

# Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Ireland

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## Introduction

Since 2023, with the establishment of the [National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance \(2024-2030\)](#), responsibility for policy provision for career guidance is shared by different national authorities in Ireland. This Framework 'outlines the vision, pillars, objectives and outcomes of lifelong guidance in Ireland over an eight-year period'. The Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030) for this Framework outlines the actions that are planned at national level, including the establishment of a National Policy Group, involving government departments and other bodies. (See the public consultation from 2023 [here](#).)

The strategic action pillars structuring the framework and eight objectives are

1. Visibility and awareness of lifelong guidance services and information provision;
2. Standards and quality throughout the lifelong-guidance system;
3. Access, inclusion and universal design and;
4. Career-management skills and lifelong career mobility.

With the new strategic framework an attempt is being made to better unify provision of lifelong guidance systematically, where these are divided into different sectors:

- Post-primary schools system of education;
- Further education and training and higher education-tertiary system;
- Guidance in the context of national disability policy framework and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Public employment services;
- Guidance in the context of labour market information and workforce development.

## Source

- Government of Ireland (2023). *National strategic framework for lifelong guidance (2024-2030)*. <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/279193/8b0c3c0a-380f-4c82-9a7e-35af3432a318.pdf#page=null>

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## Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In Ireland, there are many different actors at different levels who collaborate on the development and delivery of the lifelong guidance systems.

In March 2022, the Minister for Education announced the establishment of the National Policy Group for lifelong guidance. This group comprises senior departmental officials of Irish government Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science, the Department of Social Protection, Department of Children Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The role of the national policy group was to steer the development of a coherent long-term strategic framework for lifelong guidance.

In January 2023, the Department of Education launched a public consultation on the strategic framework to inform future developments outlining features on collaboration policy: <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/ae51d-public-consultation-on-a-strategic-framework-for-lifelong-guidance/>.

Following this public consultation process the [National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance \(2024-2030\)](#) was published in December 2023. It 'outlines the vision, pillars, objectives and outcomes of lifelong guidance in Ireland over an eight-year period'. A [Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#) outlines the actions that are planned at national level, and several high-level actors will collaborate and lead actions including a National Policy Group, government departments and other bodies.

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Several decisions and actions preceded and accompanied the development of the Framework at different times and in parallel, having implications for different policy stakeholders and decision-makers including in coordination, collaboration, and communication.

One of these is that in 2022 the Department of Education and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science made the decision to restructure and reorganise supports for guidance policy and provision within the post-primary and further education and training sectors in Ireland. As a result of this decision, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) closed on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and many of its functions were reorganised within new structures. As a result, many of the national resources developed by NCGE were transferred to the various new organisations involved in providing supports for [guidance](#) policy, provision, and delivery (see Gov.ie. (2025, 2 January).

In September 2022, [Education Training Boards Ireland \(ETBI\)](#) became the responsible agent for FET Lifelong Guidance in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. In this regard, ETBI supports all 16 Education & Training Boards (ETBs) across Ireland in key strategic areas aligning towards a new vision for 'integrated life-long guidance' in the FET sector. To ensure coordination, cooperation, and collaboration a steering committee was established by ETBI with membership from key stakeholders including representatives from the Department of Education, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science, SOLAS and ETBI. A FET Guidance network was established with a member of each ETB's FET Guidance service represented as part of this network.

The Department of Education provides funding for the programme of the Guidance Counselling Supervision Scheme. This is managed by [Monaghan Education Centre](#), overseen by a representative steering committee, and coordinated through the branch network of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). All guidance counsellors working in post-primary schools are

encouraged to attend this free supervision scheme which provides five two-hour sessions throughout the academic year. The [Institute of Guidance Counsellors](#) (IGC) is a professional body which represents guidance counsellors, the majority of whom are working in post primary schools and further education and training (FET).

The [Association of Higher Education Careers Services](#) represents the careers and employability professionals of the higher education institutions such as Universities and private colleges. These institutions provide education and training programmes at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) levels 6-10. The [Adult Guidance Association - AGA - Adult Guidance Association](#) (AGA) represents the guidance staff of the adult guidance/FET Guidance services, based within the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) regionally. The [National skills strategy 2025](#) provides the road map for many national strategies and developments, including guidance, and cooperation and roles among stakeholders at different levels to achieve its aims. It aims to improve education and training, and effective use of skills and technology in order to create sustainable growth and quality of employment. The six key objectives of the strategy are as follows:

1. Education and training providers will place a stronger focus on providing skills development opportunities that are relevant to the needs of learners, society, and the economy;
2. Employers will participate actively in the development of skills and make effective use of skills in their organisations to improve productivity and competitiveness;
3. The quality of teaching and learning at all stages of education will be continually enhanced and evaluated;
4. People across Ireland will engage more in lifelong learning;
5. There will be a specific focus on active inclusion to support participation in education and training and the labour market;
6. There will be supports to increase the supply of skills to the labour market.

The strategy also includes reference to the development of career guidance services, information and tools and the strategic action to carry out a review of guidance services, tools, and career information.

Also informing the present framework, in 2019 the Department of Education published a report on the [Review of Career Information and Tools](#), with recommendations on both governance structures and career guidance provision .

The [Review](#) made recommendations in four key areas including the role of enterprises:

1. reforms to governance and delivery arrangements;
2. improvement in career guidance tools and career information;
3. enhancement of enterprise engagement;
4. promotion of inclusion.

In 2023 OECD published the [OECD Skills Studies; OECD Skills Strategy, Ireland, Assessment and Recommendations](#). This report provides a series of recommendations for the further development of career guidance services in Ireland including a strong role for different actors in different aspects:

1. Strengthen the co-ordination of lifelong guidance to support a strategic approach moving forward;
2. Consolidate and improve online information on learning opportunities and careers to improve navigability, accessibility, and relevance;
3. Expand and strengthen guidance services to ensure that everyone can access high-quality guidance over the life course.

In May 2024, the Department of Education hosted the [first annual Lifelong guidance network event](#) bringing together representatives from more than 60 organisations including practitioners, policy makers and advocates for those accessing lifelong guidance services. Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) provide general 'supports' for the delivery of the FET Guidance and Information services/Adult Education Guidance Services (different ETBs name these as AEGS or as FET guidance services). Most of the guidance resources developed by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) (now closed) to support guidance practice in FET are now [available](#) through ETBI.

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## Access to guidance

Access to guidance in Ireland is sector specific (e.g., within education, training and labour market, and civil society). The models of guidance, delivery mechanisms and target user groups are determined at these sector levels. The new [Strategic Framework](#), as stated, aims to allow all individuals access to 'high quality holistic and appropriate lifelong guidance' aligned to their requirements (see the Introduction for an overview of the Framework). Online and in-person services are provided across sectors including career information and self-help resources such as career portals. Where publicly funded and available, these guidance and information services are free to service users unless specifically stated otherwise.

