



Output Statement of the National Centre for Guidance in Education 2021



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



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

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FOREWORD FROM CHAIR

I welcome the publication of the NCGE Output statement for 2021 on behalf of the Management of Guidance Committee (MGC) of the NCGE.

The scope and nature of NCGE activities outlined in this Statement are especially commendable in the context of the Covid Crisis which we have endured over the past three years. I wish to pay particular tribute to Director, Ms Jennifer McKenzie and all of the NCGE staff for their resilience, creativity and commitment to the delivery of a quality service consistent with the purpose and aims of NCGE during a very challenging period. The talent and dedication of staff during which the provision of Guidance support was crucial for sustaining many people - both providers and recipients of Guidance - across the community was invaluable. NCGE staff have been adept and visionary in responding with the delivery of a blended approach to service which enhanced the reputation of NCGE as an agency passionate and committed to Guidance across the lifespan.

In supporting the role of NCGE I wish to acknowledge the contribution by Léargas staff and their Director, Ms Lorraine Gilligan, to enable the provision of outputs as evidenced in this Statement. NCGE and Léargas have for over twenty-five years worked collaboratively in meeting the responsibilities of NCGE for which the MGC expresses gratitude.

The decision by the Department of Education to discontinue with an external National Agency with responsibility for the shaping of Guidance policy and practice with the disbanding of NCGE is regrettable given the long-established track record of the Centre to develop, support and influence guidance policy and quality guidance provision in the education and training sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice.

It is vital that the direction of future guidance policy which has a direct impact ultimately on Guidance services is informed by the influence of international and European policies, practices and partnerships. The creation of a cohesive and inclusive national lifelong guidance strategy which reflects the complexities and breadth of guidance across the lifespan needs to be an urgent priority in the transition from NCGE to any new structures with responsibility for national Guidance provision.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the ongoing commitment of Management of Guidance Committee members who in a voluntary capacity have been steadfast, generous and committed in supporting NCGE with oversight, governance and the capacity to provide the programme and activities as evidenced in this Output Statement for 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul King'.

Paul King, CHAIR, NCGE Management of Guidance Committee



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Authoring a final report of the 'NCGE outputs' requires reflection on an eventful 2021 for NCGE and lifelong guidance policy and practice.

In 2021 we welcomed the re-opening of schools, colleges, workplaces and support services across the country with the easing of government pandemic related restrictions and a blended approach for employees and delivery of support services. In many cases, the development of digitalised skills across the wider guidance community as a whole provided opportunities to continue to connect and collaborate with and serve clients and stakeholders.

NCGE with the support of and in accordance with Léargas policies supported staff to work from home where possible, while continuing to maintain the Centre "open" for business. With a global shift to online delivery, NCGE further established the reputation for Ireland as a country that respected the role of lifelong guidance across the wider education and training sectors.

The establishment of the two government Departments – Education and Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science in late 2020 directly impacted on the role, remit and activities of NCGE and required continued negotiation, briefing and explanations of international, European and national lifelong guidance policies with all concerned. NCGE hoped to have clarity in 2021 of the planned implementations of the Indecon Report on the Review of Career Guidance and the national lifelong guidance strategy. It is unfortunate therefore that the separation of guidance functions across different sectors is directly at odds with those recommendations of collaboration and co-ordination at national level.

On signing off on the NCGE Output statement for 2021, I am conscious that in 2022 NCGE faces an uncertain future with plans in place to close rather than restructure the organisation, which directly conflicts with all of the national lifelong guidance developments outlined within this 2021 Statement.

In this regard, I wish to acknowledge and express my sincerest thanks for the commitment of the Chair, Paul King and the Management of Guidance Committee in support of the NCGE staff and programme delivery. The professional commitment of the staff in NCGE, in supporting each other while continuing to support and deliver our service to stakeholders through another difficult year must not be underestimated.

As always it remains my professional honour to work with and lead such a dedicated team.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Jennifer McKenzie'.

Jennifer McKenzie, DIRECTOR, NCGE

Preamble

This NCGE 2021 Output Statement reflects on the activities of NCGE during the continued national and global Covid-19 Pandemic and the various changes to national and organisational structures throughout 2021.

Due to national government and public health guidelines in 2021, restrictions resulted in continued closures in schools, Further Education and Training and Higher Education sectors in the early part of the year, with reopening from September. As a result, NCGE remained directly involved in interagency collaboration and co-operation with other agencies of the Department of Education, to ensure appropriate supports were provided to develop guidance policy, provision, and practice.

Following the establishment of the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) in 2020 and clarity of the separated and differentiated responsibilities, the two Departments agreed on the implementation of the recommendations of the Indecon Career Guidance Review (2019) report resulting in a direct impact on the role and remit of NCGE activities, in particular in relation to FET guidance programme developments.

The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee and the Director continued throughout 2021 to engage with both Departments to highlight concerns and the implications of such implementation decisions on the future and strategic planning for NCGE.

The following report outlines the activities of NCGE in 2021, in fulfilment of its role and remit as designated by the Department of Education.



THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GUIDANCE IN EDUCATION

The National Centre for Guidance in Education is the agency of the Department of Education since 1995, 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 2021 included to:

