

OECD REVIEW OF CAREER GUIDANCE POLICIES



IRELAND

NATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE

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**OECD STUDY
RESPONSES FROM THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND
ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT**

1. OVERVIEW

Here we would like a brief overview of arrangements for information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

1.1 Please provide a brief (no more than one page) overview of national arrangements for career information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

In answering this please describe the principal service providers, and indicate the extent to which the provision of career information, guidance and counselling overlaps with or is integrated with other services. Indicate how responsibility both for managing and for funding information, guidance and counselling services is divided: between different Ministries (for example Education and Labour); between different levels of government; and between governments and other providers. If possible, include as an Annex the contact details and homepages of key players and main providers of services. (Note: questions that allow more detailed descriptions of services can be found elsewhere in the questionnaire).

EDUCATION SECTOR

Guidance in educational settings is funded by the relevant sections of the Department of Education and Science (DES). At present the provision of guidance varies from a basic universal entitlement at second-level to no formal provision at primary level.

Primary level – At present there is no formal guidance provision at the primary school level in Ireland. However there are elements of guidance in the primary school curriculum, e.g. *substance abuse programme, stay safe programme*. In some schools, support teachers are also available to support the needs of children with social, emotional and behavioural problems.

Second-level – Guidance is a basic universal entitlement as per the *Education Act 1998*. In addition to its normal allocation of teachers, each school is allocated an extra teaching resource to assist it with its guidance provision, ranging from eight hours per week in small schools (< 250 pupils), to two additional wholetime posts in schools with >1000 pupils. The guidance and counselling service is linked with other support services in the second-level sector such as *Home-School Liaison, Social Personal and Health Education, Stay in School Retention Initiative*, guidance modules on the Leaving Certificate Applied and Vocational Programmes and the Transition Year Programme.

Youthreach – At present there is a pilot measure for guidance, counselling and psychological services for early school leavers in Youthreach. The provision of hours ranges from 2 ½ hours to 3 hours per week for a group of 25 young people.

Third-level – Tertiary institutions provide counselling and career services in different ways. The support systems include lecturers, personal tutors, administrative staff, career services, counsellors or Chaplains and student services staff. Access officers have been approved in all third-level colleges. The policy basis is mainly institution bound.

Adult education – At present the educational guidance services are beginning to be developed with the start in 2000 of eleven pilot projects to inform the development of a service on a phased basis. Eight additional projects will start in September 2001. At present the educational guidance services

are offered to participants in *VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme)*, literacy and community education programmes. This *Initiative* will be mainstreamed in the next number of years.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Vocational guidance and counselling in the labour market sector is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as a basic universal entitlement for the employed and unemployed, and for participants on supported employment schemes and on specific skills training courses. Under the dual stranded National Employment Service FÁS, *the National Training and Employment Authority*, is statutorily responsible for the provision of guidance services in the labour market sector. FÁS the state agency with responsibility for training and employment has extended and developed its provision to include persons with disabilities as certain responsibilities under the National Rehabilitation Board (NRB) have been passed to FÁS since April 2000. Direct responsibility for the Local Employment Services (*LES*), a network of locally based employment centres which target a more marginalised client base was transferred to FÁS in January 2000 to form a new dual-stranded National Employment Service. All clients/jobseekers who register with FÁS and the LES' receive initial guidance as part of the throughput process. Thereafter, where necessary, clients can undergo intensive counselling and guidance in order to make them job/ programme ready.

The 'European Employment Guidelines' specify that all employment services clients will receive guidance and counselling before they reach particular thresholds of unemployment. In Ireland this happens when the under-25 years of age clients pass the six-month threshold, and for all others up to the age of 54 when they pass the nine-month threshold. These actions are also in the context of life-long learning as a high percentage of *Employment Action Plan (EAP)* and other clients are referred to training and education opportunities.

2. KEY GOALS, INFLUENCES, ISSUES AND INITIATIVES

Here we would like you to provide information about the broad goals for information, guidance and counselling service, about the influences that are shaping these services, about the key issues in their organisation, management and delivery, and about important recent initiatives.

2.2 What are the key objectives and goals of national policies for information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please describe differences in objectives and goals that might exist between Ministries. Where a legislative basis exists for these objectives and goals, please provide details.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The key objectives and goals of national policies for information, guidance and counselling services in the education sector include:

Preventative – student retention, personal and social development, education and career development, links with the local community. See *National Development Plan (NDP)* below.

Legislation - *The Education Act (1998)* requires schools to ensure that “students have access to appropriate guidance” (pg. 13). *The Education Welfare Act (2000)* targets young people at risk and promotes student retention. Both these Acts promote prevention.

Reactionary – school and higher education drop out, young people at risk, educational and training programmes, counselling,

Remedial – counselling, young people at risk, re-education and employment

The *National Development Plan (2000-2006)* was published by the government in agreement with the European Commission in November 1999. A key objective of the plan is to tackle the problem of early school leaving and low educational attainment. Included in the *NDP* under ‘Social Inclusion Measures’ is the school guidance service. The service is described as playing a major role in preventing early school leaving and is recognised by the *NDP* as vital in insuring each pupil gains the maximum benefit possible from the education system. The *NDP* views the guidance service as facilitating pupils going onto further education/training/employment and as providing guidance regarding options available to pupils. As part of the development of guidance provision in Ireland it is also envisaged that a comprehensive adult educational guidance and counselling service will be made available (pg. 183).

The *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF)* an agreement between the Irish Government and the Social Partners was published in 2000. The *PPF* outlines the commitment of the Government and Social Partners of, ensuring that all feel the benefits of social partnership, bringing about improvements in living standards including housing and transport and keeping pace of future developments such as the information revolution, globalisation and EU enlargement. The *PPF* consists of five operational frameworks one of which outlines a framework for ‘Successful Adaptation to Continuing Change’. Under this framework a number of strategies are outlined for the education sector. Actions under the strategy to prevent early school leaving and supporting participation in education include, reinforcing and developing the educational guidance service in schools and its links with “social partner organisations,” and the development of the *National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)* to ensure that all schools have access to a service by 2004.

The *PPF* also outlines the implementation and development of the Adult Educational Guidance Service established in 2000. The *PPF* highlights the implementation of the service on a phased basis with linkages to the employment services. The service will include a guidance, counselling and

psychological measure for early school leavers in Youthreach, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On the labour market side, under the dual stranded National Employment Service FÁS is statutorily responsible for the provision of guidance services in the labour market sector as follows:

“..to provide, or arrange for the provision of, whether for reward or otherwise-services consisting of the provision of guidance, advice and information in respect of choice of career and employment and to assist (whether financially or otherwise) in, and co-ordinate, the provision of such services by others" as stated in the Labour Services Act 1987.

The aim is to provide a high quality training and employment service to meet current and future labour market needs.

2.3 What are the major social, educational and labour market influences that are currently shaping national policies for information, guidance and counselling services?

EDUCATION SECTOR

At present the major social, educational and labour market influences shaping national policies for information, guidance and counselling services include economic growth and social change (see above), and the concept of lifelong learning.

Economic growth has necessitated the need for more IT and engineering graduates, and preparing school leavers for employment. Policy makers have responded to these economic needs by introducing the Leaving Certificate Applied and Vocational programmes (with guidance modules) into second-level schools, both of which prepare the student for entering the workforce. There is also a focus on promoting the uptake of science subjects at senior-cycle, establishing links with the local community and businesses. A recent policy initiative is the *Guidance Enhancement Initiative* (GEI) that asks schools to submit proposals for additional guidance posts by promoting links with the local community and promoting the uptake of science subjects at senior cycle.

Social change has necessitated the integration of minority groups into educational settings and the prevention of school/college drop out. Several recent initiatives by the Department of Education and Science have highlighted the guidance and counselling services in second-level schools as targeting disadvantaged groups such as the travelling community, refugees and asylum seekers and pupils at risk. An increase in social problems, such as family breakdown and social and economic disadvantage, has led to the introduction of support teachers at primary level to provide support and counselling to children at risk. Second-level curriculum support programmes at the primary level include the *Stay Safe* and the *Substance Abuse* Programmes. Other support initiatives in first and second levels include the *8-15 Early School Leaver Initiative*, the *Stay in School Retention Initiative* (SSRI) [second level] and *Home-School Liaison* (HSL). At third level, the high level of course non-completion has led policy makers to examine the issue of student retention. At present, funding is available to the third-level sector from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) to research the reasons for course in-completion and to promote student retention.

The advent of lifelong learning has brought with it developments in policy in the adult educational sector, culminating in the publication of a White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life*. At present, the educational guidance services are beginning to be developed with the start in 2000 of

eleven pilot projects to inform the development of a service on a phased basis. Eight additional projects will come on stream in 2001. These educational guidance services are offered to participants on VTOS, literacy and community education programmes.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The economic and labour market environment within which the labour market sector delivers its services over the last number of years has been highly favourable, with strong economic growth resulting in a rapid rise in the level of employment. Irish unemployment rates have fallen to an all time low of c. 3.5% with severe labour skills shortages in certain sectors. Ireland's employment and labour force growth rates have been among the fastest in the EU in recent years. This has had a twofold impact. There has been an increase in demand for career information and provision of courses in sectors like apprenticeships, IT etc. However, there has been an increased focus in the guidance and counselling areas as those remaining on the live register tend to be the more marginalised and in need of special assistance which require higher levels of intervention by those delivering information, guidance and counselling services. New incentives have been introduced, such as the Childcare Support Initiative. This enables unemployed people who wish to undertake a FAS vocational training programme to receive an allowance towards childcare fees.

Employment Action Plan (EAP)

As part of the European Employment Strategy, Ireland introduced the EAP which is a measure aimed at preventing drift into long term unemployment. Under this measure all those on the live register reaching certain thresholds of unemployment are referred to FÁS by the Department of Social Welfare. These clients are then invited for interview where they receive job and course information as well as being offered further counselling and guidance services. The results indicate a high level of positive outcomes of the guidance and counselling interventions with EAP clients. Of the 17,851 clients given guidance under the EAP initiative by FÁS in 2000, an average of 40% have been placed in training, education or a job as a direct result of these interventions. Sustainability of placements has been shown to be high including outcomes of the training placements.

Overall under the Employment Action Plan, almost 75% of those invited for interview sign off the live register within three months of referral.

2.4 What are the most important issues facing policy makers in your country in the organisation, management and delivery of information, guidance and counselling services?

EDUCATION SECTOR

The most important issues facing policy makers in education include universal access to guidance services, targeting, quality issues, the training and qualifications of practitioners and information concerning educational and training opportunities in Ireland.

Universal Access to Guidance services – Under the *Education Act (1998)* schools in the second-level sector are required to provide pupils with "access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices". The White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life* outlines the provision of guidance for all adults. The *New Deal on Educational Disadvantage* highlights the importance of guidance as a continuous process, provided at all stages of a person's education and working life.

Targeting – An important task of the guidance provision in second-level is outlined in the *National Development Plan* and the *New Deal on Educational Disadvantage* as promoting social inclusion and the retention of children at risk in the formal educational system. The importance of guidance in the non-formal sector was highlighted in the Secretary General’s speech at the AGM of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors in 2000. The recent *Guidance Enhancement Initiative* allocated additional guidance posts to schools that targeted disadvantaged pupils, promoted the uptake of science in senior cycle and promoted links with the local community through business and agencies.

Quality Issues – To develop and implement good practice in guidance in all educational settings. At present quality guidelines are being piloted in the *Adult Educational Guidance Initiative* (AEGI). Good practice is being promoted at the second-level sector through the development of *Guidelines in Guidance Programme Planning* and through the *School Developing Planning Initiative* of which the guidance programme is a part. Policy makers are also second level concerned to ensure that, at the very least, schools use the additional resources provided to assist with guidance provision for that purpose. An *Audit* was commissioned by the Department to examine the provision of guidance in schools. Two inspectors of guidance have recently been appointed to the Department’s Inspectorate.

Training and qualifications – The establishment of a core competencies model for the initial and continuing professional training of guidance counsellors; issues around a qualifications framework for the range of people working in the area of adult educational guidance.

Information on Educational and Training Opportunities – The utilisation of Information and Communicational Technologies (ICT) on a local and national basis to assist learners to find out about learning and training opportunities. The importance of ICT in guidance was emphasised by the Secretary General in his opening address to the IGC AGM (2000).

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

- The development of the dual stranded approach to National Employment Services (LES and FÁS) under the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment has reflected the need to ensure development and complementarity of both strands of the service.
- To increase the numbers of trained staff in both FÁS and the LES at Diploma/Higher Diploma level in Guidance and Counselling.
- Since June 2000 FÁS became responsible for the provision of Labour Market Services for people with disabilities and this presents significant opportunities and challenges.
- The very rapid technological developments i.e. telephony, internet access, WAP, SMS etc. has meant that a large number of the service providers and the public are now delivering/receiving elements of the information, guidance and counselling services in a very different manner than was previously the case.
- The needs of employers in the current economic climate where the labour market is extremely tight in certain sectors means government agencies are becoming more involved in the provision of services and information to employers. This in turn has an impact on the service received by jobseekers/ jobchangers and the unemployed.
- FÁS has established an Asylum Seekers Unit as a result of a Government decision to allow certain classes of Asylum Seekers the right to work while their application for asylum is being processed. This increasing role presents many challenges in the delivery of information guidance and counselling services.
- The introduction of the National Employment Action Plan.

