



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance (2024-2030)

December 2023

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## Foreword

We are delighted to welcome this National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance and accompanying [Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#).

Guidance can make a significant and positive difference to the lives of individuals. Guidance supports individuals to make effective, reflective, holistic and well-informed decisions about their future. When individuals are supported in this way, they are empowered to achieve their full potential, resulting in numerous positive benefits for themselves and those around them. While guidance is, by definition, person-centred, it contributes to cumulative and compound benefits on a larger scale. Guidance can nourish communities, strengthen and sustain the economy and contribute to a more cohesive and integrated society for all.

This National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance recognises that individuals may benefit from access to guidance, delivered in different ways, to meet individual needs throughout their lifespan, irrespective of their situation, prior experience, level of education and other factors. The population of Ireland is growing, and at the same time, the Irish economy is performing strongly. Our economic sustainability and societal well-being depend on providing the best possible Guidance on education-, training- and career-opportunities. Guidance provides a helpful link between individuals and opportunities, impartially connecting individuals of all ages with these opportunities and supporting them in all aspects of their decision-making.

While guidance services have long been in existence in the Irish context, this national strategic framework provides a vision for the conscious, systematic alignment of services throughout all sectors, along a continuum, recognising the diversity of supports required at different stages of education and career journeys. This strategic framework will therefore allow for a more visible, accessible, streamlined and complementary provision of guidance throughout Ireland.

This framework and accompanying Strategic Action Plan chart a course for lifelong guidance over a seven-year period, 2024-2030. The framework and action plan are informed by an extensive and comprehensive national consultation with stakeholders ([DE, 2023](#)) as well as the findings and recommendations of the Indecon Review of Career Guidance (2019) and the OECD Review of National Skills Strategy (2023). An advisory group also supported the development of this framework. This combination of

stakeholder voice and contemporary research including, in particular, the extensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and the research that underpinned the preparation of the OECD Review of Ireland's National Skills Strategy will ensure a well-defined and steadfast trajectory for the enhancement of lifelong guidance in Ireland.

We do not underestimate the challenges involved in planning for, orchestrating and implementing a national strategic framework and [Strategic Action Plan](#). A cross-governmental approach to lifelong-guidance provision will proactively progress and implement clear strategic actions to achieve the vision outlined in these publications. Together, we will ensure that Ireland's lifelong-guidance system will continue to serve individuals and society and contribute to economic, social and environmental sustainability throughout the duration of this framework and into the future.



**Minister for Education  
Norma Foley**



**Minister for Further and Higher  
Education, Research, Innovation  
and Science Simon Harris**

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## Executive summary

The publication of the National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland (2024-2030) and accompanying [Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#) is a significant milestone for systems of guidance in Ireland, which have been operating in several sectors for many years. These publications provide a clear foundation for a national system of lifelong guidance between all sectors and services.

The aim of this framework is to bring a focus and a coherence to the existing services and structures, in particular in schools, Higher Education, the Further and Higher Education System, and Adult Guidance Services that are key supports to young people and those entering the workforce in making initial decisions about their educational journeys and career pathways.

Our vision is to have ‘a more unified guidance system’, which will allow all individuals to have access to high-quality, holistic and appropriate lifelong guidance aligned to their requirements at different phases of their lives. Lifelong guidance in Ireland is conducive to personal, social, educational and career development of the individual. This, in turn, has a positive impact on economic development, social cohesion, civic engagement and integration. This framework for lifelong guidance provides the vision and objectives for a system of guidance, which will create and maintain the conditions for full engagement in the world of work and learning, so that people are supported to flourish and contribute in a manner that expresses their unique gifts, talents, potential and capabilities.

This framework will provide a critical building block for moving towards the further development and enhancement of career-planning and management skills and supports for those already in work, for those transitioning mid-career, or for those planning to avail of learning opportunities in order to enhance career development. As identified in the OECD Ireland Skills Strategy Report [\(2023\)](#), a vital component of engaging with the workforce-development agenda is the issue of navigability of the learning and development opportunities for those already in work.

The need for a strengthened system of lifelong guidance in Ireland has been identified through various means. An Indecon Review of Career Guidance [\(2019\)](#), for example, recommended that a National Policy Group should be appointed to develop a coherent, long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance. This review provided several recommendations under various themes, including reforms to governance and delivery

arrangements, and enhancement of engagement with enterprise. The [OECD \(2023\)](#) also recommended that the co-ordination of lifelong guidance should be strengthened to support a strategic approach. In addition, a National Consultation on Lifelong Guidance in Ireland ([DE, 2023](#)) yielded significant data from a broad range of stakeholders who provided several key messages on how a system of lifelong guidance in Ireland could be designed and on the key factors that could be considered when doing so. An advisory group comprising stakeholders representing 12 stakeholder groups advised on all aspects of this national strategic framework and accompanying Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030).

Drawing on the recommendations of the literature and research at large, this National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance outlines some defining aspects of the current system in several sectors. It outlines a clear vision for how lifelong guidance in Ireland should evolve between 2024 and 2030.

Four pillars are identified as key concepts to inform the trajectory for the development of lifelong guidance in Ireland:

1. Visibility and awareness of lifelong-guidance services and information provision;
2. Standards and quality throughout the lifelong-guidance system;
3. Access, inclusion and universal design and;
4. Career-management skills and lifelong career mobility.

Eight clear objectives under these pillars provide clear direction for this first stage of a lifelong-guidance system (2024-2030) as follows:

1. Enhance co-operation and co-ordination between those responsible for lifelong guidance with clear division of responsibilities and strong co-ordination;
2. Ensure greater awareness and access to lifelong guidance to make meaningful, well-informed and conscious decisions about education and careers in an ever-changing world;
3. Embed lifelong guidance within the world of work;
4. Improve clarity around standards and quality in lifelong guidance;
5. Further develop evidence-based policies that will help to improve the quality and impact of lifelong guidance;
6. Promote inclusion and equity of access through the provision of lifelong guidance, which is underpinned by a universal design approach;

7. Strive to ensure career-planning and management skills will be a consistent focus of guidance provision and;
8. Support career mobility for individuals through guidance provision throughout the lifespan.

