

Further Education and Training

(FET) Options for
School Leavers

#GoFurtherWithDonegalETB



etb

Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Dhún na nGall
*Donegal Education and
Training Board*

What's your next move?

Are you about to leave school or have left recently and are wondering what next or where do I go from here?

Have you thought about Further Education and Training (FET)? Did you know that Donegal ETB, as the largest FET provider in Co Donegal, offers a comprehensive range of options on your doorstep?

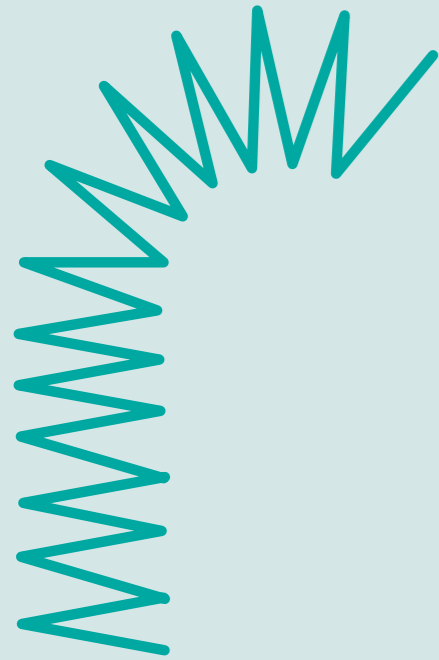
If you want to earn while you learn or fast-track your way into employment or need a stepping stone into third level with nationally and internationally recognised qualifications, then consider applying for an apprenticeship, Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) course, specific skills training course, tertiary degree or traineeship.

10 Reasons to study with us



LOW OR NO COURSE FEES

Progression to Employment and/or Degree Courses in Third Level Institutions



FLEXIBLE LEARNING FOR THE CHANGING EMPLOYMENT MARKET



CAREER GUIDANCE



EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

S M A L L

CLASS SIZES



RANGE OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION



STUDENTS OF ALL AGES CATERED FOR



VARIETY OF LEARNING AREAS



QUALIFIED, EXPERIENCED AND DEDICATED STAFF

What is an apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a full-time training programme that takes between two and four years to complete depending on the trade or occupation being undertaken.

An apprenticeship is a programme of formal education and training. It combines learning in a place of work along with learning in an education or training centre. It is an "earn while you learn" model of training. Craft Apprenticeships include traditional trades such as Electrical, Carpentry and Joinery, Plumbing and Motor Mechanics, and these apprenticeships are delivered in 7 phases over a minimum of four years. Since 2016, the range of apprenticeships has increased significantly and now includes apprenticeships in industries such as Hospitality and Food, ICT, Insurance, Property Services, Finance, Sales, and Agriculture and Horticulture. Apprenticeships vary in duration from 2–4 years and also in level of award upon successful completion (levels 5–10).

"I chose an apprenticeship as I could see it was the practical subjects I had a flare for at school. Although I achieved enough points to go down the CAO route, because I had a great interest in cars, a motor mechanics apprenticeship seemed the best option for me. I did check the CAO for options through the third level route but nothing was available with as much to offer someone looking to work in the motor trade. I'm really enjoying my apprenticeship so far. It's great being able to study your trade in which your job is guaranteed while also getting a salary in comparison to the ever-distant end to college and the uncertainty of a job when you graduate. A person with an apprenticeship always has the ability to get a job in a country of their choice as they are recognised worldwide. From going down the apprenticeship route I have found that the third level route is not the only option and, in some cases, not the best option for everyone."

Finnian Ward, Motor Mechanic Apprentice with Cormack Ward Car Sales

Why should I consider an apprenticeship?

- Apprenticeships offer you the chance to gain skills, experience and qualifications while earning a wage. You have the opportunity to gain practical work experience and qualifications without incurring a student loan and at the same time build your employment skills and CV.

What does it cost to do an apprenticeship?

- The cost to do an apprenticeship is very minimal. In fact, the model is 'earn while you learn' and so you are paid for the duration of your apprenticeship even when away from the employer in an education or training centre. Apprentices pay a student fee when attending their off-the-job training in a Higher Education Institute. This fee will generally equate to the amount of time the apprentice spends in the Higher Education Institute.