2.5 Please describe any recent (last five years) initiatives and changes that are of particular significance for the organisation, management, funding, staffing, or delivery of information, guidance and counselling services.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Policy Initiatives

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) was established in 1995 to support and develop guidance in all educational settings and to inform of the policy of the DES pertaining to guidance. Client groups of the Centre include:

Teacher counsellors in primary schools

Guidance counsellors in second-level schools

Guidance practitioners working in Youthreach and similar programmes

Careers and appointment officers and counsellors in higher education

Guidance practitioners working with adults in education

The Centre supports its client groups by providing technical advice and information on guidance practice, by supporting and undertaking research into guidance practice and needs and by planning developments and innovation for guidance practice.

The White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life* (2000) sets out the principles and priorities for the development of lifelong learning opportunities including the establishment of an Adult Educational Guidance Service.

The New Deal on Education Disadvantage published by the DES in 1999, sets out a number of initiatives to deal with educational disadvantage through the NDP. Guidance in second level is recognised by the New Deal as playing a major role in keeping young people at risk within the formal education system, and highlights an increase in the existing provision through additional funding.

The Education Act (1998) outlined the responsibilities of all the partners in education, including the Minister of Education and schools, in relation to the provision of support services, which include guidance. As already indicated, the *Act* requires all second-level schools to ensure that “students have access to appropriate guidance.” The *Act* also places responsibility for the preparation of an overall school plan with the Board of Management (BOM) of the school.

Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Second-level Schools (1996) were the first set of guidelines concerning the provision of guidance and counselling in second-level schools. The *Guidelines* outlined the roles of schools, staff and the Department in the guidance process. Many school staff recognised for the first time that they had a role to play in guidance as a result of the guidelines. Guidance counsellors themselves were clearer regarding the nature of their role after the publication of the *Guidelines*. This publication is currently being revised.

Supportive measures/initiatives

The establishment of a *Task Force on guidance, counselling and psychological services for the Youthreach programme* outlined five principles for the provision of guidance, counselling and

psychological services in Youthreach. Funding was allocated to cluster of centres based on proposals that espoused these five principles.

The establishment of the *National Educational Psychological Service* (NEPS) in 1999 as an agency of the DES. The priority from 2000-2004 is to put a comprehensive service in place to address the needs of primary and second-level schools. From 2004 onwards NEPS will focus on putting a service in place for adults in education.

The free provision by government to all second-level schools of ICT and Internet connectivity dedicated to guidance. This has resulted in the utilisation of ICT for guidance purposes and has influenced the way guidance is delivered in schools.

Under the GEI (2001) schools submitted proposals for additional staffing resources for guidance purposes. Proposals that established links with local and business communities, promoted the uptake of science subjects at senior cycle, and focused on disadvantaged pupils were given priority. 103 schools benefited from the Initiative, which will be monitored over the three years of its life.

The piloting of the *School Guidance Review and Development Planning Initiative* (SGRDPI) in second-level schools by NCGE in 1999-2000. The experiences of the pilot project have fed into the development of *Guidelines on Guidance Programme Planning in Schools* which are expected to influence the provision of guidance in schools.

An *Audit* of guidance provision in second-level schools was undertaken for the DES by the NCGE in 2000. The *Audit* examined the usage by schools of guidance hours provided to schools by the DES, qualifications of guidance counsellors, school guidance programmes and facilities for guidance provided by schools.

All second-level schools were allocated a minimum of eight hours additional teaching resource to assist with guidance provision in September 1999.

Funding under the HEA for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to improve access for mature pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with disabilities to higher education, and to research and promote student retention in higher education.

The AEGI of the DES pilots guidance provision for programme participants in adult literacy, community education, and second chance adult education programmes for the unemployed.

The EU Leonardo da Vinci funded project – *Virtual Learning Environment in the Training of Counsellors* (VLETC) 2000-01, was to develop and test ICT based learning programmes for guidance practitioners in order to conclude and formulate recommendations to providers of training for guidance counsellors in all member states.

Developments in ICT and Guidance include:

Careers-World – the launch of a website and CD-ROM hosting a course database on all courses in the CAO system, a preference exercise; online application forms and profiles of a number of employers. This is a private-sector initiative, supported largely by donations from participating firms.

QualifaX – a database hosting information on all third-level courses in Ireland, funded by the DES.

Changes in the provision of training include:

The mainstreaming by the DES of the *Educational Management of Adult Guidance* (EMAG) course developed by National University of Ireland (NUI) Maynooth with NCGE.

The initial training of guidance counsellors is at present being standardised and the curriculum updated in line with changes in the provision of guidance and counselling services through meetings between NCGE and the Course Directors of the initial training courses.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On the labour side direct responsibility for the Local Employment Services, a network of locally based employment centres which target a more marginalised client base was transferred from the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment to FÁS in January 2000 to form a new dual-stranded National Employment Service(NES).

The National Employment Services Advisory Committee under its terms of reference advises FÁS on all aspects of the operation of the National Employment Service, in the context of national policy as laid down by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. It monitors the operation and effectiveness of the NES, develops inputs into national policy for the NES and assists in the formation of principles guiding the respective roles and development of both strands of the NES.

FÁS (and the LES through FÁS) have developed a number of programmes to improve information counselling and guidance services to both employers and jobseekers. The organisation can take vacancies from employers over the phone or Internet and has a new National Internet based vacancy taking call centre CALLNET. Through its innovations in 'Web-Chat', 'Call-Back' and text messaging services employers can post vacancies with FÁS and receive live support/information. FÁS has recently developed a vacancy/ careers and course information freephone helpline service for jobseekers/ changers and the unemployed. **Job Connect is operational**, based in 4 of FÁS' 10 regions. The service allows members of the public to engage with experienced FÁS employment advisers in order to get up to date information on current vacancies. Using a freephone number the jobseeker/ changer calls JobConnect and is automatically routed to their local JobConnect centre. The JobConnect staff member can then provide a list of vacancies relevant to them e.g. by job type, geographical location or preferred hours.

If a suitable vacancy is found on the FÁS system the jobseeker can be advised of method and details of application or be put through directly to the employer using conference call technology. When the call is finished on the employer's side it will be possible for the adviser to pick up the jobseekers call and follow up on the outcome. JobConnect staff can also provide callers with assistance in the areas of current career and course information.

Alternatively those seeking vacancy, course or career information can log onto the FÁS website at www.fas.ie where detailed current information is available.

The initiation of the Employment Action Plan and the greatly changed nature and profile of the labour market (previously discussed) have both changed the manner in which the NES delivers its services. FÁS has taken over responsibility for Labour Market Services for people with Disabilities and has become increasingly involved in the delivery of services to an increasing number of asylum seekers.

Under a commitment made in Irelands National Development Plan, FÁS is currently developing a program 'Management of Guidance'. The relevant managers within FAS will usefully enhance their understanding of guidance issues in order to provide more support to staff in the implementation of the guidance process. A training programme is planned to be delivered by the National University of Ireland for those who have a management or co-ordinating role in the ES guidance area/services.

Career Directions

In 1999 FÁS development an interactive multimedia careers database called “Career Directions”. The package includes a database of over 500 careers and an interest inventory. FÁS continues to update this computerised career guidance tool.

In late 2000, work began on the development of an Internet version of the software and this new version will include a direct link to live jobs and training courses on the FÁS JobBank. Work on this project is ongoing. The project team have been trained in oracle based database systems, and are busy researching and editing over 750 careers for the finalised package. This Internet version is on schedule to be operational by the beginning of 2002.

Career Directions is in constant use in the FÁS Employment Services offices by job seekers, FÁS Training Centres, second level schools and publicly funded careers services in third- level institutions.

Training for Employment Services Staff.

FÁS, in conjunction with the NUI Maynooth, has developed a certificate and diploma in guidance and counselling aimed specifically at the needs of Jobs Advisors in the FÁS Employment Service. 130 Advisors from both FÁS and Local Employment Services graduated in early 2001 having completed their Certificate in Guidance and Counselling. Courses commencing in October 2001 have had strong interest from new and existing FÁS and LES staff. In 2000, an evaluation of the two courses was completed and the recommendations have been communicated to all relevant staff and managers. Overall the results were positive.

FÁS also continued to conduct Induction training courses for all new Placement Officers/Jobs Advisers in 2001.

Customised Training Fund

The **CUSTOMISED TRAINING FUND** was designed to provide an immediate training option for long-term unemployed jobseekers where the type of training is not immediately available in the FÁS Training Centre. The present limit is £500 but in the context of the FÁS response to High Unemployment Areas (identified and agreed), approval has been given to increase the upper limit to £1,000. The objectives of the FÁS response to High Unemployment Areas are as follows:

- To intensify and co-ordinate an approach by all sections of FÁS in selected areas currently experiencing persistent and higher than average levels of unemployment and social exclusion.
- To identify and break down the barriers which unemployed persons in these geographical areas of the country experience in accessing jobs, training, education and progression options.
- To adapt best practice and experience of the NEAP and other initiatives to respond to the needs of such persons in the shortest possible time.
- To achieve the long term objective of helping the client attain a secure foothold in the active workforce.

A group of 25 Euroadvisers in Ireland in a network of 600 in the EEA are the driving force of EURES.

This human network has at its disposal a database of job vacancies in Europe and a second database containing general information on living and working conditions in the EEA countries. The information Euroadvisers provide includes job opportunities in Europe, social legislation and taxation, education and healthcare, training opportunities, comparability of qualifications, cost of living and accommodation and useful addresses and contacts for more specialized information.

3. POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR STEERING SERVICES

Here we wish to know about the key policy instruments that are used to steer information, guidance and counselling services, and about how policy goals are translated into service delivery.

3.1 How important is legislation in steering information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please briefly describe the main pieces of legislation that directly affect information, guidance and counselling services. More complete details and examples can be provided in the Annex.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The first piece of legislation having implications for the provision of guidance and counselling services in education in Ireland was the *Education Act* (1998). The responsibilities of the Minister of Education and schools were outlined in the *Act*. Responsibilities of the former in relation to guidance include prescribing the guidance curriculum in partnership with stakeholders and providing pupils with support services based on their needs. Guidance is identified as a 'support service' in the *Education Act*. Schools under the *Act* are required to "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices" (pg. 13). This has implications for schools in that they are required by law to provide a guidance service to all pupils.

Under the *Education Welfare Act* (2000) an Educational Welfare Board was established to monitor school attendance and to keep children at risk in school. The general functions of the Board were identified as ensuring that a child receives a minimum education, and promoting the importance of education in society. Powers of the Board include assessing the development of a child to ensure that s/he is receiving a minimum education and to develop plans for children at risk. It is envisaged that the *Act* will have an impact on improving retention rates in schools and providing outreach services to early school leavers. Implications for the provision of guidance and counselling services in formal (second-level) and informal (Youthreach) settings may include liaising with children at risk and providing interventions and support to the child.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

In Ireland FÁS has a statutory role to provide Guidance Information in accordance with the provisions of the Labour Services Act 1987 viz " to provide, or arrange for the provision of, whether for reward or otherwise - services consisting of the provision of guidance, advice and information in respect of choice of career and employment and to assist (whether financially or otherwise) in, and co-ordinate, the provision of such services by others".

The National Development Plan 2000-2006 (Labour & Education) and the Human Resources Operational Programme 2000-2006 (Labour) presents the policy parameters on information, guidance and counselling developments to be implemented by both Ministries and their agencies.

3.2 What other instruments are normally used for the political steering of information, guidance and counselling services and to monitor implementation?

For example you might like to describe the use of instruments such as outcomes targets, mandatory or voluntary service quality standards, mandatory or voluntary competency standards and qualification standards for staff, competitive tendering for services and the like.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The findings of research and studies are used for the political steering of information, guidance and counselling services and to monitor their implementation, as follows:

Second-level

The results of the *Audit* (section 2.5) of guidance provision indicated that the present additional staffing allocation for guidance to second-level schools by the DES is not being utilised by all schools. This has led to the DES adopting a targeted approach to the provision of additional support to schools for guidance purposes. As indicated earlier, the GEI (section 2.5) reflects this new approach to the allocation of resources. Teaching qualifications plus a postgraduate qualification in guidance have been mandatory standards since 1971 for appointment of guidance counsellors. Guidance counsellor roles and guidance activities are described in guidelines produced by the DES and NCGE.

Third-level

Research into student retention at higher education found that there was a significant number of pupils failing to complete their course of choice (HEA, 1994). Furthermore a study into non-completion rates in the institutes of technology found a 37% non-completion rate among 1st year pupils (Healy et al, 1999). This influenced the HEA and DES to commission a detailed study into student retention at higher education (Morgan et al, 2001) and to provide funding for HEIs to conduct research and interventions into preventing course non-completion. There are no mandatory or voluntary competency standards and qualification standards for staff. Each HEI has individual responsibility in this sphere.

Adult Education Guidance

Research commissioned by NCGE in 1997 identified the existing guidance provision/information services for adults as inadequate (NCGE, 1997). In response to the findings the White Paper *Learning for Life* outlined the establishment of a comprehensive adult educational guidance and counselling service. This is being phased in at present through the AEGI pilot projects funded by the DES under the NDP with the assistance of the European Social Fund (ESF). Procedures have been put in place to monitor these projects.