The eight strategic objectives further inform the vision of the framework, which will result in a cross-sectoral, co-ordinated, inclusive, accessible, universally designed and person-centered system across the education sector as well as underpinning the diverse supports required by those in the in employment, seeking employment or changing career paths. A number of outcomes are identified and listed under each of the four pillars as key deliverables.

The National Policy Group for Lifelong Guidance represents five government departments and each is committed to the vision and objectives outlined in this national strategic framework and the accompanying Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030). The work of the National Policy Group, government departments and regional and local guidance services will continue to be central within the lifelong-guidance landscape.



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## Introduction

The purpose of this National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance 2024-2030 is to provide a high-level policy direction to inform a detailed vision of lifelong guidance in Ireland and inform future strategic actions at individual government department level in support of the ever-evolving landscape of lifelong guidance in Ireland.

This framework is grounded in national and international policy and is informed by national and international research. It incorporates the perspectives and vision of multiple stakeholders who contributed to the process of design through an extensive and comprehensive national consultation. Key messages relating to the national consultation are presented in a separate detailed report ([DE, 2023](#)).

Changing patterns of work in an increasingly globalised and digital world demand that individuals learn, upskill and reskill throughout their lives. Guidance facilitates people to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social and life choices, so that they may reach their full potential and thereby contribute to the development of a better society ([National Guidance Forum, 2007](#)).

Over the last number of decades, there has been a significant increase in the level of participation in tertiary education in Ireland. This has played a key role in terms of providing the skills and talent that have a crucial basis to Ireland's economic development. Alongside demographic factors that have driven this growth, the sociological and cultural trends favouring higher education, and in particular direct entry to Level 8 undergraduate degree programmes, are complex, multifactorial and well documented. The benefits and value to all individuals, society, the workforce and the economy from a more balanced profile of participation across all the different dimensions of tertiary education are very well documented and researched. Effective guidance will ensure individuals are aware of all pathways to their future, including further and higher education, training and options available in the world of work. This can assist individuals to make well-informed and reflective choices with a positive impact for the individual, as well as more successful transitions between stages and a reduction on national attrition rates.

The landscape of guidance in Ireland is diverse as it involves a wide range of sectors, actors and stakeholders. Guidance in education is provided nationally via state funding for post-primary education, Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education

(HE). Guidance in non-educational settings is particularly diverse as it responds to a broad diversity of needs and as such, it and is provided through a number of state-funded agencies and institutions and a growing number of public and private practitioners. The diverse landscape creates certain challenges in relation to producing an effective, and coherent national strategic framework. Hence, in January 2022, Minister for Education Norma Foley, TD, established the National Policy Group on lifelong guidance comprising five government departments:

- Department of Education (DE);
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS);
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY);
- Department of Social Protection (DSP) and;
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE).

Each represented department provides a unique perspective and is committed to collaborating to achieve the vision outlined in this framework.

A lifelong-guidance advisory group was established in 2023. The advisory group consists of key stakeholders representing 12 organisations listed in [Appendix 3](#). Each member of the advisory group contributed unique knowledge and skills from all represented sectors within the lifelong-guidance landscape. The advisory group advised on all aspects of this national strategic framework and accompanying Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030) and was chaired by a senior official from the Department of Education.

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## Section one: guidance in Ireland

### Introduction

**There is no apparent universal or consistent understanding and use of ‘guidance’ as a working term among stakeholders** ([DE, 2023](#)). While national and international definitions of guidance do exist and are set out below, it is vital to develop shared understanding of guidance in the first instance. Only then can an effective and meaningful national system of lifelong guidance be established.

In order to provide an account of contemporary guidance in Ireland, the structure of guidance in each sector is briefly described in this section. Each sector provides guidance in line with the community it supports. Each community is supported by a range of professionals. Hence, the breadth of guidance provision in contemporary Ireland is significant. A national strategic approach for lifelong guidance involving several government departments is both timely and appropriate.

A comprehensive approach to the existing services in this space, and the reduction of fragmentation in the system, will be the bedrock on which further developments can take place. Realising a definitive shared approach will further enable the significant support offered to students at school level to be continued beyond school, particularly for those most in need of that support including individuals with disabilities and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage

### Defining guidance

At its core guidance is:

*“a continuous process that enables individuals at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management **skills**”*  
([The EU Council Resolution, 2008](#)).

Guidance provision in Ireland has emerged to complement each community and ethos within which it operates.

In an adult context, guidance is defined as a process which facilitates people:

*“to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social, and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society”*

[\(National Guidance Forum, 2007; pg. 6\).](#)

The role of guidance in empowering individuals of all ages with the tools to plan and manage their own careers and learning journeys and determine the supports that best meet their individual needs is key.

At post-primary level, guidance is a whole-school activity and refers to:

*“a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives”* [\(Department of Education and Science, 2005 p4\).](#)

Irrespective of the sector or type of guidance provision in question, guidance is person-centered. For example, meaningful guidance is provided when it is informed by an awareness of the changing demographics of the people in the areas served, such as the increased diversity of the population and growing numbers of people with disabilities.

Guidance counselling is a specialised support provided in schools, the tertiary education system and in other locations within the broader provision of lifelong guidance. It refers to the direct support provided to an individual or a group of individuals by an appropriately qualified guidance counsellor. Guidance counsellors undergo specific and defined training and are qualified to support and facilitate individuals with decision-making, life choices and promoting wellbeing. In addition, guidance counsellors engage in many highly skilled guidance-counselling activities to facilitate decision-making and personal development for an individual and to support personal, social, educational and career choices. Guidance counselling is person-centered, holistic in nature and incorporates educational, career and personal/social elements. Guidance counsellors aim to empower individuals who are supported to develop a capacity for adaptation, innovation, creativity and self-motivation and to be confident in their ability to meet their potential. The Programme Recognition Framework [\(Department of Education and Skills, 2016\)](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the training involved in becoming a guidance counsellor.

In addition to the guidance counsellor role, there are many other roles and resources that can play a very important part in contributing to guidance provision. This arises in

particular in relation to meeting lifelong guidance needs for the labour force as a whole in light of the major impact on jobs expected from the transformation of the economy and society, arising from digitisation, decarbonisation and population-ageing as well as other factors.