### Post-primary schools

In 1998, the Government of Ireland published the [Education Act](#), in which Section 9 (c) states that a school shall use its available resources to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices. In post-primary schools (students aged 12 to 18 years), guidance counsellors are allocated based on the annual resource allocation indicated by department guidelines ('circulars').

In 2022 the Department of Education published "*Working as a post-primary Guidance Counsellor in Ireland 2022*" which outlines the role and qualifications requirements of guidance counsellors who are qualified teachers in post-primary schools.

In 2024 the Department of Education published the first circular on the implementation of guidance in post-primary schools. This "Guidance in Post-primary schools" circular outlines the allocation of resources to guidance in schools, the delivery of the Whole school guidance model, to include classroom learning, group work and one-to-one meetings, the role of the guidance counsellor, reflecting the needs of student and parents and the inclusion of career management skills and engagement with employers.

### Further Education and Training (FET) Sector

FET sector in Ireland comprises Vocational Education & Training (VET) and adult education and 'second chance education' for those who did not complete post-primary education or who wish to upskill and/or change careers

Within the further education and training sector, access to guidance is currently provided via the 16 regional [Education and Training Boards \(ETBs\)](#) and is informed by the National Further

Access to [guidance](#) is provided to the general public and to FET registered learners on adult and community education programmes via the FET Guidance and Information Services.

The Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS) where guidance and impartial information is provided to adults aged 18 years and over, and those over 16 who have left school early who are *interested in* or *participating in* programmes on the National Framework of Qualifications Levels 1 – 6.

Guidance in Youthreach Centres, Adult and Community Education, Youth Information and vocational Training Centres where impartial and person-centred information and career guidance is provided to support individuals to make informed choices in relation to personal, education, training and career opportunities.

Guidance is also provided to registered students and learners within Colleges of Further Education/ Post Leaving Cert Programmes.

Guidance and information are provided to learners attending or seeking to make applications to Colleges of Further Education (CFEs) and Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Programmes and Training Centres and Prison Services. Services may vary nationally depending on local ETB needs and resources.

Guidance is provided within the Colleges of Further Education (CFEs) and PLCs (which provide qualifications at NFQ levels 4 to 6), by suitably qualified guidance counsellors who are employed by and based within the colleges. They work with admissions to programmes, student support and student career guidance provision.

Nationally agreed referral processes are in place between FET guidance and information services and the Department of Social Protection.

### **Higher Education Sector**

Guidance is provided within the higher education institutions and universities via the career's advice and employability services within the colleges.

The Association of Higher Education and Careers Services (AHECS) represents the careers and employability professionals in the Universities, Technical Universities across Ireland. Representing 26 Universities, Technological Universities, Higher Education Institutes and Institutes of Technology, the mission of AHECS is to lead and support collaboration among Higher Education Careers Service professionals throughout Ireland and be the recognised authority on graduate employability, Placement and Career Development Learning.'

### **Education and Careers Fairs**

On an annual basis the "[Higher Options](#)" education and careers exhibition is held in Dublin in September. Exhibitors from further and higher education institutions across the country and the UK provide information and advice on their courses, and career progression options. [Careers talks](#) are hosted to provide insights into different career pathways, with learners and graduates of various courses invited to speak about their learning journey. Schools from across the country attend with students aged 16-18 encouraged to attend. It is usual practice that the guidance counsellor in the school will prepare students to explore their education and training options at this event.

[World Skills Ireland](#) provides a partnership between enterprise, industry, education, training and government to promote and profile skills training and apprenticeship programmes nationally. World Skills Ireland hosts the annual exhibition to showcase skills training across sectors. Post-primary schools attend the exhibition to provide students with the opportunity to speak with and explore career areas with industry experts in areas such as catering, construction, mechanics, IT, apprenticeships etc.

Higher Options and World Skills events are scheduled simultaneously to ensure that students can access both exhibitions in Dublin on the same day, especially for those who are travelling across country to attend.

### **Public Employment Services**

Public Employment Services are provided by [Intreo](#), a single point of contact for all employment and income supports. Designed to provide a streamlined approach, Intreo offers practical, tailored employment services and supports in Intreo Centres throughout Ireland. The Intreo services are

aimed at jobseekers, and those who are employed but seeking job or career change.

The **Intreo Partner Local Area Employment Service (LAES)** is a contracted employment support service delivered in all 26 counties. Local Area Employment Services provide employment supports to individuals who have been unemployed for more than 24 months. Contracts to deliver the Local Areas Employment Services are determined based on a national procurement process. The aim of the LAES is to assist customers in finding sustainable full-time paid employment by providing intensive individual support and assistance. The service is provided for long-term (>24 months) unemployed jobseekers most distant from the labour market for a period of 52 weeks and then for a further period of in-employment support for 17 weeks if the customer gets a job.

The LAES service is provided to customers on jobseeker's payments, on other payments (e.g., OPFP, Carers, DA) or the customer may not be in receipt of any payment. This is quite different to the JobPath and NES services and means that if a customer changes from a Jobseeker Allowance to a Carer's Payment, they do not need to be cancelled from the service - the customer can continue to engage if they wish.

Two examples of Local Area Employment Services include:

-[Waterford Leader Partnership LAES](#)

and

-[Ballymun Job Centre](#) .

### **National Employment Service (NES)**

The **Intreo Partner National** employment service (NES) is a contracted [JobPath](#) employment activation service that is intended to help jobseekers find and retain full-time employment. Two companies are currently contracted, following a national procurement process, by the Department to provide the service.

As part of a structured client journey, the service is primarily aimed at those who are 'newly' long-term unemployed who would benefit from the provision of intensive 'employment support services' (e.g., CV and interview preparation, and similar) and are in receipt of a primary social welfare payment. The NES focus is on jobseekers on the Live register between twelve and twenty-four months although jobseekers greater than thirty-six months may also be referred. The standard period of engagement is fifty-two weeks. The local Intreo Office will refer the individual to the local JobPath agency in their area.

Each jobseeker is assigned a personal advisor who meets with them regularly to help them develop a Personal Progression Plan and provide them with access to relevant training/coaching programmes. The NES also work closely with employers to secure vacancies for jobseekers and will provide the jobseeker with advice and support for at least seventeen weeks, and up to 52 weeks, of employment.

[Turas Nua](#) provides the National employment services for 13 counties in the south of Ireland. The employment activation schemes support jobseekers to work towards sustainable full-time employment or self-employment.

Seetec Limited provides the National employment services for the 13 counties from Dublin to Donegal, supporting job seekers with employment assistance and advice services to work towards fulltime employment or training.

### **Online access to Career information and guidance services**

In addition to individual guidance services in the education, training and PES sectors, online guidance portals available in Ireland provide information on education and training opportunities for youth, and adults, applications processes for Further and Higher Education and apprenticeships, information and resources for careers practitioners and up to date labour market information. Online services can provide general or sector specific information. Some individual online services provide access to a variety careers advisors depending on the provider, but this is not the case for all online services.

The Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science launched the national website hub [The Right Course](#) as the government central portal for information on course and training opportunities, career guidance and information on finance and social protection.

