barriers to participation are removed. AEGS must ensure that services are available on an outreach basis to those who are at most risk of being marginalised. Geographical considerations are important in this respect.

Local Consultation and an Area Based Approach to Planning

34. Strategic planning forms a key element in provision of quality guidance service. AEGS are required to engage in strategic planning, both within VECs/WIT and as a guidance services in themselves, and as set out in the Web-Based Handbook. AEGS should involve themselves in local planning and should consult with relevant local actors and providers to identify needs, avoid duplication and ensure that priorities are addressed. Local advisory groups for the AEGS provide opportunity to ensure coordinated approach for guidance provision in local areas in consultation with relevant local, county and regional plans of local development agencies, County and City Development Boards, DSP etc.
35. Publicity and awareness-raising promotional work, including the services of the impartial information and guidance in AEGS, should take place in the broader context of the single programme for adult learning established for specific geographical areas

within each VEC/WIT. Such an approach will ensure that adult learners are directed to the service that best suits their needs.

Innovation

36. Innovative approaches to guidance delivery should be considered by AEGS, including telephone provision, and e-guidance. The development of models of guidance to suit the needs of the target groups is supported at local and national level by NCGE which should be consulted for advice on this area as appropriate.

Appendix 1

To the Chief Executive Officer of each
Vocational Education Committee
November 2004

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Circular 70/04

Pay and Conditions for Adult Education Guidance Counsellors and Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinators

1. *Background*

The White Paper on Adult Education, "Learning for Life", sets out proposals for the development of an adult educational guidance service to support participants in VTOS, adult literacy and adult and community education programmes. Funds for this have been earmarked as part of the National Development Plan 2000-2006, with the aim of having a comprehensive service in place by 2006. Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the project have been approved and there is now a service operating in 25 areas.

A structure for the employment of the Adult Education Guidance Counsellors and Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinators, covering recruitment, and pay and conditions, as set out below, has been devised.

2. *Recruitment*

Appointments to the position of Adult Education Guidance Counsellor and Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator will be made by the Vocational Education Committees, where the VEC is the sponsor of the initiative, or Institute of Technology, where appropriate.

Where an adult guidance service involves the management of staff, the promotion of outreach, the supervision of quality standards, the evaluation of the service, and guidance and counselling, this role will be deemed to be that of an Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator.

In cases where the guidance counselling function is operated without such supervision and management duties, the person in question should be employed as an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor.

Within the VEC sector, suitability for appointment will be determined by means of an interview conducted by a selection board composed of

- 1 VEC representative (to be a member of a VEC)
- One CEO or nominee
- One representative with expertise in the sphere of adult /community education or guidance
- One adult guidance professional.

Such boards should pay particular attention to candidates' expertise in Adult and Community Education and Guidance.

In other cases, it is recommended that the interview board should include at least one representative of the management structure, one adult guidance professional and one representative of the broader sphere of educational, guidance or community interests.

Where the service is already managed by an Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator, and additional staff are being recruited, the co-ordinator should be a member of the interview board.

3. Qualifications and Experience

To be eligible for employment as an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor or Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator, applicants must hold one of the following :-

- A post graduate diploma in Careers Guidance or Careers Guidance and Counselling or
- A Masters of Education (Guidance) or
- A Master of Science in Counselling

or

equivalent post graduate qualification recognised by the Irish Association of Counsellors and Therapists or the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Experience in the field of education or training, youth work, community development or social science, or a teaching qualification as specified under Memo V7 and/or Circular 32/92, is also desirable. Where the area includes a Gaeltacht, it will also be necessary that the Selection Board be satisfied as to the appointee's competence in the Irish language.

Other Relevant Experience - Teaching, education/training experience in adult or youth work or employment services.

4. Appointments

Successful candidates will be subject to an initial probationary period of one year. Staff already employed in Adult Education Guidance Projects, which have received a Service Agreement covering the period up to 2006, will be deemed to have satisfactorily completed the probationary period, provided they have been employed in the project for at least one year.

Those with qualifications reckonable for recognition as teaching qualifications under Memo V7 or Circular 32/92 may be awarded permanent posts on satisfactory completion of the probationary period, provided the adult guidance project has received a service agreement covering the period up to 2006.