## Guidance in the primary system of education

Currently, there is no formal provision for guidance in the primary system of education in Ireland. However, the essential essence of guidance is evident throughout the current curriculum at large. For example, the principles and themes of the [Aistear](#) curriculum support the personal and social development of individuals. Similarly, through wellbeing in the [primary curriculum](#), students are encouraged to reflect on their choices and explore opportunities.

Additional guidance in primary schools is provided informally and on an ad-hoc basis. For example, [some state-funded programmes](#) are providing guidance-related resources for students attending primary school. Similarly, individual primary schools in Ireland often conduct activities that mirror the '[whole-school guidance](#)' approach modelled at post-primary level. The activities include career days, [Science Week](#), [Maths Week](#) and trips to local FET and HE campuses. However, these activities are not yet recognised as whole-school guidance.

As noted in the [Indecon review \(2019\)](#), there is extensive research literature highlighting that children begin to form their identities and career ideas in early childhood. Aspirations, values and interests of young children can be positively and negatively impacted by social media, family history and the reinforcement of cultural values. The importance of early intervention to combat any negative impact is very important. For example, person-centered guidance at primary level can have a positive impact towards disassembling cultural stereotypes such as “girls don't become engineers” ([Indecon, 2019](#)).

## Guidance in the post-primary system of education

[The Education Act 1998, section 9\(c\)](#) requires that a school should use its available resources to ensure “students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices”.

While “appropriate guidance” is not defined in the legislation, it “refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives” ([Department of Education and Science, 2005 p4](#)).

Guidance in the post-primary system is provided as a whole-school activity, where each school forms a team, in which the guidance counsellor has a pivotal role, to collaboratively design and develop a whole-school guidance plan as a means of supporting the needs of all students ([Department of Education, 2023](#)). Guidance counsellors work within a continuum-of-support model ([NEPS, 2010](#)) and are part of a whole-school approach to supporting wellbeing in schools ([NEPS, 2013](#)). Counselling “is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling has as its core objective, the empowerment of students, so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing” ([Department of Education and Science, 2005; pg. 4](#)).

Each post-primary school receives an allocation in respect of whole-school guidance provision. The allocation is calculated by reference to the approved enrolment, including Post Leaving Certificate pupils ([DE, 2023](#)). Allocations for post-primary guidance are provided in accordance with the type or category of school. For example, a school of 500 students will accord approximately 44 hours for guidance if the school is Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), approximately 19 hours if the school is non-DEIS but within the free education scheme, and approximately 12.5 hours if the school is fee-charging.

## Guidance in the Further Education and Training and Higher Education-Tertiary Education System

DFHERIS supports the provision of guidance through funding in FET and HE. In FET, Guidance support is mainly provided through the ETB FET Guidance, Information and Recruitment support service (GIR). The GIR service is free and impartial, and open to anyone over the age of 16. This service is accessible through the 16 Education and Training Boards located around the country. This service is multifaceted and support is provided to individuals at all stages in their lifecycle who wish to explore options in relation to FET and higher education, training, employment or self-employment in order

to facilitate the acquisition of career-management skills. Therefore, the FET GIR support services are uniquely placed to have impact at the interface of individuals transitioning, be that from school to FET and/or HET, exploring career change, upskilling and retraining during periods of unemployment and while in employment. Therefore, the FET GIR service is provided to all individuals, regardless of their circumstances, who wish to explore the most appropriate options for them from levels 1 to 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) through FET to HE, into employment and/or self-employment.

The ETB FET GIR support service engages in diverse and multifaceted work and is embedded across the ETBs including employer engagement, skills for work, training advisor and learner support, and inclusion teams in addition to their guidance roles. Also, this service works directly with the full range of state bodies, including but not limited to the DSP, the HSE and a full range of community, disability and voluntary support services.

The FET Strategy, [Future FET Transforming Learning](#), commits to a more integrated approach to guidance and information in FET. As such, the ETBI FET Guidance Steering Group has been established under the ETB Directors of FET. This forum is structured to develop, support and inform the implementation and promotion of the best practice in guidance counselling in FET settings and in non-formal settings in accordance with national priorities and key-priority areas.

Guidance in HEIs is typically provided by careers consultants who play a key role in the curriculum, employer engagement, informing strategy and policy, and innovation in practice in addition to their guidance roles. Careers consultants are at the interface of individuals' transitions, be it from second to third level, from third level to employment/further study, or from a career back into education and a new direction. Careers consultants are therefore in a unique position to have impact and to lay the foundation for developing lifelong career-management skills and have a significant understanding of evolving skills needs and the drivers for enterprise engagement.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) disburses core funding to the higher education institutions, which includes provision for student support services. Student support services encompass a range of supports for students to ensure that they get the help they need and may include careers offices, mature student and access offices,

international office, disability supports, health and wellbeing, among other supports. Therefore, funding for career services specifically is not ring-fenced.

One of the policy goals set by the HEA of relevance to guidance is to expand pathways through education and into employment/self-employment. To this end, the HEA also support a number of specialised initiatives such as [PATH 5](#), which aims to increase the participation and progression of the Traveller and Roma communities in education in Ireland.

The provision of guidance across the skills ecosystem is a key facet of the Government's workforce development approach in line with the [National Economic Plan](#).

## Guidance in the Public Employment Service

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) provides a free Public Employment Service to jobseekers, employers, employed people, and job changers. These services provide access to employment services, Intreo partners, work-experience programmes and employer opportunities as referenced in the [Pathways to Work Strategy 2021-2025](#).

Central to the delivery of a person-focused service is the provision of Public Employment Services through local Intreo Offices. Within Intreo, Employment Personal Advisors (EPAs):

- Encourage, support and assist jobseekers to secure and sustain employment;
- Work with jobseekers to develop an agreed personal progression plan, based on their needs and skills required to become job-ready and secure sustainable employment;
- Provide access routes to work experience and employment opportunities;
- Provide a service to employers by promoting the department's schemes and supports, and assist with filling vacancies and;
- Provide access routes to education and training where skill gaps are identified in line with existing and emerging labour market needs.

### Intreo partners

The Public Employment Service provides employment supports delivered initially through Intreo and subsequently by Intreo Partners who are contracted by the DSP. Intreo Partners will build on the supports provided to the jobseeker to continue the progression to become job ready.



