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## FOREWORD FROM CHAIR

As Chair of the Management of Guidance Committee of NCGE, I welcome the opportunity to present the 2019 Annual Output Statement Report of the National Centre for Guidance in Education.

This Statement is published at an unprecedented time in our nation's history in the context of COVID-19. As a consequence, many of the successful and innovative projects launched by NCGE during 2019 and illustrated in this Statement will have an even greater significance for 2020, for example, the Whole School Guidance Framework (WSGF) and the provision of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for ETB AEGS staff.

In April 2019 NCGE welcomed the publication by the Department of the 'Indecon Review of Career Guidance Report' with specific reference to the governance and activities of NCGE and recommendations for the development of a National Policy Group to develop a coherent long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance. We very much look forward to contributing and supporting the Department's 'Implementation Task Force' to drive the proposed reforms arising from the Report.

I commend the creativity and responsiveness of NCGE and the energetic and enthusiasm of our experienced and new NCGE staff under the able directorship of Ms Jennifer McKenzie.

I am most grateful to my colleagues on the Management of Guidance Committee combining their broad range of professional expertise from a range of guidance policy and practice areas and who are steadfastly committed to supporting the staff and work of the Centre.

The publication of this statement for 2019 coincides with the retirement earlier this year of the Executive Director of Léargas, Mr. Jim Mullin. We are indebted to Jim for his relentless commitment to NCGE over his long years of service as Director of Léargas. The activities and outputs of this and previous Statements from NCGE reflect Jim's innate capacity for collaborative leadership and his unfailing support to the Director and staff of NCGE for which we are eternally grateful. We wish him well in his retirement.

Paul King, CHAIR, NCGE Management of Guidance Committee



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

2019 was a busy year for the National Centre for Guidance in Education, signing off on a revised Strategic Plan for 2019 -2020 and recruitment of new staff to continue to deliver on our nationally agreed objectives and activities. 2019 also marked a turning point in guidance with the publication of the Indecon report on the Review of Career guidance 2018-2019. The clarification of the requirement for a National Guidance Strategy, with interdepartmental involvement in the development of this Strategy, is welcomed by all in the guidance community. NCGE awaits the outcome of the DES decisions in this regard to inform planning for guidance policy and provision into the future.

As we complete this Output Statement for 2019, the country and its people are exiting the severe restrictions on personal, social, educational and economic communities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. With closures of education and business organisations, guidance provision has gone “online” so many of the services and programmes of 2019 have been reconsidered and reconfigured by all involved in guidance policy, provision and practice. When we reflect on the NCGE activities and outputs from 2020, there will be many changes and differences compared to 2019 and other previous years.

It remains my honour and pleasure to work with and lead such a dedicated, committed and professional team. The continued support of the Chair, Paul King and the Management of Guidance Committee for the work of NCGE throughout 2019 is immeasurable and was confirmed in their agreement to continue into and beyond 2020 if required. On a personal note, I wish to offer my most sincere thanks to Jim Mullin, Executive Director of Léargas, for his constant support since my appointment as Director. NCGE is ever the wiser from his personal and professional commitment to the developments, role and remit of the Centre since its establishment.

While I expect this may be the last Output Statement of this type from NCGE, change is good, and as guidance is always about supporting people through transitions, guidance policy and provision must adapt to suit the needs of clients. In NCGE, we look forward to supporting the required development of guidance policy and practice to ensure quality guidance provision continues in schools and FET in a Covid-19 aware society.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Jennifer McKenzie'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer McKenzie, DIRECTOR, NCGE



## THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION

The National Centre for Guidance in Education 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. The Department's Management of Guidance Committee agreed that the Mission and Vision of NCGE are as follows:

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

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

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

**'Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society'**

*National Guidance Forum 2007*

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

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

**The overarching strategic aim of NCGE is: To inform the policy of the Department and support the development and implementation of quality guidance practice in Post-Primary and FET in accordance with national and international good practice.**

**The strategic objectives of the NCGE in 2019 included to:**

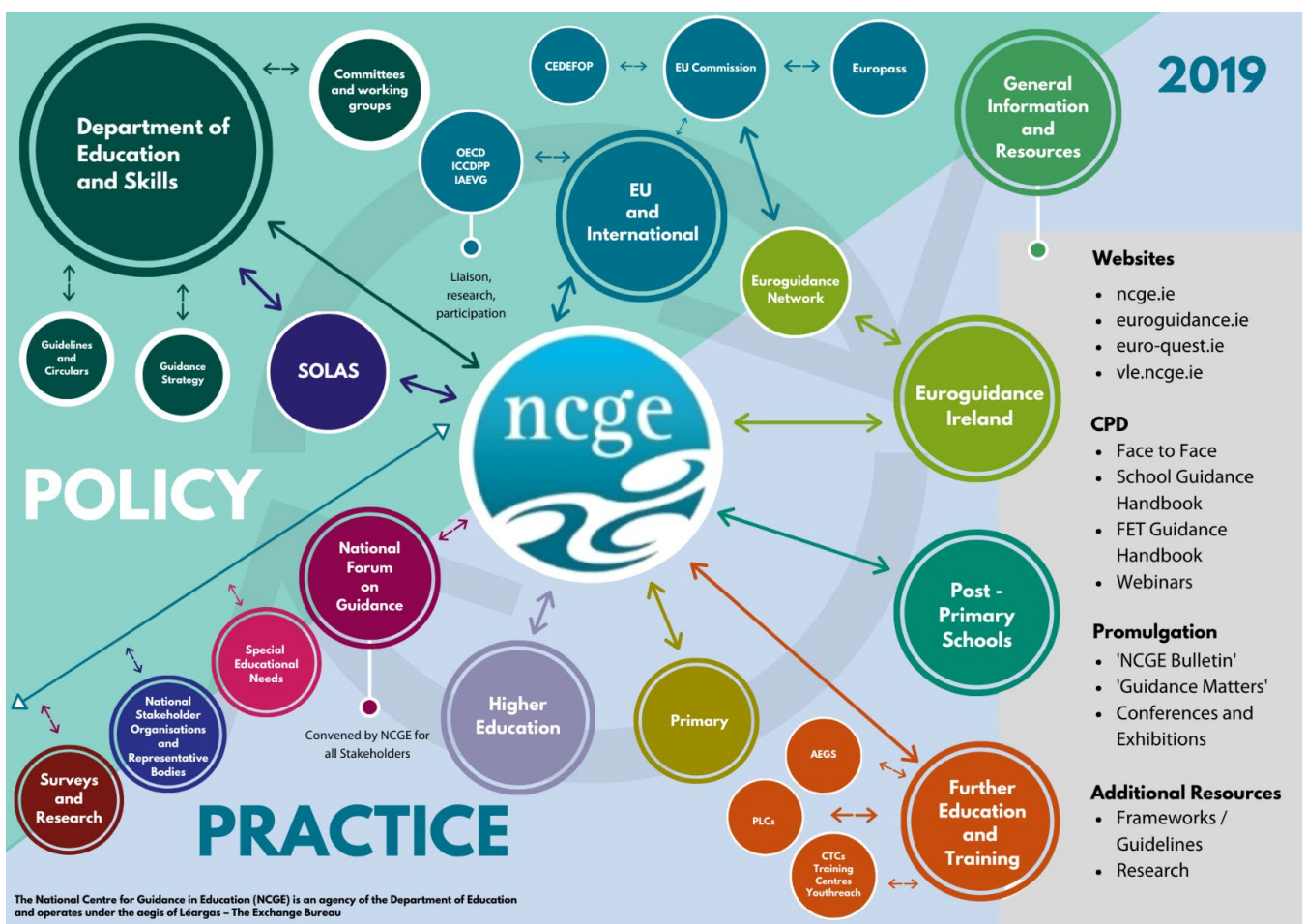
- Inform, influence, facilitate and support the development of Department Lifelong Guidance Policy
- Inform, influence, facilitate, develop and support the implementation of quality guidance practice in post-primary schools and Further Education and Training (FET) Sector
- Provide guidelines, resources and materials to support quality guidance practice and policy development
- Promote and support a National and EU focus to Guidance Policy Provision and Practice
- Coordinate and deliver continuing professional development to guidance practitioners in schools and FET in collaboration with stakeholders
- Adhere to Department Governance and Compliance Requirements

***The full strategic document is contained in the appendix from P32.***

NCGE provides support and development for guidance practitioners in the education and training sector and promotes European mobility and the European dimension of guidance in education and training. NCGE is the Department representative at EU Commission meetings on guidance and a member of the [Europass Advisory Group](#).

