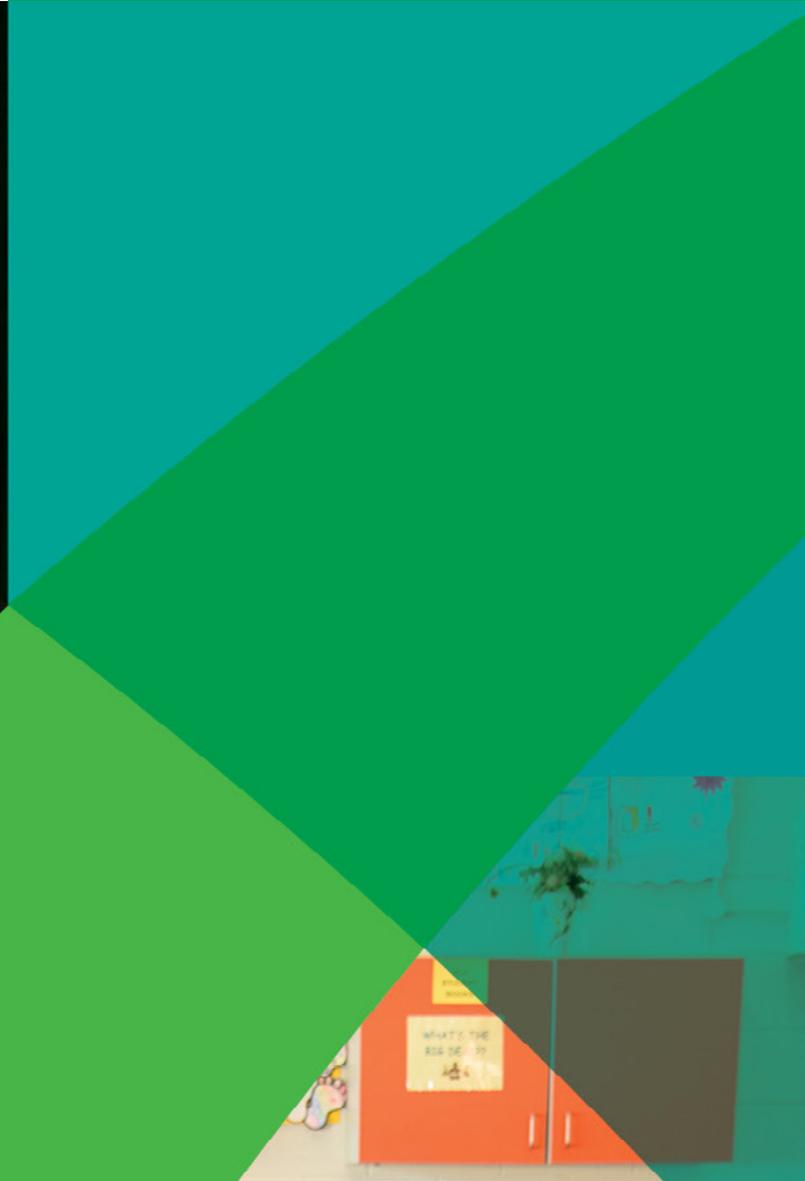


Donegal ETB

Annual Report

2021



etb

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

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Our Vision

Excellence in the delivery of a quality, learner-centred education and training service.

Our Mission Statement

To promote, provide and support accessible and inclusive education and training in a safe and caring environment which enables young people and adults to empower themselves to reach their full potential.

Cllr Doherty in his concluding remarks in his role as Chairperson for 2021 highlighted key areas which he had welcomed and supported during his tenure as Chairperson, in particular:

- It was a trying year in education for staff, students, school management and parents in our schools, colleges and centres and all are to be commended for their efforts.
- There were few opportunities to wear the Chain of Office as Chairperson due to COVID-19 restrictions on the hosting of events.
- The cross-border work with the Department of Education both North and South and, the engagement between Donegal ETB and Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and other relevant stakeholders to reach a solution for the future of education provision in the Belleek, Garrison and Derrygonnelly areas of Fermanagh following the closure of St Mary's High School, Brollagh.
- The confirmation by Minister Simon Harris on the newly established Technological University Status for the North West region encompassing Letterkenny, Galway Mayo and Sligo Institutes of Technology and the significant importance this will have for the North and North West communities who will have access to university education at a local level. This will also complement the cross-border links with Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), North West College and the Medical School of Derry and Apprenticeships to be delivered in the future.
- The welcomed significant announcements made on the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF) by SOLAS as advised by Martina Needham, Adult Education Officer to community groups and with reference particularly to the Inishowen area to help those groups to reconnect and engage during COVID-19 times.
- The progression in securing a site for the three School Campus for Bunrana: the final allocation of a long-awaited site for the three-school campus for the communities in Inishowen which will hopefully progress quickly within the anticipated timeframe without obstacles to reach completion stage in the next three years.
- The continued work of the ETB, school management and parents to progress the Merville Community College project.
- The dire stress effects of MICA on school communities, including students, staff and families and the continued additional support needs highlighted to the government and required for staff, students and affected families.

- The adverse impact of the pandemic since March 2020 on the youth of the county, and the significant fundraising difficulties encountered by youth and sporting clubs resulting in an ETB submission and proposal to Minister O'Gorman for a national promotion plan for Youth Clubs and Youth culture to be put in place.

Thanks to Anne McHugh, Chief Executive and all the staff who assisted the role of the Chairperson throughout the year for their support and assistance.

Ní ceart go cur le cheile!

Cllr Albert Doherty,
Chairperson



Donegal ETB had a difficult start to 2021 with the second period of closure of our schools and centres due to COVID restrictions. The learnings from the 2020 closure certainly paid dividends as everyone was more familiar and confident in relation to Emergency Remote Teaching.

Staff showed an unfailing dedication to the continuation of our services and as the days lengthened, the restrictions lessened during March and April.

Our Leaving Certificate students participated in the Accredited Grades process coupled with sitting their Leaving Certificate examinations which brought some normality for us. Unfortunately, Junior Cycle progress in many areas had to take a back seat yet again but on a positive note our students have had such valuable learning experiences in a range of areas which might not have happened had there been no pandemic.

The pandemic did not stop our Quality Assurance review in May. Our Further Education and Training (FET) Service worked tirelessly to ensure that the QQI International Panel had an excellent week of meetings with all stakeholders who use our FET Service.

We were delighted to be able to continue to host a number of events online. These included our annual Community Education Seminar on 10 December and our DMEP Special Concert on 21 May to celebrate the extraordinary contribution made by Sr Concepta Murphy, RIP, to music in Co Donegal. We hosted a virtual visit by Minister Harris to our FET Centre in Letterkenny and worked on the preparation of our new five-year Strategy by hosting a consultation event with our Managers on 23 April. National Workplace Wellbeing Day on 30 April was never more ironically relevant as our homes continued to be our workplaces to a large extent. Members of our ETB Choir contributed to the Colmcille 1500 celebrations by participating in an online rendition of a hymn called 'Alone with none but thee, my God', in a setting by Errigal College staff member Margaret McAteer.

The first term of the new academic year brought some promise as there were no closures and life in some small ways began to resemble normality.

We were able to re-sign our Memorandum of Understanding with LYIT in May with the prospect of the new Technological University now very much a reality for 2022.

A significant body of work on the ethos and core values of our schools has been undertaken by ETBI and Donegal ETB has been participating in this work which will contribute enormously to the standing and understanding of what our schools are about: state, co-educational and multi-denominational operating with the following core values: excellence in education, care, equality, respect and community.

I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Annual Report Committee for their excellent, detailed and exacting work during the production of this document. Andy McGovern, Cróna Gallagher, Martin Gormley, Brenda Boyle, Sandra Buchanan, Martin McGinley, Eileen Dennison and Liz Potter.

Finally I extend my thanks to our Chairperson, Cllr Albert Doherty and the members of the Board of Donegal ETB for their continued support and interest in all that we undertake in order to serve the communities of Co Donegal.

--
Ms Anne McHugh,
Chief Executive



01

Donegal Education and Training Board Statement

Donegal Education and Training Board was established under the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and is responsible and accountable for the proper direction and control of its functions in the Donegal County Council and local authority areas.

Donegal Education and Training Board confirm that the 2019 Code of Practice for Governance of Education and Training Boards, Department of Education and Skills Circular 0002/2019 has been adopted and that Donegal ETB has progressed the implementation of the up-to-date requirements of the Code in their governance practices and procedures across the organisation. The purpose of the code is to ensure that the principles of good governance and management are applied by Donegal Education and Training Board.

Functions of the ETB Board

Decisions taken by the Board are reserved functions and are set out in Section 12 (2) of the Education and Training Board Act 2013 and in Circular 0002/2019 Code of Practice for the Governance of Education and Training Boards, with a full schedule set out in Appendix A of the Code. Decisions not specified in the Code are deemed to be Executive Functions for the Chief Executive. The Board is satisfied that the Chief Executive delegates functions where appropriate and in accordance with the Education and Training Board Act 2013.

Responsibilities of the Board

The Board is responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Board and which enable it to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with section 51 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Board considers that the Annual Financial Statements properly present the income and expenditure of the Board and the state of affairs of the Board.

In preparing those accounts, the Board is required to:

- (a) apply the standard accounting policies for the preparation of ETB financial statements
- (b) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- (c) disclose and explain any material departures from the standard accounting policies

During 2021 the Board approved the following documentation.

- Adoption of the Annual Report
- Financial Statements
- Adoption of the Service Plan
- Authorised attendance of members at conferences
- Approved the acquisition, holding and disposal of land or interest in accordance with Department of Education (DE) regulations
- Ensured accurate records were kept of meetings and decisions

Donegal ETB Membership, Chairpersons, Attendance 2021

Representation and Meetings

- The term of office of Donegal ETB is five years (2019-2024).
- The Board meets regularly - around once every six weeks. In 2021, the Board met eight times.
- The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are usually elected annually.
- Donegal ETB appoints four of its board members or representatives to each Board of Management of Donegal ETB schools and colleges for the five-year term of office of the board.
- Four board members are appointed to the LYIT Governing Body.
- Members also sit on various committees of the Board, mainly the Youth, Audit and Risk, and Finance Committees.

Chief Executive: Ms Anne McHugh

Donegal ETB Board

Name	Designation	Nominating Body
Cllr Albert Doherty	Chairperson	Donegal County Council
Cllr Gary Doherty	Deputy Chairperson	Donegal County Council

Audit and Risk Committee

Name	Designation	Nominating Body
Ms Kathleen Bonner	Chairperson	External Member

Finance Committee

Name	Designation	Nominating Body
Mr Patsy McVicar	Chairperson	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)

The Board is comprised of 21 members elected under the provisions of Section 30 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 as follows:

Main ETB Board

12 Members elected by Local Authority Elections under Donegal County Council
Section 30 (I) (a) Donegal Education and Training Boards, Act 2013

	Title	Name	Surname	Category	Nominating Body
1	Cllr	Albert	Doherty		Donegal County Council
2	Cllr	Barry	Sweeny		Donegal County Council
3	Cllr	Donal	Coyle		Donegal County Council
3	Cllr	Gary	Doherty		Donegal County Council
5	Cllr	John	O'Donnell		Donegal County Council
6	Cllr	John Sheamais	O'Fearraigh		Donegal County Council
7	Cllr	Martin	Harley		Donegal County Council
8	Cllr	Martin	Farren		Donegal County Council
9	Cllr	Michael	McBride		Donegal County Council
10	Cllr	Noel	Jordan		Donegal County Council
11	Cllr	Noreen	McGarvey		Donegal County Council
12	Cllr	Rena	Donaghey		Donegal County Council

2 Members who are members of staff. Section 30 (I) (b) Members of Staff elected

13	Ms	Joanne	Donaghy	Staff Representative	Elected by Staff
14	Mr	Barry	Molloy	Staff Representative	Elected by Staff

2 Members of Parent Representatives. Section 30 (I) (c) nominated by Parents Association

15	Mr	Geoffrey	Browne	Parent Representative	Nominated by Parent Body
16	Ms	Lorraine	Doherty	Parent Representative	Nominated by Parent Body

5 Members appointed in accordance with Section 30 (I) (d) subsection (11)
From Nominated Bodies with specialist interests/areas as specified by the Minister

17	Ms	Lorraine	Thompson	Youth Work Ireland	Nominating bodies/Special Interest
18	Mr	Patsy	McVicar	NAPD	Nominating bodies/Special Interest
19	Mr	Gerard	Grant	IBEC	Nominating bodies/Special Interest
20	Ms	Regina	Grant	Disability Federation of Ireland	Nominating bodies/Special Interest
21	Mr	Brian	McDermott	Irish Hospitality Institute	Nominating bodies/Special Interest

2021 Attendance Record of Board Members

During the year the Board met on eight occasions, with details of attendance outlined in the table below:

Quorum 12	Meetings of Donegal ETB Board 2021								Total	
	Date of Scheduled ETB Board Meeting	15/02/21	26/03/21	10/05/21	12/07/21	20/09/21	01/10/21	08/11/21		13/12/21
Name of Board Member	Nominating Body									
Mr Geoffrey Browne	Nominated by Parent Body		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	5
Cllr Albert Doherty	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Cllr Gary Doherty	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	5
Cllr Rena Donaghey	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	7
Cllr Martin Farren	Donegal County Council							✓	✓	2
Cllr Noreen McGarvey	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Cllr Martin Harley	Donegal County Council	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Cllr Donal Coyle	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Cllr Michael McBride	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	7
Cllr Noel Jordan	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	7
Ms Joanne Donaghy	Staff Rep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	8
Mr Barry Molloy	Staff Rep	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7
Mr John Seamus Ó Fearraigh	Donegal County Council	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	5
Cllr John O'Donnell	Donegal County Council	n/a	n/a	✓					✓	2
Cllr Barry Sweeny	Donegal County Council	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	6
Ms Lorraine Doherty	Parent Rep	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		5
Mr Patsy McVicar	NAPD	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	6
Ms Lorraine Thompson	Youth Work Ireland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	7
Mr Gerard Grant	IBEC	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	6
Mr Brian McDermott	Irish Hospitality Institute					✓			✓	2
Ms Regina Grant	Disability Federation of Ireland	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7

02

Committees

Audit and Risk Committee

Audit and Risk Committee Membership 2021

--

1. Ms Kathleen Bonner, Chairperson (external member)
2. Mr Gabriel O'Donnell (external member)
3. Mr Kevin Huston (external member)
4. Mr David Alcorn (external member - resigned 12 September 2021)
5. Mr Michael McBride
6. Ms Lorraine Thompson
7. Mr Gerard Grant
8. Mr Francis Coyle (appointed 12 May 2021)
9. Mr Eunan Cunningham (appointed 20 September 2021)

During the year the Audit and Risk Committee met on four occasions, with details of attendance outlined in the table below.

Member		9 Feb 2021	24 Mar 2021	28 Oct 2021	15 Dec 2021	Total Meetings Attended
Ms Kathleen Bonner (Chairperson)	External Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Mr Gabriel O'Donnell	External Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Mr Kevin Huston	External Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Mr David Alcorn (resigned 12/09/21)	External Member	✓	✓			2/2
Cllr Michael McBride	Board Member	✓	✓		✓	3/4
Ms Lorraine Thompson	Board Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Mr Gerard Grant	Board Member		✓	✓		2/4
Mr Francis Coyle (appointed 12/05/2021)	External Member			✓	✓	2/2
Mr Eunan Cunningham (appointed 20/09/2021)	External Member				✓	1/2

Finance Committee

Finance Committee Membership

-
1. **Mr Patsy McVicar** (board member)
 2. **Mr Conall Dunne** (external member)
 3. **Ms Mary Doogan** (external member)
 4. **Mr Seamus Bradley** (external member)
 5. **Ms Regina Grant** (board member)
 6. **Cllr Gary Doherty** (board member)
 7. **Cllr Martin Harley** (board member)

During the year the Finance Committee met on four occasions, with details of attendance outlined in the table below.