A distinctive client journey has been embedded into the employment services process, whereby jobseekers on the live register, after engaging with Intreo in the first 12 months, are referred firstly to the Intreo Partner National Employment Service (NES) and after 24 months, to the Intreo Partner Local Area Employment Service (LAES), which is designed to engage with those with greater barriers to the labour market. In this way, the jobseeker is referred to the most appropriate service at each point in time on their jobseeking journey.

## Guidance in the context of Ireland’s national disability policy framework and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Public bodies are required to meet their public sector equality and human rights duty obligations in regard to guidance-service provision. In addition, Ireland’s national disability policy landscape is informed by the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (UNCRPD), which Ireland ratified in 2018. It is therefore important to build on the provision of guidance to people with disabilities in order to enhance equality of opportunity and outcomes for education and employment for people with disabilities. Implementation of the UNCRPD to date has followed Ireland’s long-standing national approach of “mainstream first”, dating back to the findings of the Commission on the Status of People with Disability, and which has been evident throughout Ireland’s [state report](#) under the UNCRPD ([Ireland’s initial State Report under the UNCRPD](#)). Enhancements to the provision of Guidance to people with disabilities will be approached from the perspective of meaningful inclusion in the provision of services to all, while recognising that certain cohorts with higher support needs may need more individualised or intensive kinds of supports.

In recent years, two whole-of-Government disability strategies have made progress in relation to guidance for people with disabilities:

1. National Disability Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022) ([NDIS](#)) and;
2. Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities ([CES](#)).

At the time of writing, work is underway to develop an ambitious successor to the NDIS.

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022) ([NDIS](#)) pursued the objective of encouraging and motivating people with disabilities “to develop to the maximum of their

potential”. [Action 46](#) of the NDIS required all relevant departments and agencies to “raise awareness among persons with disabilities that further education and employment, post-school leaving, are viable and potential alternatives” and to “assist persons with disabilities, by providing proper guidance concerning further education, training and career options”. The Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities (2015-2024) [\(CES\)](#) highlights the importance of guidance as part of the support structures necessary to unlock potential and enable disabled people to access the labour market and to succeed in employment on an equivalent basis with wider Irish society. [Phase 1 Action Plan of the CES \(2015-2018\)](#) included two relevant actions concerning guidance:

- [Action 1.2 \(a\)](#) set out to: “Raise awareness of training and employment options among school-goers, via parents, schools, occupational guidance officers and guidance counsellors.” It further set out to: “Raise the expectations that education and employment are real options post school.”
- [Action 1.7](#) indicated that the then-Department of Education and Skills, the National Council for Special Education, and schools would “work together to consider how guidance counsellors can effectively support students with disabilities in guiding them on further education, training and career options”. The action envisaged that “all guidance counsellors in post-primary and Further Education and Training settings, as part of their initial training and ongoing CPD [Continuous Professional Development] [would] consider how they can effectively support students with disabilities and thereafter to implement such support”.

The [CES Phase II Action Plan \(2019-2021\)](#), progressed Phase I of the Action Plan and the Department of Education committed to implement recommendations arising out of the review of guidance provision “as they relate to SEN [Special Educational Needs] learners, progression and participation in FET and HE” [\(Action 2.24\)](#).

In addition to national action plans, Ireland is committed to the [EU’s Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#), which underscores the value and importance of appropriate and inclusive lifelong guidance. It also underscores the value of accessible services and information as a key enabler of meaningful inclusion. Building on the strategy, and as one of a programme of seven key deliverables under the strategy, the [EU Disability Employment Package](#) was launched in late 2022 by the EU Commission, and is gradually built upon, including guidance for member states to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of employment and guidance services.

## Guidance in the context of labour-market information and workforce development

The labour market is evolving and is becoming increasingly complex. The Department of Enterprise and Employment has a role in terms of ensuring up-to-date labour-market information is available and identifying future skills needs in the economy and associated labour-market issues, with a particular focus on the needs of the enterprise sector. The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs and the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (SOLAS), play key roles in this respect. In addition, DFHERIS engages closely with enterprise in relation to skills needs, both through the partnership platforms (National Skills Council, Regional Skills Fora) and on the workforce development agenda via Skillnet Ireland. The Labour Market Advisory Council and Employer and Evaluation Subgroups have a key role in providing independent advice to the Minister for Social Protection on issues related to emerging labour-market challenges, the effectiveness of labour-market policies and on increasing the capacity to make informed decisions based on evidence.

The OECD ([2023](#)) note that individuals will need a stronger and better-rounded set of skills to thrive in the Ireland of tomorrow. Conversely, it is also noted by the OECD that the skills of individuals could be more fully utilised and activated in the labour market. Regarding access and inclusion within labour-market dynamics, the OECD notes that integrating disadvantaged groups into the labour market is crucial to ensure no groups are left behind and to improve Ireland's overall employment performance. Guidance has a key role to play in relation to the OECD's observations of the Irish context.

As detailed in the recent OECD Review of Ireland's National Skills Strategy, there are profound changes underway in the global economy and geopolitics: in security, sustainability, climate, trade, and above all, digitisation, automation and machine learning, evidenced in particular by the rapid and accelerating diffusion of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and resources. Value creation in the digital age is borderless and global, and companies need the skills, talent and workforce to compete at scale. Ireland can continue to flourish in the global digitalised economy and achieve its objective of being a knowledge economy, if it prioritises agility and adaptability in responding to change and fosters the skills building the high-performing workforce to enable and support Irish industry and enterprise to capitalise our on global positioning and meet the challenges highlighted in the OECD review and intensified by AI with its as yet unquantifiable impacts.

In this context, it is imperative that at both individual and enterprise level, an understanding is embedded as to the seismic impacts of the changes facing all those currently in and those entering the labour market. It is, therefore, essential that there is a lifelong guidance system in place that is equipped and resourced to support those in the workforce in navigating effectively through the transformation arising from the future world of work which is now coming clearly into view. Expert guidance, comprehensive career information and advanced career-planning and management skills will be central to supporting large numbers of workers in successfully undertaking the roles and transitions they will define working life into the future.

