Indecon Review of Career Guidance

Final Report

2 April 2019

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report is submitted to the Minister of Education and Skills (DES) by Indecon International Research Economists. The report concerns an independent review of aspects of career guidance in Ireland. The background to this review is that the National Skills Strategy 2025 proposed a review of guidance services, tools and careers information. This reflected the significance of career guidance given the changing patterns of work and the need for reskilling in the context of lifelong learning. The objective of this review is to examine aspects of career guidance in the Irish education and training system in order to improve the existing career guidance tools and career information and to enhance enterprise engagement. A copy of the terms of reference for the review is included in Annex 1. The detailed methodology undertaken for this project inter alia included extensive stakeholder engagement, empirical survey evidence with learners and guidance counsellors, an examination of international best practice, a review of existing research, and new econometric modelling of the impact of guidance counselling. The survey research included students and guidance counsellors in second-level, third-level and FET sectors and is based on 1,818 responses from learners and 440 from guidance counsellors. The stakeholder engagement included an analysis of 119 submissions as well as the organisation of a National Stakeholder Forum held at Farmleigh House on 18 July 2018.

Bilateral meetings were also held with some key stakeholder organisations to clarify issues arising from their submissions. The research included an analysis of Growing up in Ireland databases which encompassed survey research with 6,216 young people aged between 17 and 18. The project also benefited from the valuable assistance of a Steering Committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills and from a panel of international advisers.

While this review is focussed on elements of career guidance in the education and training system, Indecon notes that there are wider requirements for career guidance outside of the education and training sector for those wishing to return to paid work, whether from home or from unemployment. Individuals wishing to move from one employment to another or to progress within the same company also require information and advice. This reflects the fact that career guidance is "a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings."[1]

POLICY FRAMEWORK AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR CAREER GUIDANCE

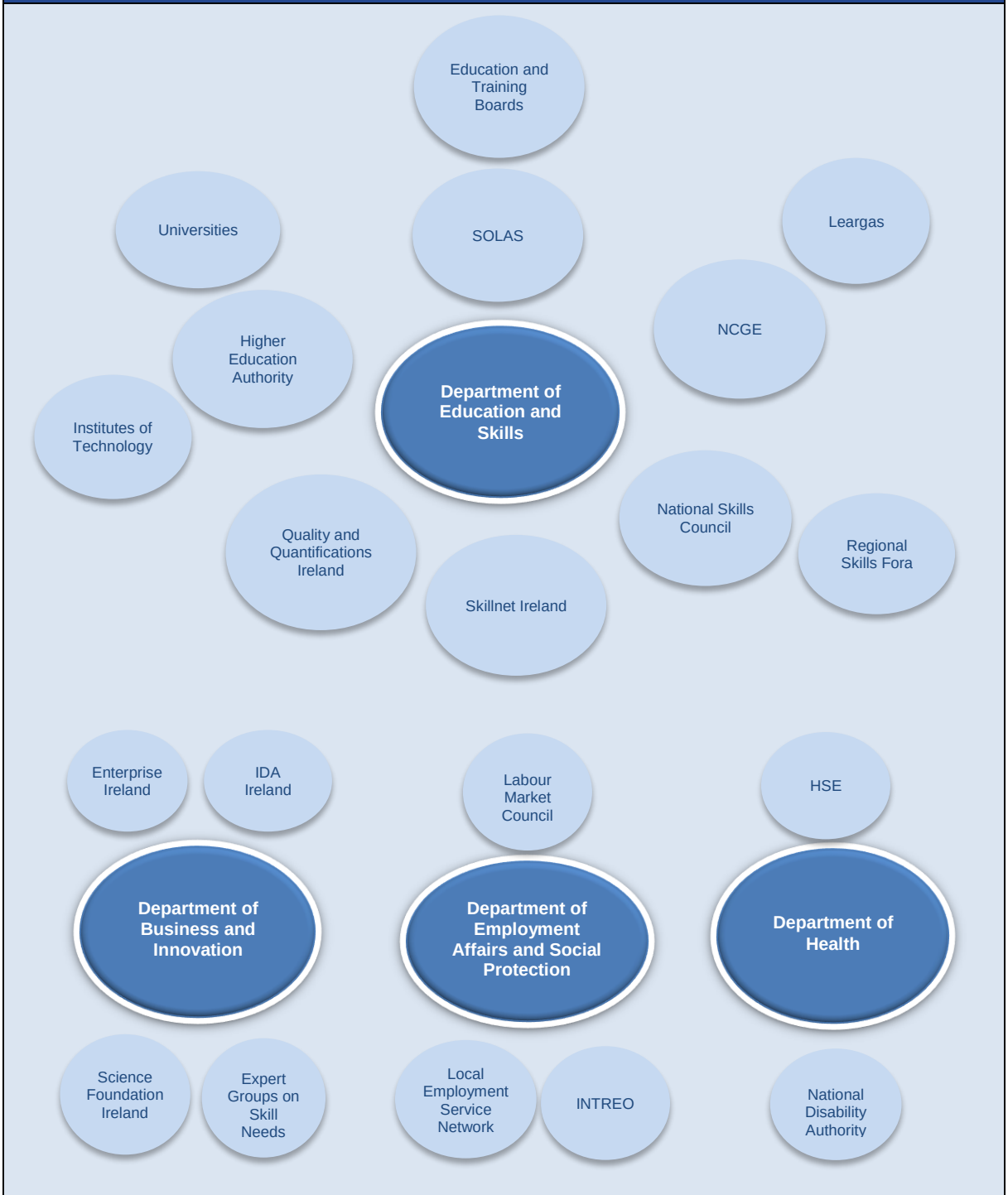
Ireland has a developed career guidance support system across the education and training system including post-primary education, higher education and further education and training. In reviewing the policy framework, it is important to recognise areas where progress has been made as well as the identification of aspects which require enhancement. Career guidance covers a range of connected activities including career education and information and direct contact with the world of work. In this context it is important to note that guidance counselling in Ireland is practiced in a holistic and integrative way, and "encompasses the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling."[2]

Organisational Structures

As part of this project it is useful to review the organisational structures of relevance. A schematic outlining examples of existing exchequer funded organisations with an involvement in career guidance policy or practice is presented in the figure overleaf. The range of state involvement in career guidance is much wider than the educational and training system. The breadth of policy interest in career guidance presents a challenge to ensure a coherent national long-term policy.

[1] EU Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (2008).
[2] Submission to Indecon from Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Selected Government or State-funded Organisations with Involvement in Career Guidance



Source: Indecon. Note there are also other state bodies which input to various aspects of guidance

Within the Department of Education and Skills, there are ten Divisions in the Department 6-8 of which have some potential involvement with guidance. Other than through the management board or ministerial policy, Indecon understands there is no explicit structural organisational mechanism which exists to co-ordinate the different areas involved in career guidance. This suggests that there would be merit in developing a new mechanism within the Department to share information and agree career guidance policies.

Career guidance policy within the Department of Education and Skills is supported by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). The NCGE is a small-sized organisation which develops guidance policies and practice in education on behalf of the Department. Indecon understands that NCGE is not an executive agency within the Department, but was established under Léargas, the Exchange Bureau, a company limited by guarantee. The Minister for Education and Skills nominates members of the Management of Guidance Committee for NCGE who are then appointed by the Board of Léargas as a sub-committee of the Board of Léargas.

In addition to Government Departments and state agencies, there are a number of important stakeholders involved in shaping career guidance within Ireland. Some examples of these are outlined in the table overleaf. The table is not designed to provide an exhaustive listing of all the relevant organisations, but to simply illustrate the extent and diversity of organisations impacting on, or which have an interest in, career guidance. The range of organisations with an interest in career guidance Ireland can be seen from the list of organisations who provided valuable submissions to Indecon as part of this review (as presented in Annex 3).

Examples of Other Organisations Relevant to Career Guidance	
Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)	The Institute of Guidance Counsellors was established in 1970's. Its constitution has as its main object the advancement of the personal, social, educational and career development of individuals and groups through supporting guidance counselling practice, discussing, promoting and researching matters relating to guidance counsellor services and sharing of the results of the Institutes work with the general public, statutory bodies and government departments and is the professional body representing a large number of guidance counsellors in Ireland.
Irish Association of University and College Counsellors (IAUCC)	Representative body for counselling services in third-level education. Counsellors work with individuals or groups to provide support in personal and academic issues.
Adult Educational Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI)	Represents staff of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative pilot projects. Identifies staff training needs and adult guidance developments.
Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland (AGSI)	Develop the career services provided to students and graduates, resource and information materials, website. Members are guidance professionals in publicly funded third-level institutions.
Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS)	Represents careers advisory and placement professionals in the higher education sector.
Institute of Technology Careers Advisers' Network (ITCAN)	Support operation of career advisory services, forum for sharing best practice. Members are career advisers in 14 Institutes of Technology.
Euroguidance Centres	Provide information on educational opportunities within the European Union and shares best practice in guidance. NCGE overseas Euroguidance in Ireland.
Career Information Websites	For example, Careers Portal, GradIreland, Careerosphere, Career Decisions, and Caerus Education.
AONTAS	National Adult Learning Organisation is the Irish non-government organisation responsible for the promotion and facilitation of adult learning.
Irish Universities Association	The IUA is the representative body of Ireland's seven universities.
THEA	The Technological Higher Education Association is the representative body of 14 Institutes of Technology.
ETBI	National Representative organisations for Ireland's 16 ETBs.
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, which is the professional association for all Principals and Deputy Principals in Post Primary schools and Further Education and Training (FET) schools and colleges in Ireland.
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
ASTI	Association of Second-level Teachers in Ireland, which is the primary representative body for post-primary teachers.
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland, which is the primary representative body for primary school teachers.
National Parents Council	National Parents Council ensures that parents become effective partners in children's education.
Union of Students in Ireland	USI is the national representative body for the 374,000 students in third-level education on the Island of Ireland.
Enterprise Representative Organisations, including IBEC	In addition to IBEC, other bodies relevant to enterprise engagement include sectoral organisations such as IHF, CIF, IFA, Chambers of Commerce and other representative groups.
Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD)	Advocates improvement in access and participation of students with disabilities in higher education and employment.
Inclusion Ireland	Inclusion Ireland provides a central forum to improve the quality of life and participation of people with an intellectual disability in Irish Society.
Disability Federation of Ireland	Disability Federation of Ireland's objectives is to ensure that changes are made that would mean equality for people with disabilities.
Source: Indecon	

Guidance Policy for Post-Primary Sector

The overall policy framework for guidance in schools is provided for in Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998) which obliges a recognised school to "*ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choice*." Within the post-primary sector, the guidance policy framework is based on a whole-school approach. A school guidance plan provides a framework for the delivery of the school guidance programme. This is designed to ensure a structured response to the education, vocational and the personal needs of the student. The Department of Education and Skills has indicated that a whole-school approach involves schools implementing guidance plans which *"should outline the school's approach to guidance generally and how students can be supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions in the personal and social, education and career areas."*[3]

Whole-School Guidance Plan Contents	
	Percentage of Schools with Whole School Guidance Plans
Aims of school guidance programme	99%
Description of current guidance provision	97%
Outline of current guidance programme	98%
A description of resources for Guidance, including information on the curriculum areas and teachers involved in the delivery of whole-school guidance	93%
A list of the school's guidance priorities	89%
An action plan related to those guidance priorities	80%
Procedures for monitoring and evaluation of the guidance programme	82%
Drafts of relevant policies	91%
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017-2018	

Guidance Policy for Higher Education Sector

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education in Ireland, including policy for career guidance within the sector. With support from the HEA, the Universities and the Institutes of Technology directly provide career guidance supports for students. Within the higher education sector Indecon understands that "*the main provision is targeted at final year students and recent graduates, although some career services have started to provide careers education in the curriculum of undergraduate courses.*"[4]

Guidance Policy for Further Education and Training

Career Guidance Policy for the FET sector is a component of the overall *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*[5] which aims to "*deliver a higher quality learning experience leading to better outcomes for all those who engage in FET.*" The framework for adult career guidance is primarily within the remit of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI), which is provided by the 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs). SOLAS is responsible for funding FET Adult Guidance Services. Career guidance in Post Leaving Certificate colleges is delivered through the post primary guidance allocation model. Some participants in FET will also have had engagement on careers issues and options with DEASP's Intreo service.

[3] Department of Education and Skills. Circular Letter 0010/2017: Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18 School Year.
[4] https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/guidance-higher-education.
[5] https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf.

Policy for Learners with Special Educational Needs

In reviewing the overall policy framework, it is important to pay particular attention to policy for learners with special educational needs. The Department of Education and Skills' policy aims to ensure that children with special educational needs can have access to an education appropriate to their specific needs, preferably in schools settings through the primary and post-primary school network as well as in special class or special school settings. For children with special educational needs in mainstream post-primary schools access is available through the support of the guidance counsellor. However, an issue identified as part of this review concerns the position of students in special schools who may have different needs. Special school staff generally, as part of their ongoing work, undertake guidance activities, including planning for the child's future, assessing further education options, training, employment or other placement options subject to the individual's abilities. There are no guidance counsellors allocated to these schools and in Indecon's opinion there is merit in policy providing enhanced provision for career guidance training for teachers in special needs schools, and also in enhancing the access of such schools to wider career guidance supports.

HOW AND WHEN LEARNERS FORM THEIR OPINIONS

When Learners Form Opinions on Career Choice

Understanding the timing and formation of, and influences on, learners' career choices is important in designing policy to maximise the impact of career guidance supports. Given the recognition that guidance is lifelong, it is of note that even among younger age cohorts, the development of knowledge, skills and competencies is critical to future career development. New Indecon primary research among guidance counsellors suggests that initial consideration of career choices usually occurs during the Junior Cycle. While best practice suggests that early intervention is merited, for many students it appears that career information is first provided in Transition Year or in Fifth Year.

Guidance Counsellors estimates of Timing of Initial Consideration of Career Choice and Receipt of Career Information

Percentage of Guidance Counsellors/Practitioners	Timing of Initial Consideration of Career Choice	Views on Timing of Initial Receipt of Career Information
In Primary School	17.4%	0.3%
In Junior Cycle – First, Second or Third Year	31.7%	26.3%
During Transition Year	30.4%	47.8%
During Fifth Year	8.7%	14.7%
During Sixth Year	5.1%	5.6%
Post Leaving Cert	3.3%	2.0%
FET	3.3%	3.3%
Total Respondents	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

Influences on Learners' Career Choice

The evidence on the influences on learner career choices in Ireland highlights the importance of family and friends. There are however, other important influences, including work experience, guidance counsellors and other teachers. In evaluating career choice influences, Indecon believes there is a distinct role provided by guidance counsellors. In this context Indecon supports the view outlined in a submission to our review, which suggested that "*the role of the guidance counsellor can be as mediator and intermediary between the known and the unknown and to help enlarge their world*."[6] In examining the key influencers, the available evidence shows that this varies by socio-economic group. Those from the lowest income groups are less likely to have consulted with their parents than those from higher income backgrounds. In general, individuals in lower income quartiles tend to receive less advice from families and may therefore be in greatest need of access to professional guidance counsellors drawing attention to the potential significance of guidance in breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage.

Percentage of Respondents Who Consulted With a Range of Potential Career Influencers									
HHEDI*	**GC Class**	**GC One-to-one**	**Year Head**	**Subject Teachers**	**Friends**	**Mother**	**Father**	**Siblings**	**Other**
All Students									
Lowest	74.6%	63.5%	35.5%	48.8%	100.0%	86.5%	66.1%	53.4%	18.2%
2nd	76.9%	66.4%	32.1%	48.3%	100.0%	87.6%	73.0%	55.2%	17.0%
3rd	78.1%	65.5%	26.7%	48.8%	100.0%	90.5%	80.1%	58.6%	19.7%
4th	77.4%	65.3%	26.1%	45.5%	100.0%	93.3%	83.7%	59.4%	22.0%
Highest	77.1%	65.0%	24.4%	46.7%	100.0%	94.7%	87.6%	58.8%	21.3%
Average	76.8%	65.1%	29.0%	47.6%	100.0%	90.5%	78.1%	57.1%	19.7%
6th Years									
Lowest	79.3%	77.6%	37.2%	50.3%	100.0%	87.5%	67.1%	54.9%	21.4%
2nd	79.9%	78.7%	34.2%	51.5%	100.0%	87.6%	73.1%	56.4%	16.4%
3rd	84.4%	80.7%	26.8%	48.1%	100.0%	91.7%	78.9%	57.6%	22.7%
4th	82.5%	81.8%	27.7%	47.2%	100.0%	94.2%	85.0%	59.5%	23.9%
Highest	79.1%	81.7%	25.8%	46.2%	100.0%	94.0%	86.3%	60.3%	21.7%
Average	81.0%	80.1%	30.3%	48.7%	100.0%	91.0%	78.1%	57.8%	21.2%

Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data
****Household equivalised disposable income***

ROLE AND IMPACT OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

In an Irish context, guidance counselling is "holistic and integrationist, placing the client firmly at the centre of the process in an immediate and relevant way. It encompasses the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling."[7] Indecon's primary research programme indicated that guidance counsellors spend about half of their time on career guidance, but also significant time on other areas of counselling. Indecon recognises the value of these integrated roles and supports a holistic approach given the importance of personal skills and attributes as a well as qualifications. It is, however, important that there is also a sufficient focus on career guidance and advice.

[6] IGC Submission to Indecon.
[7] IGC Submission to Indecon.

Guidance Counsellor Use of Time (%)				
Measure	**Career Guidance and Information**	**Personal Counselling**	**Subject Tracking**	**Other**
Median	50.0%	30.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Mean	47.9%	28.1%	7.5%	15.8%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors				

In examining what mechanisms have the greatest impact, it is useful to examine the evidence on what impact, if any, career guidance has on student outcomes as judged by students. An analysis of the evidence on how important individual appointments with guidance counsellors are in helping students decide what to do after school (where such consultations took place) demonstrates that 83% of learners perceived such appointments as important or very important in helping learners' decisions. Of further significance is that such appointments were even more important for learners from lower income groups (see table below).

Importance of One-to-one Career Guidance by Household Equivalised Disposable Income Quintile – Sixth Years			
Income Category	**Very Important**	**Important**	**Not Important**
Lowest	53.4%	32.2%	14.4%
2nd	55.4%	31.0%	13.7%
3rd	48.0%	35.8%	16.2%
4th	47.7%	33.3%	19.0%
Highest	46.8%	34.9%	18.3%
Total	**49.4%**	**33.8%**	**16.8%**
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data			

As part of the research, Indecon developed econometric modelling to predict the marginal outcomes of the impact of guidance counselling. While caution should be exercised in interpreting the results due to the possibility of what economists refer to as 'self-selection bias', the analysis indicates potential impacts across income types and gender. For example, among males in the lowest income group, the predicted probability of advancing to higher/further education increases from about 60% to 81% for those who received one-to-one counselling, relative to those who received no guidance counselling. The results suggest that guidance counselling is an effective mechanism to provide career information and impartial advice. This is consistent with research completed in other countries which suggested that guidance counselling was one of the most effective modalities for providing career intervention.[8]

[8] See Whiston 2003. Also of note is that to be effective, guidance counselling interactions should be structured in specific ways. While this is outside the scope of the current review, there is extensive international research on the best ways to organise guidance counselling interviews (see Bimrose, Barnes, Hughes and Orton 2004 and Brown and Ryan Krase 2000).

IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT SOURCES OF CAREER INFORMATION

In evaluating the source of career information, it is necessary to identify how important the different sources of information are, whether they serve different purposes within the career decision making process and what are the types of questions asked by learners. The findings from Indecon's survey work indicate that the most common question from learners relates to transition requirements into courses. The very low percentage of commonly asked questions about apprenticeships highlights the challenges in ensuring that all career options are being considered.

Guidance Counsellor/Practitioner Views on Main Career Guidance Question Asked by Learners			
What are the main questions learners often ask when it comes to their career choices and decision making?	**Very Common**	**Common**	**Least Common**
What qualifications or grades do I need to get a place on a course?	75.6%	19.1%	5.3%
How many CAO points do I need?	69.3%	8.7%	22.0%
What jobs do learners who study this course do after they have finished?	58.7%	35.3%	6.0%
How much will it cost me to do this and what financial support is available?	57.7%	34.4%	7.9%
How suitable would different employment or educational options be for me?	57.7%	27.5%	14.8%
Where is this course taught and how easy is it to get there?	54.8%	31.6%	13.5%
How difficult is it to obtain employment in different areas?	49.6%	37.8%	12.5%
How much will I earn after I finish a course?	29.9%	42.2%	27.9%
How is this course taught and assessed?	12.4%	35.0%	52.7%
How satisfied were previous students with this course?	12.2%	30.4%	57.4%
Can I fast track to earn and learn in an apprenticeship?	9.3%	27.1%	63.7%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors			

Quality and Impact of Career Information

A key issue in evaluating the sources of career information is the scope and quality of the information provided. Indecon's research shows that only a minority of guidance counsellors are satisfied with the quality of available information on self-employment and apprenticeships, and on employment trends. This suggests a perceived gap in access to this area of career information. This is despite the excellent labour market information which is available from various sources, including the SOLAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, and from Regional Skills Fora. The perceived gaps in access to labour market information were confirmed by Indecon's research with learners. While most learners were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of information in relation to the range of courses available, as well as how to apply for such courses, the fact that only a minority were satisfied or very satisfied with some other aspects of career information is of note. Access to wider career information, other than on continuation to higher education options, is critical in ensuring an awareness of the multiple pathways into the labour market.

Learners' Level of Satisfaction with Quality of Following Career Information Available				
Percentage of Respondents who are 'Very Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with Quality of following Career Information Available to them	**All Learners**	***Post Primary Students***	***Higher Education Learners***	***Further Education and Training Learners***
Information on the full range of higher education courses	**66.0%**	*76.4%*	*57.7%*	*71.3%*
Information on how to apply for courses	**61.0%**	*69.3%*	*54.5%*	*76.1%*
Information on further education and training options	**57.6%**	*68.8%*	*43.5%*	*64.5%*
Information on likely job opportunities	**47.8%**	*56.6%*	*31.4%*	*64.4%*
Information on requirements for success in different careers	**46.3%**	*57.0%*	*28.0%*	*58.5%*
Information on nature of careers options	**46.2%**	*54.2%*	*31.1%*	*64.1%*
Information on how to apply for jobs	**43.6%**	*48.5%*	*27.1%*	*64.2%*
Information on apprenticeships	**33.6%**	*40.4%*	*13.6%*	*53.6%*
Information on employment trends	**33.5%**	*37.6%*	*21.2%*	*48.8%*
Information on self-employment/entrepreneurship	**26.6%**	*33.2%*	*12.8%*	*35.9%*
Information on vocational training	**N/A**	*N/A*	*N/A*	*60.2%*
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey Research among Post Primary, Higher Education and FET Learners				

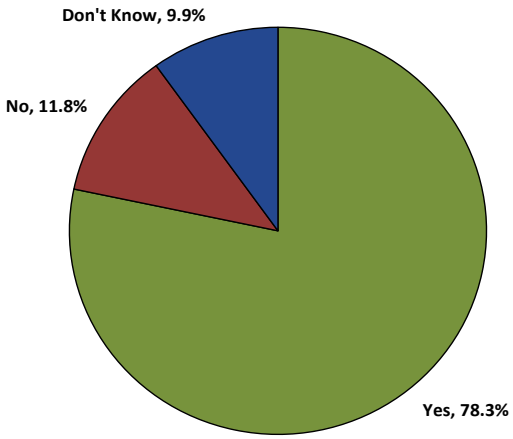
In terms of the impact of specific career guidance mechanisms, Indecon surveyed guidance counsellors as to their views on the significance of various mechanisms. The results, which are summarised below, suggest that as well as access to guidance counsellors, access to opportunities for relevant work experience was perceived as being of particular significance. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that there are structures and supports to enable employers to effectively engage. The results also highlight the potential significance of online sources of career information.

Guidance Counsellors Views on Impact of Following Career Information and Guidance Mechanisms for Helping Individuals Makes Informed Career Decisions				
Percentage of Career Guidance Counsellors who believe the Following Mechanisms have a 'Very Significant' or 'Significant' Impact in Helping Individuals Make Informed Career Decisions	**Post Primary Institution**	**Higher Education Institution**	**FET Institution**	**Other* Institutions**
Access to one-to-one career guidance and information	98.1%	100.0%	98.9%	96.2%
Access to career guidance group work sessions in classes/workshops	83.0%	92.0%	80.9%	67.3%
Access to online sources of career information and how to use them effectively	88.7%	92.0%	66.3%	75.0%
Access to online career assessment tools	73.0%	76.0%	62.1%	65.4%
Access to an up-to-date career library	58.0%	48.0%	43.0%	54.9%
Access to visits to or from employers	81.9%	87.5%	77.9%	78.8%
Access to opportunities for relevant experiences of the world of work	92.2%	96.0%	88.4%	84.0%
Access to telephone personalised career conversations	28.2%	64.0%	53.8%	55.8%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors *Other institutions include youth services, Local Employment Services, special schools, adult education guidance service, etc.				

Role of Online Tools

The use of online resources in the provision of career guidance tools was recognised as significant in the research completed as part of this review. Such tools can offer an important role in the delivery methods for career guidance. There are, however, some limitations to the use of online tools on their own. For example, lack of skills and training in the use of online tools may negatively impact their accessibility, particularly for disadvantaged learners in need of guidance. Online tools should therefore be considered as complements to, rather than substitutes for, traditional career guidance activities. Thus while "*quality online tools in themselves do not guarantee quality career guidance*"[9] they have a potentially important role to play as noted in the following figure.

Views of Guidance Counsellors on whether Online Career Guidance Websites Help Learners Make Informed Career Decisions



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

Related to this is the issue of the multiplicity of various career websites and the availability of advice on how to best utilise and navigate different information sources. This was highlighted in various stakeholder consultations as part of this review.

The international experience suggests that online career information should not exist in isolation from existing career guidance services, but rather, that it is more effective where it supplements and interacts with them. This has led to the development of the concept of 'blended guidance', which integrates online services with access to guidance counsellors. In many cases online careers services are most effective when embedded in, or strongly related to, a wider programme of career learning. In Ireland, there is an absence of blended online services for career guidance which involve multiple channels including the internet, Skype, text and telephone, combined with access to professional guidance counsellors.

[9] IGC Submission to Indecon.

ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT

One of the principal goals of effective career guidance is to support individuals to investigate the labour market and to consider where their skills best fit within this context. This can be facilitated through effective enterprise engagement, which refers to a range of career informants who can support career learning programmes including employers, employees and self-employed individuals. In order to do this successfully, individuals have to learn about the labour market through engaging with information and having effective encounters and experiences. The benefits of enterprise engagement include improved motivation and engagement in the education and training system, enhanced educational attainment, and integration with the needs of the labour market. There are also likely to be wider economic and social benefits including reduced levels of unemployment, enhanced skills alignment and productivity gains.

Enterprise engagement in career guidance in Ireland is part of a wider involvement of the enterprise sector in the Irish education and training system. The extent and diversity of enterprise engagement indicates that enterprise engagement with schools is wide ranging including the National Careers Competition, Student Enterprise Awards, and Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur. There are, however, many learners and guidance counsellors who do not have the benefits of elements of enterprise engagement and the levels of student participation at job fairs in Ireland is much lower than the OECD average.

Students Participation in Job Fairs / Internships to Investigate Possible Future Study and/or Careers				
	Ireland		OECD Average	
	Yes	No, never	Yes	No, never
Visited Job Fair	11.0%	85.4%	28.3%	68.4%
Source: 2012 OECD PISA Database. Data relates to 15 year olds who participated in PISA 2012				

The level of participation in apprenticeships and traineeships, while growing, is still relatively low in Ireland and the quality of work experience programmes is very mixed. Indecon's review has indicated that while there are good examples of enterprise interaction within career guidance in Ireland, there is a requirement to enhance this further. Best practice internationally as outlined in Section 5 of this report, suggests this should entail an integrated approach, involving increased opportunities for encounters with employers and the expansion of effective work placement and work experience opportunities. Indecon notes that an Ireland Skills Live event will run annually from March 2019, integrating the national skills competitions with a careers fair with a strong emphasis on apprenticeships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ireland exhibits a number of features of an effective, lifelong and life-wide career guidance system. The evidence assembled as part of this independent review, however, suggests that significant gaps exist. There is an urgent need to enhance effective enterprise engagement and to make much greater use of technology blended with other guidance supports in providing career guidance. There is also a need for reforms to organisational structures to support the provision of high-quality, lifelong and life-wide career information advice and guidance. Indecon's recommendations are designed to support national goals for effective and inclusive career guidance policy including:

- The provision of high-quality guidance tools and career information.
- An awareness of multiple pathways including apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Enhanced enterprise engagement.

Indecon's recommendations are summarised in the following table, and have the potential to help to address the skills needs of individuals and of the economy. Details of the recommendations are provided in Chapter 7 of this report.

