



CEDEFOP

European Centre
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Supporting careers and learning
Towards common standards for monitoring
and evaluation in Europe

21 and 22 March 2022
Virtual event

#lifelongguidance

Lessons from person-centred adult educational guidance services in Ireland

Petra Elftorp and Mary Stokes

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Mary Stokes, B.A. Psych., M.A.

Guidance Programme Coordinator for Further Education & Training with the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE)

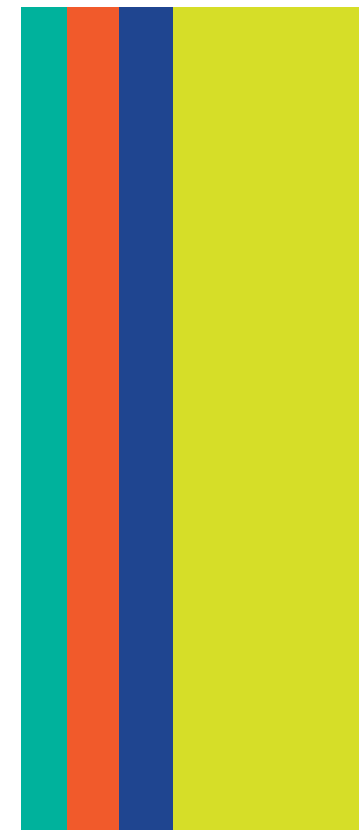
Over 25 years in a wide range of Guidance Counselling roles, including Adult Educational Guidance Services (as the system evolved)

Mary's priorities are the provision of inclusive, impartial, and accessible guidance services, the promotion of service cooperation and support of collaborative system development to best serve the needs of all across the lifespan.

NCGE is an agency of the Department of Education and the Department of Further, Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, with responsibility to support and develop guidance practice in all areas of education and training and to inform the policies of the Departments in the field of guidance.



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





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Dr. Petra Elftorp, B.Ed., Ph.D.

Lecturer and Course Director for the MA in Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development at University of Limerick

Petra qualified as a guidance counsellor at Stockholm University in Sweden, and completed her PhD on the guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia at University of Limerick.

Petra currently teaches modules on career development theory, professional practice, inclusive education and research methods at postgraduate level. She supervises several research student and her main research interests include inclusive guidance counselling; equity of access to guidance counselling; and guidance counsellors' professional identity development.



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CONTEXT

- Ireland – Guidance embedded in Education – 1998 Education Act
- Further Education & Training (FET) Sector – in EU VET+ Adult Education
- Adult Educational Guidance Initiative / Services
- Not included?
 - College/Post-primary specific provision
 - Public Employment Services
 - Third level provision





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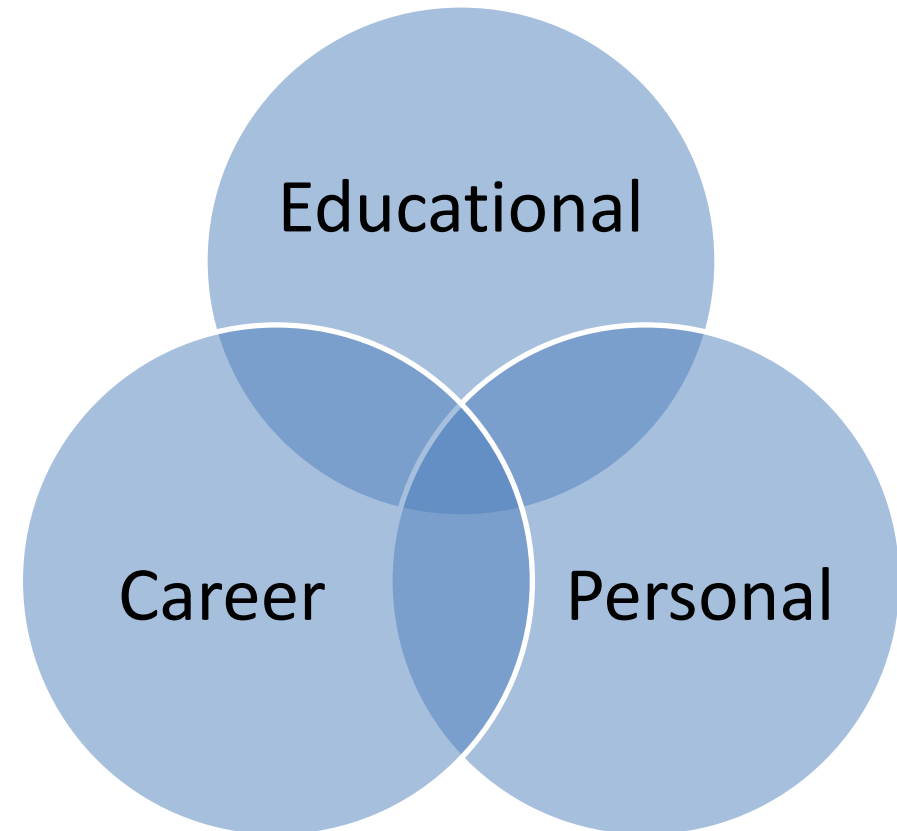
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Adult Educational Guidance Services