Where can I do an apprenticeship?

- As the apprenticeship is a combination of on- and off-the-job training, with at least 50% of the time spent with an employer, you will do part of your apprenticeship with an employer and other elements with training/education providers. The location of the training/education providers is dependent on the craft or occupation chosen.

When can I apply for an apprenticeship?

- You have to secure employment with an approved employer as an apprentice and meet the eligibility criteria for your chosen apprenticeship before you can be registered as an apprentice. You can be registered and commence the traditional craft apprenticeships any time of the year. However, intake for the new apprenticeships launched post 2016 usually takes place just once a year.

Further information is also available at www.apprenticeship.ie

What is a PLC?

Why should I consider a PLC?

- PLCs are designed as a step towards skilled employment and, as such, they are closely linked to industry and its needs.

What does it cost to do a PLC?

- A registration fee of €100 applies to all students. Non-medical card holders must also pay a QQI exam fee of €50.

Where can I do a PLC?

- Donegal ETB's **FET** Service offers PLCs in four locations – Buncrana (Further Education and Training Centre), Killybegs (St Catherine's Vocational School), Letterkenny (Errigal College and Letterkenny Further Education and Training Centre, Business Park Road) and Stranorlar (Finn Valley College).

When can I apply for a PLC?

- You can apply for a PLC anytime from November each year for starting the following September. You can apply through the school, online through <https://www.donegaletb.ie/fetcoursefinder> or through the CAO - <https://www.cao.ie/> (from November each year).

PLCs are full-time one year courses that offer a mixture of practical work, academic work and work experience. Post Leaving Certificate courses adopt an integrated approach, focusing on technical knowledge, core skills and work experience. Almost half of the time spent on a PLC is devoted to knowledge and skill training related to employment, with a further quarter spent on relevant work-based experience.

Donegal ETB offers the following QQI Level 5 PLC courses in:

- Animal Care
- Art, Craft and Design
- Business Administration
- Business Studies
- Construction Technology
- Early Learning and Care
- E-Business
- Health Service Skills
- Inclusive Education and Care
- Nursing Studies
- Sports, Recreation and Exercise

“I came to Finn Valley College to do the QQI Level 5 Business Administration PLC; my previous school was large so I could not believe the difference in individual attention I received. I have gained in confidence and practical skills. I have grown immensely as a person and I am now looking forward to moving onto third level college with the confidence I have gained”.

—
Maria Coyle, Business Administration PLC student

What is Specific Skills Training?

Why should I consider specific skills training?

- Specific skills training give participants the opportunity to develop cutting edge skills and knowledge making them more skilled, more employable and enhancing their career options and enables employers to access a pipeline of talent and students.

What does it cost to do Specific Skills training?

- Specific Skills Training courses are free and you may be paid a training allowance for the duration of your course. You can also claim an accommodation allowance if you need to live away from home for the duration of the course or a travel allowance.

Where can I do specific skill training?

- Donegal ETB's **FET** Service offers specific skills training in a number of locations around the county including its Gaoth Dobhair and Letterkenny Training Centres.

When can I apply for specific skills training?

- You can apply for specific skills training at various times throughout the year. You can apply online through <https://www.donegaletb.ie/fetcoursefinder> (use the skills word such as welding or surf as your Keyword) or through the CAO - <https://www.cao.ie/>.

Specific skills training courses are full-time courses ranging from six to forty weeks duration. They are designed to provide students with a range of employability related skills and formal vocational qualifications to facilitate those entering the labour market for the first time and for those wishing to update or acquire new skills.

Donegal ETB offers specific skills training courses at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6 through QQI or other industry recognised accreditation in a range of areas including:

- Bus Driving
- Business Administration
- Data Science
- Financial and Management Accounts
- Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Driving
- Multimedia
- Surf Instructor and Beach Lifeguard
- Welding

“I studied Metalwork at school and quickly realised that I really enjoyed it. I knew I wanted to improve my knowledge and skills so started researching courses. I came across a welding course in Gweedore—it was the perfect fit for me and it was free! Welding is a skill I can take anywhere in the world and I know I have a bright future ahead”.

