



Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board

Progress Report on Quality Improvement Plan 2019  
and  
Quality Improvement Plan 2020

June 2020

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## Part 1: Overview of Quality Improvement Activities in 2019

### Main Achievements in 2019

#### a. 2018 Actions

The implementation of 2018 QIP actions that had not been completed in 2018 was a key focus in 2019. Refer to Detailed Update on Activities below.

#### b. The Learner Voice /Inclusion

In 2019, a key priority for LOETB was to focus on improving opportunities for the Learner Voice to be heard and to influence the shape of provision. A **Learner Council** was formed in Tullamore FETC for the first time, with representation from each programme type – full-time and part-time learners from unaccredited programmes and programmes at Levels 1 to 6. The Learner Council is at the early stages of development but so far has provided learners with an opportunity to share ideas, interests, and concerns with tutors and management.

In addition, to further enhance the importance of communication with learners across the FET Service, a significant amount of time and resources was invested in the development of a consistent and comprehensive **induction process** for all learners, including a LOETB Learner Induction [video](#). A common Induction Process was piloted on selected programmes in September 2019, and the effectiveness of that process was evaluated through an engagement exercise with the relevant learners, which contributed to decisions regarding the content of the induction programme which will be used for all learners.

A range of events were held in LOETB last year that promote and encourage inclusion. An Intercultural Day was held in Portlaoise, representing 43 nationalities that attended a range of courses in FET. In December 2019, a Celebration of Learning was held in Tullamore FET Centre, responding to a request by our Syrian Community. Syrian learners that are part of the Resettlement Programme came together from Tullamore, Birr and Portlaoise to network and share experiences of their resettlement so far in Ireland. All of these learners are engaged in ESOL classes in LOETB.

Also in December, a “Portlaoise Got Talent” event was held in Portlaoise FET Centre. This event initially came about when a group of Office Skills learners were required to design a poster as part of a learning outcome. They suggested that they advertise a Talent Show, and following on from the advertisement, a range of almost twenty acts participated in the event. Over 100 people came to see the acts, which included drama, music, dance and poetry by both learners and staff reflecting a range of services across FET in LOETB.

LOETB FET Service now includes an input from the learner at Awards Ceremonies. This captures the learner voice at various stages throughout the year; whether it is a learner speaking of her return to education in later life, a learner discussing how her

course choice helped her secure employment or a learner explaining how ESOL classes enabled him to ensure a better quality of life in Ireland.

### **c. A Single Common QA System**

LOETB aims to establish a single QA system which will encompass the entire FET provision in the next three years. 2019 saw the commencement of that process. This plan coincides with the commencement of QQI's Inaugural Statutory Review of ETBs' Quality Assurance arrangement. LOETB will be one of four ETBs in the first phase of this process. In late 2019, relevant members of the LOETB FET Senior Management Team and Quality Assurance team were briefed by QQI on the planned process of the Statutory Review, and based on that information, plans have been formulated for LOETB's Self Evaluation and compilation of the SE Report, followed by planning for the visit of the Review Team in late 2020.

In February 2019, LOETB made the decision to invite an external stakeholder to review the implementation of the QIP. The rationale for this was not just to ensure that the structures and processes being developed were robust, but that this external review might highlight further improvements that could be made. The report is available [here](#). Significant progress was made during 2019 in establishing common policies and procedures that can be applied consistently across both our Further Education and our Training provision. For example, Reasonable Accommodation and Plagiarism policies were developed through the Quality Assurance Working Group which involved representation from all centres and service. Some of the TQAS documentation that had been in use in former FAS provision was revised to ensure consistency with LOETB policies and procedures. [Consultation](#) took place with second providers and contracted training companies to ensure clarity and consistency of approach. This was very well received and welcomed. We see this as a positive first step towards establishing consistency across the service.