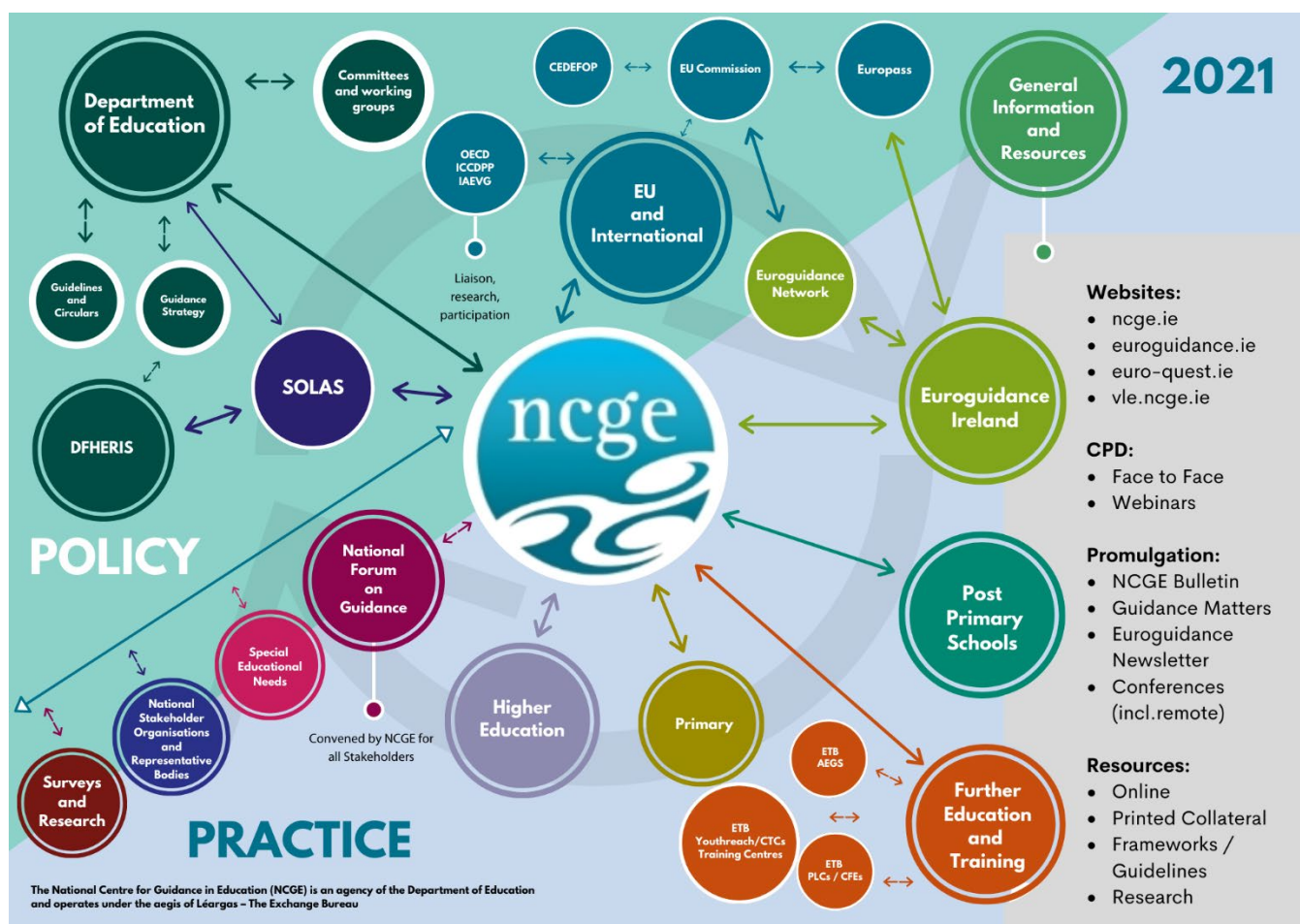
- Inform, influence, facilitate and support the development of Department Lifelong Guidance Policy
- Inform, influence, facilitate, develop and support the implementation of quality guidance practice in post-primary schools and Further Education and Training (FET) Sector
- Provide guidelines, resources 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

More information regarding the devised 2021 ‘NCGE Key Actions Plan’ is contained in Appendix 3.

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, advisory groups and committees on guidance.

As a member of the [Euroguidance Network](#), part funded by the Department of Education and the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, 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' 2021



As noted in the preamble, in 2020 DES split into 2 departments. The Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science.

1. NCGE GOVERNANCE

The NCGE Management of Guidance Committee (MGC)

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 and again in 2020 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](#).

A full list of current MGC members can be seen in Appendix 2.

Indecon Review of Careers Information and Tools

In 2021 it was expected that decisions of the Department of Education (originally Department of Education and Skills) task group on the implementation of the Indecon report would be implemented. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent establishment of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science, these decisions and actions were postponed. This delay had a direct impact on the strategic planning for NCGE for 2021-2023.

Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement (OPDA)

In 2021, NCGE and Léargas agreed and signed the annually revised and updated Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement with the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Unit (CAP) of the Department of Education and the International Section of the Dept of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science, on the role and remit of NCGE.

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 the MGC representatives of the Department of Education and SOLAS. In 2021 NCGE continued to engage with SOLAS to nominate the MGC representative to this Committee. The Finance Sub-committee of the NCGE Management of Guidance Committee meets three times per year to consider the Income and Expenditure reports to the Department, prior to sign-off by Léargas for submission.

Organisational Activities

The Management of Guidance Committee met 6 times in 2021. The Committee meetings were all convened online in accordance with government restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A public record of each meeting, based on the approved Minutes, [are available online](#).

Staffing

NCGE operated in 2021 with 7 full time staff: Director, Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET), Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post-Primary), Guidance Officer (Euroguidance), Office Administrator, Programme Administration Officer and Communications Officer. As NCGE is not considered a “frontline service” i.e. not delivering service directly to the general public or guidance clients, Department of Education approval was sought and NCGE successfully recruited a temporary Maternity Cover to ensure the continued delivery of post-primary and European programmes during 2021.

NCGE completed and instigated the revised process for recruitment of “*Panel of External Consultant Guidance Professionals*” to work with NCGE on various projects over the coming 2-year period 2021-2023, for various projects in post-primary, FET and Euroguidance. [See More](#).

The Staff Performance Management Review system was continued into 2021 as appropriate, 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. While in Ireland there remains no formal provision for Guidance in primary schools, NCGE continues to explore and highlight examples of good practice in guidance, for primary education. Supports for students in transition from Primary school to post-primary school are provided as key elements of the Guidance Related Learning modules developed by NCGE for Junior Cycle.

3. POST PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

NCGE’s post-primary programme for 2021, focused specifically on the impact of the Covid – 19 pandemics on the delivery of quality guidance provision in schools. This required continued interagency collaboration, communication with all relevant stakeholders and the development of multiple additional resources for Whole School Guidance provision. In addition to Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 related CPD for Guidance Counsellors, post primary activities included the following:

Enhancing collaboration

Building on work done beginning in Q3 and Q4 2020, the Guidance Programme Co-ordinator (Post-Primary), continued to prioritise the development of positive working relationships to further promote the implementation of best practice in guidance counselling in schools.

The Guidance Programme Co-ordinator continued to collaborate and communicate with the Department of Education Inspectorate, CareersPortal, JMB, CAO, IGC, NCCA, Trinity Access, PPLI, NYCI, USI, ISSU, Exit Entry, IBM Open PTECH, Business in the Community Ireland (BITCI) and the American Chamber of Commerce.

Internal collaboration continued to ensure targeted and collaborative activities between the Post-primary programme and the FET and Euroguidance programmes within NCGE. For example, the Guidance Programme Coordinator and the Euroguidance Officer co-ordinated, attended and co-presented at a Training and Co-operation Activity (TCA) [entitled 'Access All Areas: Internationalisation and mobility in school-based career guidance'](#) in collaboration with Léargas.

In order to develop a comprehensive webinar series in response to Guidance Counsellor needs, the Guidance Programme Coordinator worked closely with the Department of Education and collaborated with a variety of stakeholders, including NEPS, JCT and many others.

Finally, the process of collaboration with the wider Guidance Community which began in 2020 with the development of a 'sharing quality resources' process continued in 2021.

Promoting quality guidance practice at home and abroad

Over the course of 2021 the Guidance Programme Co-ordinator attended and participated at several events promoting the development and support of quality guidance practice in post-primary schools. Nationally such events included presentations at the IGC National Conference, Limerick Education Centre and attendance at the DEIS Transitions Group (Supporting DEIS learners transition to FET). In accordance with public health guidelines, these events were mostly attended online.