There also needs to be recognition that the skills responses and the skills solutions to the opportunities offered by these changes may, in many cases, be found outside of the formal, credentialed system of education and training provision. Highlighting the importance of ensuring that the totality of training and skills offerings is visible and navigable to all.

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## Section two: lifelong guidance in Ireland

### What is lifelong guidance?

Lifelong Guidance is a more unified guidance system which will allow individuals in Ireland to have access to high-quality and appropriate lifelong-guidance services. Individuals are continuously faced with personal, social, education and career choices as a normal part of life. A lifelong-guidance system is a continuum of meaningful support that individuals can access at any time in their lives. Lifelong guidance is based on the philosophy that most individuals desire to participate in the workplace and perceive work as both a way to earn a living, find purpose and to fulfil potential.

Effective guidance is impartial and person-centered. In accessing lifelong guidance within the contemporary Irish system, individuals are provided with a supportive space to reflect on and process their individualised options based on sound information about existing and emerging education and training opportunities and labour-market trends, empowering them to make informed decisions. Effective guidance integrates an individual's unique experiences, life stage and personal circumstances into all decision-making to facilitate informed, sustainable and meaningful choices. An effective system of lifelong guidance will provide support for individuals of all ages, at all educational and career stages ([CEDEFOP](#)). Lifelong guidance supports the personal and career development of an individual throughout their lifespan

Lifelong guidance may be experienced differently by individuals depending on their life-stage and the sector within which they are accessing the service. The guidance needs of the individual and other factors may also impact on how they access, utilise and experience guidance services. For some, lifelong guidance may involve accessing information relating to education, training and employment options at times of transition. For others, it may involve more regular meetings with a guidance counsellor to identify and discuss short-, medium- and long-term goals.

At any stage of the career journey, human-centric support is essential. The level of support needed will be entirely dependent on personal circumstances and the stage of the individual's career-development journey. A more holistic, whole-school model led by a guidance counsellor is appropriate in the school setting for example, while for a person transitioning careers in midlife, there is a role for the 'job-coach' model of service delivery.

## Why is lifelong guidance important?

Lifelong guidance is important for the citizen, society and the economy as set out below.

### **For the individual citizen**

A system of lifelong guidance in Ireland has numerous benefits for individuals. Lifelong guidance will support individuals to reach, fulfil and maximize their potential ([OECD et al. 2021](#)). The United Nation's [17 Sustainable Development Goals](#) are utilised in this section to convey the contemporary benefits of lifelong guidance to the individual.

Through the provision of lifelong guidance, an individual will be supported to transform their world. For many, this will enable them to transcend any negative socioeconomic situation they may find themselves in ([SDG 1](#)). Guidance supports the promotion of good health and wellbeing ([SDG 3](#)). In addition, lifelong guidance can play a role in reducing inequalities ([SDGs 5 and 10](#)) and can enhance quality education for the individual when appropriate ([SDG 4](#)). Guidance can support individuals to access decent work and play a role in economic growth at local, regional and national level ([SDG 8](#)).

People experience many transitions throughout life stages, for example: acquiring a disability, experiencing a redundancy or a period of unemployment, transitioning from employment into paid or unpaid care roles, including time out for raising children, or care of children or other relatives with health needs, and back into the workforce. The dynamics of exclusion and the slow and vulnerable process of re-engagement can be supported by guidance professionals ([SDGs 5 and 10](#)). Similarly, lifelong guidance can negate restrictive sociological stereotypical assumptions placed on individuals. Lifelong guidance can expand thought patterns and reveal opportunities that may have been perceived as unprecedented or extraordinary for the individual at many points of transition over the course of a lifetime. Through lifelong guidance, individuals may transcend sociological limits and embody the principles of mobility where traditionally there may be a perception of inertia ([SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16](#)).

Lifelong guidance ensures that individuals can access opportunities for advancement, reach their full potential and engage in life-long learning.

### **For society and economy**

Lifelong guidance plays a significant role in ensuring that Ireland has an inclusive, sustainable, reflective and robust society and economy. The development of a National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland will complement and support the objectives outlined in several other national strategies such as [the National Skills Strategy 2025](#), [the National Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) and the Pathways to Work Strategy 2021-2025, to name just three examples.

The [OECD Ireland Skills Strategy Review](#) was published in May 2023. Within this publication, it is identified that effective guidance is needed within the contemporary Irish system to support individuals in accessing meaningful educational and employment opportunities. This review also identified that guidance can help individuals to successfully navigate a labour market characterised by rapidly evolving skills needs. It is clear that better balance in skills for the Irish workforce can be achieved through continual strengthening and improvement of lifelong guidance for individuals.

While an educated workforce is advantageous for the economy as outlined, the OECD [\(2023\)](#) also observes that educational attainment is positively associated with societal benefits such as better health outcomes and greater civic participation.

The OECD recognises that globalisation, digital transformation, green transition and demographic change are combining to change in national and international communities. With these sociological and economic changes ahead, it is more important than ever that there is access to high-quality, person-centred guidance to support individuals in making the right career and life choices.

### **To enhance the current guidance landscape in Ireland**

A coherent national strategy for lifelong guidance was noted within the [Indecon Review of Career Guidance \(2019\)](#). This review found that Ireland has a number of features of effective careers support systems. However, areas requiring attention were also identified. The report outlines 18 recommendations under the following four themes:

- Reforms to governance and delivery arrangements;
- Improvement in career guidance tools and career information;
- Enhancement of enterprise engagement and;
- Promotion of inclusion.

The full list of recommendations is provided in [Appendix 1](#). Among the recommendations is the establishment of a National Policy Group to develop a coherent

long-term strategy for lifelong guidance as referred to in the introductory section of this framework.

### **To utilise best practice implemented within the European context**

European policy has also identified the importance of Lifelong Guidance. In 2020, the publication of the EU Commission's report on [Lifelong Guidance policy and practice in the EU: Trends, challenges, and opportunities](#) identified that:

- Lifelong guidance is a shared policy responsibility across the education, training, youth, employment and social affairs;
- Lifelong guidance is embedded within education and employment legislation in many countries;
- Many European countries have clear legislation in relation to practitioner qualifications in general, implementation on standards and quality in guidance could be improved;
- Fragmentation of guidance services can be a major structural deterrent to any coherent policy recommendation and;
- Labour-market information is being increasingly embedded in guidance systems across different national contexts.

