

Promoting digital skills amongst older workers (Explore programme)

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 IRELAND

Timeline

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

2020 Implementation

2021 Completed

ID number 28303

Description

The Department of Education and Skills launched, in June 2018, the EXPLORE programme to address the lack of digital skills among older workers and to increase Ireland's rate of participation in lifelong learning. In each of the nine regions in the regional skills forums network, managers approached Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to provide basic digital skills to workers in the manufacturing sector. Programmes are delivered, to small groups of learners, in flexible formats to suit the workers of each company. The programme was initially piloted in the south east region of Ireland and was later rolled out nationwide.

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, over 440 people participated in the EXPLORE programme.

The mid-east regional skills forum (MERSF) manager, in cooperation with ETBs from the region, delivered a number of successful EXPLORE programmes throughout the region. 22 people, from three companies, participated in the programme in the mid-east. MERSF also developed a number of videos from both the employers' and participants' perspectives, which proved instrumental in promoting the programme throughout all regions.

The north-east regional skills forum (NERSF) had a successful uptake of EXPLORE programmes for their region. The feedback from some of the participants relayed the direct benefit the programme has to both the individual and, in turn, the employer. 14 people, from two companies, participated in the EXPLORE programme in the north-east.

Colaiste Dhulaigh and Rathmines College (CDETB) and Blanchardstown AdultEd (DDLETB) delivered the EXPLORE programme in Dublin to 45 participants representing 16 companies. The programme participants from Colasite Dhulaigh concluded their initiative with an expert speaker, Steve Gilsenan from diageo, showcasing the impact of digital skills on manufacturing companies. Dublin Regional Skills, in cooperation with Colaiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education (CDETB), offered the opportunity for local manufacturing companies to engage with this free EXPLORE initiative, allowing their employees to upskill for lifelong learning.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, the National Skills Council (NSC) identified the digital skills divide in the Irish economy and society as a key priority, outlining that there was a significant overlap between those presently impacted by COVID-19 and those with low levels of digital skills. The NSC highlighted the need to meet these requirements to drive the development of the green economy and seek to accelerate the wide-scale development of digital skills in all sectors of the economy. Regional skills forums, in conjunction with forum members, have created the EXPLORE programme and DigiECO in line with these themes and continued to focus on these areas for 2021. DigiECO contributes towards achieving the five key pillars of the government's Future jobs Ireland strategy, with a sustainable, resilient and future orientated economy by 2025.

2021 Completed

The EXPLORE programme has been mainstreamed and runs in all nine RSFs areas.

Bodies responsible

- Department of Education and Skills (until 2020)
- Department of Education

Target group

Learners

Adult learners
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Entities providing VET

Companies

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Acquiring key competences

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Information on the EXPLORE programme](#)

[Employer and learner feedback](#)

[Employee perspective](#)

Related policy developments

2022 Completed

The network of regional skills forums

To take on board skills needs at regional level, the Department of Education and Skills set up and funded nine regional skills forums in May 2016. The forums are part of the National skills strategy.

 IRELAND

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28303>