Member		10 Feb 2021	24 Mar 2021 (joint meeting)	29 Oct 2021	15 Dec 2021	Total Meetings Attended
Mr Patsy McVicar	Board Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Mr Conall Dunne	External Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Ms Mary Doogan	External Member	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Mr Seamus Bradley	External Member	✓	✓	✓		3/4
Ms Regina Grant	Board Member	✓	✓		✓	3/4
Cllr Gary Doherty	Board Member	✓	✓		✓	3/4
Cllr Martin Harley	Board Member	✓	✓		✓	3/4

Youth Work Committee

Youth Committee Membership

-
1. **Geoffrey Browne** (chairperson, Donegal ETB Youth Work Committee)
 2. **Cllr Donal Coyle** (Donegal ETB)
 3. **Gina Grant** (Donegal ETB)
 4. **Lorraine Thompson** (Donegal Youth Service)
 5. **Claire Gavigan** (Foróige)
 6. **Maura Gallagher** (Foróige)
 7. **Amy Ferry** (Donegal Youth Council)
 8. **Milly Cunningham** (Donegal Youth Council)
 9. **Kevin Ferguson** (Scouting Ireland)
 10. **Martin Keeney** (TUSLA)
 11. **Donal McBride** (Muintearas)
 12. **Inspector Seamus McGonigle** (An Garda Síochána)
 13. **Dr Martin Gormley** (Director of Schools, Donegal ETB)
 14. **Paddy Muldoon** (Youth Officer, Donegal ETB)
 15. **Jacque Knox** (Youth Work Administrator, Donegal ETB)

In 2021 there was one meeting of the Youth Work Committee which took place on 23 March 2021. This was attended by:

Name		23 Mar 2021
Geoffrey Browne	Chairperson, Donegal ETB Youth Work Committee	✓
Cllr Donal Coyle	Donegal ETB	✓
Gina Grant	Donegal ETB	✓
Lorraine Thompson	Donegal Youth Service	
Claire Gavigan	Foróige	✓
Maura Gallagher	Foróige	✓
Amy Ferry	Donegal Youth Council	✓
Milly Cunningham	Donegal Youth Council	✓
Kevin Ferguson	Scouting Ireland	✓
Martin Keeney	TUSLA	✓
Donal McBride	Muintearas	✓
Inspector Seamus McGonigle	An Garda Síochána	✓
Dr Martin Gormley	Director of Schools, Donegal ETB	✓
Paddy Muldoon	Youth Officer, Donegal ETB	✓
Jacque Knox	Youth Work Administrator, Donegal ETB	✓

03

Risk Management

The Board maintains active oversight of Risk Management and confirms that it has carried out an assessment of the principal risks, associated mitigation measures and reviewed the effectiveness of these measures in 2021.

The Board is supported and assisted in its risk management function by the ETB Executive, led by the Chief Executive, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance Committee, respectively.

The Board also relies on the Internal Audit Unit (IAU) and its reports, on the C&AG annual audit and any external Audit such as an ESF Audit and / or Revenue Audit. In addition, there is a review of internal controls performed on an annual basis.

Risk management is considered at Board meetings and this consideration includes:

- Risk reports from senior management including the Chief Risk Officer
- Reports of the Audit and Risk Committee
- Changes in risk ratings

An outline of the risk management process has been included in the Statement on Internal Control, which is subject to change until the external audit is completed, as part of the audited financial statements which will be published within one month of receipt from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and as an appendix to the Chairpersons Comprehensive Report.

System of Internal Controls

The Board confirms that there has been a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and that the Statement on Internal Control, which is subject to change until the external audit is completed, has been included in the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) for the year ended 31 December 2021 which will be published within one month of receipt from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and as an appendix to the Chairperson's Comprehensive Report that has been submitted to the Minister.

In 2021, the impact of COVID-19 continued to result in changes to established work practices, including a significant amount of remote working. It was important to assess the impact that this may have had on the operation of the system of internal controls in place during the year. Compliance with existing policies, procedures and workflows continued in the remote working environment. Regular update, monitoring and review meetings were held to ensure full compliance with existing operational and legislative requirements. Risk registers were updated to include an identification and assessment of the impact on risk associated with COVID-19.

Procurement Policy and Procedures

The Board confirms that the organisation is adhering to the relevant aspects of the Public Spending Code and the development and implementation of the Corporate Procurement Plan.

Taxation

The Board confirms that the ETB has complied with its obligations under tax law.

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2021

The Annual Financial Statement for the year ended the 31st of December 2021 is subject to audit by the C&AG at the time of publication of the Donegal ETB Annual Report for 2021. Donegal ETB will publish the audited financial statements within one month of receipt from the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Financial data in relation to the following is included in the Annual Financial Statement:

- Táillí nár bhain le tuarastal a íocadh le comhaltaí Coiste
- Tuarastal agus sochair d'fhostaithe gearrthéarmacha;
- Sochair iarfhostaíochta;
- Termination benefits;
- Key management compensation;
- The number of employees whose total employee benefits were between €0 to €59,999;
- The number of employees whose total employee benefits were between €60,000 to €69,999 and within each pay band of €10,000; and an overall figure for total employer pension contributions.



04

What we do, where we are

Donegal ETB manages fifteen schools and colleges, including five Gaelcholáistí and two island schools, on Arranmore and Tory and is a trustee partner for a further eight Community and Comprehensive schools.

What We Do



The Further Education and Training (FET) Service has seventeen dedicated FET centres located in Ballyshannon, Buncrana (two, including a Youthreach centre), Donegal Town (Ardscoil and Drumcliff), Gaoth Dobhair, Gort a' Choire, Letterkenny (Ballyraire, Kilmacrennan Road and Letterkenny Youthreach), Milford, Glengad Youthreach, Lifford Youthreach and Stranorlar. Post Leaving Certificate courses are delivered in three ETB schools: Errigal College, Letterkenny; St Catherine's Vocational School, Killybegs and Finn Valley College, Stranorlar. The FET Service also works collaboratively with 140+ community, voluntary, statutory and private bodies to deliver its programmes across the County.

The Adult Guidance and Information Service offers impartial and confidential information and advice to adults on the education and training options available from Donegal ETB and elsewhere.

The Gartan Outdoor Education and Training Centre has a wonderful setting for its work - an 87-acre estate with extensive facilities and accommodation on the shores of Lough Gartan, 15km from Letterkenny.

The Donegal Music Education Partnership (DMEP) provides music tuition for a wide range of instruments and voice to primary and post-primary students throughout the county, and some adults. The DMEP has ten performing groups, including the Donegal Youth Orchestra.

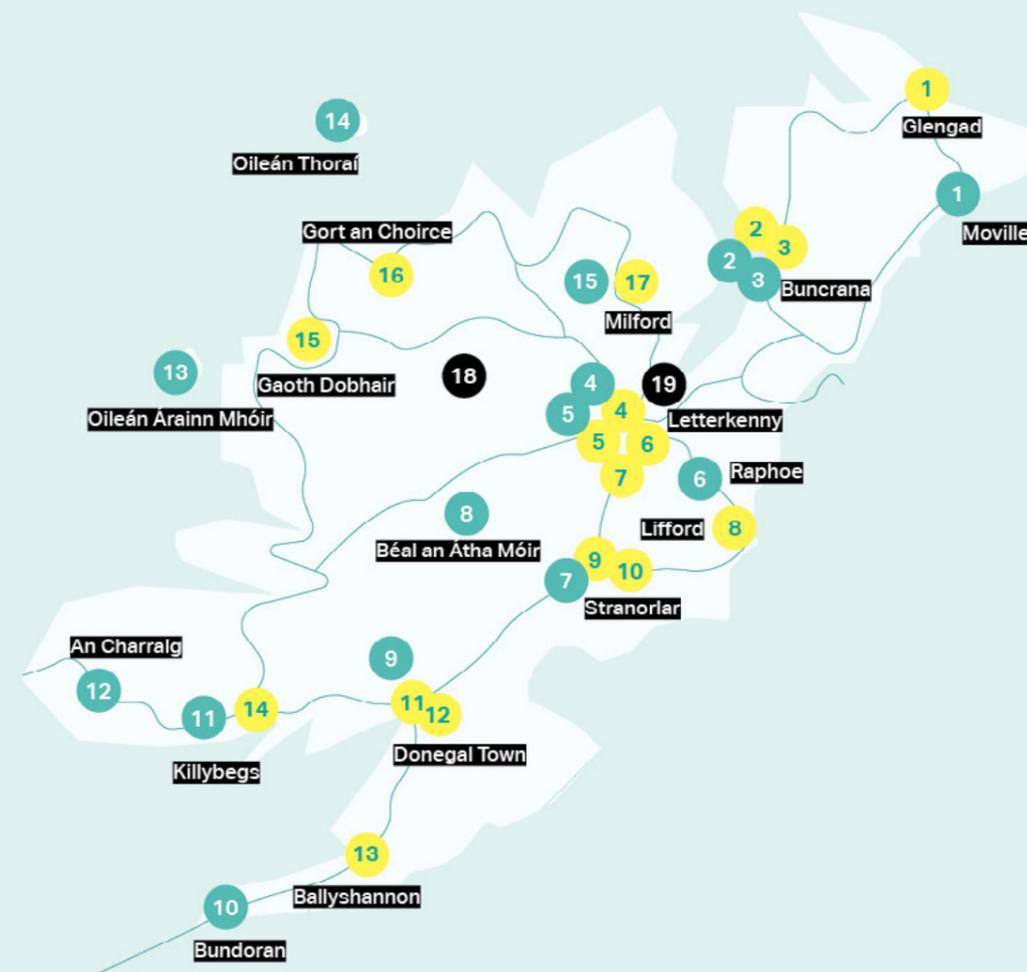
A range of courses on Drugs and Alcohol Studies is provided across Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo by a co-ordinator based at one of Donegal ETB's offices in Buncrana.

Donegal ETB also engages with a number of School Completion Programmes under the aegis of TUSLA.

Donegal ETB supports a youth work services programme within the county under the direction of the Youth Officer.

Donegal ETB works with partners such as the Donegal Sports Partnership, Donegal County Council, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, Donegal Children and Young People's Services Committee and Donegal Local Community Development Committee to help devise and assist in the implementation of strategies for the county.

Where we are



School Map - Clockwise from Merville

1	Merville Community College	Merville
2	Crana College	Buncrana
3	Coláiste Chineál Eoghain	Buncrana
4	Coláiste Ailigh	Letterkenny
5	Errigal College	Letterkenny
6	Deele College	Raphoe
7	Finn Valley College	Stranorlar
8	Gairmscoil Chú Uladh	Béal an Átha Móir
9	Abbey Vocational School	Donegal Town
10	Magh Éne College	Bundoran
11	St. Catherine's Vocational School	Killybegs
12	Coláiste na Carraige	An Charraig
13	Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada	Oileán Árainn Mhóir
14	Coláiste Phobail Cholmcille	Oileán Thoraí
15	Mulroy College	Milford

FET Centres - Clockwise from Glengad

1	Youthreach Centre	Glengad
2	FET Centre Buncrana	Buncrana
3	Youthreach Centre	Buncrana
4	FET Centre Letterkenny	Letterkenny
5	Errigal College (PLCs)	Letterkenny
6	Training Centre Letterkenny	Letterkenny
7	Youthreach Centre	Letterkenny
8	Youthreach Centre	Lifford
9	FET Centre Stranorlar	Stranorlar
10	Finn Valley College (PLCs)	Stranorlar
11	FET Centre Donegal Town (Drumcliff)	Donegal Town
12	FET Centre Donegal Town (Ard Scoil na gCeithre Máistir)	Donegal Town
13	FET Centre Ballyshannon	Ballyshannon
14	St Catherine's Vocational School (PLCs)	Killybegs
15	Training Centre Gaoth Dobhair	Gaoth Dobhair
16	FET Centre Gort an Choire	Gort an Choire
17	FET Centre Milford	Milford

Outdoor/Music Education

18	Gartan Outdoor Education and Training Centre
19	Donegal Music Education Partnership



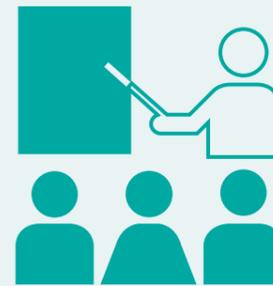
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'Lean ar Aghaidh'

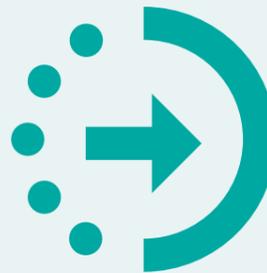
– Moving Forward in 2021

Donegal ETB has been guided throughout 2021 by the key themes of its five year plan covering 2017–2021 and called 'Lean ar Aghaidh' or 'Keep Moving Forward'. The plan has three key themes.

Key Themes:



Teaching and Learning



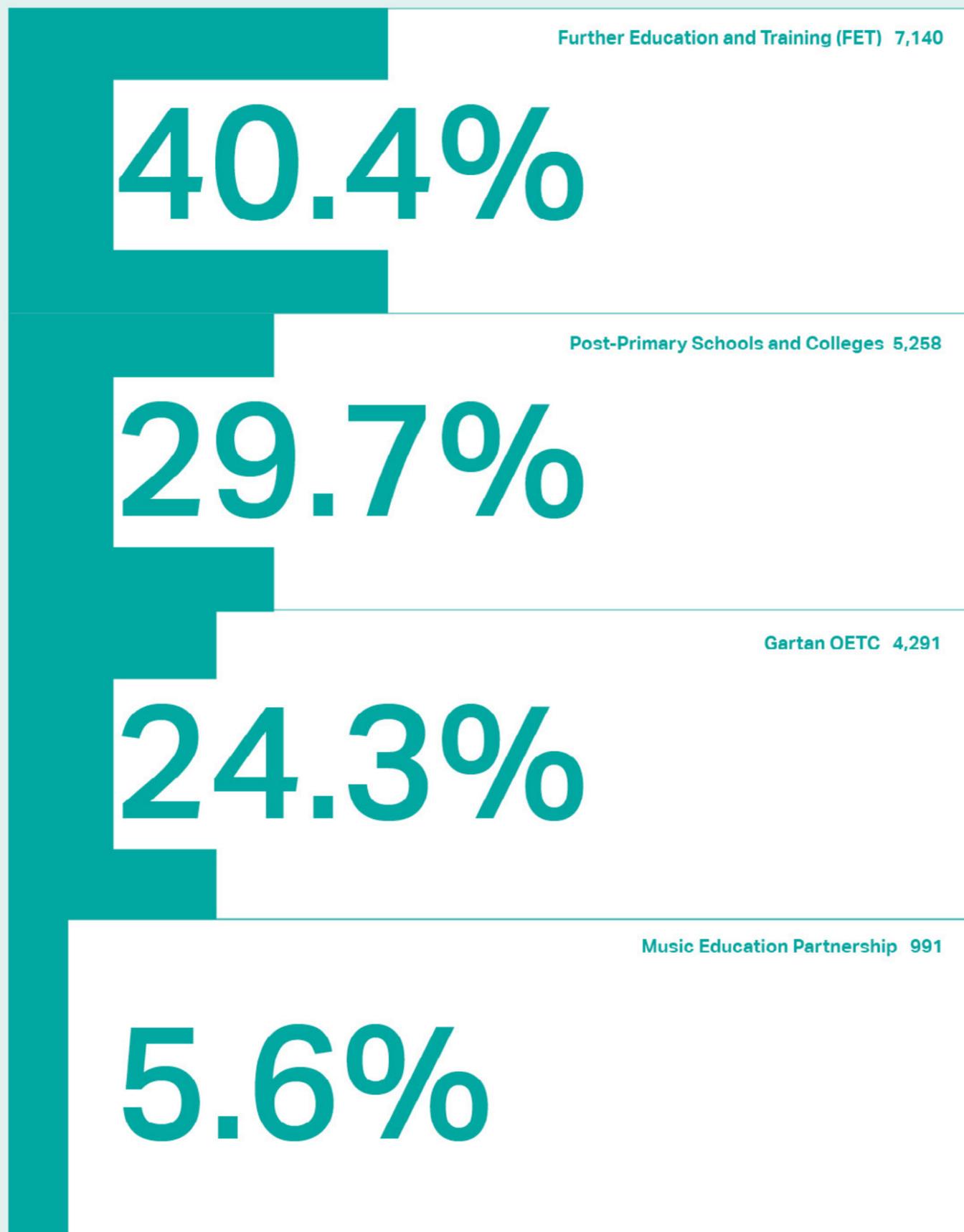
A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