—
Adam Cassidy, Welding student



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Comhhaoinithe ag an
Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union

Specific Skills training is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.

What is a Tertiary Degree?

Why should I consider a tertiary degree?

- Tertiary degrees provide a seamless access route into degree programmes. They give applicants the opportunity to start their degree in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector. Unlike other degree courses, applicants do not need to wait for CAO points as they can apply directly. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited for an interview where they will be required to show evidence of their eligibility based on the information provided when applying.

For those interested in pursuing a nursing career, this access route guarantees the twenty people who complete the access course a place in ATU's General Nursing degree.

What does it cost to do a tertiary degree?

- There are no fees attached to the first year of a tertiary degree or the tertiary degree access route (nursing) with Donegal ETB and applicants are eligible to apply for a SUSI grant. You may also be eligible to apply for a Back to Education Allowance (BTEA).

Where can I do a tertiary degree?

- Donegal ETB's **FET** Service offers it's four tertiary degrees in Letterkenny. You will then progress to an ATU campus in Letterkenny, Sligo or Galway City, depending on your progression choice.

When can I apply for a tertiary degree?

- You can apply for a tertiary degree anytime between January and September each year for starting in September through <https://www.donegaletb.ie/fetcoursefinder> (use degree as your Keyword).

A tertiary degree is a joint further and higher education degree programme. Students commence their third level experience in further education with the Education and Training Board but will complete the remainder in higher education colleges. It varies from 1 to 2 years studying in the Further Education and Training College, depending on the course.

Donegal ETB currently offers year one of the following tertiary degrees:

- Bachelor of Science in Industrial Laboratory Science
- Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Business
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Sustainable Engineering Technologies
- Tertiary access route into the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing

"I previously attended Loreto Community school Milford and was told about the Tertiary Access Route into the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing course by my career guidance counsellor, as another route to doing general nursing. My reason for choosing this course was to get an introduction to nursing before moving onto ATU as I was worried about starting straight into a big college at 17. It was also reassuring to know I would have a second option if I didn't get the points I needed. I applied online with a personal statement and some other information and got an email asking me to come in for an interview. It was a very simple process overall and I got an interview date within a week.

This course has been an extremely beneficial experience so far and I'm very glad I chose to do it. I'll now be continuing my education into nursing with work experience, patient moving, manual handling and a great insight to what nursing's all about. From doing our skills demonstrations I have gained a lot of skills that will help me in the long run when starting into ATU and also in my work experience and I cannot recommend this course enough. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and would encourage anyone thinking about nursing to definitely give it very good consideration."

— Alanna Reid, Tertiary Access Route into Bachelor of Science (Honours) in General Nursing student

What is a Traineeship?

Why should I consider a traineeship?

- Traineeships enable students to develop cutting edge skills and knowledge on-the-job, making them more skilled, more employable and enhancing their career options.

What does it cost to do a traineeship?

- Traineeships are free and you may be paid a training allowance but some fees may apply. For example with the Beauty Specialist Traineeship, students are responsible for purchasing their own makeup kit costs which generally cost around €350.00 (a payment plan can be arranged in this case). You can also claim an accommodation allowance if you need to live away from home for the duration of the course or a travel allowance.

Where can I do a traineeship?

- Donegal ETB provides traineeships in a variety of locations across the county.

When can I apply for a traineeship?

- You can apply for a traineeship at Various times throughout the year. You can apply online through <https://www.donegaletb.ie/fetcoursefinder> or through the CAO - <http://www.cao.ie/> (from November each year).

A traineeship is a programme of structured training which combines learning in an education and training setting and in the workplace aiming to improve employment outcomes for participants and increase retention and productivity within industry.

Donegal ETB currently offers the following traineeships:

- Beauty Specialist
- Communication Systems Installation
- Donegal Weaving
- Hairdressing
- Healthcare Support
- Intellectual Disability Practice
- Marine Engineering
- Medical/Legal Administration
- Outdoor Activity Instructor
- Public Works Operations and Maintenance

"After completing my Leaving Certificate I was really unsure about what I wanted to do - I didn't see the point in signing up to do a four year degree when I was really unsure about my career path for me. I took time to think about my options and I always had an interest in Make Up and Beauty. When I realised Donegal ETB offered the Traineeship in Beauty Therapy which is ITEC certified, it made sense—this was the course for me. The theory and practical elements of the course were really enjoyable, I loved every minute of it, I even won the student of the year award and secured a job offer from my placement provider. However, I plan to travel to Australia and now I have a qualification that is recognised worldwide."