[Generation Apprenticeship](#) is the national portal providing information on apprenticeships available nationally. Information is targeted at careers practitioners and young people and adults of all ages

seeking career opportunities through apprenticeship training. Information is provided for employers on the development of apprenticeship roles.

**CAO** – the Central Applications Office process the applications for undergraduate courses in the higher education sector. Course information and relevant application codes are provided. Applications are completed online. Links are available to the FET sector, but applications for the FET sector are not processed through the CAO system. It is free to access the CAO website, but applications for Higher education require a registration fee to CAO.

**CareersPortal** is an independent career guidance portal developed under public/private partnership between industry experts, government departments and public organisations, companies/organisations and colleges and further and higher education institutes. It aims to provide information and updated LMI (labour market information) to all those involved in providing or requiring career advice and guidance in Ireland including students, jobseekers, parents, graduates, adult learners and career practitioners and other professionals. Access to CareersPortal is free, however, fees are incurred by schools for access to some resources. (see also Cedefop, 2018).

**FETCHCOURSES.ie** is the national portal for education and training programmes within the FET Sector. Managed and provided by SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, in partnership with ETBI and other FET providers, information is provided on all courses offered by ETBs and other FET providers regionally. Individuals can register with the portal to apply directly for the courses listed. **Mycareerpath.ie** is a service supported by **Atlantic Technological University** which offers organisations career guidance and mentorship, including the recognition of prior learning (RPL), to address skills gaps and introduce learning pathways for employees. The service is offered to those who are working or hope to enter into Higher Education.

**Qualifax** is the National Learners' Database for education and training courses at all levels of the national framework. Funded by the Department of Education, this is managed by the **Qualifications Quality Ireland**. (QQI). This "one stop shop" is accessible to all career practitioners, learners and the general public. Comprehensive, annually updated information is provided about further and higher education and training options in Ireland. Articles and links are also provided to assist students, jobseekers, parents, guidance professionals and graduates to make informed choices for education, training and career pathways.

**SmartFutures** provide career resources in the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) sectors, for students, teachers, career guidance practitioners and parents in Ireland. Smartfutures aims to stimulate an interest in STEM subjects in secondary school and at third level. Smart Futures is coordinated and managed by Science Foundation Ireland, in partnership with national stakeholders in academia and industry.

**SOLAS** provides freely accessible labour market information on occupations and employment trends.

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## Quality assurance

Quality assurance in lifelong guidance services in Ireland has undergone development over the years in different stages. There is no formalised national system for quality assurance procedures and reporting on quality assurance mechanisms, but different principles and standards have been established at key stages. More recently, The National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance identifies the key concepts of 'Standards and quality throughout the lifelong guidance system' as Pillar 2 of the Framework. The Strategic Action Plan details the expected outcomes to include evidence-based policies that will help to improve the quality and impact of lifelong guidance:

- clear and transparent standards of guidance evident across all levels in all sectors;
- ongoing training and development of expertise and professionalism of those involved in delivering lifelong guidance;
- evidence-based decision making and a collaborative approach towards sharing key information throughout the system and between sectors.

Pending the actions and developments within this Action Plan, quality assurance of guidance provision will depend on the sector and the management of the guidance services.

In 2007, the [National Guidance Forum](#) (NGF) published the Quality in Guidance report that informed the development of quality practice. Ireland was directly involved as a lead country in the development of the ELGPN quality assurance and evidence framework (2015), which has in turn informed further developments in Ireland.

The [National Guidance Forum Guidance for Life report](#) identified a code of principles which should underpin guidance services and form the basis on which quality is assessed. This included accessibility, appropriateness, confidentiality within the law, equality of opportunity, impartiality, an integrated approach across all guidance sectors, individual ownership and responsibility. Also specified is ensuring quality standards of service: provision of information to individuals detailing service delivery; complaint procedure for clients and system for obtaining client feedback; accurate and current information; staff with appropriate skills, knowledge, and training; appropriate facilities and resources related to their target group and level of service.

Quality assurance of the initial training for guidance counsellors to work in post-primary schools and the FET sector is determined through the Department of Education [Programme Recognition Framework](#) (PRF). This PRF provides the criteria and guidelines for the University course providers who intend that their graduates will work in guidance services specifically delivered under the remit of the Department of Education and Department of Further & Higher Education. All courses must meet the PRF requirements with training in the specified eight areas of competence. (See also section [Training and Qualifications](#)).

Department Circulars are issued annually providing guidelines for practice in issues such as allocation of guidance counsellors and use of psychometric [assessments](#) in schools.

Quality assurance of the FET [Adult Education Guidance Services](#) (AEGS) requires the completion of a quantitative report for the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), Department of Further & Higher Education and SOLAS.

The bespoke data gathering Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS) is managed and monitored by ETBI with an external contracted IT provider ([Career information and ICT in lifelong guidance](#)). In comparison with previous usage (Cedefop, 2022), this is now used for monitoring quantitative indicators.

The [Department of Social Protection](#) (DSP) issues circulars for the provision of standard practice service to all [Intreo](#) offices. These offices work nationally under the activation agenda to support unemployed people back into the workforce. Employment Personal advisors are invited to complete training in the Certificate in Public Employment Services to support their role (see section on [Training and qualifications](#)).

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## Career management skills

Career management skills development and delivery varies according to sector and target users.

The National Strategic Action Plan outlined the development of employer engagement to connect guidance services with enterprise and business. The Plan outlines the intention to ensure that career management and planning skills will be a consistent focus of guidance provision across sectors.

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), following national collaboration, published the Whole [School Guidance Framework](#) (2017).

The Whole School Guidance Framework further identifies three areas of learning to aid student development in eight areas of competence. The areas of learning include learning relating to oneself (personal/social development), educational opportunities (educational development) and career decision making (career development). These include *Developing myself, developing my learning, and developing my career path*.

In 2024 the Department of Education Circular detailed that a focus on career management skills and lifelong career mobility will instil the language of skills development for students in schools. Schools are encouraged to engage with employers to enhance exposure to the world of work.

**CareersPortal** has developed relevant [programmes](#), for the development and delivery of career management skills. Some of these resources are free to access and some incur a fee for schools. This is a public-private partnership, where all facilities are not provided free for schools, so it is not used by all schools.

1. [Guidance Related Learning](#) for Junior Cycle. Developed by NCGE in collaboration with CareersPortal, provides a suite of resources to develop age appropriate CMS for junior cycle students age 12-15 years.
2. [REACH+](#), is a comprehensive career and college preparation programme, for senior cycle students (aged 15-18 years). It uses classroom-based learning using student workbooks, as well as web-based learning on the REACH+ section of the CareersPortal website.
3. [My Future+](#), is a career management skills programme provided by Careers Portal which has been developed to support adult learners in their career learning and development.

[GradIreland](#) is an online portal for university graduates to support their career and employability planning. The career services of higher education institutions provide links to this portal to support graduates nationally.