Non-formal

The *Task Force on guidance, counselling and psychological services for the Youthreach programme* outlined five general principles for the provision of guidance, counselling and psychological services for the allocation of EU structural funds. The five general principles included: partnership, complementarity, continuity, district approach and client focus (Report of the Focus Group to Guidance Task Force, 1998). A new service for the non-formal sector did not develop from the deliberations of the Taskforce, however funds were allocated on the basis of proposals received from clusters of Youthreach centres. Research undertaken by NCGE (2000) and by the National Co-ordinators for Youthreach (1999) identified needs and type of service required. Little has been undertaken in monitoring implementation.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On the Labour side FÁS receives Exchequer funding for the provision of its services through the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. Under the half yearly Monitoring Returns FÁS provides in depth qualitative and quantitative returns on its activity for the period.

The National Employment Services Advisory Committee under its terms of reference advises FÁS on all aspects of the operation of the National Employment Service.

The framework of the Employment Action Plan is used by FAS and the LES to deliver information, guidance and counselling services to all persons reaching certain thresholds of unemployment.

The vast majority of relevant staff from FAS and LES have obtained the National University of Ireland's Certificate in Adult Guidance. They are further encouraged to undertake this course of study to Diploma Level thereafter.

3.3 Please describe how government regulation, funding and provision of information, guidance and counselling services are related to one another. Is the same (government) body typically responsible for all three, or are they carried out by separate agencies?

EDUCATION SECTOR

The general picture across the education sector is that the relationship between provision of guidance services, funding and regulation is not uniform. It reflects very much the internal administrative structure of the DES. One of the roles of NCGE is to develop a degree of commonality in the provision across the sectors.

Provision	Funding	Regulation
Second-level	DES	Inspector visits (DES), Audit, Guidance Programme Planning, GEI (DES)
Adult Education Guidance	DES, ESF	Inspector visits (DES), Quality Guidelines (NCGE), Quarterly Reports (DES), Monitoring and Evaluation of Pilot Projects (NCGE & external).
Third level	HEA, DES, Student registration fees	Individual institutions
Non-formal second-chance	DES, ESF	Inspector visits (DES)

Guidance provision across all educational settings is funded mainly by the DES with the support of funding from the NDP and ESF. At present there is no systematic regulatory process, though in the second-level and adult educational settings there are visits from Inspectors of the DES. The Inspectors are responsible for ensuring that schools implement the allocations and regulations of the DES. They also provide support and assistance to schools. There are plans in the future for the development of quality guidelines in the adult educational guidance sector and these are being piloted at present through the AEGI by NCGE, an agency of the DES. It is envisaged that institutions receiving funding under AEGI will continue to do so only if they are providing a comprehensive quality adult educational guidance service as part of a service level agreement. At second-level the introduction of *Guidelines for Guidance Programme Planning* in schools will necessitate schools to include a written school guidance programme as part of the school development plan (Education Act, 1998). This plan will be available for inspection as part of whole school inspection by the DES. In the third level sector, the provision of guidance and counselling services by the HEIs is not statutory. However the HEIs receive funding for support services through the HEA and student registration fees. Guidelines have been recently issued to third-level institutions by the HEA on support services that should be available to pupils (HEA, 2000).

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

See point 3.2. (Separate funding on Labour side which is the responsibility of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. Education receive Exchequer funds through the Department of Education and Science.)

FÁS receives its funding through the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment using Exchequer and ESF funds. FÁS contracts with 'Area Based Partnerships' for the provision of Local Employment Services. There is an Operational Framework in place within which the LES target groups are highlighted as follows: –

long-term unemployed adults, dependent spouses of LTUE, lone parents, early school-leavers, persons with a disability, ex-prisoners, homeless people, travellers, ethnic minorities and persons referred from substance abuse rehabilitative programmes.

3.4 What mechanism, if any, exist for co-ordinating information, guidance and counselling services: between different Ministries; between different levels of government; between governments and other parties such as employers, trade unions, the private sector, and community groups; between service for youth and for adults; and between the different agencies that provide services? What barriers exist to co-ordination of services and to networking among providers?

EDUCATION SECTOR

Between Ministries and different levels of government

The co-ordination of information, guidance and counselling services takes place at a national level through inter-departmental committees, working parties, advisory groups, task forces, commissions etc. involving education, training, employment interests and community representatives. However this tends to occur as the need arises and not as part of an overall strategy or plan.

Between other parties

Between other parties on a local level there is a certain amount of collaboration between educational services through informal networks. Primary and second-level schools in the same catchment area in some cases have established working links. Second-level guidance services have links at local level to FÁS employment services and LES. Second-level primary schools may also have links with the local Youthreach centre, HEI and the business community in the co-ordination of information and resources.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The National Employment Services Advisory Committee referred to in the above point 2.5 is made up of nominees from across the range of service providers including government departments, government agencies, business and employer interests, community representation and other service providers. The Committee's remit in this regard is to ensure complementarity between the respective information, counselling and guidance providers.

FÁS provides occupational information to both labour market and training/education participants. Career guidance, counselling, job placement and training are offered to Adults in the labour market.

The Ministry of Education offers guidance and counselling to those in the educational system both young people and adults. A collaborative approach between the responsible Ministries and agencies is encouraged and fostered with clear delineation of the responsibilities for career guidance services in order to maximise the cost benefits.

The NES provides services to those in the labour market. This may involve referral to another agency or to an Adult education course or scheme. Other government services such as the Prison Service and Job Facilitators in the Dept. of Social Community and Family Affairs also provide career guidance services to specific groups.

The provision of Career Development Services in the Labour Market and Education is complementary. Most people receive initial career guidance while in second level education. Those who opt for third level or adult education can also have access to Career guidance.

FÁS delivers career services for people currently in employment on a request basis, especially those working in small/medium sized companies, but this is an area which requires further investment and development.

The Government, over the past years, has fostered collaboration in the general social inclusion area by the introduction of Area Based Partnership boards. These boards, administered by ADM were established by the Government in 1991 under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. These Partnership Companies are modelled on the social partnership structure at national level. They are a locally based response to unemployment and social exclusion and their management boards include representatives from the local community, employers, social partners, elected representatives and statutory agencies. They aim to identify better delivery of services and improve employment opportunities in the local community. Resources can then be targeted to meet specific local needs. Some of these Partnership companies have identified the need to develop adult education and training initiatives and pilot adult guidance services. Every initiative is supported within existing education and training structures.

3.5 What barriers exist to co-ordination of services and to networking among providers?

EDUCATION SECTOR

Barriers to the co-ordination of services include:

- Lack of information on services available at a local level
- Research and time available to establish links. This is especially relevant to the school situation where the provision of guidance is limited.
- Lack of a developed and comprehensive guidance provision across educational settings

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

None.

4 THE ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS

Here we wish to know about the roles played by some key stakeholders other than government Ministries – such as employer organisations and trade unions – in information, guidance and counselling services.

Employer Organisations

4.1 What role do employer organisations play in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services?

For example by participating in advisory and co-ordination bodies; by contributing to common funds for information, guidance and counselling services; through providing employee leave to take part in career guidance; or through participation in programme management committees.

IBEC response

In response to government, social partner and requests from other organisations, IBEC staff participate on funding and regulating committees, boards and review groups; such as the:

- Advisory Committee to the Guidance Enhancement Initiative in Post-Primary Schools
- Advisory Group to the Adult Educational Guidance Initiative
- eBusiness Project
- Employment and HR Development Committee
- EU Social Dialogue (Education and Training) Committee
- IBEC/CHIU (Conference of Heads of Irish Universities) and IBEC/IT Council of Directors (Institutes of Technology) Forum
- Irish Pharmaceutical and Chemical Manufactures Federation Skills Review Group
- Joint Council on Life Long Learning
- Leonardo EU Committee
- Leonardo National Advisory Group
- National Qualifications Authority Ireland
- NCCA
- NESF Forum on Early School Leaving
- Policy Committee Examining the Labour Market Conditions of Early School Leavers (ESRI)
- Taskforce on Lifelong Learning
- UNICE Group on Education and Training

4.2 What initiatives do employer organisations take to help provide information, guidance and counselling services?

For example: involvement in career information programmes in schools and tertiary education; the provision of guidance and counselling; organising careers fairs and exhibitions; or the production of career information.

IBEC response

- IBEC contains 60 sectors and trade associations representing all aspects of Irish Business. Two such sectors are the *Irish Pharmaceutical and Chemical Manufactures Federation* (IPCMF) and the *Irish Concrete Federation* (ICF). Both organisations have produced booklets, aimed at providing post-primary pupils with an understanding of the career opportunities in the pharmaceutical and concrete industries.

- In addition the IPCMF have a stand at the *Young Scientist Exhibition*, with the main aim of promoting interest in the sciences.
- The IPCMF will shortly appoint an Education Officer whose responsibilities will include visiting each primary and secondary school in the Republic of Ireland, creating an awareness of the sciences and instigating science based initiatives leading to careers in the industry.
- IBEC's *Business and Education Links Programme* (see enclosed Handbook for Companies and School) provides personal and interpersonal skills along with career information by establishing links between 200 IBEC member companies in 350 post-primary schools in 24 counties.
- IBEC produced '*Actions for a Learning Society.*' The recommendations primarily deal with how best to improve adult learner access to third level education, particularly through the implementation of more flexible means of delivery.

4.3 Does employer involvement in information, guidance and counselling services tend to be:

Seldom		Occasional		Regular	
1	2	3	4	5	

Local	mostly local, but some national	50-50	Mostly national, but some local	National
1	2	3	4	5

In answering this question please tick the box that best applies. You might also like to add some descriptive material in support of your response.

IBEC response

Answer box number three in both instances.

As an organisation IBEC responds to requests for assistance in formulating guidance and counselling policy. Refer to question 4.1.

Trade Unions

4.4 Do trade unions play a role in regulating or funding information, guidance and counselling services?

For example through participating in advisory and co-ordination bodies, or in programme management committees.

Trade unions operate a network of 38 resource centres for the unemployed which, inter alia, provide information, counselling and advice to unemployed people and atypical workers. Trade unions are also active in the management of Local Employment Services. Unions use funding from government sources, which is channelled through FÁS and ADM.

4.5 What initiatives do trade unions take in providing information, guidance and counselling services?

For example involvement in career information programmes in schools; providing guidance and counselling; or producing career information. Here also describe any initiatives taken by trade unions to provide information, guidance and counselling services to their own members.

Traditionally, unions would have acted as contact points for information regarding vacancies. This still survives with varying degrees of formality from informal “employer contacts union” (electrical, engineering and construction trades) to “hiring through union” in film production.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) promotes a programme of talks to schools, whereby pupils at second level are informed of their labour market rights. Under the EU employment “Youthstart” initiative, the ICTU provided a resource pack and CD-ROM dealing with these matters.

4.6 Does trade union involvement in information, guidance and counselling services tend to be:

Seldom		Occasional		Regular
1	2	3	4	5
Local	mostly local, but some national	50-50	Mostly national, but some local	National
1	2	3	4	5

In answering this question please tick the box that best applies. You might also like to add some descriptive material in support of your response.

Both questions would rate as three.

Other stakeholders

4.7 Please describe ways in which policies encourage other stakeholders – such as parents, associations of students, alumni, community organisations, educational institutions or the end-users of services.

For example through roles that are expressed in legislation; through policies to contract service provision to non-government organisations; through membership of advisory bodies; through membership of programme management committees.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The Education Act (1998) outlined that the school plan be developed in partnership with stakeholders and that the plan be distributed to stakeholders also. Stakeholders are identified as management bodies, trade unions, parents, staff and pupils. The school guidance programme is part of the school plan.

Guidelines for Guidance and Counselling in Second-level Schools (1996) – the Guidelines identified the roles of other stakeholders in guidance at second-level. Included were parents, pupils, employers, the local community, school management and staff.

Guidelines for School Guidance Programme Planning (2001) identified stakeholders in guidance as parents, school staff and management, the guidance counsellor, pupils, past pupils, employers, the local community and its agencies as having a role in the school’s guidance programme. Active participation by each stakeholder is encouraged.

The School Guidance Review and Development Planning Initiative (1999-2000) highlighted the roles that school staff have to play in the guidance process. Parents and pupils were referenced as stakeholders in the process.

The GEI (2001) highlighted the importance of schools establishing links with stakeholders in the local community and in business.

Advisory Committees – representatives from stakeholders including parents, management bodies, trade unions, professional organisations and agencies of the DES are represented on government and NCGE advisory committees/taskforces on guidance as a matter of course.

While policies do not specifically mention alumni, in practice the majority of education institutes in each sector of education use alumni as guides for their pupils and trainees.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The National Employment Services Advisory Committee has members from employer, community and trade union organisations. These members provide significant advice to the executive of FÁS on all aspects of the National Employment Service, in the context of national policy as laid down by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. The group make recommendations on the operation and effectiveness of the NES and assist in the formation of principles guiding the respective roles and development and complementarity of both strands of the NES.

The Local Employment Services Boards include representatives of employer, union, community and other organisations to develop input at local level.

Community Employment provides eligible unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a temporary basis. A Monitoring Committee meets to review the progress being made towards achieving their objectives and targets.

There are management committees of Community Groups providing community input and feedback on services.