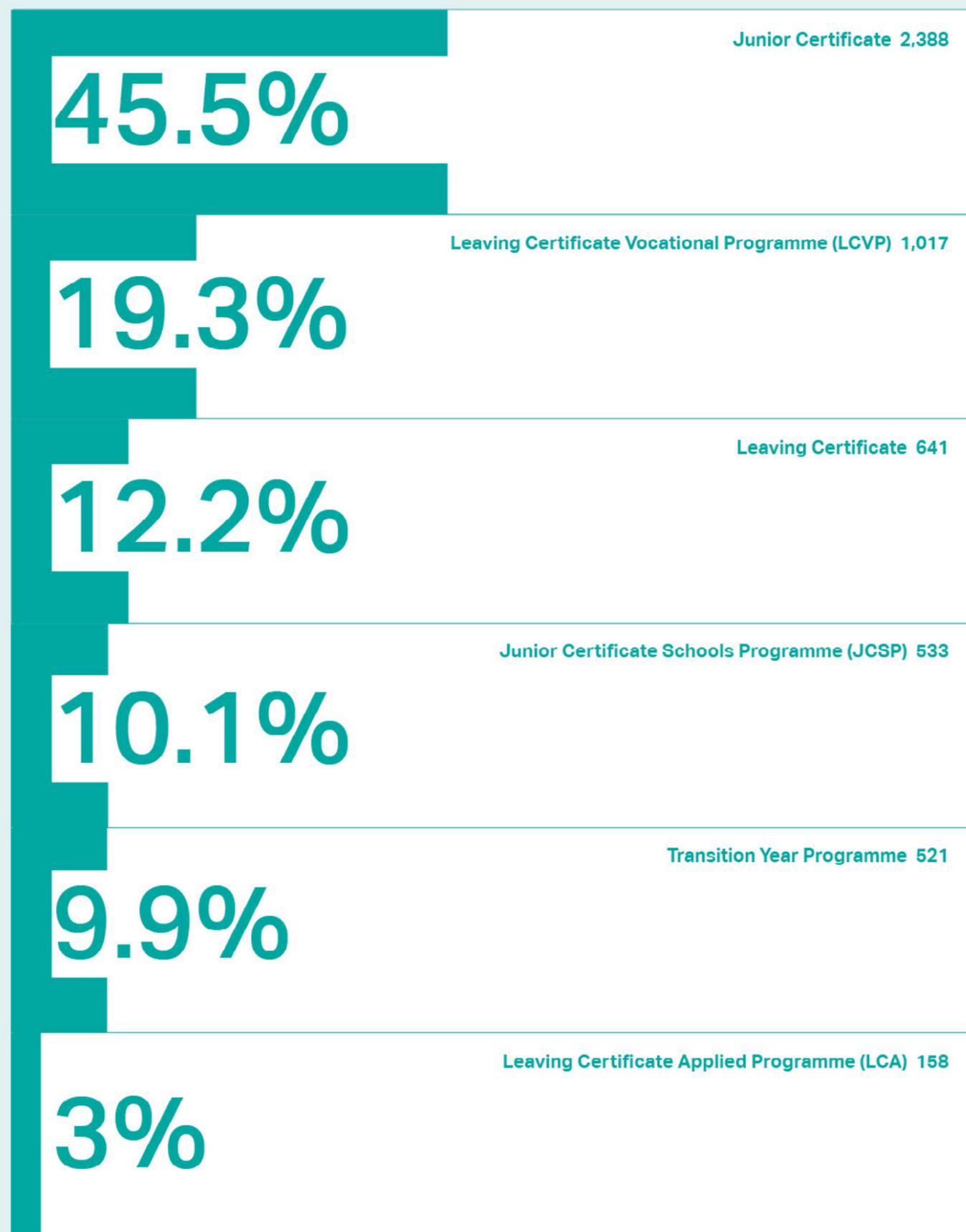
Working with Partners

Our Impact in Numbers

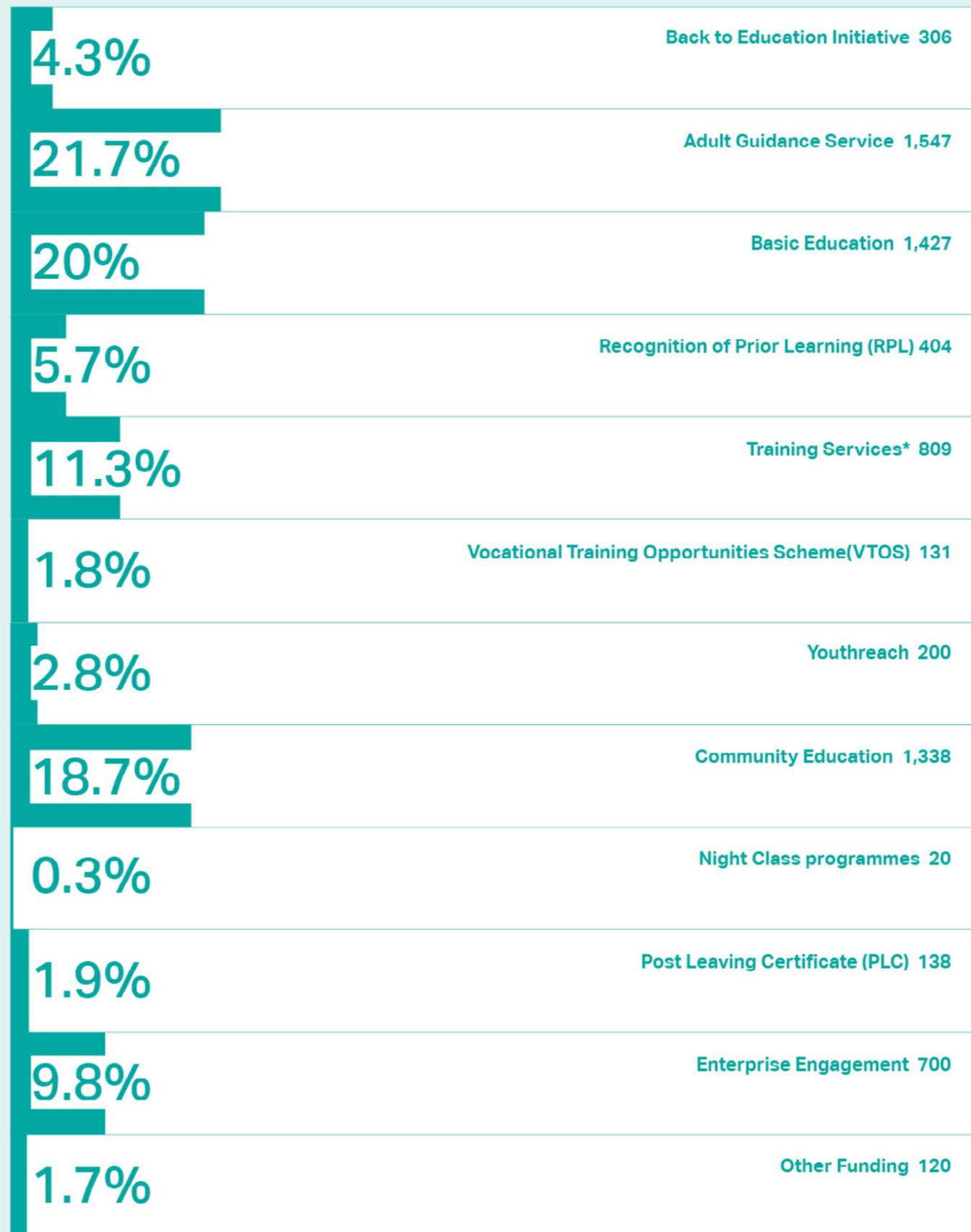
Student Numbers by Sector:



Student enrolment in post-primary schools and colleges 2021



Further Education and Training
Student Numbers 2021



* Apprenticeships, Evening Classes, Traineeships, Specialist Training Specific Skills



Key Theme 1

Teaching and Learning



Priority 1

Offer educational and training programmes with support services within quality teaching and learning environments and ensure that these programmes meet the rapidly changing needs of individuals, society and the economy.

Outcome

Responsive education programmes are provided in all schools, colleges and centres within quality teaching and learning environments.

Schools implemented a range of modified teaching, learning and assessment alternatives at short notice to maintain satisfactory levels of provision for students during the periods of school closures arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As schools moved from full lockdown to a return to in-person teaching, learning and assessment, schools shifted from emergency remote measures to a new longer-term planning phase that demanded a strategic approach to delivering education and training in a more integrated online learning environment. There was a great commitment from staff in ensuring students who were absent due to COVID-19 challenges were able to access core materials through Google Classroom.

Many teachers reported that students were more withdrawn than in previous years, with young people having missed out on the normal rites of passage and transitions that previous generations have taken for granted. Many also lost family members to the virus. This created challenges for schools in supporting and taking cognisance of the wellbeing of students. Student Support Teams helped to address many issues with students and maintained communications with parents throughout. Staff also reported having lost family members during the pandemic and the challenges they faced.

In 2021 the FET Service provision included a range of courses from Levels 1 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualification (NFQ). The range of modified teaching, learning and assessment strategies that were introduced as a response to COVID-19 in 2020 continued for the early part of 2021. Attention to health, safety and hygiene facilitated a gradual return to centres. The first groups back were those availing of tuition at Levels 1 to 4. There was an increased interest in digital skills courses, particularly online form filling. The Refugee Resettlement programme continued throughout the early part of 2021. By September all participants progressed to mainstream provision.

In the first quarter of 2021, the BTEI, VTOS and PLC programmes continued to engage and support students within the emergency remote teaching and learning arrangements with classes being delivered predominantly online. With some restrictions lifted after the Easter break, programmes began to undertake practical skills demonstrations in centres to allow for summative assessment and presentation for certification in the June and August rounds.



BTEI courses which were delivered included Healthcare Support, Childcare, ICDL, Bookkeeping and Payroll and Introduction to Living, Working and Studying Online. These courses, alongside standalone modules in Infection Prevention and Control, Intellectual Disability Studies and Digital Photography and Design skills, helped to cater for a broad range of groups across the county. Of this, 204 students presented successfully for certification with 178 of these students either progressing to employment or another further or higher education courses. Ninety-eight students finished on the VTOS programme in May and June 2021, successfully completing awards in a range of subjects including E-Business, Childcare, ICDL and Microsoft Office Specialist, Leaving Certificate, Information Processing and Essential Healthcare Skills. Of those who completed the programme in 2021, seventy-eight either progressed to a further or higher education course or obtained full or part-time employment. The programme was offered in six centres across the county in Ballyshannon, Buncrana, Donegal Town, Gort an Choire, Letterkenny and Milford. In September 2021 a new Early Learning and Care programme was introduced in the FET centre in Letterkenny after Donegal ETB had been approved to deliver the nationally developed programme.

Within the PLC programme twelve courses were offered in three locations across the county including St Catherine's Vocational School, Killybegs, Errigal College, Letterkenny and Finn Valley College, Stranorlar. In May 2021 136 students successfully completed the programme, with ninety-two students recorded as successfully progressing to a FET, higher education course or paid employment. September 2021 saw the introduction of an Animal Care QQI Major award at Level 5 within Errigal College. By the end of 2021, 404 certificates at Levels 4, 5 and 6 were awarded through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process.

Phase 2 Apprenticeship programmes continued to be delivered in a blended fashion during 2021 with significant investment in time and resources to allow for the continuation of services at full capacity during the pandemic restrictions.

During 2021 Donegal ETB responded to a request from SOLAS to embrace the Emergency Provision plans for Phase 2 Apprenticeship delivery in order to address the increasing national backlog of registered Apprentices awaiting training. The Training Centres' Phase 2 capacity was increased by 50% in 2021 and further plans are in place to increase this capacity further in 2022. We also availed of extra funding at the end of the year to procure additional equipment which allowed for the continuation and expansion of our Emergency Provision.

During 2021 we worked closely with LYIT as they embarked on delivery of Phase 4 training for Electrical Apprentices and undertook all scheduling and registering of all apprentices for Phase 4. The Motor Department within the Apprenticeship delivery team has also worked in collaboration with LYIT's Engineering Department to develop and deliver training within the renewable and green sector, with a specific focus on Hybrid/Electric cars and the supporting infrastructure for this sector; this is an area we hope to further develop.

Teaching and Learning



Priority 2

Integrate the new initiatives relating to Instructional Leadership, Restorative Practices, Teacher Collaboration, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), Induction and Mentoring into key programmes.

Outcome

Improved standards in teaching and learning in schools, colleges and centres.

During 2021, there were significant developments in relation to the implementation of the Digital Strategy in all schools. There was increased use of digital technology to deliver remote teaching and learning during periods of school closure and this has resulted in significant advancement of staff and student digital skills for learning supported by the digital learning teams.

Following two prolonged periods of being thrust into emergency remote learning, teachers and students adapted to this approach with a realisation that it was not the same as in-person teaching and learning. There was a loss of in-class collaboration opportunities (whether carefully constructed or impromptu) where new ideas were sparked, and students became truly engaged.

There was an absence of the energy that invigorates and keeps students, as well as teachers, passionate about teaching and learning. The challenge for teachers was how to create meaningful opportunities for collaboration while online.

There was also a challenge around group work in the classroom. Students had to maintain physical distance and teachers had to be creative to allow for the sharing of materials. Students had reservations about being close to others. All of the COVID-19 associated restrictions stifled the opportunities for promoting the many strategies associated with Instructional Leadership. Best practices in education are changing, but good teachers adapt to learning environments.

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and FET

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Donegal ETB embarked on developing a strategic approach to the use of blended learning by engaging H2 Learning to facilitate a research and consultation process that focused on articulating a range of options for blended learning. Four focused workshops were held with key stakeholders in 2021 and these insights have informed the development of an initial 'Blended Learning

Framework' which will support and guide the ETB's strategic approach to blended learning. The framework anticipates that the majority of FET courses and programmes across the ETB will be supported by the use of blended learning approaches. Furthermore, the framework will also enable the ETB to plan, design and accredit flexible forms of blended learning that comply with QQI Blended Learning Guidelines.

A quarterly e-newsletter was issued promoting TEL initiatives and outlining good practice. A TEL seminar (a week-long series of interactive webinars), delivered by Donegal ETB staff and external experts and leaders in the field of technology in the classroom, was a huge success and was attended by 271 FET practitioners and ETB staff over five days. As part of the FET TEL plan for 2021, a €15,000 prize fund for innovative approaches to using technology within the FET Service was made available for FET programmes. The purpose of the project was to encourage staff to re-imagine their course or an aspect of the FET Service through the use of technology. Six FET programmes received funding through the TEL Innovative Project.

The successful roll out of a TEL Mentoring Programme ensured that all FET Centres have a designated TEL Mentor to provide support and guidance to other practitioners in a non-judgemental manner. Feedback from staff was excellent. Through the Mitigating against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF), a number of Digital Hubs were set up in FET centres. They are available for 1:1 Support or as a space for students and staff to work independently and have access to devices and connectivity. Donegal ETB procured 250 laptops and 300 Chromebooks that allowed the rollout of a Device Loan Scheme for FET students in 2021.

A noteworthy initiative in 2021 was the Digital Citizenship project. In today's world, using information technology and the internet to engage in society is a priority and it is important to be able to participate responsibly and safely in a digital age. Tutor collaboration and the development of a Community of Practice all helped develop content for a Digital Citizenship website. The group helped identify relevant themes and topics, discuss content, develop lesson plans and resources including presentations, videos, and quizzes – all functional, practical and beneficial material for both teachers and students. The site was launched during our TEL Webinar series in May and has enabled staff to connect and share digital practices and resources across programmes and work collaboratively on an innovative teaching and learning initiative.