As a member of the [Euroguidance Network](#), part funded by the Department of Education and [DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion](#) (European Commission), the Centre also assists people seeking information on education and training opportunities in Europe. NCGE provides information, advice, and assistance to a wide range of organisations and individuals involved in education, training and employment on guidance matters.

### NCGE 'Activities Diagram' (2019)



# 1. NCGE GOVERNANCE

## The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee (MGC) 2017-2019

The Minister for Education nominated the Chair and membership of the Management of Guidance Committee 2017-2019. These nominations were ratified and appointed to the Committee by the Board of Léargas. In 2019 the Department and the Board of Léargas agreed that an extension to the term of office of this Committee was prudent given the Department considerations of the recommendations of the [Indecon Review of Career Guidance](#) and the NCGE focus on strategic projects to support the Department at that time. Thus, the current NCGE MGC member organisations were requested to confirm their agreement to extended membership for 12-24 months; being determined by the Department as appropriate.

Terms of Reference for the role of the Management of Guidance Committee are available to download at [www.ncge.ie/ncge/who-manages-ncge](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/who-manages-ncge).

***A full list of current MGC members can be seen on P29.***

## DES Indecon Review of Careers Information and Tools

In April 2019 the Department published the '[Indecon Review of Career Guidance Report](#)' which made specific reference to the governance and activities of NCGE and outlined recommendations for the development of a National Policy Group to develop a coherent long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance. On publication of the report, the Minister announced the establishment of the Department 'Implementation Task Force' to drive the proposed reforms.

## Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA)

In 2019, NCGE and Léargas agreed the annually revised Performance Delivery Agreement with the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Unit (CAP) of the Department on the role of NCGE, defined as follows:

- acting as a centre of excellence for guidance in relation to Post Primary and Further Education and Training (FET)
- informing the policy of the Department in the field of guidance
- co-ordinating and hosting the National Forum on Guidance
- delivering key actions outlined in the [Action Plan for Education \(2016-2019\)](#)

The PDA confirmed that SOLAS is responsible for the funding of guidance within the FET sector whereby SOLAS oversees the development and evaluation of guidance provision. SOLAS funds NCGE to support the implementation of the strategic priorities of the FET Strategy as pertains to guidance. The Department remains responsible for the overarching policy for the FET sector, including guidance. This revised PDA was co-signed by Léargas, NCGE, CAP and the International Section of the Department as part of the governance section of the Department for Léargas.

## Finance Sub Committee

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

## Organisational Activities

The Management of Guidance Committee met 6 times in 2019. The Committee reviewed and revised the NCGE Strategic Plan for 2019-2020 pending the outcome of the Departments decisions on the implementation of the Indecon Review report. A public record of each meeting, based on the approved Minutes, are available online.

See - [www.ncge.ie/ncge/who-manages-ncge](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/who-manages-ncge)

## Staffing

NCGE operated to July 2019 with 6 full time staff: Director, Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET), Guidance Officer (Euroguidance), Office Administrator, Programme Administration Officer and Communications Officer. The Department approved the recruitment of a Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary) with appointment taking place in August 2019. Following the ending of a secondment contract of the Guidance Officer (Euroguidance) in July 2019, the Department also approved recruitment to fill this position, with appointment taking place in September 2019.

As recruitment of fulltime staff was not approved pending the outcome of the Indecon report, NCGE issued a public call for suitably qualified guidance professionals with relevant expertise, who wished to be considered for a *'Panel of External Consultant Guidance Professionals'* to work with NCGE on various projects over a 2 year period. 15 qualified guidance and related sector experts applied to work with NCGE on various projects and in 2019 individual project contracts were issued to 9 experts from the panel.

See - [www.ncge.ie/ncge/panel](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/panel)

The Staff Performance Management Review system was continued into 2019, with further HR support provided by the Léargas appointed HR Generalist.



## 2. PRIMARY EDUCATION

The NCGE strategic plan outlined the priorities of the NCGE Work Programme, referring specifically to Post Primary, FET and European sectors. In Ireland there is currently no formal provision for Guidance in primary schools. NCGE continues however to highlight examples of best practice in guidance, play therapy, coaching and skills programmes for primary education through the inclusion of relevant articles as appropriate in NCGE's 'Guidance Matters' publication.

[Sample Article \(Spring 2019\)](#)

See - [www.ncge.ie/ncge/guidance-primary](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/guidance-primary).

## 3. POST PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

### Enhancing collaboration

In August 2019, following the appointment of the new Guidance Programme Co-ordinator (post-primary), NCGE instigated a series of meetings with national key agencies and stakeholders with a focus on exploring and prioritising the development of positive working relationships to further promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools. Examples of organisations met were - Careers Portal, JMB, DES Inspectorate, CAO, IGC, NCCA, La Touche (Legal Training), USI, ISSU, and The Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities (TCPID).

### Promoting quality guidance practice at home and abroad

Over the course of 2019 the Guidance Programme Co-ordinator (post-primary) attended and participated at several national and international events promoting the development and support of quality guidance practice in post-primary schools. Nationally such events participated in included the 2019 CAO Conference, the Technological Universities Research Network (TURN) Publication Conference and the Growing Up in Ireland Research Conference.

***More details on international participation can be seen on P16.***

In addition, the Guidance Programme Co-ordinator (post-primary) presented to DCU MSc Students of Guidance Counselling and at the Guidance Counsellor Supervision Conference. Internally, collaboration began with the NCGE Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET) to develop and facilitate CPD on psychometric testing.

## Whole School Guidance Framework (WSGF) – Pilot Phase 2

In 2019, those schools who had participated in the [initial WSGF pilot](#) were invited to participate in [Phase 2](#) which sought to review and gain a deeper understanding of the implementation processes and changes made in response to the WSGF. 12 of the original 16 pilot schools took part. As part of this phase schools shared their learning experiences on the process(es) of improvement planning in their school by identifying what had been done in their schools to date and highlighting the issues and challenges they continued to face. Phase 2 also provided the opportunity to discuss and propose how NCGE could provide further supports to schools and Guidance Counsellors and consider how Whole School Guidance planning could be connected to or reflect school self-evaluation processes.

### Development of resources

Stemming from the feedback generated in this pilot and congruent additional feedback received, a central focus of NCGE's post-primary programme over 2019 was the development of additional resources for Whole School Guidance provision and the delivery of related CPD.