FÁS undertakes periodic surveys of customer satisfaction levels

Area based Partnership Companies (through which FÁS contract the LES) were established by the Government in 1991 under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress as a locally based response to unemployment and social exclusion. Partnerships are modelled on the social partnership structure at a national level with state agencies, social partners, elected representatives and the community sector all making up local boards of management.

5. TARGETING AND ACCESS

Here we want to know about priorities for access to information, guidance and counselling services. This section also asks about how services are provided for adults.

5.1 Please describe any priorities or target groups for information, guidance and counselling services, including how priority needs are established.

For example target groups might include: school students; young people; adults; unemployed people; those receiving social welfare benefits; tertiary education students; employees; refugees and members of ethnic minorities.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Within the education system, DES priority target groups include: young people at risk of school drop-out, disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minorities, the travelling community and those suffering from social and economic disadvantage, early and unqualified school leavers on second chance education and training programmes, adult participants in literacy, community education, and second chance education programmes for unemployed, and those at risk of non-completion of courses at higher education. These groups are identified in policy documents including:

- *The New Deal on Educational Disadvantage, 1999* (early school leavers and young people at risk of early leaving generally)
- *The National Development Plan (2000-2006)* (early school leavers and adults)
- *The Education Welfare Act (2000)* (early school leavers)
- *The White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life (2000)* (adults)
- *The Equality Act (2000)*

Various programmes for government in the past two decades and social partner agreements have established these groups as priorities. The influence of EU policies in this sphere is not to be underestimated.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Within the Labour Market Sector FÁS and the LES have responsibility for the provision of information guidance and counselling services to the following groups;

Unemployed / jobseekers/ Jobchangers –

A guidance and information service regarding opportunities available in employment, education and training. Priority is given to jobseekers who are reaching critical thresholds in their unemployment, the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged groups. Each jobseeker is given an intensive guidance and counselling interview so that an individual career plan is prepared in a collaborative intervention.

Persons with disabilities –

At present FÁS provides a career guidance and job-seeking service for persons with disabilities. FÁS manages labour market programmes and services for persons with disabilities and operates employment supports for people with disabilities.

Asylum seekers –

Has established a new Asylum Seekers Unit to assist those eligible to work. A FÁS job bank has been set up on the FÁS website to allow employers and job seekers especially from abroad to access information on opportunities in Ireland.

Early School Leavers –

FÁS assists early school leavers by providing the training, education and work experience they require to obtain regular employment.

The rationale for the LES approach is clearly to focus on those most in need and at greater distance from the labour force within their local catchment areas. The progression of this group of people to the labour market will be difficult and realistic targets should be set in relation to outcomes. These will include a number of progression targets other than employment (for example, active engagement in education programmes for people with significant educational disadvantage, participation on JI for older unskilled men), which are appropriate for particular target groups. The target groups for LES will be made up of 80% of clients who are long-term unemployed (of at least three years continuous duration). Time spent on Community Employment, or a recognised training or development course, may count as part of the qualifying period. The 80% target would also include dependent spouses of LTUE (qualified adults), lone parents, early school-leavers, persons with a disability, ex-prisoners, homeless people, travellers, ethnic minorities and persons referred from substance abuse rehabilitative programmes. There is no requirement for a specified unemployment duration for these groups. In addition, long-term unemployed people, of twelve months or more duration, with significant educational disadvantages are also part of the 80% target. The remaining clients should include referrals from FÁS – i.e. EAP, specific target groups, etc., and others who do not fall into the above categories but require an intensive service such as small holders and dependant spouses, under 18 year olds, and other relevant disadvantaged groups identified locally. There need not necessarily be any unemployment duration attached to this group of 20%. LES should also refer clients, outside their target group, to FÁS, and to other organisations where relevant - e.g. VEC, CERT, etc.

5.2 How are any such priorities or targets expressed?

For example give details of any legislation that provides rights or entitlements to services for particular groups.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The Education Act (1998) requires schools to pupils "ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance" (DES, 1998, pg. 13).

Under the *Education Welfare Act (2000)* an Educational Welfare Board was established to monitor school attendance and to keep children at risk in school. The general functions of the Board were identified as ensuring that a child receives a minimum education, and promoting the importance of education in society. Powers of the Board include assessing the development of a child to ensure that s/he is receiving a minimum education and to develop 'plans' for children at risk. It is envisaged that the *Act* will have an impact on improving retention rates in schools and providing outreach services to early school leavers. Implications for the provision of guidance and counselling service in second-level and in Youthreach may include liaising with children at risk and providing interventions and support to the child.

The White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life* (2000) outlines the development of an adult educational guidance service. At present the educational guidance services are beginning to be developed with the start in 1999 of eleven pilot projects to inform the development of a service on a phased basis. Eight additional projects will come on stream in 2001. At present the educational guidance services are offered to priority groups such as participants in VTOS, literacy and community education programmes.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The Labour Services Act 1987.

5.3 Where such priorities exist, what active steps are taken to ensure that access to services is possible for target groups?

For example “one-stop-shops”; drop-in services that do not require appointments; telephone help-lines; use of community organisations for service delivery; targeted advertising.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Second-level – As part of its overall provision, the DES provides funding for the provision of services to all pupils. The *Guidelines for School Guidance Programme Planning* (2001) places responsibilities on schools to identify its priority target groups given the resources allocated and reflecting national priorities. A main goal of the GEI (2001) is to provide additional resources for schools in disadvantaged areas. The *School Guidance Audit* (2000) identified schools usage and non-usage of additional posts for guidance. In general terms however it is left up to schools to provide access to the target groups. There is, currently, little central monitoring to ensure such access.

Youthreach - The DES provides funding to VECs for the provision of services to Youthreach participants. In general terms it is left up to VECs to provide access to services for this target group. There is little central monitoring to ensure such access.

Adult Education – The DES provides funding to local service providers mainly based in VECs. The service providers are monitored mainly through reports to DES and NCGE.

The type of access varies according to the service provider and ranges from direct intervention and outreach through indirect support for trainers and teachers and tutors. Telephone helplines and targeted advertising are a feature of some of the AEGI pilots and will play an increasing role.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Both FÁS and LES have an extensive framework of contact points based in local communities to allow access to all target groups. All centres would facilitate drop in information and guidance facilities. In certain circumstances where higher or more specialised levels of intervention are required, appointments can be made.

FÁS Employment Services Offices and Clinics provide career advice and guidance including information on job and training opportunities as well as temporary employment options. The new FÁS Job Bank on the FÁS website enables employers and jobseekers to access information on services and register their details on line. The new JobConnect freephone service allows FÁS registered Job Seekers/Job Changers, to telephone an experienced FÁS Employment Advisor free in order to get up-to-date advice on current job vacancies, career and/or course information. Job seekers/changers can then be connected directly to employers who are advertising vacancies on the FÁS Job Bank.

Under the dual stranded National Employment Service the Local Employment Service is a network of offices and contact points based in targeted local communities and areas of disadvantage. The LES' remit is to ensure that 80% of it's clients are long term unemployed of at least three years continuous duration, those who have been unemployed for longer than 12 months and who have significant educational disadvantage, those dependent spouses of long term unemployed persons, lone parents, ex-prisoners, travellers, homeless people, ethnic minorities and persons referred from substance abuse rehabilitative programmes and others not included in the above target category, but who are particularly distanced from work. These LES offices have their own distinct advertising and branding. They are open from 9am until 5pm and clients can call in at any time.

FÁS also provide core funding and staffing (through Community Employment) to Irish Congress of Trade Union Centres (ICTU) which are based in local communities and provide an extensive information service to clients.

5.4 Typically, are different methods used to provide services for different target groups?

EDUCATION SECTOR

Outreach and telephone contact is a strong feature of AEGI but there is great commonality across education in terms of guidance methods.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Different levels of service are required depending on the needs of the client. Many FÁS clients would simply require access to information whereas a LES client would more typically require somewhat more intensive guidance and counselling services. All Employment Services clients are part of a caseloading system of service.

5.5 Do examples exist in which individuals are required to take part in guidance and counselling?

For example to continue to receive social security benefits or pensions; or to avoid expulsion from school.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Some schools operate informal policies in which pupils at risk of expulsion are required to participate in guidance. The data in this is anecdotal.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The Irish National Employment Action Plan, adopted by the Government as its response to the European Employment Guidelines, included a commitment to more systematic engagement of the employment services with the unemployed. Implementation of this commitment commenced in September, 1998. From that date, all persons under 25 who were six months on the Live Register (LR) were referred by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA) for interview by FÁS. Under this program those who are referred to FÁS undergo an initial guidance process with an Employment Service Officer. Thereafter, depending on their requirements they may undergo a thorough guidance and counselling process. Those who do not engage the process are

brought to the attention of the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs where their case/benefit claim may then be reviewed.

As the Employment Action Plan progressed the program was extended to include other groups crossing nominated thresholds of unemployment. At present all individuals under 25 are being referred when they cross the 6 months unemployment threshold as before. The timing of intervention (previously 12 months) by FÁS into all other age groups was reduced in July 2000. From this period all persons in the 25 to 54 years age bracket are being engaged with as they cross the nine month threshold.

5.6 Do policies for information, guidance and counselling services favour:

- **A comprehensive approach (so that services are universally accessible and meet a wide range or needs); or**
- **A targeted approach that favours those in greatest need; or**
- **Both of these approaches**

EDUCATION SECTOR

Both of these approaches

Policies favouring a comprehensive approach include:

- *The Education Act (1998)*
- The allocation of a minimum of eight hours guidance per week to each schoolhours/week additional teaching resource to schools to assist with guidance provision (1999)
- The White Paper on Adult Education: *Learning for Life* (2000)

Policies favouring a targeted approach include:

- The New Deal on Educational Disadvantage (1999-2000)
- Guidance Enhancement Initiative (2001)
- HEA funding to HEIs regarding student retention (1999-2001)
- National Development Plan (2000-06)

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Both of these approaches.

5.7 Please describe the major gaps, if any, in the provision of information, guidance and counselling services. Are there any groups whose needs appear to be met less effectively than others?

EDUCATION SECTOR

At present there is no formal guidance provision in the primary school sector. Equally, access by hard-to-reach groups and adults is in need of considerable further development.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Those clients most distant from the Labour Market. For example, those with low levels of literacy or difficulties in accessing education.

Services for adults

5.8 Please describe how information, guidance and counselling services are organised and provided for adults in your country.

For example: which agencies (educational institutions, community organisation, the public employment service) typically provide services for adults; are these different from the agencies that provide services for youth; how are different agencies co-ordinated; what priority do services for adults have compared to services for youth; what recent initiatives have been taken to provide services to adults.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The provision of adult educational guidance is developing at present. Under the AEGI there are at present eleven national pilot projects with an additional eight starting in September 2001. The Initiative is funded by the DES under the NDP with the assistance of the ESF. The provision is based mainly in the VECs and at present focuses on disadvantaged and minority groups (over the age of 18) such as adults on community education and literacy programmes or on VTOS programmes. It is envisaged that a comprehensive guidance service will be available to all adults over the next number of years. The service is provided through both educational institutions and public access offices. Service level providers of AEG have specific instructions to address gaps, to provide a complementary service to existing FÁS and LES services for adults, and to participate in / develop formal and informal networks of providers at local level. AEG services are a new priority.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On the labour market side, under the dual stranded National Employment Service FÁS and the LES' are statutorily responsible for the provision of guidance services in the labour market sector ,

“..to provide, or arrange for the provision of, whether for reward or otherwise-services consisting of the provision of guidance, advice and information in respect of choice of career and employment and to assist (whether financially or otherwise) in, and co-ordinate, the provision of such services by others.”

FÁS has also established Operational standards and Guidelines for the delivery of Guidance services to adults. The Operational Guidelines are published and distributed to all employment services advisors by the Programme Development Division of FÁS.

6. STAFFING

Here we wish to know about the types of staff that provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country, and about their qualifications and competencies.

In answering this section, please describe differences between staff in the different settings in which information, guidance and counselling services are provided: for example schools, tertiary education, community organisations, public employment services.

6.1 What types or categories of staff are employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country?

For example information librarian, classroom careers teacher, school counsellor, public employment services counsellor.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The types of staff employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services include:

Second-level: guidance counsellors

Higher education: career advisors/officers student counsellors

Youthreach/VTOS: ranges from guidance counsellor to tutor trained in frontline guidance skills

Adult: guidance counsellors and information officers

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On the Labour Market side FÁS and the LES are involved in the provision of information and guidance. FÁS Employment Services interviews and advises c. 140,000 clients a year. The categories of staff include Employment Services Officers, Frontline, clerical and call centre staff..

6.2 What is the best information that can be provided on the number of staff, by type or category, who are employed to provide information, guidance and counselling services in your country? Please indicate if information on their age, gender and equity group structure is available.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Second-level – 600.3 whole-time equivalent posts.

Third-level – 51.5 posts including information officers and administrative assistants, 37 of which are career advisers/officers. Of the 37 career advisers/officers nine are male. Age range is from late twenties to late fifties.

Informal (Youthreach) – Youthreach – 2 ½ - 3 hours per week.