- **Holistic and person-centred**
- **Impartial**
- **Targets those who “experience particular and acute barriers to participation”**
- **Before, during and after**
- **Involvement in development → Positive attitude towards monitoring and evaluation system!**





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Adult Guidance Management System (AGMS)

- Since 2004
- Practitioners involvement in developments
- Core features:
 - Client data (incl. demographics and case notes)
 - Tracking progression
 - Client Feedback
 - Case studies
 - Regular qualitative reporting, incl. self evaluation
 - National annual reporting and longitudinal reporting





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Strengths & Limitations

- Services are not limited by, or overly focused on, outcome measurements
- Qualitative AND Quantitative
 - Day to day usage
 - Longitudinal data
 - Complexity
 - Client feedback#
 - Self-evaluation/reflective practice
- Practical AND Strategic
- Limited practitioner engagement with key features of peer-learning and sharing of practices
- Limited resources and structures for consistent client feedback
- No obligation on a particular body to act on recommendations / issues
- It is impossible to capture everything – life changing and life saving effects of guidance counselling is often not captured



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Developments since 2019

- NCGE Role: 'FET GMS Working Group' representation –vital: *NCGE, Department of Education and Skills (now DFHERIS) SOLAS, ETBI, Directors of FET, AEOA, AEGS inclusive of all ETB AEGS roles*
- Review current AGMS and other guidance data-gathering systems in FET
- Proposal of requirements for GMS for FET-wide guidance services
- GDPR issues and implications in FET guidance provision for ETBs
- Recommendations for the future
- Advise DoE (Dept. of Education), and DFHERIS (Dept. Further Higher Education research Innovation and Science) and SOLAS – National, Regional and local
- Inform further consultations – Challenge – breadth of provision!
- Inform NCGE proposal for tender process for a new system



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Lessons

- Essential to capture this data to contribute to an **increased evidence base** in this field
- **Involve practitioners** in a meaningful way
- Measuring Outcomes of Guidance Interventions is inevitably challenging, but we must **resist reductionist or simplified approaches** – allow for complexity!
- Our work is never ‘done’ –**evaluation and change** are part of the design
- Limited effects on resource allocation can have damaging effects on practitioner ‘buy-in’ over time.
 - A commitment to evidence-informed decision making and resource allocation is needed
- Don’t lose sight of core values – impartiality and person-centred approach



Thank you

Reference: Elftorp, P. and Stokes, M. (2022). Lessons from person-centred adult educational guidance services in Ireland. In Cedefop et al. (2022). *Towards European standards for monitoring and evaluation of lifelong guidance systems and services (Vol. I)*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Cedefop working paper; No 9, pp.56-75.

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