***Information in relation to this CPD provision can be seen on P18.***

## 4. FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) SECTOR ACTIVITIES

**During 2019, the development of the FET Guidance Strategy remained 'on hold' pending the outcome of the DES Review of Career Guidance. NCGE engaged with [SOLAS](#) on all relevant activities for FET guidance. Nonetheless NCGE continued to foster improved understanding of Guidance across full range of FET provision, engaging collaboration and cooperation and consultation where possible.**

### Supports for ETB Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS)

[www.ncge.ie/ncge/adult-educational-guidance-services](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/adult-educational-guidance-services)

NCGE continued to support the provision of quality guidance within the Adult Education Guidance Services (AEGS) of the ETBs, working on behalf of DES and SOLAS, in collaboration with ETBI, on the development of the AEGS nationally.

#### Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS)

NCGE coordinates and manages the confidential Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS) database on behalf of SOLAS, with completion by the Guidance staff of the ETB AEGS (required by SOLAS) from which NCGE generates annual reports. *These reports can be accessed through the link above.*

NCGE established the FET Guidance Management System (FET GMS) Working Group (Phase 1) to consider the current ETB AEGS Adult Guidance Management System and issues regarding useful,

appropriate data gathering and reporting for FET Guidance. The FET GMS working group included representatives of DES, SOLAS, AEOA, AGA, AEGS staff, Directors of FET and ETBI. The group considered the developments required to widen the use of the data gathering system across FET guidance services. The FET GMS working group continued into 2020 to complete 'Phase 1' FET GMS working group by submitting a proposal to SOLAS for the development and piloting of a FET GMS.

### AGMS Research Project

In 2019, NCGE established a formal research project to consider all the data, quantitative and qualitative, gathered on the AGMS from 2004-2018. Due for completion in 2020, this research will provide body of evidence on the delivery of adult guidance services from the initial stages of the AEGI "pilot projects" to the embedded services of the ETBs up to 2018.

The research is not designed to provide an 'evaluation' of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative, the Adult Educational Guidance Services, ETBs nationally nor will it provide an 'evaluation' of the AGMS. The Research will inform the final completion, close-off and archiving of the AEGI AGMS system with a view to informing the establishment and development of the new FET Guidance Management System. To support this Research, NCGE established the AGMS Overarching Research Advisory Group with representatives of the AEGS and Adult Guidance Association.

### NCGE Interim GDPR Agreements with ETBs re AGMS

NCGE engaged in consultation with GDPR experts, SOLAS and ETBI and sought Léargas / NCGE legal advice in consideration of national policy in meeting the challenges involved in ensuring GDPR compliance by the AGMS. Discussions continued throughout 2019 to ensure agreement of each of the 16 ETBs. Final Draft of the Interim GDPR agreements were reached in December for sign off between NCGE and each of the 16 ETBs in 2020.

### Advisory Groups and Committees

In accordance with the NCGE remit to work with stakeholders, to influence the development of policy as relevant to guidance, the NCGE FET Guidance Programme Coordinator continues to participate in various national advisory groups and committees including:

- Aontas Project Advisory Group for European Agenda for Adult Learning & EPALE
- QQI convened RPL Practitioner Network Steering Group
- QQI convened National Advisory Group for VISKA
- Irish University Association FE to HE Subgroup
- ETBI DEIS Learners Transitioning to FET Steering Group
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment Sustainable Development Goals Stakeholder Forum
- SOLAS National Advisory Committee on Universal Design for Learning Guidelines (NAC UDL)
- SOLAS Programme Evaluation Advisory Committees (BTEI, SST, STP Programmes)

## Other Activities

- NCGE FET programme supports the promotion of the European dimension of guidance through collaboration with Euroguidance Ireland, Eurodesk and Leargas.  
**Further information available on P16.**
- Collaboration with Careers Portal on development of video promoting FET opportunities and the available Guidance Counselling and ETB Adult Guidance Service Supports for Pre-Entry, During Programme and Post Programmes.
- Collaboration with Euroguidance on EU Study Visits hosted by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland in 2019
- Attendance at IAEVG International Conference
- Engagement with FESS (Further Education Support Services) to maximise reciprocal CPD planning and delivery for FET Guidance staff
- Ongoing collaboration NCGE with NALA regarding FET Guidance integration and access to NALA Distance Learning Service and Tutor Training events
- Collaboration with An Cosán Virtual Community College regarding FET Guidance integration into An Cosan Community Education/Blended Learning provision and Community Education National/ Training events
- Attendance at the DEASP Social Inclusion Forum 2019, and launch of the DEASP Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 Ambitions, Goals and Commitments

## 4. HIGHER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

### Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (DSGC)

[www.ncge.ie/ncge/directors-studies-guidance-counselling](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/directors-studies-guidance-counselling)

This Committee represents the universities in Ireland which provide initial education and training programmes for guidance counselling. These include the Directors of the programmes in Dublin City University, Maynooth University, and University of Limerick. While University College Cork had provided this guidance counselling qualification course, NCGE were notified in 2019 that UCC would not continue with the delivery of this programme. The DES Inspectorate also attends this Committee meeting.

In 2019, the Teaching Council, on behalf of the Department, established the Review Panel to review each of the University Guidance Counselling programmes in accordance with the [Programme Recognition Framework](#). NCGE provided technical advice to the Review Panel and continued to liaise directly with the Directors.

The outcome of the review process deemed the programmes “recognised” by the Department of Education, so that the graduates of those Universities would be considered eligible for employment as guidance counsellors’ in post primary schools and FET sector.

## Other Activities

- Representatives of the Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) attended the National Forum on Guidance meetings
- Guidance Matters included articles on guidance issues in higher education and highlighted examples of innovative practice and resources.

## 5. THE EUROPEAN GUIDANCE SECTOR

### Euroguidance Ireland

[www.euroguidance.ie](http://www.euroguidance.ie)

The Euroguidance network consists of Euroguidance Centres in 34 European countries. Its mission is to promote the European dimension in lifelong guidance in member countries and to foster international learning mobility by means of guidance services. Its key target group is guidance practitioners in education and employment, who provide information and guidance on international mobility to end-users seeking studying and training opportunities abroad. The Euroguidance Ireland Centre, hosted by NCGE, promotes this European dimension of guidance and provides quality information on lifelong guidance and learning mobility for guidance professionals and individuals seeking to study or train abroad.

### The Euroguidance Network

[www.euroguidance.eu](http://www.euroguidance.eu)

In 2019 Euroguidance Ireland continued as an active member of the Euroguidance Network, attending network meetings and participating in the work of the MTG 1 Mobility Advice and MTG 3 Communications and Promotion Working Groups.

#### **Meetings attended in 2019 included.**

- Euroguidance Network Meeting, Bucharest, April 2019
- Euroguidance Network Meeting, Helsinki, November 2019

Euroguidance Ireland also joined the Academia coordinators meeting in December 2019 in Mannheim, as it was scheduled to host an Academia study visit in April 2020 with 12 participants from the European guidance community. The implementation of changes in the structure of the network took shape in Spring 2019. The small working groups (entitled 'New Ways of Working') and the 'Steering Group' have been established for the Network and are now up and running.

**The main goals of the Steering Group are to ensure:**

- Sustainable development of the Network
- High levels of engagement of the Network members
- Proactive communication with the international guidance community

**Thus far, the new ways of working have proven to be successful. This is:**

- More active engagement in the work at network level
- Better coordination between task groups
- More long-term planning, with regular plans and follow up between network meetings

The network will invite internal feedback in relation to the effects of this change in governance structures in early 2020, for review.