### **d. Data Analysis**

In 2019, LOETB recruited a Data Analyst - the function of this role is twofold; firstly, to use the data that is gathered and inputted onto local systems to generate accurate and up to date reports on inputs/outputs/outcomes, etc, and secondly, to gather relevant local data (quantitative and qualitative) to inform programme provision to best serve the needs of the Laois Offaly community. In 2019, LOETB identified Birr as an area that is an unemployment blackspot. In consultation with DEASP, a plan is in place to carry out an extensive demographic profile of the area so that provision can be planned in a more strategic and targeted manner. LOETB have procured a suitable premises in Birr to accommodate the current and future planned increase in FET provision in the area for 2020 and beyond.

### **e. Traineeships/Skills to Advance**

LOETB utilises the potential of the Skills To Advance initiative to further upskill employees, enhancing productivity for the employer and career opportunities for the employee. The current employment landscape in this region means investment in the development of current employees is a more attractive option than hoping to access required skills in an extremely competitive labour market. Current employees who

possess transversal skills and are experienced in local work practices possess the capacity – with specific skills development – to enhance productivity. In 2019 LOETB reskilled / upskilled over 1600 people already in employment across all of our FET provision.

#### **f. Effective Communication and Collaboration**

##### *FET Provision Review:*

A significant number of the actions identified by the Healthcare Review group in 2018 were put into place in 2019, including;

- Development of a common Healthcare Award Assessor Pack with agreed templates, for use by all teachers / tutors in Healthcare area
- Full review of the Level 5 Teamworking module and adaptation for Healthcare programmes. This meets an industry requirement for specific team working skills.
- Inclusion of Healthcare specific guidance notes to support more effective marking of learners by external supervisors in Healthcare work placements.
- Identification of sites for Healthcare Skills Assessment rooms: Tullamore & Portarlington
- Establishment of a Healthcare Community of Practice of Teachers – all using Moodle to share resources, hold discussions etc.

#### **g. Other Areas:**

##### **(i) Professional Development:**

The appointment of a Professional Development Co-ordinator in November 2018 has enabled LOETB to plan for and provide targeted training to our practitioner and support staff to positively impact the learning experience for our students from programmes Levels 1 – 6. In 2019, LOETB implemented a comprehensive Professional Development programme for all FET teaching staff. Approximately 70 staff members participated in approved PD, including:

- Certificate in Learning & Technology (Level 6)
- Certificate in Technology Enhanced Learning (Level 7)
- Diploma in Technology Enhanced Learning in FET (Level 8)
- Technology Enhanced Learning (Level 9)
- Academic Leadership (Level 9)

##### **(ii) LOETB response to Bord Na Mona**

LOETB has assumed the lead in addressing the needs of Bord Na Mona (BNM) employees. We have coordinated a collaborative approach that includes our colleagues in LWETB and GRETB as well as AIT/ Maynooth University/OLDC Jobs Club/ Citizens Information Service. LOETB organised full day Information Events at BNM sites for those who availed of the first BNM Voluntary Redundancy Programme early

in 2019. In 2019, approximately 50 of the BNM workers successfully completed CSCS training in LOETB's National Construction Training Centre in Mount Lucas in 360° Excavator. Over 60 other workers participated in a number of upskilling courses, including MIG & TIG Welding, Train the Trainer and Supervisory Management.

LOETB is focussing on four key areas of work:

- b.** Upskilling and reskilling those leaving BNM and seeking employment elsewhere
- c.** Provision of community training and education for those leaving BNM and not seeking employment elsewhere
- d.** Upskilling and reskilling those employees who choose to remain with BNM
- e.** Training to support sustainability of rural peatland communities

***(iii) Community Engagement / Active Inclusion:***

Through collaboration between Community Education, Adult Literacy and the Adult Guidance Service, and in partnership with the Home School Liaison Officer, the Active Inclusion group in LOETB have been successfully engaging with a cohort of parents in Mountrath that are looking to return to the labour market following a prolonged absence. The engagement, which is currently ongoing has consisted of; a short First Aid programme for parents, which consisted of a guidance information session regarding possible future courses which would lead to employment. This session was also used to ascertain the level of flexibility required in terms of the delivery mode and the adults' current levels of education. Twelve learners then progressed to an Introduction to Healthcare course and then onto a Level 5 Healthcare Course which is currently ongoing. This is supported by regular guidance and literacy supports. It is projected that approximately 9 learners will receive a Healthcare award from this engagement.