Whole School Guidance Framework (WSGF)

Whole School Guidance Continuous Professional Development (WSG CPD) continued in webinar format during 2021. The webinars were recorded and are available to watch online. A number of different Whole School Guidance planning topics were focused upon including:

- Getting Started in your new School: A webinar for newly qualified guidance counsellors (or Guidance Counsellors changing schools)
- Whole School Guidance Planning for academic year 2020/21: adapting the plan and ensuring all local school policies are in place
- Setting up a Network of Support
- Introducing Guidance Related Learning Resources for Junior Cycle (1st webinar)
- Guidance Related Learning for Junior Cycle (2nd webinar)
- Whole School Guidance Provision - Examples of Good Practice
- The Inclusion of Parents in Whole School Guidance (Planning and Practice)

The "Whole School Guidance and Looking At Our Schools (LAOS)" webinar was specifically developed to reflect the requests from schools to connect whole school guidance planning with whole school evaluation processes. The Guidance Programme Coordinator was invited to meet with local school teams as a 'follow up' to this CPD and meetings took place online.

Collaboration Pilot ‘Reimagining Post-Primary Work Experience’

Following previous communications with various stakeholders, commencing in 2020 and continued into 2021, NCGE developed a pilot project based around work experience in Transition Year (TY). This was done in collaboration with Exit Entry, a number of additional partners in education (PPLI and Spotlight) and in business (BITCI, IBM, AmCham).

Thirteen schools actively participated in this pilot, with two other schools consulting on the resources provided. The purpose of this pilot included the integration of digital technology with work experience programmes in school thereby enhancing opportunities for students and supporting the work of Guidance Counsellors. [See More](#)

In 2021 NCGE liaised with the various partners to draft the final report. Schools reflected on issues pertaining to school closures during the academic year 2020-2021. In follow up to this pilot and in recognition of the crucial data gathered, in 2021 NCGE submitted an application to draft a paper and present to the ESAI (in 2022) under the title of ‘Reimagining Post Primary Work Experience’.

4. FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (FET) SECTOR ACTIVITIES

Lifelong Guidance is defined by the European Council since 2004 as:

‘...a range of activities that enables citizens of 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 these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.’

In this context it is crucial to recognise that Guidance provision within the FET sector should be identified as a support service delivered within the wider FET Sector, operating in collaboration and co-operation within the delivery of Further Education and Training programmes and as a service to provide individuals in the general population with information on FET and lifelong learning and training options and to support their access, transfer and progression into the FET and wider HE and lifelong learning sectors.

Furthermore, the model of guidance employed across the FET sector requires the ‘adult guidance approach’, which requires different guidelines and standards to that employed within school-based guidance provision with students under 18 years of age. The FET Guidance Programme delivered by NCGE to support the development of Lifelong Guidance Policy and Practice across the FET sector therefore does not directly reflect the SOLAS reporting requirements of benefits to Learners, Communities and Employers in the same manner as that of Further Education and Training courses / programmes in ETBs / community organisations regionally.

NCGE hosts the National Forum on Guidance (NFG) twice per year which reflects on considerations and development of lifelong guidance which includes the FET sector. In April 2021, the Forum continued the focus on the theme of ‘Promoting Sustainable Development and Change - What is the contribution of Lifelong Guidance?’ The NFG supported the Guidance community submission to the DoE / DFHERIS – Education for Sustainable Development Strategy consultation. The NFG series in November 2021 further considered emerging careers and career guidance innovation, investigating ‘Career Guidance for the Green Economy’ with NCGE FET Guidance Programme Co-ordinator providing a key role in facilitating the presentations from the FET sector (LOETB) and international speakers.

As has been urgently highlighted during the last years, especially consequent to the global pandemic, an increasingly significant element of the NCGE FET Guidance Programme has been to support and build awareness of a wide range of interdepartmental, 'whole of Government' national developments that have career guidance implications. To underpin useful communications and collaborations nationally and to ensure that existing good practice in FET career guidance is maintained and included in national policy and strategy developments demands vigilance and appropriate provision of expertise and engagement. In this regard, the role of the FET Guidance Programme Co-ordinator includes to remain aware and cognisant of all stakeholders and organisations involved within the FET sector. As a result, the FET Guidance Programme Co-ordinator engaged with the range of stakeholders and organisations involved to provide expert advice and facilitate national understanding of the model of adult guidance delivery within the FET sector while promoting access to education and training, progression, and skill development at all levels for all adults nationally.

EU organisations (EU Commission, CEDEFOP etc.) and global international organisations such as OECD and ICCDPP, Career Industry Council of Australia, Canadian Career Development Foundation etc., have increasingly recognized the unique and adaptable models of adult career guidance in Ireland. Throughout 2021 NCGE have supported significant and varied inputs, collaborations, and consultations in consideration of new and innovative approaches to delivery of career guidance services, the development of career guidance systems, tools, and reporting mechanisms.

In 2021, SOLAS approved funding for the NCGE FET Guidance Programme as proposed and detailed below:

- Delivery of NCGE FET Guidance Programme in accordance with requirements of DoE and DFHERIS and remit of NCGE to inform, consult and develop guidance policy and quality Guidance practice across FET sector in accordance with national priorities and FET Strategy 2024.
- Development and provision of materials and resources to support guidance practice.
- Co-ordination and delivery of CPD for guidance practitioners in FET in accordance with DoE designated NCGE remit.
- Co-ordination and monitoring of AGMS on behalf of SOLAS while developing and establishing FET GMS system to support SOLAS and ETB FET - wide guidance service planning and provision.
- Consideration and inclusion of FET guidance requirements in context of national guidance policy

Supports for ETB Adult Educational Guidance Services (ETB AEGS) and FET-Wide Guidance Service and Guidance Counselling Provision

NCGE supports in 2021 to the professional guidance staff of the Adult Educational Guidance Services of the ETBs (ETB AEGS) included the facilitation of online meetings with Adult Educational Guidance Coordinators and Adult Educational Guidance Counsellors and Adult Guidance Information Officers, for updates on professional guidance provision, information sharing and liaison with relevant external stakeholders. These sessions provided the opportunity for ETB AEGS staff to network online and to share professional good practice and resources that may be of use in their role.

While delivery of NCGE FET CPD events is specific and targeted to identified needs of staff within ETB-AEGS, NCGE also support staff of the wider FET Guidance arena including Guidance Counsellors based in the Colleges of Further Education / Post Leaving Certificate (CFE/PLC) provision along with other FET Guidance practitioners to support quality practice, communications and delivery of services.

The delivery of webinar based CPD provision for ETB Adult Educational Guidance Services (ETB AEGS) and guidance counselling staff in FET-Wide Guidance Services is noted below and outlined further from P24.