## Study Visits & Peer Learning

[www.euroguidance.ie/study-visits](http://www.euroguidance.ie/study-visits)

**NCGE /Euroguidance Ireland hosts and attends study visits and other peer learning and networking events (as outlined in the grant request for the Euroguidance programme of activities 2018-2020). These activities aim to support the sharing of international best practice in guidance among guidance practitioners and other relevant professionals.**

### Study Visits hosted by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland in 2019:

**In February 2019**, NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland hosted a study visit: Providing meaningful guidance in a Multicultural context - focusing on the New Skills Agenda in Upskilling Pathways. The purpose of the event was to explore the challenges of providing meaningful guidance in a multicultural context; with reference to upskilling and 'The New Skills Agenda' through the exploration of models of provision. This study visit included sharing the ongoing development and practice of guidance provision to migrants, asylum seekers and those living in 'Direct Provision' Centres around Ireland and the sharing of existing good practice by participants during site visits to several Irish guidance services.

See- <https://euroguidance.ie/study-visit-2019>

**In April 2019**, NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland supported a Finnish Study group to explore guidance provision in education and training sector in Ireland, facilitating interactions with other government departments including DEASP.

As host of the Euroguidance Centre Ireland, NCGE actively promotes practitioner participation; regularly hosting such exchanges and disseminating information on opportunities available abroad. **In August 2019** the Irish National Agency, Léargas, provided NCGE with details of such an opportunity in Denmark. [Three Irish Guidance Counsellors were selected to take part.](#)

## Peer learning events participated in by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland in 2019:

**All NCGE staff have a role to support and promote the European dimension of Guidance and to represent NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland and participate in various national, European and International events as outlined below:**

**June 2019** - NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland Director led the Country team, attended and participated in the [9th International ICCDPP Symposium](#) in Tromso, Norway.

**September 2019** - NCGE / Euroguidance Director attended and presented at the EU Commission Workshop on [Lifelong guidance policy and practice in the EU: trends, challenges and opportunities](#), Brussels, Belgium.

**September 2019** - NCGE Guidance Programme Co-Ordinator in Post Primary and FET, both of whom have a role in supporting Euroguidance, attended and participated at the [2019 IAEVG Conference](#) in Bratislava/Brno, Slovakia/Czech Republic.

**September 2019** - The NCGE Director attended the third [CareersNet](#) Meeting in Rome, Italy.

**October 2019** - NCGE Director attended and presented at [International Conference – Career Development: Identity, Innovation and Impact](#), Birmingham, UK.

'**Time to Move**' (TTM) is a Eurodesk Europe-wide campaign which informs young people and those who work with them about opportunities to work, study, train and volunteer in Europe. Following the NCGE involvement in TTM events in 2017 and 2018, the focus for [TTM '19](#) was on facilitating programme participants and young people directly. In promoting the European dimension of guidance and mobility in the FET sector and in partnership with Euroguidance Ireland, NCGE attended and encouraged participation and networking by guidance and information providers at the 2019 series of events.

**November 2019** – NCGE Director attended the Finnish Presidency Conference Lifelong Guidance Seminar, Helsinki, Finland

**November 2019** – NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland presented at the [Eurodesk Ireland](#) Network meeting

**November 2019** - NCGE FET in conjunction with Léargas hosted an Erasmus+ funded Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA) entitled [Developing and Managing Career Resilience in Adult and Vocational Education and Training](#). This activity was organised within the sub-theme of 'the significant challenges for Guidance Counsellors in supporting adults in managing 'career security' in an insecure world'

**December 2019** - NCGE Guidance Programme Co-Ordinator in Post Primary attended and presented at the Winter School of Career Guidance, Slovakia

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland instigated a new programme of lectures to the students of guidance counselling in the 4 Universities in Ireland, for the academic year 2019 -2020. These lectures include information on national and international guidance policy and the role of Euroguidance.

## EUROPASS Advisory Group

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland continues to liaise and collaborate with QQI as the national data source for core information and EQF-NCP Ireland to ensure that appropriate guidance, EQF and Europass information is included within the information provided to the Learning Opportunities Portal.

The EU Commission established the [Europass Advisory Group](#) in 2018 to support the development of Europass, including the 'Learning Opportunities' portal. The NCGE Director, along with QQI Europass and EQF representatives, represent Ireland on this advisory Group at meetings in March, June and November 2019.

The Euroguidance Officer along with a QQI Europass Ireland representative attended the Joint Policy Network Meeting in November 2019.

## Irish Reference Group for EU Initiatives in Education and Skills

NCGE/ Euroguidance Ireland is an active member of the Irish Reference Group for EU Initiatives in Education and Skills. The primary objective of the Irish Reference Group for EU Initiatives is to disseminate information on EU Initiatives. Members include QQI, Europass, EQF, EQUAVET, ENIC NARIC, and Léargas. The Euroguidance Officer participated in a meeting of the [Irish Reference Group for EU Initiatives in Education in the University of Limerick in October 2019](#), presenting on the European dimension of guidance and ongoing developments at national level.

## Guidance Provision to European Schools

[www.euroguidance.ie/european-schools](http://www.euroguidance.ie/european-schools)

NCGE/ Euroguidance Ireland co-ordinates the provision of educational guidance to the children of Irish parents attending European Schools on an annual basis, on behalf of DES. 118 students availed of guidance provision across 13 European Schools (in Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany) between October and November 2019. Guidance was delivered both on-site and online, including individual and group guidance sessions to years S4 to S7 inclusive. The NCGE/Euroguidance officer also took part in the delivery of the service on-site in two locations this year. NCGE/Euroguidance further developed the online information provided for the European schools in 2019- updating information related to studying in Ireland.

See - [2019 Summary Report](#)

In 2018- 2019, NCGE instigated a process of requesting consent from Year 7 students and their parents to contact them after they had graduated from the European Schools. In 2019, NCGE contacted 34 S7 students/ parents to ascertain their destinations post-graduation from the European Schools. On publication of this output statement, 20 participants had responded, representing 57% of those surveyed. 8 of those respondents indicated that their son/daughter was currently studying in Ireland. As part of this survey, parents also provided feedback regarding their experience of the service. In 2019, the plans were discussed and agreed to conduct an internal Strategic review of the provision of Guidance Service for Irish Students in European Schools from 2010-2019, to identify good practice and make recommendations to NCGE and DES to inform the continuing and future delivery of the guidance service



## Other Activities

### Euro-Quest Resource

[www.euroguidance.ie/euro-quest](http://www.euroguidance.ie/euro-quest)

Euro-Quest is a programme which is designed to give Transition Year students an opportunity to explore the idea of studying or training abroad for a semester, an academic year, or for an entire degree or apprenticeship. This programme has been informed and adapted from feedback received directly from Guidance Counsellors. NCGE commenced a pilot of this programme with 15 post-primary schools in 2018. Utilising a whole-school approach, this pilot programme seeks input from students themselves, their school principals, guidance counsellors and TY Coordinators. [The final report of the pilot was published in 2019.](#)

Considerate of the observations and feedback, several amendments were made, reviewed and tested in preparation for a “soft launch” in December 2019.

A comprehensive student workbook and staff guidebook were finalised and ready for distribution by December 2019. The Euro-Quest programme was ready to “go live” and made available to all Post Primary schools in Ireland from January 2020.

### Euroguidance Network Website and Publications

Euroguidance Ireland contributed financially and through the provision and revision of content to the development of the Euroguidance Network website. Euroguidance Ireland also contributed to the Euroguidance Network’s ‘Highlights’ and ‘Insight’ publications during the year 2019.