## **Barriers or Challenges Encountered**

### **Consultation takes Time!**

Some of the Actions identified in QIP 2019 (and indeed some of the actions carried over from QIP 2018) require a significant level of consultation with relevant stakeholders in order to. Whilst the Quality Improvement Plan was devised with the best of intentions, on reflection, some of the timelines set out for implementation of identified actions was unrealistic. A number of changes in personnel took place during the year which had an effect on implementation of some of the actions. Significant effort was made to reach the proposed timelines but in some cases, other tasks had to be prioritised. In our attempts to improve the service going forward it is critical that we do not reduce the quality or consistency of the service being provided presently. The process of change must be incremental and allow FET staff to focus on their primary concern, learners and learning.

## Detailed Update on Activities in QIP 2019

### 1. Governance

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timescale
<b>1.1 Develop an enhanced governance structure which protects the integrity of academic processes and standards, considers risks and takes account of the results of internal and external evaluation.</b>	1.1.1 Review TOR of the Results Approval Panel groups (QIP 2018 1.1.6)	Q2 2019	TOR & Membership Published	Complete	<a href="#">Published on website</a>	N/A
	1.1.2 Formalise TOR and membership of FET Service Complaints Committee	Q3 2019	TOR & Membership published	In progress	Significant work has been done on development of policy and procedures for this area – will be ready for adoption and implementation for new academic year 2020/2021	Q1 2020
	1.1.3 Develop and formalize a Results Appeals Process which applies to all certified FET provision	Q4 2019	Process formalised	Complete	<a href="#">Published on website</a>	N/A
<b>1.2 Put in place arrangements for oversight of non-QQI certification</b>	1.2.1 Develop structures and procedures for ETB-level oversight of non-QQI certification (QIP 2018 1.4.2)	Q3 2019	Procedures and Structures established	In progress	Reporting lines to be established – what info needed, how often. QASS has a role in invigilation of exams.	Q3 2020



## 2. Excellent Experience for Learners

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timescale
<b>2.1 Provide positive learning experiences and environments with suitable resources and premises</b>	2.1.1 Provide dedicated, resourced healthcare skills assessment rooms that can be made accessible to all providers of healthcare courses where local venue resources may not be sufficient	Q4 2019	Provision of resources	In progress	Some equipment has been purchased. Two centres identified. All other centres will be facilitated to increase their stock of equipment. All stock will be ready for new academic year.	Q3 2020
<b>2.2 Provide programmes which equip the learner with relevant knowledge and skills for lifelong learning, personal development, progression and employment</b>	2.2.1 Review existing progression pathways and identify additional progression opportunities (QIP 2018 2.2.2)	Q2 2019	Pathways reviewed and opportunities identified	In progress	The Learner Information sub-group's work on the development of transparent FET pathways for learners to aid learner progression is ongoing and is expected to be completed by September 2020	Q3 2020
	2.2.2 Increase awareness and identify transparent pathways for FET learners (QIP 2018 2.2.3)	Q2 2019	Updated Cooperation Agreements with Athlone IT and IT Carlow	Complete	New Cooperation Agreements have been formalized with both IoTs	N/A
	2.2.3 Engage expertise and internal resources to develop means of enhancing generic employability skills development among LOETB learners (QIP 2018 2.2.5)	Q2 2019	Programme commenced	Delayed		Q4 2020
	2.2.4 Incorporate elements of Toolkit for Initial and Ongoing Assessment into all programmes up to Level 3, with a view to developing ILPs	Q4 2019	Roll-out of templates	Complete and ongoing	All learners entering the Adult Literacy Service are now assessed using the documentation in the toolkit. ILPs are being introduced to all new learners using the template from the Toolkit- or an amended version where required e.g.	N/A