— Tara Harley, Beauty Therapist Traineeship



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Government of Ireland



Comhhaoinithe ag an
Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union

Traineeships are co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union.

What do Principals think?

Students must be supported in achieving to the best of their ability and in becoming lifelong learners, whatever path they chose. FET offers a very exciting option for many of our students and provides them with an opportunity to earn as they learn. In an era of ever-increasing living expenses, Donegal ETB FET offers students many course options within County Donegal, thus enabling students to live, learn and earn locally. Many FET students rediscover the love of learning on their FET journey and continue their learning into higher education.

—
Seán Mac Suibhne,
Principal, Coláiste Ailigh, Letterkenny

As a Principal of a school which is a provider of further education (PLC) I have seen at first hand the enormous benefits of the courses both in their own right as nationally recognised courses with excellent qualifications, but also as gateway courses to higher education and direct employment where students can use the qualifications they receive along with the skill-set they develop for the future career progression. In an age of higher education drop-out and college course choice overload, Post Leaving Certificate courses offer a great platform for students as they prepare for the next stage of their life-long learning.

—
Séan McFadden,
Principal, Finn Valley College, Stranorlar

It is important that students and parents consider Further Education and Training FET as a possible pathway for progression. Graduates from apprenticeships, FET courses and Post-Leaving Cert (PLC) courses are rated highly by employers in areas such as team-working, commercial awareness and entrepreneurial skills. Feedback from employers is that they are most satisfied with FET graduates' computer skills, verbal communication, numeracy, and written skills.

In terms of personal attributes, employers rate highly FET students' work ethic, reliability, positive attitudes and ethical and social awareness.

Many of the FET courses on offer now have increased participation in work placements and engaged learning opportunities. The modes of assessment used often have increased focus on student project work and problem solving which is so relevant in the employment context.

—
Dr Martin Gormley, Director of School,
Donegal ETB

The benefits of choosing a FET route after completing the Leaving Certificate are vast and rewarding. The opportunity in earning as you learn with an apprenticeship, testing the water in a job area with a traineeship or completing a PLC course that will equip you with great transferable skills for the workplace or college. For too long our system wrongly has suggested that immediate entry into 3rd level was the only option. The costs were often prohibitive and put unnecessary pressure on families. With the many dynamic options available to our unique students, there are so many excellent options and pathways to choose from. We as a school are extremely proud that 23% of our student graduates chose the apprentice pathway in 2018.

—
John Gorman,
Principal, Rosses Community College

When considering pathways after a Leaving Certificate, young people should give serious consideration to all opportunities available to them including those opportunities in Further Education. As well as developing education and working from a knowledge based programme, students in Further Education develop transferable skills particularly through work experience and placements. They learn on the job, put theory into practice and as a result are very aware and very capable for positions as they arise. In my experience those who go through the Further Education system gain great experience and are directly employable as result.

—
Fiona Temple,
Principal, Mulroy College, Milford

As Principal of a large school, I am delighted to see an increasing interest in Further Education and Training FET as an option after Leaving Certificate. For too long a small but significant group of students have limited success in our academic, exam-led school system simply because their practical skills and abilities were undervalued with no viable educational pathway to harness their capabilities. The expansion of apprenticeships and traineeships into newer occupations such as ICT is to be welcomed and should go in some way towards paving the way for these skilled based opportunities to sit comfortably as an option alongside a direct progression to higher education. Gaps in our workforce, the forgotten middle skills jobs, the high drop-out rate at third level and associated costs offer a niche that FET can comfortably fill.

—
Margaret O Connor,
Principal, Loreto Community School, Milford

What do Industry Leaders think?