[Classroom Guidance](#) is one example of private companies providing fee-based resources for school classroom-based career guidance programmes to develop CMS.

[Trinity Access Programme Schools of Distinction Programme](#) is developed by Trinity College Dublin to support access to Higher education nationally. The programme supports schools where there is a low progression to post-secondary education. The scheme builds on the work being successfully undertaken by schools in challenging conditions and often with limited resources. This programme involves the supported implementation of three core practices - Pathways to College, Mentoring, and Leadership in Learning. These three core areas support a whole school approach and leadership in learning where students develop their critical learning skills; introduction of higher education opportunities at early stages of post-secondary education; Pathways to College includes attendance at careers/colleges seminars and fairs, involvement of parents and community links.

Within the FET sector, in the colleges of further education and training centres, career management skills are developed through work experience and preparation programmes and modules. These modules are set at the relevant level on the QQI [National Qualifications Framework](#). They may be delivered by education and training staff and not specifically the guidance services.

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## Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Currently systems and standards for gathering evidence and the assessment of career guidance in Ireland are determined at sectoral level.

The National Strategic Framework Action Plan details the objective to further develop evidence-based policies that will help to improve the quality and impact of lifelong guidance.

In the post-primary school sector (students aged 12 to 18 years), the Inspectorate of the Department of Education carries out inspections of guidance and makes recommendations for whole school guidance programme improvements within the relevant reports. Inspections of guidance are conducted by the Inspectorate in the context of a 'subject inspection'. In 2009, Department of Education published guidelines on school inspections for guidance in *Looking at Guidance , Teaching and Learning in Post Primary Schools*.

Department of Education Inspector unit will evaluate teaching and learning in guidance under the headings of teaching, learning and assessment; subject provision and whole-school support; planning and preparation. The draft findings and recommendations from the evaluation are discussed with the school principal and guidance counsellor and the school board of management are invited to comment on the [report](#).

In school guidance, the Department of Education Inspectorate division complete inspection reviews and reports of the delivery of the whole school guidance programme in post primary schools.

The system for the monitoring and evaluation of the Adult Educational Guidance Services is responsibility of ETBI since 2022. This is compiled using the bespoke data gathering and reporting processed within the Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS) Executive summary reports of quantitative data are produced annually by ETBI. Prior to 2022 the AGMS reports of the AEGS were published by NCGE, from which the Cedefop collection of expert papers Elftorp and Stokes (2022) referred to the AGMS stating that while a number of guidance tools and online portals have been developed in the wider arena (27), at that time no other national monitoring and evaluation system of adult guidance systems and services of its kind existed in Ireland.

There is no national formal monitoring system in place to regularly assess and review effectiveness of private guidance services, however each organisation will determine its own processes.

As example the mechanisms used for assessing the effectiveness of a practice like [Career](#)

Guidance tools for all include:

1. continuous feedback by its users, mainly via asynchronous communication (emails);
2. the advisory groups, set up with guidance counsellors that inform CareersPortal on developments in labour market and education and discuss how these can be integrated in the initiative;
3. the organisation and hosting of the national career skills competitions, which promote employability as they evaluate and assess the skills students have acquired during their work experience. During the competition, the students must complete a career investigation and illustrate which career skills they observed and which they have already or need to develop.

The [Department of Social Protection \(DSP\)](#) provide national data annually for government in relation to the national unemployment figures, but not specifically on career guidance.

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## **Career information, ICT in guidance**

There are several public and private companies providing online careers, education, and specific labour market information, and below are listed also some of the longer lasting developed sites in the country

[SOLAS](#) is the national further education and training authority which provides the [Further Education and Training Course Hub](#), which offers information on all FET courses available within the Education Training Boards (ETB) sector nationally.

[SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit](#) (SLMRU) provides data and analysis on LMRU to the ETB sector.

[Qualifax](#) provides the national database of courses and interest profile assessment for potential learners.

[The Right Course](#) was launched by the Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science in 2021 as the national website hub government central portal for course and training opportunities, career guidance and information and finance and social protection supports for reskilling and upskilling.

[CareersPortal](#) provides up-to-date and relevant career information and resources to those needing or providing career guidance. The site is a valuable tool for guidance professionals throughout the country. It is supported by both public and private organisations, disseminating the most up-to-date information about careers and courses across all sectors of the economy. This includes regularly updated labour market information, occupational data, career videos, career sectors; career interest profiler; personality assessment; CV templates and career news; and information on education courses, schemes/benefits for the unemployed. All visitors can create and manage their own free online career file.

**Apprenticeships** There have been significant developments in apprenticeships in Ireland, including non-traditional apprenticeships such as in the financial sector. All information is available online, in the [Apprenticeship](#) website, managed by the Further Education and Training Authority, SOLAS.

[JobsIreland.ie](#) is the public employment service of the Department of Social Protection which offers a free job advertising service to employers and enables job seekers to search for jobs and to create a profile to match their skills and experience with available jobs. This service includes a network of staff providing expert guidance and resources to both jobseekers and employers. They can help jobseekers to create their CV and find a job corresponding to their profile, while helping employers

Portal	Description	Responsibility Authority	Type of information provided				
			training opportunities	career guidancesupport	financial support	labour validation	market information
Qualifax	Ireland's national database of courses to support students, jobseekers, parents, guidance professionals and graduates to explore their education and training options. Specific sections target students, adult learners, practitioners, parents/families, and apprentices.	QQI	x	x	x	x	x
Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH)	The FETCH portal provides learners with a search tool to find training opportunities, as well as information on grants and allowances to obtain financial support. Portal targeting both young and older learners,	SOLAS and ETBI	x		x		
Generation Apprenticeship	providing information about apprenticeships opportunities.	SOLAS	x				

	A free online service for employees and anyone else seeking to upskill or reskill. The website uses AI technology and one-to-one mentoring to support employees and others back into higher education.	Atlantic Technological University	x	x	x	
MyCareer Path	MyCareerPath.ie also supports businesses struggling with changing demands from clients and widening skills gaps within their own workforce, by providing advice and identify solutions.	A privately-run website providing careers information and guidance materials to different stakeholder groups (e.g. students; early school leavers; adult learners; parents and carers; guidance professionals; jobseekers) on career development, labour market statistics and skills gaps across sectors; occupational profiles; education and training opportunities; progression routes.	Durrow Communications	x	x	x

	A government-operated portal where users can find information on types of courses and training and			
The Right Course	where to search Government of Ireland opportunities; information on grants and other financial support; as well as on career guidance.	x	x	x

[Springboard+](#), a Government initiative, also offers free and heavily subsidised higher education courses at certificate, degree, and masters level leading to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy. These areas include ICT, engineering, green skills, manufacturing, and construction, among many others. Adults can research career courses and contact the various provider institutes for details.

[The National Parents and Students Leaving Certificate Helpline](#) is delivered annually following the publication of the Leaving Certificate examination results. This is a free telephone-based helpline to support students and their parents / guardians to navigate their next progression steps into Further and/or Higher Education institutions.