Summary of Recommendations
REFORMS TO GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS
1. **Appoint a National Policy Group to develop a coherent, long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance.**
2. **Ongoing emphasis on evidence-based policy, including through organisation of a biennial stakeholder forum.**
3. **Establish a support organisation to oversee technology-facilitated guidance services, funded in part from the NTF.**
4. **Department of Education and Skills to set up an Implementation Task Force to drive the proposed reforms.**
5. **Integrate a consistent Learner Guidance and Support Service across FET**
IMPROVEMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE TOOLS AND CAREER INFORMATION
6. **Provide multi-channel, blended career guidance supports, including online tools with telephone and internet access to experienced guidance practitioners.**
7. **Strengthen and promote a user-friendly centralised careers portal.**
8. **Allocate specialised guidance practitioners to groups of schools on a regional basis.**
9. **Invest in providing accessible labour market intelligence.**
ENHANCEMENT OF ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT
10. **Implement a programme with the enterprise sector to highlight the benefits to enterprise of participating in career guidance.**
11. **Initiate supports for employers to facilitate career guidance inputs and quality work experience.**
12. **Introduce measures to increase participation of students, parents and teachers at an expanded number of regional career fairs/workshops.**
13. **Widen access to work experience programmes and apprenticeships using online matching services.**
14. **Encourage co-operation among groups of schools for joint enterprise engagements.**
PROMOTION OF INCLUSION
15. **Introduce a specific module on career guidance as part of training for teachers in special schools.**
16. **Provide access for special education and adult learners to the proposed enhanced central career support services, including information on labour market opportunities.**
17. **Provide additional specialised ongoing CPD supports for teachers in special schools.**
18. **Prioritise resource allocation, including guidance teachers for learners most in need of assistance.**

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Some of the recommendations outlined will require time and resources to implement, while others can be implemented in the short term. Indecon believes the changes proposed will enhance career guidance and have the potential to improve skills in the labour force, and contribute to addressing socio-economic disadvantage. A key issue for the proposed reforms is that there is an Implementation Group established by the Department to prioritise and implement the recommended changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DISCLAIMER

Indecon would like to acknowledge the valuable assistance and advice provided by a Steering Group appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills. We would particularly like to express our gratitude to Professor Tom Collins, chair of the Steering Group, Kathleen P. Gavin (Department of Education and Skills, Skills Planning and Enterprise Engagement Unit), Eamonn Moran (Department of Education and Skills, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit), Suzanne Dillon (Department of Education and Skills, Inspectorate); Beatrice Dooley (Institute of Guidance Counsellors); Vivienne Patterson (Higher Education Authority); Roisin Doherty (SOLAS); Margie McCarthy (Science Foundation Ireland); Angela Lambkin (Quality and Qualifications Ireland); Eric Gaughran (National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals); Geoffrey Browne (National Parents Council Post Primary); Mark Keese (OECD); Gerry Reynolds (Takumi Precision Engineering); Mark Gantly (Chair, Regional Skills Forum West); and Danielle O'Driscoll (student representative). We would also like to thank William Beausang, Patricia Flannery and Paul Keating of the Department of Education and Skills.

Indecon acknowledges the valuable inputs from the organisations and individuals that provided submissions to the review, as well as inputs from participants at the national consultation workshop held at Farmleigh House in Dublin on 18th July 2018. A list of participants at this workshop is included in Annex 1. Enhanced career guidance also has the potential to reduce exchequer costs by contributing to tackling unemployment levels in certain cohorts of the labour force. There is also potential for exchequer impacts via reducing the dropout rates in third-level education and by increasing productivity. We also express our gratitude to learners in post-primary, higher education, further education and training sectors, and to guidance counsellors who participated in the detailed survey research programme. We are also very appreciative of the assistance of Professor Dorothy Watson at the Economic and Social Research Institute, in addition to Dr Claire Finn at the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Ali Cox at the Irish Social Science Data Archive at University College Dublin, in providing access to the Growing Up in Ireland database.

Particular thanks are also due to the valuable inputs on international experience from Indecon's international academic advisors on this project, Dr. Deirdre Hughes OBE and Professor Tristram Hooley.

The usual disclaimer applies and the analysis and findings in this independent report are the sole responsibility of Indecon.

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

This report is submitted to the Minister of Education and Skills (DES) by Indecon International Research Economists. The report concerns an independent review of aspects of Career Guidance provision in Ireland. Indecon was appointed to undertake this review following a competitive tendering process.

1.2 Background to Career Guidance Review

The background to this review is that the National Skills Strategy 2025 proposed a Career Guidance Review recognising that "*changing patterns of work, in an ever more globalised economy will require people to upskill and reskill throughout life for different careers and jobs.*" The objective of this review is to examine aspects of career guidance in the Irish education and training system in order to improve the existing career guidance tools and career information and to enhance enterprise engagement. This review has examined career guidance in the post-primary, higher education, and further education and training sectors. An analysis of how learners form their opinions around career choice has also been undertaken. This included an evaluation of the sources of career information and an assessment of which mechanisms are likely to have the greatest impact. A copy of the terms of reference for this Review are included in Annex 1.

While this review is focussed on elements of career guidance in the education and training system, Indecon notes that there are wider requirements for career guidance outside of the education and training sector for those wishing to return to paid work, whether from home or from unemployment. Individuals wishing to move from one employment to another also require information and advice. This reflects the fact that career guidance is "*a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings.*"[10]

This review has examined existing career guidance in post-primary/higher education and further education and training. An analysis of how learners form their opinions around career choice has been undertaken. This included an evaluation of the sources of career information and an assessment of which mechanisms are likely to have the greatest impact.

An extensive programme of consultation was completed including meetings with stakeholders, the organisation of a national policy workshop, and an analysis of submissions received from interested parties. The level of interest in the review was reflected in the fact that Indecon received 119 submissions from interested parties. Detailed primary research was undertaken with guidance counsellors and learners. The analysis has also been informed by an international review of best practice and new econometric modelling of the impact of guidance counselling.

[10] EU Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies (2008).

1.3 Methodology

The detailed methodology undertaken for this project inter alia included extensive stakeholder engagement, empirical survey evidence with learners and guidance counsellors, an examination of international best practice, a review of existing research, and new econometric modelling of the impact of guidance counselling. The survey research included students and guidance counsellors in second-level, third-level and FET sectors and is based on 1,818 responses from learners and 440 from guidance counsellors. The stakeholder engagement included an analysis of 119 submissions as well as the organisation of a National Stakeholder Forum held at Farmleigh House on 18 July 2018.

Bilateral meetings were also held with some key stakeholder organisations to clarify issues arising from their submissions. The research included an analysis of Growing up in Ireland databases which encompassed survey research with 6,216 young people aged between 17 and 18. The project also benefited from the valuable assistance of a Steering Committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills and from a panel of international advisers.

1.4 Report Structure

Section 2 of the report outlines the policy framework and organisational structures for career guidance. Section 3 examines how and when learners form their opinions and the following section analyses the important role and impact of guidance counsellors. Section 5 examines the evidence on the sources and importance of career information. An examination of enterprise engagement is presented in Section 6. Recommendations are presented in the final section.

2 Policy Framework and Organisational Structures for Career Guidance

2.1 Introduction

Ireland has a developed career guidance support system across the education and training system including post-primary education, higher education and further education and training. In reviewing the policy framework, it is important to recognise areas where progress has been made as well as the identification of aspects which require enhancement. Of note is that career guidance covers a range of connected activities. The OECD highlighted the nature of career guidance as encompassing:

- Career education in which students learn about the world of work and develop career management skills through classroom teaching, and through other activities.
- Career information on courses and occupations, learning and career opportunities, progression routes and choices, as well as information on where to find help and advice, and how to access it.
- Individual career counselling on a one-to-one [group] basis, providing specific advice on career decisions, either pro-actively or reactively.
- Direct contact with the world of work to give young people first-hand insights into, and experiences of, the labour market in order to raise, broaden and inform career aspirations.[11] This latter area raises the issue of how to enhance enterprise engagement.

One important component of career guidance noted above is guidance counselling which in Ireland is practiced in a holistic and integrated way and "*encompasses the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling*."[12]

2.2 Organisational Structures

As part of this project it is useful to review the organisational structures relevant to career guidance. A schematic outlining examples of existing exchequer funded organisations with an involvement in policy or implementation aspects of career guidance is presented in Figure 2.1. The range of state involvement in career guidance is much wider than the educational and training system. The breadth of policy involvement in career guidance results in challenges in ensuring a coherent national long-term policy on career guidance. This is not unusual internationally. Because career guidance is concerned with the connections between different life stages it often falls between different government departments and agencies[13] which can result in problems of co-operation and co-ordination.

[11] OECD 2018.
[12] Submission to Indecon from Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Figure 2.1: Selected Government or State-funded Organisations with Involvement in Career Guidance

Source: Indecon. Note there are also other state bodies which input to various aspects of guidance

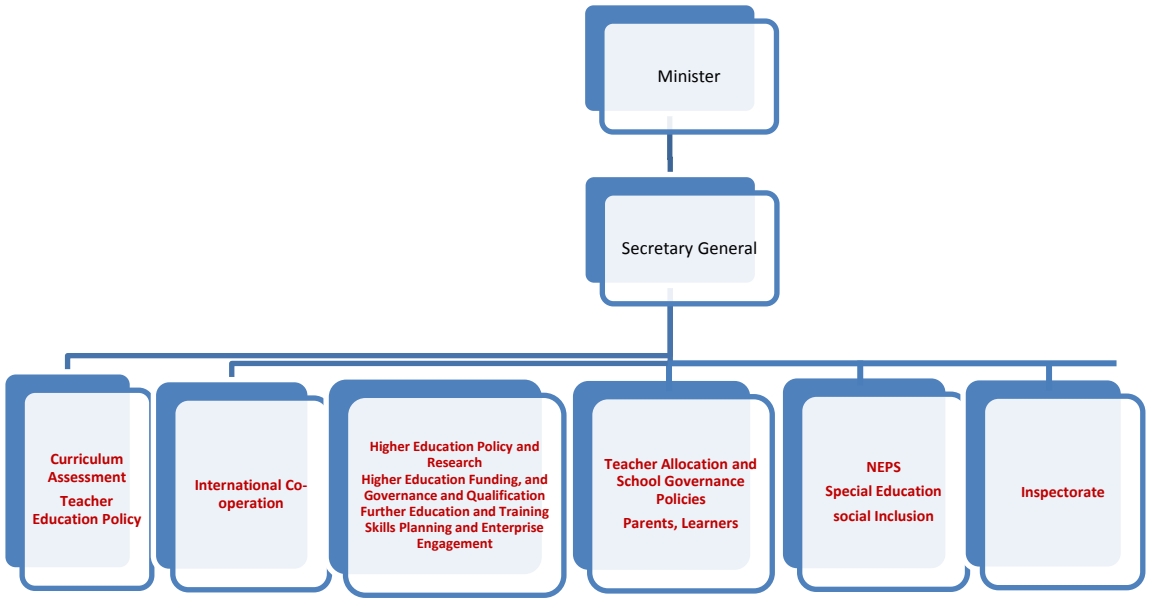
An outline of the role of the state-funded organisations with an involvement in career guidance is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Selected Government/State Funded Organisations of Relevance to Career Guidance	
	Role in Career Guidance
GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS:	
Department of Education and Skills (including NEPS)	Primary responsibility for policy on Career Guidance in Education and Training System.
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	Responsibility for Career Guidance services provided by INTREO as part of its overall administration of Ireland's welfare system.
Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation	Identification of skills needs through EGFSN
Department of Health	Responsible for providing policy and service delivery for people with disabilities and supporting national disability strategy.
EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:	
Post-Primary Schools	Whole school approach provides guidance services to post-primary students.
Universities	Provides career guidance to university students.
Institutes of Technology	Provides career guidance to students in IOTs.
TRAINING PROVIDERS:	
Educational and Training Boards (ETB)	ETBs are statutory authorities which have responsibility for education and training, youth work and a range of other statutory functions.
Skillnet Ireland	National agency responsible for the promotion of workforce learning in Ireland, with 60+ Networks Supporting over 15000 Companies.
STATUTORY AGENCIES:	
Higher Education Authority	The HEA has a statutory responsibility, at central government level, for the effective governance and regulation of higher education institutions and the higher education system.
SOLAS	SOLAS is the statutory authority responsible for Further Education and Training.
Quality and Qualifications Ireland	QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) is an independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland.
HSE	The HSE provides public health and social care services and is involved in aspects of the provision of career guidance for individuals with disabilities.
Science Foundation Ireland	Science Foundation Ireland funds research in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and promotes STEM education and engagement.
National Disability Authority	The National Disability Authority (NDA), as the independent statutory body provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. Assists the Minister for Justice and Equality in the co-ordination of disability policy. Functions include research, developing and collaborating on the development of relevant statistics; assisting in the development of standards; developing codes of practice and monitoring the implementation of standards, codes and employment of persons with disabilities in the public service.
ADVISORY COMMITTEES/NON-STATUTORY AGENCIES:	
Léargas	Exchange Bureau which is parent company of NCGE
National Centre for Guidance in Education	Supports and develops career guidance policies and practice in education on behalf of Department of Education and Skills and is a part of Léargas. It also manages Euroguidance Ireland.
National Skills Council	The National Skills Council (NSC) is the National advisory body established to oversee research, advise on prioritisation of identified skills needs and how to secure delivery of identified needs.
Regional Skills Fora	Provide a cohesive structure for employers and the further and higher education system to work together in building the skills needs of their Regions.
Labour Market Council	The Labour Market Council monitors progress on the Pathways to Work strategy and provides inputs to aid feedback to the Minister for Employment, Affairs and Social Protection.
National Council for Special Education	Responsible to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs.
Source: Indecon	

Within the Department of Education and Skills there are ten divisions, 6-8 of which have some potential involvement with guidance. The areas of responsibilities relevant to career guidance are highlighted in red below. As well as divisions with responsibility for development and implementing of policy, we have also highlighted the National Educational Psychological Services which is the executive agency within the Department which provides psychological services to pupils in primary and post-primary schools and the role of the Inspectorate. Indecon notes that the inspectorate team is primarily comprised of subject specialists but there are two inspectors of guidance. These guidance inspectors are based in two of the five regions and primarily focus on these two regions.

Other than through the management board or Ministerial policy, Indecon understands there is no explicit co-ordinated structural organisational mechanism to co-ordinate the different areas which are involved in aspects of career guidance. This suggests the merits of a new mechanism within the Department to share information and agree overall policy in relation to career guidance in education and training.

Figure 2.2: Areas within Organisational Structure of Department of Education and Skills with Involvement in Career Guidance



Source: Indecon

Career guidance policy in the Department is supported by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), which is a small-sized organisation with seven whole-time-equivalent staff. This organisation supports and develops guidance practice in education on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills. However, Indecon understands that NCGE is not an executive agency within the Department but was established under Léargas, the Exchange Bureau, a company limited by guarantee. The Minister for Education and Skills nominates members of the Management of Guidance committee for NCGE who are then appointed by the Board of Léargas a sub-committee of the Board of Léargas. Léargas in turn is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee established in 1995. Indecon notes that the objective of Léargas, which is to manage European Union funded transactional co-operative and exchange programmes, is very different and separate to that of NCGE and the inclusion of NCGE within Léargas means that NCGE cannot access Erasmus+ funding. Indecon understands that Léargas reports to the international division within the Department. There is, however, a service level agreement in place between the Department and the NCGE, a copy of which is included Annex 2 of this report. There is also a Management Committee (MGC) for NCGE appointed by the Minister for Education which is a Sub-Committee of the Board of Léargas. The terms of reference for this sub-committee is included in Annex 9 of this report. There are also a number of other organisations directly involved in or with an interest in career guidance. These include the main representative bodies and other interested stakeholders. In addition, there are other organisations with an involvement or interest in career guidance as can be seen from the list of organisations who took the time to make submissions to Indecon as presented in Annex 2. These include a wide range of other organisations such as the NESC Secretariat, SVP, EUNICAS, National Federation of Voluntary Bodies, FIT etc. Table 2.2 is designed to illustrate the extent of organisations impacting on career guidance but does not comprise an exhaustive list of all relevant organisations.

Table 2.2: Examples of Other Organisations Relevant to Career Guidance	
Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC)	The Institute of Guidance Counsellors was established in 1970's. Its constitution has as its main object the advancement of the personal, social, educational and career development of individuals and groups through supporting guidance counselling practice, discussing, promoting and researching matters relating to guidance counsellor services and sharing of the results of the Institutes work with the general public, statutory bodies and government departments and is the professional body representing a large number of guidance counsellors in Ireland.
Irish Association of University and College Counsellors (IAUCC)	Representative body for counselling services in third-level education. Counsellors work with individuals or groups to provide support in personal and academic issues.
Adult Educational Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI)	Represents staff of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative pilot projects. Identifies staff training needs and adult guidance developments.
Association of Graduate Careers Services in Ireland (AGSI)	Develop the career services provided to students and graduates, resource and information materials, website. Members are guidance professionals in publicly funded third-level institutions.
Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS)	Represents careers advisory and placement professionals in the higher education sector.
Institute of Technology Careers Advisers' Network (ITCAN)	Support operation of career advisory services, forum for sharing best practice. Members are career advisers in 14 Institutes of Technology.
Euroguidance Centres	Provide information on educational opportunities within the European Union and shares best practice in guidance. NCGE overseas Euroguidance in Ireland.
Career Information Websites	For example, Careers Portal, GradIreland, Careerosphere, Career Decisions, and Caerus Education.
AONTAS	National Adult Learning Organisation is the Irish non-government organisation responsible for the promotion and facilitation of adult learning.
Irish Universities Association	The IUA is the representative body of Ireland's seven universities.
THEA	The Technological Higher Education Association is the representative body of 11 Institutes of Technology and Technological University, Dublin.
ETBI	National Representative organisations for Ireland's 16 ETBs.
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, which is the professional association for all Principals and Deputy Principals in Post Primary schools and Further Education and Training (FET) schools and colleges in Ireland.
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
ASTI	Association of Second-level Teachers in Ireland, which is the primary representative body for post-primary teachers.
TUI	Teachers Union of Ireland, which is the primary representative body for primary school teachers.
National Parents Council	National Parents Council ensures that parents become effective partners in children's education.
Union of Students in Ireland	USI is the national representative body for the 374,000 students in third-level education on the Island of Ireland.
Enterprise Representative Organisations, including IBEC	In addition to IBEC, other bodies relevant to enterprise engagement include sectoral organisations such as IHF, CIF, IFA, Chambers of Commerce and other representative groups.
Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD)	Advocates improvement in access and participation of students with disabilities in higher education and employment.
Inclusion Ireland	Inclusion Ireland provides a central forum to improve the quality of life and participation of people with an intellectual disability in Irish Society.
Source: Indecon	

Our analysis of the organisational structures indicates that there are numerous organisations with an involvement or interest in career guidance. Some of these are not within the education and training system which is the focus of this review, but they are important in the provision of career guidance and are relevant in ensuring that there is a coherent national strategy for lifelong guidance. The co-ordination of different agencies and developments in career guidance is a critical issue in developing policy. This was reflected in many of Indecon's engagements with stakeholders. For example, THEA suggested that "*Coherence is at the heart of this. We have many commendable initiatives but aligning these remains a challenge.*"[14]

2.3 Guidance Policy for Post-Primary Sector

Before considering the policy framework for guidance and career information in post-primary schools it is useful as context to note that in 2017 there were 714 second-level institutions aided by the Department of Education and Skills. Of further significance is that enrolments in schools are expected to increase over the next five years and then to decline.

The overall policy framework for career guidance in schools is provided for in Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998) which obliges a recognised school to "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choice." 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 interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.

Within the post-primary sector, the career guidance policy framework is based on a whole-school approach. A school guidance plan provides a framework for the delivery of the school guidance programme. This is designed to ensure a structured response to the educational, vocational and personal needs of the student. The Department of Education and Skills has indicated that a whole-school approach involves schools implementing guidance plans which *"should outline the school's approach to guidance generally and how students can be supported and assisted in making choices and successful transitions in the personal and social, education and career areas."*[15]

The whole-school guidance plan has been described by the NCGE as *"…the document in which the school, in a systematic way, defines the guidance programme it offers, and states how resources are organised to deliver the programme."*[16] While such plans are important it is also essential that there is leadership and that capacity exists within schools to implement and manage such plans. An analysis of the Department of Education and Skills' School Compliance Survey provides insight into the implementation of the policy framework involving whole-school guidance plans in post-primary schools. This suggests that 97% of schools have a whole-school guidance plan. Evidence on the contents of the whole-school guidance plan presented in Table 2.3 shows some variance in the extent to which schools have action plans related to guidance policies and the extent to which procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate the guidance programmes. In this context, Indecon understands the Department of Education and Skills has supported NCGE in the establishment of a pilot project with 15 schools to examine best practice in implementing the whole-school approach and that the outcomes from the pilot have recently been shared at a conference.

[14] Submission to Indecon from THEA
[15] Department of Education and Skills. Circular Letter 0010/2017: Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts 2017/18 School Year.
[16] NCGE. Planning the School Guidance Programme. 2004.

Table 2.3: Whole-School Guidance Plan Contents	
	Percentage of Schools with Whole School Guidance Plans
Aims of school guidance programme	99%
Description of current guidance provision	97%
Outline of current guidance programme	98%
A description of resources for Guidance, including information on the curriculum areas and teachers involved in the delivery of whole-school guidance	93%
A list of the school's guidance priorities	89%
An action plan related to those guidance priorities	80%
Procedures for monitoring and evaluation of the guidance programme	82%
Drafts of relevant policies	91%
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2018	

2.4 Guidance Policy for Higher Education Sector

Before outlining the policy for guidance and career information in the higher education sector, it is useful as context to note that there were approximately 230,000 students in the third-level sector in 2017, of which 180,000 (79%) were full-time. The Department of Education and Skills projections of demand for full-time third-level education suggest this will increase further and that there will be between 192,000 – 227,250 full-time students in third-level institutions by 2029.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education and research. With support from the HEA the Universities and the Institutes of Technology provide career guidance supports for students. One of the policy goals set by the HEA of relevance to career guidance is to expand pathways through education and into employment/self-employment. This will involve enhancing mechanisms and services supporting lifelong guidance on career options and choices, and lifelong learning opportunities. Examples include the targeted introduction of employability statements for all disciplines in all HEIs by 2020.

Within the higher education sector Indecon understands that "*The main provision is targeted at final year students and recent graduates, although some career services have started to provide careers education in the curriculum of undergraduate courses. The Careers Advisory/Appointments Office provides information on educational and employment opportunities to students and graduates. Students can meet with a Careers Adviser for educational and career guidance*."[17]

The level of career and student counselling resources in terms of the numbers of staff as well as the annual expenditure in the higher education sector is monitored by the Higher Education Authority. In annual expenditure terms across all universities, colleges, and institutes of technology, in 2015/16 there was a combined expenditure of just under €12.3 million across the student counselling and career services areas. Counselling services had a marginally higher level of expenditure. While the level of career services staff has remained relatively static across the period examined, the numbers of staff working in student counselling services had gradually increased to 78 people in 2015/16. The HEA has indicated that the level of resource provision in these areas are not likely to have changed substantially since 2015/16.

[17] https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/guidance-higher-education.

2.5 Guidance Policy for Further Education and Training Sector

Career Guidance Policy for the FET sector is a component of the overall *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019*[18] which aims to "*deliver a higher quality learning experience leading to better outcomes for all those who engage in FET."* The Strategy discusses the role of guidance in the FET sector and the various forms it takes. FET learners, according to the Strategy, tend to access services through self-referral or through referral from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection via the Intreo service. Typically, learners referred through the Intreo service, will have had engagement on career options with their case workers. For those in PLC courses in second-level schools or FE colleges, guidance is provided by the schools and colleges.

In Ireland, the framework for publicly-funded adult career guidance is primarily within the remit of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) which is delivered by the 16 ETBs. This initiative was born out of the White Paper on lifelong learning and is covered by Operational Guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills.[19] The services provided are underpinned by the following principles:

- Learner/Client centred;
- Confidentiality;
- Impartiality;
- Equal Opportunities;
- Accessibility;
- Transparency; and
- Empowerment.

For individuals in FET they can avail of career guidance from the Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS) provided by the ETBs, whose work includes:

- The provision of guidance services to individuals and groups in the FET sector;
- Collaboration with Government departments and agencies to strength referral protocols and guidance provision;
- Fostering links with employers and LEOs, as well as with managers and members of Regional Skills Fora; and
- Participating with local ETBs in a range of community-based programmes to develop supports for clients and the community.

[18] https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf.

[19] Department of Education and Science [now Department of Education and Skills], Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education, 2000.

The AEGS supports the following target groups which were identified by the Department of Education and Skills in their Operational Guidelines 2012 for the Adult Guidance Initiative (AEGI):[20]

- *"Adults and young people aged over sixteen years who left school with low or no formal qualifications or low literacy levels.*
- *The unemployed, particularly the priority groups identified as part of the Government's activation agenda.*
- *The long-term unemployed and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed, especially those over fifty years of age.*
- *Those not in work but not eligible to be on the Live Register.*
- *Those in the workplace with basic skills needs."*

The Operational Guidelines set out the overall objectives of the AEGI with the overall aim to "*offer a guidance service to adults which includes impartial adult education information, one-to-one guidance and group guidance, which will help people to make informed educational, career and life choices."* [21] The other objectives are to ensure there is integrated and inclusive adult educational guidance counselling, available at all stages (including pre-entry and pre-exit) and that services be offered free of charge to target groups which include the above and disadvantaged men and women, lone parents, those with caring responsibilities, travellers, homeless people, substance misusers, ex-offenders, people with disabilities, people for whom English is not their mother tongue and former residents of designated education institutions and eligible family members.

SOLAS is responsible for funding FET Adult Guidance Services at ETBs on an individual ETB level. The funding provision for ETBs in terms adult guidance activities has increased from €6.6 million in 2016 to €6.9 million in 2018.

There are also supports for trainees through the advocacy service and for apprentices through the training advisers located in training centres.

2.6 Policy for Learners with Special Educational Needs

In addition to reviewing the overall policy framework, Indecon believes it is also important to pay particular attention to policy for learners with special education needs. The Department of Education and Skills policy for supporting children with special educational needs aims to ensure that children with special educational needs can have access to an education appropriate to their needs, preferably in school settings through the primary and post-primary school network as well as in special class or special school settings.

For children with special educational needs in mainstream post-primary schools, students can access the support of the guidance counsellor. Educational planning is an essential element of the whole-school policy approach to meeting students' needs. The existing policy framework for career guidance in the post-primary sector requires that educational plans should be differentiated in line with a pupil's needs. Policy is that a student's support plan should include clear, measurable learning targets, and specify the resources and interventions that will be used to address student needs in line with the Continuum of Support process. The policy framework requires that individualised support plans for students should be developed through a collaborative process involving relevant

[20] http://www.aegai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/17Oct-The-Role-of-the-AEGS.pdf.

[21] https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/AEGI_Operational_Guidelines_2012__FINAL.pdf

teachers, parents/guardians, the pupils themselves and outside professionals, as necessary. There is no additional or separate guidance support for children with special education needs and there is currently no policy to support an alternative or separate guidance provision for children with special education needs in mainstream post-primary. Career guidance counsellors work closely with the special education needs coordinator, where appropriate.

An issue identified as part of this review concerns the position of students in special schools who may have different needs. Special school staff generally, as part of their ongoing work, undertake guidance activities including planning for the child's future, assessing further education options, training, employment or other placement options subject to the individual's abilities. There are no guidance counsellors allocated to these schools and there is merit in providing enhanced career guidance training for teachers in special schools and to facilitate the access of such schools to wider career guidance supports.

Recently published guidelines by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) provide information on post-school education and training options for people with disabilities. These guidelines provide students and their families with information on the range of post-school options and supports available and guidance to inform individual choice. The guidelines cover Further Education and Training, Higher Education and Rehabilitative Training, and Adult Day Services.

Indecon understands that policy requires all schools to develop Education Plans for children identified with special educational needs and additional care support needs. Guidelines for schools on educational planning are contained in the *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*, which were published when the new model for the allocation of special educational needs teachers was introduced in September 2017. Also published were the *Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.*

Indecon also notes that the Comprehensive Review of the Special Needs Assistant Scheme[22] published by the NCSE found that while the scheme is greatly valued by parents, students and schools and works well in meeting the care needs of younger students and students for whom it was originally intended, including those with care needs such as toileting, mobility and feeding, it is less effective for some older primary and post-primary students, as overreliance on SNA support can result in these students experiencing alienation and stigma. It also found that there can be an over-dependence on SNA support, leaving some young people inadequately prepared for life in post-school settings and it is seen as a blunt instrument to deal with the very wide range and variety of needs, ages, developmental stages and school settings.

It is also important to consider what career guidance is provided to students with disabilities in the higher education sector. The Student Support Service within each higher education institution scaffolds the learning process, and provides academic and personal supports to students. Student Support Services in higher education institutions usually include an equity of access office, dedicated disability services and a career guidance support service. The central role of disability officers is to provide supports and services to students with disabilities to assist them in accessing higher education and successfully completing, and to ensure compliance with the legal requirement to provide reasonable accommodations as appropriate.

[22] NCSE (2018), Comprehensive Review of the Special Needs Assistant Scheme, NCSE Policy Advice Paper No. 6

In the further education area, over 17,000 people with a disability in 2017 enrolled in a range of mainstream FET programmes. Details on all FET programmes are available on www.fetchcourses.ie. Learners on FET programmes have access to appropriate guidance services. Some programmes also provide income support by enabling learners to retain their DEASP entitlements and have provision for meal and travel allowances. The HEA Fund for Students with Disabilities also funds services and support for students with a disability in Post Leaving Certificate Colleges.

SOLAS through the ETBs also provides funding for education and training for people with disabilities through Specialist Training Providers. Indecon understands that over 3,500 benefited from this provision in 2017 although we understand that there are still access difficulties in some FET settings. Features of the programme include longer duration, adapted equipment and transport arrangements. In terms of outcomes of those who participated in a specialist training programme, the overall evidence indicates after they leave the FET training delivered by ETBs, that 26% were in employment, 4% were on government schemes, 15% were engaged in further study, 31% were unemployed and 24% were inactive/other.

An issue concerning the policy framework regarding individuals with special needs is that where learners are involved in special schools, there are no separate guidance counsellors and the teachers in schools undertake guidance activities. This is discussed further in Chapter 4 concerning the role of guidance counsellors.

2.7 Summary of Findings

- Ireland has a developed career support system across the education and training system including post-primary education, higher education and further education and training.
- One important component of career guidance is the role played by guidance counselling which in Ireland encompasses the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling.
- There is a wide range of state involvement in career guidance and this is reflected in existing organisational structures. The multiplicity of organisations involved highlights the challenges in ensuring a coherent national long-term policy on career guidance.
- Within the Department of Education and Skills there are ten divisions, 6-8 of which have some potential involvement with Guidance. Other than through the management board or Ministerial policy, Indecon understands there is no explicit co-ordinated structural organisational mechanism to co-ordinate the different areas which are involved in aspects of career guidance. Career guidance policy in the Department is supported by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE).
- In addition to government departments and state agencies there are a number of important other key organisations directly involved in career guidance. These include representative bodies and other stakeholders.
- The overall policy framework for career guidance in schools obliges them to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices. Within the post-primary sector, the career guidance policy framework is based on a whole-school approach.