The Collective - a programme for young adults with autism

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In early 2021, Donegal ETB identified a training need among young adults with autism transitioning from second level education. These young adults have specific needs and interests and require inclusive progression routes to further education, higher education and employment. The National Learning Network collaborated with Donegal ETB in designing a response to this need and a programme called The Collective was developed. The first intake of this one-year pilot programme commenced in September 2021. In The Collective, an instructional collaborative space to nurture and promote self-driven development is provided, where students can pursue their own interests while gaining practical and transferable skills using a range of technologies. The students are given the opportunity to achieve industry-recognised certification from a wide range of qualifications including ICDL, Adobe, Digital Citizenship etc. This will facilitate students' access to higher training, universities, apprenticeships and jobs in the region. If appropriate, students can also engage directly with industry; host company placements are sourced locally where students will have the opportunity to practice their skills in new environments. It is envisaged that in addition to gaining qualifications, students will develop real-world practical transferable skills, to support lifelong learning such as soft skills, computer skills, online safety, problem solving, creative thinking and creative media.

Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund (MAEDF)

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The FET Service supported thirty-three Community Education providers to avail of the MAEDF SOLAS-funded initiative. The fund focused on increasing the capacity of community education providers to address the decline in participation of disadvantaged students, particularly those on literacy and basic skills programmes at NFQ Levels 1-3. There was a strong focus on community education as a mechanism to continue to support and engage with disadvantaged students and a recognition that online learning/blended learning is an essential support to meet the complex needs of students.

The fund was widely publicised in August through a range of channels including newspapers, social media and direct contact with nearly two hundred Community Education providers in the county. Two briefing sessions were held on 19 and 25 August and the fund resulted in funding of just over €300,000 to support digital infrastructure, study and learning hubs throughout the county.



New Traineeships

Donegal ETB developed a number of new traineeships during 2021:

Donegal Weaving Traineeship - Donegal ETB is the first education provider in the country to develop an accredited course in weaving, the Certificate in Donegal Weaving which is accredited by the Scottish Qualification Authority. The course was developed in collaboration with individual weavers and industry partners (Magees, McNutts, John Molloy & Sons and Studio Donegal) with the assistance of the Harris Tweed Authority in Scotland. The first instance of this forty-week course began in Cill Chartha in September 2021 and includes a twelve week work placement. Training is provided by experts in the industry including experienced handweavers and Hattersley-loom weavers.

The development of the course is extremely important for the preservation of the long-standing craft which is part of Donegal's unique heritage and also has the potential to provide industry with a talent pipeline to support employment in the weaving and textile industry, locally and nationally. A short information video gives further details: [Click here](#).

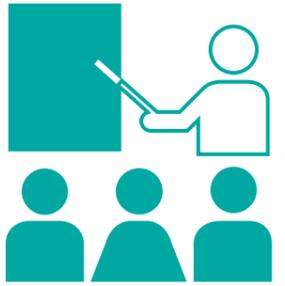
Communication Systems Installation

Traineeship - The Communication Systems Installation traineeship was developed in response to the demand for suitably qualified candidates to meet the needs of industry in the communication technologies sector and specifically to meet the need for the communications cabling industry. On successful completion of this traineeship, students will be equipped with the specialist skills and knowledge required to carry out the installation of fibre optics and copper cabling. The development of this traineeship is timely with the roll out of the National Broadband Plan locally and nationally: considerable investment in the installation and upgrade of the high-speed fibre network is required to enable households, businesses and schools to operate effectively. The first instance of this course commenced in November 2021 and has been well received by industry. An information video is available by [clicking here](#).

Network Planner Traineeship - This traineeship was developed during 2021 in partnership with KN Circet, a leading telecommunications company to meet the needs of the network planning and software development sector which has seen huge growth in recent years. Donegal is home to a large FinTech sector which is struggling to source the talent and skills needed to meet the needs of this fast-paced industry. Students participating in this traineeship are developing knowledge and skills in programming and coding, with a variety of programming languages such as HTML5, CSS, C#, Java and Python. In addition, the course offers students qualifications in Certified Tester accreditation. The work placement will be facilitated by KN Circet with students having the opportunity to apply their learning in a live working environment.

The skills acquired by students on this course are transferable to a broad range of sectors. An information video is available by [clicking here](#).

Teaching and Learning



Priority 3

Embrace the new concepts within the new Junior Cycle Programme in our schools, colleges and centres.

Outcome

Students with increased confidence and independent learning skills will be able to study the prescribed subjects and relevant short courses.

Teachers were supported in meeting the challenge of effectively integrating ICT in their classroom practices as part of the new Junior Cycle Programme. This enabled the young person to be at the forefront of advances in teaching practices and learning techniques. This also helped to assist the presentation of many Classroom Based Assessments (known as CBAs).

School management undertook regular audits of ICT facilities in all subjects, to include information on whether available resources were being used and how they were being used.

Teachers with good ICT skills acted as mentors to colleagues whose ICT skills were not as well developed. Good practice within schools was disseminated among members of the staff at every opportunity.

Schools also exploited the benefits of ICT in their assessment procedures and practices beyond purely administrative functions. This included using ICT to assess, track and analyse students' progress through the use of appropriate software. The Abbey Vocational School and Errigal College worked with 'Jump A Grade' on integrating an ICT solution to the provision of formative and summative assessment.

The student voice was proactively promoted in many schools. Students were supported to contribute and provide feedback on a lot of aspects of school life.

Donegal ETB's Teacher Collaboration Initiative helped support emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was supported through the Department of Education Digital School Excellence Fund. A core group of teachers across our schools worked with a Co-ordinator who shared best practice and also organised Teach Meets to help disseminate information on successful initiatives and identified possible challenges.

Teaching and Learning



Priority 4

Integrate generic skill development (literacy, numeracy, interpersonal skills, digital skills etc.) within all education and training programmes.

Outcome

A pool of staff is developed supporting integration of generic skills in education programmes.

The integration and provision of generic skills continued through a range of provision at Levels 1 to 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications. This provision included communications, digital skills, numeracy skills, culture, heritage and history, work experience and career preparation. Thematic provision motivated participation and active engagement with the learning process.

Professional Development for teaching/instructing staff included universal design for learning (UDL) and how to use technology to enhance teaching and learning. The FET Service engaged with iCare, Bluestack Foundation and the Irish Wheelchair Association to support the integration of literacy and digital skills alongside personal care and lifeskills.

Specialist Training Providers (STPs) continued to deliver tuition at NFQ Levels 3, 4 and 5. STP teachers and trainers were encouraged to avail of FET Service professional development, including UDL, and strategies to support dyslexic students. STP provision supported participants to develop networks within their community by supporting engagement with local employers and embedding decision-making, customer service and time management skills.

The FET Guidance Service continued to reach out to students and clients through online and phone support during the first half of 2021. This changed to in-person support for the second half of the year. Tick that Box, a resource developed by Donegal ETB guidance practitioners, ensured consistency of support across the Service and provided a resource which could be used by students even after they had progressed from their course.



Teaching and Learning



Priority 5

Maintain and enhance quality standards across all our education programmes.

Outcome

Quality assurance frameworks are in place for all programmes offered by Donegal ETB.

At the start of the 2021 school year, incidental inspections recommenced in schools. During the incidental inspections, the inspectorate also collected some information about the implementation of aspects of anti-bullying measures and the placing of pupils/students on reduced timetables in schools. During the COVID-19 period, schools received advance notice, by telephone, of an incidental inspection to ensure that inspectors can comply with the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

During 2021, schools were also subject to Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling Inspection visits. These visits were designed to advise and provide support on creating a safe learning and working environment for all within a school.

FET Quality Assurance and COVID-19

Throughout 2021, adherence to the FET Service Contingency Policy for Alternative Assessment and modified arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment continued. This policy had been developed in response to COVID-19 related social restrictions and ensured that contingency assessment arrangements were in place to support students and enable them to complete their course of study and achieve certification. The policy continued to be modified and updated and a further two revisions were approved by the Quality Council and published on our website in 2021. Forty-two alternative assessments were developed in conjunction with FET tutors, teachers and instructors delivering QQI programmes. These alternative assessments enabled summative assessment and certification of FET students across Levels 4-6 on the NFQ to take place throughout the year

The revisions to the policy in 2021 also allowed for alternative arrangements to certify the work experience and work practice elements of QQI major awards; the Personal and Professional Development award was used where access to the workplace was prohibited because of the restrictions. Another change of note was the inclusion of all centres and programmes within the External Authentication (EA) sampling strategy to be included at least once per year.

FET Inaugural Quality Review

The inaugural Quality Review of the FET Service was undertaken by an independent review panel in May 2021, following an extensive self-evaluation process and the production of a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report in February 2021. The Review Team commended the learner-centred approach which they found sits at the heart of all activity, resulting in a FET Service which is driven by the ETB's culture and strategic vision and which has a rich breadth of engagement, reach and opportunity for all. The Team's repeated acknowledgement of the passion and commitment of staff and of the value placed on Donegal ETB by its external stakeholders was also affirming and motivating, as was their assertion that we are the civic anchor in our community.

The Team found evidence of rapid, flexible, innovative and impactful support to students and staff during the pandemic and of the critical role played by the ETB in supporting the active inclusion of individuals across the county, particularly those who are socially, educationally or economically disadvantaged. They noted the development and maintenance of an extensive network of positive relationships with a wide range of organisations, institutions, groups and sectors, enhanced by significant outreach provision and community education. The flexible approach adopted by Donegal ETB to its external environment and its responsiveness to the changing local and regional needs of individuals and businesses was also applauded. Significant leadership by FET in relation to Access, Transfer and Progression and RPL was highly commended.

FET Learner Support Services

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The need for a more structured approach to student support across the FET Service was identified in research which was carried out by DMH Associates; responding to this research, the FET Service implemented a number of key actions in 2021. A Student Support Welfare and Inclusion Group was established, with the first meeting taking place online in February 2021. The group has representation from all areas of the service. The group charted existing supports to create an awareness of what is available to both students and staff. A wide range of professional development courses to support staff implement inclusive teaching and learning practice and build capacity was offered. These include Universal Design for Learning and strategies to support dyslexic students.

In September, a dedicated student support service was set up, with two dedicated support staff. A referral structure was piloted and the service was promoted widely across the FET Service. A clear point of contact was now in place for student referrals. Support offered contributes to development of skills that will help the student succeed on their course. These include:

- Study Skills (e.g. time management; note taking)
- IT skills to succeed (e.g. Google Classroom; immersive reader; Teams)
- Academic Writing (referencing; structure of assignments; plagiarism)
- Maths – refreshing and filling gaps to support success on course
- Strategies to support dyslexic students

Programme Development and Validation within FET

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Programme Development in 2021 has been more integrated in the compliance and governance structures with the Programme Sub-Committee established in 2020 settling into clearer processes and working on the development of the new Programme Development and Approval Policy, which was still in final consultation stages at the end of 2021 with a view to being presented to the Quality Council in the first quarter of 2022. The Terms of Reference for the Integrated Provision Planning Group were also in the final stages of consultation for presentation to the Quality Council in January 2022.

These were all essential elements of the integration of these processes across the wider governance structure.

New full-time programmes that were approved in 2020 and that commenced delivery in 2021 included the Traineeships in Communications Installation System, Donegal Weaving and Network Planning (Software) as well as Specialist Training Provision on four programmes - Level 3 Jobstart, Level 4 Retail Sales, Level 5 Information Technology and Business Studies and the ASD Collective programme. The final Centre Approval process with the Scottish Qualification Authority for the Donegal Weaving Traineeship was achieved in April 2021. A QQI Level 5 Animal Care for the PLC provision was also approved and commenced delivery at Errigal College in September 2021, with Level 5 students, five of which will also do an Erasmus+ placement in Malaga in April 2022.

New programmes approved in 2021 that have been scheduled for delivery in the fourth quarter of 2022 include Traineeships in Data Science, QQI Level 5 International Trade and Business Administration and a City & Guilds Level 3 Business and Administration. A new City & Guilds qualification in Word Processing Techniques for integration into VTOS programmes has also been approved for delivery with both the awarding body and the internal QA processes. Silver Learning Partner Approval has also been gained with ACCA with plans to commence delivery in April 2022 of a Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Financial and Management Accounting.

Programmes progressed for approval with awarding bodies and through the internal approval process that also commenced delivery in 2021 included the Skills to Advance (STA) offerings of Design and Make a Fashion Accessory with Hanna Hats, Solidworks for the engineering sector and the City and Guilds qualifications at Level 3 and Level 4 for the Hospitality Sector which was a nationwide SOLAS initiative to support this sector that was badly impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A City & Guilds Level 3 qualification in Computer Aided Design has also been progressed for approval with both the awarding body and the internal QA approval processes.

Learning for Living also progressed new offerings at Level 1 to allow more integration of occupation skills within the literacy and digital skills offering with the introduction of Level 1 Horticulture and also the addition of Level 5 Local History for delivery in the Gaeltacht areas in Irish.

New programmes developed for validation with QQI in 2021 included the two Stage Early Learning and Care qualifications at Level 5 and Level 6 which was a collaborative process with the sixteen ETBs. Donegal ETB's differential validation was gained in June 2021 and a VTOS pilot of the Level 5 course commenced in September 2021.

A new Level 6 Special Purpose Award in Work-Based Learning Practices was also developed in conjunction with IBEC and was submitted at the end of 2021 for final validation with QQI at the February 2022 Programmes and Awards Executive Committee. This is the first programme developed by Donegal ETB for validation by QQI within the new governance structures and in line with QQI's new validation processes for qualification development and validation.

At the end of 2021 work was also well underway with the approval process for new City and Guilds Horticulture qualifications at Level 2 and Level 3 that will provide more flexibility in planning short course provision and will offer certification at award, diploma and certificate level for both full-time and part-time delivery options. These qualifications will be adaptable for courses with BTEI, STA and Skills to Compete or may be integrated as components of Traineeships or other provisions. These qualifications offer progress pathways within each level and between levels.

Other work in hand at the end of 2021 included progression of awarding body approval with the Institute of Motor Industry on Electrical Hybrid Vehicle certification at Levels 1 to 3. These programmes may be offered as an enhancement on the Level 6 Motor Vehicle Apprenticeship provision as well as for STA provision for existing employee upskilling within the Motor Vehicle and Emergency Services sectors.

FET Student Voice

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The QA team hosted a Student Voice Roadshow during the week commencing 29 November 2021, the second annual event aimed at listening to and collating the views of students on their experience of Donegal ETB's FET Service. During the week-long event, a total of 147 FET students from across the service participated in the online sessions.

Throughout the sessions, participants were motivated and engaged, provided valuable insights and made relevant and important contributions; they were broadly positive about their experiences as Donegal ETB FET students. In common with participants in the 2020 Student Voice Forum, this cohort of students described how they value opportunities to make their voices heard and offered suggestions for improvement. Of particular note were references made to the support received from their teachers, tutors and instructors, as well as from their peers. Reference was also made to the support provided by the Adult Guidance Service, in the form of counselling and career and progression advice. Many participants also expressed pleasure at returning to the classroom setting, noting that the feeling of support from those around them helps to build their confidence. In terms of teaching and learning, feedback was largely positive. However, a small number of respondents suggested that too much time is focused on assignments and that more time should be spent on learning instead. Other suggestions for improvement included a hybrid version of delivery, comprising face-to-face and online teaching, enhanced with resources such as video clips.

The volume of feedback collated indicates that many students take considerable pride in completing a FET course, but also that they have high expectations of FET Service staff, programmes and facilities, and that they see instances where they feel improvements can be made.

Overall, the FET Service's ability to communicate effectively with and listen to its students will be critical in implementing a strong, integrated quality assurance system and delivering the high-quality learning experience that students desire.