Adult Education Guidance Initiative – 19 guidance posts and 10 information officer posts. Age range of guidance workers is from early thirties to early sixties. Out of the guidance posts appointed to date (15) eight guidance workers are female.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Within FÁS Employment Services there are 304 Employment Services Officers involved in the provision of information, guidance and counselling services. Overall there are 504 staff employed by FÁS Employment Services. Within the Local Employment Services there is a total staffing complement of c. 365, 280 of which are involved in the direct provision of information, guidance and counselling services.

Age and Gender analysis - FÁS Employment Services Officers

5 year age bands

	To 24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-65
Female	0	17	36	30	37	21	22	11	4
Male	0	1	0	4	12	22	27	38	22

6.3 What education and training qualifications are the different types or categories of career information, guidance and counselling staff required to have? (Where qualifications are required, please indicate whether it is government or a professional association that requires them, and describe relevant professional licensing bodies).

For example teaching qualifications, university degrees in psychology, special diplomas in guidance and counselling, post-graduate qualifications, completion of in-service courses and so on. Please describe the length of the education and training and the type of qualification that it leads to. Please describe any differences in requirements between different settings in which services are provided.

In answering this question, you might find a grid such as the example below to be a useful way to organise your response. Note: This is only an example to help guide your response.

		Level of Education and Training					
		Teaching qualification	University degree in psychology	Special diplomas in guidance and counselling	Post-graduate qualification	In-service courses	Other
Type of staff position	Information librarian						
	Classroom careers teacher						
	Counsellor in government agency						
	Counsellor in private agency						
	Other						

EDUCATION SECTOR

Type of Staff	Level of Education and Training					
	Teaching qualification (1 year full-time) Government Requirement	University degree in psychology	Postgraduate diplomas in guidance & counselling (1 year full-time/ 2 years part-time) Government Requirement	Post-graduate qualification	In-service courses	Other Certificate/ Diploma/ Degree (1-4 years duration)
Information officer (adult education)					✓	✓
Classroom careers teacher	✓				✓	
Guidance counsellor (second-level)	✓		✓		✓	
Guidance counsellor (adult education)	✓		✓		✓	
Careers advisor in higher education	No Government requirement	requirement				
Practitioners in private practice	No Government requirement	requirement				
Youthreach	No Government requirement	requirement				

The table above outlines the qualifications required for the different types or categories of career information, guidance and counselling staff. Guidance counsellors working in second-level are required to have a teaching qualification and a post-graduate Diploma in Guidance and Counselling. Guidance counsellors working in an adult education setting are expected to have the Diploma in Guidance and Counselling also. For professional membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) it is a requirement by that organisation that a person is qualified in guidance. Many practitioners in private practice may have a degree and postgraduate qualification in psychology or other certificate and diploma qualifications. This sector is not regulated at present. In relation to third-level there is no requirement by the government at present regarding qualification in guidance. Many existing career advisors have university diplomas and degrees.

Professional Licensing bodies

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) does not act as a licensing body but does give formal recognition to initial training programmes and qualifications based on its criteria.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

FÁS in conjunction with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth developed a Certificate Course in Adult Guidance and Counselling, (Theory and Practice) for FÁS Employment Services and Local Employment Service staff. This course has been designed to address the initial needs of those working in a guidance capacity with unemployed adults. The course is delivered in an open learning format, where participants attend seven workshops and complete home based learning assignments. This course provides a basic level professional qualification for those working in a guidance setting with unemployed adults. It will also form a pathway for staff wishing to pursue further qualifications in the field and will contribute to the development of a professional guidance and placement service. A total of 400 FÁS and LES staff have obtained the Certificate.

A Diploma/Higher Diploma in Arts (Adult Guidance and Counselling), was also developed by FÁS in association with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. This course is designed to serve as an accredited training programme for people working with adults in a guidance/counselling setting, providing information, advice and placement services and meets the longer term development needs of both FÁS and LES staff. The first course commenced in October 1997, and a further four courses have since commenced. Each course runs over two academic years and combines distance learning; regular tutorial workshops and home based assignment and projects.

Local Employment Services (LES) Mediators engaged in the LES Network have received training in Career Path Development and Placement which is an intensive six-day programme. The Central FÁS Placement Services Unit continued to provide training for LES Mediators in Career Path Planning. Work commenced on the development of a self-assessment support manual for LES Mediators to support the on-going training and development needs of Mediators. All mediation staff have been trained to use the Caseload Management System which was developed by FÁS. This system enables the Mediator to track clients through a process of guidance and career path planning. LES Co-ordinators have been trained in management information systems, also developed by FÁS, which enables local LES areas analyse their interaction with clients. The LES Mediators Forum, in conjunction with the FÁS Central Support Unit, organised and facilitated training workshops for mediators focusing on:

- Group work in the mediation process
- Role of the mediator in exploring enterprise opportunities with unemployed clients.

There are currently two main Professional bodies catering for those working in the Career Development area. Each has a number of levels of membership. The Institute of Guidance Counsellors requires members to have a primary degree, relevant experience and postgraduate qualification in Career Guidance. The Irish Institute of Adult Guidance and Counselling was established in 1999 and requires applicants for membership to have completed a minimum of a one year certificate in Adult Guidance or similar qualification and to have worked in a guidance setting with adults for three years.

There is a general need for a co-ordinated and innovative approach to staff development and qualifications for all national guidance services (labour market and educational), ranging from front line counselling and guidance skills to advanced levels of service without pre-conditions or the imposition of artificial academic or status quo barriers to the recognition of guidance qualifications. Best practice in adult guidance developed by the enhanced FÁS National Employment Services should also be disseminated to any new national guidance initiatives. The FÁS service will be further developed and resourced in collaboration with other agencies in the field

Many of our Employment Services officers are trained to either Certificate or Diploma level in Adult Guidance and Counselling from the National University of Ireland.

Mediators/Advocates

Within the Local Employment Services (which is now part of the dual stranded FÁS National Employment Services-since the beginning of last year), FÁS supports the training of Mediators who are engaged in a basic guidance process with the LTU and Early School Leavers. We have developed the Advocates Programme for Early School Leavers in the Youthreach programme) in 14 areas and have provided Training in Adult Guidance/psychometrics/Personalised Career Path approach with this group. The Programme is being mainstreamed in 2000. FÁS also support Mentors in the Community Training Workshops and jointly manage the Guidance and Counselling initiative with the DES.

		Level of Education and Training					
		Teaching qualification	University degrees in psychology	Special diplomas in guidance & counselling	Post-graduate qualification	In-service courses	Other
Type of staff position	Information librarian						
	Classroom careers teacher						
	School counsellor						
	Counsellor in government agency			yes	yes	yes	
	Counsellor in private agency						
	Other						

6.4 What, typically, are the types of competencies (or knowledge and skills) that these different types or categories of workers required to have?

For example communication skills, group facilitation skills, individual and group assessment skills, labour market knowledge, knowledge of career development theory.

In answering this question you might find a grid such as the example below to be a useful way to organise your response. Note: This is only an example to help guide your response.

		Level of Education and Training					
		Teaching qualification	University degrees in psychology	Special diplomas in guidance & counselling	Post-graduate qualification	In-service courses	Other

Type of staff position	Information librarian						
	Classroom careers teacher						
	School counsellor						
	Counsellor in government agency						
	Counsellor in private agency						
	Other						

EDUCATION SECTOR

The IGC's policy on recognition of initial training qualifications of guidance counsellors sets down areas of knowledge and skills for guidance counsellors working in second-level education. These are: *The Guidelines for the Practice of Guidance and Counselling in Schools* (1996) and the *Guidelines for Guidance Programme Planning* (2001) both set down descriptions of the role of the guidance counsellor with the latter describing a range of guidance learning activities. These infer a range of competencies. Currently, the Directors of the Training Programmes for Guidance Counsellors, the IGC and DES are together drawing up new guidelines for the recognition of initial training qualifications. Guidance learning activities in AEG are described in the White Paper: *Learning for Life* from which inferences on competencies can be drawn.

The following data is based on descriptions listed above.

	Competence					
	Communication skills	Group facilitation skills	Individual and group assessment skills	Education and labour market knowledge	Knowledge of career development theory	Counselling skills
Information officer (Adult Education)	✓			✓		
Guidance counsellor (second-level)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guidance counsellor (adult education)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Careers advisor in higher education	✓	✓		✓		
Other counsellor in HEI	✓	✓	✓			✓

		Competence					
		Communication skills	Group facilitation skills	Individual and group assessment skills	Labour market knowledge	Knowledge of career development theory	Other
Type of staff position	Information librarian						
	Classroom careers teacher						
	School counsellor						
	Counsellor in government agency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Counsellor in private agency						
	Other						

6.5 How are the competencies or knowledge and skills required of those who provide information, guidance and counselling changing, and why? What is being done to meet these changing knowledge skill needs?

EDUCATION SECTOR

The competencies, knowledge and skills required of those providing information, guidance and counselling are changing due to economic and social changes in society and to developments in ICT and guidance. With increased economic prosperity in Ireland at present there are a lot of social changes taking place also:

- The advent of life-long learning - more adults returning to learning
- A wider range of full-time and part-time night courses available
- Greater employment opportunities especially in the engineering, construction and software industries

- The emergence of IT as a tool in education and guidance e.g. databases on educational and employment opportunities, careers information available on the internet
- The emergence of a multi-cultural society – labour coming from overseas, asylum seekers
- Changes in the traditional family structure leading to stresses within the family, e.g. one-parent families, both parents working

New competencies, knowledge and skills required by guidance practitioners arising from these economic, social and ICT changes include:

- Multicultural counselling skills
- Counselling and interventions with families, pupils, and adults returning to learning/employment
- Knowledge concerning the range of educational and employment opportunities available
- Competency with using ICT as a tool in guidance
- Awareness of quality assurance issues and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions

There are a number of initiatives in place that are assisting guidance practitioners to keep pace with the developments and changes.

- Initial training for guidance counsellors - NCGE meets with the course directors of the initial training courses four times per year in order to influence the courses to respond to changes and developments in society by adapting the curriculum
- 1998/1999 NCGE surveyed second-level schools to identify guidance counsellors' needs for hardware, software, training and support in ICT and guidance
- 1999/2000 the DES provided dedicated ICT hardware for guidance to all schools and provided a national training in-service programme to develop guidance counsellor competencies in this area
- The DES funds in-service for guidance counsellors annually. This in-service takes place at national and local levels and is mainly organised by the IGC
- The IGC itself organises on-going in-service at local level paid for by its own members
- NCGE develops and disseminates information on good practice in guidance through the *Guidance Counsellor Handbook* and *Newsletter*. This includes evaluative information on new methods
- NCGE has organised national in-service training for Adult Education Officers on the Educational Management of Adult Guidance in co-operation with NUI Maynooth. Included in this is an examination of competencies required by guidance practitioners working with adults

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The changing nature of Ireland's labour market, with unemployment at an all time low of 3.7%, has meant that those involved in the provision of information, guidance and counselling services to adults have seen a gradual change in their client profile.

FÁS and the LES are frequently interacting with clients who require a higher level of intervention than was previously the case as providers focus significant attention on those most distanced from the labour market, i.e. long term unemployed, women returnees, early school leavers etc. A 'Management of Guidance' program is currently in the design stage for Employment Services Managers and staff. The training programme aims to improve the overall quality of service within FÁS in the area of adult guidance and counselling.

In addition the supply side shortages have resulted in the need for FÁS and LES to appropriately address employer needs. In order to facilitate employers and jobseekers alike, providers of

information, guidance and counselling services must build close linkages with employers to fully understand the labour market environment. In this regard a training program has been devised for FÁS Employment Services staff which will promote best practice employer liaison and relationship building techniques.

6.6 What opportunities exist for information, guidance and counselling service staff to update their knowledge and skills?

For example: Do industrial agreements allow time for recurrent education and skills upgrading? What time, and what programmes, do government agencies provide for the purpose? What recurrent education and skills upgrading courses are provided by tertiary institutions?

EDUCATION SECTOR

New competencies, knowledge and skills required by guidance counsellors are provided for through the provision of in-service training by the DES which usually takes place during school hours (working hours). The IGC also provides ongoing in-service training for its members. The main focus of in-service training is on assessment, the use of ICT in guidance and counselling skills. Guidance counsellors have the opportunity at the IGC/HEI Conference to meet with the Admission Officers of each of the colleges and CAO in order to keep updated on the range of courses provided at 3rd level. Tertiary institutions provide a number of skills upgrading courses in the areas of counselling, information technology and assessment. Some of these are post-graduate post-professional courses e.g. M.Sc. in TCD.

Career advisers/officers at 3rd take part in training courses provided by AGSCI and AGCAS (Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services – UK). Most of the training takes place during working hours.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Peer support in the form of two-hour group discussion sessions once a month facilitated by a professional counsellor to support staff working over a prolonged period of time with many different sections of society.

See also point 6.3 above

6.7 Please describe any policies that exist to systematically make use of groups such as alumni, parents and local employers in delivering services.

For example by acting as mentors, or by visiting classes to provide information on careers.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Policies that suggest making use of alumni, parents and local employer groups in delivering services include:

- *Guidelines for Guidance Programme Planning in Schools* promote the involvement of parents, employers, pupils, past pupils, local community and its agencies in the School's guidance programme.
- *The GEI* promotes school links with the local and business communities and their involvement in the school's guidance programme
- *The Education Act* (1998) requires that schools consult with stakeholders in the drafting of a school's plan and the establishment of a student's council in schools

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The Board of FÁS, whose members are appointed by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment comprise a chairman, representatives from employer, trade union, education, social welfare and youth interests, a representative of the Minister for Finance, two representatives of the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and two FÁS employee members.