- The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory planning and policy development body for higher education including policy for career guidance within the sector. With support from the HEA the Universities and the Institutes of Technology directly provide career guidance supports for students.
- Career Guidance Policy for the FET sector is a component of the overall *Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019.* The framework for adult career guidance is primarily within the remit of the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative (AEGI) which is provided by the 16 Education and Training Board (ETBs). SOLAS is responsible for funding FET Adult Guidance Services. Career guidance in Post Leaving Certificate colleges is delivered through the post primary guidance allocation model. Some participants in FET will also have had engagement on careers issues and options with DEASP's intreo service.
- In reviewing the overall policy framework, it is important to pay particular attention to the policy framework for learners with special education needs. Special school staff generally undertake guidance activities including planning for the child's future, assessing further education options, training, employment or other placement options subject to the child's abilities. There are no guidance counsellors allocated to these schools; and, in Indecon's opinion, there is merit in policy providing enhanced opportunities for career guidance training for teachers in special needs schools, and in enhancing the access of such schools to wider career guidance supports.

3 How and When Learners Form their Career Opinions

3.1 Introduction

Understanding the timing and formation of, and influences on, learners' career choices is important in designing policy to maximise the impact of career guidance supports. This section presents Indecon's findings in relation to learners' career choice formation including: when learners form their career opinions and who are the key influencers.

3.2 When Learners Form Opinions on Career Choice

In considering when learners form their opinions in Ireland, Indecon notes that in Ireland "guidance has been largely based in the post-primary sector, providing educational and career guidance to students and applying a personal counselling approach."[23] There are also significant supports provided in higher and further education and training. Given the recognition that guidance is lifelong, it is of note that even in younger age cohorts, the development of knowledge, skills and competencies is critical to future career development. New Indecon primary research with guidance counsellors presented in the next table suggests that initial consideration of careers choices usually occurs during the Junior Cycle and Transition Years. While best practice suggests that early intervention is merited for many students it appears that career information is first provided in Transition Year or in Fifth Year.

There is an extensive research literature that highlights the way in which children begin to form their career ideas and identities in early childhood and that these develop throughout their time in primary school.[24] [25] Gottfredson describes how children develop career ideas and then adjust and abandon these in response to what they see in the world around them.[26] Such ideas are often strongly influenced by family histories and the media.[27] Such compromise and circumscription of career ideas can often result in the uncritical reproduction of social norms e.g. 'girls don't become engineers'. Having limited aspirations can influence academic attainment,[28] subject choice,[29] [30] and career outcomes.[31] [32] Because of this it is important to intervene to broaden children's career thinking and ensure that they understand the possibilities that are open to them. A recent review of the literature has set out the importance of offering career related learning in primary education and has drawn together the evidence around what makes such interventions in primary effective.[33]

[23] National Guidance Forum Report 2007, p.14.
[24] Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., and Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development*, 72(2), 187–206.
[25] Gutman, L. and Akerman, R. (2008). *Determinants of Aspirations*. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning.
[26] Gottfredson, L. S. (2002). Gottfredson's theory of circumscription, compromise, and self creation. In Brown, D., and Brooks, L. (Eds.) *Career Choice and Development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 85-148.
[27] Chambers, N., Rehill, J., Kashefpakdel, E. T., and Percy, C. (2018). Drawing the Future: Exploring the Career Aspirations of Primary School Children from Around the World. London: Education and Employers.
[28] Flouri, E. and Pangouria, C. (2012). *Do Primary School Children's Career Aspirations Matter? The Relationship Between Family Poverty, Career Aspirations and Emotional and Behavioural Problems.* London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies.
[29] Kelly, P. (2004). Children's experiences of mathematics. *Research in Mathematics Education*, 6(1), 37-57.
[30] Archer, L., Osbourne, J., DeWitt, J., Dillon, J. & Wong, B. (2013). *ASPIRES: Young People's Science and Career Aspirations, Age 10-14*. London: King's College.
[31] Akerlof, G. A., and Kranton, R. E. (2000). Economics and identity. *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 115(3), 715-753.
[32] Breen, R., and Garcia-Penalosa, C. (2002). Bayesian learning and gender segregation. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 20(4), 899–922.
[33] Kashefpakdel, K., Rehill, J. & Hughes, D. (2018). *Career-related learning in primary*. London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

While specific recommendations on this issue is outside the scope of the current review this may merit consideration in the context of the development of a longer-term strategy.

Table 3.1: Guidance Counsellors Estimates of Timing of Initial Consideration of Career Choice and Receipt of Career Information

Percentage of Guidance Counsellors/Practitioners	Timing of Initial Consideration of Career Choice	Timing of Initial Receipt of Career Information
In Primary School	17.4%	0.3%
In Junior Cycle – First, Second or Third Year	31.7%	26.3%
During Transition Year	30.4%	47.8%
During Fifth Year	8.7%	14.7%
During Sixth Year	5.1%	5.6%
Post Leaving Cert	3.3%	2.0%
FET	3.3%	3.3%
Total Respondents	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

The significance of the post-primary school phase in the consideration of career choices was also highlighted by Indecon research with second-level students. The fact that some learners first started thinking about what they would do in primary school is also of note. This suggests the need for early action in career guidance.

Table 3.2: When Second-level Student Respondents First Started Thinking about What to Do Upon Leaving School/Education

Age at which you first started thinking about what to do upon leaving school/education	Percentage of Second-level Students
In Primary School	24.8%
In Junior Cycle – First, Second or Third Year	37.2%
During Transition Year	30.3%
Other	7.7%
Total	**100%**

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level and Higher-level Students

In considering when students first start thinking about what to do, of note is the recommendation to Indecon from the Union of Students in Ireland, who suggested that "reform should include specific focus on early intervention, and measures should be tailored for students well in advance of the Junior Certificate."[34] This view of the need for early action is aligned with International evidence on best practice. The importance of early intervention was highlighted by guidance counsellors and also by enterprise representatives. For example, the Construction Industry Federation suggested that early intervention/guidance regarding careers directions would seem to be prudent and options can be limited by poor subject selection[35].

[34] Submission to Indecon from Union of Students in Ireland
[35] Submission to Indecon from Construction Industry Federation

The fact that a percentage of higher-level students only started thinking about careers during college is of interest as indicated in the table below.

Table 3.3: When Higher Level Student Respondents First Started Thinking about What to Do Upon Leaving School/Education	
Age at which you first started thinking about what to do upon leaving school/education	**Percentage of Higher-level Students**
In Primary School	14.4%
In Junior Cycle – First, Second or Third Year	20.0%
During Transition Year	19.9%
Final Year in School	17.7%
During College	21.3%
Other	6.7%
Total	**100%**
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level and Higher-level Students	

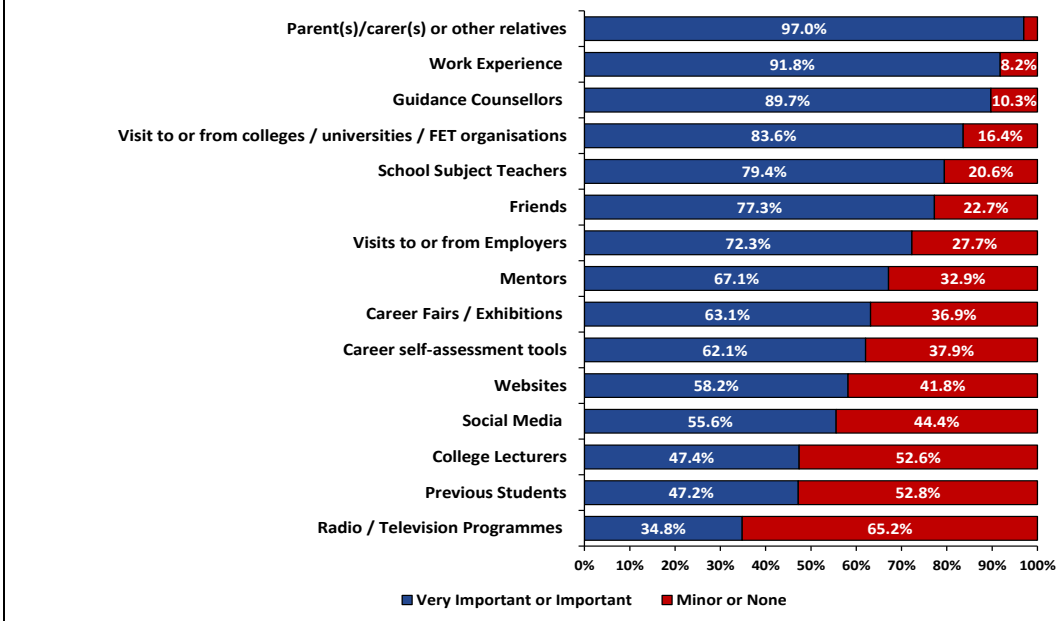
The views of students on when they first obtained career information indicates that most students first obtained information about possible career choices when they were in the 14 – 17-year age group. This is broadly consistent with the findings from Indecon's survey of guidance counsellors.

Table 3.4: Age at which Respondents First Obtained Information about Possible Career Choices		
Age at which you first obtained career information	**Percentage of Second-level Students**	**Percentage of Higher-level Students**
Younger than 10	3.7%	1.4%
10-11	3.9%	1.0%
12	4.6%	1.0%
13	7.7%	1.6%
14	10.7%	2.8%
15	27.8%	10.6%
16	31.1%	26.7%
17	8.2%	20.2%
18-19	2.1%	18.0%
20-21	0.2%	10.1%
22-25	0.1%	4.9%
26-30	0.0%	1.6%
Over 30	0.0%	0.0%
Total	**100%**	**100%**
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Students in Second-level and Higher Education		

3.3 Influences on Learners' Career Choice

The evidence on the influences on learner career choices in Ireland highlights the importance of family and friends. This is aligned with research from other countries and for example research in Scotland suggested that students consider "*family and friends to be the most important source of career information and advice.*"[36] The research literature strongly supports the idea that career decision making is grounded in the personal and familial networks that young people have and this has led to the development of a range of interventions which seek to make positive use of these influences and to integrate them with the contributions that are made by guidance counsellors and the wider education system.[37] There is, however, a range of other important influences including work experience, guidance counsellors and other teachers. In evaluating influences, Indecon believes there is a distinct role provided by guidance counsellors. In this context Indecon supports the view outlined in the submission to Indecon's review by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors who suggested that "*the role of the guidance counsellor can be as mediator and intermediary between the known and the unknown and to help enlarge their world*."[38] The views of guidance counsellors on the importance of different influences is presented below and highlights the importance of family, work experience and guidance counsellors. A wide range of other influences are also evident from this research.

Figure 3.1: Views of Guidance Counsellors on Importance of Following Career Choice Influences



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

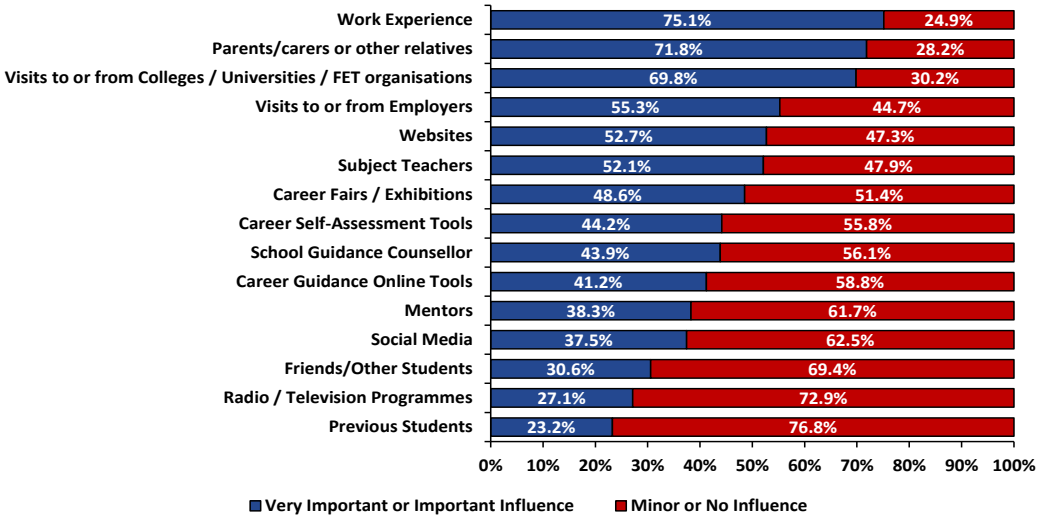
[36] http://iccdpp.org/self-help-and-career-planning-report-for-skills-development-scotland-2009 Page 1.

[37] Oomen, A.M.F. (2018). *Parental involvement in career education and guidance in senior general education in the Netherlands*. PhD Thesis, University of Derby.

[38] IGC Submission to Indecon.

The diversity of influences is also reflected in the views of post-primary students and again the importance of family and of work experience is highlighted for these younger learners.

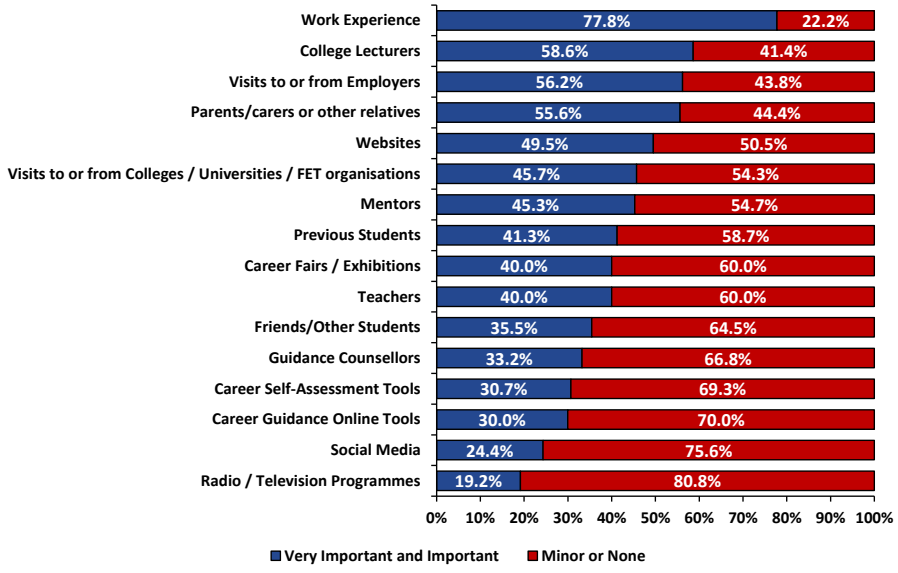
Figure 3.2: Views of Second-level Students on Importance of Following Career Choice Influences



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level School Students

The perspective of higher-level students on the influences on their career choice is presented in the figure below. The findings demonstrate the diversity of influences on career decisions.

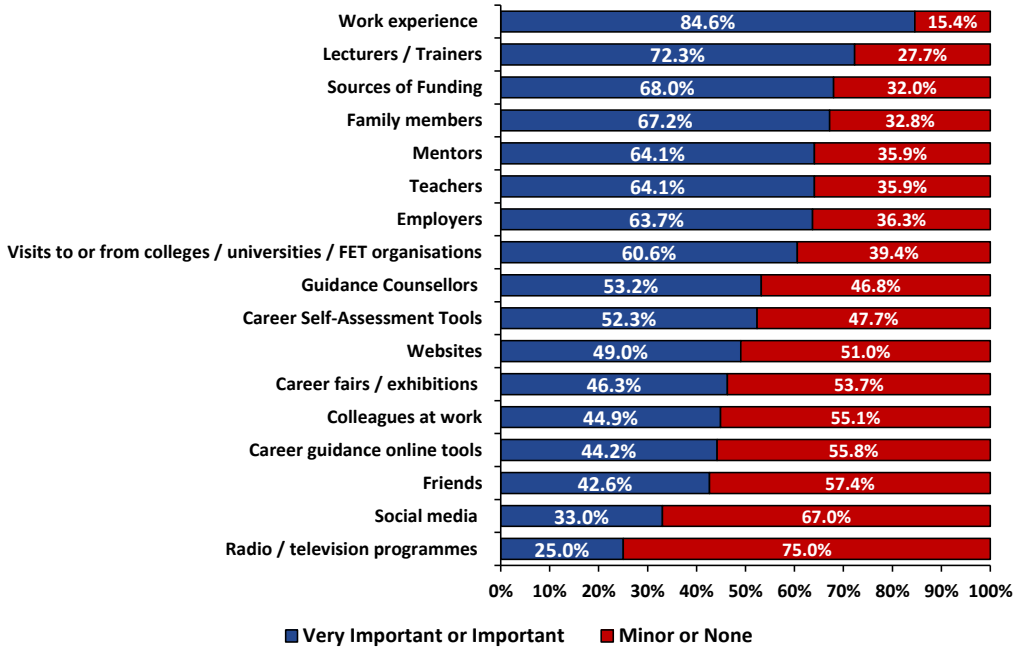
Figure 3.3: Views of Higher-level Students on Importance of Following Career Choice Influences



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Higher Education Learners

The views of FET learners on the importance of different influences on career choices again demonstrates that different factors are more important to some individuals than others. However, for further education and training learners, work experience and the views of lecturers/trainers appear to be particularly important.

Figure 3.4: Views of FET Learners on Importance of Following Career Choice Influences



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of FET learners

The evidence presented above demonstrated that many factors can have a significant influence on different individuals in deciding on career choices. While there is broad agreement on the importance of family and friends particularly for younger students, the extent of different weight being given to influences may be a reflection of other factors. For example, the significance of different influences will depend upon whether individuals have had access to or consulted with some of the potential sources of advice and information. The relative importance of different influences may also be determined in part by socio-economic factors. While the overall judgements on the range of influences is of interest, in order to guide policy Indecon believes it is critical to examine how significant different sources of influence were for those individuals who consulted with different sources, and how this varied by socio-economic groups.

Evidence on this is available from the latest GUI data of the importance of a selection of career guidance sources. The findings examine how helpful different sources of advice were in students' decisions on what to do after they left school. In cases where individuals consulted with family, they were perceived as very important, with mothers listed as the most important sources. The findings also demonstrate the significance of one-to-one sessions with individual guidance counsellors.

Table 3.5: Percentage of Respondents Views of Importance of Helping You Decide Career Choice – Sixth Years			
	Very Important	**Important**	**Not Very Important**
Guidance Counsellor Class Session	23.7%	46.8%	29.6%
Guidance Counsellor Individual Appointment	49.4%	33.8%	16.8%
Year Head	21.2%	48.8%	30.0%
Subject Teachers	32.0%	57.1%	10.9%
Friends	29.9%	53.1%	17.0%
Mother	65.2%	31.1%	3.6%
Father	58.7%	35.8%	5.6%
Other Family Members including Siblings	45.9%	39.5%	14.7%
Someone Else	45.9%	39.5%	14.7%
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data			

In examining how learners form their opinions and who are the key influences, the evidence shows that this varies by socio-economic group. The data in Table 3.6 shows that those from lowest income groups are much less likely to have consulted with their parents than those from higher income backgrounds. The greater level of consultation with year heads in lower income groups may reflect the nature of the roll out of the whole school approach in DEIS schools. Individuals in lower income quartiles have less advice from family and this may not be sufficiently compensated by access to professional guidance counsellors. This raises the concept of 'agency' as potentially useful in considering inherited advantages/disadvantages of some students.[39] Indecon believes that the gaps in social capital of some disadvantaged families in Ireland impacts on the need for guidance outside the family to alter ambitions and to provide knowledge on opportunities. There is research evidence which suggests that careers interventions, particularly enterprise engagement, can compensate for lower levels of social capital that exist within families from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.[40] In this context, SVP indicated that a lack of positive role models is a barrier for those who had no previous experience of a family member or someone they know from their communities progressing to third-level. Similar factors apply in terms of lack of experience of different career options.

[39] See Clerkin. A, Filling in the Gaps. A theoretical Grounding for an Education Programme for Adolescent Socioemotional and Vocational Development in Ireland. Review of Education, Vol 6, No. 2, June 2018

[40] Mann, A., Kashefpakdel, E., & Percy, C. (2018). Socialised social capital? the capacity of schools to use careers provision to compensate for social capital deficiencies among teenagers. In *Essays on Employer Engagement in Education* (pp. 86-101). Routledge.

Table 3.6: Percentage of Respondents Who Consulted With a Range of Potential Career Influencers									
HHEDI*	**GC Class**	**GC One-to-one**	**Year Head**	**Subject Teachers**	**Friends**	**Mother**	**Father**	**Siblings**	**Other**
All Students									
Lowest	74.6%	63.5%	35.5%	48.8%	100.0%	86.5%	66.1%	53.4%	18.2%
2nd	76.9%	66.4%	32.1%	48.3%	100.0%	87.6%	73.0%	55.2%	17.0%
3rd	78.1%	65.5%	26.7%	48.8%	100.0%	90.5%	80.1%	58.6%	19.7%
4th	77.4%	65.3%	26.1%	45.5%	100.0%	93.3%	83.7%	59.4%	22.0%
Highest	77.1%	65.0%	24.4%	46.7%	100.0%	94.7%	87.6%	58.8%	21.3%
Average	76.8%	65.1%	29.0%	47.6%	100.0%	90.5%	78.1%	57.1%	19.7%
6th Years									
Lowest	79.3%	77.6%	37.2%	50.3%	100.0%	87.5%	67.1%	54.9%	21.4%
2nd	79.9%	78.7%	34.2%	51.5%	100.0%	87.6%	73.1%	56.4%	16.4%
3rd	84.4%	80.7%	26.8%	48.1%	100.0%	91.7%	78.9%	57.6%	22.7%
4th	82.5%	81.8%	27.7%	47.2%	100.0%	94.2%	85.0%	59.5%	23.9%
Highest	79.1%	81.7%	25.8%	46.2%	100.0%	94.0%	86.3%	60.3%	21.7%
Average	81.0%	80.1%	30.3%	48.7%	100.0%	91.0%	78.1%	57.8%	21.2%
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data ****Household equivalised disposable income***									

An analysis of potential career influencers by gender is presented in Table 3.7. This suggests that females are slightly more likely to use guidance counsellors and males slightly more likely to consult the year head or subject teachers.

Table 3.7: Percentage of Respondents Who Consulted With a Range of Potential Career Influencers by Gender									
Gender	**GC Class**	**GC One on One**	**Year Head**	**Subject Teachers**	**Friends**	**Mother**	**Father**	**Siblings**	**Other**
All Students									
Male	75.9%	63.1%	29.2%	49.7%	100.0%	89.4%	80.9%	55.5%	20.2%
Female	78.1%	67.6%	27.2%	44.9%	100.0%	92.6%	79.7%	60.2%	19.3%
6th Years									
Male	81.1%	78.1%	30.6%	51.4%	100.0%	90.3%	80.1%	56.5%	21.9%
Female	81.5%	83.9%	28.3%	45.0%	100.0%	93.1%	81.0%	60.8%	20.6%
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data									

In examining how learners form their opinions it is useful to also consider the position of learners from one-parent households and not one parent households. Table 3.8 indicates the percentage of these two cohorts who consult with different influences in terms of career guidance. For those in one-parent households the percentage who have access to some potential influencers such as fathers and mothers is less than for other groups.

Table 3.8: Percentage of Respondents Who Consulted With a Range of Potential Career Influencers – One Parent Households and Not One Parent Households									
	GC Class	GC One-to-one	Year Head	Subject Teachers	Friends	Mother	Father	Siblings	Other
All Students									
One Parent Household	77.4%	66.2%	31.3%	44.8%	100.0%	83.0%	50.5%	53.8%	19.3%
Not One Parent Household	76.9%	65.3%	27.6%	47.6%	100.0%	92.6%	85.7%	58.7%	19.8%
6th Years									
One Parent Household	82.3%	80.1%	35.0%	47.8%	100.0%	83.3%	50.2%	55.6%	22.3%
Not One Parent Household	81.1%	81.2%	28.5%	48.2%	100.0%	93.3%	85.9%	59.3%	21.0%
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data									

The evidence on how learners form their opinions also varies by the educational attainment of the young persons' parents.

Table 3.9: Percentage of Respondents Who Consulted With a Range of Potential Career Influencers – Parents' Highest Education – All Students									
	GC Class	GC One-to-one	Year Head	Subject Teachers	Friends	Mother	Father	Siblings	Other
All Students									
None/Primary school	67.2%	62.0%	42.3%	49.6%	100.0%	80.3%	66.4%	62.8%	18.2%
Lower Second-level	80.1%	69.3%	38.6%	49.5%	100.0%	86.1%	74.4%	57.4%	19.1%
Hi Sec /TechVoc / UppSec+Tech/Voc	77.0%	64.8%	28.1%	46.7%	100.0%	90.0%	79.0%	56.1%	18.7%
Non-Degree	76.2%	65.7%	25.3%	46.7%	100.0%	92.6%	81.8%	59.1%	18.7%
Primary Degree	76.6%	66.6%	26.9%	48.3%	100.0%	93.9%	85.2%	59.5%	22.1%
Postgrad	78.2%	62.8%	24.6%	45.8%	100.0%	94.0%	82.3%	58.9%	22.0%
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data									

3.4 Summary of Findings

- Understanding the timing, formation, and influences on learners' career choices is important in designing policy to maximise the impact of guidance support. Given the recognition that guidance is lifelong, it is of note that even in younger age cohorts, the development of knowledge, skills and competencies is critical to future career development. While research evidence and best practice suggests the need for early intervention, for many students, it appears that career information is first provided in Transition Year or in Fifth Year.
- The evidence on the influences on learner career choices in Ireland highlights the importance of family and friends. There is, however, a range of other important influences including work experience, guidance counsellors and other teachers.
- In examining how learners form their opinions and who are the key influencers, the available evidence shows that this varies by socio-economic group. Those from lowest income groups are less likely to have consulted with their parents than those from higher income backgrounds. Individuals in lower income quartiles have less advice from family and may therefore be in greatest need of access to professional guidance counsellors drawing attention to the potential significance of guidance in breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage.

4 Role and Impact of Guidance Counsellors

4.1 Introduction

In Indecon's research on how and when learners form their opinions, in addition to family and friends, the significance of guidance counsellors was evident. Guidance counsellors are a critical source of career information and play a fundamental role in influencing and preparing individuals for their careers. It is therefore important as part of this review to consider the role and impact of guidance counsellors.

4.2 Role of Guidance Counsellors

In an Irish context, guidance counselling is "holistic and integrationist, placing the client firmly at the centre of the process in an immediate and relevant way. It encompasses the four areas of social/personal counselling, vocational guidance counselling and educational guidance counselling."[41] Indecon's primary research programme indicated that guidance counsellors suggested that they spend about half of their time on career guidance, but also significant time on other areas of counselling. Indecon recognises the value of these integrated roles and supports a holistic approach given the importance of personal skills and attributes as a well as qualifications. This is consistent with the view of the JMB/AMCSS that "in the complex life of a student…to view career guidance and counselling as polarised, is both arbitrary and artificial."[42] The mix between personal, social and educational supports was also evident in DES School Guidance Compliance return which indicates that the percentage of time spent by guidance counsellors was 15% doing Junior Cycle and nearly three times higher in Senior Cycle. The results highlight the fact that guidance counsellors are a key source of career information and supports. It is, however, important that there is also a sufficient focus on career guidance and advice.

Table 4.1: Guidance Counsellor Use of Time (%)

Measure	Career Guidance and Information	Personal Counselling	Subject Tracking	Other
Median	50.0%	30.0%	5.0%	10.0%
Mean	47.9%	28.1%	7.5%	15.8%

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

An analysis of the survey evidence shows some differences whether guidance counsellors are involved in post-primary, higher education, FET or other areas but it is clear that in all sectors counsellors are significantly involved in the provision of career guidance and information.

[41] IGC Submission to Indecon.

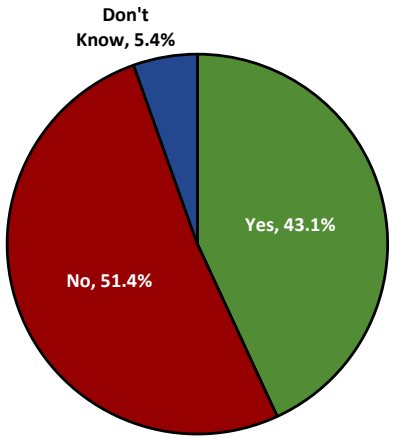
[42] JMB/AMCSS Submission to Indecon

Table 4.2: Guidance Counsellor Use of Time by Type of Institution				
Average Use of Counsellors Time (%) by Organisation Type	Career Guidance and Information %	Personal Counselling %	Subject Tracking %	Other %
Post-primary	44.8	35.0	8.0	11.1
Higher-level	44.2	13.0	3.4	39.4
FET	53.5	23.0	6.1	17.3
Others*	70.0	15.6	4.4	11.7

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors
**Other institutions include youth services, Local employment services, special schools, adult education guidance service, etc.*

One-to-one sessions are a potentially important source of career information and guidance, and involve a guidance counsellor meeting with learners on an individual basis to discuss their potential career, educational or other options. Such sessions provide the opportunity to discuss specific and individualised career paths as well as encouraging greater learner participation. Indecon's primary research with learners indicated that just over 43% of second-level students surveyed indicated that they had attended a one-to-one discussion with their guidance counsellor in the last year. Indecon notes that whether students had as yet attended such a guidance counselling session will have been influenced by what year they were at in the school cycle.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of Second-level Students Respondents who had One-to-one Discussions with Guidance Counsellor Last Year



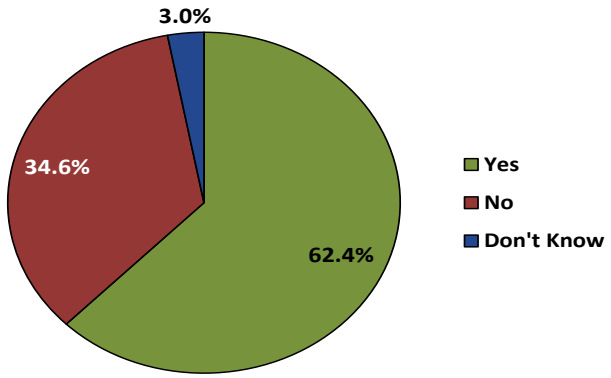
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level School Students

Of those second-level students that attended a one-to-one session, students estimated these lasted approximately 30 minutes, but in some cases much longer sessions were involved.

Table 4.3: One-to-one Career Guidance Discussion with a School Guidance Counsellor		
	Length of time for a one-to-one career guidance and information meeting (minutes)	Number of career guidance interviews had in the last year
Average	33	3
Median	30	1
Minimum	4	1
Maximum	180	60
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level Students		

Indecon has also examined the use of one-to-one career guidance sessions by FET learners. Over 62% of FET learners surveyed had attended a one-to-one session.