In other cases, and subject to the project operating satisfactorily, a fixed purpose contract may be awarded following successful completion of probation i.e. employment will be continued subject to

- (a) the continued operation of the Adult Education Guidance Initiative; and
- (b) the scale of the Adult Education Guidance programme approved in the area being continued.

In the event of an Adult Education Guidance programme which has been operating satisfactorily for a period in excess of 3 years no longer being required in a scheme, the issue will be the subject of national discussions between the Department, IVEA and TUI.

5. Salary Scale -- Adult Education Guidance Counsellors

Scale Point	Salary Scale at 01.10.02 (including ¼ benchmarking) €	Salary Scale w.e.f. 01.01.04 €	Revised Salary Scale w.e.f. 01.07.04 €
1	32,205	35,259	35,964
2	33,334	36,495	37,225
3	34,461	37,730	38,484
4	35,587	38,963	39,741
5	36,713	40,196	40,999
6	37,842	41,432	42,260
7	38,968	42,665	43,517
8	40,096	43,899	44,777
9	41,222	45,132	46,035
10	42,350	46,366	47,294
11	43,477	47,600	48,553
12	44,766	49,012	49,992
13	46,376	50,773	51,788

6. **Qualification allowances**

Qualification allowances will apply as per the allowances payable to teachers, updated as appropriate by subsequent pay increases, subject to a maximum rate being paid equal to a primary degree (pass or honours) plus a Higher Diploma in Education (pass), as specified from time to time in Department circulars.

7. **Allowance for Co-ordination Duties**

<i>Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator</i>	1.10.02 €	1.1.04 €	1.07.04 €
+ 1 information officer or Guidance Counsellor (1 staff)	2,810	2,894	2,952
AEGC + 2-3 staff	3,676	3,787	3,863
AEGC + 4-5 staff	4,862	5,008	5,108
AEGC + 6-7 staff	6,090	6,273	6,398

A co-ordination allowance as shown above will apply when the guidance counsellor is responsible for the day to day management of the service, including supervision of Information Staff and/or other guidance counsellors, and for planning and evaluation of the service as deputed by the management structure.

8. **Placement on Salary Scale**

New appointees will be placed on the first point of the salary scale. Staff within the teaching service or Youthreach/Traveller service or other relevant public sector education or training or community services who transfer to the post of Adult Education Guidance Counsellor may be placed on the AEGC scale at a salary point immediately above the rate of basic salary which applied prior to the transfer.

Adult Education Guidance Counsellors currently serving in projects will be assimilated on to the new scale with effect from 1 September 2002.

9. **Hours of Attendance**

Adult Education Guidance Counsellors should work for 35 hours per week. Attendance should be at such times as necessary for the delivery of the Adult Education Guidance Service. Attendance outside of normal hours will be by prior agreement with the CEO/EO/AEO of the VEC, (or the project managing authority in other cases) and will be offset against normal hours attendance. Where at least 25% of annual attendance time is outside of normal hours, an additional three days annual leave will be allowed in the year in question.

10. ***Superannuation***

Where staff are in the employment of the VEC or an IOT, service will be pensionable under the conditions set out in the relevant Superannuation Scheme for the sector.

11. ***Annual Leave/Sick Leave***

Adult Education Guidance Counsellors shall have 30 days annual leave, excluding public holidays. Sick Leave arrangements will provide for full pay for certified sick leave up to a maximum of six months in one year, (or 183 days), followed by half-pay thereafter for a maximum of twelve months total sick leave (or 365 days) in any period of 4 years or less. Paid sick leave for absences for minor uncertified indispositions may be allowed up to a maximum of 7 days in a year, provided that absences exceeding 3 consecutive days are medically certified.

12. ***Travel and Subsistence Allowances***

Allowances in respect of travelling and subsistence will be payable in respect of approved journeys on Adult Education Guidance business at rates not greater than those sanctioned by the Minister for Education and Science from time to time.