We at Mooney Boats, Killybegs feel Traineeship programmes are incredibly valuable to our industry because the knowledge offered on the course is directly relevant to our business. This means potential young people who have completed a traineeship have an immediate advantage when it comes to getting employment. As far as growth opportunities and employment prospects go; Enterprise Ireland reported that the engineering sector grew rapidly in 2018, and this is growth that we see here in Killybegs, not only with ourselves but with the local companies who work here. The growth we are experiencing first hand is forecast to continue and with this kind of industry growth, job prospects and opportunities for personal development will grow also.

—
Lee Mooney,
Managing Director, Mooney Boats LTD, Killybegs

Inishowen Engineering have been working in partnership with Donegal ETB for over 20 years and have been looking for a course to encourage new entrants into the Engineering sector—Donegal ETB's Traineeship fits the bill perfectly as it gives people the basic entrance skills to develop Welders, Fabricators, CNC Operatives and develop general engineering skills. We would strongly encourage young people to consider Traineeships as their next option after their Leaving Cert.

—
Micheal McKinney,
Managing Director, Inishowen Engineering

Our members are consistently keen to recruit job ready people with the right skills and attitude for the modern workplace. The Further Education and Training courses and programmes provided by Donegal ETB are informed and designed in collaboration with local industry and employers and offer school leavers with new opportunities and more diverse pathways to their future career. The practical courses and personal attention given to each student will ensure that employer will benefit from the employee with job ready skills, knowledge and attitude and the student can start on their chosen career path with confidence.

—
Toni Forrester,
CEO, Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce

Employers within the ICT/FinTech sectors are embracing a broad range of qualifications from school leavers that include practical internships, apprenticeships, industry-related part-time courses providing graduates with relevant work-ready skills. There are multiple pathways for school leavers to success and choosing **FET** option/courses after completing the Leaving Certificate offers an attractive earn as you learn, alternative route to employment, training and indeed Higher Education. We are proud to engage with all levels of academia, promoting all routes for school leavers into education and employment so they can enjoy the benefits and opportunities within the ICT/FinTech sector.

—
David Roche, Director FinTech Services & Head of Corporate Social Responsibility,
Tata Consultancy Services

Donegal ETB currently offers an extensive range of Further Education and Training **FET** programmes for school leavers. These programmes have been designed in collaboration with local employers and address current and future industry requirements. The programmes have the advantage of being very practical and typically class sizes are reasonably small ensuring students receive significant personal attention from the experienced and competent tutors. Upon successful completion, students will have knowledge, skills and competencies to gain employment or progress to higher education programmes delivered locally and nationally.

—
Dr Oran Doherty, Retail Supervision,
Apprentice Manager, IBEC

Today, employers are embracing a broad range of qualifications from school leavers that include practical traineeships, apprenticeships and other industry focused part-time courses that provide graduates with employer-ready skills. Enterprise Ireland is working closely with employers and education providers to develop industry-leading education and training opportunities for those entering the workforce, and upskilling. School leavers should consider multiple pathways to achieve their career aspirations and be encouraged that there are more choices than ever before.

—
Aidan McKenna,
Regional Director, North East & North West Region,
Enterprise Ireland

On the job learning or work based learning is such a very good option. As an employer, MEANit Web Design Agency would prefer to have people learn on the job than coming in with a degree. In many cases it takes a mix of on the job and in class learning. It is not ideal for all careers, however for most careers, this is a great option and the one that is favoured in so many other countries. Donegal ETB is delivering on a promise to introduce us to 'work ready' enthusiastic young people, who add value to our business. Our first port of call when recruiting will be with Donegal ETB.

—
Michael MacGinty,
Sales Director,
MEANit Web Design Agency, Letterkenny

What do Guidance Counsellors think?

There are so many benefits to choosing a **FET** route after completing the Leaving Certificate. Whether it is earning as you learn with an apprenticeship, testing the water in a job area with a traineeship or completing a PLC course that will equip you with great transferable skills for the workplace or college. There are so many excellent options and pathways to choose from.

—
Rory White, Guidance Counsellor,
Finn Valley College, Stanorlar

The diverse range of lifelong learning opportunities available to our students in the Further Education and Training **FET** sector is fantastic. There is something for everyone and the support provided by the dynamic **FET** team in Donegal ETB is first class. The practical aspect and work placement elements of **FET** courses are invaluable learning experiences. Students are prepared for progression into the workplace or Higher Education while working on their personal strengths, making them more employable in the future.