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## Training and qualifications

There is no national formal registration or recognition process for guidance qualifications.

Guidance counsellors employed in post-primary schools and Further Education and Training (FET) sector delivered by the Education and Training Boards (ETB) nationally must hold a post-graduate qualification in guidance as recognised by the Department of Education.

Each sector determines the relevant guidance qualifications or experience required by practitioners or staff to work in that sector and the continuous professional development required.

The [Department of Social Protection](#) (DSP) provides the public employment service through the Intreo offices. Employment Personal Advisors in DSP Intreo offices are eligible if they are employed to attend appropriate in-service training, Certificate in Public Employment Services, co-ordinated and delivered between DSP and the National College of Ireland.

Post Graduate Qualifications in Guidance (initial training for guidance). There are four programmes in three Universities (Dublin City University; University of Limerick; and Maynooth University (Education Department and Department of Adult and Community Education) in Ireland providing post-graduate initial education programmes in guidance counselling. Previously, University College Cork, University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin also provided these courses, the qualifications from which remain recognised for those holding these qualifications. These universities are subject to the [Department of Education](#) review process under the Programme

Recognition Framework (Department of education, 2016) guidelines on the requirements for training of guidance counsellors working in the schools and FET sector since 2016. (see also section [Quality Assurance](#))

The Programme Recognition Framework provides the criteria and guidelines for the University course providers who intend that their graduates will work in guidance services specifically delivered under the remit of the Department of Education. All courses must meet the PRF requirements with training in the specified eight areas of competence. The PRF from 2016 remains unchanged.

Department of Education updated information on training courses (past and present) approved by the Department of Education for employment as guidance counsellor in the education and training sector is available online in several links:

- [Key publications in guidance](#)
- [Guidance](#)
- [Programme Recognition Framework: Guidance Counselling](#)
- [Training and qualifications for guidance counsellors in post-primary schools](#)

Guidance counsellors working in post-primary schools are also required to have a teaching qualification in addition to their guidance qualifications, while guidance staff working in the higher education career services will usually hold a primary BA degree (honours) in any subject and a relevant postgraduate qualification: guidance counselling, executive/career coaching, training and development, and occupational psychology are examples. It depends on the individual career service as to the background of recruits.

The Department of Education provides clarity on the training and qualifications required for the role of guidance counsellors in schools ([Department of Education, n.d.](#)).

In 2023 the Department of Education established the Oide organisation to combine the previously separate professional learning supports and services for teachers in the primary and post-primary sectors. Oide delivers the Continuing professional development (CPD) programme for post-primary school-based guidance counsellors only as they must also hold a teaching qualification.

The Department of Education provides funding for the programme of the [Guidance Counselling Supervision Scheme](#) supervision of guidance counselling in schools. This is managed by Monaghan Education Centre, overseen by a representative steering committee, including Dept of Education, and coordinated through the branch network of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). All guidance counsellors working in post-primary schools are encouraged to attend this supervision scheme which provides five two-hour sessions throughout the academic year.

In addition, guidance professional representative groups provide [Continuous Professional Development](#) (CPD) for their membership depending on needs of staff and target groups ([Association of Higher Education Career Services](#), AHECS and [Institute of Guidance Counsellors](#), IGC). These groups only provide CPD for members with qualifications only including different staff currently working in the field.

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## Funding career guidance

Career guidance is publicly funded by different government departments and agencies. It is also provided in the private sector where fees incurred for career guidance services are delivered.

The Department of Education funds the provision of guidance hours to the post-primary schools and Colleges of Further Education (CFE) / Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) through the “teacher” allocation process which includes funding of the guidance programme and the allocation of “hours” to the guidance counsellor.

Department of Education circulars are issued to schools and CFE/ PLC colleges annually outlining the allocation for the following academic year. An example of circulars issued in advance of each academic year is available at the [guidance webpage](#) of the Government.:

The Further Education and Training (FET) sector, Guidance and Information Services, including the [Adult Education Guidance Services](#) (AEGS) are funded by the SOLAS grant allocation to [Education training boards](#) (ETB) annually.

Guidance in Youthreach / community training centres, is provided by ETBs and funded through SOLAS grant allocation. [The Youthreach](#) programme usually provides two years integrated education, training and work experience. Basic skills training, practical work training and general education are features of the programme, and the application of new technology is integrated into all aspects of programme content.

Career services in higher education institutions and universities are funded from the [Higher Education Authority](#) institutional budget allocation to provide student support services.

The [Department of Social Protection](#) (DSP) [Intreo](#) offices are funded in accordance with government priorities and the DSP budget allocation.

#### *ESF funding*

SICAP targets innovative, locally led approaches to support disadvantaged communities and individuals including unemployed people, people living in deprived areas, people with disabilities, single parent families, people on a low income, members of the Traveller and Roma community and other disadvantaged groups. The programme is managed at a local level by 33 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) using a community development approach. Services include helping people to find work or to upskill, providing CV training or a personal development course or helping them onto a work placement programme.

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028 provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion at a local level through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

Administered by [Pobal](#), SICAP 2024-2028 is co-funded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-2027.

[SICAP](#) is managed locally by 33 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) with support from Local Authorities. SICAP targets include that individuals accessing their services are better prepared to enter the labour market through the provision of supports which may include- CV preparation, interview skills, career guidance, mentoring, pre-start up business supports and/or new business aftercare supports.

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## Career guidance for school pupils

Career guidance in post-primary schools is mandatory based on legislation.

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

According to the [Guidelines for second level schools](#), 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 separates, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance*' ([Dept of Education, 2005](#)).

In 2024, the Department of Education issued the Circular *Guidance in Post-primary schools*, outlining the requirements for delivery of the whole school guidance approach in post-primary schools. \_

The Department of Education issues [circulars](#) annually on the resources (i.e. allocation of teachers hours) to be allocated to guidance and to guidance counsellors. Guidance counsellors must be qualified teachers who also have a department recognised postgraduate qualification in guidance.

Guidance in post primary schools, for students aged 12 to 18, encompasses the three elements of personal, career and education counselling, and is delivered in classroom-based activities and in one-to-one sessions with the guidance counsellor. At post-primary level, schools are required, by the Department of Education to develop a whole school guidance plan as part of their overall school development plan, considering students' needs, resources and contextual factors. The plan details the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the delivery of guidance in the school and takes into consideration student needs, school infrastructure and other factors.

There is no formal curriculum for guidance in post-primary schools, but resources are provided for Career Management Skills and career exploration by various organisations.

In 2017, following a collaboration with stakeholders and public consultation, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) published the [Whole school guidance framework](#). This outlines the framework for planning guidance services and competence development for students in guidance-related learning from first year up to the sixth. It also provides the framework for the delivery of Guidance for all, Guidance for some and Guidance for a few, based on the continuum of [support model](#) of the Department's National educational psychological service.