See - [www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications](http://www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications)

## 6. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

**In accordance with NCGE's terms of reference, the Centre advises on high quality and relevant initial guidance counselling education and training and provides Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for guidance practitioners. All CPD programmes are informed by NCGE's Quality Assurance Procedures.**

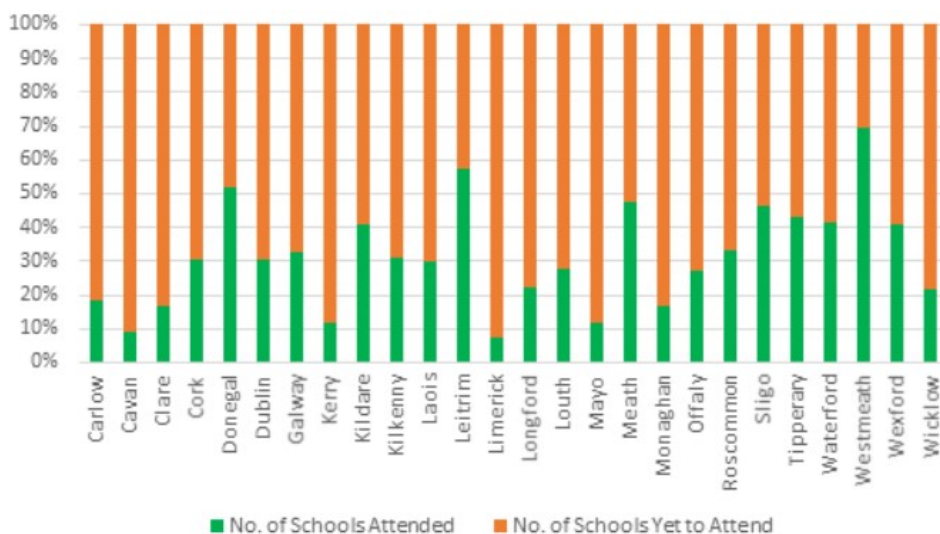
### Post Primary

in 2019 NCGE initiated a national CPD programme for schools, titled '[Step-by-step Approach to Guidance Practice using the Whole School Guidance Framework \(WSG\)](#)' - 9 CPD events within this theme took place between April and December 2019; hosted in Dublin, Donegal, Waterford, Westmeath and Galway. At these, school principals and Guidance Counsellors reflected on the whole school approach to guidance planning. Following review, evaluation and feedback after each CPD event, NCGE revised and developed additional resources to support Whole School Guidance planning and provision.

Table 1: WSG CPD Attendance Information

Date	Location of CPD Event	Total No. of Participating Schools
30/04/19	Dublin (City Centre)	28
08/05/19	Westmeath (Mullingar)	41
14/05/19	Cork	26
24/09/19	Dublin	39
26/09/19	Waterford	15
01/10/19	Donegal	20
03/10/19	Galway	16
02/12/19	Dublin (DES Clocktower)	22
09/12/19	Westmeath (Mullingar)	16
<b>Total number of schools who participated</b>		222 (one school having participated twice)

Figure 1: The uptake of WSG CPD by county with reference to the total number of post primary schools in that county.



Note: the colour green indicates number of schools participating in the CPD while orange indicates those schools who have yet to attend.

Top participation (in terms of the relative proportion of schools participating on a per county basis) was recorded in Donegal, Leitrim and Westmeath. Lowest levels of participation were recorded in Cavan, Limerick and Monaghan. These geographical areas will be targeted in future CPD provision to increase participation.

## Feedback:

*Table 2: Participants key learnings from WSG CPD:*

Participant Answer	No. of Participants referring to this answer
Need for Guidance Counsellor and Management to Plan	86
Need for Consideration of Whole School / Team Approach	76
Awareness of How & Where to Access NCGE Supports including resources	72
Identified Gaps / Current Needs in Practice	52
Need to focus on Junior Cycle	40
Need to reflect on current practice & distribution of resources	34
Need to update / review school plan	33
Need to recognise and affirm current practice	27
Need to Include Stakeholder voice	20
Awareness of Importance of Networking & Learning from other schools	23
Need to Identify priorities for future	7

Participants were asked: **What are your key learning's from today's CPD?**

The responses to this question are listed in table 2 above.

It should be noted that some participants mentioned multiple aspects in their answers.

Participants were asked to evaluate the WSG CPD and score the day with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. 65% of participants gave the highest score possible (5) while 33% of participants gave the day a score of 4 out of 5.

## Further Education and Training

NCGE coordinates and delivers the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for ETB AEGS staff. In 2019 CPD events were informed by NCGE survey of training needs for ETB AEGS Staff conducted in January 2019. NCGE held several CPD and new AEGS Staff training events.

- NCGE delivered 1 session for 11 newly appointed ETB AEGS staff on the AEGS Adult Guidance Management (AGMS) database system, inputting data and reporting through that system.
- **March 2019:** 73 ETB AEGS staff attended CPD over two days with separate events dedicated to Guidance Coordinator-Counsellor and Guidance Counsellor *and* Guidance Officers to reflect their roles. With the theme of 'Social Inclusion', speakers included SOLAS; EAL & ESOL Development Officer DDLETB; Business in the Community Ireland; Irish Refugee Council; National Disability Authority and the Centre of Excellence for Universal Design NDA.

NCGE conducted a 'participant response survey' following the March 2019 CPD events and consulted the requests for CPD submitted through the AGMS, to inform further ETB AEGS CPD provision.

- **November 2019:** 59 ETB AEGS Staff attended CPD event (consisting of 2 x 1.5-day sessions, and 1-day sessions) on 'Supporting the practitioner to support the client: *Self-Care and Mental Health issues for Adult Education Guidance Services*' facilitated by Dr. Marie Rooney. The CPD event also included a half-day workshop on 'Psychometric Testing in Adult Guidance'. This was a collaborative approach between NCGE Post Primary and FET Guidance Programme Coordinators to reflect, develop and support good practice across lifelong guidance.

## Euroguidance

With a growing number of students considering options for studying or training abroad the online Mobility Guidance Counselling Module provides guidance counsellors with the skills they need to support learners. Several additional guidance counsellors enrolled in 2019 and others successfully completed their course during this period.

*"As a new guidance counsellor, I enjoyed the module as the step by step process was clear as were the important aspects that need to be considered throughout the process."*

See - [www.euroguidance.ie/cpd-mobility-guidance-counselling](http://www.euroguidance.ie/cpd-mobility-guidance-counselling)

## 7. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

**NCGE convenes and participates in committees and working groups for and on behalf of DES. The activities for 2019 were as follows.**

### DES Post Primary Guidance Counselling Supervision Steering Group

This Steering Group is chaired by Teacher Education Section of the Department, managed by the Monaghan Education Centre and coordinated via the IGC branch network. NCGE is a member of the Steering group, working with the Department Inspectorate representative in an advisory capacity to ensure reflection of Department policy on guidance.

### Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing

[www.ncge.ie/ncge/advisory-committee-psychometric-testing](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/advisory-committee-psychometric-testing)

Following the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing ( normally convened by NCGE on behalf of DES and to review and update the list of psychometric tests and assessments

approved by DES for use in post-primary schools), NCGE worked in collaboration with DES to make further revisions to the List of Tests, to account for implications of Brexit and changes to various Tests by publishers.

NCGE worked in collaboration with the DES and NEPS on the revision and update of the Circular, to include reference to the PSI Register of Psychometric Test Use: guidance Counsellors, which endorses the professional competence of guidance counsellors in the use of psychometric tests in schools.