7 DELIVERY SETTINGS

Here we would like to know about the delivery of services in different settings

Schools

7.1 Are separate career education lessons a normal part of the school curriculum? If so, for each school grade, please indicate whether or not such lessons are required and the mandatory number of hours per year.

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Grade 13
Required?							
Hours							

EDUCATION SECTOR

Second-level schools. Career education classes are a normal part of a school's guidance programme. While there is no mandatory hours requirement, the classes tend to take place at senior cycle. In certain leaving certificate programmes e.g. LCA/LCVP, careers education is a formal part of the curriculum.

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year	6 th year
Required	None	None	None	TYP*	LCA/LCVP*	LCA/LCVP*
Hours	-	-	-	School's discretion	LCA-240 hours, LCVP – 140 hours	LCA – 240 hours, LCVP 140 hours

* Guidance is provided by subject teachers in the TYP/LCA and LCVP programmes in addition to guidance provided by the guidance counsellor.

For the second-level sector schools in the free education scheme are allocated the following number of guidance hours by the Department of Education and Science as indicated earlier, in addition to its normal allocation of teachers, each school is allocated an extra teaching resource to assist it with its guidance provision, ranging from eight hours per week in small schools. The following table indicates the additional hours allocated to schools of different sizes:

* No. of pupils	No. of guidance hours per week
<250	8
250<500	11
500<750	22

* 103 school have recently benefited under the GEI and would have a greater number of guidance hours per week than highlighted by the above table.

The use of the allocation of guidance hours is left to the discretion of the individual school. The *Education Act (1998)* requires that schools provide pupils with appropriate guidance. However the recent Audit highlighted that the majority of schools provide little or no guidance to pupils in the junior cycle.

7.2 If separate career education lessons are not provided, are policies in place to integrate career education into other subjects? Details can be provided in an Annex.

EDUCATION SECTOR

No, policies are not in place. It is entirely at a school’s discretion.

7.3 Are periods of work experience required as part of the secondary school curriculum? For each school grade please indicate whether or not such experience is required, and how many hours per year are required.

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year	6 th year
Required	None	None	None	TYP*	LCA/LCVP*	LCA/LCVP*
Hours	-	-	-	School’s discretion	LCA-240 hours, LCVP – 140 hours	LCA – 240 hours, LCVP 140 hours

EDUCATION SECTOR

Second-level schools

	1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th year & 6 th year
Required	No	No	No	TYP*	LCA/LCVP*
Hours	-	-	-	1-4wks depending on school	LCA – 10 days, min 2, max 4 work placems, LCVP – min. 1 week

* Work experience is provided on the TYP/LCA/LCVP programmes

7.4 What other types of career information, guidance and counselling services are typically provided for school students (that is, apart from career education lessons and work experience)?

For example career fairs; personal counselling; access to career libraries; alumni programmes; parent involvement programmes; internet or computer-based programmes.

EDUCATION SECTOR

In the second-level sector other types of career information and guidance and counselling services include:

- Personal counselling
- Access to career libraries
- Internet and computer based programmes – QualifaX, Careersworld

- Attendance at national and local career fairs – Higher Options, open day visits to higher education institutions
- Information evenings for pupils and parents concerning CAO, UCAS and school guidance and counselling issues e.g. bullying, transition from primary to secondary
- Career and educational assessment.
- Class-work on personal and social development – assertiveness, communication skills, personal development etc
- Job interview preparation (undertaken with parent and past pupil support)

The public employment sector

7.5 What information, guidance and counselling services are provided by the public employment service?

For example: what is the relative balance between career and job information services and guidance and counselling; what types of clients typically seek and receive assistance; how are these services related to overall national labour market and employment policies?

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

FÁS provides a range of information, guidance and counselling services to the unemployed, employers, employees and communities. These services include the registration and intensive guidance and counselling of job seekers for referral to vacancies, training and labour market programmes in accordance with an agreed career path.

FÁS Employment Services are provided through a network of 134 locations including 54 full-time offices. FÁS has a client database linked to the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs Live Register database. FÁS also supports employment services through 95 community organisations around the country.

The Local Employment Services is now established in 26 areas of high disadvantage to provide a gateway for long term unemployed persons within these areas, to access the full range of guidance, training, educational and employment support opportunities available to help them obtain employment.

The Public Employment Services has responsibility for the provision of information guidance and counselling services to the following groups;

Unemployed / jobseekers/ Jobchangers –

A guidance and information service regarding opportunities available in employment, education and training. Priority is given to jobseekers who are reaching critical thresholds in their unemployment, the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged groups. Each jobseeker is given an intensive guidance and counselling interview so that an individual career plan is prepared in a collaborative intervention.

Persons with disabilities –

At present FÁS provides a career guidance and job-seeking service for persons with disabilities. FÁS manages labour market programmes and services for persons with disabilities and operates employment supports for people with disabilities.

Asylum seekers –

FÁS has established a new Asylum Seekers Unit to assist those eligible to work. A FÁS job bank has been set up on the FÁS website to allow employers and job seekers especially from abroad to access information on opportunities in Ireland.

Early School Leavers –

FÁS assists early school leavers by providing the training, education and work experience they require to obtain regular employment.

Employment Action Plan -

Monthly progress reports on the Employment Action Plan statistics and comparative analysis of the main EAP target groups.

Tertiary education

In answering this section, please separately describe services in university-level tertiary institutions (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 levels 5A and 6) and in non-university-level tertiary institutions – such as community colleges and polytechnics (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 level 5B).

If applicable, also describe services in post-secondary non-tertiary institutions (those offering programmes at ISCED-97 level 4) and in institutions offering continuing education or further education and training programmes.

7.6 Please describe information, guidance and counselling services that are provided within tertiary education.

For example: Are they a normal and standard service within tertiary institutions or are they only provided in some institutions? Are they normally provided separately from or together with personal and study counselling services? Are they normally provided separately from or together with job placement and graduate recruitment services?

Guidance and counselling services within higher education.

University based guidance and counselling services:

All of the universities provide career advisory services. The main provision is targeted at final year pupils and recent graduates. The career advisory office provides information on educational and employment opportunities to pupils and graduates. Pupils can meet with a careers advisor for educational and career guidance. Personal counselling is usually offered to pupils through the student health service/student's union in the University. Universities are not required by the state to offer careers advisory services and the provision in each University differs. However across University settings the main roles and tasks of the Careers Advisor are similar and include:

General management – managing service provision, administration and evaluation of service, liaison with external organisations e.g. employers.

Information management – the provision of information on educational/training and labour market opportunities in Ireland and abroad.

Teaching / coaching guidance activities – organisation of career talks, seminars and workshops

Counselling – helping pupils explore their thoughts and feelings in relation to further education and career choice.

Advice – making suggestions based on the career advisor’s knowledge/experience and on assessment results in relation to further training and employment options.
Assessment – using psychological and educational assessments to facilitate decision making and self-awareness.
Referral – referring pupils to other services better able to meet their needs.
Advocacy – negotiating with other institutions/agencies on behalf of a student.
Follow up – contacting former clients.
(Aungier, 1999).

Guidance and counselling services within the Institutes of Technology:

Not all of the Institutes of Technology offer a guidance and counselling service. For those that do the provision differs greatly between institutes. Like the university based services the provision is targeted at final year pupils and recent graduates and the counselling service is separate to that of the careers service. The institutes of technology are not required by the state to provide guidance and counselling services. The roles and activities of the guidance practitioner in the Institutes of Technology are similar to those outlined for the Universities above.

Guidance and counselling services within the post-leaving certificate (PLC) sector

The guidance and counselling provision in this sector is within the VEC system providing some guidance and counselling to pupils through the services of a guidance counsellor. Information concerning courses is usually provided by the tutor or co-ordinator of the PLC programme. The role of the guidance counsellor in the second-level sector: personal, educational and career counselling is offered, the guidance counsellor conducts educational assessments and provides information concerning course and employment opportunities.

The private (for-profit) sector

7.7 What is known about career guidance and counselling services provided by the private (for-profit) sector: such as management consultants, outplacement services or private practitioners?

For example describe their client base, the level of their fees, the sorts of services that they provide, and what is known about growth in these services over time.

Career guidance and counselling services are offered by a number of private practitioners from different backgrounds. A number of guidance counsellors in private practice offer services to school leavers and some offer services to adults returning to learning or changing career. Organisational psychologists also engage as consultants offering career and educational counselling, assessment and employment counselling. This service is mainly targeted at the adult population that is employers, employees, those seeking career change or those returning to learning. This sector is not regulated and there are a number of practitioners in private practice without the relevant professional qualifications. The fee charged by practitioners in private practice varies among practitioners and operates usually on a sliding scale. With the advent of lifelong learning the private sector is expanding and widening its client group. There has been little research conducted into this area to date.

7.8 Please describe any steps that governments have taken to try to encourage private (for-profit) organisations to provide guidance and counselling services or to regulate the ways in which such services are provided.

For example by providing vouchers that can be used to purchase services; by changing legislation; by contracting out services; by setting staff qualification levels; by regulating fees that can be charged.

There have been no policy/initiatives to regulate/encourage this area to date.

Other organisations

7.9 What role do other organisations – for example in the community sector – play in providing information, guidance and counselling services? What types of clients do they serve? What types of needs do they attempt to meet?

EDUCATION SECTOR

Community based guidance focuses on individuals who have dropped out of both the formal and non-formal education system and who are at risk of social exclusion. It aims to reach out to these ‘hard to reach’ young people by training volunteers (from the same background or who interact on a daily basis with the target group) in frontline guidance skills. These volunteers subsequently work with the target group to bring them back into the formal system of education, training and employment through guidance provided on an informal basis. This approach, supported by the EU Leonardo programme, was pioneered in Ireland by NCGE working in co-operation with Cork City Partnership and Cumas Teo, Conamara. In the Cork site accredited training for the volunteers is provided at certificate and diploma level by University College Cork.

Community education (including literacy) and men and women’s community groups (mainly women’s) have provided basic guidance assistance through self development courses which have enabled participants to have the self confidence to progress to the next step in education and training. Community education (including literacy education) is mainly government funded.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Community Employment schemes provide information on a variety of services. FÁS Job Clubs enable clients most distanced from the labour market to access careers information and services.

7.10 Have governments attempted to increase their role (for example by contracting out services)? If so, why? Have they attempted to regulate the ways in which they provide services?

EDUCATION SECTOR

Governments have increased funding to develop literacy education and basic skills training arising out of the findings of OECD studies in literacy levels in Ireland and as part of the *National Development Plan*. While there is no general tendency evident for government to fund community organisations to provide guidance services, the involvement of relevant community organisations in consortium and networks supporting AEGI pilot projects is encouraged. Indeed one of the pilot projects based in Cork is operated by a consortium led by community organisations.

8 DELIVERY METHODS

Here we would like to know about delivery methods, including the ways in which they are influenced by government policies.

8.1 Career information, guidance and counselling services can be delivered in a variety of ways. In the last five years, how have these been influenced by government policies? (These might be policies to improve the use of resources, policies to increase access, policies to better meet client needs, policies to encourage equity, or other types of policies. To guide your answer, a list of some of the ways in which information, guidance and counselling services are delivered is given below).

- Batteries of psychological tests
- Telephone information, guidance and counselling
- CD-ROM-based self exploration and job-search packages
- Internet-based self exploration and job-search packages
- Careers fairs and exhibitions
- Educational experiences such as transition years
- Group guidance and counselling sessions
- Individual face-to-face interviews
- The systematic use of community members such as employers, parents or alumni: for example as sources of career information or as mentors and role models
- Career information libraries
- Paper-and-pencil self assessment techniques: for example the Holland Self Directed Search
- Organised workplace experience or community experience

EDUCATION SECTOR

Delivery method in guidance and counselling services typically include:

- Career/educational/personal counselling – individual and group
- Assessment – psychological and educational
- Information – provision of course/occupational/labour market information
- Advice – suggestions based on advisor's own knowledge and experience
- Educational Development Programmes – study skills, examination techniques, subject/course choice
- Personal and Social Development Programmes – assertiveness, self-awareness, decision making, planning
- Referral – to other qualified helpers internal/external to organisation, referral to guidance counsellor/careers advisor
- Career education/transition programmes – information on further/higher education/labour market facilitating transition to these areas
- Placement – work experience, work shadowing
- Follow-up – contacting former clients to find out what they are doing/what they need
- Networking – building links with employers, agencies and institutions
- Promoting change – assisting the organisation's curriculum development
- Managing, organising and co-ordination of the guidance programme

The following policy initiatives (last five years) have influenced the delivery methods of career information, and guidance and counselling services:

Second-level

- 1994/5 – The introduction of the LCA and LCVP. These programmes include a guidance module and work placement for pupils.
- 2000 – *Schools IT 2000 Initiative*. Under this initiative each guidance counsellor received a computer with Internet access and training in ICT.
- 2001 – funding by the Department of a database on educational opportunities in Ireland.
- The provision of career information using the Internet and computer software e.g. QualifaX, Careers World, Career Directions.