Figure 4.2: Percentage of FET Learner Respondents who had One-to-one Discussions with Guidance Counsellor Last Year



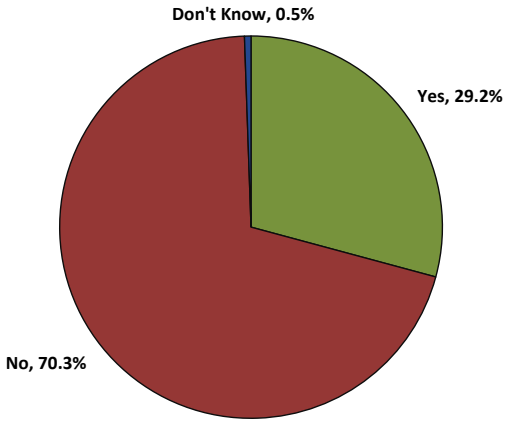
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of FET Learners

The one-to-one sessions for FET learners lasted on average around 44 minutes. FET learners had three one-to-one sessions annually on average.

Table 4.4: Length and Frequency of FET Learners' One-to-one Career Guidance Discussion with a Guidance Counsellor		
	Length of time for a one-to-one careers guidance and information meeting (Minutes)	Number of career guidance interviews had in the last year
Average	44	3
Median	36	2
Minimum	5	1
Maximum	300	40
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of FET Learners		

Among Higher Education learners, 30% of those responding to the Indecon survey had a one-to-one guidance session in the previous year.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of Higher Education Respondents who had One-to-one Discussions with Guidance Counsellor Last Year



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Higher Education Learners

On average, a Higher Education learner's one-to-one guidance session lasted just over 30 minutes.

Table 4.5: Length and Frequency of Higher Education Learners' One-to-one Career Guidance Discussion with a School Guidance Counsellor

	Length of time for a one-to-one careers guidance and information meeting (Minutes)	Number of career guidance interviews had in the last year
Average	32	2
Median	30	2
Minimum	0	0
Maximum	120	5

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Higher Education Learners

The impact of guidance sessions in enhancing career information was also suggested by a detailed analysis of the levels of satisfaction concerning different aspects of sources of information among learners who responded to the Indecon survey. For example, as indicated in the table overleaf, for all areas of information there was an enhancement in satisfaction levels for those who attended one-to-one sessions with guidance counsellors.

Table 4.6: Second-level Students' Satisfaction with Quality of Careers Information Available and Whether They Attended a 1-on-1 Career Session			
Percentage of second-level school respondents who attended and did not attend a 1-on-1 career session and whether they were 'Very Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with the quality of the career information provided to them in following areas:	**Attended 1-on-1 Session**	**Did Not Attend Any 1-on-1 Session**	***Difference***
Information on the full range of higher education courses	76.4%	62.7%	***13.7%***
Information on further education and training options	68.8%	58.2%	***10.6%***
Information on apprenticeships	40.4%	32.3%	***8.1%***
Information on nature of careers options	54.2%	41.2%	***13.0%***
Information on likely job opportunities	56.6%	43.7%	***12.9%***
Information on requirements for success in different careers	57.0%	48.0%	***8.9%***
Information on employment trends	37.6%	29.7%	***7.9%***
Information on self-employment/entrepreneurship	33.2%	28.5%	***4.8%***
Information on how to apply for jobs	48.5%	40.7%	***7.9%***
Information on how to apply for courses	69.3%	49.3%	***19.9%***
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Second-level Students			

Impact of Guidance Counsellors on Outcomes

In examining what mechanisms have the greatest impact, given the central role played by guidance counsellors, it is useful to examine the evidence on what impact, if any, guidance counsellors had on student outcomes. An analysis of the evidence on how important individual appointments with guidance counsellors are in helping students decide what to do after school (where such consultations took place) is presented in the next table. This demonstrates that 83% of learners perceived such appointments were important or very important in helping learners' decisions. Of further significance is that such appointments were even more important for learners from lowest income groups.

Table 4.7: Importance of One-to-one Career Guidance by Household Equivalised Disposable Income Quintile – Sixth Years			
Income Category	**Very Important**	**Important**	**Not Important**
Lowest	53.4%	32.2%	14.4%
2nd	55.4%	31.0%	13.7%
3rd	48.0%	35.8%	16.2%
4th	47.7%	33.3%	19.0%
Highest	46.8%	34.9%	18.3%
Total	**49.4%**	**33.8%**	**16.8%**
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data			

To investigate this further, Indecon undertook detailed econometric modelling using the GUI data. In the econometric model developed for this research the dependent variable examined whether students intend to apply or have applied to higher education. The model is run using data from Sixth Year students in the GUI database. The model aims to identify the key factors driving the propensity of students to apply for third-level education. The results of the logit model are presented below.[43] While the nature of the model makes interpreting the precise impact from the coefficients alone challenging, from the regression outputs we see that family equivalised disposable income quintile is a significant determinant of going on to higher/further education. This is explored in greater detail in Table 4.9. Additionally, females are more likely to go on to higher/further education, as are those who do higher-level mathematics in the Leaving Certificate. However, of significance in considering the impact of career guidance on outcomes is that attendance at a one-to-one session and a classroom guidance session are significant, with one-to-one sessions being a strong predictor of whether students are likely to progress to higher/further education.

Table 4.8: Logit of Whether Student has or will Apply to Higher/Further Education

Dependent Variable	**Dummy Variable of Whether Student has or will Apply to Higher/Further Education**	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
Household income quintile		
- 2nd	0.0038314	0.2039497
- 3rd	0.3499205*	0.2093733
- 4th	0.3350609*	0.2051682
- Highest	0.0795136	0.1962066
Confidence in the Education System		
Quite a lot***	-0.2023052	0.1966651
Not very much***	-0.0679227	0.2096032
None at all***	-0.9279245***	0.3243411
Gender		
female	0.4137355***	0.1224955
Level of Maths		
Ordinary	0.6123662*	0.2677793
Higher	0.8672348***	0.2924598
Not sure	-1.0669670	0.7804541
Cognitive Test – Maths Score		
1	-0.2310166	0.2664986
2	0.2655443	0.2651811
3	0.2811784	0.2679824
4	0.580152**	0.2860368
Cognitive Test – Naming Task	0.0030367	0.0107428
Individual Appointment		
Yes	0.6222016***	0.1359998
Class Session		
Yes	0.4251736***	0.1399125
Constant	-0.2429286	0.4385324

Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

[43] Starred figures in the table indicate statistical significance.

Indecon expanded on the preceding econometric modelling to predict marginal outcomes of the impact of guidance counselling for males and females in different income quintiles. This analysis interprets the coefficients in the preceding table in a more meaningful manner. While caution should be exercised in interpreting the results due to the possibility of self-selection bias, the results indicate potential impacts. The second column presents the probabilities of applying for third-level without career guidance and the third column presents the probability for those who reported having had one-to-one guidance. For example, for males in the lowest income class, the predicted probability of going to higher/further education increases from about 60% to 81% for those who received one-to-one counselling, relative to no guidance counselling. The results suggest that for the Sixth Year students examined having a one-to-one guidance session appears to have had a significant impact on outcomes across each income quartile and gender.

Table 4.9: Marginal Predictions of Logistic Model of Whether Students from Lower Income Quintiles Apply or Will Apply to Higher/Further Education

Gender and Income Quintile	No Guidance Margin***	Margin with Guidance***
Male & Lowest	0.598	0.818
Male & 2nd	0.584	0.810
Male & 3rd	0.690	0.871
Male & 4th	0.700	0.877
Male & Highest	0.624	0.834
Female & Lowest	0.689	0.871
Female & 2nd	0.677	0.864
Female & 3rd	0.768	0.910
Female & 4th	0.777	0.914
Female & Highest	0.712	0.883

Source: Indecon analysis
****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***

The results suggest that guidance counselling is an effective mechanism to provide career information and impartial advice. This is consistent with research completed in other countries which suggested that guidance counselling was one of the most effective modalities for providing career intervention.[44] The analysis in this report suggests that guidance counsellors represent one of the mechanisms which are likely to have the greatest impact in the provision of effective career information.

[44] For example, see Whiston (2003). Also of note is that to be effective guidance counselling interactions need to be structured in specific ways. While this is outside the scope of the current review, there is extensive research available on the best ways to organise guidance counselling interviews (see Bimrose, Barnes, Hughes and Orton 2004 and Brown and Ryan Krase 2000).

4.3 Guidance Counsellors in Special Schools

Given the important role in career guidance played by individual guidance counsellors, it is necessary to consider the position of students with special education needs who are in special schools, as there are no separate guidance counsellors allocated to these schools. In a detailed submission to the review by the Disability Federation Ireland, it was suggested that access to career guidance for young people with SEN at all levels and in all educational settings is of critical importance. Consistent with this, the National Disability Authority (NDA) indicated that "*career guidance for learners with disabilities should be delivered in an individually focused person centred way across the learner pathways.*" The NDA also highlighted that "*this will require knowledge and understanding of disability, training and employment options.*" A similar point was made in a submission from WALK who recommended the provision of supported guidance for all students in special education that is delivered in a manner appropriate to their needs. While special school staff provide career guidance as part of their planning for the needs of learners, it is important that these staff have sufficient expertise in career guidance and access to information on employment options. Caerus Education has highlighted data from the examination by the National Institute for Intellectual Disability[45] which demonstrated that very few young people were likely to obtain paid employment in the workforce. Consultations by Indecon undertaken as part of this report suggests the need for additional supports for guidance in special schools. This issue is illustrated by views in the table below.

Table 4.10: Examples of Views on the Need for Guidance in Special Schools
"It is difficult for young people and their parents to find out what post school vocational places are available for them."
"At present children attending our special school do not have access to career guidance. We would be interested in looking at how career information is presented to the student peers and adopting the tools that are in use to suit our students."
"They more than any other kids need guidance and options for their career path."
"At the moment learners with complex needs have no real opportunity to form opinions around career choices."
"It is difficult to source suitable career guidance resources for young people with special needs."
"Young people with intellectual disabilities… are significantly less likely to make progression into further education, apprenticeships and employment than their non-disabled peers."
"There is so much potential for all our children …. Unfortunately when a student gets to 18 we the staff never mind the parents are nervous about what lies ahead."
"In special schools, teachers, learners and parents cannot form opinions about possible career choice or options as there is very limited information available to them."
Source: Extracts from Submissions to Indecon

[45] O'Brien et al 2011

4.4 Summary of Findings

- Indecon's primary research programme indicated that guidance counsellors spend about half of their time on career guidance, but also significant time on other areas of counselling. Indecon recognises the value of these integrated roles and supports a holistic approach given the importance of personal skills and attributes as a well as qualifications. It is, however, important that there is also sufficient focus on career guidance and advice as well as the other integrated roles as supports. It is also important that guidance counsellors have access to ongoing CPD and up to date data on labour market developments.
- One-to-one sessions are a potential important source of career information and guidance, and involve a guidance counsellor meeting with learners on an individual basis to discuss their potential career, educational, or other options. Such sessions provide the opportunity to discuss specific and individualised career paths as well as encouraging greater learner participation and influencing ambitions.
- Individual appointments with guidance counsellors have a key impact in helping students decide what to do after school, with 83% of learners perceiving such appointments as important or very important in helping learners' decisions.
- As part of the research Indecon developed econometric modelling to predict the marginal outcomes of the impact of guidance counselling. The results suggest that having a one-to-one career guidance session appears to have had a significant impact on outcomes. In considering the impact of career guidance on outcomes new econometric modelling by Indecon indicates that attendance at a one-to-one session is a strong predictor of whether students are likely to progress to higher/further education. The results suggest that guidance counselling is an effective mechanism to provide career information and impartial advice. This is consistent with research completed in other countries which suggested that guidance counselling was one of the most effective modalities for providing career intervention.

5 Importance of Different Sources of Career Information

5.1 Introduction

In evaluating the sources of career information, it is necessary to identify how important are the different sources of information and what the types of questions asked by learners are. Guidance counsellors are a key source of information and this was discussed in Section 4 of this report. In this section we examine the availability, quality and impact of the different sources of career information. The findings from Indecon's survey work with guidance counsellors indicate that the most common question from learners relates to transition requirements into courses. The very low percentage of commonly asked questions about apprenticeships highlights the challenges in ensuring that all career options are being considered.

Table 5.1: Guidance Counsellor/Practitioners Views on Main Career Guidance Question Asked by Learners

What are the main questions learners often ask when it comes to their career choices and decision making?	Very Common	Common	Least Common
What qualifications or grades do I need to get a place on a course?	75.6%	19.1%	5.3%
How many CAO points do I need?	69.3%	8.7%	22.0%
What jobs do learners who study this course do after they have finished?	58.7%	35.3%	6.0%
How much will it cost me to do this and what financial support is available?	57.7%	34.4%	7.9%
How suitable would different employment or educational options be for me?	57.7%	27.5%	14.8%
Where is this course taught and how easy is it to get there?	54.8%	31.6%	13.5%
How difficult is it to obtain employment in different areas?	49.6%	37.8%	12.5%
How much will I earn after I finish a course?	29.9%	42.2%	27.9%
How is this course taught and assessed?	12.4%	35.0%	52.7%
How satisfied were previous students with this course?	12.2%	30.4%	57.4%
Can I fast track to earn and learn in an apprenticeship?	9.3%	27.1%	63.7%

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

There is understandably diversity in what questions are asked by learners in post-primary education, higher education and FET sectors. While questions in relation to CAO points and transition requirements were most commonly asked by learners in the post-primary sector, in the higher education area the most common questions related to employment opportunities. FET learners commonly asked questions concerning the financial impact of courses as well as logistical issues such as the location of the course. This highlights the need for a tailored approach to the provision of career information to align with the needs of different groups.

Table 5.2: Guidance Counsellors Views on Very Common Questions Asked by Learners Regarding Their Career				
Percentage of Guidance Counsellors/Practitioners who Indicated 'Very Common' in relation to Following Career Questions asked by Learners	**Post-Primary Institution**	**Higher Education Institution**	**FET Institution**	**Other Institutions***
How suitable would different employment or educational options be for me?	52.4%	65.2%	65.5%	68.6%
How difficult is it to obtain employment in different areas?	44.8%	70.8%	56.8%	51.0%
How many CAO points do I need?	94.4%	25.0%	34.5%	25.5%
What qualifications or grades do I need to get a place on a course?	89.7%	50.0%	58.9%	48.0%
How much will I earn after I finish a course?	33.1%	25.0%	21.8%	28.0%
How much will it cost me to do this and what financial support is available?	45.4%	45.8%	86.7%	70.6%
How satisfied were previous students with this course?	12.0%	33.3%	10.3%	4.0%
How is this course taught and assessed?	9.2%	12.5%	21.6%	12.0%
What jobs do learners who study this course do after they have finished?	57.9%	79.2%	59.6%	51.0%
Where is this course taught and how easy is it to get there?	49.6%	25.0%	75.0%	62.0%
Can I fast track to earn and learn in an apprenticeship?	6.4%	4.2%	11.5%	22.0%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellor ****Other institutions include youth services, Local employment services, special schools, adult education guidance service, etc.***				

5.2 Quality and Impact of Career Information

A key issue in evaluating sources of career information is the scope and quality of the information provided. There is a need for depth in the information provided and mechanisms to ensure it is independent and accurate. One detailed submission to Indecon suggested there was a poor level of such information available and that this is a contributory factor to social and economic problems including a misalignment between the needs of employers and the skills of the workforce as well as a lower level of social mobility. Indecon's research shows that only a minority of guidance counsellors are satisfied with the quality of available information on self-employment, apprenticeships, and on employment trends. This suggests a perceived gap in access by guidance counsellors to labour market information in a user-friendly format. This is despite the excellent labour market information which is available from various sources including SOLAS Skills and Labour market Research Unit, from the Expert group on Future Skills Needs, and from Regional Skills Fora.

Table 5.3: Guidance Counsellors Views on Quality of Following Career Information Provided					
Percentage of Respondents who Consider Following Information Quality as 'Very Good' or 'Good'	**All Practitioners**	**Post Primary Practitioners**	**Higher Education Practitioners**	**FET Practitioners**	**Other* Practitioners**
Information on the full range of higher education courses	**94.6%**	*96.9%*	*92.0%*	*92.3%*	*88.2%*
Information on further education and training	**95.6%**	*96.5%*	*80.0%*	*98.9%*	*92.2%*
Information on other adult education options	**70.7%**	*61.0%*	*64.0%*	*88.4%*	*90.2%*
Information on apprenticeships	**74.8%**	*79.5%*	*44.0%*	*71.6%*	*72.5%*
Information on career options	**92.5%**	*93.8%*	*95.8%*	*87.4%*	*93.9%*
Information on likely job opportunities	**79.9%**	*78.0%*	*88.0%*	*81.7%*	*84.0%*
Information on requirements for success in different careers	**83.1%**	*82.9%*	*80.0%*	*83.2%*	*86.0%*
Information on employment trends	**63.5%**	*61.3%*	*80.0%*	*58.5%*	*76.0%*
Information on self-employment/entrepreneurship	**45.6%**	*40.4%*	*72.0%*	*44.2%*	*60.0%*
Information on how to apply for jobs	**78.5%**	*74.7%*	*92.0%*	*82.1%*	*84.3%*
Information on how to apply for courses	**94.9%**	*95.7%*	*100.0%*	*93.7%*	*90.2%*
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors ****Other institutions include youth services, Local employment services, special schools, adult education guidance service, etc.***					

The gaps in the quality and availability of career information concerning self-employment/ entrepreneurship, apprenticeships and employment were even more pronounced by Indecon's research with learners. While most learners were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of information in relation to the range of courses available as well as how to apply for such courses, the fact that only a minority were satisfied or very satisfied with other aspects of career information is of note. Access to wider career information other than simply information on continuing to the next higher education option is critical in ensuring an awareness of multiple pathways into the labour market.

Table 5.4: Learners' Level of Satisfaction with Quality of Following Career Information Available				
Percentage of Respondents who are 'Very Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with Quality of Following Career Information Available to Them	**All Learners**	***Second-level Students***	***Higher Education Learners***	***Further Education and Training Learners***
Information on apprenticeships	**33.6%**	*40.4%*	*13.6%*	*53.6%*
Information on employment trends	**33.5%**	*37.6%*	*21.2%*	*48.8%*
Information on further education and training options	**57.6%**	*68.8%*	*43.5%*	*64.5%*
Information on how to apply for courses	**61.0%**	*69.3%*	*54.5%*	*76.1%*
Information on how to apply for jobs	**43.6%**	*48.5%*	*27.1%*	*64.2%*
Information on likely job opportunities	**47.8%**	*56.6%*	*31.4%*	*64.4%*
Information on nature of careers options	**46.2%**	*54.2%*	*31.1%*	*64.1%*
Information on requirements for success in different careers	**46.3%**	*57.0%*	*28.0%*	*58.5%*
Information on self-employment/ entrepreneurship	**26.6%**	*33.2%*	*12.8%*	*35.9%*
Information on the full range of higher education courses	**66.0%**	*76.4%*	*57.7%*	*71.3%*
Information on vocational training	**N/A**	*N/A*	*N/A*	*60.2%*
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors				

Part of the problem with access to formal labour market information may be due to a lack of awareness of available sources of information or because the available information has not been used. This is also suggested from previous research as presented in the table below.

Table 5.5: Awareness of Formal Labour Market Information (EGFSN etc.) by User Groups				
	School Students %	**Third-level %**	**Adult %**	**Youthreach %**
Never heard of it	32	23	29	78
Heard of & Never Used	61	61	49	22
Used	7	16	31	0
Total	100	100	100	100
Source: Survey Results included in Report of Expert Group on Future Skill needs on careers and Labour Market Information in Ireland				

In terms of the impact of specific career guidance mechanisms, Indecon surveyed guidance counsellors as to their views of the significance of various mechanisms. The results suggest that as well as access to guidance counsellors, access to opportunities for relevant experiences of the world of work was perceived as of particular significance. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that there are structures and supports to enable employers to effectively engage. Indecon's research and consultations also highlight the potential significance of online sources of career information including how to use them effectively.

Table 5.6: Guidance Counsellors Views on Impact of Following Career Information and Guidance Mechanisms for Helping Individuals Make Informed Career Decisions				
Percentage of Career Guidance Counsellors Who Believe the Following Mechanisms have a 'Very Significant' or 'Significant' Impact in Helping Individuals Make Informed Career Decisions	**Post Primary Institution**	**Higher Education Institution**	**FET Institution**	**Other* Institutions**
Access to one-to-one career guidance and information	98.1%	100.0%	98.9%	96.2%
Access to career guidance group work sessions in classes/workshops	83.0%	92.0%	80.9%	67.3%
Access to online sources of career information and how to use them effectively	88.7%	92.0%	66.3%	75.0%
Access to online career assessment tools	73.0%	76.0%	62.1%	65.4%
Access to an up-to-date career library	58.0%	48.0%	43.0%	54.9%
Access to visits to or from employers	81.9%	87.5%	77.9%	78.8%
Access to opportunities for relevant experiences of the world of work	92.2%	96.0%	88.4%	84.0%
Access by telephone to personalised career conversations	28.2%	64.0%	53.8%	55.8%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors				
****Other institutions include youth services, Local employment services, special schools, adult education guidance service, etc.***				

Access to accurate and up-to-date career information is essential for the delivery of high-quality career guidance. A key component within career-focused guidance information is specific information on the labour market, including supply and demand dynamics, occupational demand forecasts, job requirements, and job characteristics. Ensuring there is accurate and accessible labour market information is also a challenge for other countries where often the provision of high-quality and relevant labour market information is a weakness in the delivery of career guidance. This was highlighted by the OECD who noted that:

> *"…common weaknesses in career information include: a failure to include information on labour market supply and demand; delays in capturing changes in the content of occupations or in identifying new occupations; the absence of information on the destinations and labour market outcomes of those completing courses of education and training; a greater emphasis upon educational information than upon occupational and labour market information; and weak links between these two key information domains."*[46]

From a learner perspective, Indecon's research suggests that a significant percentage of learners indicated that they were not provided with labour market information. Given the previously reported findings on the low level of satisfaction with information on employment trends and other aspects of labour market opportunities, it is evident that this requires much greater attention as part of career guidance policy. IBEC in a submission to Indecon suggested that high quality labour market information needs to be provided to all stakeholders including careers guidance counsellors, careers advisors, students, parents and others. IBEC proposed that this includes an analysis of trends, predictions of future labour market needs and identification of the range of skills required. Indecon believes it is also important for individuals to learn how to use and interpret labour market information.

[46] OECD. Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap, 2004.

Table 5.7: Learners' Views on Provision of Labour Market Information				
Were you provided with information about labour market/employment developments to help with your career decisions?	**All Learners**	***Second-level Students***	***Higher Education Learners***	***Further Education and Training Learners***
Yes	**30.7%**	*32.9%*	*20.7%*	*41.8%*
No	**48.5%**	*39.4%*	*62.4%*	*38.7%*
Don't Know	**20.8%**	*27.8%*	*16.9%*	*19.5%*
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors				

5.3 Role of Online Tools

The use of online tools in the provision of career guidance can be an important mechanism to input to career guidance and such tools can play an important role in the delivery method for career guidance. As far back as 2004, the OECD's Career Guidance Policy Review outlined the role which can be played by ICT in service delivery and the accessibility benefits of online guidance resources.[47] Since the OECD report was prepared, there has been an exponential increase in technological innovations and internet use. There are, however, some limitations to the use of online tools on their own. For example, lack of skills and training in the use of online tools may negatively impact the accessibility particularly of disadvantaged learners in need of guidance. Online tools should therefore be considered complements to rather than substitutes for traditional career guidance activities. Thus while "*quality online tools in themselves do not guarantee quality career guidance*"[48] they have a potentially important role to play. Not all tools are aligned with the needs of specific users, for example, adult learners or those involved in special education or other groups who are disadvantaged. For example, a submission to the review by the Department of Adult and Community Education in Maynooth University indicated that from their experience "*access to career information and tools is fragmented, disjointed and unequal, depending on such issues as life stage, geographical area, social status, among other things. Many of the career tools for adults do not take sufficient account of culture, gender, class and disadvantage. Career tools are usually not designed to accommodate disadvantage and marginality and often score diversity and difference negatively*." If online information is not supported by access to individual career guidance advice and assistance and if wider policies do not focus on building digital literacy, then those most in need could be left behind. In this context, AONTAS indicated that "*while the provision of online information may seem like an efficient process for getting information to learners, it also leaves the most vulnerable learners in our society, such as those with poor literacy and digital literacy skills, at a severe disadvantage*."

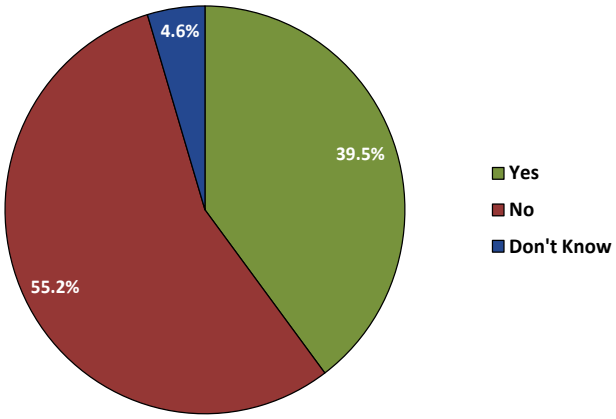
[47] OECD. Career Guidance and Public Policy – Bridging the Gap, 2004. http://www.oecd.org/education/innovation-education/34050171.pdf.

[48] IGC Submission to Indecon

Against this background Indecon's primary research examined the availability of online/distance career guidance supports. 39.5% of guidance counsellors indicated that the organisation at which they work provides online/distance career guidance supports, while 55.2% of counsellors indicated that their organisation did not. The issue here is likely to refer to the support on the usage rather than the direct provision of online tools. This is relevant as in using online tools the "*user is often unaware of the extras*" in the available tools and guidance counsellors need to be trained on a regular basis to "*ensure their value is fully utilised.*"[49] Ongoing support for learners is therefore required. Related to this is the multiplicity of various career websites and advice on how to best utilise and navigate the information sources. This was highlighted in various stakeholder.

Online tools can facilitate one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many forms of communication. A range of countries has established blended online career services of various kinds. In Ireland there is an absence of blended online services which involve multiple channels through which more interactive forms of career services can be delivered including access to professional guidance.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of Guidance Counsellors whose Organisation Provides Online/Distance Guidance



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

[49] IGC Submission to Indecon

In terms of the use of online tools the research with guidance counsellors highlights the high level of usage of websites of individual educational organisations as well as the importance of Qualifax, Careers Portal (including Reach+) and CAO.

Table 5.8: Guidance Counsellors' Use of Specific Online/Distance Services in Provision of Learner Support

Service	Yes	No	Don't Know
Websites of specific schools, colleges or universities	96.5%	2.3%	1.3%
Qualifax	94.2%	5.1%	0.7%
Careers Portal (including Reach+)	93.7%	5.1%	1.2%
CAO	93.7%	5.6%	0.7%
UCAS	83.5%	14.7%	1.7%
Apprenticeship.ie	80.8%	17.4%	1.7%
Careers News	76.1%	21.1%	2.8%
Grad Ireland	60.9%	35.8%	3.3%
Unicas	58.7%	36.0%	5.3%
FETCHCourses	56.8%	39.3%	3.9%
Prospects	38.0%	56.5%	5.4%
Unibrowse	11.9%	80.3%	7.8%
Onestepup	11.6%	80.7%	7.6%
123tests.com	10.8%	83.9%	5.3%
CASCAID	4.2%	87.9%	7.9%
Unifrog	3.2%	88.0%	8.8%
Fast Tomato	1.4%	90.4%	8.2%

Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

Our primary research also examined the use of online tools by second-level school students, higher education learners, and FET learners. The evidence is presented in Table 5.9 shows similar results to the findings from the survey with guidance counsellors. The most commonly used online tools of second-level students include Careers Portal, Qualifax, and specific institutions websites. Those in higher education used services such as the CAO, websites of specific institutions, and Qualifax the most. The most commonly used online tools of FET learners include FETCH courses, CAO, Careers Portal, and specific institutional websites. Although in general, due to the diversity of learner profiles and education levels in this cohort, FET learners use online services less than other cohorts. While there is a wide range of very valuable databases and websites, they need ongoing development. To give one example, QQI indicated that the Qualifax website is "*static and based on a model and technology which is out dated and investment is needed. There is an opportunity to integrate this with other services and align it with current technologies.*"[50]

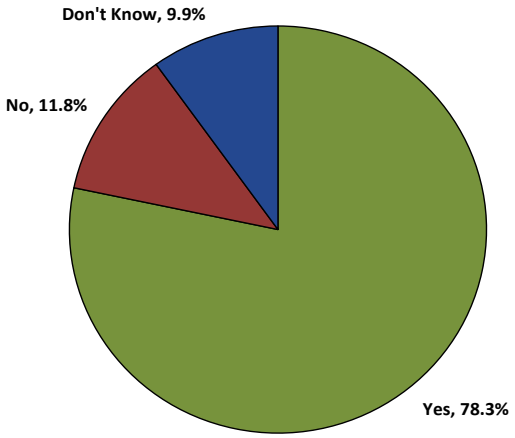
[50] QQI Submission to Indecon

Table 5.9: Learners' Use of Specific Online Tools			
% of Respondents who have used the following services	**Second-level School Students**	**Higher Education Learners**	**Further Education and Training Learners**
Careers Portal (including Reach+)	76.2%	54.1%	44.5%
Qualifax	69.6%	61.0%	36.8%
Websites of specific schools, colleges or universities	65.9%	81.5%	52.9%
CAO	65.2%	83.8%	40.6%
UCAS	25.5%	28.5%	12.2%
Careers News	19.2%	11.3%	15.0%
Apprenticeship.ie	16.3%	1.8%	13.9%
Unicas	12.9%	7.7%	3.8%
FETCHCourses	7.8%	4.8%	42.9%
Prospects	7.2%	11.3%	7.7%
123tests.com	6.9%	4.4%	7.8%
Grad Ireland	6.4%	44.2%	12.1%
Unibrowse	4.5%	3.0%	2.7%
Onestepup	2.5%	0.6%	2.7%
CASCAID	2.2%	0.6%	2.2%
Unifrog	2.0%	0.2%	1.1%
Fast Tomato	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Surveys of Learners (3)			

Given the multiplicity of various career websites this highlights the need for advice on how to best utilise and navigate the range of online information sources, or alternatively, the provision of a central portal. This was highlighted in various stakeholder consultations as part of this review. For example, the HEA in their submission to Indecon noted that, "*the provision of one national system for career guidance, rather than multiple services as is currently the case, would be the most appropriate way forward in terms of providing a one stop shop for career guidance tools and career information for students and adults*." A similar point was made in the submission by Science Foundation Ireland where it was suggested that currently there are too many different career portals available and this is confusing. It was concluded by SFI that, "*one unified portal is required that is the National Careers website/data source*." It was argued that, "*directing all traffic to one portal which in turn contains linkages to specific areas of interest, could be the best way of providing connectivity and ease of access to students across colleges and career choices and career support offered by a myriad of stakeholders nationwide*."