					simplified for beginner ESOL learners. All ITABE learners engaged in the service have an ILP on file detailing goals and progression from their initial contact with the service to present.	
<b>2.3 Commitment to technology-enhanced learning to support independent and collaborative learning</b>	2.3.1 Staff CPD -Support interested staff in upskilling using options available through SOLAS e-college (QIP 2018 2.3.2)	Q4 2019	Staff engaging in CPD	In progress	SOLAS starting campaign to promote use of eCollege. LOETB planning to provide tutor support to help learners that are new to online provision.	Q1 and Q2 2020
<b>2.4 Provide relevant and timely feedback to learners and ensure that learner feedback is obtained at various stages of provision</b>	2.4.1 Introduce a common feedback process for learners across LOETB's FET Service (QIP 2018 2.4.1)	Q3 2019	Feedback process established	Delayed		Q3 2020
	2.4.2 Agree a mechanism for evaluation of learner feedback (QIP 2018 2.4.2)	Q4 2019	Mechanism established and in use	Delayed		Q3 2020
<b>2.5 A FET Service for all: Improve Access, Transfer and Progression Arrangements for Learners</b>	2.5.1 Develop a LOETB Access, Transfer and Progression Policy (QIP 2018 2.5.1)	Q3 2019	Policy formalised	In progress	Admissions process prioritized. Healthcare specific admission process. Interview template. To be rolled out for September 2020.	Q3 2020
	2.5.2 Research mechanisms for better tracking of progression (QIP 2018 2.5.2)	Q3 2019	Mechanisms researched	In progress	Phone surveys have been identified as being the most effective method of capturing progression and target information. To do: Pilot project in tracking. Identify a sample of courses where there has been strong and poor outcomes reporting and make phone contact with completed learners. Learners to be informed that there will be follow up contact after they	Q3 2020

					finish their course at their induction.	
	2.5.3 Introduce a common Induction Process for all learners (QIP 2018 2.5.3)	Q3 2019	Process introduced	Complete	Piloted in September 2019. Now in place for all courses. Video created.	N/A
	2.5.4 Formalise Policy and Procedures for Reasonable Accommodation for learners (QIP 2018 2.5.4)	Q3 2019	Policy in place	Complete	<a href="#">Introduced and implemented from September 2019.</a>	N/A
	2.5.5 Promote and encourage inclusivity in the FET Service; host a series of events to showcase LOETB's FET Service as one that welcomes all learners, to commence with an intercultural event	Q2 2019 and ongoing	Events hosted	Complete and ongoing	See Main Achievements 2019	N/A

### 3. Excellent Education and Training

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timeline
<b>3.1 Provide quality-assured programmes with high levels of achievement and accreditation by learners</b>	3.1.1 Introduce common Plagiarism policy; educate learners about plagiarism and referencing at induction stage (QIP 2018 3.1.4)	Q4 2019	Policy developed; awareness training for learners at induction	Complete	Policy implemented. Plagiarism awareness part of induction process. Handbook provided for all staff and learners.	N/A
	3.1.2 Roll out anti-plagiarism software in centres on an incremental basis (QIP 2018 3.1.5)	Q4 2019	Further roll-out	Complete	Some teachers engaging very well with this, and use is gradually increasing.	N/A (Ongoing)
	3.1.3 Provide CPD and promote sharing of resources regarding integration of modules	Q3 2019	Provision of CPD and support	Complete	Training provided. Each centre has designated QA support person who can offer support in this area.	
<b>3.2 Evidence-based planning, coordination and Review</b>	3.2.1 Gather local demographic data provided from SLMRU, and other sources to identify areas of high unemployment and low education attainment.	Q4 2019	Information gathered and analysed	In progress	See Main Achievements in 2019	Q3 2020
	3.2.2 Using the information gathered in 3.2.1 above, plan targeted provision in identified regions.	Q 4 2019	Plan for provision	In progress	As above	Q3 2020
	3.2.3 Conduct a review of Childcare provision across LOETB's FET Service	Q1 2020	Review completed and recommendations identified with plan for implementation	Delayed	This will be completed in line with the development of new ELC programmes	2021
<b>3.3 Relevant, responsive, integrated and innovative</b>	3.3.1 Collate document which provides examples of collaboration with employers which is already occurring	Q3 2019	Document collated	Delayed	This will be collated when the Pathways Conference takes place.	Q4 2020