- CPD webinar - Legalities in FET Guidance practice
- NCGE / AEGS Coordinators support meeting
- NCGE / AEGS All Staff Support and Development Meeting
- Open P-TECH and SkillsBuild Demo - Develop Open P-Tech/ IBM / Exit Entry Pilot
- NCGE / ETB AEGS Guidance Counsellor Coordinators Meeting
- NCGE / ETB AEGS All Staff Meeting introductions to EU tools and resources - e.g., “THRIVE” resources
- ETB AEGS All staff Meeting to establish collaboration with Irish Refugee Council regarding Dept. Justice developments for those from Migrant/ international Protection circumstances
- NCGE Webinar for newly recruited ETB AEGS staff on the rationale background to and use of the data gathering system in ETB- AEGS the Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS)
- ‘Whole of FET Guidance’ webinars in collaboration with SOLAS (National Strategy Adult Literacy for Life) attendees) and AHEAD (Application of Universal design for Learning to FET Guidance Service Provision)

Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS), developments and work toward FET- Guidance Management System (FET- GMS)

Co-ordination and Monitoring of AGMS

NCGE continued to manage and co-ordinate the Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS), contracting and leading the work of the IT Company including coordination of necessary AGMS upgrades in accordance with the agreed SOLAS funding allocation.

Following the work of the NCGE FET- GMS Working group from 2019-2020, which was delayed due to Covid – 19, in December 2020 NCGE submitted the proposal for the development of the FET – Guidance Management System.

In June 2021, NCGE met with SOLAS about this Proposal. While progress on that FET GMS proposal was not agreed at that time, and in the absence of a formal response from SOLAS until October 2021 on the development of the future FET- GMS system, NCGE continued to co-ordinate all interim updates to AGMS required in respect of GDPR Compliance, ETB Manager Access to data, development of guides and information.

- Secure Access for designated ETB Managers to Adult Guidance Management System reports, information, and consultation.
- Support re AGMS GDPR for ETB Data Protection Officers meetings & discussion Data Protection Officers Association (DPOA)
- Development of Guide for use by ETB Directors of FET and AEOs.
- Meeting with AEOA Representative on the FET GMS Working Group to develop understanding and collaboration with ETB AEOs, with subsequent presentation to AEOA.
- Ongoing work with IT Company to develop system and guide as requested by some ETB AEGS Staff to facilitate ‘deletion/ anonymisation option’ and guide for ETB AEGS Staff.

Advisory Groups and Committees

In accordance with the NCGE remit to collaborate with stakeholders, to influence the development of policy as relevant to guidance, the NCGE FET Guidance Programme Coordinator actively participated in and supported various national advisory groups and committees in 2021 including:

- DFHERIS Interdepartmental Stakeholder Group 10-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy
- AONTAS Project Advisory Group for European Agenda for Adult Learning & EPALE
- AONTAS convened 'Mitigating Education Disadvantage' in context of Covid -19 Working group
- 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)

Other Activities

In 2021 NCGE was invited to attend, participate, and input, to provide expert information advice and support regarding networking, relevance and role of lifelong guidance, access, progression, and pathways in FET and HE across various organisations and target groups. This involved engagement with representative group/ development of external links/ research/ support to external organisation-agencies.

- Inputs to Executive meetings of FET staff association groups – Adult Guidance Association (AGA) and Adult Education Officers Association (AEOA)
- Invited to attend, participate and input into NYCI “Young Voices” online event
- Invited to attend and input to FET wide NAPD Online Conference - Symposium April 2021 and provided NCGE Response to NAPD Vision Doc ‘FET College of the Future’
- Engagement with “Access to Med”, facilitating knowledge of and access to ETB AEGS Regional services
- Initial FET Guidance Service information sharing with HEI Access Officers MU (Online learning Course) Global Migrant Literature and Culture: Law Society of Ireland
- Collaboration with National Disability Authority regarding developments in FET Guidance in context of Policy, Research and Public Affairs Team
- Developments to CAO – inclusion of FET discussions of concerns with CAO, ETB AEGS, INOU, ETB Managers and Guidance Counsellors
- Initiated collaborative/ consortium role with “Development Perspectives” to develop/ mirror WorldWide Global Schools programmes (currently delivered in 70% Post Primary Schools and often led by Post Primary Guidance Counsellor) in FET plus engagement of SAOLTA Programme

Collaborations:

- National Coordinator Youthreach-VTOS re development of career guidance, application of digital use of “guidance tools’ e.g.: Careers Portal MyFutures+ etc.
- Initial introduction and engagement with IUA THEA National Recognition of Prior Learning in Higher Education Project involving 19 HEIs - all ITs, TUs and universities.

- Input and support for national webinar events by ETBI/ SOLAS/ AHEAD e.g.:
 - FET College of the Future Webinar
 - ETBI: RPL: recommendations from the Tobar Project Evaluation
 - Adult Education for Tackling Social Exclusion
- Interagency collaboration with Jigsaw newly appointed Youth Mental Health Promotion Manager - Further & Higher Education¹² to ensure understanding of FET based guidance provision in supporting Youth Mental Health

In addition to the above, in 2021 NCGE FET Guidance:

- Supported the promotion of the European dimension of guidance through collaboration with Euroguidance Ireland, Eurodesk and Léargas.
- Engaged with TOBAR Evaluation, VISKA trials & Guidance in Recognition of Prior Learning
- Informed briefings for the Cedefop Analytical Framework for Upskilling Pathways (2016 Recommendation)
- Informed and contributed to Cedefop publications on RPL

Given the high level of NCGE collaboration with stakeholders and activities delivered to support FET based guidance delivery, it was of grave concern to NCGE that the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science announced the decision in November 2021 to transfer the “FET Functions” of NCGE to the ETBI with no clear outline or plan provided to NCGE for the continued development and support for the provision of guidance in the FET sector outside of ETB structures.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (DSGC)

This Committee represents the universities in Ireland which provide initial education and training programmes for guidance counselling. In 2021 these included the Directors of the programmes in Dublin City University, Maynooth University, and University of Limerick. The DoE Inspectorate also attends this Committee meeting. [See More](#)

In 2021 NCGE continued to facilitate communications with the guidance professional representative bodies, IGC, AHECS and AGA to meet with the Directors of Studies Committee to discuss information exchange and collaboration. On agreement with and continued invitations from the Directors, NCGE provided workshop presentations to current students of guidance counselling in MU, DCU and UL. These presentations highlight the national and international role and remit of NCGE, the range of guidance policies at national and EU / International level and the supports, resources and CPD provided for guidance practice in schools and FET and the role of Euroguidance. These workshops also provide opportunities for student guidance counsellors to establish initial connections and communications with NCGE prior to qualification.

Other Activities

- Representatives of the Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) attended the National Forum on Guidance meetings
- Guidance Matters (see P28) included articles on guidance issues in higher education and highlighted examples of innovative practice and resources.

6. THE EUROPEAN GUIDANCE SECTOR

Euroguidance

The Euroguidance network consists of Euroguidance Centres across European countries. Its mission is to promote the European dimension in lifelong guidance in member countries, support the competence development of guidance practitioners 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.

See - www.euroguidance.eu and www.euroguidance.ie

In 2021 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) Task Groups.