The importance of accurate and easily assembled online tools tailored to different needs was suggested by the research undertaken. As can be seen overleaf, 78.3% of career Guidance Counsellors consider online career guidance tools as helping learners make informed career decisions. Learners also consider that online tools to help them make informed career choices.

Figure 5.2: Views of Guidance Counsellors on whether Online Career Guidance Websites Help Learners Make Informed Career Decisions



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

5.4 International Best Practice in Development of Online Tools

In considering the sources and impacts of career information it is useful to review international best practice in the developing of such tools. Career guidance has a long history of utilising technologies[51] including online and digital technologies. The key uses that these tools have been put to have been:

- the provision of career information and resources;
- the use of artificial intelligence and automation to replace aspects of what was previously done face-to-face by human professionals; and
- the development of new forms of communication and interaction through which career guidance services can be delivered.[52]

Online careers services do not exist in isolation from existing career guidance services, but rather supplement and interact with them. This has led to the development of the concept of *blended guidance* which unites online and onsite services.[53] [54] These can include online supports supplemented by telephone, online and direct meetings with counsellors. Recent work on the efficacy of online careers provision has highlighted the value of such integrated services and suggests that in many cases online careers services are most effective when embedded in, or strongly related to, wider programmes of career learning. [55]

[51] See Watts (2002) and Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts, (2010a)

[52] Hooley, Hutchinson & Watts, (2010a)

[53] Hooley, Shepherd & Dodd, (2015)

[54] Bakke, I.B., Haug, E.H. & Hooley, T. (2018). Moving from information provision to co-careering: Integrated guidance as a new approach to e-guidance in Norway. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling*, 41, 48-55.

[55] Vigurs, Everitt & Staunton, (2017)

The use of online technologies as part of career guidance raises challenges as well as opportunities.[56] However, international experience supports the use of online career support tools.[57] There is however a need to build the competencies of both guidance professionals and learners in order to make successful use of online technologies.[58] It is useful to classify online tools into three categories, namely: provision of information, automated interactions and communications. The services that provide online communication can be further divided into those that facilitate one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many forms of communication.

A range of countries have established online career counselling services of various kinds.[59] These include online services incorporating counselling and chat software.[60] Such services translate some aspects of face-to-face counselling into a text based online interaction. For example, the Careers Service Northern Ireland, Careers New Zealand and the National Careers Service in England have developed a range of online career guidance services using webchats, email, text and telephone communications. Such services maintain guidance as an interaction delivered by a professional to a client. Innovative practice in relation to the blending of services can be found in South Korea where schools use QR codes to link communications to parents to online resources.[61] Another example from New Zealand uses a mixture of videos and conventional delivery to profile inspirational people to inspire career decision making. In Scotland, career information advice and guidance are provided on a lifelong basis through a combination of website, complemented by face-to-face support and there is also an option to use a dedicated telephone helpline. Such a service enables users to access career information and other career guidance activities as they choose, when they choose and through any channel they prefer.

Denmark, offers an example of a country with a strong e-guidance service. This includes a national telephone helpline service and use of Facebook, SMS and webchat facilities. In-house trained careers professionals have access to government education and training datasets, careers information and destinations data. The eGuidance service is a key online resource for providing LMI up-to-date and comprehensive information on education in Denmark and guidance tools empowering citizens to find answers about education and jobs. Indecon understands that the division has 25 full-time and 15 part-time practitioners, who have competences in guidance and digital literacy.

[56] Kettunen & Sampson, 2018
[57] Bimrose, 2016; Goss & Hooley, 2015; Nota, Santilli & Soresi, 2016
[58] Kettunen, Sampson & Vuorinen, 2015; Kettunen, Vuorinen & Sampson, 2015; Osborn, Kronholz, Finklea & Cantonis, 2014
[59] Hughes, D., (2018) Expert Paper for Indecon, Exeter DMH Associates
[60] Haberstroh, Rowe and Cisneros, 2012
[61] Hooley, Shepherd & Dodds, 2015

5.5 Summary of Findings

- The findings from Indecon's survey work indicate that the most common question from learners relates to transition requirements into courses. The very low percentage of commonly asked questions about apprenticeships highlights the challenges in ensuring that all career options are being considered.
- Our research evidence shows that only a minority of guidance counsellors are satisfied with the quality of available information on self-employment, apprenticeships, and on employment trends. This suggests a major gap in access to this area of career information in the Irish career guidance education and training system. This is despite the excellent labour market information which is available from various sources including SOLAS Skills and Labour market Research Unit from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and from Regional Skills Fora.
- In terms of the impact of specific career guidance mechanisms, Indecon surveyed guidance counsellors as to their views of the significance of various mechanisms. The results suggest that as well as access to guidance counsellors, access to opportunities for relevant experiences of the world of work was perceived as of particular significance. This reinforces the importance of enhancing enterprise engagement. The results also highlight the potential significance of online sources of career information and how to use them effectively.
- The use of online tools in the provision of career guidance was recognised as significant in the research completed as part of this review. Such tools offer an important component in the delivery method for career guidance. There are, however, some limitations to the use of online tools on their own. Online tools should therefore be considered complements to rather than substitutes for traditional career guidance activities. Related to this is the multiplicity of various career websites and advice on how to best utilise and navigate the information sources.
- The international experience suggests that e-guidance services should be developed but online career information should not exist in isolation from existing career guidance services, it is more effective where it supplements and interacts with them. In Ireland there is an absence of blended online services which involve multiple channels including web, text and telephone combined with access to professional guidance.

6 Enterprise Engagement

6.1 Introduction

One of the principal goals of effective career guidance is to support individuals to understand the labour market and consider where they best fit into it. This can be facilitated by effective enterprise engagement which refers to a range of approaches to career informants who can support career learning programmes including engaging employers, employees and self-employed individuals. Enterprise engagement is of central importance to facilitating the provision of accurate labour market information and its integration into career guidance practices. Employer encounters can be decisive in stimulating career learning and supporting appropriate career choices. However, there is a need to ensure that employer engagements including work experience are well planned if they are to be effective in building an understanding of the workplace and employability skills. The benefits of enterprise engagement include improved motivation and engagement in the education system, enhanced attainment and integration with the needs of the labour market. There are also likely to be wider economic and social benefits including reduced levels of unemployment, enhanced skills alignment and productivity gains. The range of areas where enterprise engagement can be utilised is wide and includes Career Fairs, Networking Events, Career Talks, Inputs to Curriculum Development, Mentoring, Skills Workshops, Apprenticeships, Work Experience and Internships. Examples of areas where enterprise engagement can play a unique role are outlined in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Aspects of the Contribution of Engagement in Career Guidance

- Providing access to detailed information on labour market and on skill requirements.
- Stimulating career learning and expanding ambitions from encounters with enterprises.
- Facilitating work experience to enhance understanding of the realities of the workplace and career options.
- Providing apprenticeship programmes to build skills.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship/self-employment.

The recent 2018 OECD report on Career Guidance and Employer Engagement has highlighted the benefits to individuals being able to draw on engagement with employers and employees to optimize positive outcomes and noted that:

> *"Employers and worker volunteers are an information resource for young people whose own networks are inherently limited. Engagement of people who have first-hand knowledge of workplaces allows trusted insights into authentic expressions of working life, providing a young person with new and useful information about the labour market and how it relates to their own individual sense of who they might become. This engagement can be particularly effective in challenging negative assumptions about specific careers."*[62]

[62] OECD (2018) Musset. P, Kurekova, LM, 2 July 2018. Working it Out: Career Guidance and Employer Engagement, OECD Education Working Paper 175.

Individuals' ability to find out about the demands of the labour market and to consider how these relate to their own capacities can create a positive feedback loop. If strong systems are in place to facilitate such career learning employers are better able to interface with the education system, communicate both their long and short-term needs and manage recruitment. Enterprise engagement should, however, be integrated into wider career guidance activities.[63] One of the issues of note from Indecon's research for this review was that with effective career guidance, socio-economic disadvantage can be reduced. Effective employer engagement also has the potential to compensate for socio-economic disadvantage. Disadvantaged individuals typically have weaker social networks and less capacity to gather informal information about trends in the labour market. By providing opportunities for employer engagement and labour market learning this inequality can be reduced. However, employer engagement needs to be designed in ways that take account of such inequalities. For example, a study[64] of work experience describes the way in which asking students to source their own work experience placements confines them to their existing social networks rather than expanding them.

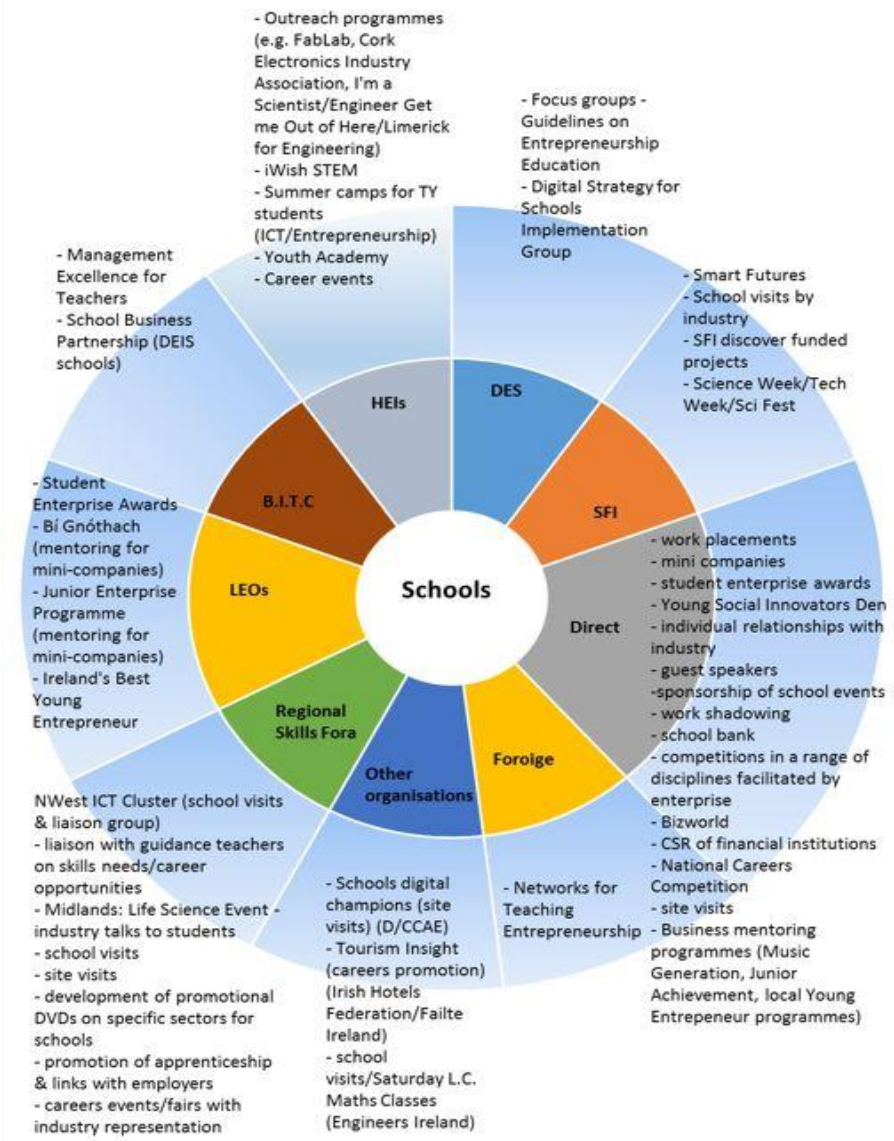
6.2 Overview of Enterprise Engagement

Enterprise engagement in career guidance in Ireland is part of a wider involvement of the enterprise sector the Irish education and training system. The extent and diversity of enterprise engagement indicates that enterprise engagement with schools is wide ranging and includes specific initiatives such as competitions for young people including the National Careers Competition, Student Enterprise Awards, and Ireland's Best Young Entrepreneur. They also comprise of school visits including those facilitated by the Regional Skills Fora, SFI, and directly with schools. Employers also facilitate work experience placements apprenticeships and access to job fairs. There are however many learners and guidance counsellors who do not have the benefits of enterprise engagement.

[63] Hooley (2014)

[64] Hatcher & Le Gallais (2008)

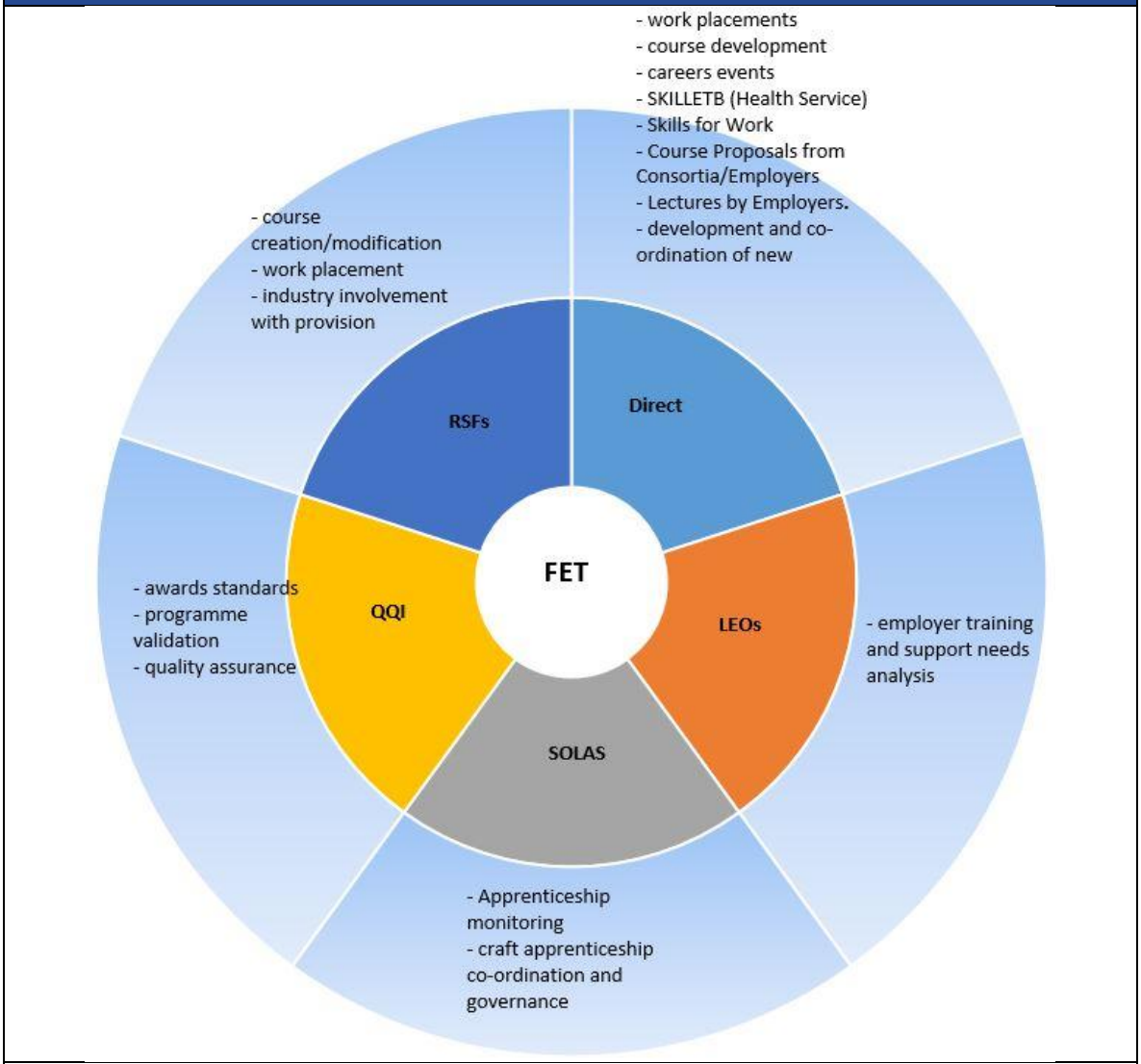
Figure 6.2: Some Examples of Enterprise Engagement in Second-level Education Sector



Source: Department of Education and Skills

There is also extensive enterprise engagement in the FET sector a selection of which is shown in the figure overleaf. These include opportunities provided under apprenticeship schemes as well as work placements which are a common component of many FET courses. Enterprises are involved in the development of courses and engage with QQI. There is also employment input to the development of apprenticeships schemes.

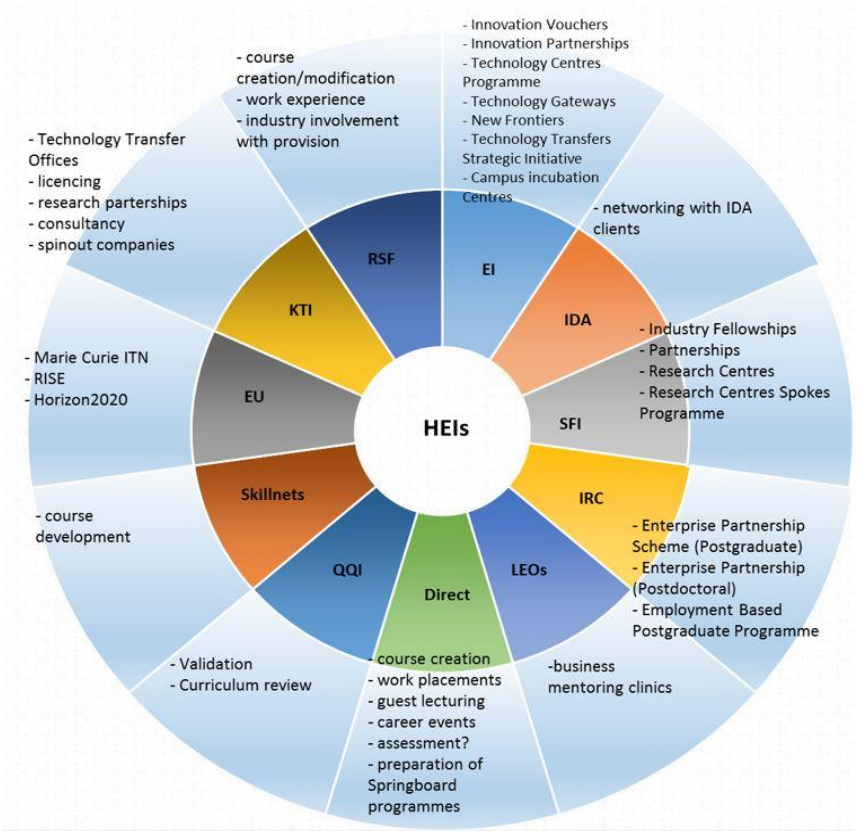
Figure 6.3: Some Examples of Enterprise Engagement in FET Sector



Source: Department of Education and Skills

Within the higher education sector, mechanisms have been initiated to facilitate enterprise engagement with course development, work placements and other inputs which are important to an effective career guidance system. Some of the different areas of enterprise engagement with the higher education sector are presented.

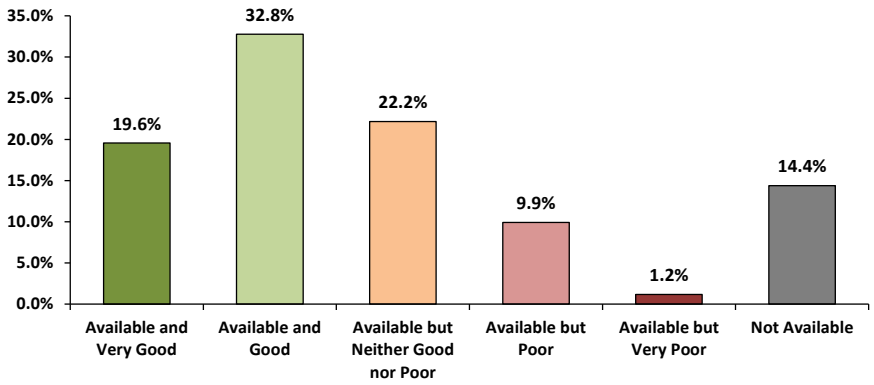
Figure 6.4: Some Examples of Enterprise Engagement in Higher Education Sector



Source: Department of Education and Skills

The extent of involvement of the enterprise sector is reflected in new research completed for this review as presented in Figure 6.5. This indicates that in most cases guidance counsellors suggested that enterprise engagement was available and was perceived as good or very good. However, also of note is that some guidance counsellors indicated that enterprise engagement was not available which suggests that there are areas for enhancement.

Figure 6.5: Guidance Counsellors Views of Availability and Quality of Enterprise Engagement at their Organisation



Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Survey of Guidance Counsellors

6.3 Employers Visits/Job Shadowing/Career Fairs

The importance to learners of visits to or from employers in potentially influencing career choice is highlighted in Table 6.1. This indicated that a significant percentage of students judged that such visits were important or very important.

Table 6.1: Importance of Visits / to / From Employers in Influencing Career Choices			
	Second-level School Class	***Higher Education Learner***	***FET Learner***
Very Important Influence	16.4%	19.0%	22.9%
Important Influence	38.8%	37.2%	40.8%
Minor Influence	27.2%	24.4%	21.2%
No Influence	17.6%	19.4%	15.1%
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Surveys of Learners (3)			

Survey evidence in learners' perspectives of the access and quality of visits to or from employers, presented in Table 6.2 suggests that there is not access by all learners to good quality employer visits. Separate OECD research indicates that only 38% of students indicated that they had participated in work site visits.

Table 6.2: Learners' Perceptions of Access and Quality of Visits To or from Employers				
Access and Quality of visits/programme of visits to or from employers	**All Learners**	***Second-level School Students***	***Higher Education Learners***	***FET Learners***
Available and Very Good	**13.3%**	*14.6%*	*10.3%*	*14.4%*
Available and Good	**22.9%**	*21.9%*	*21.4%*	*26.8%*
Available but Neither Good nor Poor	**21.7%**	*21.3%*	*21.6%*	*22.6%*
Available but Poor	**9.5%**	*9.4%*	*11.5%*	*7.3%*
Available but Very Poor	**3.7%**	*4.3%*	*3.9%*	*2.2%*
Not Available	**28.9%**	*28.6%*	*31.2%*	*26.8%*
Source: Indecon analysis of Confidential Surveys of Learners (3)				

An important form of employer engagement is in the format of job shadowing or visits to a job fair. It is noteworthy that only 11% of students in Ireland had participated in jobs fairs compared to an OECD average of 28.3%. Similarly, the very small percentage of 7.1% students in Ireland who had engaged in internships is noteworthy and is much lower than the average in the OECD. This may be reflective of a relatively low level of intensive engagement by students in Ireland with the world of work.

Figure 6.6: Students Participation in Job Fairs / Internships to Investigate Possible Future Study and/or Careers				
	Ireland		OECD Average	
	Yes	No, never	Yes	No, never
Visited Job Fair	11.0%	85.4%	28.3%	68.4%
Source: 2012 OECD PISA Database. Data relates to 15 year olds who participated in PISA 2012				

Figure 6.7 shows evidence on the extent of employer engagement by socio-economic status (SES). The figures for Ireland show that student engagement in career guidance with enterprise is much lower for students from low SES. In some countries such as Denmark, the extent of such disparity is not evident. This suggests that students most in need of enterprise engagement have less access than other groups.

Figure 6.7: Career Guidance Activities in Which Employers Engage by SES (Percentage of Students who Participated)

Source: Musset and Kureková, 2018. OECD Education Working Paper No. 175

In Indecon's judgement there are fewer opportunities to participate in open days with enterprises or to meet employers at career fairs. An analysis by Indecon of advertised open days/career fairs in 2018 suggests there were over 261 such opportunities provided but most of these opportunities related to education and training opportunities and there is less access to career fairs involving opportunities to meet with employers. This is reflected in the judgement of IBEC that there is ad hoc access to provision of career talks and career fairs at all levels of the system from post-primary to job seekers.

The extensive availability of events covering higher education and further education and training is presented in Table 6.3. This highlights the focus on higher education options and also the professionalism and success of the higher education sector in engaging with students.

Table 6.3: Selected Education/Training Representative Organisations providing Open Days/Information Seminars/Careers Fairs in 2018/19		
AHEAD	Greenhills College	National College of Art & Design
Athlone Institute of Technology	Gurteen Agricultural College	National College of Ireland
Ballsbridge College of Further Education	Higher Education Authority (HEA)	National Maritime College of Ireland
Ballyfermot College of Further Education	Inchicore CFE	National Maternity Hospital
Ballyhaise Agricultural College	Institute of Art Design & Technology	North Kerry College Listowel
BIMM Institute Dublin	Institute of Technology Blanchardstown	NUI Galway
Blackrock Further Education Institute - BFEI	Institute of Technology Carlow - Carlow Campus	O'Fiaich Institute
Bray Institute of Further Education	Institute of Technology Carlow - Wexford Campus	Ormonde College of Further Education
CAFRE Enniskillen	Institute of Technology Sligo	Pallaskenry Agricultural College
CAFRE Greenmount	Institute of Technology Tallaght	Pontifical University St Patricks College Maynooth
CAFRE Loughry	Institute of Technology Tralee	Portlaoise College
Carlow College - St. Patrick's	Irish College of Humanities & Applied Sciences	Rathmines College of Further Education
Cavan & Monaghan ETB	Irish Times	Roslyn Park College
Cavan Institute	Irish Universities Assoc - Participating Colleges	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
CIT Cork School of Music	Kennedy College	Sallynoggin College of Further Education
CIT Crawford College of Art & Design	Kildalton Agricultural College	Scoil Ruain
Clonakilty Agricultural College	Killester College of Further Education	Shannon College of Hotel Management
Colaiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Sligo College of Further Education
College of Amenity Horticulture - Botanic Gardens	Liberties College	St. Angela's College Sligo
Cork Institute of Technology	Limerick College of Further Education	St. John's Central College
Dublin City University	Limerick Institute of Technology	St. Mary's University College
Dublin Institute of Technology	Limerick Institute of Technology - Tipperary	St. Patrick's Campus DCU
Dun Laoghaire Further Education Institute	Lir - National Academy of Dramatic Art	Trinity College Dublin
Dunboyne College of Further Education	Louth & Meath ETB	UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Marino College of Further Education	University College Cork
EUNiCAS	Marino Institute of Education	University College Dublin
Galway Community College	Mary Immaculate College	University of Limerick
Galway Technical Institute	Maynooth University	Waterford College of Further Education
Galway-Mayo IT	MIC St. Patricks Campus Thurles	Waterford Institute of Technology
Grad Ireland	Moate Business College	Westport CFE
Grange Community College	Mountbellew Agricultural College	Whitehall College of Further Education

There are a number of good models of job fairs covering specific sectors as well as some wider events such as Ireland Skills. However, these are not as extensive or prominent as open days organised by the higher education sector.

Table 6.4: Examples of Job Fairs in 2018/19
Agri Jobs Ireland
Careers Options West
HSE
RACE
IASA
IGC Carlow
IGC Cork
IGC Kerry
IGC Sligo
Irish Farmers Journal
JobsExpo
Meath Partnership
National Ploughing Association
Northside Partnership
Tech Job Fair
Source: Indecon research

6.4 Work Experience Programmes

Within Ireland, work experience is ordinarily a feature of the Transition Year programme in post-primary schools in accordance with the *Department's Transition Year Programmes – Guidelines for Schools* which indicates that work experience within Transition Year should create opportunities to vary the learning environment of students and to demonstrate that learning can occur outside of a classroom. Work experience also arises under the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and the Leaving Certificate Applied. In considering work experience opportunities it is also important that students should also have the option for international experience either in post primary or in higher education. This is relevant as it was pointed out during Indecon's consultations that the QS Employer Global Study 18 found that six out of 10 employers globally give extra credit for an international student experience. During Transition Year (TY) programmes, students in post-primary schools in Ireland secure work experience placements. In addition to work experience at post-primary stages, for those learners who progress to third-level or FET, there are also opportunities to engage in work experience. The work experience that students receive however can vary significantly in terms of format and quality but can help students investigate career options. There is an issue for some students in identifying appropriate work placement opportunities particularly in smaller geographic areas. Indecon also notes the absence of a centralised online facility to facilitate work experience opportunities and this is a gap in Irish career guidance provision. There is also a concern that more disadvantaged students may not participate in transition year programmes. [65]

Science Foundation Ireland indicated in their submission to Indecon that "*concentrated effort to centralise the network of TY work experience opportunities, with equal opportunities for all, would be useful and is in demand.*"

[65] See Clerkin, A. 2018, Filling in the gaps: A Theoretical Grounding for an education programme for adolescent socioemotional and Vocational Development in Ireland, Review of Education Vol 6, No 2 June 2018, p 146-179.
See also Smyth, E., Byrne, D. & Hannan, C (2004) *The Transitional Year programme: An assessment* (Dublin, Liffey Press/ESRI) and Jeffers, G. (2002) Transition year programme and educational disadvantage, Irish Educational Studies, 21 (2), 47-64.

There are also issues concerning the nature of work experience provided. IBEC in their recent publication Smarter World, Smarter Work, indicated that currently the quality of work experience opportunities tends to be very uneven. IBEC also noted that durations of work placement vary and often multiple requests come to employers at the same time and there is no consistency of access.

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs have pointed out that "*properly organised, structured supervised work placements are an invaluable response to enhancing student understanding of career opportunities, the reality of work, and in enhancing the work readiness of those placed.*" Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 sets out the ambitious target to raise the level of placements offered by employers, as part of 'the shared responsibility' approach of the strategy. The Expert Group indicated that it is important that this element is fully advanced. There is, however, a need to assist employers to participate effectively with work placement and other forms of enterprise engagement.