13. ***Duties of Adult Education Guidance Counsellors***

The duties of the post will include, under the direction of the Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator or CEO/EO/AEO of the VEC, (or the direction of the management structure for the community service or Institute of Technology in other cases) and in accordance with the overall plan for the service approved by the Adult Education Board:

- to provide guidance, counselling and information services to individual clients and to groups, and provide referral services to other agencies as appropriate
- to provide support and advice in the field of guidance and counselling to staff in Further Education centres, and support the development of an integrated curriculum of learning, guidance and progression
- to broker services with educational bodies and other institutions as emerging client needs are identified
- to share good practice from the sector and supporting the mainstreaming of relevant lessons into national policy and practice
- to act in a representative capacity if required on matters relating to adult educational guidance
- to assist in the management of resources, e.g. financial, premises, materials, personnel etc as appropriate, relevant to the needs of the local programme
- to keep records and prepare reports and submissions in consultation with the Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator or CEO/EO/AEO as appropriate

- any other duties appropriate to the needs of the local scheme as may be assigned by the Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator or CEO/EO/AEO for the effective and efficient management of resources.

14. *Additional Duties of Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator*

The Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator will have the following additional functions, under the direction of the CEO/EO/AEO of the VEC, (or the direction of the management structure for the community service or Institute of Technology in other cases) and in accordance with the overall plan for the service approved by the Adult Education Board

- to co-ordinate the day to day operation of the Adult Guidance Service, including planning, supervision of staff, management of premises and resources, and maintenance of records,
- to support staff development, supervise guidance information services and staff, establishing quality standards and guidelines in line with national practice for the initiative,
- to provide an outreach service to adult education centres in the catchment area
- to market and promote the guidance service, including the development of promotional materials
- to develop appropriate networks and partnerships with local agencies in the field of education, training, welfare and community services
- to monitor the service, reporting to the CEO/EO/AEO (or community or other management structure as appropriate) on developments and provision, and informing the work of relevant national agencies.

15. *Requirement to Obtain Appropriate Qualifications*

For those employed in the existing service as co-ordinators who do not have a guidance and counselling qualification, employment may be continued subject to the condition that the appropriate qualifications are obtained within a five year period from the date of this circular. Permanent posts may not be granted in the interim, and the arrangement will apply only where the Department is satisfied with the operation of the overall project. The Department is prepared to consider applications towards the cost of fees for appropriate courses from persons in this category.

16. *Implementation*

Chief Executive Officers are requested to make arrangements to introduce the terms of this circular as soon as possible. It will be a condition of participation in the scheme that the selected candidates participate in in-service training and networks supported by the Department of Education and Science and the National Centre for Guidance in Education and/or VEC, and that the projects supported through the measure fulfil the qualitative, quantitative and financial requirements set out by the Department, the National Centre for Guidance in Education and the VEC.

Pauline Gildea
Principal Officer
24 November 2004

Service Level Agreement

Appendix 2



Circular 0015/2007

To the Chief Executive Officer of each Vocational Education Committee/Sponsor of Adult Guidance Projects

Pay and Conditions for Adult Guidance Information Officers

1. Background

The White Paper on Adult Education, "Learning for Life", sets out proposals for the development of an adult educational guidance service to support participants in VTOS, adult literacy and adult and community education programmes. The service is being developed in phases as resources permit and is now available in 38 areas.

A structure for the employment of the Adult Guidance Information Officers, covering recruitment, and pay and conditions, as set out below, has been devised.

2. Recruitment

Appointments to the position of Adult Guidance Information Officer will be made by the Vocational Education Committees, where the VEC is the sponsor of the initiative, or other sponsor, as appropriate. Please see appendix attached outlining job description.

3. Qualifications

The Leaving Certificate or equivalent will be the minimum requirement.

4. Salary

The salary scale will be effective from the 1st June 2004 in the case of Information Officers who were in service on that date, or from the date of appointment, if subsequent.

Retrospective payments should take account of public service increases under the terms of sustaining progress and the benchmarking process.

5. Salary Scale

The agreed salary scale for those in the post with effect from 1st June 2004 is as follows:

€24,112 - €25,868 - €27,644 - €28,967 - €30,247 - €31,972 - €33,223 - €34,490

For information, this scale updated to 1st Dec. 2006 is as follows:

€27,831 - €29,857 - €31,907 - €33,435 - €34,911 - €36,904 - €38,346 - €39,811

For the sake of equity as between currently serving officers, the scale in the case of currently serving officers will comprise two further long service increments on a personal basis as follows:

1st June 2004: LSI 1: €35,658, LSI 2: €36,832

1st Dec. 2006: LSI 1: €41,157, LSI 2: €42,511

Assimilation will be through placement on the next favourable point with effect from 1st June 2004.