Data Management within FET

Donegal ETB appointed a FET Systems and Data Reporting Officer in November 2020 with responsibility of management of the MIS (Management Information System) within the FET Service. 2021's QA Self Evaluation report highlighted the opportunity to consider more effective ways of using data to inform FET provision, including access, transfer and progression, and monitoring and evaluation. Donegal ETBs Communications Officer also requested more data in order to better inform the general public and current students and staff about FET outcomes.

In 2021 SOLAS provided Donegal ETB with a number of licences for Tableau, a visual analytics platform; the Systems and Data Reporting Officer has obtained the Tableau Desktop Specialist certification and is also a member of the national Tableau champions group to ensure that in future we will maximise our use of Data to better inform decision making

Locally, the Data Management working group met regularly in 2021 to develop approaches to analysing and reporting on data in the Programme Learner Support System (PLSS) and sharing data to drive improvements. Thematic analysis was carried out prioritising the work to be completed and a plan for using 2021 data to baseline for future benchmarking and analysis was developed. Key requirements identified and some emerging themes in 2021 were: the need for an interactive dashboard for regular reporting; better management and understanding of maintaining students on PLSS; need for data to inform programme reviews; need for student voice data to improve our provision.

Bord Dearbhairthe Teastasaithe ETB (CAB)

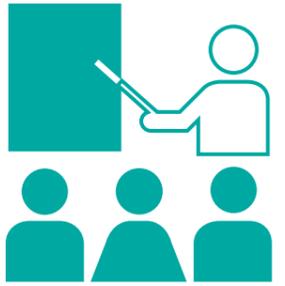
Throughout 2021, the FET Certification Approval Board (CAB) continued to develop procedures initially introduced in 2020 which allowed for the continuation of online approval functions. CAB worked closely with the Quality Council in order to develop an organic reporting template which provides the QC with a regular overview of certification figures along with issues or areas of good practice.

Standard reporting templates which are now used across the entire FET Service for the presentation of courses to CAB were developed. During the year, efforts were made to provide feedback from EA reports in a systematic and appropriate manner to staff; this feedback focuses not only on areas of concern, but also highlights any positive views of good practice expressed by the EAs. In conjunction with the feedback, a process has been developed to support tutors where EA reports to CAB have identified a need to provide individual or group support in specific areas. This feedback is collated and presented to the QA team who organised and provided specific CPD both online and in centre during 2021 based on common themes. One such theme related to the variance in the standard of learner evidence being presented; following a recommendation from CAB to the QA team, a process was developed to standardise presentation of digital evidence. This process is now currently being piloted by RPL and BTEI.

Department of Education Inspections in 2021

School	Date
Abbey Vocational School	25 May 2021
Magh Ene College	18 May 2021
Gairmscoil Chú Uladh	21 May 2021
Mulroy College	02 Dec 2021
Gaelcholáiste Chineál Eoghain	07 Dec 2021
Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada	10 Dec 2021

Teaching and Learning



Priority 6

Participation in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme (four schools) by contributing to the use and maintenance of Irish in the school and local Gaeltacht community.

Outcome

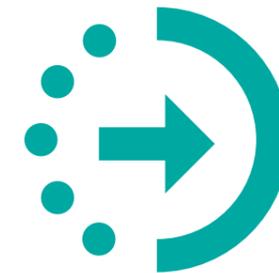
An action plan for improvement is developed which sets out the way in which the school intends to fulfil the language based criteria.

There are four schools involved in promoting the Irish language as part of Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme. There has been a positive response from teachers, students and parents to plans to develop the use of Irish in the four schools—Coláiste Phobail Cholmcille, Oileán Thoraí, Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada, Oileán Arainn Mhóir, Gairmscoil Chu Uladh, Béal an Atha Móir agus Coláiste na Carraige.

There are some ongoing fears in the schools that they would not have the full support of parents and students. However, the schools, despite some challenges, were very satisfied with the positive reactions to more use of Irish in classrooms and in communication generally. There has been an increased emphasis on recruiting staff with a good competence in the Irish language to help further develop the ongoing work.

Key Theme 2

A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



Priority 7

Implement the new organisational structures to enable Donegal ETB to carry out new and enhanced functions.

Outcome

An organisation which is able to provide a service relating to new and enhanced functions for ETBs relating to education, training and administration.

Organisational Structure

A business case was presented some time ago to the DE seeking additional staff and resources that Donegal ETB believes are necessary to carry out its work and meet all its statutory obligations. The business case sets out the challenges the ETB is facing, proposed solutions, and sets out the risks of continuing to operate without the requested resources. Donegal ETB continues to work with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), which represents ETBs, to engage with the DE to try to progress this matter under phase two of the new Organisational Design Structures for ETBs. Unfortunately, no progress on this has been achieved to date.

The three Directors Forums hosted under ETBI - Organisation Support and Development (OSD), Schools and Further Education and Training (FET), which report to the Chief Executive's Forum, continued to meet regularly throughout the year and agreed strategies and network reporting structures for the various categories of ETB functions. These fora worked on a number of initiatives with a view to continuing to develop best practice throughout the organisation and the sector.

Within Donegal ETB, regular meetings of several in-house committees were held including the Chief Executive and Directors Group; the Executive Forum under the Director of OSD, the groups for Principals and Deputy Principals under the Director of Schools; the FET senior managers and coordinators teams under the FET Director; the FET Funding and Planning group, which is comprised of senior management from OSD and FET to address cross-functional issues relating to SOLAS funding and other matters, and the FET Buildings Group which also comprises representatives from both OSD and FET and addresses matters relating to building and accommodation needs within FET. A COVID-19 Response Team has been in place since the onset of the pandemic and works collaboratively with Lead Worker Representatives to implement the Workplace Safety Response Plan (see Corporate section later in this report).

A central body, Education Shared Business Services (ESBS) has been set up by the DE, which in future will oversee the payment of both payroll and student payments. The transition to ESBS is underway. In 2020 ESBS took over responsibility for payments to Apprentices under Phase one of the transfer of student payments, while in 2021 significant work was undertaken on the transition of payments to all other FET students, with payments for these other students scheduled to move to ESBS in February 2022. Engagement with ESBS is ongoing in relation to the payroll transition, which is currently scheduled to take place in 2023, and preparatory work on this project began during 2021 with the appointment of a transition project lead and the formation of a subject matter expert working group.

Ethos

Donegal Education and Training Board has begun the process of rolling out ETB Ethos across its fifteen post primary schools and colleges. This is part of a broader national initiative involving all ETBs. In January 2021 a coordinator was appointed to lead out on the initiative and to work directly with schools.

What is Ethos?

Put simply, ethos is how we live, work and relate to each other in our school community. While it encompasses the curriculum and how it is taught, ethos is broader than this. It also relates to shared core values, to the hidden curriculum, to decision making processes and to the relationships that underpin the daily life of school. The process of identifying core values and ethos has been evolving over the past decade. All ETB schools are State, Co-Educational and Multi-Denominational. ETB ethos is underpinned by the core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Respect, Equality and Community.

Embedding ETB ethos across all our schools

A Professional Learning Network for Ethos has been established comprising one representative from each Donegal ETB school. Additionally, each school has appointed an Ethos Leadership Team to manage the rollout locally. The focus in 2021 was on raising awareness and understanding of ETB ethos with all members of the school community. Over the coming years the focus will move towards embedding ETB ethos and core values into all aspects of school life. ETBI has consulted widely across the sector and produced a Framework for Ethos. This document outlines ETB ethos and specifies the standards that all ETB schools should strive for. This will continue to be an important point of reference for the school-based Ethos Leadership Teams.

Irish Language Developments

The Official Languages Act of 2003 is to promote the Irish language for official purposes in the state, in communicating with and providing services to the public. Every public body named under the Act has a duty to prepare a language scheme when requested to do so by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht under section 11 of the Act.

Donegal ETB proudly updated its Irish language scheme 2021-2023, building, as always, on the use of Irish within the organisation.

In 2021 we again provided a wide range of Irish language classes. Classes were held at various levels and locations - from Letterkenny to as far west as Oileán Thoraí agus Oileán Árainn Mhóir. When possible, the classes were in-person in the classroom, but online when the need arose from January to Easter, all of which were enthusiastically received.

The pandemic has allowed us as a Board to focus on accreditation with the European Certificate in Irish. It was delivered at three different levels, A2 to B1 and B2. As these classes were online, people from other parts of the country, with an interest in the Ulster dialect, were able to attend. This made it possible to cater for students of Irish in London and Cork - as well as Árainn Mhóir and An Clochán Liath.

We continued our work with community groups and the Language Planning Officers to organise and advertise classes. Outside the Gaeltacht we are working with Lónra Leitir Ceanainn to promote the Irish language in Letterkenny as a Gaeltacht Service Town and we are a member of the Network Board of Lónra.

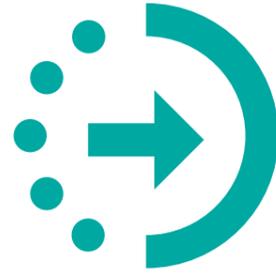
Seachtain na Gaeilge was celebrated throughout the organisation and as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge, four 'Little Lessons', developed by the Adult Literacy service and with a focus on Irish grammar, were added to the 'Little Lessons' YouTube playlists.

Donegal ETB is a member of the 'Breacadh' adult education project, which serves Education and Training Boards covering a Gaeltacht area. The development of a phonics scheme for the various dialects was continued in conjunction with Fóras na Gaeilge and An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta. This is a very important project and the learning resources of 'Breacadh' are regularly disseminated to schools and the Board's education programmes County-wide.

Coláiste na Carraige, now in their third year as part of the post-primary schools participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme, are now teaching Mathematics, Physical Education and History through the medium of Irish.

Donegal ETB's annual Induction Day for newly appointed teachers once again delivered a module on teaching through Irish for teachers teaching in our Gaelcholáistí and Scoileanna Gaeltachta.

A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



Priority 8

Continuous review of the legislative/governance requirements of Donegal ETB operations and ensure implementation of outcomes.

Outcome

Full compliance with all legislative and governance requirements relating to Donegal ETB.

Compliance

Donegal ETB continued to be mindful of its obligations in terms of legislation and governance in 2021. Further steps were taken during 2021 to enhance compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs (CL 0002/2019). All required actions were implemented at Board meetings and at meetings of its Audit and Risk committee, Finance committee, School Boards of Management, and Youth Work committee. The ETB also ensured that it complied with the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013, and other legislation, as well as with the requirements of the Revenue Commissioners.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), with its composition of three ETB Board members and five external members, met four times during 2021.

ARC is responsible for monitoring the Executive in how it carries out its functions. It operates under Terms of Reference that have been approved by the ETB Board. During the year, ARC provided reassurances to the ETB Board about the effectiveness of the internal control processes. ARC had access to reports from management; an external audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General; and internal audits by the Internal Audit Unit – ETBs. In turn, the ETB Board received reports of the meetings of ARC. The Board took ARC's findings and recommendations into account when approving the Annual Financial Statements and adopting the Statement on Internal Control.

ARC also carried out a self-assessment review during 2021 and the results of this review were presented to the Board.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is composed of three Board members and four external members and met four times during 2021. The Committee continued to have responsibility for reviewing the income and expenditure of the Board, performance against budget, and the financial aspects of both the Education plan and the Training Service plan. The ETB Board received the minutes of the Finance Committee meetings for consideration and to help assure Board members that these plans were being implemented.

The Committee also reviews annually the financial aspects of the Annual Service Plan and recommends them to the ETB Board for inclusion as part of the overall Annual Service Plan which is required to be submitted to the DE by 1 March each year. A joint meeting with the ARC is also held annually in March to review and recommend approval of the Annual Financial Statements (AFS) by the ETB Board in advance of the deadline for submission of the draft AFS to the DE by 1 April.

The Committee carried out a self-assessment review during 2021 and the results of this review were presented to the Board.

Risk Management

Donegal ETB's approach to risk management is guided by the principles set out in Section 7 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs (CL 0002/2019). Work continued throughout 2021 on the review and updating of the Corporate, Schools and FET Risk Registers, which are considered by the Audit and Risk Committee. Operational Risk Registers for ETB areas including Finance, Procurement, ICT, Human Resources, Corporate Services, Building Services and Estates Management and Health and Safety have been developed and are updated regularly. This work continues to heighten awareness around the whole area of risk management. Risk registers were also updated in 2021 to continue to assess the impact of COVID-19 on risk management.

Internal Control

Under Section 7.4 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs, the Board has responsibility for ensuring that effective systems of internal control are instituted and implemented. In 2021 Board members, with the assistance of the Finance Committee, reviewed how the ETB's programmes performed in relation to targets and budgets. The Board also carried out its annual review of internal controls and considered a report from the Audit and Risk Committee in relation to the effectiveness of the internal controls during 2020. The Board approved the annual Statement on Internal Control which was included in the Annual Financial Statements for 2020.

In 2021 Donegal ETB developed an internal audit tracker to improve its ability to monitor progress towards the implementation of the findings and recommendations of the Internal Audit Unit.

During 2021 Donegal ETB continued to take account of the potential impact on the system of internal control of changes to work practices arising from the impact of COVID-19.

The following audits were dealt with during 2021:

- The Comptroller & Auditor General (C &AG): audit of accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020
- Internal Audit Unit (IAU) - ETBs: Review of previous audit of Contracted Training
- (IAU) ETBs: Human Resources
- (IAU) ETBs: Procurement (Commenced 2020)
- (IAU) Review of Previous Internal Audits (commenced 2020)
- YR YEI 2017 - ESF Audit Authority Audit (commenced 2020)
- Training for the Unemployed - ESF Article 125
- ESF Verification Audit - BTEI, Adult Literacy and Youthreach 2019

Training for members of the Board, ARC and Finance Committees

An online training session was delivered by the Institute of Public Administration to members of the Board, ARC and Finance Committee on December 15, 2021. The session focussed on governance, as well as financial and risk management.

Child Protection

Donegal ETB confirms it has a Child Protection Policy in place for the organisation, which has been developed in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (Child Protection Procedures) as published by the Department of Education.

Procurement

We are committed to delivering a strategic approach to Procurement by upholding the values of Transparency, Equal Treatment, Non-Discrimination and Proportionality. It is essential that government funds are spent in a way that achieves maximum value for money, adheres to government policy, national guidelines and EU Directives, while providing a sustainable delivery of services.

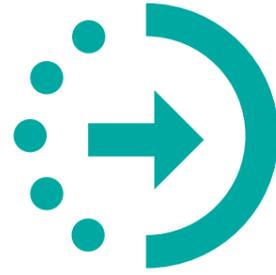
Donegal ETB is committed to operate its procurement under the national procurement model agreed by government, and the principles of corporate governance outlined in the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs (CL 0002/2019). This code of practice requires completion of the Corporate Procurement Plan, supported by the production of the Multi-Annual Procurement Plan or 'MAPP'. The plan is an essential link in the provision of sustainable, fit for purpose, contracts and frameworks. The Corporate Procurement Plan sets out the Board's strategic approach to procurement. By following the guidance set out in this document we are facilitating Donegal ETB's compliance with the procurement aspect of the Code of Governance and achieving best value for money for the taxpayer.

In instances where the national procurement model does not have an appropriate mechanism in place for a particular purchase (framework/drawdown), it is the intention of Donegal ETB to comply with the relevant Public procurement guidelines available from the [OGP website](#) and sectoral agreed policies and procedures available from the [ETBI website](#).

In line with Circular 10/14: Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement, Donegal ETB seeks to encourage participation on a fair and equal basis by small and medium sized enterprises, by implementing a 'lotting' structure where possible, engagement with the Donegal Local Enterprise Office, market engagement and advertising.

Procurement at Donegal ETB has been working towards increasing compliance levels while simultaneously achieving value for money. We aim to engage with all stakeholders with a view to adding value to Donegal ETB through procurement.

A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



Priority 9

Arising from the on-going integration of education and training services and the implementation of the Shared Services Project to redefine organisational priorities and corresponding job roles.

Outcome

Clear evidence of effective systems, working relationships and job roles within Donegal ETB.