Tertiary education

Guidelines for the Development of Student Support Services have recently been developed for the tertiary sector by the HEA. The *Guidelines* highlight the student support services that should be offered to students by the HEIs. The *Guidelines* outline the minimum provision of what should be offered by these services. In relation to Careers and Appointments services the *Guidelines* highlight a minimum service as providing “career advice; access to reliable up-dated information on job requirements, careers fairs.” The *Guidelines* also state the need for using ICT as a tool in the provision of careers information. It is also stated that careers advice should form part of the curriculum and should not be a service offered in isolation.

Adult

The policy initiative that has led (on a pilot basis) to the development of local access to adult educational guidance services to encourage equity (in terms of targeting) is the White Paper *Learning for Life*. The pilot phase has allowed the testing of a range of delivery methods – individual and group guidance, telephone information, outreach and marketing, computer and Internet assisted guidance, workplace experience.

Further Education

Policy initiatives in this area have aimed to increase access and to encourage equity. The policy base has been the report of the *Taskforce on Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services*, referred to in section 3.2 above. This has led to basic guidance skills training for staff who work with challenging young people in non-formal education settings. It has also led to increased access to professional guidance and counselling services. Delivery methods used are mainly individual and group guidance and workplace experience.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The National Employment Services delivers its services through its extensive network of local offices using staff to client interaction using;

- Individual face-to-face interviews
- Internet-based self exploration and job-search packages (www.FÁS.ie)
- Telephone information, guidance and counselling (JobConnect)
- psychological testing - aptitude/interest inventory/competency skills
- annual 'Opportunities' careers fair and exhibition
- Organised workplace experience or community experience
- Career information databases
- Career Directions CD-ROM

As stated in the National Development Plan under the Employability Pillar policy aims to encourage labour force mobilisation, the continuance of preventive policies and the inclusion of new innovative developments such as ICT-based delivery systems.

8.2 Please describe any recent or current initiatives to develop Internet-based information, guidance and counselling services.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Current Initiatives to develop internet-based information and guidance and counselling services. The main focus of activity in this field has been to develop web based information access on learning opportunities in education and training and occupational information. QualifaX, Career Directions and Careersworld fit within the range of such products. However there has been very little public or private sector investment in a web based guidance service.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

FÁS (and the LES through FÁS) are involved in a number of initiatives to improve information, counselling and guidance services to both employers and jobseekers. The organisation is currently in the final stages developing a National Internet based vacancy taking call centre. Through its innovations in 'Wed-Chat', 'Call-Back' and text messaging services employers can post vacancies with FÁS and receive live support/information.

FÁS is currently piloting a vacancy/ careers and course information freephone helpline service in three of its 10 regions.

A Career Directions computer assisted career guidance tool is also available which provides a self-assessment interest inventory linked to a database of careers information, and occupational trends of specific careers. This database is currently being updated to provide information on about 500 careers and is also available on CD-ROM and floppy disc. FÁS continues to update its software and provides technical training and support for these systems which are used in the FÁS Employment Services and Local Employment Services. The software is also distributed to schools, VTOS co-ordinators, VECs, Department of Social Community and Family Affairs Jobs Facilitators, and Adult Guidance services. New developments under way or planned include making Career Directions available on the FÁS internet site, enabling links to be established with live training and employment opportunities on the web site while also including the full database of up to 750 careers.

8.3 Can examples be provided of the use of screening tools to match client needs or client type to the type of service provided? If such screening tools exist, please describe the reasons for developing them, and describe where they are used.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Second-level:

Screening is done at entry to second level in a number of voluntary secondary schools. Prospective pupils may sit an aptitude test on entry to second level which facilitates the guidance counsellor to determine the learning pace of the individual pupil. Pupils may then be placed in a particular class stream according to their performance on the aptitude test and from reports of school staff from the schools the pupils are originating from. The guidance counsellor may use the results of these aptitude tests to advise pupils on their suitability for certain subjects and courses also.

A number of assessment tests such as the *Porteous Problem Checklist* may be used by the guidance counsellor in a counselling setting to determine the nature and seriousness of a pupil's difficulty. These assessment tests may facilitate the guidance counsellor in determining the intervention required to best suit the pupil's needs.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Screening tools are used by the FÁS Asylum Seekers Unit to test the competencies of those entering Ireland. A range of assessments are used to determine levels of technical/language skills. This provides each individual with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills. The outcome of each assessment/interview is used by the Employment Services Officer to ascertain the type of work each individual may be best suited to within the Irish jobs market.

The Fast-track to Information Technology Programme is a special initiative where disadvantaged and those most distant from the labour market are brought through a fast tracking process to train them as I.T. professionals. An integral part of this programme is the use of aptitude/competency tests in the selection process.

9 CAREER INFORMATION

Here we wish to know about the educational and occupational information that is used in information, guidance and counselling services.

9.1 What is the public sector's role in producing career information?

For example indicate which Ministries are responsible for its production; how it is produced; whether it is produced on a national level or at the regional/provincial/state level. Also indicate if governments legislate to control how information is classified, distributed or stored.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

FÁS has the statutory responsibility for producing careers information for the public at large. The relevant Ministry is the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. FÁS projects are developed at national level. There are no formal means (advisory committees etc) for the public, different target groups, and guidance practitioners to feed into the development of the products. The Department of Education and Science has grant aided computer assisted guidance projects e.g. QualifaX, Careers World. These initiatives arose from the non-government and private sector. The classification, distribution and storage of careers information is not the subject of government control. The student support unit of the Department distributes information concerning grants and student support available at third level including ESF grants. The Higher Education section publishes information concerning third level education, teacher and nursing training, etc and the further education section publishes information concerning PLC courses, VTOS and Youthreach. The various second-level support sections of the Department publish information on second-level options including TYP, LCVP, LCA, taking the Leaving Certificate examination etc. The HEA also publishes information concerning going to higher education, mature student access and grant information etc. The Revenue Commission produces information concerning tax relief on tuition fees. Regarding information on specific courses this is left to the individual institution. Each higher education institution produces information concerning its courses, entry requirements, deferral, fees and grants, examinations, and support structures and services available to pupils. The DES are at present in the process of developing proposals concerning course information using IT as a medium – internet and on CD-ROM.

At national level, FÁS is responsible for the provision of Career Information as set out in the Labour Services Act.

On a national level FÁS Programme Development has developed a career information and guidance tool *Career Directions* which provides information/contacts on over 800 career paths. In addition literature is produced within various relevant departments to aid clients careers/ course choices. FÁS distributes these career information tools and literature to the LES' for further distribution to the public.

9.2 What forms does career information typically take?

For example: printed guides containing information on a large number of jobs and courses; individual leaflets or information sheets; CD-ROMS; Internet-based services.

Most of the published information and materials are paper based in the form of leaflets and booklets. The DES provides some limited information through the Internet while the various higher education institutions provide comprehensive information on the courses available and general information about the institution. Career information is usually contained in printed guides. However with the emergence of IT some information is now distributed through CD-ROM and is available through the Internet. Databases concerning educational and employment opportunities are becoming more available on CD-ROM and through the Internet such as QualifaX and Careers World.

Every FÁS and LES office provides information on courses/ jobs and career through notice boards, touch screen kiosks and front line contact. Career Directions is available in all FÁS and LES offices, library's, community organisations and schools on CD-ROM and will soon be available over the Internet. Currently the FÁS Internet site provides details on over 500 career paths/ contacts. Individual leaflets and information sheets are produced for various career and course information. FÁS is currently piloting a programme, 'JobConnect', a freephone service which provides job, career and course information to members of the public from a qualified Employment Services officer.

9.3 Typically, which client group is aimed at?

For example school students; public employment service clients; tertiary students; the general public.

Both educational and employment information is mainly targeted at young people age 16-25 but increasing attention is being paid to different adult needs.

All career information in the labour market services is aimed at the unemployed, job seekers/changers and adults of a working age.

9.4 What methods are used to gather it?

FÁS draws its career information from professional associations and sectoral committees. QualifaX's information is supplied by further and higher education institutes mainly. Careers World uses similar sources but has targeted large employers to provide support and information.

Ongoing internal research, interaction with clients (employers). Consultants have also been contracted to collate and analyse material on career information before provision to the public.

9.5 Please describe the steps that are taken to ensure that it is accurate and timely.

Careers information product developers e.g. FÁS, QualifaX, Careers World are largely dependent on information suppliers for the accuracy of the information and the speed at which it is relayed. Developers give opportunities to suppliers to amend/change the text. Guidance and counselling services may update the information they have on a regular basis to ensure that the information held concerning educational and employment opportunities is accurate and timely. A staff member may be devoted to this task. Guidance and counselling services usually have a calendar of events and thus would be aware that the information is timely. The IGC prepare a calendar of career related events on a yearly basis.

Within FÁS the National Employment Services department are responsible for the provision of career information. The department review the career information provided on an ongoing basis and work with contracted consultants to ensure career information is updated/ altered as necessary. The new Internet based Career Directions will allow for instant alteration to any information source provided.

Therefore any current issues in regards to updating information which may have arisen with the Career Directions CD-ROM, distributed countrywide, will be negated.

9.6 Please describe the steps that are taken to ensure that it is user-friendly and oriented to user needs.

This is largely undertaken on an informal basis by the developers. Very little formal research into consumers views of the products have been undertaken to date or of expressions of consumer needs with the exception of NCGE's study. In that study parents, pupils, and guidance counsellors in second-level schools were surveyed on their usage of and the appropriateness of the careers information materials available in schools.

FÁS conducts annual customer surveys through independent consultants and this includes a focus on both the guidance and counselling provision and any aids to guidance used by staff of FÁS. The results indicate a high level of client satisfaction.

9.7 How is it typically distributed?

For example through career information centres; through public libraries; through community organisations; to schools and tertiary institutions.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The careers information materials e.g. booklets, CDs etc are mainly distributed to schools, tertiary institutions, education centres, libraries – sometimes as part of a national / local distribution, sometimes on request. Public access to such information on the web is increasing.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Every FÁS and LES office provides information on courses/ jobs and career through notice boards, touch screen kiosks and front line contact. Career Directions is available in all FÁS and LES offices, library's, community organisations and schools on CD-ROM and will soon be available over the Internet.

9.8 What role does the private (both for-profit and not-for-profit) sector play in providing career information?

For example: What is known about the size and nature of the market for privately published guides to jobs or to tertiary education? What examples can be provided of privately funded career information websites? Are there examples of the mass media taking an active role in providing career information?

EDUCATION SECTOR

The private sector plays a large role in providing career information. Each of the private higher education institutions provides comprehensive information concerning the courses available at that institution and a guide to studying and life at the institution. A number of guidance practitioners publish educational and employment opportunities annually for school leavers, adults who wish to

pursue night courses, guides to making successful job applications and interview skills, and guides to the leaving certificate, examination and study skills and the completion of aptitude tests, etc.

There are a number of privately funded career information websites. These include websites on educational and employment opportunities provided by career practitioners, private organisations, and recruitment agencies. Examples of such websites include:

- Careersworld.com
- QualifaX.ie
- Nightcourses.com
- Stepstone.ie

The mass media particularly the national newspapers (Irish Times, Irish Independent) provides information for pupils taking state examinations on a yearly basis. Information on examination skills, study skills and general tips concerning the examinations of the different subjects at both junior cycle and senior cycle is provided. Information is also provided on applying for various courses in the further education and higher education sectors, living away from home and the 1st year in University etc. Profiles of the different courses and careers are also outlined.

The Irish Times provides a helpline manned by guidance counsellors in early January and again in August to answer queries concerning the Central Applications Office (CAO) application system and the leaving certificate examination results. The Irish Independent also provides a helpline manned by guidance counsellors in August to answer queries in relation to the leaving certification examination results. The helpline is run in conjunction with the National Parents Council (post-primary) and the IGC.

9.9 Have governments tried to increase the role of private sector in providing career information?

For example by contracting out the production of material.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The DES encourages the non-government and private sector to produce careers information materials and occasionally grant aids them.

9.10 Please describe the ways in which labour market data is typically included in career information.

For example through inclusion of data on unemployment rates and earnings; through the inclusion of data on regional variation in employment and unemployment for particular occupations; through inclusion of the results of graduate employment and course satisfaction surveys.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Information on the labour market is available through a number of sources. The HEA conducts a survey on a yearly basis of the destination of higher education institution graduates. This information includes the sector at which the graduate is employed and information concerning earnings. Guides are also produced by higher education institutions concerning careers in different fields such as engineering, accountancy and law, etc. Information in these guides includes a description of the type of work, starting salary, training and further education, etc. Each higher education department also provides information concerning further education and labour market opportunities in its career area.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The *Research and Planning Unit* in FÁS has published a number of papers on skills and labour shortages/bottlenecks in Ireland. These studies inform the guidance practitioners in the employment services. The *LES* have also conducted research into barriers for the long-term unemployed in accessing employment, training and education in Ireland. The latter report has highlighted areas for the improvement of services for the most disadvantaged groups in accessing training, education and jobs.

10 FINANCING

Here we wish to know about: the ways in which information, guidance and counselling services are funded; the ways in which costs are shared; and the financial resources devoted to information, guidance and counselling services.

