



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

National Centre for Guidance in Education

Strategic Plan 2015-2017

Foreword

The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee (MGC) was established by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 2010, as a sub-committee of the Board of Léargas. The MGC agreed the NCGE Strategic Plan for 2012-2014.

In 2014, the MGC began the process to agree the Strategic Plan for 2015-2017.

NCGE commissioned Prospectus Management Consultants to carry out a consultation with all stakeholders to inform the planning process. To complete their report, Prospectus Management Consultants met with the Management of Guidance Committee, staff of NCGE and the members of the National Forum on Guidance and invited all stakeholders to provide their comments and responses directly to Prospectus via an online Survey Monkey questionnaire in late 2014.

A report was provided to the MGC to inform the Strategic Planning process and to identify the Key Goals and Objectives for 2015-2017.

The Strategic Plan 2015-2017 outlined below takes account of the issues arising in the consultation, current national priorities and was agreed by the MGC in May 2015.

Paul King
Chair, Management of Guidance Committee
2014-2016

National and European Union Guidance Context and the Role of the NCGE

National Guidance Provision

Post primary and Further Education and Training

Lifelong Guidance is provided within education and training, for and with the labour market, and requires delivery approaches that are tailored to the target client group (e.g. students/adult learners etc.).

The Education Act 1998¹ requires that a recognised school provides access to appropriate guidance for its students. Hence, DES is responsible for the guidance provision within post primary schools and the Further Education and Training centres.

Higher Education

Careers services in Higher Education institutions currently operate within the student support services in collaboration with student counselling services etc. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) National Access Office provides the Springboard Guidance phone line each year to support applications for specific Springboard courses.

Department of Social Protection (DSP)

Under current government priorities, DSP is responsible for the provision of the Intreo Service – providing career and employment guidance for unemployed adults and the signposting of adults to the FET/HE sector as appropriate.

Role of NCGE

NCGE is an agency of the DES and hence the provision of post primary schools and FET centres falls within its remit.

Working in collaboration and co-operation with the HEA to support good practice, NCGE has advised on and supported the development of this Springboard Guidance Phone Line.

While NCGE does not have a direct role in the development of guidance policy and provision in DSP, however, where the roles of the DSP and the FET guidance services are interconnected through the AEGI² services and the FET strategy, NCGE has a key role to play in the development of such guidance policy and practice.

¹ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0051/>

² AEGI: Adult Educational Guidance Initiative: DES / SOLAS funded guidance services for adults managed by ETBs and WIT nationally.

European Union Guidance Context

The EU Council Resolutions in 2004³ and 2008⁴ outline the vital role of guidance in lifelong learning and the requirement of Member States to support and develop guidance policy at national level. Member States are encouraged to develop Career Management Skills, Quality Assurance in guidance, and to support the access to and co-operation and co-ordination of guidance services

Role of NCGE

NCGE hosts the Euroguidance Centre for Ireland, which is part of the European network of National Resource and Information centres for guidance funded by the EU Commission. The role of Euroguidance is to support mobility throughout Europe through the provision and exchange of information about learning, study and training opportunities available to those working and living within the member states. The main target group of Euroguidance is guidance practitioners and policy makers from both the educational and employment sectors in all European countries.

NCGE is the DES designated representative for Ireland at the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)

Guidance Definitions

Two key national definitions inform the developments of guidance policy and provision in Ireland

'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)⁵

'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)⁶

The Education Act 1998, Section 9 (c) states that a recognised school shall...*'use its available resources to (c) ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices'*.

³ EU Council resolution 2004 Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209286%202004%20INIT>

⁴ EU Council resolution 2008 ...on... better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf

⁵ http://www.nationalguidanceforum.ie/documents/NGF_Guidance_for_Life%20final.pdf

⁶ Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act, 1998
http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/pp_guideliines_second_level_schools_9c.pdf?language=EN

VISION

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

MISSION

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

AIMS

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is an agency of the Department of Education and Skills, established in 1995, operating under the aegis of Léargas.

The Aims of the NCGE, as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills, include to:

- 1. promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools, centres for education, and Further Education and Training settings*
- 2. promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in non-formal settings in accordance with national priorities*
- 3. advise on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning*
- 4. provide advice, support, materials and resources for guidance counselling in education and FET*
- 5. advise on high quality and relevant initial guidance counselling education and training and to provide continuing professional development (CPD) for guidance practitioners*
- 6. organise the provision of guidance to Irish nationals in the European Schools*
- 7. 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 (DES), SOLAS, Directors of Studies of Guidance Counselling (DSGC), the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), the Education and Training Boards Ireland, (ETBI), the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI), Higher Education Authority (HEA), National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), Department of Social Protection (DSP) and other Government Departments and National and Employer agencies where appropriate.

NCGE Strategic Plan 2015-2017

Strategic Objectives

In giving expression to the Aims of the Centre, notwithstanding that guidance is provided throughout the employment, education and training sectors *and* that the focus of lifelong guidance remains lifelong and life-wide, the key focus of NCGE Strategic Objectives for 2015-2017 will include to:

- (i) inform and support the development of DES lifelong guidance policy in the education and training sector
- (ii) develop and support quality guidance practice in post primary schools and the FET sector
- (iii) promote and support a national and EU focus to guidance policy provision and practice

In its commitment to the above, the NCGE will remain adaptable and responsive to the requirements and priorities of the Minister and the Department of Education and Skills.

Strategic Activities

The detailed actions and key performance indicators for the activities listed will be outlined in the NCGE Annual Plan. These activities include to:

1. inform, influence, facilitate and support the development of guidance policy in post primary schools and FET
2. inform, influence, facilitate and support the development of guidance provision and delivery in post primary schools and FET
3. co-ordinate the provision of Continuing Professional development (CPD) for guidance counsellors and practitioners in post primary schools and FET
4. establish, support and promote quality assurance and best practice guidelines for guidance in Post primary schools and FET
5. provide quality information, resources and materials to support guidance provision and practice
6. exchange information on guidance and support development of policy at national and EU level via Euroguidance Centre and National Forum on Guidance, and ELGPN (or its successor as appropriate)

The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee will review the activities and achieved objectives annually. In fulfilling these aims and objectives, NCGE will:

- (i) ensure and promote use of ICT where possible and appropriate
- (ii) engage with all relevant stakeholders
- (iii) establish a process to review and reflect on development of activities and programmes
- (iv) ensure compliance with governance requirements