The Human Resources (HR) department of Donegal ETB provides support in a number of areas, including:

- HR staffing resources/allocation
- Recruitment and selection
- HR operations incorporating People XD and PTT online claim system for staff
- Pensions/Superannuation
- Employee health and wellbeing
- Contract management
- Training and development
- Industrial Relations

HR Staffing Resources/Allocation

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Teaching staff allocation: Donegal ETB's final Teacher Allocation for 2021 (for academic year 2021/2022) was 508.83 whole time equivalents in accordance with circulars from the DE.

Administrative staff allocation

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Administrative staff allocations are approved by the DE on the basis of:

- Agreed formulae in relation to school-based administrators
- Agreements between the DE and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- FET programmes

Maintenance staff allocation

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The Department of Education sets out the criteria for maintenance staff allocation in post-primary schools on the basis of student enrolment. The HR Department carried out an annual review of maintenance staff allocation and where increases apply the HR Department advised the Department accordingly.

FET programmes

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The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science advises on the number of maintenance staff based on the student enrolment and advises HR of changes. In terms of non-teaching staff generally, the ETB has approved staffing levels. HR sends returns to the DE every quarter.

Recruitment and Selection

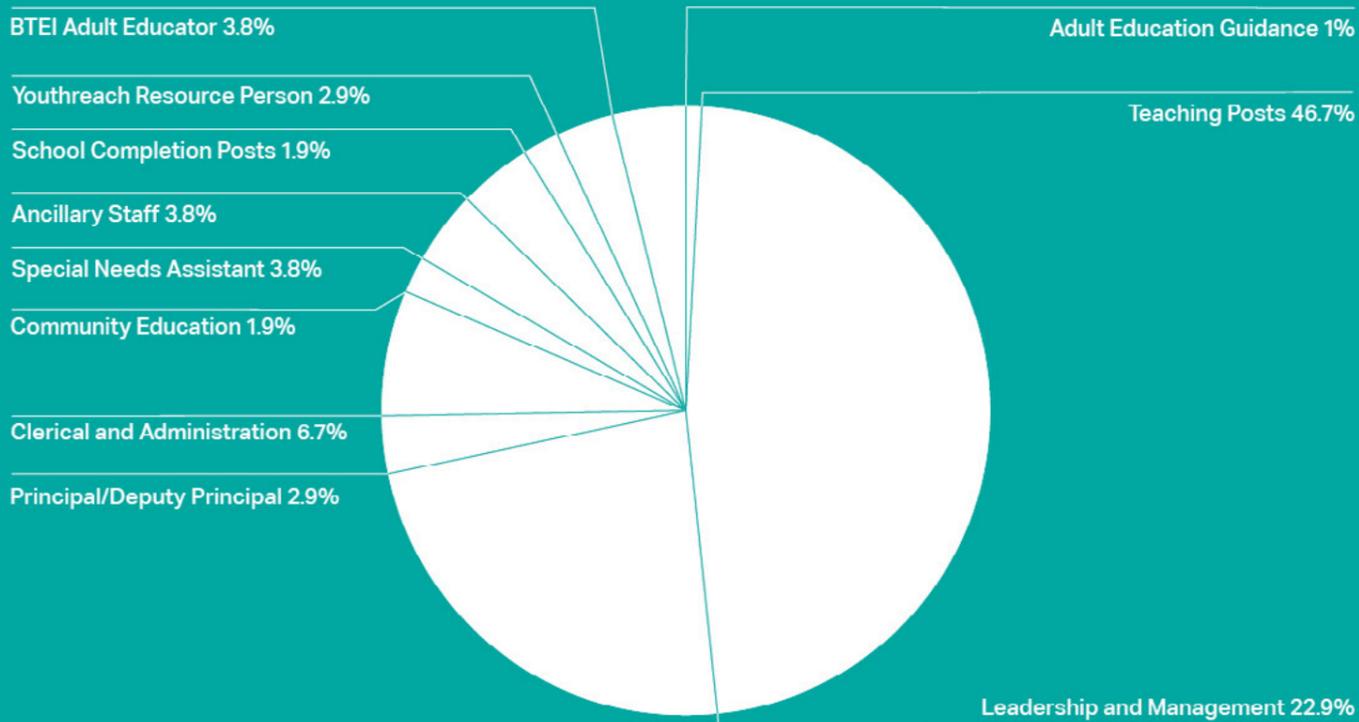
A total of 105 appointments were filled through formal recruitment processes in the calendar year 2021 across a range of posts in a permanent, fixed term, specified purpose and acting capacity.

Teaching Post	49	FET Training Standards Officer	1
Leadership and management in schools (included posts of responsibility, HSCL and Programme Coordinator)	24	Special Needs Assistants	4
Principal/Deputy Principal	3	School Completion Posts (Donegal ETB act as Agents for SCP Local management Committees)	2
Clerical and Administrative (Grades III to Grade VII)	7	Ancillary Staff	4
Community Education Facilitator (CEF) Grade	2	F Youthreach Resource Person	3
Adult Education Guidance Co-ordinator	1	FET Project Development Officer	1
BTEI Adult Educator	4		

Work/Life Balance and Statutory Leave Applications

The HR Department processed 190 Work Life Balance applications in 2021 as follows.

Maternity Leave	31	Job Share	52
Parental Leave	24	Work Share	19
Secondment	6	Career Break	14
Carer's Leave	3	Paternity Leave	7
Parents Leave	34		



Pensions/Superannuation

Superannuation and retirement benefits

Here are some details in relation to the ETB Pensions section in 2021, starting with the names of the various schemes:

- The Education and Training Boards Teacher Superannuation Scheme, 2015
- The Education Sector Superannuation Scheme, 2015
- The Single Public Sector Pension Scheme, 2012
- The FÁS Closed Scheme
- The FÁS Open Scheme

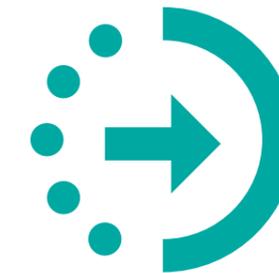
Number of retirees in 2021	16
Updated number of retirees at the end of 2021	318

Training and Development

The following Training and Development was specifically initiated via Donegal ETBs Training and Development Policies.

Pillar	No of Employees	Category
Schools	18	Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Post-Primary
Schools	1	Leadership and Management
Schools	2	Subject Related
Schools	2	Training in the area of Special Needs
FET	1	Supporting Students with Disabilities
OSD	1	Data Protection / Procurement
OSD	17	Information Technology
OSD	14	Skills to Advance Initiative (Certificate in Leadership Management) accredited by Institute of Leadership and Management.
OSD	8	Project Management
OSD	1	Diploma in Employment Law

A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



Priority 10

Provide a range of staff learning opportunities and supports to build organisational capacity and enhance the quality of educational and training provision.

Outcome

A dynamic organisation that responds quickly and effectively to change.

Professional development opportunities for staff continued throughout 2021.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

events were published on Donegal ETB's staff intranet and a new automated system was developed where FET staff could view all upcoming CPD opportunities and apply online via an automated expression of interest form. Fifty-two CPD events were offered between January 2021 – December 2021 with 1,196 staff engagements in the range of CPD offered. CPD themes in 2021 included:

Wellbeing – Five Wellbeing events were organised throughout 2021 with a total of 136 staff in attendance. Wellbeing seminars included strategies for staying focused and staying well, understanding the psychological consequences of the pandemic and pathways to learning from the experience and foster hope within us, exploring how alcohol and prescription medications can have an impact on personal motivation and learning capacity and understanding the impact of domestic abuse.

Quality Assurance – Four Quality Assurance Workshops were offered in 2021 with a total of 141 staff in attendance. These workshops included understanding good practice and areas for improvement in the teaching, learning and assessment, how policies and their associated procedures and processes are being developed as part of the Donegal ETB's integrated quality assurance system and reviewing the initial findings and feedback from the QQI review team.

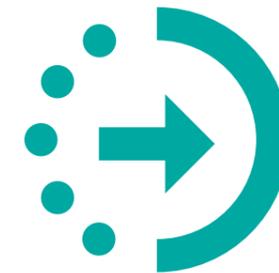
Accessibility Tools and UDL – Nineteen Workshops were facilitated in 2021 with a total of 409 staff in attendance. These workshops included 'The National Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Badge Rollout with AHEAD and UCD providing participants with a strong introduction to the UDL Framework. Various workshops were delivered by Donegal ETB staff and external experts promoting Universal Design for Learning, widening participation, equitable access to education, and student inclusion.

Inclusion – Seven CPD events were organised in 2021 with a total of 151 staff in attendance. These workshops included 'LGBTQI+ Awareness Training', 'Visibility and Language Matters for LGBTQI+' embracing a culture that promotes and celebrates the visibility of LGBTQI+ for students and staff, "Practical strategies with which to support autistic students across all educational settings including FET centres and post primary-schools", and "Practical Steps to support Dyslexia in the Classroom".

Supporting Teaching and Learning

Practices – Seventeen further CPD events were offered in 2021 with a total of 495 staff in attendance. These CPD events included Designing Blended Learning Experiences, Supporting Staff to use Digital Technologies, TEL Mentoring, GDPR Training, Digital Citizenship Training, Skills Checker to Support Access, Integrating Literacy in Vocational Subjects, Visual Enhancement of PowerPoint, Assessment and Feedback, Mind Mapping and Reflective Practice in Further Education.

A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



Priority 11

Use new and emerging technologies to enhance organisational support and development.

Outcome

Increased usage of relevant Information and Communications Technologies and associated software.

During COVID-19 the IT team in Donegal ETB continued to strengthen the ability of staff to teach and communicate remotely. With the return to the classroom and office, a new blended approach will bring its own challenges.

The use of Chrome Remote Access allowed staff to access work laptops while working from home. It proved to be secure, with 2 Step and additional pin verification, and reliable requiring little technical support.

The risk posed by a cyber-attack on the organisation has increased exponentially over recent years. Donegal ETB have engaged with KHIPU Networks Cyber Security who provide a managed service, deploying simulated phishing attacks.

This year-long campaign attempts to simulate what would happen if Donegal ETB encountered a real cyber-attack. Each campaign is followed by an educational awareness follow through. We are already experiencing a more cautious approach by staff when accessing their emails.

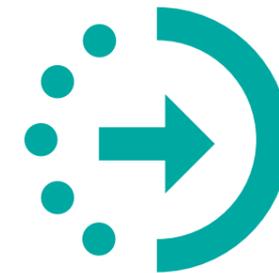
Donegal ETB also added another layer of security to each mobile handset provided to staff to help prevent against phishing and smishing attacks. This has proven seamless and effective.

Donegal ETB continues to roll out and enhance Teacher - Student interactions through our Google Workspace accounts. The Teaching and Learning upgrade allows for recording of online classes, live streaming options, attendance reporting, Breakout Rooms and Q&A within online classes. This has already proven to be hugely popular with staff.

Donegal ETB also manages a MS 365 tenant. All staff and students are automatically allocated a MS365 licence. This allows for both online and offline access as required. The rollout of upgraded Microsoft licensing to allow students to use applications when their internet was weak or unavailable.

The ongoing development of a Digital Content Hub to provide quick, easy use instructional videos for staff and students is available to staff, students and parents in schools and FET.

A Progressive, Accountable Organisation



Priority 12

Develop a clear and effective communications strategy for Donegal ETB.

Outcome

There is an increased trust and a deeper understanding of Donegal ETB and its role, responsibilities and services provided among all the stakeholders.

In 2021 Donegal ETB continued to build on and further develop the communications of its work to the public in a variety of ways which are highlighted below. However, all of this was considerably reduced because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Strategic

Donegal ETB's Communications Advisory Group, which provides strategic direction on Donegal ETB's communications structures and operations, met online four times in 2021 to continue overseeing the development of Donegal ETB's communications in a number of areas including:

- Strategic
- Media/Press
- Digital Communications
- Corporate Communications
- Internal Communications
- Crisis Communications
- Marketing

Donegal ETB's media insight report for 2021, which provided quantitative and qualitative analysis on traditional print, online and broadcast media for Donegal ETB during 2021 provided a number of highlights including:

- 1,295 media items, including 664 print media articles, 358 broadcast items and 273 online items.
- Donegal ETB's largest media type was Regional with 984 items, which was made up from 626 regional print articles and 358 regional radio broadcasts, followed by 273 online items and 38 national items.
- The top Key Topic for Donegal ETB was Business Support, followed by Community Education and then Apprenticeships.
- For 2021 Donegal ETB achieved a media score of 86, which is well above the industry benchmark of 50/100.

Strategic advice was provided by Donegal ETB's Communications Officer in several areas including the development of Donegal ETB's Strategy Statement for 2022-2026 and supporting ETBI with its communications procurement process and the implementation of its 2021-2024 Communications Strategy.

Media/Press

In 2021 fifteen press releases were issued to local print, radio and online media as appropriate. This included, for example, extensive coverage of new staff appointments as well as the appointment of a new Board member and Chairperson.

Many of these press releases were posted as news stories on Donegal ETB's website (English and Irish) and shared across its various social media platforms as appropriate. A total of twenty-three news stories were posted to the website in 2021, covering all aspects of the organisation – Corporate (8), Schools (1) and Further Education and Training (FET) Services (14).

A number of Donegal ETB's schools received extensive coverage of a range of activities throughout the school year in local print and online media. However, the volume of activities was down on previous years due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

Donegal ETB also received thirty-eight items of national coverage of some of its work. Highlights included:

- 12 January - Deelee College teacher Evin Devenney spoke to the Irish Times about what he had learned the previous year from online teaching as part of a larger news article: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/be-kinder-with-deadlines-what-teachers-learned-from-remote-teaching-last-time-1.4456408>
- 26 January - a photograph of a raging robin taken by staff member Ciaran Cunningham (Head of IT), in a personal capacity, featured on the front of the Irish Times as their Image of the Day.
- 07 October - Donegal ETB's mobile phone cybersecurity initiative featured in the Irish Times (sponsored by the ETB's mobile phone company Three): <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/innovation/partner-profile-three/cyberattacks-underscore-need-to-safeguard-an-organisation-1.4691756>

- 21 December - students and staff at Moville Community College featured in an Irish Times article about the effects of the MICA crisis: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/donegal-town-dealing-with-mica-if-it-was-in-dublin-this-would-already-be-fixed-1.4746183>

More locally, on 5 July Invest Donegal published an interview on their website and across their social media platforms and local print media with Area Training Manager Vinny McGroary on how Donegal ETB develops, nurtures and advances talent across the county: <https://donegal.ie/en/latest-news/2021/july/donegal-etb-developing-nurturing-and-advancing-talent-across-the-county>. While on 28 August, the Donegal News newspaper published an interview with Donegal ETB's Director of FET, Cróna Gallagher, as part of the integrated promotional campaign for the 2021 online FET Fortnight event: <https://donegalnews.com/2021/08/a-service-that-reaches-into-every-nook-and-cranny/>.

Sponsored profile Three

Cyberattacks underscore need to safeguard an organisation

Donegal Education and Training Board leads way with quick response for phones

Recent high-profile cyberattacks have created heightened awareness of the need to protect all parts of an organisation's network, including mobile phones.

One organisation to respond very quickly was Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) which has adopted Three Ireland's 3Mobile Protect solution to secure the 197 mobile phones it provides to staff to enable them to access work emails while working remotely.

The solution, developed and powered by Irish company Corrata, protects smartphones and tablets from security threats, detects suspicious or unusual activity on every device, and stops the latest threats from texts, WhatsApp messages, social media scams or emails with infected links.

"Donegal ETB is very proactive when it comes to technology and security," says Three head of public sector sales Ken McGrath. "They were very quick to respond to the heightened threat level following the HSE attack. I think that attack crystallised the issue for a lot of people. The fraudsters and hackers have become very sophisticated and they profile cohorts of people really well before targeting them."

"I have received fraudulent messages myself and they were very convincing. I was only able to recognise them as scams because I wasn't expecting a delivery from the courier company mentioned."

The Donegal ETB IT team had noticed a big increase in security risks in the wake of the HSE attack. Almost every day, staff reported getting text-message phishing scams and links

to malicious websites sent to their phones.