10.1 What method(s) do governments use to fund information, guidance and counselling services?

For example: direct service provision; contracting out/tendering; public-private partnerships. If possible indicate the percentage of total government funding of information, guidance and counselling services that flows through each of these methods.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Guidance and counselling services provided under the aegis of the Department of Education and Science are funded as follows:

Second-level	direct service provision
Higher education	public-private partnership - the student contributes towards pupils support services in his/her registration fee (11.5% of funding from the DES for Student Support Services which includes the Careers Advisory Service and the Student Counselling Service)
Adult education	at present there are 11 pilot projects in place with a further eight starting in September 2001. The provision caters for adults on VTOS, literacy and community education programmes at present. It is envisaged that adults outside of these programmes wishing to avail of the service will pay a fee.
Non-formal	Guidance workers that are available are paid for by the state.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On the labour market side the Government fund FÁS to interalia deliver guidance services as set out in the Labour Services Act 1987.

10.2 Are individuals required to meet some of the costs of government information, guidance and counselling services? If so, what sorts of clients are asked to pay, and what is the typical level of fees charged?

EDUCATION SECTOR

At present clients expected to pay towards the provision of guidance and counselling information services are those in higher education. They contribute towards student support services in the student registration fee.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

All information, counselling and guidance services provided by FÁS and the LES' are free of charge to the client.

10.3 Please describe what cost and expenditure data is available to government and to stakeholders – for example on the relative costs of different delivery methods, or the cost of achieving particular outcomes, or the costs of providing services to particular types of clients – when making policies for information, guidance and counselling services. Describe the ways in which this information is used, providing specific examples if possible.

The cost and expenditure data available to government are mainly salary data for guidance counsellors, Inspectorate, training, and agency costs. There is little data available on the relative costs of different delivery methods or costs of achieving particular guidance outcomes. The costs of providing services to second-level schools, higher education, non-formal education and adults (VTOS, literacy etc) can be presented differentially. It is not clear how this information is used when making policy except in the area of adult education where certain target groups have free access to all services and other adults are required to pay a fee.

10.4 Please provide the best available estimates of the cost (most recent year) to governments of providing information, guidance and counselling services.

In answering this, where possible provide information on the ways in which this cost is divided between different Ministries and between different levels of government. Where possible, provide information on trends in costs over time. Where possible break costs down by type: for example staff costs; information production costs; capital and equipment costs.

In answering this, it might be helpful to include and Annex describing the problems that are involved in providing expenditure and cost data for information, guidance and counselling services in your country.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Sector	Total	Staff	Information Produced	Capital & Equipment
Second-level school				
Higher Education				
Adult Education	£565,000			
Non-formal Education	£785,000			

10.5 Please provide and indication of the statutory salaries of information, guidance and counselling service workers. As a base, take the case of guidance officers/counsellors with a guidance or counselling qualification at ISCED-97 level 5 (i.e. a university degree or equivalent) and indicate:

- The starting salary for those with the minimum required training
- The salary after 15 year's experience
- The number of years from the starting salary to the top salary

- **Where available, please provide equivalent information for other categories of guidance and counselling workers.**

EDUCATION SECTOR

Guidance Counsellor in Education

Starting salary:	£18,730/EUR 23,782.90
After 15 years:	£28,564/EUR 36,268.80
Number of years on scale:	26

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Guidance Counsellor in FÁS

Grade 8 salary:	£20,866 to £31,808
Grade 10 salary:	£15,891 to £26,300
Number of years on scale:	

11 ASSURING QUALITY

Here we wish to know about the ways that the quality of information, guidance and counselling services is evaluated, maintained and enhanced.

11.1 Please describe the steps that governments take to maintain and increase the quality of information, guidance and counselling services.

EDUCATION SECTOR

The steps that the government takes to maintain and increase the quality of information, guidance and counselling services for each of the different educational levels include:

Second-level	Through the Guidance Inspectorate. Through Guidelines for Guidance Programme Planning in Schools Through the GEI 2001 – monitoring and evaluation of allocations under the initiative over a 3 year period.
Adult Education	Through the Guidance Inspectorate. A new guidance inspector has been appointed to Adult Education (2001). Through monitoring by NCGE and external evaluation. Through the introduction of quality guidelines – at present being piloted as part of the AEGI.
Higher Education	Each institution is responsible for its own development in this field.
Further education	Grants are allocated to Youthreach guidance actions based on their applications for the provision of professional counselling and psychological services.

11.2 Do standards exist for the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services? How and by who were these developed? What status do they have? Do they differ between providers?

EDUCATION SECTOR

No standards exist for the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services at present in the education sector.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

FÁS has established standards for quality measurement in all its Training and Employment Programmes, including Adult Guidance and Counselling. Along with the promulgation of the Euro Counsel Guidelines within FÁS Employment Services, FÁS has developed Operational Standards and Guidelines for the delivery of Guidance Services to Adults within both FÁS and the LES'. The Operational Guidelines are published and distributed by the Programme Development Division of FÁS which has policy responsibility for the development of guidance services within FÁS. They are also available on the FÁS Intranet.

A number of Evaluations of the Guidance services, (commissioned by Programme Development Division) which FÁS provide have been completed and others are on-going in a constant review and improvement process.

Quality outcomes include individuals increased knowledge of their career path options and outcomes, supply to a rapidly changing labour market, workforce development, increased job satisfaction and enhanced work performance. FÁS conducts annual surveys of programme outcomes, guidance outcomes from both national and EU perspectives. The outcomes are tracked by FÁS using its Client Database Systems (CDB) and by its sophisticated caseload tracking system and management information tools. An Annual Report summarises outcomes.

FÁS has achieved the *Quality* mark and or the ISO 9001 standard for training centres, employment services guidance regions and other sections of the organisation.

11.3 Do standards exist for the competencies required by information, guidance and counselling services staff? If so, how and by who were these developed? What status do they have? Do they differ between providers?

EDUCATION SECTOR

Staff are deemed competent through success in the initial training they have received. The content of training is divided mainly by the HEI concerned.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

On an ongoing basis FÁS continues to upgrade the guidance and counselling qualifications of the employment services/local employment services staff through the provision of Certificate and Post-Graduate training in Adult Guidance and Counselling in conjunction with the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The vast majority of staff have completed the Certificate level course. A substantial number of staff have either completed or are studying for the two-year Diploma/Post-Graduate Diploma in Adult Guidance and Counselling. It is planned to increase the capacity on the two-year course this year through an additional third level centre.

FÁS is currently developing two programmes that will enhance the provision of by information, guidance and counselling services namely a 'Marketing Employment Services' programme and a course for those managing the delivery of employment services within FÁS.

11.4 Are there formal requirements, for example expressed in regulations or legislation, for the education and training qualifications required by information, guidance and counselling staff?

EDUCATION SECTOR

At present there are formal requirements expressed in DES Circulars concerning the education and training qualifications of guidance counsellors in second-level schools.

Guidance counsellors at second-level are expected to hold a degree, a teaching qualification and a Diploma in Guidance and Counselling. Because of the shortage of trained guidance counsellors a number of posts in the second-level sector are filled by graduates with a degree in psychology/other relevant qualifications.

11.5 Do guidelines exist on information quality standards to help groups such as tertiary institutions, industry associations and individual enterprises produce career information?

EDUCATION SECTOR

There are no national guidelines. NCGE has negotiated with NCDA (USA) to adapt their standards for Ireland.

11.6 Please provide details of any professional groups, bodies or associations of information, guidance and counselling services workers in your country.

In answering this please describe the extent to which such professional groups, bodies or associations: work to raise standards of professional practice, for example through the professional development and recurrent education of their members; are actively involved in lobbying governments on professional issues, for example relating to service quality; and have an industrial role to improve the employment conditions of their members.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Professional Organisations of guidance practitioners include:

- The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) – second-level sector, and adult education sector
- The Association of Careers Services in Ireland (AGCSI) – third level sector
- Irish Association of University/College Counsellors

The IGC is the professional body representing guidance practitioners in both second-level schools and the adult education sector. The Institute has a liaison and advocacy role with government departments, management and trade union organisations, national parent bodies, higher and technical education institutions, employment and training agencies, representatives of industry and a range of non-government organisations. It has a constitution and a code of ethics and promotes standards for entry into the profession and for the practice of guidance and counselling.

It supports the professional development of its members through in-service training.

The Institute is represented on a number of advisory committees including the review of initial training courses in guidance working on the establishment of course accreditation standards.

It lobbies governments on professional issues through the IGC Forum.

The mission of AGSCI is to lead, support and develop collaboration among higher education careers services in the development and delivery of high quality careers guidance for pupils and graduates, and in their work with employers and academics. Goals of AGSCI include promoting the professional competence of Higher Education Careers Services staff and the quality of service provided by member institutions, and to influence policy with government and Higher Education.

The constitution of the Irish Association of University/College Counsellors states that the association will further the education and training of counsellors, further the study of counselling through research and the dissemination of knowledge, and liaise with other professional bodies in line with the aims and objectives of the association.

11.7 Please describe any ways in which career information, guidance and counselling professionals are involved in the development of policy: for example through formal roles for professional associations; or through providing feedback to service providers.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Guidance practitioners have an active input into policy making and contribute to policy debate through the representation of their professional bodies e.g. the IGC and AGSCI on government committees. Practitioners also provide feedback to government in relation to current services in the education sector.

12 THE EVIDENCE BASE

Here we wish to know about the ways in which the delivery of information, guidance and counselling services is evaluated and supported by data and research evidence. In answering this section please refer in particular to national evidence where this is available, rather than to studies conducted in other countries.

12.1 What information is available about the extent to which information, guidance and counselling services are used? What is known about differences in levels of use and access as a function of factors such as: socio-economic status or family background; geographical location; gender; age; educational level; and levels of disadvantage? Do regular national statistical collections monitor access? Have access and usage levels changed over time?

EDUCATION SECTOR

There is little information available about the extent to which information, guidance and counselling services are used. There is no systematic recording of client and problem type, and no national standards for such records. There is no government requirement for keeping such records though this will become part of Service Level Agreements in the delivery of Adult Educational Guidance.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

ICTU response:

To the extent that Area Based Partnerships function in this area, they make returns to ADM, the central co-ordinating body. These will record the number of individuals involved.

FÁS conducts regular customer surveys which include information of the extent of usage of our Information Guidance and Counselling services. The introduction of new delivery tools such as Career Directions and self-service systems have resulted in an increase in usage over the last couple of years.

12.2 How is the level of community need and demand for information, guidance and counselling services established (for example by use of surveys, rates of service usage, waiting lists)? What is known about the expectations that clients have of services?

EDUCATION SECTOR

The level of demand is mainly assessed by education providers and guidance practitioners based on their experiences. There are no standard records for requests for guidance services (as opposed to records of clients served). There is no national data available on client's expectations of services.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

FÁS undertakes annual/ bi-annual surveys in order to assess client attitudes, expectations and outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services delivered through its network of employment services offices.

12.3 What criteria are normally used to judge the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services?

EDUCATION SECTOR

There are no standard criteria for assessing benefits and outcomes.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

In addition to analysis of the above surveys in this regard, FÁS records extensive details/ statistics on referrals, progression and placement of clients who have received information, guidance and counselling services.

12.4 Please provide details of any recent (last five years) studies that have been conducted of:

The costs of providing information, guidance and counselling services

- **How costs vary as a function of the type of service delivered and the characteristics of clients**
- **How the outcomes or benefits of information, guidance and counselling services relate to their costs**
- **How the benefits or outcomes of information, guidance and counselling services are related to the type of service provided and the characteristics of clients**

EDUCATION SECTOR

No cost-benefit studies have been undertaken.

12.5 Please provide details of any recent (last five years) initiatives or pilot projects that have been designed to provide insight into: the impact of careers services on individuals' career choices; the ability to use career information; the impact of services upon employers; the impact of services upon the development of a learning society.

EDUCATION SECTOR

No impact studies have been undertaken.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Response as 12.2

12.6 Do any national research centres specialise in career information, guidance and counselling services? Do they specialise in evaluative and policy studies: or do they mainly focus upon guidance techniques and methods?

EDUCATION SECTOR

No national research centres specialise in the field of information, guidance and counselling.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

The National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance, a member of the Network of European Resource Centres for Guidance, specialises in the research and delivery of career information, guidance and counselling services with particular reference to trans-national mobility of workers. They have focused on developing guidance techniques and tools to assist job seekers and secondary schools nationally.

12.7 How useful have governments found the work of research centres in developing policy for information, guidance and counselling services?

EDUCATION SECTOR

See 12.6 above.

LABOUR MARKET SECTOR

Policy is developed at agency level in co-operation with central government using the information derived from experience and research gained at service delivery level with due consideration to emerging EU and Irish Government policy directives.

12.8 Have governments taken steps to increase the evidence base for information, guidance and counselling services through support for relevant research centres? Has such support been on the basis of individual commissioned studies, or are more on-going forms of support used?

EDUCATION SECTOR

No.

ANNEX

SECTION 1	FÁS National Employment Services 27-33 Upper Baggot Street Dublin 4 Ph 00 353 1 6070590 www.FÁS.ie email. frank.kavanagh@FÁS.ie	Local Employment Services National Employment Services 27-33 Upper Baggot Street Dublin 4 Ph 00 353 1 6070590 email. frank.kavanagh@FÁS.ie
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Section 4.4 - 4.6 Completed by

Mr Peter Rigney
Industrial Officer
Irish Congress of Trade Unions
31 -32 Parnell Square
Dublin 1