There is general recognition that the full potential of well-designed work placements is not currently being realised. The difficulties with work placements, especially for certain groups, was highlighted by the Ballymun Job Centre who indicated exposure to employers and inside knowledge on career pathways was a significant gap. Indecon's assessment that there is a need to build better systems capacity to support effective enterprise engagement.

6.5 Apprenticeships

An important issue raised during Indecon's consultations was the awareness and emphasis given to apprenticeships. A guidance counsellor suggested to Indecon that the profile of apprenticeships needs to be elevated and pointed out there is little understanding of the level and nature of apprenticeships or the type of skills/interests needed to enter into an apprenticeship. It was also suggested that the traditional belief that apprenticeships are for 'the kids that are not good at school' still prevails. Some new evidence from the Department of Education and Skills, National Employer Survey 2018, on the extent of enterprise engagement with higher education institutions indicates that while most employers do not provide apprenticeships in collaboration with higher education institutes, a significant percentage provide such opportunities.

Table 6.5: Percentage of Employers Providing Apprenticeships with Higher Education Institutes

	HE Only	***FET Only***
Apprenticeships	19%	20%
Source: Department of Education and Skills, National Employers Survey		

For craft apprenticeships, individuals have to secure employment and are then registered with SOLAS and are then called for training by SOLAS. Details of the type of apprenticeships provided are presented in the table overleaf. This indicates that as well as sectors where apprenticeships have been traditionally established there is now a wider range of apprenticeship available. In new consortia-led apprenticeships, the consortium manages the pattern of on and off-the-job training.

Table 6.6: Range of Apprenticeship Providers (as of November 24th 2018)		
Apprenticeship	**NFQ Level**	***Duration***
BIOPHARMA		
Laboratory Analyst	Level 7	3 years
Laboratory Technician	Level 6	2 years
CONSTRUCTION		
Brick and Stonelaying	Level 6	4 years
Carpentry and Joinery	Level 6	4 years
Painting and Decorating	Level 6	4 years
Plastering	Level 6	4 years
Plumbing	Level 6	4 years
Stonecutting and Stonemasonry	Level 6	4 years
Wood Manufacturing and Finishing	Level 6	4 years
ELECTRICAL		
Aircraft Mechanics	Level 6	4 years
Electrical	Level 6	4 years
Electrical Instrumentation	Level 6	4 years
Electronic Security Systems	Level 6	4 years
Instrumentation	Level 6	4 years
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	Level 6	4 years
ENGINEERING		
Farriery	Level 6	4 years
Industrial Electrical Engineering	Level 7	2 years
Industrial Insulation	Level 6	4 years
Manufacturing Engineering	Level 6	3 years
Manufacturing Technology	Level 6	2 years
Mechanical Automation and Maintenance Fitting	Level 6	4 years
Metal Fabrication	Level 6	4 years
Pipefitting	Level 6	4 years
Polymer Processing Technology	Level 7	3 years
Sheet Metalworking	Level 6	4 years
Toolmaking	Level 6	4 years
FINANCE		
Accounting Technician	Level 6	2 years
Insurance Practice	Level 8	3 years
International Financial Services Associate	Level 6	2 years
International Financial Services Specialists	Level 8	2 years
HOSPITALITY		
Commis Chef	Level 6	2 years
Chef de Partie	Level 7	4 years
Sous Chef	Level 8	2 years
Butcher	Level 5	3 years
ICT		
ICT Network Engineer Associate	Level 6	2 years
ICT Software Developer Associate	Level 6	2 years
LOGISTICS		
Logistics Associate	Level 6	2 years
MOTOR		
Agricultural Mechanics	Level 6	4 years
Construction Plant Fitting	Level 6	4 years
Heavy Vehicle Mechanics	Level 6	4 years
Motor Mechanics	Level 6	4 years
Vehicle Body Repairs	Level 6	4 years
PROPERTY SERVICES		
Auctioneering and Property Services	Level 6	2 years
Source: ***www.apprenticeship.ie***		

The range of sectors where employer engagement is provided via apprenticeships is also evolving. For example, as indicated in Table 6.7 there are new additional apprenticeship programmes in development or under consideration.

Table 6.7: Apprenticeships in Developent or Under Proposal		
APPRENTICESHIPS IN DEVELOPMENT	**NFQ Level**	***Duration***
Occupational Profile Approved	**Proposed NFQ Level**	***Proposed Duration***
Proposed Apprenticeship		
Advanced Quantity Surveyor	Level 9	2 years
Arboriculture	Level 5	2 years
Baker	Level 5	2 years
Engineering Services management	Level 7	2 years
Geo Driller	Level 6	2 years
HGV Driver	Level 5	3 years
International Financial Services Advanced Specialist	Level 9	3 years
OEM Engineer	Level 6	4 years
Precision Turned Parts Manufacturing	Level 6	3 years
Retail Practice	Level 5	2 years
Scaffolding	Level 6	3 years
Bar Manager	Level 6	2 years
Occupational Profile not yet approved	**Proposed NFQ Level**	***Proposed Duration***
Applied Horticulture	Level 6	2 years
Associate Sales Professional	Level 6	3 years
CGI Technical Artist (Animation Games), VFX)	Level 9	2 years
Equipment Systems Engineer	Level 9	2 years
Executive Chef	Level 9	2 years
Farm Management	Level 7	4 years
Farm Technician	Level 6	2 years
Fintech Associate Professional	Level 6	2 years
ICT Associate Professional in Cybersecurity	Level 6	2 years
Lean Sigma manager	Level 9	2 years
Manufacturing ICT Engineer	Level 7	2 years
Manufacturing Technician	Level 6	2 years
Principal Engineer – Professional Doctorate	Level 10	4 years
Hairdressing	Level 6	3 years
Healthcare Assistant	Level 6	2 years
Recruitment Practitioner	Level 6	2 years
Science Aircraft Asset Management	Level 7	3 years
Software System Designer	Level 9	2 years
Sportsturf Management	Level 6	2 years
Stud Farm Management	Level 7	2 years
Supply Chain Associate	Level 7	3 years
Supply Chain Manager	Level 9	2 years
Supply Chain Specialist	Level 8	2 years
Wind Turbine Maintenance	Level 6	3 years
Source: www.apprenticeship.ie		

The number of individuals participating in approved apprenticeships programmes in Ireland has expanded since 2014 and in 2018 there were over 5,600 new registrations in apprenticeships. Despite this expansion, there is a need for career guidance policy to ensure that students are aware

of the multiple pathways available, including apprenticeships. This is an issue raised by representative bodies of both learners and teachers during the stakeholder consultations. For example, the Union of Students in Ireland recommended a stronger emphasis on the provision of unbiased information on all pathways including PIcs and Apprenticeships. The Teachers Union of Ireland also suggested that the profile of apprenticeships need to be elevated and that there should be greater promotion of apprenticeships and traineeship programmes.

Table 6.8: New Apprentice Registrations 2014-2018					
	New Apprentice Registrations				
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Auctioneering					53
Biopharmachem					16
Construction	582	693	914	1,180	1,486
Electrical	1,051	1,184	1,617	2,095	2,249
Engineering	453	508	503	678	709
Finance			67	190	189
Hospitality				25	143
ICT					61
Logistics					27
Motor	604	760	716	673	708
Printing	8	8	4	2	0
Food Manufacturing					5
Craft Apprenticeships	2,698	3,153	3,742	4,508	5,058
New Consortia	**n/a**	**n/a**	**79**	**335**	**590**
Grand Total	**2,698**	**3,153**	**3,821**	**4,843**	**5,648**
Source: SOLAS					

From a learner perspective a challenge in pursuing apprenticeships is having access to information and advice on where the opportunities exist and how to secure apprenticeship-based employment. This is particularly the case as decisions are made by individual employers and as indicated in the table below there are around 5,500 employers involved in apprenticeship programmes.

Table 6.9: Employers Involved in Apprenticeship Programmes				
	2015	2016	2017	2018
Active employers	3,558	4,216	4,965	5,583
Source: SOLAS				

6.6 Enhancing Enterprise Engagement in Irish Career Guidance

Our review has indicated that while there are examples of very good enterprise engagement within career guidance in Ireland, there are strong benefits to be achieved by further enhancing enterprise engagement. Best practice internationally suggests this should involve an integrated approach involving increased opportunities for encounters with employers and the expansion of effective work placement and work experience opportunities. Indecon notes that an Ireland Skills Live event will run annually from March 2019, integrating the national skills competitions with a careers fair with a strong emphasis on apprenticeships.

Facilitating successful enterprise engagement requires that the barriers to such involvement are overcome. The OECD has suggested that this requires:

- "*Making the business case to employers and employees to demonstrate why they would benefit from participating – since the direct benefits may be limited (during short placements, students do not typically do productive work).*
- *Identifying barriers and obstacles for schools and for employers that may stand in the way and dismantle them.*
- *Employers and schools often face technical, legal or information barriers that might deter them from mutual co-operation.*
- *A key barrier for greater employer engagement is often not knowing what schools and education providers need and what employers can provide.*
- *Employers have enterprises to run and might not have sufficient motivation to engage in the provision of career guidance, and it is not always clear for the employers how they can benefit from participating in career guidance activities.*
- *In some countries, there might be legal constraints with respect to a greater involvement of employers in education, e.g. health and safety, or child safeguarding regulations related to work-based learning or other forms of workplace experience.*
- *Teachers and school leaders might be reluctant in accepting people in work in their classrooms and schools.*
- *Schools may lack resources to cover the costs linked to reaching out to people in work. Internships, in particular, include costs in administration*."[66]

Indecon's assessment is that employer engagement with career guidance can be ad hoc and dependent on local relationships. Even where employers may wish to engage there are often difficulties experienced in knowing how to participate and this highlights the need for brokerage.[67] This describes the process by which education and employment is brought together, objectives agreed and activities initiated. While it is possible for either educational providers or employers to act as brokers, it is more usual for a third-party organisation to sit between education and employment and provide the brokerage. IBEC have suggested that this in part could be facilitated through a central portal using a model such as Skills Development Scotland 'Marketplace'. Indecon believes this would be worthwhile but also needs to be combined with other initiatives to enhance enterprise engagement.

[66] OECD (2018)

[67] Hallam, Morris, Hooley, Neary & Mackay, (2016)

6.7 Summary of Findings

- One of the principal goals of effective career guidance is to support individuals to investigate the labour market and consider where they best fit into it. This can be facilitated by effective enterprise engagement which refers to a range of career informants who can support career learning programmes including employers, employees and self-employed individuals. In order to do this successfully individuals have to learn about the labour market through engaging with information and having encounters and experiences.
- Enterprise engagement in career guidance in Ireland is part of a wider involvement of the enterprise sector the Irish education and training system. The extent and diversity of enterprise engagement indicates that enterprise engagement with schools is wide ranging. There are however many learners and guidance counsellors who do not have the benefits of effective enterprise engagement. Indecon's review has indicated that while there are examples of very good enterprise interaction within career guidance in Ireland, there are significant gaps.
- The level of participation in apprenticeships, while growing, is still relatively low in Ireland and the quality of work experience programmes is very mixed. Indecon's review has indicated that while there are good examples of enterprise interaction within career guidance in Ireland, there is a requirement to enhance this further. Best practice internationally as outlined in Section 5 of this report suggests this should entail an integrated approach, involving increased opportunities for encounters with employers and the expansion of effective work placement and work experience opportunities. Indecon notes that an Ireland Skills Live event will run annually from March 2019, integrating the national skills competitions with a careers fair with a strong emphasis on apprenticeships.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

Ireland exhibits a number of features of an effective, lifelong and life-wide career guidance system. The evidence assembled as part of this independent review, however, suggests that significant gaps exist. There is an urgent need to enhance effective enterprise engagement and to make much greater use of technology blended with other guidance supports in providing career guidance. There is also a need for reforms to organisational structures to support the provision of high-quality, lifelong and life-wide career information advice and guidance. Indecon's recommendations are designed to support national goals for effective and inclusive career guidance policy including:

- The provision of high-quality guidance tools and career information.
- An awareness of multiple pathways including apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Enhanced enterprise engagement.

Indecon's recommendations are designed to support national goals for effective and inclusive career guidance policy including:

- The provision of high-quality guidance tools and career information;
- An awareness of multiple pathways including apprenticeships; and
- Enhanced enterprise engagement.

The recommendations are based on a detailed analysis of the gaps which exist and have taken account of international best practice including:

- Importance of lifelong and life-wide coherent services;
- Need to build effective enterprise engagement;
- Requirement for accurate and accessible labour market intelligence;
- Appropriateness of differentiated services to meet the needs of different students;
- Effectiveness of blended career information using technology with access to guidance counsellors;
- Need for clear governance and delivery arrangements; and
- Benefits of evidence-based policy informed by the views of learners, guidance counsellors, employers, parents, teachers and other influencers.

A summary of the proposed recommendations is outlined in the table below and are discussed subsequently in this chapter.

Table 7.1: Summary of Recommendations
REFORMS TO GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS
1. **Appoint a National Policy Group to develop a coherent, long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance.**
2. **Ongoing emphasis on evidence-based policy, including through organisation of a biennial stakeholder forum.**
3. **Establish a support organisation to oversee technology-facilitated guidance services, funded in part from the NTF.**
4. **Department of Education and Skills to set up an Implementation Task Force to drive the proposed reforms.**
5. **Integrate a consistent Learner Guidance and Support Service across FET.**
IMPROVEMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE TOOLS AND CAREER INFORMATION
6. **Provide multi-channel, blended career guidance supports, including online tools with telephone and internet access to experienced guidance practitioners.**
7. **Strengthen and promote a user-friendly centralised careers portal.**
8. **Allocate specialised guidance practitioners to groups of schools on a regional basis.**
9. **Invest in providing accessible labour market intelligence.**
ENHANCEMENT OF ENTERPRISE ENGAGEMENT
10. **Implement a programme with the enterprise sector to highlight the benefits to enterprise of participating in career guidance.**
11. **Initiate supports for employers to facilitate career guidance inputs and quality work experience.**
12. **Introduce measures to increase participation of students, parents and teachers at an expanded number of regional career fairs/workshops.**
13. **Widen access to work experience programmes and apprenticeships using online matching services.**
14. **Encourage co-operation among groups of schools for joint enterprise engagements.**
PROMOTION OF INCLUSION
15. **Introduce a specific module on career guidance as part of training for teachers in special schools.**
16. **Provide access for special education and adult learners to the proposed enhanced central career support services, including information on labour market opportunities.**
17. **Provide additional specialised ongoing CPD supports for teachers in special schools.**
18. **Prioritise resource allocation, including guidance teachers for learners most in need of assistance.**

7.2 Recommendations for Governance and Delivery Arrangements

1. **Appoint a National policy group to develop a coherent new long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance**

The review of organisations with an involvement in career guidance in Ireland indicated the presence of a multiplicity of policy, delivery and representative bodies. Currently there is no process in place to co-ordinate long-term career guidance policy across each stage of the life cycle from early childhood up to and including adulthood. Ensuring a coherent policy involving all aspects of career guidance strategy is a challenge and this is aligned with the experience in other countries. While this issue is wider than the focus of this study, which is on career tools and information and enterprise engagement, the conclusions of this review strongly identified the need for the development of a new long-term strategy encompassing lifelong career guidance. The requirement for a national strategy for career guidance was a key theme arising from Indecon's stakeholder forum and from various submissions to the review process. This is aligned with the ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) Guidelines for Policies and Systems for Lifelong Guidance which indicated the merits of reviewing and developing national policies in this area.[68] Indecon recommends that a government led group should be established to develop this strategy. In planning for this group, the Department should also consider the current responsibilities for career guidance within the Department of Education and Skills.[69] Given the need for the strategy to encompass lifelong and life wide guidance, policy inputs from outside of the Department of Education and Skills are also required. This should include inputs from key Government departments (including the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health) as well as from guidance counsellors, enterprise, learners, teachers and parents. The proposed new strategy should facilitate the avoidance of fragmentation and enhance synergies between different public and private stakeholders.[70]

2. **Ongoing emphasis on evidence-based policy, including organisation of a biennial stakeholder forum.**

The research completed for this study has confirmed the significance of career guidance and also identified some gaps in supports. It highlighted mechanisms which are likely to have the greatest importance. This highlights the merits of ongoing evidence to inform career guidance policy. A process to give emphasis to evidence-based policy should be introduced and should build on the excellent research which has been completed in Ireland and internationally as reflected in the bibliography to this report. As well as empirical research evidence, inputs from practitioners, learners, enterprise and wider stakeholders should be obtained. Indecon recommends the organisation of a biennial stakeholder forum to share evidence to input to career guidance policy. The Career Guidance Stakeholder forum organised as part of this review highlighted the value of such a mechanism to provide advice to Government. The value of such a group to provide evidence to inform policy has been recognised internationally.[71]

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[68] The Institute of Guidance Counsellors in highlighting the need for a long-term strategy recommended the involvement of cross Ministerial/ Departmental areas.

[69] While it is important that the different elements of career guidance in the Department of Education and Skills are integrated into functional areas, there is merit in considering a consolidation of the fragmented responsibilities. This could include allocating overall career guidance policy to one Assistant Secretary who would have responsibility for developing mechanisms to ensure the sharing of information and experiences within the Department and to co-ordinating the expertise within the Department to input to the new long-term career guidance strategy.

[70] In developing a long-term strategy, the proposed policy group could potentially consider the merits or otherwise of creating a national agency responsible for all aspects of career guidance services as has been implemented in other countries.

[71] For example, in Northern Ireland a Careers Advisory Forum[71] was established in 2015 to advise both the Department for the Economy and the Department of Education on current and future careers provision. In Croatia, the Lifelong Guidance Forum policy advisory network, established in 2015, brings together relevant stakeholders from differing sectors, including education and employers with the objective of developing more efficient policies, measures through the *National Strategy for Lifelong Guidance and Career Counselling 2016-2020.*

3. **Establish a support organisation to oversee technology facilitated guidance services funded in part from the NTF.**

Currently there is a gap in the provision of blended career guidance supports including multi-channel career information and tools with access to professional guidance counsellors. There is a need to develop such services in Ireland and this would enhance access to career information and advice at times which suit users.[72] The development of a technology-based service as exists in other countries would be a very cost-effective response to enhancing information and advice. The details of what is proposed is discussed in Indecon's recommendation on career tools and information. This will require that an organisation has responsibility for providing such services. This could potentially incorporate the expertise of NCGE but would require technology resources and experts in the delivery of blended career guidance services to learners and influencers. The detailed design of such a support organisation requires careful implementation planning which is outside the scope of this study and should be considered by the proposed Implementation Group. There are a number of options for such an organisation. These could include (i) an executive agency within the Department similar to NEPS, (ii) a new organisation involving an expansion of the role of the NCGE, (iii) allocation of responsibilities for technology driven services to an existing or new not-for-profit limited company or to a state agency, (iv) incorporation of such services as part of the a wider national agency targeting all aspects of career guidance or (v) the award of a contract based on a competitive tender.[73] In evaluating the different options the key is to ensure that enhanced supports involving a combination of technology based services and access to professional advice is provided in the most effective manner. Indecon believes there may be potential to fund this proposed service in part from the NTF as it would play a critical role in relation to existing or likely future requirements for skills in the economy. This proposed service would also be lined with our recommendation to invest in accessible market intelligence.

4. **Department of Education and Skills to set up an Implementation Task Force to drive the proposed reforms**

The reforms recommended in this report have the potential to provide more effective career guidance for individuals throughout the lifecycle. The new strategic direction proposed will only have an impact if there is clear governance and implementation of the reforms. Indecon recommends that a high-level Department of Education and Skills led Implementation group should be established to co-ordinate existing services and the implementation of any changes. This group should also set out the timescales for delivery of the recommendations in this report and should prioritise these to ensure effective implementation. The Implementation group would also be responsible for decisions on how best to organise the proposed enhanced services which the research suggests are needed.

[72] The model of the national telephone helpline and internet eGuidance service in Denmark is interesting and we understand has 25 full-time and 15 part-time practitioners.

[73] There are a number of examples of the state providing support services via external appointed companies. For example, the National Digital Research Centre provides support services based on a contract for the provision of services.

5. **Integrate a Learner Guidance and Support Service across FET**

The FET sector is an important provider of lifelong career guidance. It is essential that guidance and supports are integrated by all FET providers and this is underpinned by a code of practice. This should incorporate guidance provided within individual further education and training bodies as well as access to the proposed new centralised services proposed as part of this Indecon review. The strategy should also ensure that FET learners have access to up to date labour market information in a user-friendly format. It is important the enterprise inputs are obtained in the development of the guidance and support services provided. Adult Education Guidance Services are currently available in the 16 ETBs and information is provided both to the public and to the adults in FET. Links with DEASP-INTREO and Learner Guidance Services across FET are critical in helping adults progress to employment. The proposed code of practice for integrated guidance services in FET should be aligned with the Guidance for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance from the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (EGPLN). A key objective should be to provide a consistent level of career guidance regardless of location or type of FET programme.[74,75]

7.3 Recommendations to Improve Career Guidance Tools and Information

6. **Provide multi-channel blended career guidance supports including online tools with telephone and internet access to experienced guidance practitioners.**

The absence of an integrated system which uses technology-based guidance, combined with professional advice is as noted earlier a significant gap in the Irish system. While many guidance counsellors use existing online tools such as 'CareerPortal', 'Careers File', and 'Interest Profiler', as part of guidance counselling, there is currently no technology led integrated blended career guidance service as exists in other countries. Indecon recommends the establishment of a new technology facilitated service involving a blended service providing online information and career tools combined with telephone or internet access to a group of professionally trained guidance counsellors. International evidence suggests that an integrated range of interventions involving the use of technology combined with guidance is likely to be an effective mechanism for career information. This should be accessible to individuals throughout their life cycle.[76] While the education and training sector is not, and should not be, the only provider of career services to adults,

[74] Indecon notes that SOLAS 'Progress Review of the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019' specifies a need to upgrade the guidance services with FET and extend to all who engage with FET including employees. The recommended strategy should include outreach, guidance and support measures as well as mentoring services. These are in line with the EU Commerce Resolution 2016 on "Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults". One important element which Indecon supports in developing an integrated strategy for guidance across the FET sector is the need for ongoing investment in continuous professional development for guidance counsellors involved in FET and the importance of a standardised approach to CPD.

[75] In integrating guidance and support services across the FET the DES / SOLAS Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019 pointed out that the nature and quality of guidance provision varies across the different access points into the FET sector. The need for an integrated FET Guidance approach was frequently mentioned during the consultation process for the DES / SOLAS strategy. The recommended integrated model of guidance for the FET sector should, as proposed in the SOLAS strategy build on practice within the AEGI services.

[76] The need for this was also raised by guidance professionals consulted and by learners and their representatives. For example, the Union of Students in Ireland recommended investment in a centralised resource for guidance, accessible to all citizens including an online database of careers and pathways. The NCGE also indicated that "given new technologies, it is appropriate to consider the coordinated development of accessible online career tools and information portal". NCGE however suggested that "this needs to be supported by the provision of a quality guidance service whether ICT based or face to face."

the proposed technology based centralised service could provide useful information to those outside of the educational and training sector. Indecon believes that a centralised service offering career guidance tools has the potential to play a valuable role but that this needs to be integrated with other support and advice.[77] In considering the provision of blended online distance career guidance supports a key issue is to ensure that users are aware of different features and application of the range of guidance tools available. This is particularly important, given the fact that various tools are being continually updated and developed.[78] This is an even greater challenge for some individuals seeking advice such as adults who have been out of the workforce and returning to education or to the labour market, or individuals from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, or persons with language or literary barriers.[79] The proposed technology driven supports would represent value for money from an Exchequer perspective and would facilitate widening the access to career guidance on a lifelong and life-wide basis. It would also provide important supports for young people, adults, teachers, employers and parents including for teachers in special education schools. The development of an efficient support organisation to provide such services should be funded by the NTF and there may also be potential for EU assistance, depending on the organisational model chosen.

7. **Strengthen and promote a user-friendly centralised careers portal**

Indecon recommends that a national careers portal should be developed and promoted.[80] This should utilise and build on the existing public and private sector tools. The wide range and capacity of the existing information services was evident in the analysis presented in the report. The merits of such a centralised careers portal was suggested at the National Career Policy Forum held in Farmleigh as part of this review, and was also raised in a number of the submissions provided to Indecon. The proposed central portal should be accompanied by a national policy framework to govern career tools and information. Indecon envisages that a national central portal would provide information for employers, as well as for learners, guidance counsellors, teachers and parents. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs has suggested that while there are examples of "effective portals at regional level, which are pitched directly at employers, enhancing their understanding of available positions and how their skill needs might be serviced," consideration should be given to the development of national portal. Indecon supports this as part of the design of the new portal. The development and promotion of a national careers' portal should take account of international best practice.[81] EU Commission developments in relation to online career guidance resources and tools suggests the need for online information with various levels of functionality and the need to provide differentiated information and supports at different times in an individual's life cycle. It is

[77] In this context, it is of note that in the submission to Indecon by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors suggested that "*the provision of quality tools and information in itself will not ensure quality career guidance support*

[78] Given the range of importance of career guidance websites and their extra functionalities, it was pointed out by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors that "*in spite of the frequency with which students use smart phones, iPads and sophisticated laptops, the user is often unaware of 'the extras'. Guidance Counsellors need to be trained on a regular basis … to ensure their value is fully utilised*"

[79] This was highlighted in the submission by AONTAS who suggested that "*While the provision of online information may seem like an efficient process for getting information to learners it also leaves the most vulnerable in our society, such as those with poor literacy and / or digital literacy skills at a severe disadvantage"*

[80] In this context, NCGE in their submission to Indecon noted that "while a number of policies exist at national and international level in the guidance and educational domain generally, none of these policies are specifically directed at a framework for career tools and information". The NCGE also pointed out that there is no single comprehensive and publicly available ONLINE portal of information on education, training and other opportunities. Similar points were made by many other stakeholders.

[81] See Everett and Staunton (2017).

also important not to assume that all or even the majority of users will have high levels of digital literacy. As outlined in this report, it is essential that the portal and online tools are not considered in isolation and are embedded into career guidance. The portal should facilitate access to different types of information including information concerning self-awareness and psychometric tests, understanding of labour market opportunities, assistance with decision making and help in obtaining employment and building careers.[82] The portal could include guidance on automated interactions which would personalise information and facilitate initial exploration and diagnostics and matching to a range of occupations or jobs.[83]

8. **Allocate specialised Guidance practitioners to groups of schools on a regional basis.**

In designing delivery arrangements for guidance, counsellors are appointed to individual schools or higher education or FET organisations. Given the integrated nature of the guidance counsellors' role this is in general an appropriate approach. However, the ability of any guidance counsellor to be a specialist in all sectors is not feasible. There is therefore merit in allocating a limited number of specialised career guidance practitioners to a group of schools. This would facilitate learners to have access to a wider group of specialists who would have detailed up to date knowledge on specific sectors. Such guidance counsellors could also be a source of detailed sectoral information on labour market developments and on employment, and work experience and apprenticeship opportunities. These regional specialists would support existing guidance counsellors in individual schools and other parts of the education and training sector. Indecon accept that guidance counsellors cannot be experts on all careers and often play a critical role in pointing learners to sources of information. However, having a small group of sectoral specialists would be of value and would not involve significant costs.

9. **Investment in accessible labour market intelligence.**

An important finding from the evidence collated as part of this review related to the gap in the access by guidance counsellors and learners to labour market intelligence. The importance of effective labour market intelligence was consistently highlighted during the consultations for this review. For example, research carried out by the NESC Secretariat suggested that it was reported that career guidance teachers in school are often unaware of the development of new roles in the labour force and that this limits their ability to guide students into those sectors and jobs. This is an area which has been given attention in other countries. Indecon recommends that a programme to provide and promote accessible labour market information should be integrated as part of career guidance strategy. This should be available to parents, learners and guidance counsellors. This should provide the information required by students at post-primary, higher education and FET, and should also be available for adult learners in a user-friendly format. How to enhance access to the information by guidance counsellors, parents and other influencers should be given particular emphasis and the development of a National Skills database which would identify the sets of skills in jobs across a range of occupations may be useful in this context.[84] There is also a need to continue

[82] See Hooley, Shepard and Dodd (2015) for analysis of types of information on career websites.

[83] The proposed portal should also include information on work experience and apprenticeship opportunities, and provide supports for learners with special education needs and for other groups who may be in danger of being left behind such as immigrants. Funding for the proposed portal could be provided from the National Training Fund and managed by the proposed centralised support service.

[84] In considering the services of career information as well as specific tools, it is important to recognize the potential role played by a well-equipped careers library but access to such resources by students and parents is a core part of this. There may also be merits in developing designated career guidance information sections with the public library network as suggested by a leading educational researcher Dr. Gerry Jeffers who inputted to Indecon's review.

to build the digital career literacy of guidance counsellors. This will require investment in continued CPD and professional support for guidance teachers. There is also a requirement to enhance digital career literacy among learners, parents and other influencers, which will be supported by the Government's National Digital Strategy.

7.4 Recommendations to Enhance Enterprise Engagement

10. **Implement a programme with the enterprise sector to highlight the benefits to enterprise of participating in Career Guidance**.

There is a need to demonstrate to individual enterprises the benefits of a partnership approach in career guidance. This could include highlighting the impact of effective career guidance in addressing the skill needs of the economy, and the value placed by learners and their influencers in access to enterprise. OECD research has highlighted that promoting the benefits to enterprise of such participation is important in addressing the barriers to enhancing enterprise engagement. Indecon recommends that the proposed Department Implementation Group should work with enterprise representatives to develop this proposed programme. The range of support measures proposed to facilitate enterprise engagement should be highlighted as part of this initiative.