Network Meetings attended in 2021:

- Euroguidance Network Meeting, *General*, ONLINE, June 2021
- Euroguidance Network Meeting, Slovenia, ONLINE October 2021

Euro-Quest

Launched officially in 2020, Euro-Quest remained a core focus of Euroguidance Ireland efforts in 2021; Euro-Quest is a free, online, classroom-based resource for use with Transition Year students in Ireland. It is accompanied by a Student Workbook and Whole School Guidebook. Euro-Quest is comprised of 4 x modules and a pre- and post-course student survey to measure the learning experience and outcomes. The programme is designed to be integrated into the (Transition Year) TY curriculum through Guidance and to link with other subjects with Europe as the common theme.

Information on the Euro-Quest module was promoted and distributed through all NCGE / Euroguidance online channels and through the printing of dedicated flyers and leaflets for distribution at relevant events. The 'Student Workbooks' and 'Teacher Guidebooks' were also printed and distributed to each Leader and Teacher enrollee as part of a 'Euro-Quest Induction Pack'. Elements of these were also translated into Irish for use by schools in Ireland whose learning is achieved through the medium of Irish. Over the course of 2021 updates were made to both the online course and the accompanying workbook and guidebook elements.

As of December 2021, over 3200 students from all over Ireland had enrolled from more than 150 schools. From a comparison of pre- and post-course surveys. It is clear there is currently an initial deficit in the knowledge Irish students have regarding mobility opportunities that is significantly addressed through engagement with the programme.

See [HERE](#) for more information in relation to learning outcomes.

For more information on the programme see - www.euroguidance.ie/euro-quest and www.euro-quest.ie/

Peer Review

Euroguidance Ireland discussed and agreed with Euroguidance Estonia and Euroguidance France to design, develop and implement a Peer Review Process across the 3 countries. It was agreed that the purpose of this Peer Review Process was to consider and review Estonia, France and Ireland Euroguidance Centres in the context of national provision, through interviews with stakeholders and the review of relevant information relating to the main goals, tasks and activities of Euroguidance. The 3 countries agreed to adopt a peer learning process using a 'critical friend' approach to assess current practices.

The Estonia and France peer review process was completed online due to government and public health restrictions across EU countries in 2020.

The Irish Peer Review took place in 2021. The final Irish report can be accessed [HERE](#). A final report of the 3 countries peer reviews will be furnished in 2022.

Study Visits

NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland hosts and attends study visits and other peer learning and networking events. These activities aim to support the sharing of international best practice in guidance among guidance practitioners and other relevant professionals. [See More](#).

In December 2021 NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland, in co-operation with Léargas hosted a virtual TCA entitled - *ACCESS ALL AREAS INTERNATIONALISATION AND MOBILITY IN SCHOOL-BASED CAREER GUIDANCE*. This event was attended by over 30 Guidance practitioners from 11 countries across Europe. The final report and programme outline can be accessed [HERE](#).

International Conferences

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. With the continued impact of the global pandemic, attendance in person at European conferences was not possible. However, with conferences globally hosted online, NCGE was invited through various stakeholder organisations and international colleagues to attend and present at such conferences as per those samples outlined below.

UNESCO Conference on the Role of Academic Counselling in Shaping Students Futures: Frameworks, Best Practices and Platforms (2021):

On the 23rd of February, NCGE Director presented on 'The Irish Experience'

See - <https://bit.ly/3lAMgMA>

Conference of the National Institute of Education of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus - Best practices of career guidance (2021):

On the 2nd of June a presentation was delivered by NCGE Director, NCGE FET Guidance Programme Co-ordinator and NCGE Euroguidance Officer on the '*Model of Career Guidance Counselling in Ireland*'.

IAEVG Conference (2021)

In October 2021, NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland attended the (remote) IAEVG Conference facilitated by Latvia. The theme was 'maximising the potential of career guidance'

See – www.iaevgconference2020.lv/ and

www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications/insight-magazine/insight-january-2022

EPALE Ireland National Day The Most Important Life and Work Skills in 2021 + Beyond

On Thursday 25 November 2021, NCGE FET Guidance Programme Co-ordinator presented a 'short' input to this seminar/workshop event.

See - <https://bit.ly/38Nvyqd>

Policy level collaboration

Joint Policy Networks Meetings:

The NCGE/ Euroguidance Ireland Director represents Euroguidance Ireland at regular meetings organised by DG EMPL through which Euroguidance Centres, National Europass Centres and EQF National Coordination Points are kept informed by, and feedback to, Commission level policy formulation.

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, represented Ireland on this advisory Group in 2021.

Cedefop CareersNet Network

[CareersNet](#) (Cedefop) was established in 2017, to bring together a network of independent experts in lifelong career guidance. Working with CareersNet, Cedefop has collected comparable and reliable information on a European scale in the field of lifelong guidance and career development issues. The gathered information and analysis aim at the identification of gaps and solutions, beyond a snapshot of national guidance systems. Following a successful application process Jennifer McKenzie, the NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland Director was further appointed in her own capacity as a national expert as the Ireland representative member of CareersNet for 2021-2023 and attended the Fifth Annual Careers Net meeting, hosted online in December. While the term of office within the Steering Group to 2021 ended, the NCGE Director was appointed by Cedefop to the CareersNet Working group for the revision of the ELGPN Guidelines on Policies and Systems Development for 2022.

Guidance Provision to Irish students in European Schools

Each year, NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland provides a guidance service to the Irish students attending European Schools. This programme is co-ordinated by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland on behalf of the Irish Department of Education. NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland collaborates with the Dept to review and plan for the annual provision of this service.

Traditionally delivery has occurred both on site in the European Schools and via an online video conferencing-based system. Since autumn 2020, in accordance with Covid- 19 pandemic restrictions in Ireland and across the EU, this service has been delivered entirely online. The transition involved:

- The development of a new student guidance (online) portal
- The creation and integration of an online booking facility ('Calendly')
- The use and integration of the online platform 'Zoom' for delivery
- Intensive adapted communication with school contact teachers, students and their parents
- The expansion of the guidance team for delivery
- The provision of additional training for the guidance team and resources regarding the European School system, the European Baccalaureate, the new student portal and the use of 'Zoom'.
- The provision of a substantial number of additional resources and an FAQ section to enable students and their parents prepare for their scheduled (online) guidance sessions
- The facility for in-time confidential guidance data-gathering and the generation of specific reports of the service delivery

For autumn 2021 delivery, the above elements were revised and updated. Amendments were made, as appropriate.

- o Additional resources were devised to cater for the expansion of the service to the S3 cohort for the first time.
- o A new 'Teams' communication channel was set up to provide a pivotal point of information and contact for both (i) European school coordinators (ii) Guidance Counsellors
- o An online introductory meeting was scheduled for European school coordinators, Guidance Counsellors and the Inspectorate to offer an opportunity to meet with one another, familiarise themselves with the service and ask any questions they may have about delivery

The independent external review of the Irish Guidance Service to the European Schools commissioned by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland in 2020 continued to inform the ongoing progression and developments for the 2021 service delivery. This review incorporated feedback from students and their parents, European School Directors, European School 'Coordinating Teachers', the Irish Department of Education and NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland staff. Intended as an internal document; the feedback has provided valuable insights into the views and needs of all stakeholders. The review continues to inform the ongoing progression of the service.

