

**Draft Minutes of Meeting No. 84  
of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs  
28 September 2020 - Webex**

<b>Present:</b>	Tony Donohoe	Chair
	Keelin Fagan	EI
	Helen McMahon	EI
	Ray Bowe	IDA
	Vivienne Patterson	HEA
	Joan McNaboe	SOLAS
	Laura Bambrick	ICTU
	Paul Keating	DFHERIS
	David Hegarty	DBEI
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Kevin Daly	DBEI
	Don O'Connor	DBEI
	Niamh Martin	DBEI
	Ruth Morrissy	DBEI
	Katie Griffin	DBEI
	Alan Power	DBEI
<b>Invited guests</b>	Evelyn O'Connor	DES
	Jennifer McKenzie	NCGE
<b>Presenters</b>	Dr Anthony Mann	OECD
<b>Apologies:</b>	William Beausang	DFHERIS
	Shauna Dunlop	SOLAS

### **1. Minutes of EGFSN Meeting Number 83**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### **2. OECD Presentation on Career Aspirations of Teenagers**

Dr Anthony Mann gave an informative talk on the OECD study into the Career Aspirations of Teenagers. He spoke of OECD's stance being supportive of provision of career guidance beginning in primary education. It was important that this guidance challenged stereotyping and enabled young people to see the links between what they do in the classroom and their potential in the future. Effective career guidance encourages students to reflect on who they are and who they want to become. It broadens understanding of the labour market – focusing in particular occupations which are poorly understood and of strategic importance. It targets young people from disadvantaged backgrounds for the greatest levels of intervention.

In Ireland, over 5,000 students from 157 secondary schools took the PISA tests in 2018. Ireland is one of 32 countries where students also completed the PISA Educational Career Questionnaire investigating young people’s career readiness and they also responded to questions about their aspirations for their future careers, and from where they learn about the world of work.

It is found that young people’s career aspirations are often narrow, unrealistic and distorted by gender and social background. While the world of work has undergone major changes since 2000, young people’s career expectations have changed little but become both less certain and more concentrated.

Some findings are illustrated in the tables below. The top five career choices for boys and girls are outlined. Also highlighted are the career aspirations of those high and low performers and those from disadvantaged and advantaged backgrounds.

2018 - Top 5 Girls	2018 -Top 5 Boys
1 Teachers	Teachers
2 Doctors	Engineers
3 Nursing and midwives	Sportspeople
4 Lawyers	Accountants
5 Vets	Architects

Low Performers	High Performers
Teachers	Teachers
Sportspeople	Doctors
Disadvantaged students	Advantaged
Teachers	Teachers
Nursing and midwives	Doctors
Sportspeople	Lawyers
Engineers	Engineers

Dr Mann concluded by saying that career guidance is very important as young people are staying in education longer than ever. They have more decisions to make and those decisions are becoming more difficult because:

- The world of work is changing rapidly
- Higher education and skills provision is becoming marketised
- (in some countries) teenagers are no longer working part-time alongside their full-time education

High quality reviews show that career guidance activities often make a difference.

Ms Jennifer McKenzie from the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) who attended the meeting with Evelyn O’Connor from the Department of outlined the NCGE Whole School Guidance Framework to the group. The **Whole School Guidance Framework** was developed to facilitate

schools in designing, developing and implementing their comprehensive whole school guidance programme. This Framework supports school management and the guidance counsellor to develop a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of both group and classroom-based guidance and 1-to-1 guidance counselling.

From September 2020, NCGE has introduced Guidance Related Learning class - based programmes for schools for 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> year, based on the developmental model outlined in the Framework. NCGE hopes to focus on the development of further modules for Senior Cycle. For more information, the Group is invited to look at:

<https://www.ncge.ie/resource/guidance-related-learning-resources-junior-cycle>

### 3.Spotlight on Skills

Ms Keelin Fagan and Ms Helen McMahon from Enterprise Ireland (EI) delivered a presentation on the progress of Spotlight on Skills. Helen described how the programme has been redesigned as an online resource. Enterprise Ireland continue to work in partnership with the Regional Skills Fora Managers. Each Spotlight on Skills workshop has a capacity of 12 companies per workshop, 2 participants per company (24 participants per workshop). The programme was redesigned in 2020 to be delivered online. EI have run 4 workshops online since June. In 2021 EI will be running 12 workshops; the aim is to deliver 36 workshop during the 3 year period of the current tender

Background and aims of Spotlight on Skills:

- It's part of the **Skills for Growth** Initiative which is led by the Department of Education and Skills.
- It was found that EI clients **lacked the expertise or capability to identify their critical skill needs** for future growth.
- Enterprise Ireland developed a customised approach to assist their clients to **identify their critical skill needs** and to find an appropriate **response**.
- Key Output of Spotlight on Skills (SOS) programme = **Strategic Company Skills Plan** (workforce planning too).
- Key partnerships have been developed with each of the **Regional Skills Fora Managers**.
- Clients are provided with a **toolkit & methodology** to support them to **identify the critical skills** required to achieve their growth plans.
- Clients are helped to develop a **strategic company skills plan** and to successfully integrate the plan across the business.
- Participants are directed the education and training providers through the **Regional Skills Fora Managers** to address their critical skills needs
- Intelligence and data from SOS clients is shared with those who manage the Education and training policy and infrastructure.

### 4. Skills to Compete

Due to the previous item running over time, it was agreed that this item be held over until the next meeting in December 2020.

## **5. Brief updates on EGFSN projects**

### **Brexit Skills update**

With the renewed threat of a no deal Brexit, we have seen second iterations of training programmes informed by the 2018 EGFSN analysis, specifically in the Customs field.