11. **Initiate supports for employers to facilitate Career Guidance inputs and quality work experience.**

Indecon recommends that information/guidance and other supports should be developed for employers on how to facilitate effective inputs and to provide quality work experience programmes. A framework to support such enterprise engagement would be important. This is aligned with the view of NUI Galway's Career Development Centre who suggested that frameworks need to be established to provide for interactions with industry and also pointed out that currently students have limited opportunities to connect with SMEs, despite the significance of SMEs as employers. IBEC has also recommended a structured work experience format template is developed in collaboration with employers and Indecon strongly supports this proposal. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs have pointed out that "properly organised, structured supervised work placements are an invaluable response to enhancing student understanding of career opportunities, the reality of work, and in enhancing the work readiness of those placed." Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 sets out ambitious target to raise the level of placements offered by employers, as part of 'the shared responsibility' approach of the strategy. The Expert Group indicated that it is important that this element is fully advanced. Indecon recommends that information/guidance should be distributed to employers on how to structure career guidance inputs and quality work experience programmes. Indecon believes that enterprise would welcome guidance and structures to facilitate engagement with career guidance. In this context we note the recommendation of IBEC concerning the development of a structure "through which employers can engage with schools higher and further education, to provide support in career planning skills, careers information, role models, career talks and fairs and work placements."[85]

[85] Smarter World, Smarter Work, Informed Choices: Career Guidance in an Uncertain World, IBEC September 2018

12. **Introduce measures to increase participation of students, parents and teachers at an expanded number of regional career fairs/workshops.**

Career fairs can be a very cost-effective way to secure labour market intelligence and for learners and others to gain an understanding of the skills required in different occupations.[86] The higher education sector has very effectively pioneered extensive open days and other initiatives to inform learners of the requirements of higher education. While there are a number of excellent enterprise career fairs and skill workshops such as Ireland Skills, these are not as extensive as open days organised by the higher education sector. There is a need to facilitate extensive participation by students, parents, guidance counsellors, school heads and teachers in an expanding number of such events. Events should also be developed to facilitate FET learners and adults. Co-operation between IBEC and other enterprise organisations as well as the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Employment, Affairs and Social Protection/INTREO personnel would be useful in expanding the number of such events and in encouraging participation. Involvement of local authorities would also be of merit.

13. **Widen access to work experience programmes and apprenticeships using online matching services.**

Work experience programmes can be of significant value in informing learners of the realities of working life. However, ways to ensure that learners have the opportunity to gain appropriate experience in careers which may be suitable to them can have particular benefits in informing career choices. These can be of special significance in reducing inequalities for some learners who have weaker social networks. Mechanisms such as a web based matching services whereby learners can apply for targeted work experience programmes and apprenticeships should be introduced and should fit into the overall development of a technological driven guidance scheme. Additional other supports will also be required. Indecon notes that IBEC has called for consideration of such a central system for the management of work experience opportunities. IBEC have indicated that this has worked well in Northern Ireland through their Connect to Success online portal whereby employers across the country post their opportunities and students apply directly. Indecon notes that there are plans for (and a working pilot of) an online marketplace for apprenticeship opportunities. A separate online matching service is, however, also required for work experience programmes. In addition, ensuring that guidance counsellors also have up-to-date information on the requirements of different career options would be enhanced by counsellors having relevant work experience. In this context, we note that one of the recommendations from the Institute of Guidance Counsellors to Indecon was for "optional summer work placements/ experience for guidance counsellors in industry as appropriate". Indecon believes that this has significant merit and that providing work placement programmes for career guidance practitioners should be given a high priority.[87]

[86] https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/careers-enterprise-what-works-report-careers-events.pdf

[87] As part of a submission to Indecon by Science Foundation Ireland, it was suggested that, "regular, consistent support and exposure for teachers and guidance counsellors to relevant, real time information is essential." Indecon believes that work placements for guidance counsellors as well as for learners could be a valuable part of such supports. Career Guidance Counsellors are in a unique position to communicate labour market opportunities and requirements to potential employees. "This requires accurate information about skill requirement and the nature of employment in different areas. Indecon believes that this would be enhanced by a programme to facilitate work placements for career guidance counsellors in different enterprise sectors.

14. **Encourage co-operation among groups of schools for joint enterprise engagements.**

Currently in Ireland, employer visits are valued by students and guidance teachers. However, given the constraints on the number of such events which students will have access to, consideration should be given to encouraging groups of schools to co-operate with such initiatives. This would facilitate students to have wider opportunities to engage with enterprises, in line with their interests and competencies. It would also facilitate a more effective use of employers' time. Encouragement should also be given to employers to organise open days to which students from groups of schools would be invited.

7.5 Recommendations to Promote Inclusion

15. **Introduce a specific module on Career Guidance as part of the training for teachers in special schools.**

There are particular challenges faced by teachers in special schools and by teachers in DEIS schools in overcoming the barriers faced by some learners in progression to employment. Given that there are no guidance counsellors in special schools and reflecting the role of teachers in DEIS schools as key influencers of career choice, Indecon recommends that a specific career guidance module for these teachers is developed, to be delivered as part of their initial training. One of the strategic priorities set out in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024 was the need to raise awareness of training and employment options. It was also pointed out that "better guidance on types of courses/ employment opportunities that are suited to particular conditions" was needed and it was suggested that the general sense is that "guidance is poorly tied to actual opportunities." A key theme set in the strategy was the importance of enhanced career advice from a younger age for people with a disability. Enhanced career advice for students in DEIS schools is also needed. Indecon's recommendation for additional career guidance training support for teachers in special schools and in DEIS schools, reflects the importance of providing career guidance to build bridges into work.

16. **Provide access for special education and adult learners to the proposed enhanced central career support services, including information on labour market opportunities.**

The recommendations in this report involve the development of enhanced central career support services including information on labour market opportunities and centralised blended career supports involving online and telephone access to guidance counsellors. Indecon recommends that these new centralised career services should be designed to also provide specific tailored information and supports for special education learners and adult learners.

17. **Additional ongoing CPD supports for teachers in special schools**.

Additional ongoing CPD supports should be provided for teachers in special schools. These should include up to date information on developments in career options for special needs learners. A similar approach of providing additional tailored career guidance CPD supports should be designed for teachers with learners who face particular barriers to securing employment, including supports for teachers in schools with high levels of migrant students. This is to reflect the particular issues faced by these teachers and is in addition to the need for continued CPD investment for all guidance counsellors.

18. **Prioritise resource allocation, including guidance teachers for learners most in need of assistance.**

The research completed for this study shows that while many learners have access to influences outside of the educational and training system, guidance counsellors have a significant impact on students. There are, however, particular challenges for students who have greater need for career guidance. Those from lowest income groups are less likely to have consulted with their parents than those from higher income backgrounds. Individuals in lower income quartiles have less advice from family and may therefore be in greatest need of access to professional guidance counsellors drawing attention to the potential significance of guidance in breaking the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage. Indecon therefore supports prioritising resource allocation to those students with the greatest need of career guidance. Indecon are therefore supportive of the current Government policy to provide a higher level of allocation of guidance counsellors to DEIS schools and we also support the targeting of ongoing supports and resources allocation on learners most in need of advice and information.

7.6 Conclusion

Some of the recommendations outlined above will require time and resources to implement, while other measures can be implemented in the short term. Indecon believes the changes proposed will enhance career guidance and have the potential to improve skills for the labour market and contribute to addressing socio-economic disadvantage. Enhanced career guidance also has the potential to reduce exchequer costs by contributing to tackling unemployment levels in certain cohorts of the labour force. There is also potential for exchequer impacts via reducing the dropout rates in third-level education and by increasing productivity. A key issue for the proposed reforms is that there is an Implementation Group established by the Department to implement and prioritise the recommended changes.

Annex 1 Copy of Terms of Reference Review

Career Guidance Review - Terms of Reference

About the Client

The Department of Education and Skills is seeking consultants to undertake a Career Guidance Review that would include recommendations on changes to improve the existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system in Ireland.

The Skills Planning and Enterprise Engagement Unit, which is leading on this review, was established in 2016 to support the implementation of the National Skills Strategy 2025 in a manner that links Further Education, Higher Education and skills issues involving the wider Department. The Unit provides support to the National Skills Council and the network of 9 Regional Skills Fora. The Unit also seeks to facilitate co-operation across all Government Departments that have responsibility for specific aspects of the measures outlined in the National Skills Strategy.

The National Skills Strategy 2025 singles out guidance at all levels as an important issue and one that was raised by many stakeholders during its development. It highlights the significant role of career guidance arising from changing patterns of work and an increasing need for upskilling and reskilling and overall more generally in the context of lifelong learning. It provides for a full review of career guidance that would include recommendations on changes to improve the services available.

Nature of the Services Required

The objective of the SRFT is to source a provider of policy related expert advice that has the capacity to carry out a full Career Guidance Review that would include recommendations on changes to improve the existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system in Ireland.

The Department requires a provider of policy and operational related expert advice that has the capacity to carry out a full Career Guidance Review that would include recommendations on changes to improve the existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system in Ireland.

The review will be carried out in accordance with the following Terms of Reference:

- Describe and review existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system in Ireland. The review will specifically consider;
    - existing policy framework for such tools and information
    - information sources, including online tools,
    - organisational structures
- Assess how learners form their opinions around career choice including when, who and what influences these choices.
- Review the quality, quantity and sources of career information available and assess which mechanisms and what formats have the greatest impact on students and adults career choices.

- Outline what measures could be designed and what framework created to enhance enterprise engagement with the education and training system in relation to providing information on career pathways for students and adults.
- Recommend changes to improve the existing career guidance tools and career information for post-primary/further education/higher education students and adults, currently in place across the education and training system in Ireland.

Annex 2 Membership of Steering committee for the Review of Career Guidance

Membership of Steering Committee for the Review of Career Guidance

Organisation	**Name of Member**
Chair	Tom Collins
Higher Education Authority	Vivienne Patterson
SOLAS	Roisin Doherty
Science Foundation Ireland	Margie McCarthy
Quality Qualifications Ireland	Angela Lambkin
Enterprise Ireland	Gerry Reynolds
Institute of Guidance Counsellors	Beatrice Dooley
National Association for Principals and Deputy Principals	Eric Gaughran
National Parents Council Post-Primary	Geoffrey Browne
DES – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	Eamonn Moran
DES Inspectorate	Suzanne Dillon
DES – Skills Planning and Enterprise Engagement Unit	Kathleen Gavin
OECD	Mark Keese
Chair, West Regional Skills Forum	Mark Gantly
Student Representative	Danielle O'Driscoll

Annex 3 List of Organisations/Individuals who Made Submissions to Indecon Review

Organisations who have Provided Inputs to Public Consultation Programme
AEGAI
AONTAS
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
ASTI
Ballymun Job Centre
Caerus Education
Career Decisions
CAREEROSPHERE
Careers and Education News
CareersPortal.ie
Cavan and Monaghan ETB
Centre for Creative Arts and Media (CCAM) GMIT
Coláiste de hÍde
Colaiste Stiofain Naofa
Construction Industry Federation
Cork ETB
Cork Institute of Technology
CRC School, Clontarf
Crescent College Comprehensive SJ
DDLETB Adult Guidance Service
DEASP
Department of Adult and Community Education (MU)
DES
Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI)
DIT Admissions Office
Dublin North Branch of IGC
Dublin Regional Skills Forum
Dublin West Branch of IGC
Dun Laoghaire Further Education Institute
Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI)

Organisations who have Provided Inputs to Public Consultation Programme – *Continued*
Enterprise Ireland
EUNiCAS
Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
Fastrack to Information Technology (FIT)
Galway Roscommon ETB Adult Guidance and Information Service
Gorey Community School
Grad Ireland
HEA
Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)
Holy Family School for the Deaf
IBEC
IDA Ireland
IGC National Executive
Inclusion Ireland
International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Irish Hotels Federation
Irish Universities Association
ITCAN
Joint Managerial Body
Junior Achievement Ireland
Kerry Adult Guidance and Information Service (KAGIS)
Léargas
Liberties College
Limerick Institute of Technology Careers Service
Local Employment Service Network
Maynooth University, Department of Adult and Community Education
Mary Immaculate College (MIC)
Moate Business College
Monaghan Education Centre
MSLETB
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Organisations who have Provided Inputs to Public Consultation Programme – *Continued*
National Association of Principals and Deputy Principal FET Committee
National Centre for Guidance in Education
National College of Ireland
National Council for Special Education
National Disability Authority
National Economic and Social Council Secretariat
National Federation of Voluntary Bodies
National Parents Council post primary (NPCpp)
North East Branch of IGC
North Tipperary Leader Partnership (CE Supervisor)
Northern Region Advocates Network
NUIG Career Development Centre
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
School of the Divine Child
Science Foundation Ireland
Skillnet Ireland
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
SOLAS
South East Branch of IGC
Southern Advocate Network
St Anthony's Special School
St Ita's Special School, Drogheda
St. Augustine's Special School
St. Cecilia's School
St. Colman's Community College
St. John of God School
St. Josephs Adolescent School
St. Paul's Community College
St. Raphaela's Second-level School
Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI)
The Heritage Council

Organisations who have Provided Inputs to Public Consultation Programme – *Continued*
THEA
Trinity Careers Service
UCD Career Development Centre
Union of Students of Ireland
VERI
WALK

Individual Submissions

Individual submissions were also received by 20 individuals, including guidance counsellors, parents, teachers, researchers and students.

Annex 4 Econometric Modelling Results on Impact of Career Guidance

Econometric Modelling Results on Impact of Career Guidance

Indecon's econometric examination of the impact of guidance counselling is based on examining outcomes for those who received guidance counselling compared to those who did not. To study in detail the causes and nature of whether students received career guidance at school, we employed regression analysis. Such analysis enables us to study which factors are statistically significant and use multivariate analysis to consider competing or correlated effects. To do this we used a logistic model of having received career guidance. That is to say, the dependent variable becomes a zero-one variable received or did not receive career guidance, either in a class, in a one-to-one session with the counsellor, or both.

In general, the logit model, G(.), can be written as the probability the dependent variable equals 1 (had guidance) as a linear equation of fixed factors and explanatory variables, and a random error term.

$$G\big(Pr(\boldsymbol{X})\big) = ln\left(\frac{Pr(y=1|\boldsymbol{X})}{1-Pr(y=1|\boldsymbol{X})}\right) = \alpha + \beta\boldsymbol{X} + \varepsilon$$

We studied a variety of factors using the GUI data. The dependent variable y is the dummy variable for received career guidance from the guidance counsellor in class, one to one, or both. Many variables were tried but most were not significant. The following variables were used in the regressions (we retain the GUI-defined names for variables as these will be common to the AMF):

Description of Dependent Variables	
Dependent variables	**Description**
cq3c1a1	Consulted to help decide what to do after leaving school - The Guidance Counsellor - class session
cq3c1b1	Consulted to help decide what to do after leaving school - The Guidance Counsellor - individual session
cq3c1a1_b1	Either class or individual consultation
cq3c2a	In thinking about what you would do after leaving school - Had career talks at your school
cq3c2h	In thinking about what you would do after leaving school - Talked to a private guidance counsellor outside school
cq3c6a	Are you having difficulty deciding what course to take (at 3rd level)
cq3c9	Have you applied/will you apply for a place for further or higher education in Ireland or elsewhere
Independent variables	**Description**
w3equivinc	Household equivalised disposable income
Cq3k2b	How much confidence in the education system
p2sexW3	Gender of the young person (person 2)
cq3b8c2	LC - Level of Mathematics
cq3b8b2	LC - Level of English
w3cq_authority	Total score- Opposition to Authority scale
CognitiveMathsTotal	Cognitive test-Maths Score
CognitiveNamingTotal	Cognitive test-Naming Task
cq3g3c	Agree or not - You feel that you have matured fully
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data	

It should be noted that these models are carried out on the sub-sample of students who were in 6th year at the time of completing the GUI questionnaire. We believe that utilising this sub-sample provides a more relevant insight into the exposure to and impact of career guidance as students in 6th year are more likely to have given significant thought to their future plans post-school.

The first model considers classroom career guidance. The regression coefficient estimates are log-odds ratios and are presented in the panel below. The statistical significance is by asterisks which are related to p-values. Overall, the regression itself is statistically significant but has a low pseudo-R-squared value, indicating much of the variation is seemingly random.

Income is negatively correlated with receiving the consultation, which matches the previously presented cross-tabulations. Students' maturity and attitudes to authority seem to have significant impacts.

Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in Classroom Session		
Dependent Variable	Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in Classroom Session	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3equivinc	-0.0000101*	0.00000566
female	-0.1065017	0.113716
maths_lev		
Ordinary	-0.4510252	0.351411
Higher	-0.4796645	0.3711254
cq3b8b2		
Higher	-0.044296	0.1570701
Not sure	0	(empty)
CognitiveMathsTotal		
1	0.1704963	0.2797894
2	0.1242803	0.2672764
3	0.0960605	0.2690948
4	0.0930941	0.2796266
CognitiveNamingTotal	-0.010526	0.0099113
maturity		
True for the most part	0.4173794**	0.1849336
Somewhat true	0.4120497**	0.1914457
A little true	0.6799821***	0.2260549
Not at all true	0.3702577	0.2399266
w3cq_authority	-0.0653624***	0.0162154
p3q10b	0.0268589	0.0423352
_cons	2.879993***	0.557998
Observations	2,336	
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data		
****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

The next regression looked at one-to-one guidance. Results from this model indicated that income does not seem to be a significant determinant of receiving one-to-one career guidance. Being female makes one marginally more likely to receive career guidance one to one (relative to males). Further estimation of the marginal impact, indicated males were 78% likely to receive one on one guidance versus 84% for females.

Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one Session		
Dependent Variable	Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one Session	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3equivinc	0.00000963	0.0000182
w3equivinc_2	-4.75E-11	3.49E-10
2.p2sexW3	0.3923802***	0.1084865
Maths Level		
Ordinary	0.0258737	0.2913284
Higher	-0.1317046	0.3065644
CognitiveMathsTotal		
1	0.1844338	0.2592417
2	0.3724532	0.2499968
3	0.2653004	0.2491851
4	0.2194474	0.2589356
CognitiveNamingTotal	0.0169818*	0.0054481
Maturity		
True for the most part	0.0821152	0.1975804
Somewhat true	-0.0926124	0.2010522
A little true	-0.2069567	0.2207265
Not at all true	-0.3959729*	0.2385161
Constant	0.6105159	0.4162731
Observations	2,419	
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

The impact of the level of mathematics chosen seems interesting, but seems to be negatively correlated with receiving one-to-one career guidance. Below, we present the marginal impacts by level of mathematic chosen for the Leaving Certificate. Those taking foundation and ordinary level maths are somewhat more likely to have a one-to-one career guidance session than those taking higher-level.

Predictive Margins on Level of Leaving Certificate Maths based on Logistic Regression and Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one Session		
Predicted	Level of Leaving Certificate Mathematics	
cq3b8c2	**Margin**	**Standard Errors**
Foundation	0.818555	0.041958
Ordinary	0.822321	0.01086
Higher	0.798433	0.013724
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

An interesting question to consider more deeply is how particular resources, such as one-to-one guidance, interacts with guidance outside of the school. This analysis may provide insights into whether outside career guidance is a compliment or substitute for in-school guidance. To do this we first included whether the student got outside career guidance as an explanatory variable. The results of this regression with one-to-one guidance as the dependent variable are below.

We find that receiving outside career guidance has a positive impact on the likelihood of receiving one on one in school career guidance, which implies that outside career guidance is seemingly more likely on average to be a compliment to in school career guidance, although several factors may be driving this. As part of this model we also included the self-reported quality of career guidance provision as indicated by the principals of the schools in which the young person attends. Those schools in which the principal indicated 'Excellent' guidance counselling resources had a higher likelihood of having one-to-one guidance.

Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one Session – Inlcuding variable for private guidance		
Dependent Variable	Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in Classroom Session	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3equivinc	0.0000162	0.0000206
w3equivinc_2	-2.75E-10	3.87E-10
p2sexW3		
female	0.37875***	0.1268589
maths_lev		
Ordinary	-0.5396742	0.4269653
Higher	-0.8570216	0.4413785
CognitiveMathsTotal		
1	0.3131928	0.3053118
2	0.4567751	0.2918028
3	0.4575159	0.2927197
4	0.2921105	0.3030804
CognitiveNamingTotal	0.0268889**	0.0112153
maturity		
True for the most part	0.0986471	0.2315764
Somewhat true	-0.0992597	0.2352641
A little true	-0.3662181	0.2557035
Not at all true	-0.445158**	0.2839874
private	0.3276586*	0.1791048
p3q11_8		
Fair	*0.0877489*	*0.2315227*
Good	*0.2431306*	*0.2291598*
Excellent	*0.5280489***	*0.2563471*
Don't Know	*-0.2182732*	*0.528181*
Constant	0.6797822	0.5649452
Observations	1,877	
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data		
****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

It can be observed from the estimates that there is considerable variation in whether students got guidance. Males and females taking foundation maths are more likely to partake in a one-to-one session than those taking higher level maths classes.

Predictive Margins on Gender and Mathematics Level based on Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one Session		
Predicted	Gender and Mathematics Level	
P2sexW3 # cq3b8c2	**Margin**	**Standard Errors**
Male # Foundation	0.7885421	0.086779
Male # Ordinary	0.7927904	0.076998
Male # Higher	0.7659438	0.073169
Female # Foundation	0.8462809	0.080647
Female # Ordinary	0.8495959	0.077088
Female # Higher	0.8284799	0.076334
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

The final regressions outlined overleaf consider whether students received either in class **or** one on one guidance in school. We used our own defined variable from this section of the questionnaire. We also tried a variable from the next section, cq3c2a—a yes/no variable/question "In thinking about what you would do after leaving school - Had career talks at your school", but this did not yield significant results. Income again has an insignificant impact. We also added a variable where school principals rated their own resources subjectively relative to other schools on guidance. This had a positive and significant impact on receiving guidance, relative to the base category of 'Poor', for both categories of 'Good' and 'Excellent'.

Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one OR Classroom Session		
Dependent Variable	Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one OR classroom session	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3eincquin		
2nd	0.5051784	0.3831881
3rd	0.2635847	0.354603
4th	0.3290208	0.3470218
Highest	0.0593975	0.3308003
female	0.2600426	0.2108207
maths_lev		
Ordinary	-1.541698	1.033125
Higher	-1.44894	1.052408
CognitiveMathsTotal		
1	0.3206548	0.4619201
2	0.5898663	0.4436528
3	0.5417193	0.4450623
4	0.33084	0.4628202
CognitiveNamingTotal	0.0227891	0.0185151
maturity		
True for the most part	0.0495038	0.3889797
Somewhat true	-0.2186024	0.3904016
A little true	-0.1584163	0.4387659
Not at all true	-0.6596372	0.4499791
cq3c2h	-0.5927705*	0.3296144
p3q11_8		
Fair	0.4310175	0.3441119
Good	0.6634763*	0.3450887
Excellent	0.6796147*	0.3829762
Don't Know	-0.7791341	0.6406417
Constant	Constant	Constant
Observations	1,877	
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

The next tables show the marginal impact of income quintile. While income is not significant, it may still be of interest to observe the marginal effects by income, as some of the insignificance is generated by the error term – there still could be considerable variation in the dependent variable by the marginal variable (income). About 93% of students receive either one or the other, and it would appear that the least likely to receive guidance are the highest and lowest income categories. This may be due to a variety of factors and behaviours, and it is unlikely that they are the same for both categories.

Predictive Margins on Income Quintile based on Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one OR Classroom Session		
Predicted	Income Quintile	
w3eincquin	**Margin**	**Standard Errors**
Lowest	0.930	0.017
2nd	0.956	0.011
3rd	0.945	0.012
4th	0.949	0.010
Highest	0.934	0.011
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

Of perhaps more interest is the marginal impact by principal reported relative availability of resources, as this was significant. In this case, the marginal estimates are again shown below. An almost 4% increase in receiving either class or one-to-one guidance is found going from 'poor' to 'good' or 'excellent'. It would therefore appear that self-reporting by principals may be a useful indication of school guidance outcomes.

Predictive Margins on Princpals' Assement of Quality of Career Guidance based on Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Guidance Counsellor in One-to-one OR Classroom Session		
Predicted	Principal's Assessment of Career Guidance Quality	
p3q11_8	**Margin**	**Standard Errors**
Poor	0.910	0.024
Fair	0.939	0.010
Good	0.951	0.008
Excellent	0.952	0.011
No Response	0.825	0.079
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

While there seems to be only a small amount of marginal impact of income on access to guidance at school, either for a one on one or class group session, it is important to also consider aspects of the substitutability of in-school provided resources versus private resources. The GUI also contains information on whether students consulted a private guidance counsellor outside of school when making after leaving school career decisions.

To investigate this further, we used a similar model with the dependent variable whether the student used a private career guidance counsellor. The logit regression results are presented overleaf. We see from the results that being in the highest income bracket has any statistically significant positive results.

Logistic Regression on Whether Student Consulted with Private Guidance Counsellor		
Dependent Variable	Consulted with Private Guidance Counsellor	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3eincquin		
2nd	-0.1972847	0.2777109
3rd	0.1900149	0.2522299
4th	0.0938038	0.248242
Highest	0.5850167**	0.2357403
female	0.4543941***	0.1315949
maths_lev		
Ordinary	0.4745023	0.5403312
Higher	0.6623718	0.5511971
CognitiveMathsTotal		
1	0.1916965	0.3912884
2	0.3480928	0.3711763
3	0.4865574	0.3711881
4	0.519409	0.3801735
CognitiveNamingTotal	0.0165273	0.011397
maturity		
True for the most part	0.3169904	0.2616023
Somewhat true	0.0938595	0.2717697
A little true	0.3276784	0.2925458
Not at all true	0.7677009**	0.3071612
p3q11_8		
Fair	-0.1380311	0.2521871
Good	-0.2384014	0.2480512
Excellent	-0.1921328	0.2647195
Don't Know	-0.0997001	0.6047596
Constant	-3.521559***	0.6912854
Observations	1,877	
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

Given the above results, we can use the model and software to give marginal predictions of probabilities of using outside school guidance while interacting (effectively cross-tabbing the predictions), for income quintile and gender. These results are presented overleaf.

From the table of marginal predictions, we see that the lowest income quintile between 11% and 16% probability of receiving outside guidance, depending on gender. For females in the highest quintile, they are about 26% likely to get outside help relative to about 9% for males in the second lowest quintile – an almost 2.5 times difference.

Marginal Predictions of Logistic Model of Private Guidance Counsellor		
p2sexW3#w3eincquin	**Margin*** **	**Delta-method Standard error**
Male # Lowest	0.1103	0.0217
Male # 2nd	0.0925	0.0167
Male # 3rd	0.1301	0.0181
Male # 4th	0.1197	0.0162
Male # Highest	0.1809	0.0187
Female # Lowest	0.1626	0.0287
Female # 2nd	0.1378	0.0230
Female # 3rd	0.1897	0.0235
Female # 4th	0.1756	0.0207
Female # Highest	0.2566	0.0228
Source: Indecon analysis ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

The preceding analysis focused on assessing the determinants of receipt of various forms of career guidance. Indecon also utilised logit modelling to assess the determinants of how students viewed their experience with career guidance. The following variables were used in these regressions.

Description of Variables	
Variable	**Description**
cq3c1a1	C1a1. Consulted to help decide what to do after leaving school - The Guidance Counsellor - class session
cq3c1b1	C1b1. Consulted to help decide what to do after leaving school - The Guidance Counsellor - individual session
cq3c1a1_b1	Either class or individual consultation
hsdclassW3	Social Class of the Household
w3equivinc	Household equivalised disposable income
Cq3k2b	How much confidence in the education system
p2sexW3	Gender of the young person (person 2)
cq3b8c2	LC - Level of Mathematics
cq3b8b2	LC - Level of English
w3cq_authority	Total score- Opposition to Authority scale
CognitiveMathsTotal	Cognitive test-Maths Score
CognitiveNamingTotal	Cognitive test-Naming Task
cq3g3c	Agree or not - You feel that you have matured fully
p3q10b	If your school has a guidance counsellor, how many hours does he/she spend in counselling?
p3q11_8	Principles rating of adequacy of resources relative to other schools: Guidance Counselling
Source: Indecon Analysis of GUI Data	

The first regressions for classroom guidance are presented overleaf. The questionnaire asked students how important guidance counsellors (class and one-to-one) were in helping them decide with career choices.

It is important to keep in mind that the regressions here are ordered-logits which accounts for the ordered nature of the dependent variable (order of importance). The dependent variable in the GUI is coded as 1, 2, or 3, depending on whether the student respondent answered that the type of career guidance was 'very important', 'important', or 'not important'. Thus, a higher 'value' indicates less importance. The model estimates the probability of going from one order to the next.

Examining the results for the income quintile, there is a significant impact relative to the base (lowest quintile) for the third and highest groups. The positive coefficients indicate higher income groups are more likely to rate class-based career guidance as unimportant. Even when including income quintile, household class is also a significant explanatory factor. The baseline class is professional so negative coefficients indicate less likely to rate importance low; or in other words, lower social class status means more likely to rate importance high.

Other factors, such as maturity, level of LC English, and math cognitive ability test scores all indicate a positive and significant relationship with rating class-based career guidance from the guidance counsellor as of low importance. Some variables used in the other regressions were not significant, such as sex. Confidence in the education system had a positive and significant correlation, indicating a likelihood to rate the importance lower.

Ordered Logit of Importance of Classroom Guidance Session		
Dependent Variable	Importance of Classroom Guidance Session	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3eincquin		
- 2nd	0.1805457	0.1914750
- 3rd	0.4215516**	0.1856309
- 4th	0.2718978	0.1848331
- Highest	0.3528753*	0.1852835
p2sexW3		
- Female	0.099199	0.105125
cq3k2b		
Quite a lot	0.6587432***	0.1634721
Not very much	1.065196***	0.1819272
None at all	1.745407***	0.3803467
hsdclassW3		
- Managerial and technical	-0.5816483***	0.107
- Non-manual	-0.8344669***	0.124
- Skilled manual	-1.242865***	0.153
- Semi-skilled	-1.015258***	0.162
- Unskilled	-1.824183***	0.329
- All others gainfully occupied and unknown	-0.1020360	0.578
- Validly no social class	-0.8315777***	0.157
cq3b8b2		
Higher	0.2722387*	0.142874
Not sure	1.221514	1.333026
w3cq_authority	0.0352072**	0.016
CognitiveMathsTotal	0.095735*	0.048
CognitiveNamingTotal	0.005	0.009
p3q11_8		
- Fair	0.149	0.198
- Good	0.164	0.193
- Excellent	0.090	0.210
- Don't Know	0.420	0.521
/cut1	0.289	0.451
/cut2	2.545	0.457
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

As a final model, we created a dummy variable equalling 1 if the student responded as either important or very important, and zero if they responded unimportant. We then also estimated the marginal impact of the income quintiles on the dependent variable using a simple logit model. Both of these modelling results are presented below.