Any currently-serving Information Officer who is already on a higher salary than the above will retain his/her salary on a personal basis.

6. Duties of Post

These are set out in Appendix attached – [click here](#) to view appendix (File Format Word 95KB)

7. Hours of Work

Information Officers must work for 35 hours per week. Attendance should be at times which facilitate the delivery of the Adult Guidance Service.

8. Pensions

Subject to the normal approval process applying to each post (where this has not already taken place), the pension arrangements will be the normal arrangements applying to VEC staff in the administrative structure, with similar arrangements applying where the sponsor is not a VEC.

9. Annual Leave

Annual leave will be 20 days rising to 22 days after 5 years' service, plus whatever days already apply (i.e. privilege days / closed days) to the particular VEC in which they are employed.

Any currently serving Information Officer who already has more than 20 / 22 days' leave, as set out above, will retain his/her current number of days on a personal basis.

10. Sick Leave

Sick leave arrangements will be the standard arrangements that already apply to VEC staff in the administrative structure.

11. Travel and Subsistence

Travel and subsistence arrangements will be the standard arrangements that already apply to VEC staff in the administrative structure.

12. Implementation

Chief Executive Officers or other sponsors of adult guidance projects are requested to make arrangements to introduce the terms of this circular as soon as possible. It will be a condition of participation in the scheme that the selected candidates participate in in-service training and networks supported by the Department of Education and Science and the National Centre for Guidance in Education and/or VEC, and that the projects supported through the measure fulfil the qualitative, quantitative and financial requirements set out by the Department, the National Centre for Guidance in Education and the VEC.

13. Enquiries

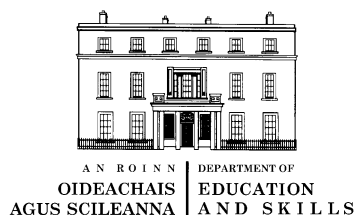
Please direct any queries you may have to Eileen McBrien at above address, Tel: (01) 8892009, email: Eileen_McBrien@education.gov.ie

Breda Naughton
Principal Officer
19 February 2007

Circular 70/2004

Appendix 3

Circular 76/2011



Circular letter 0076/2011

To: The Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees

Interim Protocol to enable referral of unemployed people to Further Education programmes funded by the Department of Education and Skills

Introduction

1. The Government has embarked on a programme of institutional reform as part of labour market activation policy, the objective of which is to prevent the drift into and reduce long-term unemployment. Chief amongst these are the establishment of the National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES) and the establishment of a new further education and training authority – SOLAS. NEES is designed to be a ‘one stop shop’ public employment and benefits service for unemployed people and SOLAS is designed to bring a unifying and central management structure to the further education and training sector.

Purpose of this Circular

2. As part of this programme of institutional reform, protocols will be agreed between NEES, SOLAS and Vocational Education Committees (VECs)/Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs) to ensure that the NEES can refer unemployed people to suitable education and training opportunities at appropriate intervals in accordance with case management activity. However, pending full establishment of both NEES and SOLAS, as well as the completion of the amalgamation of VECs into LETBs, the Government has decided that interim protocols should be agreed by 31 December 2011 so that they can be fully implemented on full establishment of both bodies. This circular is intended to act as that interim protocol.
3. The circular sets out some of the elements that should be contained in the local protocols and in two Appendices, gives an overview of Further Education, and a summary of each programme, including eligibility criteria.

Background to the Protocol

4. It is acknowledged that VECs, D/SP and FÁS are already engaged in a significant programme of transformational change. It is also acknowledged that there is already a formal referral process for unemployed people into FÁS training programmes under the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP), which is underpinned by IT systems and shared data. Finally, it is acknowledged that significant numbers of unemployed people

already access further education programmes, through recruitment by VECs, informal referrals from welfare offices, and on a self-service basis.

5. The protocol is not intended to replace the formal FÁS referral process or be its equivalent or to replace existing local protocols between VECs and welfare offices. Instead, this protocol is intended to complement that formal referral process. It should build upon existing referral protocols, where they exist. It should facilitate access by unemployed people to relevant and useful further education opportunities as part of their progression pathway.