### **To effectively incorporate stakeholder perspectives**

A national consultation identified that lifelong guidance is essential in the perspective of stakeholders. A report on the consultation was published by the Department of Education [\(2023\)](#), wherein 12 key messages relating to lifelong guidance in Ireland were identified and discussed in detail. The key messages are presented under the following headings:

1. Terminology and definitions;
2. Holistic approach to guidance;
3. Lifelong guidance;
4. Access and inclusion;
5. Barriers to access;
6. Allocation and funding;
7. Qualifications, training, continuous professional development and supply;
8. Early intervention;
9. Culture and pathways;
10. Links with employers and the world of work;
11. Recruitment and;
12. Research and evidence-based evaluations.

In addition, the OECD Review of National Skills Strategy sets out a detailed analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement for Ireland's Lifelong Guidance system and includes a number of important recommendations to this end. The OECD Review is underpinned by a detailed and extensive process of engagement, encompassing all



stakeholders. The perspectives of stakeholders and the key messages arising from both consultations were carefully considered in designing this strategic framework and the accompanying Strategic Action Plan for Lifelong Guidance in Ireland.

## Challenges in designing and implementing a national framework for lifelong guidance

Designing, implementing and co-ordinating a National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance involves several challenges.

Guidance has been in operation in Ireland for decades. Prior to the evolution of the concept of lifelong guidance, a variety of services, each with their own culture and ethos were established throughout Ireland. As discussed in [section one](#), Guidance has evolved in different ways in different sectors. Identifying a unifying applicable and overarching framework to the variety of systems in place posed an initial challenge. However, effective collaboration between government departments on the National Policy Group and consultation with stakeholders through the national consultation process and the advisory group mitigated this challenge and a vision for lifelong guidance emerged as will be presented in [section three](#).

Each of these services have their own strengths and weaknesses, and work within a particular educational and cultural model in which there is a major emphasis on the Leaving Certificate and on points for entry to Higher Education. For example, it is observed by the OECD (2023) that the method of skills acquisition and the level of same could be better balanced in Ireland. Indeed, the OECD (2023 p79) state “guidance counselling services in schools appear to often place much emphasis on the Leaving Certificate”. The OECD also state “project participants mentioned that in practice, there is an over emphasis on progression from Senior Cycle to HE” (ibid). The OECD also note that the focus on Higher Education is a cultural value reinforced by schools, parents and broader society (OECD, 2023).

Guidance can play a vital role in changing this culture through consideration and presentation of the wider range of learning and career pathways available to students, including, for instance, STEM careers, apprenticeships, and programmes in FET, and the world of work more generally. Ensuring the visibility of all options supporting guidance professionals will be key. The OECD (2023) also note, that by consolidating and improving online information on learning opportunities and careers to improve

navigability, accessibility and relevance and, indeed, by strengthening learning and career pathways over the life course, guidance counsellors and other practitioners would be supported in their work.

As previously mentioned, in conceptualising and actualising a national framework, given the scope and range of guidance services within the lifelong-guidance system, it is a challenge to ensure unified and consistent understanding of key terminology and working definitions of what guidance actually is. The vision and key deliverables outlined in this publication have been well researched in terms of contemporary international and national research and are agreed by the National Policy Group. Lifelong guidance must be visible to the community, accessible to all, normalised and voluntary, holistic where appropriate, innovative, future-oriented, and must integrate links with education, training and employers. Hence, adequate resourcing of the framework to implement the vision and actualise the key deliverables, is also identified as a potential challenge.

Finally, in orchestrating a framework such as this, on a national scale and across several sectors, effectiveness of implementation is recognised as a challenge. The impact of this national strategic framework will be monitored, fortified and evaluated by the National Policy Group as outlined in the accompanying Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030) in order to ensure the strategic objectives are met and that lifelong-guidance supports individuals in Ireland throughout their life journey.

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## Section three: vision, pillars, objectives and outcomes

### Introduction

Guidance takes place across a very broad range of statutory agencies in educational settings, public-employment settings, and in a large number of other services such as community, voluntary, criminal justice and disability. In addition, guidance is provided by private practitioners. This presents challenges, as discussed. However, the foundations for a lifelong-guidance continuum are already in place. Through effective collaboration at national, regional and local levels an effective and meaningful continuum of lifelong guidance can be further established and strengthened. Indeed, lifelong guidance in Ireland will involve provision of a more unified guidance system. This strategic framework for lifelong guidance is a vital step so that policy and practice across a number of domains can be facilitated to work in synergy.

This section addresses the vision, pillars, objectives and outcomes of a contemporary continuum of lifelong guidance services in Ireland.

### Overall vision

A clear and meaningful vision is essential to build and maintain momentum and set the course for action for what needs to constitute a significant reform. The Department's overall vision for lifelong guidance is:

*“A more unified guidance system which will allow all young people and adults to have access to high quality and appropriate lifelong guidance.”*

A framework for lifelong guidance provides a platform for a system of guidance which will create and maintain the conditions for full engagement in the world of work and learning so that people are supported to flourish and contribute in a manner that expresses their unique gifts, talents, potential and capabilities. Universal design is a core value within the overall vision of lifelong guidance in Ireland. Lifelong-guidance support must be available for all individuals irrespective of their life stage, age or occupation.

Strong co-ordination at the national level is necessary to support the implementation of lifelong guidance policies and the delivery of guidance services. One example of co-operation and co-ordination at a national level is the work of the oversight group for a single portal for career guidance and information led by DFHERIS. Another example is the work of the National Policy Group in its oversight of the development and implementation of this lifelong guidance framework, led by the Department of Education, supported by DFHERIS, DSP, DCEDIY and DETE.

The vision for lifelong guidance in Ireland will be delivered under four key pillars and through eight strategic objectives. The pillars, objectives and outcomes were designed through consideration of:

1. A review of international literature and policy;
2. A review of research conducted in the Irish context including but not limited to the [Indecon review \(2019\)](#);
3. Various national policies and strategies such as [National Skills Strategy](#), the [Digital Skills Strategy](#), curricular reforms, wellbeing and sustainable-development policies;
4. An overview and discussion of guidance strategies in other jurisdictions and;
5. A formal and in-depth consultation with stakeholders. A detailed

[Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#) accompanies this framework.