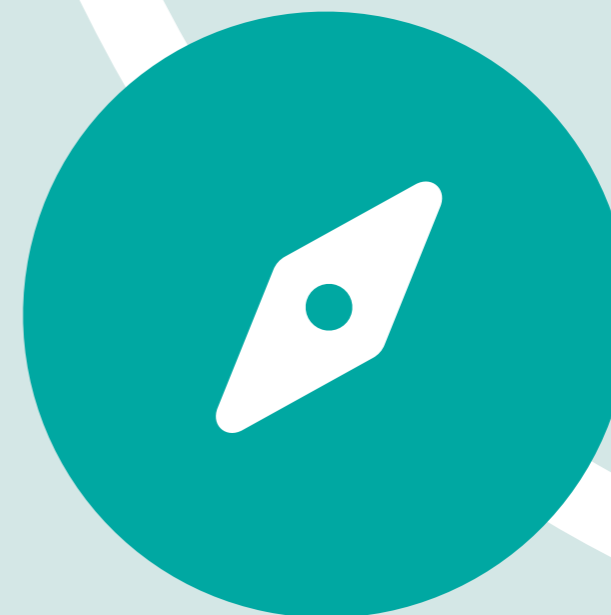
—
Shirley McConologue, Guidance Counsellor,
Crana College, Buncrana

Further Education and Training courses are a beneficial, achievable and an attractive route to employment, to gain both knowledge and training and are a pathway to Higher Education: more students should be encouraged to complete Further Education and Training courses. Financially there are big incentives such as little to no fees and the benefits of getting paid whilst you learn on an apprenticeship. Similarly, it can allow students to get a feel for an area of work or study they might like to explore further in the future without having to make the big commitment to a four year degree which could be a cause of anxiety for those looking to do Higher Education. I think the benefits of Further Education and Training are many for students and should be encouraged by schools and the Department of Education.

—
Conor Doherty, Guidance Counsellor,
Carndonagh Community School

Through our scheduled Guidance classes and in our individual appointments, we always strongly encourage our students to research and apply for Further Education and Training **FET** courses, as well as Higher Education options. It is important that young people are presented with a range of Further Education options and progression routes, given their various ability levels and personal education preferences. In particular, our annual visit to the Training Centre at Ballyraine sparks interest among our students and encourages them to explore the various **FET** options available locally. Many of our students have used the Further Education and Training route to secure employment or to access Higher Education and we are proud to give these examples to our Leaving Certificate students as they make their final year decisions.

—
Yvonne Doherty, Guidance Counsellor,
St. Eunan's College, Letterkenny



Further information on **FET** courses

Information on our FET courses can be found at:

<http://www.donegaletb.ie/fetcoursefinder>

You can apply online for many of Donegal ETB's FET courses through www.donegaletb.ie/fetcoursefinder or through the CAO - <http://www.cao.ie/options> (from November each year) or apply directly to our centres:

Traineeships/Specific Skills Training

- Tara McGuire, Recruitment Officer, 074 91 20500,
coursedonegaltc@donegaletb.ie

PLCs

- Danielle McGee, FET Centre Buncrana,
074 9362466, daniellemcgee@donegaletb.ie
- Caroline Gillespie, FET Centre Donegal Town (Drumcliff),
074 97 21705, carolineanggillespie@donegaletb.ie
- Anne Marie Luby, St. Catherine's Vocational School, Killybegs,
074 9731491, annemarieluby@donegaletb.ie
- Michelle O'Reilly, Errigal College, Letterkenny,
074 9121047, michelleoreilly@donegaletb.ie
- Kathleen Boland, Finn Valley College, Stranorlar,
074 9131684, kathleenboland@donegaletb.ie

Apprenticeships

- The Apprenticeship Team, 074 9120500/087 1183137
apprenticeship@donegaletb.ie
- <https://www.donegaletb.ie/feature/programmes/apprenticeships/>
- www.apprenticeships.ie

Tertiary Degrees

- Eileen Patton, Adult Guidance Coordinator, 074 91 78088,
adultguidance@donegaletb.ie