Requirements of a Local Protocol

6. In order to implement this protocol, VEC CEOs should nominate a relevant staff member to act as a VEC contact person for the purposes. This could be the Adult Education Officer (AEO), Education Officer (EO) and/or the AEGI Co-ordinator/Counsellor. The D/SP regional/local offices should nominate contact personnel as well. This could be the County Employment Facilitator or Employment Services Manager. These contact points should arrange a familiarisation session for Employment Service Office and Social Welfare Local Office personnel with relevant VEC staff – AEGI staff and/or programme directors/co-ordinators/managers, as appropriate.
7. From the familiarisation session, VECs and welfare/employment service offices should agree relevant contact points, based on the aims and objectives of the various further education programmes, and the different courses being provided under those programmes, so that welfare offices can ensure access by unemployed people to relevant further education programmes, from their offices. This means that the local protocol should identify who manages each further education programme so that an appropriate referral can be made, e.g. for a referral to an adult literacy intervention, the Adult Literacy Organiser or AEGI Information Officer, as appropriate. In establishing the appropriate referral points, the protocol could build on enhancements to the NEAP and feedback from the piloting of D/SP's new client profiling capability in order to better align referrals with appropriate programmes.
8. The AEGI Information Officer/other relevant VEC staff member could maintain a noticeboard in local welfare offices and/or arrange for information stands on signing-on days, in consultation with welfare office staff. Welfare office staff could maintain regular contact with VEC staff (and vice-versa) in relation to referrals in order to establish if contact or enrolment has taken place and to update on progress, e.g., completion or progression to another programme.
9. The SOLAS Implementation Group will seek an update on progress in implementation of this interim protocol for the end of the first quarter of 2012.

Seamus Hempenstall
Principal Officer
Skills Division
22 December 2011

Appendix 1

Background on Further Education

Post Leaving Certificate (PLC)

The Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programme is a self-contained whole-time learning experience designed to provide participants with specific vocational skills to enhance their prospects of securing lasting, full-time employment or progression to other studies. The programme caters for young people who have completed their Leaving Certificate and adults returning to education.

It is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. There are 32,688 PLC places nationwide, enabling around 38,700 people to participate in courses. 90% of PLC provision is in the VEC sector but there is some in a number of voluntary secondary and community and comprehensive schools. There are just under 200 approved PLC centres nationwide.

Most PLC courses are of one year's duration. However, some PLC courses provide for progression over 2 years and a small number are of 2 years' duration. Since 2008, no new courses that are not at FETAC Level 5 or 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) have been approved, but some existing PLC courses offer certification from other bodies, like City & Guilds or BTEC. All approved PLC courses are listed on www.qualifax.ie.

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

VTOS is targeted at unemployed persons over 21 years of age. Its primary target groups are the longer-term unemployed, the low-skilled and disadvantaged. It aims to give participants education and training opportunities which will develop and prepare them to go into paid employment or on to further education opportunities leading to paid employment.

There are currently almost 6,000 places available nationwide. VTOS is delivered in both Core (stand alone) and Dispersed (Post Leaving Certificate) modes, at NFQ levels 3 – 6. People can combine Junior and Leaving Certificate subjects and FETAC modules under VTOS.

If eligible, participants receive a training allowance in lieu of their welfare payment as well as travel and meal allowances and can access childcare and guidance supports. Tuition, books and material are provided free of charge.

Youthreach

The Youthreach programme provides two years integrated education, training and work experience for unemployed early school leavers without any qualifications or vocational training who are between 15 and 20 years of age.

The programme is funded by the Department of Education and Skills. There are almost 6,000 places available nationwide under the Youthreach umbrella. Almost 3,700 of these places are provided by VECs in just over 100 Youthreach centres. The majority of the remainder of places are provided by FÁS in Community Training Centres.

The programme usually provides two years integrated education, training and work experience. Basic skills training, practical work training and general education are features of the programme, and the application of new technology is integrated into all aspects of programme content.

There is a strong emphasis on personal development, on the core skills of literacy/numeracy, communications and IT, along with a choice of vocational options and a work experience programme.

Learners on the Youthreach programme are entitled to receive training allowances. Additional allowances for meal, travel and accommodation are also available.

Back To Education Initiative (BTEI)

The overall aim of the BTEI is to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of part-time accredited learning opportunities leading to awards on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) to facilitate their access, transfer and progression to other education or employment pathways.