<b>programmes and initiatives</b>	within LOETB (QIP 2018 3.3.1)					
	3.3.2 Begin awareness raising campaign focusing on opportunities for employers to benefit from engagement with LOETB (QIP 2018 3.3.2)	Q3 2019	Campaign commenced	Delayed		Q4 2020
<b>3.4 Reflective practice to support improvement and sharing of knowledge, skills and resources (QIP 2018 3.4)</b>	3.4.1 Facilitate the establishment of communities of practice / subject networks to allow for sharing of knowledge and resources (QIP 2018 3.4.1)	Ongoing	Establishment of COPs	Complete - Healthcare	COP established for Healthcare. Specific workshops organised. Moodle set up.	
	3.4.2 Develop a Healthcare Assessor Pack containing common Guidelines and a template for a common Assessment Brief – to ensure consistency for all Healthcare Programmes	Q3 2019	Development of Pack	Complete Q2 2019	Centre staff and managers briefed. Template and Sample docs made available to centres Moodle site established	
	3.4.3 Agree a common approach to Induction for Healthcare programmes	Q3 2019	Development of template	Complete	Rolled out in PI and TFETC in 2019, all other centres in 2020	

#### 4. Effective Communication and Collaboration

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark	Status	Update	Revised Timeline
<b>4.1 Develop excellent internal and external communication systems</b>	4.1.1 Design an information document for all staff detailing LOETB FET services (QIP 2018 4.1.3)	Q4 2019	Document published	Delayed		2021
	4.1.2 Organise a LOETB FET Service Awareness Campaign for both internal and external stakeholders (QIP 2018 4.1.4)	Q3 2019	Campaign organized and commenced	In progress	Social Media Campaign Planned to commence in Q2 2020	Q2 2020
	4.1.3 Nominate a designated QA staff member to each centre as specific support person for QA related issues	Q2 2019	Staff members identified, contact initiated with centres	Complete	All centres were informed who their designated QA Support person is. Log of queries maintained.	N/A
	4.1.4 Promote the involvement of external stakeholders into shaping of course provision; support teaching staff in incorporating relevant information sessions from relevant local employers into course content	Q4 2019	External involvement organised	Complete and ongoing	Examples of this include involvement of CIF and employers from Utilities industry in shaping of Utilities Specialist Traineeship, involvement of Bord na Mona in shaping provision for their employees, and engagement with healthcare professionals and advocate in delivery of workshops and shaping of healthcare provision.	N/A
<b>4.2 Collaborate with FET centres, second providers and contract trainers to work towards a common QA system.</b>	4.2.1 Commence a review of existing TQAS documentation with a view to a common set of QA policies, procedures and documentation to be used by all	Q2 2019	Reviewed documentation	Complete	A number of TQAS forms and procedures were revised. Collaboration with second providers in Q4 2019, rolled out from January 2020 – See Main Achievements 2019	N/A (process ongoing)
	4.2.2 Introduce, on a trial basis, a similar process to that of the Internal Verification	Q3 2019	Internal Verification Completed	Complete	QASS staff involved in IV process for one second provider, gathered feedback and evaluated	N/A

	process used in FET centres, to selected Training courses				process. Some recommendations made which will inform the development process for a single QA system	
	4.2.3 Commence a system of tutor-devised assessments on Training Programmes, with support provided by QA Dept and experienced FE tutors.	Q3 2019	Tutor-devised assessment	Complete	Training provided in September 2019, and course is ongoing. Support provided by QASS and other experienced tutors.	