For further information including a more detailed report of delivery in 2021 see: -
www.euroguidance.ie/european-schools

Other Activities

Internal collaboration

This continued to be a focus to ensure targeted and collaborative activities between the Euroguidance programme and Post Primary & FET Programmes within NCGE. For example, the Euroguidance Officer and the Post Primary Guidance Programme Coordinator collaborated on a TCA in December 2021.

See – www.euroguidance.ie/TCA/Dec2021

External collaboration

The Euroguidance Officer joined the new 'Inter Agency' working group. A group consisting of Euroguidance, Eurodesk, the HEA, QQI/Europass and EURES designed to stimulate opportunities for future collaboration between agencies/networks. The group worked in 2021 towards their first collaborative publication scheduled for Spring 2022.

'Academia' Network

The Euroguidance Officer re-joined this group in November 2021 to coordinate and plan for 2022 CPD opportunities for the European Guidance community. Ireland was scheduled to facilitate a virtual Academia experience in March 2022.

For more information on Academia see - www.euroguidance.eu/international-mobility/academia
For information in relation to the Irish offering see – www.euroguidance.ie/academia

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 2021.

See - www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications

Promoting the 'New Europass'

NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland remained committed to the promotion of the new Europass Portal; doing so through our national website, through the production of dedicated web resources and videos, through a competition (in association with another national partner), through our social channels and our regular newsletters - to ensure that guidance practitioners in Europe are kept informed about key developments to this invaluable tool. The Euroguidance Officer, along with QQI Europass representatives, is an active member of the Europass Learning Opportunities working group. The NCGE Director is a member of the Europass Advisory Group.

See – www.europa.eu/europass/en

7. 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 in post-primary schools and the FET sector.

All CPD programmes are informed by internal, national and international research, consultation and engagement with guidance counsellors and stakeholders, informed by EU and international guidelines where appropriate, and adhere to NCGE's Quality Assurance Procedures. Resources to support CPD are developed prior to and following feedback received during the webinars in an ongoing process of professional development supports.

Post Primary

A number of webinars were coordinated as a real-time response to national Covid-19 related events. For example, January 2021 saw a webinar entitled 'School Closures January 2021: Interactive Discussion on Digitalised Guidance (and a reminder of supports and resources available). There were 591 registrants for this webinar on 12th January 2021, inclusive of Guidance Counsellors, school management and representatives from relevant stakeholders. Simultaneously, a focus on non-Covid related quality guidance provision in schools was also provided. NCGE presented webinars throughout 2021 to provide attendees with information on Whole School Guidance, resources relevant to their practice and further areas in service of best practice in Guidance.

Webinar provision was provided in Post Primary in two series through the year – a Winter/Spring series of five Webinars from January – April for the 2020/2021 academic year, and an Autumn series of two Webinars September – October for the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year.

Participants in both series included Guidance Counsellors, school management and representatives from other relevant agencies/bodies *e.g.*, *PDST, JCT etc.* Where registrants were unable to attend live (due to timetabled classes etc.), a recording of the session was subsequently made available. Numbers of participants for each Webinar Series are outlined in the Table below.

Table 1: 2021 Post Primary Webinar Attendance Information

Date	Series	Webinar	Registrants	Live Attendees
12/01/2021	Winter/Spring 2021 Post Primary Webinar Series	'School Closures January 2021: Interactive Discussion on Digitalised Guidance'	591	400
19/01/2021	Winter/Spring 2021 Post Primary Webinar Series	'The Inclusion of Parents in Whole School Guidance (Planning and Practice)'	231	134
02/02/2021	Winter/Spring 2021 Post Primary Webinar Series	'Understanding all aspects of QQI'	258	120

04/02/2021	Winter/Spring 2021 Post Primary Webinar Series	'Guidance Related Learning for Junior Cycle' - Webinar 2	212	68
02/03/2021	Winter/Spring 2021 Post Primary Webinar Series	'Whole School Guidance and 'Looking At Our Schools' (LAOS)'	337	126
27/04/2021	Winter/Spring 2021 Post Primary Webinar Series	'Whole School Guidance Provision - Examples of Good Practice'	763	408
21/09/2021	Autumn 2021 Post-Primary Webinar Series	'Settling Back In and Self Care for the Guidance Counsellor'	255	115
19/10/2021	Autumn 2021 Post-Primary Webinar Series	'Working with Students with Intellectual Disabilities'	292	96

CPD supports for Guidance in Further Education and Training sector

NCGE coordinates and delivers the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for ETB AEGS staff. CPD training was delivered via online webinar through 2021 with two sessions provided for ETB AEGS staff in the context of online provision. With smaller numbers of guidance staff employed within the FET guidance sectors, attendance figures are always lower than those for the post-primary sector.

A webinar session on the Legalities of Digitalised Guidance in FET was facilitated for ETB AEGS staff on 10/02/2021. To ensure that new staff recruited to ETB AEGS services through 2020/2021 were informed on relevant considerations in ongoing use of the Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS), a webinar session was delivered also on 23/06/2021 introducing NCGE, Data Gathering and relevant background to development of the (ETB) Adult Education Guidance Services. Participant information at these sessions is outlined in the table below.

Table 2: CPD Webinars for ETB AEGS staff 2021

Date	Webinar	Registrants	Live Attendees
10/02/2021	Legalities of Digitalised Guidance in FET - AEGS	47	41
23/06/2021	Introduction to NCGE, Data Gathering and background to development of the (ETB) Adult Education Guidance Services	18	17

In Autumn 2021 NCGE provided CPD webinar sessions also across FET to relevant guidance practitioners. Participants in the 'Whole of FET' Webinar sessions included ETB AEGS Guidance Coordinators, AEGS Guidance Counsellors and Adult Guidance Information Officer staff, Guidance Counsellors in PLC/CFE, Youthreach/CTC Advocates and representatives from other relevant agencies/bodies. The numbers of participants are outlined in the table below.

Table 3: Autumn 2021 Whole of FET Guidance Webinar Series Attendance Information

Date	Webinar	Registrants	Live Attendees
23/11/2021	'DFHERIS Adult Literacy For Life 10 Year Strategy in FET Guidance Practice'	95	63
30/11/2021	'Universal Design for Learning in FET Guidance provision'	115	61

Euroguidance

Over the course of 2021, NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland continued the facilitation of the online 'Mobility Guidance Counselling Module' for use by guidance counsellors. Due to the prioritisation of the 'Euro-Quest' programme and the allocation of required resources to progress this it was not feasible or appropriate to proactively promote the module. However, guidance counsellors engaged with Euro-Quest were encouraged to complete this module to facilitate additional knowledge pertaining to mobility.

See - <https://euroguidance.ie/cpd-mobility-guidance-counselling>

8. COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

NCGE convenes and participates in committees and working groups for and on behalf of the Department. The activities for 2021 were as follows.