The BTEI enables providers to increase participation through a wider range of flexible options which are appropriate to the particular circumstances of learners, enabling them to combine family, work or personal responsibilities with learning opportunities.

The BTEI enables providers to expand provision of courses leading to certification at NFQ Levels 3 and 4, provide a link to full-time further education and training and offer progression from literacy and community education programmes. It also facilitates participation in ICT training. The BTEI's primary target group is adults who have not completed upper second level education, particularly the so called "hard to reach" that experience strong barriers to participation.

In the current context, the BTEI enables providers to address the skills needs of unemployed people, in particular the priority groups identified in the Government's activation agenda, and to develop part-time education and training opportunities for low skilled people in employment to gain qualifications. The BTEI targets individuals and groups that experience particular and acute barriers to participation and are more difficult to engage in the formal learning process. A list of these groups is set out below:

- Adults and young people aged over 16 who left school with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy levels;
- The unemployed, particularly the priority groups identified as part of the Government's activation agenda;
- The long-term unemployed and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, especially those in the older age groups;
- Those not in work but not eligible to be on the Live Register;
- Those in the workplace with basic skills needs;
- Disadvantaged women who have particular experience of barriers to participation;
- Disadvantaged men, including those experiencing rural isolation;
- Lone Parents and others with caring responsibilities that may prohibit their participation in full time courses;
- Travellers;
- Homeless People;
- Substance Misusers;
- Ex-offenders;
- People with Disabilities; and

- People for whom English is not the mother tongue, who require language and literacy supports.

Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme (ALCES)

Literacy is fundamental to personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability. For the purposes of this circular, Adult Literacy is **the provision of basic education, including reading, writing and numeracy skills, and ICT for adults who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy competencies to enhance their functional participation in personal, social and economic life.**

The target cohort for adult literacy programmes are those adults with less than upper second level education. It is recognised that there are those who have upper second level education but whose literacy and numeracy skills are less than or equivalent to Level 3 on the NFQ and VECs may include this cohort for programmes. All VEC adult literacy programmes are offered free-of-charge to any person over 16 years of age who fulfil the criteria outlined in the points above.

Adult literacy programmes are generally focussed on learning outcomes at NFQ Levels 1-3. Sometimes minor awards or specific support at NFQ Level 4/5 is also provided. This will enable adults to be competent and confident in a range of skills which are essential for full and effective participation in society.

Adult literacy programmes include:

- Intensive Adult Basic Education (ITABE)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Family Literacy
- Workplace Literacy (for county council workers.)
- Skills for Work
- Adult Refugee Programme

Guidance

Educational Guidance is an important part of participation in Further Education programmes and this is supported by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (www.ncge.ie). Research has shown that guidance provision increases retention/completion rates in programmes. Participants in Further Education programmes can access guidance support through:

- In PLC programmes, the school guidance counsellor.
- In Youthreach, through guidance and counselling provided as part of the Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services programme for Youthreach, and;
- In VTOS, BTEI and ALCES, through the Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI), see http://www.ncge.ie/adult_guidance.htm

ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE INITIATIVE (AEGI) OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES 2012

Appendix 2

FURTHER EDUCATION– SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME ELIGIBILITY