**Part 2:**  
**Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board**  
**Quality Improvement Plan 2020**

**Introduction**

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board is committed to the provision of Quality Education and Training Programmes and Services. The Statement of Strategy published in 2018 focuses on four key goals:

- Excellent Education and Training
- Excellent Experience for Students
- Organisation Transformation
- Staff Development

Since the establishment of LOETB we have been committed to the development of an organisation that is learner and staff centred, that provides seamless pathways for learners and encourages staff to develop and grow as part of a lifelong learning philosophy.

The concept of constant improvement is another tenet of LOETB's approach to developing as an organisation. In February 2019 LOETB invited an external stakeholder into the organisation to review our progress to date in Quality Assurance and the implementation of our Quality Improvement Plan. This process involved interviews with Senior Management, Middle Management, and Staff and is an example of our willingness to hear other voices and review our practice.

The rationale for this review was based on listening to another voice, critiquing where we are, and identifying the priorities for the future. The process also recognised our ambition in the first QIP and the importance of maintaining realistic timelines to allow processes to develop at a pace that is manageable and contributes to the quality of the outcome.

In 2020, LOETB will be one of the first four ETBs to participate in QQI's Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance. In preparation for this review, LOETB will conduct a



comprehensive self-evaluation and will present findings in a Self-Evaluation Report. We believe that this process provides LOETB with an excellent opportunity to showcase the significant progress that has been made in recent years in establishing a real culture of quality in the organisation, and will help the FET Service to plan for furthering development and improvement for the future by setting out an Action Plan in response to the Review Panel Report.

As well as concentrating significant energy on Self-Evaluation in 2020, LOETB have identified priority areas to focus on this year. This Quality Improvement Plan 2020 will continue to expand on the priorities established in 2018 and 2019 and will provide a focus for the development of:

- Restructuring of FET Services
- Communities of Practice – Guidance and Inclusion Support Network
- LOETB Information Hub
- Community Engagement / Active Inclusion
- Co-development / Co-delivery model with IT Carlow

As Director of Further Education and Training I am confident that LOETB will continue to further improve the services we have available to all learners, and support the staff in expanding the creativity and innovation that they show to provide a high quality FET service.

## **Priorities in 2020**

### **1. Restructure of FET Services**

In consideration of the forthcoming FET Strategy 2020 -2024, as well as the involvement of LOETB in a number of key national projects, including the QQI Inaugural Review, LOETB will complete a restructure of our Service in the first quarter of 2020 to ensure a greater focus on a number of key themes. Each of the following themes will become a pillar in the new LOETB FET structure, and will be overseen by a member of the FET Senior Management Team.

- Skills (with a specific focus initially on Bord Na Mona)
- Pathways
- Inclusion
- Quality Assurance

### **2. Communities of Practice**

#### **a. Guidance**

The Adult Guidance Service of LOETB have initiated a project re Integration of Guidance at FET Centre Level across LOETB. This involves the development of a Guidance Community of Practice where a Learner Liaison will be in place in each FET Centre with the following responsibilities:

- Information support on site in all centres for all learners and potential learners.
- Link with management, staff and guidance re learner progression and employment pathways.
- Working collaboratively with the Guidance team on the development of a Career Management Programme across FET that is clear, transparent and consistent.

LOETB are engaging with Maynooth University to provide Professional Development to approximately 18 relevant staff in our FET centres in order to ensure they are adequately equipped to administer quality and accurate guidance information to our learners.

*This project was due to commence in September 2020 – however, due to the COVID19 pandemic, a decision has been made to postpone the commencement of the project until January 2021, or to the start of the new academic year 21/22 – depending on availability of tutors from Maynooth University and readiness of LOETB staff to engage on programme, taking into account that staff will be engaging in a different mode of provision in line with HSE and Government guidelines.*

#### **b. Inclusion Support Network**

In conjunction with the introduction of the inclusion pillar to the LOETB FET structure, the Inclusion Support Network (ISN) will be rolled out in 2020. This will comprise of a representative from each of our FET Centres and Services – someone who is working face to face with our learners. The function of this person within the centre will be as an advocate for those who experience barriers accessing courses and

encounter obstacles in their learning. The ISN will champion inclusiveness in our centres by promoting best practice in accessibility. This will be achieved through peer support and by sharing ideas and resolutions to issues experienced by our learners. The ISN will meet formally twice each year and communicate with each other on an ongoing basis.