These include the second phase of the Local Enterprise Office network's Prepare Your Business for Customs workshops, as well as a further round of Skillnet Ireland's Clear Customs programme. The latter is also being supported by Enterprise Ireland's €9,000 Ready for Customs grant, for the hiring or redeployment of customs capacity within firms.

As recommended by the 2018 Brexit report, the Logistics and Supply Chain Skills group, also continues to meet under the chairmanship of the Department of Transport.

Aside from the Brexit context, the importance of logistics and supply chain roles to the economy has been highlighted by the current pandemic. The Government's recognition of this was highlighted at the Group's most recent meeting, which featured an address from the new Minister for International Logistics, Hildegard Naughton.

The group itself, which contains a number of Government Departments, as well as the range of industry representative groups, continues to progress the five objectives of its work programme:

- Improving alignment between curriculum and industry needs
- Building employment connections to close the skills gap, in particular through the work of DEASP
- Encouraging best practice in the development of talent
- Mapping existing provision and improving industry awareness of this provision
- Delivery of a careers promotion campaign

Two sub-groups have been established to advance these objectives, and they are looking at developing promotional tools such as the Tourism Insight TY programme, mapping current education opportunities with career paths, and the establishment of a network of education and industry champions to promote the sector.

The Group is in the process of finalising a progress report on the achievements of its first year, which will be presented to Minister Naughton and published on the EGFSN website.

### **Building Future Skills**

Alan Power informed the Group that its report on the demand for skills within Ireland's Built Environment sector to 2030 had been approved by the National Skills Council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Following its launch by the Minister, the report will be disseminated through all of the EGFSN's social media and other communications channels. Dr Power invited the Group to also disseminate the report amongst their contacts. The report indicated that its nine overarching recommendations be delivered through a targeted implementation group, composed of the key public and private sector stakeholders identified as responsible for their delivery. An Tánaiste has

also committed to the establishment of such an implementation group in the accompanying press release.

In the coming weeks, DBEI will be in contact with EGFSN members to see how best we can advance the recommendations with a view to establishing a robust and effective implementation group

## **Technology Skills 2022**

DFHERIS updated the group on progress on implementation of Technology Skill 2022

## **Design Skills**

*Together for Design: Digital, Product and Strategic Design Skills of the Future* was published in May 2020. This study examines the future demand for design skills over the years 2020 to 2025. *Together for Design* builds on this foundation of the EGFSN's *Winning by Design* report, published in 2017. *Together for Design* forecasts the need for digital, product and strategic design skills over the years 2020 to 2025. The report sets out a series of recommendations for the design community and education system to ensure Ireland can keep up with digital, product and strategic skills needs. An Implementation Group was formed to drive forward progress on the recommendations. Two meetings of this Group have been held to date. Despite the impact of COVID-19, good progress had been made on all actions.

## **Leading the Way**

Don O'Connor updated the group on the SME Management Skills, entitled *Leading the Way*, which was also approved by the national Skills council and published in October. Management Development has been identified by the OECD as a key lever to improve the productivity of SMEs.

The aim of the project was to assess the current state of management capacity and practices in SMEs in Ireland, identify where weaknesses may exist, and how these can be remedied. The research for the study was carried out by TU Dublin and was funded by the European Commission, under the Structural Reform Support Programme, administered by DG REFORM. The study has identified 7 key findings, including that:

- Management Development must become a real strategic priority for all SMEs in Ireland;
- Formal approaches to training and developing strategy need to be valued;
- Learning from external sources, like customers, suppliers and networks, should be encouraged; and
- A wide range of training and education opportunities are already available to SME managers, many of them supported by the State; SMEs need to take more advantage of what is already provided.

The report makes 6 recommendations that aim, among other things, to:

- Communicate the value of investment in Management Development training
- Develop a step-by-step pathway for managers to assess their skills needs and identify the training they need;
- Bring more coherence to the current training offer, making it more accessible; and
- Put a major focus on best practice as well as resolving key areas of weakness.

An implementation Group will be set up shortly to take these recommendations forward.

## **6.National Skills Bulletin**

Ms Joan McNaboe presented a brief overview of the findings in the National Skills Bulletin. The Bulletin provides outlooks in light of COVID-19 for 97 occupations. The report will be officially launched by webinar in mid October.

It examined a number of indicators including:

- **Occupational forecasts** (incorporating income support payments data, economic employment forecasts (ESRI, Central Bank, Dept of Finance))
- Occupations potentially at high risk of **automation**
- Occupations at high **exposure to disease** and proximity to others
- Insight from **Regional Skills Fora**

The bulletin notes that occupations that have been highly impacted by COVID include:

- **Sales assistants**
- **Hospitality occupations** (e.g. waiters/waitresses, bar staff, kitchen assistants)
- **Cleaners**
- **Leisure & travel services** (e.g. air travel assistants)

Many of those employed in these occupations were:

- Employed part-time
- Female
- Younger (high share under 25 years)
- Lower than average levels of education attainment
- Some (cleaners, waiters, kitchen assistants) had a higher than average share of non-Irish employed

The Bulletin noted that the occupations where Covid has had less effect include:

- ICT professionals e.g. programmers/developers, Scientists, engineer
- Business & financial (e.g. economists, financial/data analysts)
- Healthcare workers
- Education (e.g. primary/secondary teachers)
- Animators, games developers

It was noted that using standard LFS employment has declined by almost **140,000** since quarter 4 2019. The COVID-19 adjusted estimates indicate the fall in employment could be almost **580,000**.

## **7. AOB**

The Chair informed the Group that Ms Katherine Griffin was leaving the EGFSN Secretariat and the Department to take a career break. The Chair and the members wished her good luck and thanked

her for her work during her time in the Secretariat, particularly in relation to communications. The next meeting of the EGFSN will take place on Monday 7th December 2020.

EGFSN Secretariat