Programme	Objective and target groups	Full/part time/	NFQ Levels	Eligibility	Programme Duration	Income supports (depending on individual circumstances).	Educational Supports
PLC	Enable school leavers and adult returners (including the unemployed) to gain major awards to enhance employability for entry or re-entry to the labour market	Full time	5,6	Must be over 16 years old.	Academic Year (programmes are mainly one year)	Back to Education Allowance	Maintenance grant may be available. Guidance available through school guidance service
VTOS	Enable the unemployed, in particular the long-term, low-skilled unemployed avail of full-time opportunities to gain major awards at to enable progression to further education and training or higher education or employment.	Full time	3-5	Must be over 21 and more than 6 months unemployed.	Academic year – courses generally 2 years.	Participants paid training allowance in lieu of primary welfare payment	AEGI, Childcare support may be available through the Childcare Education and Training Scheme (CETS)
Youthreach	Provide early school leavers between 15 and 20 years of age with opportunities to gain major awards to enable progression to further education and training or higher education or employment	Full time	3-5	Must be aged 15-20 years.	Academic year – courses generally 2 years.	Participants paid training allowance in lieu of primary welfare payment	Counselling available, Childcare support may be available through the Childcare Education and Training Scheme (CETS)
BTEI	Provide adults, including the unemployed and in particular, those with less than upper second level education, opportunities to acquire minor awards (modules) in areas of core skills and key competences, in order to enable progression to further education and training or employment.	Part time	1-6, mainly 1-4	Must be over 16. No other set criteria, but courses are provided free of charge for people with less than second level (leaving certificate) education.	Part-time modular courses up to 17 hrs per week or 400 hours annually. Can commence at various times during year.	Participants may keep welfare payment provided they are not receiving any other training payment.	AEGI, Childcare support may be available through the Childcare Education and Training Scheme (CETS)
Adult Literacy and Community Education	Programmes are designed for the hard-to-reach, the disadvantaged, those most distant from the labour market and the low-skilled to return to education in a way that suits them. It is delivered in typical and atypical modes on a highly flexible basis and is focussed on core skills and key competences (literacy, numeracy, personal skills, and communications) to build confidence and enable progression.	Part time	1-3	Provided to people over 16 with literacy/numeracy difficulties. Community Education programmes are targeted at people who are at risk of social exclusion.	Part-time modular courses, between 2-8 hours per week. Literacy programmes can commence at various times.	Participation on A/L C/E programmes does not interfere with welfare entitlements	AEGI

Circular 15/200

**Appendix 4
Circulars 22 and 23/2009**

Circular 0022/2009



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

To: The Managerial Authorities of Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and to the Vocational Education Committees

Implementation of Moratorium on Promotions in the Public Service

The Government has decided to implement a recruitment and promotion moratorium across the civil and public sector including the civil service, local authorities, non-commercial state bodies, the Garda Síochána and the Permanent Defence Forces with effect from 27th March, 2009.

The measures have an immediate impact for schools in relation to the filling of promotion posts other than those of Principal and Deputy Principal.

With effect from 27 March 2009 schools may no longer make any appointment to a post of responsibility including those that may have fallen vacant on or before 27 March 2009. Accordingly schools must immediately cease any arrangements to fill such posts. The replacement of holders of posts of responsibility who are on leave of absence and whose posts of responsibility would normally have been replaced in an acting capacity must not be filled as they are comprehended by this moratorium.

It is a matter for the school authority to re-organise and prioritise the appropriate duties for post of responsibility holders in the context of implementing this moratorium.

The Government decision provides for an exception to the above rule in respect of the filling of the first allocation of posts of responsibility in new schools. The Department will be in direct communication with new schools in relation to their entitlement to fill their first allocation of posts of responsibility.

This circular supersedes all previous circulars and notifications in relation to the filling of posts of responsibility.

ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE INITIATIVE (AEGI) OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES 2012

Queries

Please note the following e-mail addresses in relation to any queries regarding this circular:

Primary Schools - <mailto:PrimaryAllocations@education.gov.ie> and

Post-primary Schools – <mailto:Allocations@education.gov.ie>

Hubert Loftus
Principal Officer
Primary Teacher Allocations

Anne Killian
Principal Officer
Post Primary Teacher Allocations

March, 2009

Information Note – Clarification of Circular Number 0022/2009

The Department has received a number of queries regarding the interpretation of [Circular 0022/2009](#).

In order to assist schools with the implementation of Circular 0022/2009 the position is as follows:

1. Appointments to Principal and Deputy Principal posts **can** continue to be made in the normal way.
2. Appointments to permanent posts of responsibility (other than Principal and Deputy Principal) **cannot** be made including those that were vacant on or before 27 March 2009.
3. Appointments to acting posts of responsibility (other than Principal and Deputy Principal) **cannot** be made including those that were vacant on or before 27 March 2009.
3. With the exception of Principal and Deputy Principal Posts the Government decision also means that with effect from 27 March 2009 existing temporary or acting appointments to posts of responsibility **cannot** be renewed beyond their existing stated end date. If the existing stated end date is specified (e.g. end of current school year or other specified date) then the existing temporary or acting appointment to the post of responsibility must cease from that date and payment of the allowance will be automatically stopped.
4. Where the POR acting appointment was made on the basis of a fixed purpose contract, for the duration of the absence of the original holder, the moratorium will apply when that absence terminates or in the event of the acting appointee leaving the post in the interim for whatever reason.