Students have also an opportunity to access work experience in the transition year programme (fourth year) and to attend college/university open days during senior cycle, (i.e., fourth, fifth and sixth year in post-primary school). Guidance counsellors provide information to parents via parents' evenings. Many schools include a "Career Guidance" section on the school website to provide general information for parents and students.

The Whole School Guidance Framework (NCGE 2017) outlines a continuum of support model, -detailing the -Guidance for all, guidance or some and guidance for a few model

The Whole School Guidance Framework further identifies three areas of learning to aid student development in eight areas of competence. The areas of learning include learning relating to oneself (personal/social development), educational opportunities (educational development) and career decision making (career development). These include Developing myself, developing my learning, and developing my career path. The Whole School Guidance Framework is a core document informing the delivery of guidance in post-primary school and is available via [Oide](#), the professional development support service for post-primary school staff.

[CareersPortal](#) has developed relevant programmes, for the development and delivery of career management skills. Some of these resources are free to access and some incur a fee for schools. This is a public-private partnership, where all facilities are not provided free for schools, so it is not used by all schools. These programmes include: (See section [Career information, ICT in guidance](#)).

1. [Guidance Related Learning](#) for Junior Cycle. Developed by NCGE in collaboration with

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices -  
Ireland

CareersPortal, provides a suite of resources to develop age-appropriate CMS for junior cycle students age 12-15 years.

2. REACH+, is a comprehensive career and college preparation programme, for senior cycle students (aged 15-18 years). It uses classroom-based learning using student workbooks, as well as web-based learning on the REACH+ section of the CareersPortal website.

Trinity Access Programme– Schools of Distinction Programme is developed by Trinity College Dublin to support access to Higher education nationally. The programme supports schools where there is a low progression to post-secondary education. The scheme builds on the work being successfully undertaken by schools in challenging conditions and often with limited resources. This programme involves the supported implementation of three core practices - Pathways to College, Mentoring, and Leadership in Learning. These three core areas support a whole school approach and leadership in learning where students develop their critical learning skills; introduction of higher education opportunities at early stages of post-secondary education; Pathways to College includes attendance at careers/colleges seminars and fairs, involvement of parents and community links.

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## Guidance for VET participants

In Ireland, vocational education and training is referred to as further education and training (FET) and includes adult education, post-leaving certification level (i.e., NFQ Levels 5 to 6) and vocational training programmes, including Apprenticeships.

In 2020, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science launched the National FET Strategy: [Future FET: Transforming Learning](#), The National Education and Training (FET) Strategy, based on three strategic pillars – building skills, fostering inclusion, and facilitating pathways.

This strategy outlines the role of ETBs in provision of guidance in education training employment and careers to all within their regions. The approach to guidance is inconsistent across FET settings and provision, and this must be rectified with an integrated approach to guidance across ETBs. This should ensure that impartial guidance is available to all who seek it within the ETB region, and that the ETB positions itself to ensure that it works effectively for all FET provision and all FET learners.

Guidance in VET is provided by qualified guidance counsellors in the FET Guidance and Information services in the -Colleges of Further Education / PLC programmes, and Training Centres and to the general public via the Adult Education Guidance Services (AEGS).

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## Guidance for higher education students

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Career advisory and appointments offices and student counselling services develop career guidance activities for students in universities and private colleges. The model of guidance provides- progression options to work and/or further studies and developments in the institution itself.

Employability modules/career management skills may be offered as an integrated element of course curriculum in some institutions with agreement and in collaboration with the academic staff.

The basic method of service delivery is information, advice and guidance via the helpdesk, quick queries and one-to-one consultations. Career services in most institutions refer students to student support/ personal counselling services when appropriate.

The [Association of Higher Education Career Services](#) (AHECS) provides support to career advisers based within the HE sectors, nationally. AHECS supports standards of practices across the career's services.

[GradIreland](#) provides online information and guidance services to students in HE institutions-, can be accessed by all HE careers services and is also available to higher education graduates.

[MyCareerPath.ie](#) is a service supported by the [Atlantic Technological University](#), which offers organisations career guidance and mentorship, including the recognition of prior learning (RPL), to address skills gaps and introduce learning pathways for employees.- The service is offered to those who are working or striving to enter into Higher Education.

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## Guidance for adult learners

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There are diverse public and private provisions for [lifelong guidance for adults](#) of all ages in Ireland, and adults have different options for accessing services (information and resources, etc.) and guidance activities, both online and offline. Guidance services are available which are sector specific i.e. FET or Higher Education or labour market / unemployment services. Diverse self-help platforms and information sources developed online are also available, examples include [CareersPortal.ie](#) and [The Right Course.ie](#) and [Nightcourses.com](#) which all cater to adults in different learning contexts (See section [Career information and ICT in lifelong guidance](#)).

The main public provider for adults is the FET Guidance and Information Services and Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS). Career guidance is provided through drop-in and coordinated and targeted provision, and these services operate regionally across the 16 ETBs (Education and Training Boards. See: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0da49-career-guidance-and-information/>

Operating within the further education and training sector (FET), these services were established in 2000 by the Department of Education and are now managed within the regional structures of the ETBs.

The AEGS services work with adults and early school leavers over 16 years. They provide free up-to-date information and guidance on education opportunities to the designated target groups, including early school leavers, the unemployed, lone parents, and disadvantaged adults. They also make and accept referrals from the DSP [Intreo](#) offices (See section [Access to guidance](#)) operating in the labour market sector. One-to-one guidance counselling is provided where appropriate and services coordinate the delivery of guidance based on individual needs and the needs of the adult learner groups.

[Youth Information centres \(YICs\)](#) nationwide are managed by a variety of statutory and non-

governmental organisations. YICs offer an information service on a wide number of issues including employment matters, local community services and education and training to young people.

Among the online information services is [Springboard](#), which provides subsidised courses in Higher Education at certificate, degree, and master's level leading to qualifications in areas where there are employment opportunities in the economy. These areas include ICT, engineering, green skills, manufacturing, and construction, among many others. Adults can research career courses and contact the various provider institutes for more details as required. AEGS and other FET Guidance and Information services are available to provide further information on Springboard courses. (The telephone hotline for contact with a career practitioner is no longer available).

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## Guidance for the employed

Career guidance is provided free to those in employment by public services and fees incurred for private sector services.

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) Intreo offices provide a wide range of supports including to those who are employed or looking to change job or career.

Those adults who are working in low-skilled jobs and wish to return to education – in basic education, literacy and numeracy and IT skills, to part-time qualifications in areas such as childcare, social care, business studies – can access their local Intreo office or the nearest [ETB Adult Educational Guidance Services](#) (AEGS) for information and guidance.

For those adults in employment who have resources available, career guidance can be arranged privately through contacting private guidance practitioners or organisations. Guidance counsellors who are members of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors must adhere to the IGC Code of Ethics. Contact information for private practitioners is available: <https://igc.ie/private-practitioners-listing-2/>. Fees apply and information is provided by the practitioners directly.