These messages were becoming more convincing, with some even written in Irish, targeting Gaeltacht-area schools. This increased the chances that someone might think they were genuine and mistakenly click on the link.

"Even for reasonably IT literate people, malware is so sophisticated now that we have to have a double-take," says Ciaran Cunningham, head of IT with Donegal ETB. "Cybersecurity had been a big concern and, like many organisations, the mobile side was overlooked. Teachers who are out on classes spend more time on their phones than they do on their laptops, so it was a gap that we didn't have covered."

Malware is a silent invader on mobile devices, he explains. "Most users might be totally unaware if something is happening in the background. I'm very conscious of the fact that staff will always use their phone for some personal use within reason, as well as for work."

"I genuinely feel that because we provided these phones, there's a duty of care on us to ensure a level of protection that they may not be able to provide themselves. The HSE attack really brought this to a head. So, I made a decision: we are now in a position where we can't wait around for something to happen."

One of the key attractions of 3Mobile Protect is its ease of installation and set-up.

It was deployed to all 197 employee devices within a few hours without needing an external service provider or taking

up extra resources from the internal IT team.

Each mobile device makes about 4,000 internet requests a day and 3Mobile Protect acts as a firewall, protecting them whether the traffic is on mobile networks or wifi.

The improvement was almost immediate, says McGrath. "Minutes after going live, 3Mobile Protect identified one device that was infected with malicious software. It successfully blocked more than 5,000 separate network traffic requests, preventing data leakage and isolating the device while alerting the employee and administrator of the issue. Within the first 24 hours, the software detected and blocked 1,600 other attempts to breach security, such as by staff clicking links in faked SMS phishing messages."

Another benefit is the level of detail available through 3Mobile Protect's dashboard, which provides live reporting tools on what's happening with the network and where any threats are being blocked.

"We are getting information that we never had before," says Cunningham. "I think this is going to be a game changer for us. What I really like is that I get a full overview of everything. I can see at a glance whether the mobile devices have a good, fair or bad security score. 3Mobile Protect has been like putting a guard on the gates."

And it protects without compromising users' privacy. "The beauty of 3Mobile Protect is that it doesn't access any personal data," McGrath points out. "It only shows whether the device is compromised, wheth-

Interviews with RTÉ's Raidió na Gaeltachta were regularly provided throughout the year following ETB meetings.

Digital Communications

Donegal ETB increased its digital communications outputs in 2021 through the use of its website and social media platforms to raise awareness of its brand, communicate its work and engage with its many audiences and communities across the county and its islands.

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Simon Harris T.D., acknowledged the informative nature of Donegal ETB's digital communications with our Director of FET at a meeting of the Regional Skills Forum on 15 February and again at his virtual tour meeting on 01 March. We had active engagement with the Minister throughout 2021 on Twitter and Instagram.

In 2021 the website had 156,308 users, of which 150,530 were new users, along with 570,414 page views. A new section on ETB primary schools was added to the Schools and Youth Service section (<https://www.donegaletb.ie/schools-youth-services/primary-schools/>).

In a continuous effort to improve how we communicate who we are and what we do to the many individuals, communities and partners we work with across the county, we launched a blog, Donegal ETBlog, to provide a more in-depth understanding of our work. This is available through a link on the website (<https://donegaletb.ie/blog/>) with blogs posted on the first and third Tuesday of each month. While the blog is managed by the Communications Officer, each blog is written by a different 'blogger', including current and former students and staff across schools, FET centres, music and outdoor education service, Corporate Services, employers, funders, community representatives and the many other partners we work with both here in Donegal and further afield. The first August blog written by Adult Guidance Counsellor Elena Gill resulted in over twenty-five thousand views of the social media posts about it and a full-page feature in the Inishowen Independent newspaper.

Donegal ETB, its schools, FET Service, Gartan Outdoor Education and Training Centre and music service, is very active across a number of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.

In terms of vanity metrics, Donegal ETB continued to grow its followers on its social media platforms in 2021:

- Donegal ETB's largest social media platform, Facebook, surpassed ten thousand followers in 2021 by gaining 1,355 news followers with a total of 10,200 by the end of December. This compared to an increase of 1,998 in the previous twelve months (01 January - 31 December 2020).
- Followers on Donegal ETB's LinkedIn company account continued to grow, standing at 2,504 at the end of 2021, up from 1,752 the previous year (2020), an increase of 752 followers. At the end of December 2021, the ETB's LinkedIn showcase page, specifically for employer services, had 292 followers, an increase of 33 followers on 2020.
- Donegal ETB's Instagram account had 2,134 followers at the end of 2021, an increase of 333 followers from the previous year.
- Donegal ETB's Twitter account had 3,845 followers at the end of 2021, up from 3,516 at the end of 2020.
- The ETB's YouTube account had 326 subscribers at the end of December 2021, up by 92 from 2020.



There was a continued use of two of Donegal ETB's personalised hashtags, #WeAreDonegalETB and #GoFurtherWithDonegalETB, across various sections of the organisation, notably schools and FET.

The engagement rates of Donegal ETB's various social media platforms remained high; Donegal ETB's Twitter account (@DonegalETB) for example, had over 1.3 million impressions in 2021, while many of its LinkedIn posts had engagement rates averaging between 6 and 8% or sometimes higher at 10% and over; a 2% rate is considered good for LinkedIn.

A number of new videos were added to the ETB's YouTube account in 2021 including four additional short videos in Irish which were added to the 'Little Lessons' series (focusing on spelling, grammar and basic IT) for Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Donegal ETB's Communications Officer also continued to provide support to schools and centres on the use of social media.

Corporate Communications

A core team comprising Donegal ETB's three Directors, Head of Corporate Services, Communications Officer, music service manager and Corporate Services administration, put together Donegal ETB's 2020 annual report.

Donegal ETB's Strategy Statement 2022-2026 was also developed in 2021 (with the graphic design of the final document taking place in early 2022).

Donegal ETB's charity number was added to the website, appropriate social media accounts and the Administrative Office headed paper and compliment slip in keeping with compliance requirements under the Charities Governance Code.

A substantial piece of work was undertaken with a graphic designer to recreate the logos for all fifteen post-primary schools as a complete file of these in various formats to facilitate a range of printing requirements was not available.

A case study on Donegal ETB's FET communications, with a focus on Digital Communications, was included in the QQI Inaugural Review of Quality Assurance Further Education & Training Service Self-Evaluation Report, which was published in February 2021.

Internal Communications

The staff intranet was further developed in 2021 to enhance internal communications.

Donegal ETB's Communications Officer provided an information session on communications for new teachers as part of their induction.

Marketing

A wide range of communications to support marketing activities were carried out in 2021. While our digital communication activities constitute marketing, additional activities also included:

- updating the FET Options for School Leavers brochure and FET Options for School Leavers – PLCs brochure
- Donegal ETB's 2021-2022 FET prospectus was completely revamped by Donegal ETB's Communications, Adult Guidance and FET Recruitment staff. This was a substantial piece of work.

Donegal ETB continued to work strategically with local online media outlet Donegal Daily to promote the standing of Further Education and Training (FET) which also consequently promotes the standing of Donegal ETB. Nine advertorials were published in 2021 which focused on a particular field of learning within the FET Service through its former students (see Appendix 1).

In addition, because of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the annual FET Information and Guidance Fair, which normally attracts around 1,000 adults and young people, was, for a second year, not held in person in 2021. Instead, a series of information videos were created and aired on YouTube (FET Fortnight 2021 playlist can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1HRy1EecPt2BNLjvGq8x0yCqc25fACJ>) and across other social media platforms. These videos concentrated on the most popular subject areas and applicant groups: Care Courses (child and health); Engineering and the Built Environment; Business, Administration and Finance; Information and Communications Technology; Community Campus; Options for Career Changers, Upskilling and Reskilling; Apprenticeships; Options for School Leavers and New Traineeships. A further four FET student stories were posted on Donegal Daily to support the promotion of this event (also listed in Appendix 1).

The FET Service sponsored Highland Radio's 'Business Matters' podcast from January-June 2021. Additionally, a number of staff spoke on the podcast at various intervals throughout the year:

1. Episode 27, 27 January, Area Training Manager Vinny McGroary - <https://www.highlandradio.com/2021/01/20/business-matters-ep-27-vinny-mcgroary-david-daly/>
2. Episode 35, 17 March, Enterprise Engagement Coordinator (Skills for Work) Donna McDade - <https://www.highlandradio.com/2021/03/17/business-matters-ep-35-neil-ferry-noreen-harding-donna-mcdade/>
3. Episode 39, 14 April, Recruitment Officer Tara McGuire - <https://www.highlandradio.com/2021/04/14/business-matters-ep-39-frankie-veldman-tara-mcguire/>
4. Episode 42, 05 May, Adult Guidance and Information Service Coordinator Deirdre McColgan - <https://www.highlandradio.com/2021/05/05/business-matters-ep-42-garrett-harte-daithi-ramsay-deirdre-mccolgan/>
5. Episode 54, 28 July, Assistant Training Centre Manager Mairead Carlin - <https://highlandradio.com/2021/07/28/business-matters-ep-54-tommy-gallen-mairead-carlin/>

Two FET student stories were added to the EU Funds website (<https://eufunds.ie/>) in 2021, providing a total of four Donegal ETB FET Student stories on this national website (<https://eufunds.ie/case-studies/>):

1. Youthreach: <https://eufunds.ie/portfolio/youthreach-was-one-of-the-best-decisions-ive-made-in-my-life/>
2. BTEI: <https://eufunds.ie/portfolio/debbie-designs-a-creative-future-after-donegal-etb/>

Key Theme 3

Working with Partners

**Priority 13**

Build on relationships already established with local community groups and relevant voluntary, statutory, cross border and employers to work towards shared goals.

Outcome

Strengthened partnerships providing more focused approaches to learning and employment opportunities.



Partnerships have been enormously helpful in our various programmes. These partnerships have helped to create new relationships and networks and to access different paces, realities and venues. The partnerships have helped to increase resources – not just through increased or diversified funding sources, but also through access to human knowledge, skills and time.

During 2021 various partnerships have helped to engage more people, and types of people, in different ways. We have seen successful partnerships in FET, Youth Work, Music, Outdoor Education and in our Drugs and Alcohol Awareness programme. This has deepened the experiences of those already engaged and helped to involve people in different forms and roles.

FET Enterprise Engagement (incorporating Skills for Work/Skills to Advance)

2021 was a busy year for our Enterprise Engagement service. The recruitment of a Programme Development Officer and the merging of the former Skills for Work function into the Enterprise Engagement team are reaping rewards in increased responsiveness and reach throughout the county. In 2021, we had a coordinated approach to provide training interventions across the spectrum from Levels 1-6 while also facilitating access to various learning pathways for our students.

A key challenge from the outset for our Enterprise Engagement service has been the need to establish the brand of Donegal FET as a professional and responsive service with much to offer industry in Donegal.

Collaboration with the Donegal Local Enterprise Office (LEO) and the Profit Net Engineering Group has been a key activity in 2021 where we focused on the reskilling and recertification of welders. In 2021,

fifty-two employees were upskilled in welding across ten companies. We also responded to a request for the delivery of training in SolidWorks across thirteen companies. This training gave companies the skills and abilities to increase their flexibility as well as turnaround time to customers. We recognise that Engineering is the common thread underpinning all economic pillars in our County. This collaboration with the Engineering Sector was further solidified by our interactions with the Killybegs Marine Cluster Group (twenty companies with a combined annual turnover in excess of €300 million) that focuses on the growth and employment opportunities within the Blue Economy. Our primary focus in that Group is to keep building a talent pipeline through certified training and to upskill existing staff.

In 2021, there was a concentrated effort in training to raise skills in office productivity in Killybegs companies. In response to Microsoft specialist training delivered to Atlantic Dawn in Killybegs, Christine Sweeney, Financial Director reported, "Everything has become more streamlined and is much more efficient. Overall, I see a huge increase in efficiency – I would estimate around 20% across the board."

In 2021, we continued to strengthen our relationships with various business networks and in particular the Donegal Business Network, the Chamber of Commerce, Letterkenny and Donegal Women in Business. We presented at various webinars and made pitches across the networks promoting our training across Levels 1–6.

These efforts led to a large uptake in social media training as many companies had to maximise their presence in commercial trading online. As an example, over the lockdowns forty-one companies engaged in our Diploma in Social Media for Business and this gave

them a comprehensive tool kit to trade online. Toni Forrester, CEO of Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce, completed this Diploma and praised Donegal ETB for its flexibility in responding to the needs of local businesses. In her words, "I would recommend the course to others. If someone has the time and limited resources, this course would really help them develop the skills needed to develop their business or organisation."



“Only for the training rolled out by Donegal ETB, I would not be where I am today. Donegal ETB saved my bacon!”

Summary of 2021 Activity

No. of Courses/Programmes	No. of Companies	No. of Students
74	246	699

Skills for Work also rolled out social media courses that reached in excess of 130 businesses, the majority of which were microbusinesses. A local retailer in Letterkenny reported that “only for the training rolled out by Donegal ETB, I would not be where I am today. Donegal ETB saved my bacon!”

In addition, to support the textile and telecommunications industry, we also commenced a two-year certified training course (during the low season) Supervisory Management in Hospitality (City & Guilds) across six Donegal hotels in order to support staff retention in the industry and to provide progression pathways. We recognise tourism as one of our pillars in our economy.

All programmes in 2021 for employees were either taught online or onsite delivery keeping in mind COVID-19 restrictions without compromising the learning experience.

Overall, Donegal ETB collaborated with local business networks as well as developed good relationships with Donegal County Council by feeding into the Economic Development Group as well as the Local Enterprise Office. We also tapped into our wider networks with the Regional Skills Forum, the IDA, Fintech Working Groups, LYIT and Ulster University in collaborative efforts to strengthen the economic position of our county.

Cross-Border Partnerships

The NW cross-border tertiary education cluster is the result of years of successful collaborative working amongst the four education sector providers in the region, Donegal ETB, Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT), Ulster University (Magee campus) and the North West Regional College. The aim of this cross-border collaboration is to improve access to higher and further education and training to students living in Donegal and in the North West Region and also to achieve better educational and economic development opportunities for all who live in the region.

Donegal ETB was the first partner to appoint a Project Development Officer in September 2021. Since then, we have engaged in desk research, completing papers on Manufacturing and Engineering in the region and on the Apprenticeship Framework for both jurisdictions and have continued to build relationships and network. The process of mapping course areas, specialist areas and progression routes among the four institutions in the region also commenced.

Community Partnerships

Collaboration and partnership with the community and voluntary sector continued to play an important role in the work of the FET Service in 2021. While COVID-19 continued to impact negatively on the delivery of community education provision, providers and participants availed of more online and blended courses. This resulted in 295 courses delivered in 2021, up from 169 in 2020, but down from nearly 500 in 2019. There was a stronger emphasis on outdoor provision, and courses which promoted sustainable development and conservation practices. FET support for sustainable development continued through its collaboration with Inishowen Development Partnership’s ChangeMakers project. In July, FET and Inishowen Development Partnership signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen co-operation and support for provision in Inishowen.

The annual Community Education seminar, held on 10 December, was facilitated online for the second year. The keynote speaker, Professor Emeritus Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh and former Dean of Arts and Vice-President of NUI Galway, spoke about how Community Education contributed to sustaining community cohesion and the key role of heritage and culture in social development.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) became an embedded provision process in 2021. The two-year collaborative partnership project with Limerick and Clare ETB and LYIT, Validating Competencies of Care Sector Employees (VCCSE), continued to support experienced care sector employees and expanded to include the financial and community and voluntary sector. Awards included Level 6 major awards in Administration, Business and Management; Level 5 major awards in Health Service Skills, Healthcare Support and Community Development; Level 6 modules in Safety Management; Level 5 modules in Child Development; Level 4 in Customer Service and Level 3 Work Experience, with four hundred and four certificates awarded in total. The mainstreaming of provision resulted in training and professional development for RPL mentors within the service. The RPL process validates skills, knowledge and competencies without requiring participants to duplicate their learning. The process has facilitated increased engagement with FET.