Please note that in such cases school management authorities will be required to certify that they are in compliance with the terms of paragraph 4 as part of their notification to the Department about the continuation of these POR acting appointments beyond 31 August 2009.

These arrangements apply to all acting posts of responsibility including those arising from leaves of absences such as maternity leave, career break, job sharing and secondment.

ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE INITIATIVE (AEGI) OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES 2012

5. As previously outlined the e-mail addresses for queries in relation to [Circular 0022/09](#) are as follows:

Primary schools: PrimaryAllocations@education.gov.ie

Post-Primary schools: Allocations@education.gov.ie

May 2009



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Circular 23/2009

To: The Managerial Authorities of Community and Comprehensive Schools and to the Chief Executive Officers of Vocational Education Committees

Implementation of Moratorium on Recruitment and Promotions in the Public Service

The Government has decided to implement a recruitment and promotion moratorium across the civil and public sector including the civil service, local authorities, non-commercial state bodies, the Garda Síochána and the Permanent Defence Forces with effect from 27 March, 2009.

This Circular outlines the impact on Community & Comprehensive Schools and Vocational Education Committees in relation to the filling of positions other than Teachers and SNAs. A separate Circular will issue from the Department in respect of Teacher and SNA posts.

Staffing positions other than Teacher and SNA posts

Positions other than Teacher and SNA posts in schools and VECs, including temporary appointments on a fixed-term basis, are comprehended by the Government decision. Accordingly, all such posts, however arising, may not be filled by recruitment, promotion or payment of an allowance for the performance of duties at a higher grade. Community & Comprehensive Schools and VECs are therefore requested to immediately cease any

ADULT EDUCATION GUIDANCE INITIATIVE (AEGI) OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES 2012

arrangements to fill such posts. This also means that no appointments, whether permanent, temporary or by way of acting appointment may be made.

In exceptional circumstances the necessity for such posts may arise and will require the prior sanction of the Minister for Finance.

Additional Information on Department of Finance website

There is further information in relation to this Government decision on the Department of Finance website at www.finance.gov.ie some of which is in question and answer format.

Queries

Please note the following e-mail addresses in relation to any queries regarding this circular:

Community & Comprehensive Schools – ccfinancial@education.gov.ie and

Vocational Education Committees – financialvec@education.gov.ie

Matthew Ryan
Principal Officer
Post Primary Administration
30 March, 2009

Circular 76/2011

Appendix 5
Supervision letter to VECs 2003
Circulars 22 and 23/2009

Rannógán Bhrúisoblaicéirí,
An Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta,
Uirlé 1, Bloc 4,
An t-Áras Árachais,
Sráid Talbóid,
Baile Átha Cliath 1.



Further Education Section
Department of Education and Science,
Floor 1, Block 4,
Irish Life Centre,
Talbot Street,
Dublin 1.

Project Co-ordinator
Adult Educational Guidance Initiative

17th June 2003

Dear Co-ordinator

Re: Minimum Supervision Requirements for AEGI Staff

With reference to the terms of the Service Agreement between the project/VEC and the Department of Education and Science, we wish to outline minimum supervisory requirements for AEGI Staff.

Please note that we do not refer to supervision in a management capacity, but to "caseload supervision", i.e. a working alliance between the Supervisor and the member of AEGI staff, in which the staff member can offer an account or recording of his/her caseload or work with Clients, reflect on it, receive feedback and where appropriate, guidance. The objective is to enable AEGI staff to maintain an ethical competence, knowledge, skills, confidence and creativity so as to offer a high quality service and to monitor good practice.

Each project is required to provide a minimum of two hours of Supervision to staff per month. Funding is to be provided out of the existing annual budget allocated to each project by the Department.

A panel of qualified supervisors is available from the Irish Association of Counsellors and Therapists (I.A.C.T.). The Institute of Guidance Counsellors is in the process of selecting and training their own panel. Please find enclosed an information sheet and list of qualified supervisors from I.A.C.T. for your information. Further details can be obtained from the National Centre for Guidance in Education, if required.

Yours faithfully

Aoife Conduit
Further Education Section
Ext 6409

Appendix 5

Supervision letter to VECs 2003