See - [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0058\\_2019.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0058_2019.pdf)

Following changes in personnel in both NCGE and Psychological Society of Ireland, NCGE re-established collaborations with PSI to address outstanding issues of the PSI Register of Guidance Counsellors in the use of Psychometric tests.

See - [www.ncge.ie/psi](http://www.ncge.ie/psi)

### CEDEFOP 'CareersNet'

NCGE Director continued to attend and participate at meetings of the CareersNet network and as an active member Steering Group of the Cedefop CareersNet network.

See - [www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/careersnet](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/careersnet)

### NCGE / ETBI Directors of FET Group

In the absence of the FET Integrated Guidance Strategy, NCGE, ETBI and the Directors of FET continued to meet to support interim operational developments in the continued provision of quality guidance services across the ETBs. This group met twice in 2019 to discuss various issues including guidance provision, staff CPD and to agree on Final draft of Interim GDPR agreements for the Adult Guidance Management System.

## 8. PROMULGATION

NCGE provides information to clients and stakeholders on the role and activities of NCGE through various means including its online properties, social media, printed publications, showcasing at conferences/exhibitions and direct presentations to stakeholders. NCGE provides access to quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility for learning purposes as a core element of the Centre's work. Through the Communications Officer, NCGE contracts the services of appropriate external suppliers to ensure quality development and delivery.

### NCGE & Euroguidance Ireland main Websites

NCGE's main method of disseminating information is through its online web properties.

#### [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie)

Including dedicated 'Handbook' sections

- the School Guidance Handbook
- the FET Guidance Handbook

#### [www.euroguidance.ie](http://www.euroguidance.ie)

The NCGE Euroguidance Ireland Centre website is maintained as a companion site of the main NCGE website and provides information relating to the work of Euroguidance Ireland, the Euroguidance Network and the provision of guidance to Irish students in European schools.

### Statistics on usage

#### **ncge.ie**

There was a total of 37,877 unique visitors to this website in 2019, an increase of 46% vs 2018: recording 57,339 sessions (+40 % vs 2018) and 146,962 total page views (+43 % vs 2018). Of these, 84% (the same as 2018) were first time visitors to the site and 16% were returning visitors.

There was a total of 17,470 documents downloaded from the site in 2019, an increase of 112% vs 2018.

#### **euroguidance.ie**

There was a total of 4,917 unique visitors to this website in 2019, an increase of 29% vs 2018: recording 6,856 sessions (+25 % vs 2018) and 17,317 total page views (+19 % vs 2018). Of these, 86.7% were first time visitors to the site and 13.3% returning visitors.

There was a total of 705 documents downloaded from the site in 2018, a decrease of 56% vs 2018. *This can be attributed to the end of the 'pilot phase' of the 'Euro-Quest' resource.*

## Provision of online resources and materials for Post Primary

### [www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook](http://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook)

The 'School Guidance Handbook' is an online handbook for school-based guidance counsellors. The 'Handbook' provides digital content to inform and support the development and delivery of the school guidance programme. Such digital content includes template documents, webinar recordings, videos and research publications.

#### Statistics on usage

In 2019 there were a total of 17,598-page views of the Handbook

### [www.ncge.ie/wsg/resources](http://www.ncge.ie/wsg/resources)

In follow up to the successful Whole School Guidance Framework pilot programme in 2018 and in response to requests from schools during the CPD events in 2019, NCGE continued to develop appropriate resources for use in schools to explore whole school guidance and questionnaires that can be used directly with students.

#### Statistics on usage

In 2019 there was a total of 9,309-page views of the 'WSG Resources' section of the NCGE website.

## Provision of online resources and materials for FET

### [www.ncge.ie/fet-guidance-handbook](http://www.ncge.ie/fet-guidance-handbook)

In September 2018, the **FET Guidance Handbook** was relaunched online. This provides digital content to inform and support the development and delivery of the FET guidance programme. Such digital content includes webinar recordings and information pertinent to practitioners in FET guidance delivery.

#### Statistics on usage

In 2019 there were a total of 2,389-page views of the Handbook.

In 2019 NCGE continued collaboration with AONTAS National Information 'One Step Up' Platform development supplying online links to ETB AEGS Local Contacts and presenting part of the AONTAS One Step Up Video

See - <https://www.onestepup.ie/information-booklet/decision/>

## Social Media

**Twitter** - [twitter.com/ncgeguidance](https://twitter.com/ncgeguidance)

NCGE continued to engage with members of the Guidance Community through its Twitter account. By the end of 2019 there were over 1300 followers to the account (compared to 960 at the end of 2018); gaining on average 7 additional followers each week.

**Facebook** - [facebook.com/EuroguidanceIreland](https://facebook.com/EuroguidanceIreland)

The NCGE Euroguidance Facebook Page was set up to promote the activities of the Euroguidance Ireland Centre. By the end of 2019, the total amount of followers was approx. 1600.

## Vimeo (Video resources)

[vimeo.com/ncge](https://vimeo.com/ncge)

NCGE continued to use the NCGE Vimeo channel to host video-based resources. These were linked to from [ncge.ie](https://ncge.ie) and [euroguidance.ie](https://euroguidance.ie).

## 'Guidance Matters'

[www.ncge.ie/ncge/newsletter](https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/newsletter)

In 2019 NCGE published "Guidance Matters" Spring and Winter editions, as the online interactive newsletter / magazine providing articles and reviews on guidance provision across the education sector. All staff in NCGE source and / or write articles for this publication on an on-going basis. The NCGE Communications Officer coordinated the process, including the editing of articles submitted, the production of draft copies and liaising with the design and publication team.

In addition to being published online for viewing or download, each issue was also sent directly, in e-zine format, to over 4200 NCGE subscribers.

## 'NCGE Bulletin'

[www.ncge.ie/ncge/ncge-bulletin](https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/ncge-bulletin)

Throughout 2019, the 'NCGE Bulletin' was issued monthly to keep guidance practitioners and stakeholders up to date on the ongoing work of NCGE and developments in guidance on a regular basis. It was distributed to the NCGE main database of over 4200 subscribers.



## Conferences & Exhibitions

NCGE host stands each year at several national conferences and exhibitions, for example the annual IGC Conference and Higher Options exhibition. These provide direct access to NCGE for Guidance Counsellors and other clients of the Centre. In addition to the hosting of stands and exhibition spaces at national events, NCGE and NCGE staff members are invited and present and participate in many international events every year.

***Examples of these have been referenced already on P16 of this Statement.***

## Translation to Irish

### [www.ncge.ie/ncge/acmhainni-gaeilge](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/acmhainni-gaeilge)

In 2019, NCGE completed the tender process with the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) to confirm the provision of Irish translation services to NCGE. Throughout 2019, NCGE worked with the newly contracted translator to ensure key information and resources were made available in the Irish language, including

- School Guidance Handbook Articles  
<https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook>
- 2 x issues of Guidance Matters  
[www.ncge.ie/ncge/newsletter](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/newsletter)
- the 2018 NCGE Output Statement  
[www.ncge.ie/ncge/reporting](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/reporting)
- various additional letters of correspondence.

NCGE continued the established partnership agreement with [Careers Portal](#) for the continued development of [www.saoloibre.ie](http://www.saoloibre.ie) and associated resources. This partnership promotes the development of resources in Irish for guidance counsellors and their students, additional work was done in profiling careers with Irish with a significant focus on opportunities in Europe.