DoE Steering Group for the Professional Support (Guidance Counselling Supervision) Programme for Post-primary School Guidance Counsellors

This Steering Group is chaired by Teacher Education Section of the Department and managed by the Monaghan Education Centre. The guidance counselling supervision programme for school-based guidance counsellors is funded by the Department, managed by Monaghan Education Centre and coordinated and delivered via the IGC branch network. NCGE is an active member of the Steering group, working with the Department Inspectorate representative in an advisory capacity to ensure reflection of Department policy on guidance and delivery of quality guidance practice. In 2021 NCGE representative was directly involved in the development and piloting of the proposed online evaluation tool for the programme.

See - <https://metc.ie/index.php/national-programmes/supervision-for-guidance-counsellors/>

Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing

NCGE has convened the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Psychometric Testing (on behalf of DoE). It was agreed with DoE to postpone the meeting for 2021, while NCGE worked in collaboration with DoE to review, update and make further revisions to the List of Tests, to account for implications of Brexit and changes to various Tests by publishers for use in post-primary schools.

NCGE engaged with the test publisher in UK and test providers in Ireland to ensure appropriate standards of qualifications are required to access psychometric tests appropriately.

NCGE explored establishment of a working group to consider such Tests for use in FET sector.

See - <https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/committees-and-working-groups>

NCGE – Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) collaboration

NCGE continued to engage with the Psychological Society of Ireland, in relation to the PSI Register of Guidance Counsellors in the use of Psychometric tests.

See - <https://www.ncge.ie/psi>

CEDEFOP ‘CareersNet’

The 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. Due to this membership, the NCGE Director was invited as a CareersNet expert to participate in the international inter-agency co-operation on the development of the revised Cedefop/EU Commission / OECD / ETF / UNESCO / ILO publication [‘Investing in Career Guidance – revised edition 2021’](#) (published August 2021).

NCGE / ETBI Collaboration

In 2021 NCGE collaborated with ETBI to establish a policy level working group to ensure understanding of the role of NCGE to support guidance policy and practice across the ETB Sector. While the Terms of Reference were agreed and the first meeting held in September, further meetings were postponed pending further decisions of Dept of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Skills on the future of FET guidance.

9. PROMULGATION

NCGE provides information to clients and stakeholders of NCGE through various means including its web properties, social media, online and printed publications, showcasing at conferences/exhibitions and direct presentations to stakeholders. Through the Communications Officer, NCGE contracts the services of appropriate external suppliers to ensure quality development and delivery. Given the working environment generated by the onset of the pandemic in early 2020; over 2021 the importance of disseminating timely, informative and readily accessible information maintained a greater priority and focus. Communication levels increased significantly over the course of the year and additional communication tools, new resource areas and reference points were developed.

NCGE & Euroguidance Ireland main Websites

NCGE's main method of disseminating information and resources is through its online web properties. Over the course of 2021, in part response to the pandemic, NCGE continued to re-develop the way that our resources were presented. In addition to the way that content could be accessed we also added a large amount of new and highly relevant resources targeting specific cohorts of the national and international guidance community.

www.ncge.ie

This is the core website for NCGE and includes dedicated sections as follows:

- Specific Resources for Post-Primary Guidance delivery
- Specific Resources for Further Education and Training Guidance delivery
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities
- General information, including about NCGE, reports and FOI / governance requirements

www.euroguidance.ie

The NCGE Euroguidance Ireland Centre website is maintained as a companion site of the main NCGE website and provides particular information relating to the work of Euroguidance Ireland. It includes dedicated sections as follows:

- Specific Euroguidance Ireland Resources (applicable across multiple practice areas)
- Information relating to 'Euro-Quest' delivery in schools
- Information relating the Irish European School Guidance Service
- Information relating to studying / training in Ireland and in Europe and the Network

Statistics on usage:

ncge.ie

There was a total of 28,572 visitors to this website in 2021: recording 43,623 sessions and 112,312 total page views. There was a total of 14,143 documents downloaded from the site in 2021.

euroguidance.ie

There was a total of 5,007 visitors to this website in 2021: recording 6,385 sessions and 13,837 total page views. There was a total of 891 documents downloaded from the site in 2021.

Provision of online resources and printed materials for Post Primary:

www.ncge.ie/resources/post-primary

Over the course of 2021 this new and dedicated resource section was maintained and significantly added to. This section 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, research publications and more. In addition a new NCGE '[Shopify portal](#)' was launched, providing a means for the ordering of free printed materials for school Guidance delivery and planning.

Provision of online resources and materials for FET:

www.ncge.ie/resources/FET

Again, over the course of 2021 this new and dedicated resource section was maintained and added to. This section 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 practice.

Social Media

Twitter

www.twitter.com/ncgeguidance

NCGE continued to engage with members of the Guidance Community through its Twitter account. By the end of 2021 there were over 2300 followers to the account (compared to 1890 at the end of 2020); gaining on average 8 additional followers each week.

Facebook

www.facebook.com/euroguidanceireland

The NCGE Euroguidance Facebook Page was set up to promote the activities of the Euroguidance Ireland Centre. By the end of 2021, the total amount of followers was approx. 1600.

'Guidance Matters'

www.ncge.ie/guidancematters

'Guidance Matters' is NCGE's biannual online interactive magazine providing articles and reviews on guidance provision across the education sector. In 2021 NCGE again published Summer and Winter editions. All staff in NCGE source and / or author 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 consulting 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 4500 NCGE subscribers.

'NCGE Bulletin'

www.ncge.ie/ncge/ncge-bulletin

The 'NCGE Bulletin' was issued 10 times over the course of 2021: keeping guidance practitioners and stakeholders up to date on the ongoing work of NCGE and national / international developments in guidance. Due to contingency (pandemic) requirements this was additionally supplemented through requisite tactical communications to specific cohorts.

Euroguidance Ireland Newsletter

www.euroguidance.ie/newsletter

Beginning in February 2020, NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland began the production and despatch of a dedicated Euroguidance Newsletter. This was sent in e-zine format, to over 4500 NCGE subscribers on two occasions in 2021

Vimeo (Video resources)

www.vimeo.com/ncge

Throughout 2021 NCGE expanded the use of its Vimeo channel; being used to host video-based resources and in particular recorded Webinars. This continued to be an invaluable platform during this period.

The 'NCGE Podcast'

www.ncge.ie/resources/podcast

Over the course of 2021 NCGE delivered 5 x podcasts. Through discussions with NCGE staff and guests, a series of episodes relevant to Post Primary, Further Education and Training and European considerations for Guidance were made available on the NCGE website and the 'Soundcloud' platform.

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. Due to the continuance of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2021 a considerable number of planned 'face to face' activities were cancelled and postponed. These included events coordinated by NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland and those intended to be participated in.