## Strategic pillars

Four key strategic pillars have been identified as the essential building blocks to create a strong foundation for an evolving system of lifelong guidance:

1. Visibility and awareness of lifelong guidance services and information provision and strong co-ordination;
2. Standards and quality throughout the lifelong guidance system;
3. Access, inclusion and universal design and;
4. Career-management skills and lifelong career mobility.

The four strategic pillars represent the key areas of focus or priorities under which the long-term vision of lifelong guidance will operate. The four strategic pillars inform and underpin the following strategic objectives.

## Strategic objectives

The National Policy Group will ensure a continuum of guidance and make lifelong guidance a reality through the following eight strategic objectives:

1. Enhance co-operation and co-ordination between those responsible for lifelong guidance with clear division of responsibilities and strong co-ordination;
2. Ensure greater awareness and access to lifelong guidance to make meaningful, well-informed and conscious decisions about education and careers in an ever-changing world;
3. Embed lifelong guidance within the world of work;
4. Improve clarity around standards and quality in lifelong guidance
5. Further develop evidence-based policies that will help to improve the quality and impact of lifelong guidance;
6. Promote inclusion and equity of access through the provision of lifelong guidance, which is underpinned by a universal design approach;
7. Strive to ensure career-planning and management skills will be a consistent focus of guidance provision and;
8. Support career mobility for individuals through guidance provision throughout the lifespan.

The eight strategic objectives will enable the following outcomes to be achieved.

## Outcomes

Between 2024 and 2030 the represented departments on the National Policy Group will progress work relating to each of the four pillars and will seek to advance each of the following outcomes. Each outcome is presented in this framework under an associated pillar.

Pillar		Outcome
1	Visibility and awareness of lifelong-guidance services and information provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals will have access to appropriate and impartial <b>guidance throughout their lifespan</b></li> <li>Individuals are clear on what guidance services are available and will know how to access <b>guidance services</b></li> <li>All individuals have access to comprehensive and high-quality, user-friendly, accessible and <b>appropriate support</b></li> <li>Individuals will have access to greater work-related opportunities due to enhanced links between the <b>world of work and guidance services in all sectors</b></li> </ul>
2	Standards and quality throughout the lifelong-guidance system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear and transparent standards of guidance are evident <b>across all levels in all sectors</b></li> <li>Training and development of expertise and professionalism of those involved in delivering lifelong-guidance <b>is ongoing</b></li> <li>Evidenced-based decision-making and a collaborative approach towards sharing key information throughout the system and between <b>sectors</b></li> </ul>
3	Access, inclusion and universal design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All individuals have access to comprehensive and high-quality, user-friendly, accessible and <b>appropriate support</b></li> <li>All individuals have access to comprehensive, holistic, impartial and high-quality lifelong guidance <b>services</b></li> <li><b>Disadvantaged groups in particular, as identified in the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy, have access to comprehensive holistic, impartial and high-quality lifelong guidance services</b></li> <li><b>Guidance provision is universally designed for all</b></li> </ul>
4	Career-management skills and lifelong career mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All individuals can access person-centred support <b>in relation to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing career-management skills</li> <li>- <b>Upskilling</b></li> <li>- <b>Reskilling</b></li> <li>- <b>Mobility</b></li> <li>- Self-employment and the world of work</li> <li>- <b>The labour market</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The accompanying [Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#) will elaborate on the trajectory of work for each represented department in the National Policy group and other bodies.

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## Conclusion and implementation

To ensure that Ireland's best asset remains its people, an intensified focus must now be placed on a lifelong approach to guidance. It is recognised that to close the gaps identified by the Indecon report and realise the potential opportunities identified by the OECD's Skills Strategy Project, there is a need for an integrated whole-of-government approach to lifelong learning and guidance. Hence, each member of the National Policy Group will play a collaborative role to achieve a high-functioning lifelong-guidance system.

As referred to throughout the framework, a [Strategic Action Plan \(2024-2030\)](#) has been designed to deliver the vision for lifelong guidance under the four pillars and through the eight objectives to achieve the identified outcomes. The National Policy Group will provide oversight of the delivery of this work and will continue to work collaboratively to progress all aspects of the national strategic framework and strategic action plan. The advisory group will continue to support the delivery of strategic actions. From time to time, it may be necessary to invite additional members to the advisory group or to establish subgroups to progress specific strategic actions. Strong co-ordination at the national level is necessary to support the implementation of lifelong-guidance policies and the delivery of guidance services.

The departments comprising the National Policy Group have a key role to play to ensure the correct infrastructure, supports including budget and other measures are in place to support lifelong guidance in order to deliver ever-improving outcomes in education, employment, in the economy and in society. The provision of good-quality and accessible guidance across the lifecycle, underpinned by a universal-design approach, is pivotal to the success of these efforts. Future strategic actions by each department will continue to build on the infrastructure, resources and mechanisms to ensure meaningful lifelong guidance is available to all.

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## Appendix 1: Indecon Review of Career Guidance (2019)

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

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

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

Indecon's recommendations are summarised below, and have the potential to help to address the skills needs of individuals and of the economy ([INDECAN, 2019 pviii](#)).

**A summary of recommendations includes the following:**

### Reform to governance and delivery arrangements

1. Appoint a National Policy Group to develop a coherent, long-term strategy for lifelong career guidance.
2. Ongoing emphasis on evidence-based policy, including through organisation of a biennial stakeholder forum.
3. Establish a support organisation to oversee technology-facilitated guidance services, funded in part by the National Training Fund.
4. DE to set up an Implementation Task Force to drive the proposed reforms.



5. Integrate a consistent Learner Guidance and Support Service across

## FET improvement in career-guidance tools and information

6. Provide multi-channel, blended career-guidance supports, including online tools with phone and online access to experienced guidance practitioners.
7. Strengthen and promote a user-friendly centralised careers portal.
8. Allocate specialised guidance practitioners to groups of schools on a regional basis.
9. Invest in providing accessible labour-market information.