LOETB will support the members of the ISN through CPD and the Digital Badge in Universal Design Learning with Ahead has been identified as the most appropriate for our requirements. The members of the ISN will also complete the prerequisite five additional hours in order to become a Facilitator. The ISN will then be in a position to support colleagues who wish to complete the Digital Badge in future iterations. It is anticipated that the members of the ISN will begin this training in September.

### **3. LOETB Information Hub**

LOETB are currently developing an 'Information Hub' for potential learners to enquire about or apply for further education and training courses and to get advice from the Adult Guidance Service who will be based onsite. The premises, which will be situated in the centre of Portlaoise Town, will provide a modern environment that will allow users to self-access information on courses or to receive assistance on the kind of course that's right for them. In 2019 in Laois, over 330 people engaged with the Adult Guidance for the first time, with the service facilitating another 500 appointments for existing clients. Therefore, the potential is apparent for LOETB to capitalise on a local need for this service by way of providing a more visible presence. The location is also highly convenient for local enterprises to drop in and learn what training and education supports are available for their employees or to arrange a visit from LOETB's Enterprise Engagement Support Service.

*The development of this facility has been significantly delayed due to COVID19 pandemic but it is hoped that it will open by the end of 2020.*

### **4. Community Engagement / Active Inclusion:**

LOETB will, in 2020, work as part of a multi-agency approach with DEASP and Portarlington Community Development Association (PCDA) to engage those in the greater Portarlington area which has been identified by DEASP as an unemployment blackspot. The involvement of PCDA as the Second Provider encourages support within the local community, linking the learners in with local employers and local groups such as Portarlington Enterprise Centre, Portarlington Fab Lab, Men's Shed, etc. The project outline is as follows:

- 201 LTU JA claimants were identified signing in Portarlington, 129 over 25 years of age and 72 under 25 years of age who are not engaged in any activation measure. Approximately 80% of the cohort are male.
- Under 25s were invited for individual appointments with LOETB/DEASP Officers to engage with the learners. An eight-week Local Training Initiative is

currently being developed for this cohort. The learners will complete two level 4 QQI modules which will support them defining their career directions. They will also complete various other certificates which will enhance their potential to gain employment. They will then work on identifying employers for employment or as a potential host for the DEASP Youth Employment Support Scheme (YESS). The DEASP Employment Engagement Officer will support the learners by approaching employers in the local area to secure YESS placements on their behalf.

- The Over 25s will be invited for individual appointments with LOETB/DEASP Officers in February 2020. A 34-week Local Training Initiative has been proposed to support the learners to achieve a Major Award and move towards further education and training or employment as many of this cohort are very long term unemployed and will require a myriad of supports.

#### **5. Co-delivery / Co-development model with IT Carlow**

In 2020, LOETB will commence the exploration of a co-delivery/co-development model with IT Carlow – whereby learners could commence their studies with LOETB for up to two years, and complete their undergraduate studies with IT Carlow, with both parties having cooperated and collaborated to agree the approach and content. It is anticipated that in 2020, particular subject areas for a pilot programme will be explored, with likely commencement of a programme being September 2021.

#### **6. Maintaining FET Provision during COVID-19 Pandemic**

Due to the closure of FET centres during the COVID-19 Pandemic, LOETB's FET Programmes and Services are currently being maintained through online provision. In planning for the new academic year, and in observing Government guidelines in relation to Social Distancing, LOETB will work towards developing and implementing a Blended Learning Policy, and associated procedures and guidelines.