Translation to Irish

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 2021, NCGE worked with the newly contracted translator to ensure key information and resources were made available in the Irish language, including:

- Post Primary Resources
- Euroguidance Ireland Resources
- Euro-Quest student workbooks
- 2 issues of 'Guidance Matters'
- The 2020 NCGE Output Statement
- Various additional letters of correspondence

ICT Developments in NCGE

In line with the strategic objective to ensure and promote the use of ICT where possible and appropriate, over the course of 2021 NCGE:

- Purchased additional hardware to facilitate NCGE staff's remote working requirements
- Continued (and expanded) the use of the 'Microsoft 365' cloud-based productivity platform, including 'Teams' for internal coordination and video conferencing
- Maintained a 'Zoom' Licence for external meetings and webinar delivery
- Maintained a subscription to 'Slido' cloud-based polling software
- Launched a 'Shopify' portal enabling practitioners order NCGE printed materials directly (free of charge)
- Contracted an external online conference management company to facilitate the delivery of the National Forum on Guidance online

Reporting

Throughout 2021, NCGE continued to provide briefing documents and information on guidance counselling and guidance related issues to the Dept of Education (DoE) and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). NCGE also provided appropriate reports and information to SOLAS and other Departments and agencies. NCGE continued to ensure compliance with completion of various reports to DoE and other Government departments on issues such as finance, environment, energy efficiency, procurement and parliamentary questions, etc.

10. 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. 2 Fora took place in 2021 under the overarching theme of 'Green Guidance'. Due to the continuance of the Covid-19 pandemic these were hosted online. In 2021 Minister Eamonn Ryan, presented the keynote address to the Forum in November on 'Career Guidance for the Green Economy'.

See - www.ncge.ie/national-forum-guidance

11. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

NCGE became subject to the Freedom of Information Act with effect from 31st May 2006.

See - 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 31st December 2021.* [Access 2021 Report](#)

12. FINANCIAL REPORT

NCGE Funding

NCGE core funding is provided by DoE Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (CAP). This includes funding for the provision of post primary guidance supports, policy advice, research, and national, EU and international co-operation activities and functions *and the* European Schools Guidance Programme on behalf of the Department and co-funding for the Euroguidance Centre.

Since 2014, on an annual basis NCGE completes the SOLAS Grant application and reporting process in accordance with the “Overarching Parameters and Guidelines Document for 2022 Funding Allocations by SOLAS to Agencies in the FET Sector”. In each application, NCGE outlines the plans for the delivery of the NCGE FET Guidance Programme in accordance with the NCGE strategic and operational / annual plans to support all FET based guidance provision.

NCGE hosts and manages the Euroguidance Centre for Ireland which is co-funded from the Department CAP grant and the EU Commission. In 2021 NCGE submitted the appropriate reporting following the end of the multi-annual 3-year funding for Euroguidance 2018-2020 and was approved for final payment of all outstanding costs.

NCGE Summary Accounts 2021

NCGE financial accounts are published each year within the Léargas Audited accounts. Expenditure as detailed below includes activities pertaining to the development of policy and the delivery of service to support development and delivery of quality guidance practice in post-primary schools and FET sector.

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>Income Euro</i>	<i>Expenditure Euro</i>
DES CAP UNIT	635,000	566,053
SOLAS	267,617	267,617
Other Total (Including Euroguidance)	30,540	99,487
Total	933,157	933,157

Appendix 1 - NCGE Staff in 2021

Jennifer McKenzie	Director
Mary Stokes	Guidance Programme Coordinator (FET)
Carol Guildea	Guidance Programme Coordinator (Post-primary)
Orla Ní Cheallaigh	Guidance Officer (Euroguidance)
David Cullen	Communications Officer
Jean Rafferty	Office Administrator
Luke Dunne	Guidance Programme Administrator
Eimear Mc Donnell	Guidance Officer (Post primary and Euroguidance) <i>Temp Maternity Cover position</i>

Appendix 2 - NCGE Management of Guidance Committee Members 2021

<i>Paul King</i>	<i>DCU (Chair)</i>
<i>Jennifer McKenzie</i>	NCGE (ex Officio)
<i>Karen Murtagh</i>	DoE
<i>Seán P O'Briain</i>	DoE (retired in 2021)
<i>Lorraine Gilligan</i>	Léargas Executive Director (newly appointed)
<i>Máire Quinn</i>	Léargas
<i>Josephine McGread</i>	AGA
<i>Justin McGree</i>	IGC (resigned during 2021)
<i>Kathy Finnegan</i>	NAPD
<i>Roisin Doherty</i>	SOLAS
<i>Fiona Davis</i>	HEA
<i>Mary B. Ryan</i>	DSGC
<i>Stephen Fitzgerald</i>	DSP
<i>Joe Cunningham</i>	ETBI

Appendix 3 – NCGE Key Actions Plan 2021

Preamble

The Department of Education 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. This extension was confirmed to end 2021.

With the further extension to the MGC to end 2021 and pending the outcome of the Departmental decisions on the implementation of the recommendations of the Indecon report, it was agreed by DoE and MGC that development of a revised Strategic Plan was not appropriate at that time. Based on the objectives and activities agreed within the [previous Strategic Plan](#) (to end 2020) it was agreed that an Annual Key Actions Plan was appropriate.

This 'Key Actions Plan' detailed the functions and activities under the following headings.

- Inform and Collaborate with DoE and DFHERIS on prioritised actions of national guidance policy and practice in Education and FET/ HE sectors
- Convene, co-ordinate and collaborate with stakeholders to inform, influence and advise on national guidance policy and quality practice
- Development of Whole School Guidance approach, supporting guidance counsellors and school management to make use of the Whole School Guidance Framework
- Inform and influence DFHERIS and SOLAS on the Guidance Workstream of the FET Strategy including exploration of wider FET Sector guidance needs.
- European Programme, including Euroguidance and European Schools Guidance Service
- NCGE Communications
- Staffing, Governance and Administration

Each of these activities would remain informed and underpinned by **Government of Ireland Sustainable Development Goals**, as highlighted by the excerpt below.

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 ¹ 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.

- **Goal 4.** *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*²
- **Goal 5.** *Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*³
- **Goal 8.** *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*⁴

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2008%3A319%3A0004%3A0007%3AEN%3APDF>

² <https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal>

³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>

GLOSSARY

AEGI	Adult Educational Guidance Initiative
AEGS	Adult Education Guidance Services
AGA	Adult Guidance Association
AGMS	Adult Guidance Management System
AmCham	American Chamber of Commerce (Ireland)
BITCI	Business in the Community Ireland
CAO	Central Applications Office
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTC	Community Training Centre
DSP	Dept. Social Protection
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DES/DoE	Dept. Education and Skills / Dept. of Education
DFHERIS	Dept. Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science
DSGC	Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
EPALE	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
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
IBM	International Business Machines (Information Technology Company)
IGC	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
ISSU	Irish Second-Level Student's Union
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers
JMB	Joint Managerial Body (for Voluntary Secondary Schools)
MGC	NCGE Management of Guidance Committee
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Services
NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
PPLI	Post-Primary Languages Ireland
PSI	Psychological Society Ireland
P-TECH	Pathways in Technology Early College High School
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna.
TCA	Training & Cooperation Activity
USI	Union of Students in Ireland