## Enhancement of enterprise engagement

0. Implement a programme with the enterprise sector to highlight the benefits to enterprise of participating in career guidance.
1. Supports for employers to facilitate career-guidance inputs and work experience.
2. Introduce measures to increase participation of students, parents and teachers at an expanded number of regional career fairs/workshops.
3. Widen access to work-experience programmes and apprenticeships using online matching services.
4. Encourage co-operation among groups of schools for joint-enterprise engagements.

## Promotion of inclusion

5. Introduce a specific module on career guidance as part of training for teachers in Special Schools.
6. Provide access for special education and adult learners to the proposed enhanced central career-support services, including information on labour-market opportunities.
7. Provide additional specialised ongoing CPD supports for teachers in special schools.

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

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## Appendix 2: OECD Skills Strategy Ireland: assessment and recommendations (2023)

The issues of career guidance, lifelong guidance, and careers-information provision were considered extensively in the OECD Skills Strategy Review for Ireland, the Report of which was published on 9 May 2023.

The report notes that despite an extensive provision of career guidance services in Ireland, there is still room for improvement in a number of areas and the OECD have made several specific recommendations in this respect as outlined below.

### Summary of OECD report's relevant areas

#### Chapter 2: Opportunities to secure a balance in skills through a responsive and diversified supply of skills

##### ***Opportunity 1: Improving information and guidance for individuals on learning and career pathways***

**Rec 1:** Strengthen the co-ordination of lifelong guidance to support a strategic approach moving forward.

**Action 1.1:** Continue actively involving all relevant actors in developing a coherent, long-term strategic framework for lifelong guidance.

**Action 1.2:** Strengthen national co-ordination of lifelong guidance services.

**Rec 2:** Consolidate and improve online information on learning opportunities and careers to improve navigability, accessibility and relevance.

**Action 2.1:** Develop a centralised online portal for all information on learning opportunities and careers by better co-ordinating and consolidating information.

**Action 2.2:** Ensure that online information is user-friendly and tailored to individual learners' needs by using filters, self-assessment tools and direct access to advisors.

**Action 2.3:** Improve the dissemination of information on skills shortages and mismatches, learning outcomes and pathways.

**Rec 3:** Expand and strengthen guidance services to ensure that everyone can access high-quality guidance over the life course.

**Action 3.1:** Strengthen the quality of guidance-counselling services in schools by giving guidance counsellors appropriate time and resources and involving employers further in the provision of guidance services.

**Action 3.2:** Strengthen guidance-counselling services in schools by making them more widely available and covering a wide range of possible learning and career pathways.

**Action 3.3:** Improve the availability and accessibility of independent and comprehensive career-guidance services beyond initial education by strengthening institutional support for adults.

**Action 3.4:** Target guidance services for adults to groups most distant from the labour market and at risk of losing jobs.

### ***Opportunity 2: Strengthening learning and career pathways over the life course***

**Rec 4:** Promote and strengthen pathways from school into further education and training and apprenticeships to develop a well-balanced tertiary system and diversified supply of skills.

**Action 4.1:** Change perceptions of further education and training and apprenticeships through improved career guidance, communication and rebranding.

## **Chapter 3: Fostering greater participation in lifelong learning in and outside the workplace in Ireland**

### ***Opportunity 1: Strengthening incentives to participate in lifelong learning for individuals***

**Rec 2:** Provide tailored and targeted support to disengaged individuals to address the specific barriers they face to participating in lifelong learning.

**Action 2.3:** Increase support for vulnerable groups to participate in lifelong learning by providing targeted guidance and financial supplements to address the indirect costs of learning.

**Rec 3:** Establish a clear and robust lifelong-learning guidance and support system for employers to efficiently match them with training that meets their needs.

**Action 3.1:** Formalise a system of lifelong learning guidance for employers by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the feasibility, of different models of service integration.

**Action 3.2:** Design an online portal tailored to employer needs and integrate this portal into a potential broader lifelong-learning guidance system for employers.

**Action 3.4:** Develop a work plan to provide targeted additional guidance to small and medium-sized enterprises, beginning with a pilot programme in sectors of national priority.

#### **Chapter 4: Leveraging skills to drive innovation and strengthen firm performance in Ireland**

##### ***Opportunity 1: Better utilising Ireland's research talent and public research and innovation system to drive innovation within firms***

**Rec 2:** Better activate the skills of graduate and doctoral researchers in the workforce to strengthen the innovation capacity of Ireland's economy.

**Action 2.3:** Strengthen career guidance for research graduates and better integrate transversal skills development into research training at all levels.

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## Appendix 3: Advisory Group

The National Policy Group wishes to thank the Advisory Group for their expert contribution to this publication. The Advisory Group contributed significantly to the content of this framework. The following organisations were represented on this group:

AGA – Adult Guidance Association

AHEAD – Association for Higher Education Access and Disability

AHECS – Association of Higher Education Careers Services

DFHERIS – Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

DE – Department of Education

ELGPN - European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network

ETBI – Education and Training Boards Ireland

IBEC – Irish Business and Employers Confederation

IGC – Institute of Guidance Counsellors

INOUE – Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

JMB – Joint Managerial Body

Maynooth University (Department of Adult and Community Education)

Trinity Careers Service

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## Appendix 4: Abbreviations

AI – Artificial intelligence

CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

CES – Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities

CPD – Continuous Professional Development

DCEDIY – Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

DE – Department of Education

DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

DETE – Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

DFHERIS – Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

EPA – Employment Personal Advisors (Intreo)

ETB – Education and Training Board

ETBI – Education and Training Boards Ireland

DSP – Department of Social Protection

FET – Further Education and Training

GIR – Guidance, Information and Recruitment

HE – Higher Education

HEA – Higher Education Authority

HSE – Health Service Executive

IBEC – Irish Business and Employers Confederation

IGC – Institute of Guidance Counsellors

INOUE – Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

JMB – Joint Managerial Body

LAES – Local Area Employment Service (Intreo partner)

NDIS – National Disability Inclusion Strategy

NES – National Employment Service (Intreo partner)

NEPS – National Educational Psychological Service

NFQ – National Framework of Qualifications

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SEN – Special Educational Needs

STEM – Science, Engineering, Technology and Maths

UN – United Nations

UNCRPD – United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities