

# **National Report on Guidance in Group Settings NAVIGUIDE LLP-LDV-TOI- 11-AT-0010**

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Each country partner must complete the following sections based on guidance within your own country. Please include any visual/diagrammatic explanations, web addresses and references. Please answer the following questions according to your national situation in guidance!

## 1 Guidance in General

- *Please explain how guidance takes place in your country.*

### **Irish Definition of Guidance**

For the purposes of this report guidance, as defined in 2007 by Ireland's first ever National Guidance Forum, will be applied.

The National Guidance Forum was an independent establishment jointly created by the then Department of Education & Science working in close collaboration with the then Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment. The Forum's mandate cited the EU's policy definition of such a forum as '*an assembly of all the relevant actors concerned with the development of policy, systems and practices for lifelong guidance*'. The Forum was presented with a remit to explore how individuals, at any point throughout their lives, can access quality guidance as appropriate to their needs. The remit also incorporated the requirement for the Forum to identify collaborative action across the guidance continuum and agree recommendations in collaboration with other stakeholders. The forum consisted of thirty three members. The membership represented Government Departments and State Agencies – all with a remit for guidance. Members of professional bodies, Trade Unions, Trainers, employer groups and networks, national and local employment services providers, management and practitioners from all sectors of education including Universities, Institutes of Technology and Vocational Education Committees. Parent groups, guidance practitioners and guidance service consumers were also represented on the Forum who in 2007 agreed the following definition of guidance:

*'Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that*

*they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society.* (National Guidance Forum Report, p6, 2007)

- *Who provides the guidance services? Who do they target?*

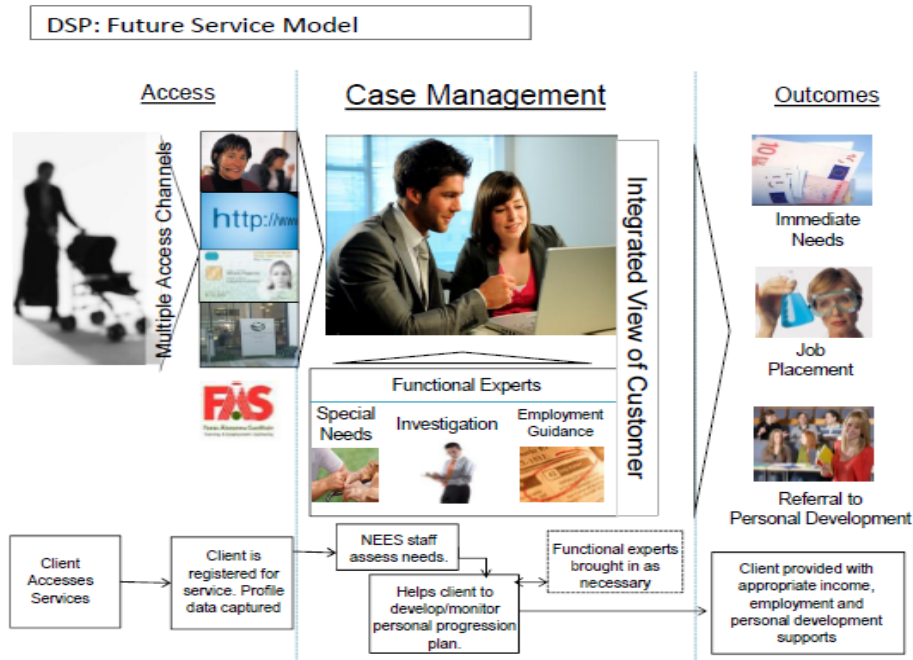
The Department of Social Protection is establishing a new National Employment and <sup>1</sup>Entitlements Service (NEES)<sup>1</sup>, as provided for in the Programme for Government. The Programme for Government sets out the remit of the NEES as follows:

*“We will replace FÁS with a new National Employment and Entitlements Service so that all employment and benefit support services will be integrated in a single delivery unit managed by the Department of Social Protection. This integrated service would provide a ‘one stop shop’ for people seeking to establish their benefit entitlements; looking for a job; and seeking advice about their training options...This service will offer users a higher level of personalised employment advice, with more frequent face-to-face interviews.”* (Department of Social Protection 2011, p.5).

This new service delivery model aims to increase social and economic participation. For some individuals, the successful outcome will be full-time employment without any further social welfare support. For others who are quite distant from the labour market, activation measures will support them on social welfare payments taking up 5 other progression options, such as training and education to enhance employability (Department of Social Protection 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> 1 It is possible that the name of the service may change following further consideration by the Minister for Social Protection.



### Key Characteristics

- The client can use multiple access channels (including self-serve) to access NEES services.
- Each client's needs will be assessed to determine their level of need based on their employment history, educational level etc.
- NEES staff will work with clients identified as needing case management to develop a personal plan of how to move from income support into gainful employment.
- In some cases the selection and authorisation of the appropriate interventions – whether that be income support, job placement, job search assistance, or referral to personal development will be relatively straightforward.
- However in other cases the client's case will be referred for the attention of specialists whether that be for expert income assessment, special needs payments or for career advice and support.
- Direct training/skills development needs will be identified by the NEES which will then
  - draw on the support of the State's skills/further education agencies in order to meet these needs.
  - Advise the client of the self-serve options available under Back To Education and Springboard schemes
- Once the personal plan is developed and income supports are in place (if necessary) NEES and the client will jointly review progress against that plan at regular intervals and continued income support will be conditional on the client participating in this activation/case management process.

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International Methods` Database for  
Vocational Orientation in Group Settings

Source: Department of Social Protection, 2011

Local Employment Service Networks, established by the Irish Government in 1996 work in close cooperation with NESS, and previously FAS, but operate independently thus ensuring their unique partnership and integrated character. LESNs networks operates in twenty seven geographical areas of high disadvantage. They were originally intended to provide a gateway for long-term unemployed people to access a range of guidance, training, educational and employment support opportunities. However, because of the overwhelming increase of unemployment the LESNs now work with all unemployed people within their respective geographical boundary areas. The LESNs pride themselves in their ability to quickly respond to local employment needs. They maintain and operational ethos nurtured and influenced by their close association with Area-Based Local Development Partnership Companies.

It is recognised that, at both national and EU level, effective guidance is essential in ensuring that people get the education or training intervention they need and that they have the best possible chance of being successful in their chosen course. An effective guidance service is not separate to other interventions but an integrated part of them. SOLAS will be a body under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). SOLAS aims to provide 21st century high-quality further education and training programmes to jobseekers and other learners. SOLAS will also implement the policies and strategies in the FET sector to ensure that the up skilling opportunities necessary to get back into employment are offered to unemployed job seekers (Department of Education and Skills, 2011).

The establishment of SOLAS has meant significant change within the sector. Previously there were 33 Vocational Education Committees (VECs) which were statutory education authorities and had responsibility for further and adult education, youth work and the management of second level schools. As part of the change, FAS Training Division was transferred to the VECs and those VECs

report to the new authority SOLAS in respect of FET. More broadly, the 33 VECs were changed into 16 Local Education and Training Boards (LETBs) and the existing awarding bodies (FETAC, HETAC, NQAI and IUQB) were consolidated into Qualifications and Quality Assurance Agency Ireland (QQAAI). The Adult Education Guidance Initiative (AEGI) continues to be available to Adult Literacy, Community Education, Back to Education Initiative and Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme participants (Department of Education and Skills, 2011).

Below is an overview of guidance service provision in Ireland. *Table 1*, while not comprehensive, is presented to demonstrate the range of guidance services available and the client cohorts the services are intended to support.

	<b>Guidance Service:</b>	<b>Guidance Activity:</b>	<b>Client Cohort:</b>	<b>Administrative Control:</b>	<b>Staff Providing the Service</b>	<b>Staff Qualifications Required:</b>
<b>1</b>	Guidance and Counselling in Post-Primary Schools	Personal and social, educational and career guidance.	Age 12/13-18: pupils attending post-primary schools	Department of Education & Skills	Guidance Counsellor &/Or Subject Teachers	Guidance Counsellor Degree + Teaching Qualification.  Recognised Guidance Qualification
<b>2</b>	Careers Advisory Services in third-level educational institutions	Career and educational guidance – concentration on further educational and employment opportunities	Aged 17+ Students attending most major third-level institutions	Universities, Colleges of Technology, Further Education Colleges	Careers & Appointments Officers or Guidance Counsellors	Degree + Various Other Qualifications



3	Adult Educational Guidance Initiative	Educational and Career Guidance	Literacy, VTOS and Community Education Participants	Solas under the Department of Education & Skills (as of 2012)	Guidance Counsellor/ Information Officer	Guidance Counsellor Degree + Recognised Guidance Qualification
4	Youth Information Service	Information and Onward Referral	Age 15-25	Local Education & Training Boards (as of 2012) (formerly Vocational Educational Committees)	Youth Information Officer	Various
5	National Employment Service: National Employment and Entitlements Service (NEES) (as of 2012)  (Formerly known as: FÁS & Local Employment Service networks)	Career Guidance ... with emphasis on placement and training  Information and Referral: Clients of the National Employment Action Plan	Aged 15+  Unemployed or in danger of becoming unemployed  Short or Long-term Unemployed	Department of Social Protection	NEES Staff/ LESN Mediator / LESN Guidance Officer	Diploma/Certificate in Guidance and Counselling and/or Various

7	Unemployment Resource Centres	Information, Guidance, Counselling and Advice	Aged 18+: Unemployed	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Information Officer	Various
8	Private Guidance Agencies	Social, Educational &/or Career Guidance	All age groups	Private Service provision	Psychologist / Guidance Counsellor	Primary Degree / Masters in Psychology, Guidance Qualifications or Various

*Are there Specialised Services?*

9	Specilised services (OPEN Work 4U Spirasi Crosscare Migrant Project)	Social, Educational &/or Career Guidance  Public awareness education and promotion of interculturalism  Information/Advocacy & referral	All age groups  One Parent Families  Disability groups  Asylum seekers, refugees and other disadvantaged migrant groups	Local Voluntary Agencies/ Community Organisations      Social Care Agency	Social, Educational &/or Career Guidance  Public awareness education and promotion of interculturalism staff  Information/Advocacy & referral staff	Degree + Various Other Qualifications
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- *Are there National policy objectives?*

Adult and career guidance practice within national exchequer-funded employment service agencies is relatively contemporary in Ireland. It was only in circa 1996 that the concept of guidance informed, to some degree, the practice and operations of the then Irish twin-stranded National Employment Service operated by FÁS (Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority) and its partner organisations, the Local Employment Service Networks.

In 2000, in a further guidance-related policy development the Irish Government approved funding and established the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative. This initiative was placed under the auspices of the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). The NCGE is a Department of Education & Skills funded agency.

The publicly funded guidance initiatives were augmented by careers guidance services available to some in Irish educational institutions. The provision of private professional guidance services was available in Ireland all through the years for those citizens who could afford to pay the professional fees.

Guidance, according to the Government's White Paper (*Learning for Life, Department of Education & Science, Dublin, 2000*) refers to a range of activities designed to assist people to make choices about their lives and to make transitions consequent on these choices. As is documented, dramatic changes in work structures and social organization have occurred in Ireland since 2000. Demands on adults to rethink their careers and their skills development mirror current Government policy that emphasise the need for continuous training, up skilling and education of both the working population, but more especially of the 450,000+ Irish workless population. These current policies are presented by the government within their overarching plan to safeguard and secure Ireland's economic recovery and future social development.

One of the more practical consequences of the current financial and employment downturn in Ireland is that there is now a requirement of unemployed adults to actively engage in repeated career decision-making processes across their work lifespan. In line with current EU policy aspirations, guidance is becoming more recognised as fundamental within the suite of support systems intended for to assist Irish unemployed citizens to fully achieve their lifelong learning ambitions and goals. This is clearly evidenced within Irish policy by the emphasis placed on the government's national stipulation of nationwide adult guidance service provision. Guidance service goals now forms an integral, if not always comprehensive, element in the strategic direction of a number of Government Departments, most especially the Department of Education & Skills - whose remit encapsulates a guidance brief:

*The Department of Education and Skills is to provide high-quality education, which will enable individuals to achieve their full potential and to participate fully as members of society, and contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development.*" (Available at: Website of Dept of Ed & Skills)

The Department of Education & Skills' mission promotes equity, inclusion and lifelong learning. These aspirations are the tools the Department hopes will enable the personal, social, cultural and economic needs of Irish citizens to be realised. The Department moreover advances the policy of advocating quality service delivery, responsible policy formulation, research and evaluation within its range of education and skills portfolio of funded activities. This is clearly noticeable within the present *Training & Skills* sub-division of responsibilities the Department emulates. This departmental secretariat is charged with continually advocating the development and provision of client-focused, one-on-one guidance services, albeit during a time of major government financial restraints for such services.

As mentioned in the previously in this section Ireland is currently in the process of developing an integrated employment service & training delivery model and establishing the necessary bodies; NEES and Solas.

Nevertheless, guidance is now viewed within Irish policy-making circles as a key channel in encouraging the advancement of human potential, social inclusion and employability prospects of the Irish population. Therefore, now more than ever, as Ireland strives to address and overcome its major financial and unemployment crisis, the provision of quality guidance services is being promoted within education and skills training policy, with guidance now being viewed as a key component in enhancing the future economic prosperity of the country.

- *What is positive/negative about Guidance in your country?*

The NCGE policy focus is to have an all inclusive guidance service for all groups. Table 1 outlines the vast array of Guidance service already in operation in Ireland. Whilst the majority of the services offer comprehensive guidance and information, there appears to be varying standards within some of these services. In Ireland the qualifications of Guidance Counsellors varies from no formal guidance qualification to Masters Level.

## **2 Guidance Settings: Individualised and Group**

- *How is guidance provided in your country?*

In Ireland at the present time the National Employment Entitlement Service (NEES), LESNs, Solas, local community and voluntary organisations, universities and other educational institutions, professional bodies and employers provide guidance-type support services (*Refer to Table 1*). Moreover, the provision of professional guidance and counselling services by independently-funded guidance clinicians is now widely available. Please refer to section one for more detailed information on the services provided.

- *What is the prevalence of group and individualised guidance?*

The majority of the guidance is provided on an individualised basis. The AEGI offers and provides impartial adult education information, one-to-one guidance and group guidance intended to help people to make informed educational, career and/or life choices. The AEGI is aimed at those adults who are considering or participating in Adult Literacy, Vocational Training Opportunity Schemes (VTOS) and Community-based Education Initiatives, including the Back to Education Initiative. Former residents of designated Irish institutions are now also eligible to receive AEGI guidance support. Information on local, regional and national adult education is available to the general public from any AEGI location. However, AEGI guidance services are restricted to the specific client categories as highlighted above.

#### Secondary Schools

Guidance counselling in secondary schools is available on an individual and/or group basis, to provide support to students in their personal and social, educational and career development.

(Source: Dept. of Education & Skills 2012)

#### Job Clubs

Prior to the implementation of the new integrated employment and training service (NEES & Solas) Fas provided group guidance to unemployed job-seekers through job club services. However under the NEES service the future of these job clubs is uncertain.

#### Group Engagement

The NEES has introduced a 'group engagement' service for the unemployed receiving benefits. After 3 months these individuals are sent to a 'Group

Engagement' session where they are provided with information. They are presented with their options and their obligations regarding their benefits. Following this they referred to the NEES for individual guidance and support.

- *What methods/techniques/tools are used for guidance in group settings?*

In secondary schools activities in groups settings include encouraging students to explore a range of educational and career areas, doing project work and team work to enable group discussion on career opportunities, providing information on the competencies and skills required for the working world and psychometric testing.

In Job clubs and group guidance within the AEGI the methods include discussions, presentations, role-plays, worksheets, use of multi-media, interview preparation. In 'Group Engagement' sessions clients are provided with information on receiving benefits.

- *Are these methods/techniques/tools also used in individualised settings?*

Worksheets, mock interview, interview preparation and information sessions are also used in individualised guidance settings.

- *If not, what makes them so effective in a group setting?*

Group guidance sessions, unlike individualised sessions, offer clients the opportunity to share information, interact with the members of the group and learn from each other's experience. The team building element to group guidance also increases motivation and engagement, as well as enhances confidence.

### **3 National Stakeholders**

- *Who are the key stakeholders in guidance in your country?*

Interested stakeholders within the national guidance domain are: Department

of Finance, Department of Education & Skills, Department of Social Protection, Universities, Institutes of Technology, Colleges of Further Education, Local Education and Training Boards (formerly Vocational Education Committees), Second-Level Schools and Institutes, National Centre for Guidance in Education, Adult Education Guidance Initiative, Institute of Guidance Counsellors, NEES, Solas, Local Employment Service Networks, IBEC , ICTU, Employers, Local Community-based Education Providers, Individual Guidance Practitioners and the myriad of Guidance Service Users.

- *What do they invest (time, money, commitment energy etc., and what outcome/ impact do they expect?*

The above bodies and organisations invest time, money, commitment and energy in relation to the policy and the provision of guidance services in Ireland. The key stakeholders in guidance in Ireland expect a high quality cost-effective and inclusive guidance service. The guidance service should meet the expectations of the definition of guidance as set out by the National Guidance Forum:

*'Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society.'* (National Guidance Forum Report, p6, 2007)



#### 4 Qualification and further training of guidance staff

- *In general what types of qualifications do guidance practitioners have?*

Outlined in *Table II* are details of the guidance and/or counselling training provision offered by Irish universities and Higher Education institutions:

**Table II**

<i>Course</i>	<i>Institution</i>	<i>Faculity</i>
<i>Higher Diploma in Guidance &amp; Counselling</i>	<i>University College Cork</i>	<i>Department of Applied Psychology</i>
<i>Higher Diploma in Arts: School of Guidance and Counselling</i>	<i>National University of Ireland Maynooth</i>	<i>Education Department</i>
<i>Graduate Diploma in Guidance &amp; Counselling</i>	<i>University of Limerick</i>	<i>Education Department</i>
<i>Masters in Education: Guidance &amp; Counselling</i>	<i>University of Dublin</i>	<i>Education Department</i>

	<i>Trinity College</i>	
<i>M.Sc in Educational Guidance and Counselling.</i>	<i>University of Dublin Trinity College</i>	<i>Education Department</i>
<i>Higher Diploma in Arts: Adult Guidance &amp; Counselling</i>	<i>National University of Ireland Maynooth</i>	<i>Centre for Adult &amp; Continuing Education</i>
<i>MSc in Education: Guidance &amp; Counselling</i>	<i>University of Dublin Trinity College</i>	<i>Education Department</i>
<i>Masters in Education; with specialism in School Guidance &amp; Counselling.</i>	<i>National University of Ireland Maynooth</i>	<i>Education Department</i>

### **Practitioners who qualified outside of the Ireland Training System:**

Guidance practitioners with qualifications obtained outside of Ireland and who wish to work in the education sector are required to present themselves to the Inspectors of Guidance in the Department of Education & Skills prior to commencing in post. This is a safeguard strategy that is intended to ratify their guidance qualifications. Likewise guidance practitioners with qualifications obtained outside Ireland and who wish to work within the NES (FÁS) labour market/employment service also need to have their qualifications ratified by their host organisation prior to commencing in post.

- *Is there a minimum qualification required?*

Table 1 describes the various qualifications required by the guidance services in Ireland, from Post-Primary right through to University and the public employment service.