## ICT Developments in NCGE

### **Additional main NCGE website functionality**

In line with the strategic objective to ensure and promote the use of ICT where possible and appropriate, in 2019 NCGE continued its expansion of the functionality of the NCGE website site, this included:

- Expanding the usage of the secure '**meeting space**'. This online area supports the work of committees convened by NCGE, including the Management of Guidance Committee, the Directors of Studies of Guidance Counselling and others.
- Reflective of GDPR requirements; utilising new form and survey pages to gather information from stakeholders in a comprehensive and secure manner.

## Additional tools used

In 2019 NCGE general administration and procedures migrated to the use of 'Microsoft 365' cloud-based productivity platform.

## Reporting

Throughout 2019, NCGE continued to provide briefing documents and information on guidance counselling and guidance related issues to DES. NCGE also provided information to SOLAS and other Departments and agencies. As part of Euroguidance Erasmus+ funding requirements; NCGE submitted the Interim report of activity for 2018-2020 to the DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion of The European Union. NCGE continued to ensure compliance with completion of various reports to DES and other Government departments on issues such as finance, environment, energy efficiency, procurement and parliamentary questions, etc.

## 9. NATIONAL FORUM ON GUIDANCE

The National Forum on Guidance provides an informal communication and co-operation facility for those involved in the provision of guidance and the development and support of guidance practitioners and services. Participants include organisations and individuals providing guidance in both the education and the public employment sector. NCGE coordinated and hosted two meetings of The National Forum on Guidance in 2019 on the 1st of May and the 11th of November 2019, in The Clock Tower, DES. Agendas, presentations and reports from each meeting are available on the NCGE website.

See - [www.ncge.ie/national-forum-guidance](http://www.ncge.ie/national-forum-guidance)

## 10. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

NCGE became subject to the Freedom of Information Act with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006. See [www.ncge.ie/ncge/foi-aie-protected-disclosures](http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/foi-aie-protected-disclosures)

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of a report each year relating to the number of protected disclosures made in the preceding year and any actions taken in response to such disclosures.

*No protected disclosures were received by NCGE in the reporting period up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019.*

[Access 2019 report](#)

## 11. FINANCIAL REPORT

### NCGE funding

NCGE core funding is provided by DES Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (CAP). This includes funding for the provision of the European Schools Guidance Programme on behalf of the DES.

SOLAS provides the grant to NCGE to fund the support and developments for FET based guidance including AEGI CPD and other FET based guidance within ETBs and the overall FET sector.

NCGE hosts and manages the Euroguidance Centre for Ireland which is co-funded from the DES CAP grant and the EU Commission. 2019 marked the interim year of the multi-annual 3-year funding for Euroguidance 2018-2020.

### NCGE Summary Accounts 2019

Expenditure as detailed below includes NCGE support to DES and SOLAS for developments pertaining to policy and the coordination and delivery of guidance programmes across post- primary and FET.

Detailed financial reports are provided quarterly and annually via income and expenditure returns to DES, the Board of Léargas and appropriate financial returns to the EU Commission for EU funded programmes.

**NCGE Summary Accounts as detailed in the Léargas audited accounts:**

	<i><b>Income Euro</b></i>	<i><b>Expenditure Euro</b></i>
DES CAP UNIT	600,000	536,826
SOLAS	278,000	278,000
Other Total <i>(Including Euroguidance)</i>	38,473	101,647
<b>Total</b>	<b>939,080</b>	<b>916,473</b>

## NCGE STAFF IN 2019

<b>Jennifer McKenzie</b>	<b>Director</b>
<b>Carol Guildea</b>	<b>Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post Primary)</b> (Appointed August 2019)
<b>Mary Stokes</b>	<b>Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET)</b>
<b>Orla Ní Cheallaigh</b>	<b>Guidance Officer (Euroguidance)</b> (Appointed September 2019)
<b>David Cullen</b>	<b>Communications Officer</b>
<b>Jean Rafferty</b>	<b>Office Administrator</b>
<b>Luke Dunne</b>	<b>Guidance Programme Administrator</b>

## NCGE MANAGEMENT OF GUIDANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<i>Paul King</i>	<i>DCU (Chair)</i>
<i>Jennifer McKenzie</i>	<b>NCGE (ex Officio)</b>
<i>Karen Murtagh</i>	<b>DES</b>
<i>Seán P O'Briain</i>	<b>DES</b>
<i>Jim Mullin</i>	<b>Léargas</b>
<i>Máire Quinn</i>	<b>Léargas</b>
<i>Josephine McGread</i>	<b>AGA</b>
<i>Justin McGree</i>	<b>IGC</b>
<i>Kathy Finnegan</i>	<b>NAPD</b>
<i>Roisin Doherty</i>	<b>SOLAS</b>
<i>Fiona Davis</i>	<b>HEA</b>
<i>Mary B. Ryan</i>	<b>DSGC</b>
<i>Stephen Fitzgerald</i>	<b>DEASP</b>
<i>Joe Cunningham</i>	<b>ETBI</b>

## GLOSSARY

AEGAI	Adult Educational Guidance Association Ireland
AEGI	Adult Educational Guidance Initiative
AEGS	Adult Education Guidance Services
AGMS	Adult Guidance Management System
CAP	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (DES)
CDETБ	City of Dublin Education and Training Board
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTC	Community Training Centre
DEASP	Dept. Employment Affairs and Social Protection
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES	Dept. Education and Skills
DSGC	Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling
EAAL	European Agenda for Adult Learning
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
ENIC	European Network of National Information Centres
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
EQUAVET	European Quality strategies in Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EURES	European Employment Services
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FET	Further Education and Training
HEA	Higher Education Authority
IAEVG	International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance
IGC	Institute of Guidance Counsellors

ILSA	Irish Learning Support Association
LESN	Local Employment Support Network
MGC	NCGE Management of Guidance Committee
NALA	National Adult Literacy Agency
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Services
PSI	Psychological Society Ireland
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna.
TCA	Transnational Cooperation Activity
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

## APPENDIX – NCGE STRATEGIC PLAN (JUNE 2019 – DECEMBER 2020)

### Preamble

The Department of Education & Skills (DES) has informed NCGE of the Minister's decision to extend the term of the current NCGE Management of Guidance Committee (MGC) to **31/12/2020** with the possibility of further extension as appropriate.

The NCGE MGC agreed to extend the NCGE Strategic Plan 2015-2017 to end 2018 pending the outcome of the DES Indecon<sup>1</sup> Review of Careers Information and Tools.

The DES Action Plan for Education 2019 outlines in:

Goal 4- Action 55: *“Establish an implementation task force within the DES to drive the proposed reforms arising from the career guidance review”*

Action 55.2: *Prioritise which of the other actions in the Indecon report on the review of career guidance might be progressed and progress implementation of priority actions.*

Following the DES publication of this Review Report in April 2019, the MGC awaits the decisions of the DES Task Force on the priorities agreed. In this context, the MGC is fully aware that a review of this current plan may be required pending the decisions of DES.

### Government of Ireland Sustainable Development Goals

Lifelong Guidance, by definition, supports the individual to make appropriate choices and decisions for their career, education and life path. Core principles of guidance ensure impartiality and supporting equal opportunities for all.

Eu Council Resolution 2008 <sup>2</sup> on **better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies** states:

*“... the definition of guidance as referring to a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used..”*

In accordance with Government of Ireland requirements and to contribute to achieving the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*, the NCGE Strategic Plan 2019-2020 supports the development of sustainable guidance policy and practice specifically in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, SDG 5 and SDG 8, outlined below, as appropriate.