Working with Partners



Priority 14

Support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work activities across the county.

Outcome

Further development of quality youth work in Donegal.

Area Profile Needs Assessment Service Requirement (APNASR)

Area Profile Needs Assessment Service Requirement was carried out in relation to West Donegal and small areas within, aimed at placing a UBU Youth Project in the locality. The APNASR provides key socio-economic and demographic information about the needs and characteristics of a population or area.

In respect of the UBU Your Place Your Space Funding Scheme, completing the Area Profile Tool provides key information about the needs of the 10–24 year old young people and the type of services available to them within the whole Donegal ETB area, specific geographic areas within the ETB boundary and non-geographic themes. The APNASR was used to generate a Service Requirement for new UBU service provision, based on funding availability.

UBU Your Place Your Space

Implementation of the UBU Your Place Your Space. The Funding Scheme aims to provide supports to young people, based in their local communities, to enable them to overcome adverse circumstances and achieve their full potential by improving their personal and social development outcomes. The highlight of 2021 was the setting up of a new UBU Youth Project in Inishowen, funded by the Department of Children Equality Disability Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), through Donegal Education and Training Board. The Aspire Inishowen Youth Project is managed and implemented by Donegal Youth Service.

Youth Organisations funded under the UBU Scheme are:

- Foróige Donegal
- Donegal Youth Service, Letterkenny
- Donegal Youth Service, Inishowen
- Involve Young Travellers Donegal

Other Funded Schemes/Programmes/Initiatives

Youth Information Centre Scheme

Letterkenny Youth Information Centre offered a free, confidential information service to young people aged 12-25 years in Co Donegal. A one stop shop approach where all the information is available under the one roof. Support for parents/guardians seeking information and support for their young people was also provided.

Drugs Education and Prevention Programme

Prevention is focused on preventing the escalation of drug use and/or reducing the harm associated with drug misuse, there may be problems but they are not yet fully manifested. Education focuses on providing information and increasing knowledge, exploring attitudes and opinions and developing self-esteem and social skills. Young people developed and practiced important protective skills e.g. communication, assertiveness, decision making, goal setting and stress management. Young People received information to acquire appropriate knowledge around facts in relation to drugs and alcohol.

LGBTQI+ Youth Service Initiative

This initiative provided additional youth worker hours dedicated specifically to supporting young LGBTQI+ people and for any associated additional costs e.g. transport or venue hire; the action arises primarily from the needs identified by young people themselves and the youth sector in the consultation process for the LGBTQI+ National Youth Strategy.

Local Youth Club Grant Scheme (LYCGS)

Funding administered in small grants through the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme 2021 to volunteer-led clubs and groups across the county, involving young people and youth leaders, supporting a diverse range of non-formal educational programmes and activities. Donegal ETB aims to ensure that all young people benefit of the LYCGS.

Youth Capital Funding Scheme

The DCEDIY provided funding for targeted Staff-led Youth Services for the purchase of equipment to support the running of projects/organisations in the provision of quality youth services to young people.

Performance Engagement and Oversight Framework

The UBU Your Place Your Space Performance Oversight and Engagement Framework (POEF) has been designed to provide stakeholders with a set of standardised tools, templates and guidance. POEF has been developed with a view to collecting information across the sector to contribute to the development of an evidence base, showing the impact of the work with young people. Planning and progress review meetings took place with funded organisations to review and discuss the delivery of the service as outlined in the relevant UBU Service Requirements and the application forms. It also provides a shared and co-governance approach to a measurement, monitoring and planning system across the UBU Scheme.

Donegal Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)

In relation to Youth Work the Youth Officer is a member of the Health and Wellbeing and the Youth Participation CYPSC Donegal Sub-Groups (SG).

In 2021 the intention of setting up a Youth Participation SG was to use the existing CYPSC interagency model to support communication and collaboration across existing youth participation structures, coordination of existing youth participation structures and building of structures and processes for dialogue within and between agencies and young people. Receipt of advice from young people on SG work/activities so that they can influence and impact the work is utilised. Tusla Youth Participation Training was developed and delivered according to the Lundy Model. In addition, CYPSC Donegal has been a valuable research setting while carrying out the Donegal ETB Area Profile Needs Assessment in respect of UBU Your Place Your Space.

The work of the Youth Work Section Functions is guided and supported by the Donegal ETB Youth Work Co-Ordination Group.



06

More Training

Gartan Outdoor Education and Training Centre - 2021 Highlights

Gartan Outdoor Education and Training Centre (OETC) made the best of what was a difficult year throughout 2021. 194 different groups from primary/post-primary, youth, community, training, FET/HE and adults took part in outdoor education and training courses throughout the year.

2021 highlights included:

- 22 post-primary schools attended the Centre in 2021; 1,930 students and 111 teachers took part in outdoor education and training courses.
- 422 young people and 82 leaders from the youth / community sector took part in outdoor education and training courses at the Centre in 2021.
- 290 Further Education and Training students and staff participated in Outdoor Education and Training courses in 2021.
- 469 adults took part in outdoor education and training courses at the Centre in 2021.
- 10 trainee instructors completed a full-time forty-seven week traineeship qualifying as instructors in kayaking, windsurfing, sailing and attaining proficiency qualifications in mountaineering, powerboating and first aid. Eight new trainee instructors started on the outdoor activity traineeship in October which will finish in September 2022.
- 204 people accessed weeklong tuition at our Sailing and Windsurfing School in Downings over a seven week period in July and August.
- Summer outdoor education adventure camps were at full capacity for July and August with 320 young people participating in week-long courses.



Donegal Music Education Partnership (DMEP) - 2021 Highlights



2021 was another year of the fight against COVID-19 but it ended with more young people than ever playing music and singing with the Donegal Music Education Partnership (DMEP).

By December there were more than 450 students signed up for DMEP music tuition across Donegal, mostly 1-to-1 or small groups. There were more than six hundred on DMEP's ukulele programme across seventeen national schools, from Dunfanaghy to Ballyshannon. The number of music tutors working on DMEP programmes rose from twenty in 2020 to thirty-one in 2021.

It was a year of blended tuition, affected by the COVID-19 lockdowns. When face-to-face wasn't possible, most of the programme successfully moved online. Initiatives included the new **Atlantic School of Rock** in Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola (PCC), An Fál Carrach, with thirty music students, and the **Mulroy Music Academy** at Mulroy College in Milford, also with thirty. A successful PCC Soundwaves day for young musicians was held in PCC in December, facilitated by Derry organisation Wall2Wall Music.

DMEP's ten performing groups continued to be affected by the restrictions but there were highlights during the year. The **Donegal Youth Orchestra** had the excitement of working on a new suite being written by their conductor, Vincent Kennedy (Dublin). This was 'Colmcille, Dove of Peace', commissioned by Creative Ireland and Donegal County Council for the Colmcille 1500 celebrations. There was disappointment when COVID-19 forced the postponement of the world premiere, scheduled for An Grianán Theatre in Letterkenny in December. A link-up between the DYO and musicians of Irish National Opera, involving a concert at Coláiste Ailigh in Letterkenny, also had to be cancelled.

Some in person events in 2021 were able to go ahead. The **Donegal Chamber Orchestra** with the Conwal Singers performed the world premiere of a new piece by Derry composer Seán Doherty called 'Mobhi's Belt'. The concert, outside the Glebe Gallery in Churchill in October, was booked out. The piece was commissioned by Donegal County Council and Derry and Strabane Council as part of the Colmcille 1500 Years of celebrations. The Orchestra also had a full house for a Christmas concert at Rockhill House, Letterkenny.

The **Donegal Youth Choir** rehearsed online and in person during the year with conductor Sara Laughlin. In February they made a remarkable video of the song 'Secret for the Mad' by dodie.

An online DMEP concert on Friday 21st May underlined the enduring legacy of the work of DMEP founders such as the late Sister Concepta Murphy, Ballyshannon, and the late Jim Rafferty, Glenties. The concert was in memory of the late Sr Concepta Murphy, who passed away in September 2020. It featured some outstanding musicians who've emerged from the DMEP over the years, such as flautist Amy Gillen, Bridgetown. Amy won the Tagore Medal for outstanding achievement at Royal College of Music in London in 2020.

07

Corporate

Donegal ETB is committed to providing a safe working environment for all staff and students. We continue to monitor our COVID-19 response with the support of the Lead Worker Representatives in each school, centre and admin office support staff in this area.

COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt society. However the online space is now a familiar work environment for students and staff alike which has resulted in a more dynamic organisation, brought about by the need to adapt as a result of the pandemic.

Corporate Services

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The Corporate Services Department supports the organisation in the following areas:

- Operations of the Board within Donegal ETB
- Corporate Governance
- Risk Management
- Climate Change, Sustainability and Energy Management
- Estates Management
- Insurance
- Health, Safety and Welfare at Work (inclusive of COVID-19)
- Data Management inclusive of Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- Communications
- Scéim na dTeangacha Gaeilge Oificiúla
- Administrative support services to the Board and Executive
- Customer Service

Capital Development Programme | Estates Management

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The Building's Team provides a range of services to support our schools and FET Centres.

The range of services that are provided are as follows:

- ETB Building Capital Projects for new schools/ centres, extensions, temporary accommodation and refurbishment projects etc.
- School Summer Works Scheme
- Emergency Works Scheme
- Sports Capital Projects
- Procurement for the appointment of Consultant Design Teams and Contactors
- Application for required planning permission and appeals
- ETB self-funded building matters
- Facilities Management
- Coordinating and managing maintenance requests throughout our schools and centres when the need has been identified
- Assistance to non-ETB schools when requested by DE Building Unit Capital Projects
- Financial Management of Capital Projects
- Energy Management and Reporting
- Management of lease and license agreements
- Donegal ETB Property Register
- Insurance requirements

Protected Disclosures

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 The Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 provides a framework within which workers can raise concerns regarding potential wrongdoing that has come to their attention in the workplace, in the knowledge that they can avail of significant and other protections if they are penalised by their employer or suffer any detriment for doing so.

Donegal ETB has put in place a policy, which in tandem with the legislation, will encourage workers to report potential wrongdoing in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, where appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected. The policy highlights that it is always appropriate to raise concerns when they are based on a reasonable belief, irrespective of whether any wrongdoing is in fact subsequently identified. The policy also provides workers with guidance on how to raise concerns. This policy applies to all Donegal ETB workers including contractors, consultants, agency staff, former employees and interns/trainees.

In accordance with the provisions of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, Donegal ETB has appointed the Head of Human Resources to receive protected disclosures. The designated officer can be contacted by telephone at 074-9706055, by email at protecteddisclosures@donegaletb.ie, or by post to the Head of Human Resources, Administrative Offices, Donegal ETB, Ard O'Donnell, Letterkenny, County Donegal, F92 DP98.

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires each public body to prepare and publish, by 30 June each year, an annual report outlining the number of protected disclosures received in the preceding year, and the action taken (if any), in a form which does not enable the identification of the persons involved.

Pursuant to Section 22 of the Protected Disclosure Act 2014, Donegal Education and Training Board confirms that for the period 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021, one Protected Disclosure was received. In response Donegal ETB launched an investigation and the matter remains under investigation at the time of writing.

Freedom of Information

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 The Freedom of Information Act 2014 came into effect for Donegal ETB on 14 April 2015. The Act gives individuals the right to access personal and non-personal records, to have incorrect or misleading records amended or deleted and to seek reasons for decisions that are made which affect him/her. This Act was introduced to increase openness and improve accountability.

Requests are made by emailing foi@donegaletb.ie. During 2021, Donegal ETB received 6 requests under the Freedom of Information Act which are outlined below. An Annual Freedom of Information Disclosure Record is published on the website under Publications and Resources.

Freedom of Information Requests 2021

Reference	Requester Category	Description	Granted/Refused
21.1	Business	Records relating to purchase of sites for 2 School Crana Campus	Refined & Part-granted
21.2	Business	Records relating to Procurement Tender	Refused
21.03	Journalist	Records pertaining to multi and non-denominational school survey, minutes and complaints re religion in schools	Refined & Part-granted
21.04	Oireachtas	Records relating to subscription by Donegal ETB to IBEC	Granted
21.05	Other	Records relating to invites to teachers/schools for religious training	Granted
21.06	Other	Records relating to number of students expelled/suspended from a school	Granted

Data Protection

Data Protection is very much embedded within the organisation, and we continue to ensure compliance with regulation and best practice in this area and that procedures are kept up to date.

Health, Safety and Welfare

Donegal ETB continues to increase knowledge and understanding of how to ensure an efficient Health and Safety system through education, raising awareness and supporting the Health and Safety of all internal and external customers to the organisation. This is aided by the issuance of the new Safety Statement with supporting templates. Training is prioritised throughout the sector in relevant areas of Health and Safety and continuous engagement with schools and centres takes place to ensure that risk is managed and minimised and to the highest degree possible.

Policies and Procedures

Donegal ETB publish all relevant policy documents on Donegal ETB's website for ease of access. Policy documents come from varying parts of the organisation including centrally created policies from ETBI. These are collaborated on by a number of ETBs on behalf of the sector thus ensuring a robust result for each ETB. FET, Schools and OSD policy documents are also created as necessary and issued to the relevant audience within the organisation.

Abbreviations

Term	Definition
AFS	Annual Financial Statements
APNASR	Area Profile Needs Assessment Service Requirement
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
BTEI	Back to Education Initiative
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CAB	Certification Approval Board
CL	Circular Letter
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DE	Department of Education
DMEP	Donegal Music Education Partnership
EA	External Authenticators
ESBS	Education Shared Business Services
ESF	European Social Fund
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FET	Further Education and Training
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	Human Resources
IAU	Internal Audit Unit
ICDL	International Computer Driving Licence
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
JCSP	Junior Certificate Schools Programme
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
LYCGS	Local Youth Club Grant Scheme
LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
MAEDF	Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund
NAPD	National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals

Term	Definition
NFQ	National Framework of Qualifications
OETC	Outdoor Education and Training Centre
PCC	Pobalscoil Chloich Cheannfhaola
PLC	Post Leaving Certificate
PLSS	Programme Learner Support System
POEF	Performance Oversight and Engagement Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SOLAS	An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (The Further Education and Training Authority)
STA	Skills to Advance
STP	Specialist Training Providers
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
TUSLA	The Child and Family Agency
VTOS	Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme
UDL	Universal Design for Learning

Parent – refers to parent or guardian

Student – refers to student/learner

Appendix I - List of 2021 Donegal Daily advertorials for the FET Service (see Priority 12)

A. Monthly advertorials on Donegal Daily (FET Service)

1. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/02/02/students-set-on-the-right-path-with-donegal-etb-adult-guidance-and-information-service/>
2. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/03/08/donegal-women-part-of-21st-century-apprenticeship-story/>
3. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/04/06/tara-springs-forward-into-a-new-healthcare-career/>
4. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/05/10/childcare-plc-leads-danielle-into-a-job-she-loves/>
5. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/06/02/great-opportunities-for-men-in-childcare/>
6. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/09/07/further-education-options-available-to-donegal-students-on-their-doorstep/>
7. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/10/06/youthreach-was-one-of-the-best-decisions-ive-made-in-my-life/>
8. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/11/02/maries-career-change-leads-to-dream-role/>
9. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/12/01/debbie-designs-a-creative-future-after-donegal-etb/>

B. FET student stories to support the promotion of the online FET Fortnight event:

1. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/08/17/donegal-etb-fet-fortnight-niall-builds-a-new-career-in-healthcare/>
2. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/08/18/there-is-such-variety-ill-definitely-be-going-back-to-donegal-etb/>
3. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/08/19/donegal-etb-fet-fortnight-how-vanessa-developed-an-interest-in-software-development/>
4. <https://www.donegaldaily.com/2021/08/20/donegal-etb-fet-fortnight-kathleens-joy-at-finding-her-dream-job/>

Front cover image credit (welding) Ruth Connolly

Contact us

Donegal ETB

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Training Board*