## 1. Governance

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
<b>1.1 Develop an enhanced governance structure which protects the integrity of academic processes and standards, considers risks and takes account of the results of internal and external evaluation.</b>	1.1.1 Formalise TOR and membership of FET Service Complaints Committee	Q3 2020	TOR & Membership published
	1.1.2 Review governance structure to take into account new organisational structure	Q2 2020	Revised governance structure
<b>1.2 Put in place arrangements for oversight of non-QQI certification</b>	1.2.1 Develop structures and procedures for ETB-level oversight of non-QQI certification (QIP 2018 1.4.2)	Q3 2019	Procedures and Structures established

## 2. Excellent Experience for Learners

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
<b>2.1 Provide positive learning experiences and environments with suitable resources and premises</b>	2.1.1 Provide dedicated, resourced healthcare skills assessment rooms that can be made accessible to all providers of healthcare courses where local venue resources may not be sufficient	Q3 2020	Skills Assessment Rooms open and in use
<b>2.2 Provide programmes which equip the learner with relevant knowledge and skills for lifelong learning, personal development, progression and employment</b>	2.2.1 Review existing progression pathways and identify additional progression opportunities	Q3 2020	Pathways reviewed and opportunities identified
	2.2.3 Engage expertise and internal resources to develop means of enhancing generic employability skills development among LOETB learners (QIP 2018 2.2.5)	Q3 2020	Programme commenced
<b>2.3 Commitment to technology-enhanced learning to support independent and collaborative learning</b>	2.3.1 Staff CPD -Support interested staff in upskilling using options available through SOLAS e-college (QIP 2018 2.3.2)	Q1/2 2020	Staff engaging in CPD
<b>2.4 Provide relevant and timely feedback to learners and ensure that learner feedback is obtained at various stages of provision</b>	2.4.1 Introduce a common feedback process for learners across LOETB's FET Service (QIP 2018 2.4.1)	Q3 2020	Feedback process established
	2.4.2 Agree a mechanism for evaluation of learner feedback (QIP 2018 2.4.2)	Q4 2020	Mechanism established and in use
<b>2.5 A FET Service for all: Improve Access, Transfer and Progression Arrangements for Learners</b>	2.5.1 Develop a LOETB Access, Transfer and Progression Policy (QIP 2018 2.5.1)	Q3 2020	Policy formalised
	2.5.2 Research mechanisms for better tracking of progression (QIP 2018 2.5.2)	Q3 2020	Mechanisms researched

### 3. Excellent Education and Training

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
<b>3.2 Evidence-based planning, coordination and Review</b>	3.2.1 Gather local demographic data provided from SLMRU, and other sources to identify areas of high unemployment and low education attainment.	Q3 2020	Information gathered and analysed
	3.2.2 Using the information gathered in 3.2.1 above, plan targeted provision in identified regions.	Q3 2020	Plan for provision
	3.2.3 Conduct a review of Childcare provision across LOETB's FET Service	In line with ELC Prog Dev Project	Review completed and recommendations identified with plan for implementation
<b>3.3 Relevant, responsive, integrated and innovative programmes and initiatives</b>	3.3.1 Collate document which provides examples of collaboration with employers which is already occurring within LOETB (QIP 2018 3.3.1)	Q3 2020	Document collated
	3.3.2 Begin awareness raising campaign focusing on opportunities for employers to benefit from engagement with LOETB (QIP 2018 3.3.2)	Q3 2020	Campaign commenced

### 4. Effective Communication and Collaboration

Quality Improvement Objective / Desired Outcome	Key Tasks/Activities	Timeline	Measure / Benchmark
<b>4.1 Develop excellent internal and external communication systems</b>	4.1.1 Design an information document for all staff detailing LOETB FET services (QIP 2018 4.1.3)	Q4 2019	Document published
	4.1.2 Organise a LOETB FET Service Awareness Campaign for both internal and external stakeholders (QIP 2018 4.1.4)	Q2 2020	Campaign organized and commenced