- **Goal 4.** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*<sup>3</sup>
- **Goal 5.** *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*<sup>4</sup>
- **Goal 8.** *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Indecon won the DES tendered contract in 2018 to complete the DES required review of Careers Information and Tools

<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2008%3A319%3A0004%3A0007%3AEN%3APDF>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

<sup>5</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>

## **NCGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2020**

NCGE Strategic Plan will cover the timeframe of **June 2019–December 2020**.

The following is the Vision, Mission and Aims elements of the NCGE Strategic Plan as revised and agreed by DES and the MGC.

### **VISION**

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

### **MISSION**

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.

### **AIMS**

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), an agency of DES, was established in 1995 and operates under the aegis of Léargas.

The aims of NCGE, as outlined by DES, include:

- promoting the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools, centres for education, and Further Education and Training (FET) settings
- promoting the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in non-formal settings in accordance with national priorities
- advising on policy and strategies for the promotion of a continuum of guidance in the context of lifelong learning
- providing advice, support, materials and resources for guidance counselling in education and FET
- advising on high quality and relevant initial guidance counselling education and training and to provide continuing professional development (CPD) for guidance practitioners
- organising the provision of guidance to Irish nationals in European Schools
- contributing 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 and as a constituent part of Léargas, NCGE is committed to working in collaboration and partnership with relevant stakeholders including DES, SOLAS, the Directors of Studies of Guidance Counselling (DSGC), the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), the Adult Guidance Association (AGA), the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD), the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) and other Government Departments and National and Employer agencies where appropriate.

### **DES - Léargas/NCGE Performance Delivery Agreement**

Considering the main aims of NCGE, the DES Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA), agreed with Léargas/NCGE in December 2019, outlines the following: -

- The DES PDA clearly states that DES is responsible for overarching policy for the FET Sector, including guidance
- SOLAS will oversee the development and evaluation of guidance provision and fund NCGE work in supporting implementation of the strategic priorities of the FET Strategy as relates to Guidance. This includes agreement of annual funding and work plans

Contd/...



- NCGE will be responsible for the following: -
  - acting as a centre of excellence for guidance, in relation to Post-Primary and Further Education
  - participating in any successor meetings to the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Meetings, or other EU Commission meetings relating to lifelong guidance
  - continuing with the coordination, development of resources and delivery of supports in Whole School Guidance (WSG) Planning Programme considering DES Circular 09/2012
  - continuing as an active member of the Euroguidance network activities
  - developing a Strategic Plan for NCGE for 2019 - 2020
  - coordinating and hosting further meetings of the National Forum on Guidance
  - delivering key actions outlined in the Action Plan for Education

### **NCGE Strategic Plan 2019-2020**

*To inform the policy of DES and support the development and implementation of quality guidance practice in Post-Primary and FET in accordance with national and international good practice.*

#### **Key Objectives**

- Inform, influence, facilitate and support the development of the DES Lifelong Guidance Policy
- Inform, influence, facilitate, develop and support the implementation of quality guidance practice in post-primary schools and FET Sector
- Provide guidelines, resources and materials to support quality guidance practice and policy development
- Promote and support a National and EU focus to Guidance Policy Provision and Practice
- Coordinate and deliver continuing professional development to guidance practitioners in schools and FET in collaboration with stakeholders
- Adhere to DES Governance and Compliance Requirements

#### **The NCGE Key Strategic Activities for 2019-2020 include:**

##### **1. General Guidance Policy**

- i. Inform and collaborate with DES on prioritised actions agreed from the recommendations of the DES Review of Careers Information and Tools
- ii. Inform and collaborate with DES on prioritised actions of ongoing national guidance policy and practice across the Education and FET sectors
- iii. Participate and represent DES at EU and International level on the development of Lifelong Guidance Policy to inform national policy decisions
- iv. Support DES in the continued process of the Programme Recognition Framework
- v. Liaise on behalf of DES, with the Department of Health on the CORU registration for Counsellors and Psychotherapists
- vi. Explore and inform DES on evidence-based and evidence-informed planning to include research and pilot projects as appropriate

##### **2. General Programme**

- i. Convene, host and chair various committees on behalf of DES to inform guidance policy (e.g. the Advisory Committee on Psychometric Tests, Committee of the Directors of Studies of Guidance Counselling)
- ii. Convene, host and chair various working groups, as appropriate, with DES and relevant stakeholders to inform and develop quality guidance practice
- iii. Coordinate and host the National Forum on Guidance twice per year
- iv. Inform, influence, advise and collaborate with relevant stakeholders to support the development of quality guidance practice in Education and FET sectors
- v. Provision of Continuous Professional development programme to support quality guidance delivery for guidance practitioners in schools and FET

### **3. Post-Primary Guidance**

- i. Roll out nationally of CPD programmes on WSG Framework to post-primary schools
- ii. Implement Phase 2 of the Pilot Project on WSG
- iii. Develop further online resources for Post-Primary Guidance Policy and Provision
- iv. Establish links with relevant agencies to further develop supports and resources for schools
- v. Consider and explore the development of a data-gathering system for guidance in post-primary, in collaboration with DES
- vi. Promote European mobility in schools through *Euro-Quest* modules for TY in collaboration with Euroguidance
- vii. Consider and explore pilot project with DDELTB regarding guidelines for EAL links to Guidance in schools

### **4. FET Guidance**

- i. Inform and influence DES and SOLAS on the FET Guidance Strategy including exploration of wider FET sector guidance needs
- ii. Collaborate with ETBI and ETBs on the support and development of quality guidance provision in line with the FET Guidance Strategy
- iii. Review, revise and redevelop the Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS) as a FET Guidance Management System to include proposal for funding and national development, as agreed with SOLAS
- iv. Provide online resources for FET guidance policy and provision
- v. Promote European mobility in FET sector in collaboration with Euroguidance
- vi. Consider and explore pilot project with DDELTB regarding guidelines for EAL links to Guidance in FET
- vii. Inform the development of appropriate guidelines for collaboration of guidance and RPL

### **5. European Programme**

- i. Deliver Euroguidance activities and report in accordance with EU Commission requirements
- ii. Collaborate with QQI – EUROPASS as per EU Commission guidelines and national priorities
- iii. Participate in EU Commission EUROPASS Advisory Group, in collaboration with QQI
- iv. Promote European mobility in collaboration with Post-Primary and FET Programmes in NCGE
- v. Participate actively in EG Network activities through working groups, hosting and attending study visits
- vi. Coordinate and deliver the guidance service to European Schools, on behalf of the DES Inspectorate, to include an overarching Review and Recommendations report for the development of the Service from 2020

### **6. NCGE Communications**

- i. Provide online resources through websites (NCGE and Euroguidance)
- ii. Deliver NCGE monthly Bulletin
- iii. Inform stakeholders and clients on International, European and National issues of guidance policy and practice through general reports and the twice-yearly online magazine 'Guidance Matters'
- iv. Maintain NCGE contact database of guidance stakeholders nationally and internationally

### **7. Staffing, Governance and Administration**

- i. Support NCGE Staff to include an appropriate Performance Management System, CPD and succession planning
- ii. Adherence to and completion of reports for DES in compliance with DES procedures
- iii. Collaborate within Léargas to ensure compliance with and adherence to administration, financial and HR policies, including Internal Audit
- iv. Upgrade NCGE ICT office systems to Microsoft 365
- v. Ensure Risk Compliance is explored at all convened MGC meetings
- vi. Report to Léargas Board as appropriate