In addition, private practitioners nationally provide career coaching and career mentoring where fees apply, and information is available from the practitioners directly.

There are no national registration requirements for guidance practitioners in private practice.

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## Guidance for unemployed adults

DSP [Intreo](#) offices and local employment services provide employment services to access the labour market. The Intreo Partner Local Area Employment Service (LAES) is a contracted employment support service delivered in all 26 counties. Local Area Employment Services provide employment supports to individuals who have been unemployed for more than 24 months. Contracts to deliver the Local Areas Employment Services are determined based on

a- national procurement process.

The aim of the LAES is to assist customers in finding sustainable full-time paid employment by providing intensive individual support and assistance.- The service is provided for long-term (>24 months) unemployed jobseekers most distant from the labour market for a period of 52 weeks and then for a further period of in-employment support for 17 weeks if the customer gets a job.

The LAES service is provided to customers on jobseeker's payments, on other payments (e.g., OPFP, Carers, DA) or the customer may not be in receipt of any payment. -This is quite different to the JobPath and NES services and means that if a customer changes from a Jobseeker Allowance to a Carer's Payment, they do not need to be cancelled from the service - the customer can continue to engage if they wish.

Two examples of Local Area Employment Services (LAES) include: [Waterford Leader Partnership LAES](#); and [Ballymun Job Centre](#)

#### *National Employment Service (NES)*

The Intreo Partner National Employment Service (NES) is a contracted JobPath employment activation service that is intended to help jobseekers find and retain full-time employment. Two companies are currently contracted, following a national procurement process, by the Department to provide the service--, Seated and Turas Nua.

As part of a new structured client journey, the service is primarily aimed at those who are 'newly' long-term unemployed who would benefit from the provision of intensive employment support services and are in receipt of a primary social welfare payment. The NES focus is on jobseekers on the Live Register between twelve and twenty-four months although jobseekers greater than thirty-six months may also be referred. The standard period of engagement is fifty-two weeks. The local Intreo Office will refer the individual to the local [JobPath](#) agency in their area--.

Each jobseeker is assigned a personal advisor who meets with them regularly to help them develop a Personal Progression Plan and provide them with access to relevant training/coaching programmes. The NES also work closely with employers to secure vacancies for jobseekers and will provide the jobseeker with advice and support for at least seventeen weeks, and up to 52 weeks, of employment.

[Turas Nua](#) provides the National Employment Services for 13 counties in the south of Ireland. The employment activation schemes support jobseekers to work towards sustainable full-time employment or self-employment.

The ETB abased- AEGS provide guidance services to access education opportunities for upskilling or reskilling to unemployed adults.

[Springboard](#) (a specifically funded programme of the [Higher Education Authority](#)) provides education opportunities for unemployed adults to access higher education, and for employed adults who wish to improve their skills

Local employment services (LAES) (in partnership with DSP) provide career guidance and employment support in targeted areas. Local area employment centres, such as the [Ballymun Job Centre](#) (BJC), provide access to education and training opportunities, and [career guidance](#) services for unemployed adults.

A network of regional skills fora under the auspices of the Department of Further and Higher Education provide an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions. More structured engagement on the skills agenda and the work of the fora is expected to contribute to better outcomes for learners and support enterprise development. Each of the nine [regional skills fora](#) will provide:

1. a single contact point in each region to help employers connect with the range of services and support available across the education and training system;
2. more robust labour market information and analysis of employer needs to inform programme development;
3. greater collaboration and utilisation of resources across the education and training system and enhancement of progression routes for learners;
4. a structure for employers to become more involved in promoting employment and opportunities for career progression in their sectors. further information can be found [here](#))

The Department of Social Protection developed the [Pathways to Work strategy 2021-2025](#) to outline plans and activities to support jobseekers through 5 strands of Action: Working for

jobseekers, working for employers, working for work-, working for all leaving no one behind and working with evidence. This strategy is implemented through the services of and agencies funded by the Department of- Social Protections.

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## Guidance for older adults

Career guidance for older adults is provided by both public sector and private sector guidance services.

Older adults are entitled to access their local ETB based **Adult Educational Guidance Services** (AEGS) and the local **Intreo** office of the DSP. (See also relevant section [Access to guidance](#))

**Age Action Ireland** provides information and support for continued engagement in lifelong learning and advice on employment issues for older adults experiencing age discrimination.

The Retirement Planning Council of Ireland provides holistic courses and supports for older adults transitioning from work to retirement.

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## Guidance for early leavers

In Ireland, early school leaver is defined as a person whose education ceased before the age of 16 years. Department of Education Retention rates report the retention rate to Leaving Cert of 91%, with some variation based on school type (Gov.ie, 2024).

For those individuals who have left school early, if they are registered on the Youthreach programme, they can access guidance during that programme. Those individuals not registered on any education or training programme, can access the ETB based Adult Education Guidance Services (AEGS). ( See Section on [Career guidance for early school leavers](#)).

**Work Placement Experience Programme** operates under the Department of Social Protection. Early school leavers who have reached the age of 18 may qualify for this- 6-month, 30 hour per week voluntary work experience programme. The programme is for jobseekers that are currently getting a qualifying social welfare payment and who have been unemployed for six months (156 days) or more. -This programme is aimed at jobseekers aged 18-65 years who wish to re-train and gain experience in another type of employment, to build new skills and gain work experience.

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## Guidance for NEET

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There are several public guidance services available to those not in education, employment or training.

The ETB based [Adult Educational Guidance Services](#) are accessible to those in the NEET category who wish to consider their education or career options. Referrals can be made to appropriate organisations as necessary.

The [Department of Social Protection](#) (DSP) has the responsibility of implementing the **Youth guarantee scheme** through competence check-ups, career support, work-based learning opportunities and cooperation with different stakeholders.

[Youth information centres](#) (YICs) provide a free, confidential information service to young people up to 25 years and those who work with them on a wide range of subjects including careers, education, employment matters, rights and entitlements, leisure, sport, travel and European opportunities. Located around the country, they are a first point of contact for a young person seeking information on any subject of interest or concern. [Youth Information Centers](#) provides services are delivered by various state and non-governmental organisations, with funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (Gov. ie, 2019).

The DSP [Employment and Youth Engagement Charter](#) was established as part of the government [Pathways to Work 2021-2015 strategy](#). The aim of the strategy is to reduce youth unemployment with the support of the Intreo services through collaboration with employers to support young jobseekers to develop their skills and experience to enhance their employability. Supports include CV and interview preparation and a mentoring programme to offer guidance and support to job seekers.

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## Guidance for young people at risk

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The [Department of Education](#) requires that all schools provide a whole school [guidance](#) approach to the guidance provision. This ensures that all school staff are involved in identifying young people at risk and implementing an appropriate response and support. This includes the delivery of personal/social, career/vocational and educational guidance. The guidance counsellor in the school provides one-to-one personal guidance counselling with appropriate referrals to mental health and other specialists if required.