Logit of Importance of One-to-one Guidance Session		
Dependent Variable	Dummy Variable of Importance of One-to-one Session	
Independent Variables	**Coefficients**	**Standard Errors**
w3eincquin		
- 2nd	-0.1063723	0.2049929
- 3rd	-0.2448360	0.1986803
- 4th	-0.1565186	0.1986409
- Highest	-0.1159959	0.1990239
p2sexW3		
- Female	-0.032264	0.107751
cq3k2b		
Quite a lot	-0.3628113*	0.1778974*
Not very much	-0.4534109*	0.1924869*
None at all	-0.1929805	0.3665487
hsdclassW3		
- Managerial and technical	0.3349498**	0.1559154**
- Non-manual	0.373656**	0.1808843**
- Skilled manual	0.6304642***	0.2275427***
- Semi-skilled	0.7735697***	0.2438759***
- Unskilled	0.4565870	0.4906632
- - All others gainfully occupied and unknown	-0.9009270	0.8857856
- - Validly no social class	0.6786158***	0.2361784***
- cq3b8b2		
Higher	0.1561943	0.1460387
Not sure		
w3cq_authority	-0.0474703***	0.0162786***
CognitiveMathsTotal	-0.0712178	0.0491147
CognitiveNamingTotal	0.0127307	0.0094448
p3q11_8		
- Fair	0.0748415	0.2008550
- Good	0.2156077	0.1964653
- Excellent	0.3898394*	0.2145512*
- Don't Know	-0.0278366	0.4924838
Constant	1.218881***	0.4628155***
Source: Indecon analysis of GUI data *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1		

From this estimation, we see that almost 70%+ of students said career guidance one-to-one is important, but the percentage falls with income quintile, although the highest income quintile is about 68%.

Marginal Predictions of Logistic Model of Importance of One-to-one Guidance		
w3eincquin	**Margin*** **	**Delta-method Standard error**
Lowest	0.707	0.033
2nd	0.685	0.028
3rd	0.655	0.025
4th	0.674	0.023
Highest	0.683	0.021
Source: Indecon analysis ****** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1***		

Annex 5 List of Organisations / Individuals who Participated in National Stakeholder Forum

List of Delegates at Career Guidance Review National Workshop, Farmleigh House Dublin, 18 July 2018	
Delegate	**Organisation**
Seán Ó Foghlú	Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills
Kathleen P. Gavin	Department of Education and Skills
Patricia Flannery	Department of Education and Skills
Paul Keating	Department of Education and Skills
Professor Tom Collins	Chairman, Career Guidance Review Steering Group
Dr Deirdre Hughes	University of Warwick
Aideen Hartney	National Disability Authority
Alan Power	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
Andrew Brownlee	SOLAS
Angela Lambkin	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Anne-Marie McGuaran	National Economic and Social Council
Beatrice Dooley	Institute of Guidance Counsellors
Blathnaid Ni Chinneide	National Adult Literacy Agency
Breda Corr	General Secretary, National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education
Brian Cotter	American Chamber
Caroline Spillane	Engineers Ireland
Catherine Greene	Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland
Deirbhile Nic Craith	Head of Education and Research, Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Dermot Carey	Construction Industry Federation
Dharragh Hunt	National Disability Authority
Emer Smyth	Economic and Social Research Institute
Eric Gaughran	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals
Fiona Dunne	Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Fiona Maloney	Director of FET Support Services, Education and Training Boards Ireland
Geoffrey Browne	National Parents Council - Post Primary
Geraldine King	National Recruitment Federation
Gerry Jeffers	Department of Education, NUI Maynooth
Graham Love	Higher Education Authority
Helen McMahon	Enterprise Ireland
Jennifer McKenzie	National Centre for Guidance in Education
Jim Mullin	Léargas
Kara McGann	IBEC
Marcella Stakem	Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
Margaret Grogan	CEO, National Education Psychological Service
Mark Gantly	Chair, Regional Skills Forum West
Mark Keese	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Mark Mitchell	Grad Ireland
Martin Marjoram	Teachers' Union of Ireland
Mary Ruane	Institute of Guidance Counsellors - National Executive
McCarthy Margie	Science Foundation Ireland
Miriam O'Keefe	American Chamber
Moira Leydon	Association of Second-level Teachers, Ireland (ASTI)
Neil McDonnell	CEO, Irish Small and Medium Enterprises Association (ISME)
Nicola Fogarty	Local Employment Service Network
Nuala McLoughlin	Irish Hotels Federation
Nuala Whelan	Ballymun Job Centre
Oisín Hassan	Union of Students of Ireland
Padraig Walsh	Quality and Qualifications Ireland

List of Delegates at Career Guidance Review National Workshop, Farmleigh House Dublin, 18 July 2018 (Continued)	
Pat Mansuell	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals - Further Education and Training Committee
Paul Healy	Skillnet Ireland
Paul King	National Centre for Guidance in Education
Ray Bowe	IDA Ireland
Raymond Jordan	National Council for Special Education
Richard Keane	Student Yearbook
Roisin Doherty	SOLAS
Roslyn Hickey	Career Guidance Advocate (working in Youthreach and the Community Training Sector)
Shane Rooney	Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland
Sharon Curran	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Sharon Eustace	National Education Psychological Service
Siobhan Corry	Joint Managerial Body
Martin Shiel	DES Social Inclusion Unit
Tony Lally	Head of Special Education, Department of Education and Skills
Yvonne McLoughlin	Head of Careers Office, DCU
Siobhan Keogh	Regional Skills Forum Mid East Region Manager
Eimear Sinnott	CareersPortal
Lorraine O'Connor	Early Childhood Ireland
Orla Bannon	Trinity Career Service
Josephine Walsh	NUI Galway, Career Development Centre
Laura Coleman	Cork Institute of Technology Access Service
Mark O'Connor	Inclusion Ireland
Alison Doyle	Caerus and Trinity College
David Foster	UCD Director of Career Development and Skills/ Director
Frances O'Hara	Head of Careers, Northern Ireland (Dept. for Economy)
Brendan Baker	Head of Career Development Centre, NUI Maynooth, and Chair of AHECS
William H. Batt	Partner, Indecon
Dr. Ronnie O'Toole	Partner, Indecon

Annex 6 Evidence on Guidance in Post-Primary Schools

Hours per Week Devoted to Whole School Guidance Across Guidance Areas - Junior Cycle			
Measure	**Personal & Social**	**Educational**	**Career**
Mean	52	25	11
Median	60	25	10
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Hours per Week Devoted to Whole School Guidance Across Guidance Areas - Senior Cycle			
Measure	**Personal & Social**	**Educational**	**Career**
Mean	35	22	34
Median	35	20	33
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Hours per Week Devoted to Guidance Across Teaching Cycles			
Measure	**Junior Cycle**	**Senior Cycle**	**Other (e.g. PLC)**
Mean	25.6	32.7	1.6
Median	12.0	21.0	0.0
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Hours per Week Devoted by Guidance Counsellors Across Guidance Areas - Junior Cycle			
Measure	**Personal & Social**	**Educational**	**Career**
Mean	27	12	7
Median	17	8	5
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Hours per Week Devoted by Guidance Counsellors Across Target Group - Junior Cycle		
Measure	**Individual (One-to-one) Activities**	**Group Activities**
Mean	29	19
Median	20	12
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017		

Hours per Week Devoted by Guidance Counsellors Across Guidance Areas - Senior Cycle			
Measure	**Personal & Social**	**Educational**	**Career**
Mean	25	16	31
Median	24	15	30
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Hours per Week Devoted by Guidance Counsellors Across Target - Senior Cycle		
Measure	**Individual (One-to-one) Activities**	**Group Activities**
Mean	46	28
Median	47	25
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017		

How Many Teachers Designated as Guidance Counsellors in 2016/17	
Measure	**Teachers Designated as Guidance Counsellors**
Minimum	0
Mean	1
Median	1
Maximum	5
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017	

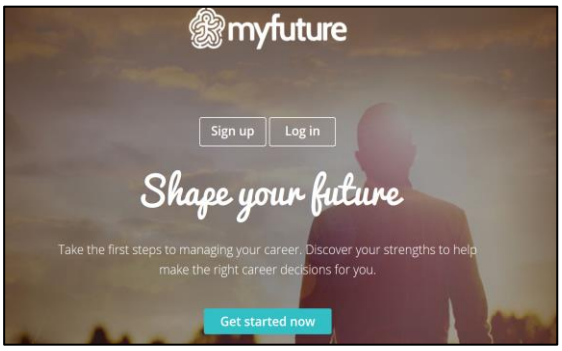
Staffing Allocation Provided for Guidance in 2016/17 and 2017/18		
Was the full staffing allocation specifically provided for Guidance in the relevant Circulars allocated to guidance in the school year 2016/17 and 2017/18?	**Percentage of Schools, 2016/17**	**Percentage of Schools, 2017/18**
Yes	95.6%	94.7%
No	4.4%	5.3%
Total	**100%**	**100%**
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017		

Staffing Allocation Provided for Guidance in 2016/17			
Measure	**Hours per Week for Whole School Guidance in 2016/17**	**Hours per Week Specifically for Guidance Counsellors in 2016/17**	**% of Hours Per Week Specifically for Guidance Counsellors**
Mean	49	23	47.7%
Median	28	18	64.3%
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Statutory Staffing Allocation Provided for Guidance in 2017/2018			
Measure	**Hours per Week for Whole School Guidance in 2017/18**	**Hours per Week Specifically for Guidance Counsellors in 2017/18**	**% of Hours Per Week Specifically for Guidance Counsellors**
Mean	46	23	49.3%
Median	30	21	70.0%
Source: Data returned by schools to the Department through the School Guidance Compliance Return 2017			

Annex 7 International Best Practice in the Development of Online Tools

International example: My Future – Australia



Australia has maintained the myfuture website since 2002. It is run by an independent government owned company and strategically managed by a board drawn from all of the state governments and the national government. It provides extensive information on occupations, courses, sectors and companies and offers a range of tools to allow individuals to access this information in a bespoke way.

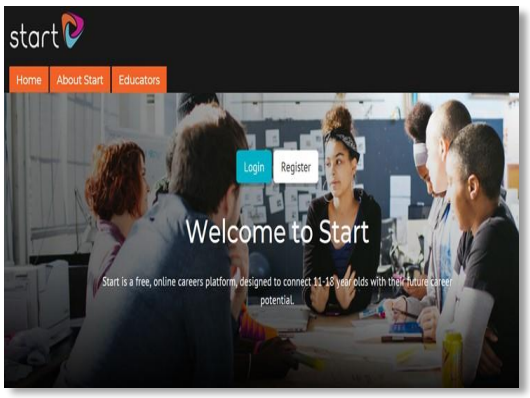
See https://myfuture.edu.au

International example: Smart books – South Korea

In South Korea smart textbooks have been developed on career and jobs. They are used at all levels of schooling. In addition smart textbook homepages have been created so that students can log on to the books and use them anywhere.

See http://smartbook.career.go.kr

International Example: Start - England



Start is a commercial product that is offered to schools in England. It is a CAGS which uses students' skills, interests and values to offer suggestions of careers (Hooley & Sahar, 2016). The CAGS is freely available but schools pay to access the data about students which is generated by the system. Other revenue streams come from opportunity providers and from government contracts.

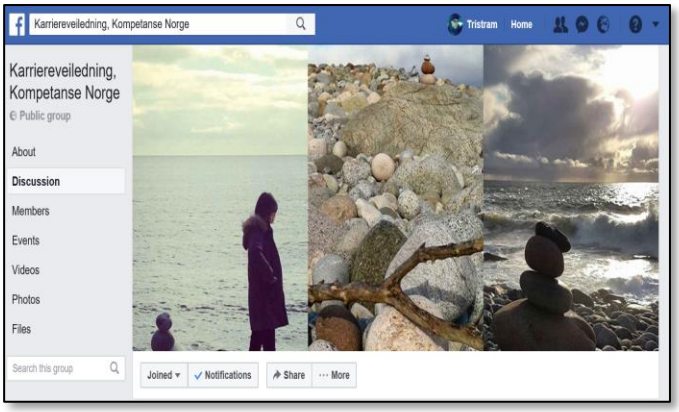
See https://www.startprofile.com/.

International example: eVejledning – Denmark

The Danish eGuidance service was formed in 2011 as part of the Danish Ministry of Education. The service uses professional career counsellors to deliver online support to clients through chat and audio channels. The service has also begun delivery of careers services through Facebook (Himmelstrup, 2017). eGuidance has found that individuals are keen to access a wide range of career support online from information provisions to much deeper forms of one-to-one guidance. The service has developed an online guidance model which emphasises the importance of creating a relationship, reflection and making the most of opportunities (Jochumsen, 2017).

See https://www.ug.dk/evejledning/eguidance-eveiledning.

International example: Karriereveiledning - Norway

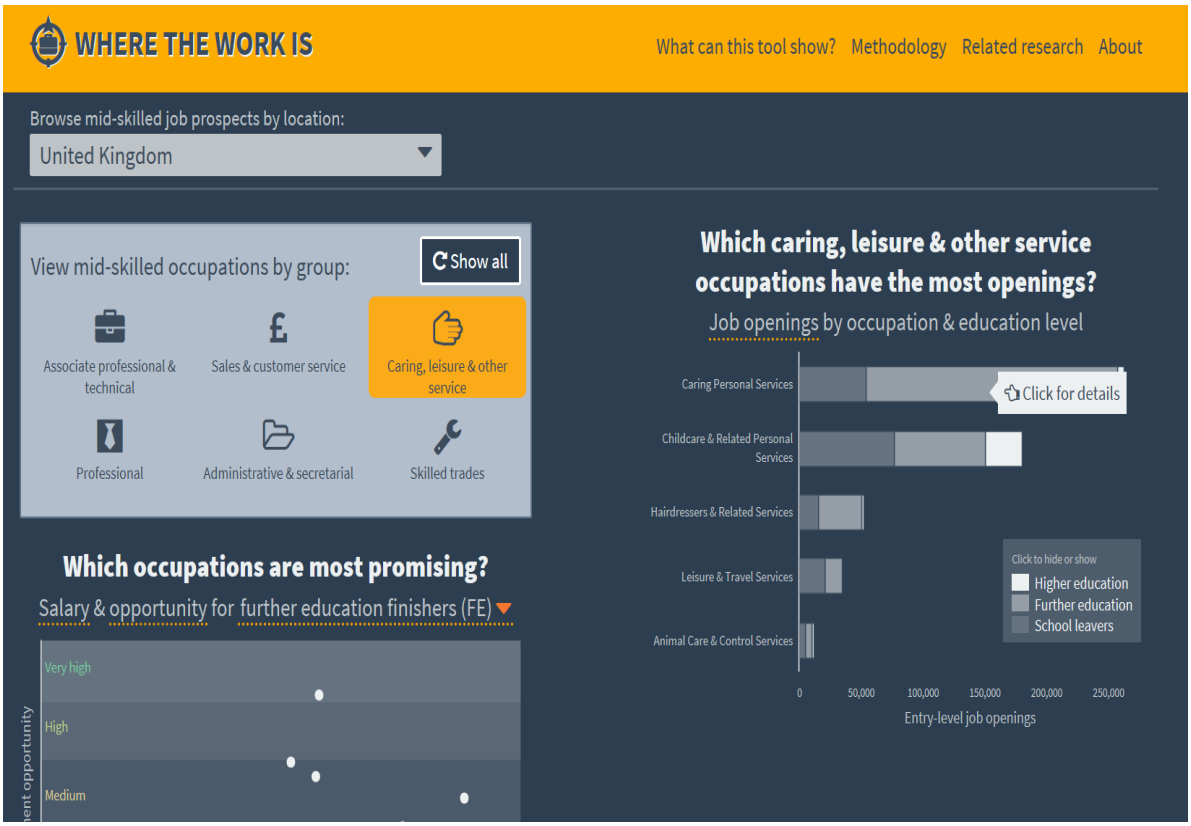


Skill Norway have established a professional networking and information exchange group for careers professionals on Facebook. The site is open for all careers professionals and allows individuals to share information that they think will be of interested to the group. It is overseen by Skills Norway who also use it to promote their activities and amplify conferences and other events and initiatives.

See https://www.facebook.com/groups/1695913347404749/.

Annex 8 International Examples of Enterprise Engagement and Provision of Labour Market Information

International example: UK



Where the work is (http://wheretheworkis.org) is a demonstrator project created by the Institute for Public Policy Research and Burning Glass which uses information scraped from employers and recruiters websites to create a summary of what jobs are actually being advertised and insights about the skills, qualifications and requirements associated with them. This is then combined with existing government and research data to create a picture of what employers are actually looking for.

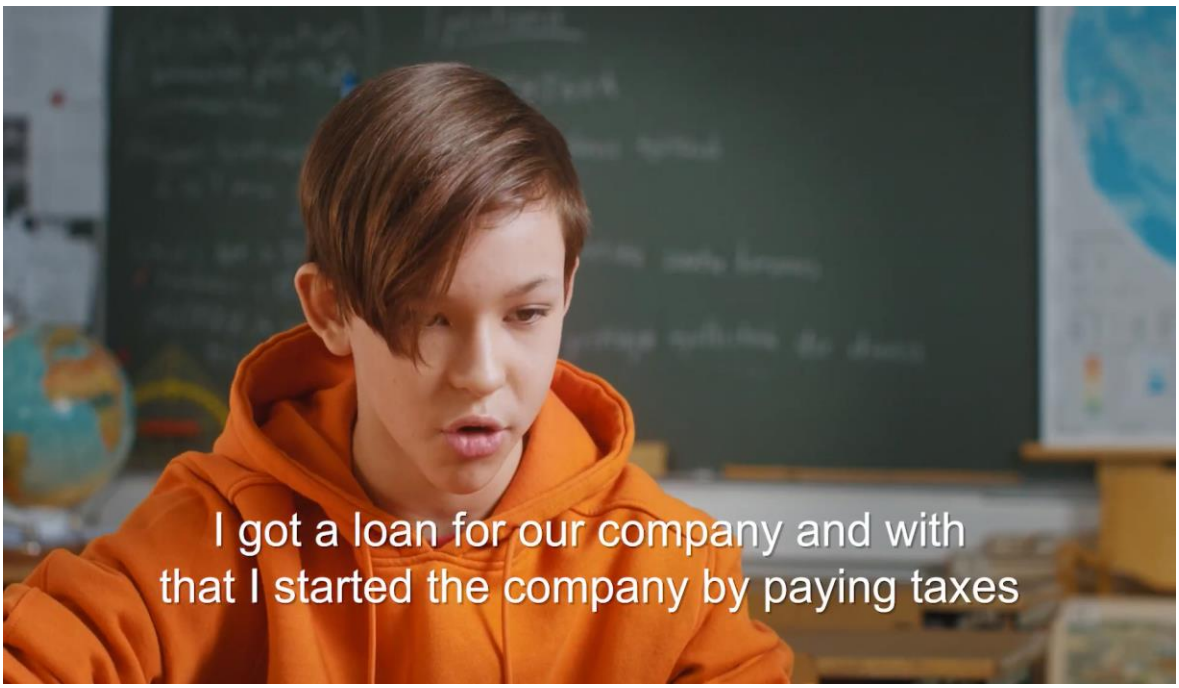
International example: Canada

In a project run in Canadian employment services, participants were given an initial assessment for their suitability to engage with a package of well-designed and structured labour market and career development resources. Where they were deemed to be suitable for this self-study approach, they were provided with an introduction to the materials and encouraged to engage in a four-week self-study programme. The evaluation found that the programme was effective with participants doubling their self-assessment of their skills and their likelihood of being in work throughout the programme (Redekopp, Hopkins & Hiebert, 2013). It also found that once the initial assessment has been done and participants introduced to the programme there was little additional advantage in practitioners providing ongoing support. This suggests opportunities for efficiency savings where LMI resources are high-quality and utilised appropriately by careers professionals.

International example: USA

Following the 1994 School to Work Opportunities Act, the state of California put in place an ambitious set of activities designed to bring school and work closer together. These activities were sustained in California after federal funding was withdrawn and involved establishing a series of local partnerships between schools and employers to deliver career learning activities including a substantial work experience programme. Research found that participation in these activities was associated with better progression to both higher education and to work (Neumark, 2004).

International example: Finland



The Me & My City programme is an experiential learning environment for ninth grade students in Finland. In it, students participate in a simulation of a business. They compete in teams against each other and the winning team is the one that achieves the best operating profit and the best reputation.

For further information see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC6W-KREwEI

International example: England

In England there was a recently announced initiative to develop 20 careers hubs that were announced by the government in late 2017. These hubs will build on the existing Enterprise Adviser Network, which connects senior businesses volunteers to schools. However, they will also seek to build the capacity of schools to deliver provision across the eight Gatsby Benchmarks. Schools will be issued with a 'virtual wallet' which will provide schools with dedicated funding to invest in careers activities including funding a range of brokerage organisations to provide them with employer engagement opportunities.

Further information on the hubs can be found at

https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/schools-colleges/careers-hubs.

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Annex 10 Service Level Agreement between NCGE and Department of Education and Skills and Code of Best Practice for Léargas

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit, Department of Education and Skills

and

National Centre for Guidance in Education

1. Introduction and Context

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) was established in 1995, under the aegis of Léargas, as an agency of the Department of Education and Science. The Centre aims to support and develop guidance provision in educational settings and to inform the policy of the Department in the field of guidance.

NCGE is also part of the Euroguidance network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) under the Erasmus + programme, formerly the Lifelong Learning Programme. The network aims to support guidance practitioners in promoting European mobility and the European dimension within education and training. Guidance is an important pillar of the EU agenda to promote employment, competitiveness, inclusion and quality education and training across the EU.

1.1 Purpose and Scope of Agreement

This Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement (the 'Agreement') between the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit (CAP), Department of Education and Skills and the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) formalises an agreed level of service and performance in relation to guidance provision in the Education sector. The agreement is not a legally binding agreement or a contract, and is not exhaustive in its identification of responsibilities.

In summary, the objective of this agreement is:

(i) Identifying the respective roles and responsibilities of the Department and the NCGE in relation to developing and supporting quality guidance provision in the education sector as part of lifelong learning in accordance with national and international best practice
(ii) Informing the policy of the Department in the field of guidance;
(iii) Providing clarity on the strategic, governance and operational aspects of the organisations' relationship;
(iv) Establishing structured arrangements for reporting, communications and liaison;
(v) Facilitating improved engagement and co-operation between both organisations.

This agreement was developed in accordance with the statutory provisions applying, relevant national strategies and Government Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and the outcome of the DES Corporate Governance Compliance Reviews dated 11 July 2017. In particular the scope of this Agreement addresses the provisions of the *Code of the Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* in relation to Oversight Agreements (section 8.4) and Performance Delivery Agreements (sections 8.8 to 8.12).

Both organisations will ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with the Agreement and its implications, and that all dealings between the two organisations are conducted in accordance with the agreement.

This Agreement does not in any way limit any additional actions or policies being implemented between the two organisations, nor does it limit any reductions. It also does not supersede any specific agreements between the two organisations in relation to particular work areas. Both parties reserve the right to curtail, defer or discontinue the actions proposed should this become essential in the light of the overall budgetary situation from time to time, but each organisation must inform the other when such a decision is being considered.

Both organisations will ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with the Agreement and its implications, and that all dealings between the two organisations are conducted in accordance with the Agreement.

This agreement replaces the previously agreed Memorandum of Understanding dated July 2015.

1.2 Duration of the Agreement

This agreement will be for the calendar year 2018. It will be reviewed annually and it may be amended, where necessary, through consultation with the parties and through agreement.

1.3 Amendments to the Agreement

There may be a need for amendments due to changes in legislative matters, government / ministerial priorities or policies, prevailing operating circumstances and / or broader political, economic and financial priorities.

Where amendments become necessary, the DES commits to engage in meaningful and timely consultations with NCGE. Such consultation will be designed to quantify any increase or reduction in effort required to achieve amended targets, while simultaneously ensuring that other targets are modified to reflect total output requirements.

2. Roles and Statutory Functions of the Parties to this Agreement

2.1 Department of Education & Skills

The vision of the DES, set out in its Statement of Strategy, the Action Plan for Education 2016 – 2019 is to *'Provide the best education and training system in Europe'*. The underlying mission of the DES is *'To facilitate individuals through learning, to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, cultural and economic development'*. This mission is supported by the following goals:

1. Improve the learning experience and the success of learners;
2. Improve the progress of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special educational needs;
3. Help those delivering educational services to continually improve;
4. Build stronger bridges between education and the wider community; and
5. Improve national planning and support services.

Among the key ambitions of the DES over the course of the Action Plan for Education is "enriching teaching and learning with new curricula, new assessment methods, and technology assisted learning".

The DES's key function, in relation to examinations and assessment, in the context of the above is to develop and operate, in conjunction with the SEC, appropriate programmes for assessment, accreditation and certification of second level examinations.

2.2 National Centre for Guidance in Education

Léargas operates under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills. The Léargas Executive Director reports to a Board, which is appointed by the Minister.

NCGE operates under the aegis of Léargas and reports to its own Management of Guidance Committee which is a sub-committee of the Léargas Board. The members of the Committee are nominated by the Minister for Education and Skills and appointed by the Board of Léargas.

In fulfilling its aims NCGE, as a constituent part of Léargas, is committed to working in collaboration and partnership with relevant stakeholders including the Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS. Other stakeholders including the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), Directors of Studies, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI), Higher Education Authority (HEA), National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) along with other Government Departments and National and Employer agencies are involved with work of NCGE, where appropriate.

Regular communication and co-operation is a normal part of the relationship between the Department (CAP, Further Education and SOLAS) and the NCGE, and both organisations undertake to be flexible and open to requests for information and meetings as they arise.

Specifically, the following liaison arrangements are agreed:

- The overall responsibility for ensuring that ongoing effective communication and liaison arrangements apply lies with the senior management teams in the NCGE and with CAP and Further Education in the Department and with SOLAS as appropriate.
- Meetings between the management teams will be held usually 3 times a year to review progress on priority work areas and to address any issues arising.

The Department will provide relevant information to the NCGE that impacts on its role and functions in a timely manner. It will also ensure that, in as far as possible, information is requested in good time.

The NCGE will ensure that the Department is promptly and regularly informed of all relevant developments and information, and is given advance notice of, and sufficient information about, any emerging issues or planned public announcements.

Both parties are committed to the promotion of partnership, responsiveness and mutual co-operation in their ongoing interactions.

2.3 NCGE Statement of Strategy

Pending the outcome of the review of Guidance which is due to be completed in Q2 2018, it was decided to extend NCGE's 2015 – 2017 statement of strategy.

3. Governance and Accountability

Léargas is accountable to the International Section of the DES for the compliance with the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016.

The overall responsibility for ensuring that NCGE operates in compliance with the Revised Code of Practice for the governance of State Bodies 2016 lies with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) Unit at the Department of Education and Skills.

In carrying out its functions NCGE must comply with the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 as appropriate. The NCGE must ensure ongoing awareness of, and compliance with, all of its corporate governance, reported and related obligations. The DES commits to ensure that the NCGE is kept informed of any change to corporate governance, reporting or related obligations.

4. Funding Arrangements

The running costs of the NCGE are met predominately from annual grants from CAP and SOLAS. In addition, income is generated by the Centre in respect of EU projects undertaken by the Centre.

The purpose of the DES grants is to enable the NCGE to carry out its functions as provided for in the Performance Delivery Agreement and more specifically to meet the targets agreed in the finalised strategic plan.

SOLAS is responsible for the funding of guidance within the Further Education and Training sector. SOLAS will oversee the development and evaluation of guidance provision and fund NCGE in their work in supporting implementation of the strategic priorities of the FET Strategy as it relates to guidance. This will include annual funding agreements and work plans. DES is responsible for overarching policy for the FET sector, including guidance.

NCGE is committed to the allocation of funding within the agreed budget and commits to compliance with all Department of Public Expenditure and Reform guidelines, Department guidelines, relevant legislation and circulars, taxation legislation, employment and pension legislation, prompt payment of accounts and all other legislation relevant to Bodies in receipt of Exchequer funding.

NCGE must provide a commitment that written financial procedures are in place which are in compliance with the requirements of the Public Financial Procedures and other relevant financial regulations or guidelines, including DPER circular 13/2014.

Specific exemptions from the Code of Practice for the Governance of State bodies

No exemptions have been sought.

5. Reporting Requirements

Both organisations prepare medium term strategy documents. The Department prepares an Annual Report and the NCGE prepares an Annual Output Statement which is incorporated into the Annual Report of Léargas. Appropriate consultation between the organisations will be undertaken prior to the finalisation of these documents.

The Department is required to prepare a Statement of Strategy every three years, or within 6 months of the appointment of a new Minister. The NCGE is provided with the opportunity to input into this process as part of a wider consultation process carried out by the Department.

The Department is required to publish an Annual Report and Output Statement each year. The NCGE will provide appropriate information to the Department to assist in producing these reports.

Annual estimates of projected expenditure and details of quarterly expenditure must be provided on request in the required format as appropriate.

NCGE will also be required to provide financial documentation to CAP as set out in the Budget Allocation Letter dated 26th February 2018, in accordance with requirements under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

6. Performance/Service Levels and Performance Measurement

An Annual Work Plan is to be prepared by NCGE outlining the Policy actions for which it has responsibility in any given year and how their implementation will be achieved.

In particular, NCGE will be responsible for the following:

- Acting as a centre of excellence for guidance in particular in relation to Post-Primary and Further Education
- Participating in any successor meetings to the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Meetings, or other EU commission meetings relating to lifelong guidance
- Development of the Whole School Guidance framework resources and co-ordinating supports for schools to develop the whole school guidance approach
- Continuing as an active member of the Euroguidance network activities
- Developing a Strategic Plan for NCGE for 2018 - 2020
- Co-ordinating and hosting further meetings of the National Forum on Guidance.
- Delivering key actions outlined in the Action Plan for Education.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

At the initial meeting between CAP and the NCGE in the DES each year (as set out in section 2.2), NCGE performance will be considered and assessed in terms of the Statement of Strategy and associated multi-annual work plan.

8. Department Support

The DES shall provide support to the NCGE which it deems necessary to fulfil its roles and functions. Such support shall include advice on general government policy, legal matters, shared service models or other such matters deemed necessary.

8. Sign Off and Review

This agreement is jointly signed by the Principal Officers, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit and the International Sections of the DES, the Director of NCGE and the Executive Director of Léargas and takes effect from the date on which it is agreed and signed by all parties. It will be review annually and amendments may be made as deemed necessary.