- *Is there specific training provided for career counsellors?*

Yes, refer to **Table II**

- *Are there further education/training courses provided for guidance practitioners?*

Yes, refer to **Table II**

- *Is there a continuous Professional Development (CPD) process in place? If so how does this work.)*

There is a CPD process in place under the aegis of the NCGE. The Department of Education and Skills provides for CPD for staff in its programmes through a range of different resources, including direct grants to VECs, through the Professional Development Service for Teachers, and by way of grants to organisations like National Adult Literacy Association and Waterford Institute of Technology (The Department of Education & Skills, 2011). The Dept. Of Social

Protection has stated that NEES Staff will be provided with the necessary training, support and infrastructure to perform their jobs.

## 5 Existing Networks for Career Counsellors and Trainers

- *Are there any forums/way for guidance practitioners to exchange information or to share good practice e.g. regular peer meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops etc.? If yes, is this a formal or informal process?*

There are both informal and formal forums/networks for guidance practitioners to exchange information and share good practice.

- The LESN Mediators Forum

The LESN Mediators Forum is a formal meeting held each month, where guidance practitioners get together to share information and discuss topical issues in guidance.

- National Forum on Guidance

The National Forum on Guidance is a formal forum and was launched in October 2011. It provides a national communication and co-operation facility for those involved in provision of guidance and development and support of guidance practitioners and services. Organisations providing guidance in both the education and the public employment sector are involved. This Forum also provides NCGE with the opportunity to formally report on the developments of the ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) to all relevant bodies and provide those bodies with the opportunity to formally inform NCGE of local/regional developments in guidance which could be brought to ELGPN in return (NCGE, 2011).

- ICG-The Institute of Guidance Counsellors

ICG is the professional body representing over 1200 practitioners in second

level schools, third level colleges, adult guidance services, private practice and in other settings. They organise conferences and meetings that enable members to network and share experiences.

- Euroguidance Network

The euro guidance network is a co-operation of over 65 centres throughout 31 European countries. The network aims to support the guidance community in promoting European mobility and the European dimension within education and training through the provision of quality information and exchange of best practice. The NCGE is responsible for the co-ordination of euroguidance activities in the education sector.

Informal meetings are arranged bi-annually between the Ballymun Job Centre guidance staff and GEMS NI. These meetings allow practitioners working in similar organisations in different countries to share experiences discuss guidance methods and provide support for one another. This was originally established as a result of a collaboration of an EU project entitled Manage Your Career.

## **6 Existing Methods e.g. handbooks, databases, resources etc.**

- *How do guidance practitioners access information on new methods and resources in guidance?*
- *Are there online platforms that assist practitioners in gaining new information and sharing good practice?*
- *How effective are they?*
- *Do you have any idea of their usage? What is good about them / what is not so good about them?*

Whilst we have little information regarding their national usage, the staff at the Ballymun Job Centre frequently use the following resources to obtain information regarding career guidance:

- Online databases: NCGE website, careers portal, qualifax, newsletters, career directions
- Offline: Newsletters, knowledge sharing amongst colleagues
- While these resources generally provide up-to-date detailed information on training/education and career information, some are less frequently updated at certain times which results in outdated information.

AHEAD, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability is a an independent non-profit organisation that works to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation. AHEAD provides information to guidance counsellors on disability issues in education (Ahead, 2011).

## 7 Further comments

- *Have you any other comments that would be interesting to capture regarding Guidance in your own country? Particularly in relation to group guidance?*

The new integrated guidance and training service deliver model will be fully implemented by the end of 2012. At the time of completing this report, January 2012, the implementation has begun but not completed therefore some of the information is provisional.

## 8 Bibliography

Listed below are the websites and publications that informed the contents of the Irish National Report.

### **Websites:**

- Austrian NES website: [www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at](http://www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at)
- Ballymun Job Centre website

- FAS website
- Local Employment Service Network website
- Institute of Guidance Counsellors in Ireland website
- National Centre for Guidance in Education website

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