[Youthreach](#) /Community Training Centres provide supports and education and training to young people at risk. Guidance counselling is provided as required in line with guidelines from the

Department of Education. Centres can decide if the cohort requires personal counselling/therapeutic interventions or career guidance supports.

The DSP [Work Placement Experience Programme](#) is a 6-month, 30 hour per week voluntary work experience programme. The programme is for jobseekers that are currently getting a qualifying social welfare payment and who have been unemployed for six months or more. The programme aims to provide participants with work experience and to develop new skills, through training and learning. Work takes place within a supportive environment with a view to increasing participants experience, skills and employment prospects. A Personal Learning Plan is developed to identify training, skills development and learning required.

[Youth information centres](#) provide resources for young people to access information on education, training, volunteering, travelling etc.

Young people who have left school early, or who are at risk, are entitled to access the Adult Education Guidance Services (AEGS) nationally.

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## **Guidance for persons with disabilities**

The National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance is informed by the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), the EU's Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030 and the EU [Disability Employment Package](#).

The Framework is also informed by two core national disability strategies:

[The National Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) (2017-2022) includes objectives to encourage people with disabilities to maximise their potential, required all relevant government departments and agencies to raise awareness of further education training and employment for people with disabilities, and sought to provide guidance on further education, training and career options.

The Government [Comprehensive Employment Strategy \(CES\) for People with Disabilities](#) (2015-2024) identifies guidance as part of the support structures required to enable disabled people to access the labour market and to succeed in employment. By reference to this CES, the Action Plan of the National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance, outlines the strategic short-term action to “develop supporting guidance material to embed the learnings from existing programmes in special schools and post-primary schools to support transition planning and positive transitions to further education, employment or disability day service, as appropriate”.

National Disability Authority developed a policy paper to inform the future development of Career Guidance for Learners with Disabilities in post primary schools. The [Literature Review](#) report was published in January 2023:

1. Guidance is available for students with disabilities in post-primary schools through the Whole School Guidance programme;
2. Semi-state bodies support the delivery of guidance by developing information and policies.

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) which provides information on post-school education and training options for people with disabilities. The role of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. The NCSE undertakes research and publishes relevant [reports](#) to inform and advise on national policy -in this sector. They have developed information that identifies where to access appropriate guidance and other relevant supports.

Adult learners with disabilities attending or planning to attend Further Education Training (FET) courses, can access the FET Guidance and Information Services—/ Adult Education Guidance

## Services of the ETBs.

SOLAS the state body that oversees FET provision have adopted the strategy for [Universal Design for Learning](#) and are actively promoting inclusive practice across the sector and in all learning and services.

They also have a strategic focus with inclusion, skills and pathways being three pillars in their current strategic plan.

There are also number of specialist training providers across the further education and training (FET) sector with a focus on transitional management.- Specialist training providers include the National Learning Network, The [Irish Deaf Society](#) and others.

The [National Learning Network](#) (NLN) is contracted by Education and Training Boards (ETBs) regionally to provide specialised training and support to people with disabilities mental health issues; illness or additional support needs support includes employment-based training programmes. All programmes offered include a work experience module, some centres include a 'jobs club'. Support is offered on job seeking progression to further and higher education.

### National Learning Network

In higher education the [PATH 4](#) funding initiative has supported the development for inclusive programs on university campuses around Ireland for students with intellectual disabilities. - This is building on the success of the [TCPID](#) program in TCD, which focuses on learning and transitions to employment for people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

The [STIAL](#) project - a collaborative project between Dublin City University (DCU) the WALK PEER programme and the Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI), has a focus on developing post-school pathways (PSP) for young people with disabilities. The purpose of the project is to provide access to career guidance information and transition support to career guidance counsellors and senior cycle class teachers working with students with disabilities and their parents in mainstream post-primary and special schools. The project also seeks to increase the capacity and promote the inclusion of young people with disabilities to access the same post school opportunities as their non-disabled peers in Ireland.

In relation to employment services. There is specialist information and support available from the [EmployAbility](#) service. The Department of Social Protection supports this nationwide service that provides employment support for people with a health condition, injury, illness or disability and provides a recruitment advice service for the business community. Access to the Employability Service is through referral from the local Intreo office. The Employability service is a service of the local employment service. List of EmployAbility Organisations can be found via following [link](#).

There are also several disability organisations and disability person organisation active in the delivery of information and guidance related services.

[AHEAD](#) is the national non-governmental organisation which aims to support inclusive environments in education and employment for people with disabilities. AHEAD provides information to students and graduates with disabilities, teachers, guidance counsellors and parents on disability issues in education. AHEAD provides accessible online information specifically relevant to students with disabilities to who wish to apply for and access further and higher education and graduate opportunities in work;

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) established the Deaf Career Project in 2021 to [provide career planning and guidance service for Deaf people](#), having identified the gap. The project espouses the principles of universal design (UD) and universal design for learning (UDL) and theories of career guidance and inclusion.

A team of peer mentors who are from the Deaf community, provide information and resources to support the [Deaf community in transitions into and from education and work](#). These workshops are designed to provide guidance on various topics such as CV writing, interviewing techniques, networking, and career development.

The [IDS](#) are also actively developing an online resource for professionals engaging with Deaf people in the delivery of guidance and for Deaf people engaging in guidance. -This contains a glossary of common terms translated into Irish sign language and useful publications that include:

- a literature review on the experience of Deaf people in guidance,
  - an overview of the deaf career project and
  - an innovative reciprocal training program developed collaboratively between the

Future developments include short videos employing Irish Sign Language setting out different aspects of education and work that will help support guidance work with Deaf people.

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## Guidance for immigrants

Career guidance for immigrants and refugees is provided by both public sector- and NGO services.

Adult Immigrants and refugees are entitled to access the [FET based AEGS services](#) nationally. The -AEGS work in collaboration with local Education and Training Board (ETB) services for immigrants and refugees through the ESOL programmes (English for speakers of other languages).

Refugees attending education programmes or those who are unemployed are entitled to access the same national guidance services as others, within schools, colleges and DSP [Intreo](#) and local area employment services.

The Irish Refugee Council provides information for asylum seekers and refugees who wish to access [employment](#) and [education](#) options in Ireland. They provide signposting links to the ETB Further Education and Training sector and to the AEGS nationally, Information is provided for International Protection Applicants on their rights to apply for [work permits](#).

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## Guidance for other groups

The Migrants Rights Centre Ireland provides supports and information to migrants and their families on issues including employment.

In some regions, guidance is available through the Education and Training Boards support for former prisoners. As an example, the Pathways Centre in Dublin City facilitates the reintegration of former prisoners through:

1. guidance counselling;
2. social and peer support work;
3. personal/addiction counselling;
4. educational programmes.

The Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities (IASIO) provides the community-based *LINKAGE* service, which includes career guidance support for those referred by the Probation Services.

The ETB based Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS) nationally cater for a wide range of target groups determined at local level which can include disadvantaged target groups including travellers, homeless services users, substance mis-use, former prisoners etc.

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