



Service Plan 2026

*Laois and Offaly
Education and Training Board*

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board

Contents

Message from the Chairperson	3
Foreword by the Chief Executive	4
Organisation Profile	5
Geographical Map of LOETB Locations	6
Overview of Services	7
Strategy Statement	8
Statement of Services	11
Overview of Major Capital Projects	24
Projected Receipts and Expenditures 2026	25
Appendix 1	28
Glossary	49

Message from the Chairperson

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the 2026 Service Plan on behalf of Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB). The work of LOETB as a statutory body is wide-ranging with responsibility for post-primary schools, further education and training provision and services, performance music education, youth services, and community programmes across Laois and Offaly.

The needs of our students have always been central to the service provided by LOETB and it is this focus that will enable us to continue to meet the changing education and training needs of the region into the future. I particularly welcome the expansion of the Tertiary programmes this year and the new connections with other Technological Universities to ensure a wide choice of courses is available to all to support progression to higher education. In addition, the continued expansion of apprenticeships will be of great benefit to the region as well.

The Service Plan sets out the comprehensive range of activities to be undertaken by the Schools, Further Education and Training (FET), and Organisation Support and Development (OSD) Directorates in 2026. It also sets out the related financial information as well as Key Performance Indicators to help monitor and evaluate its implementation. In 2026, the focus of the organisation remains constant as we strive to provide the highest quality lifelong education and training opportunities for all communities across Laois and Offaly.

I would like to thank our Chief Executive, Joe Cunningham, his management team, and all staff for their continued commitment and dedication to excellence through education and training. Finally, I would like to acknowledge, with sincere thanks, the work of my fellow Board members and committee members who give so diligently and selflessly of their time in their contribution to the governance of LOETB.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Neil Feighery".

Neil Feighery
Chairperson

Foreword by the Chief Executive

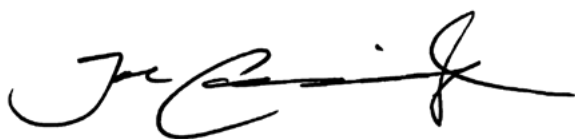
The Service Plan has been developed to support the implementation of our Strategy Statement 2023–2027. The Strategy Statement sets out our goals and priorities over a 5-year period, and the annual Service Plan is the guide to support and manage the actions required to mark their achievement. In developing the Service Plan, a consultation process was undertaken with senior management across all areas of provision to ensure that the actions set out for delivery during 2026 are appropriate and commensurate with the overall priorities and aims set out in our Strategy Statement. The consultation process also ensures that the expected outcomes are achievable and are the responsibility of senior management in their respective areas of service provision.

The increasing number of students attending our schools and FET centres is testament to the ongoing success of our work, and prudent financial planning is required to ensure that the necessary resources are in place to successfully deliver the planned activity for 2026 in an effective and efficient manner.

I wish to convey my thanks and appreciation to:

- The Chairperson and members of the Finance Committee for their recommendation of the plan,
- The Chairperson and Board members of LOETB for their consideration and approval of the plan,
- The Chairpersons and members of committees of LOETB who give so generously of their time in promoting the work of the Board.

Finally, I wish to thank the management and staff of our schools, centres, services, and administrative office for their continued commitment and dedication to LOETB and I look forward to working with them to ensure the implementation of the plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Cunningham", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joe Cunningham
Chief Executive

Organisation Profile

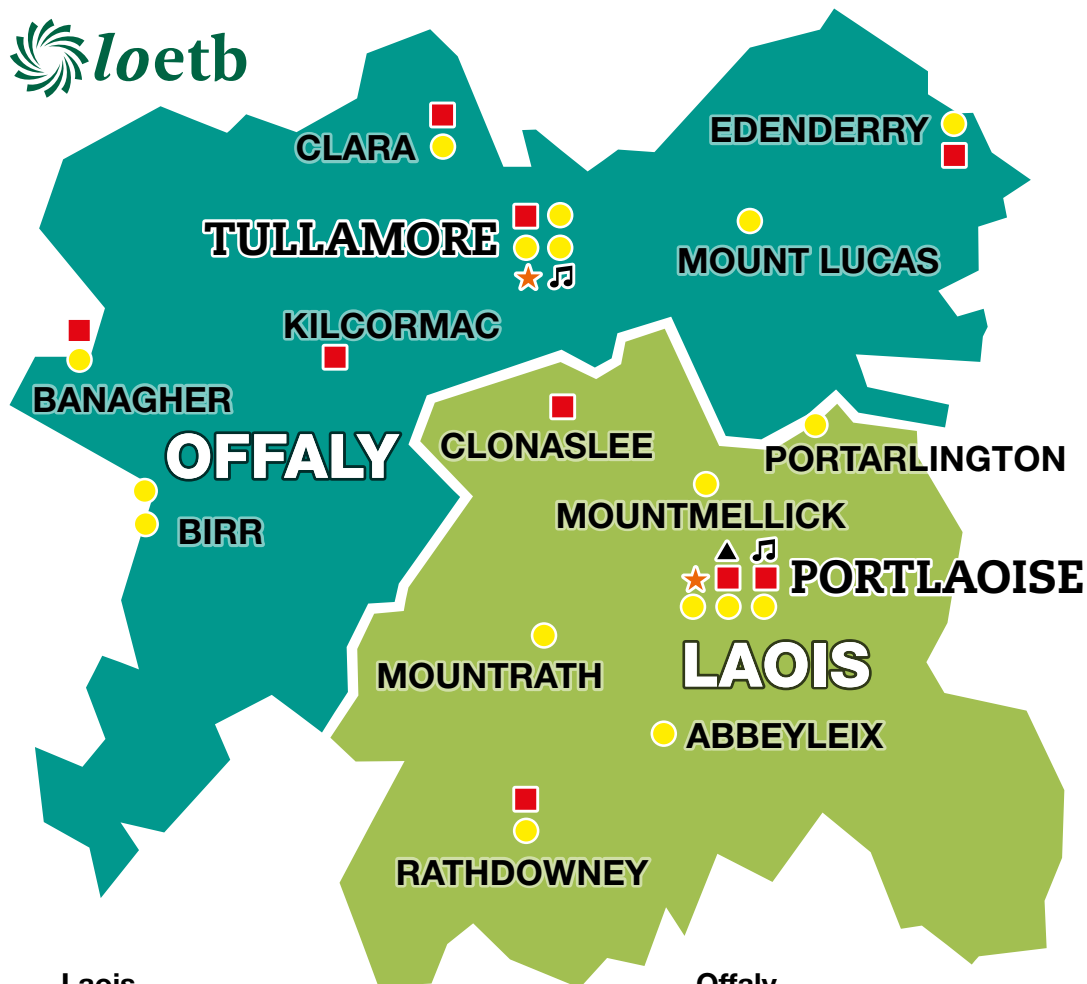
LOETB is the statutory provider of education and training services for Laois and Offaly. The overall aim of LOETB is to enable our students to reach their potential. We strive to offer learning experiences that respond to the needs of students of all ages and abilities. We make guidance and relevant supports available to our students to help them attain their learning goals and qualifications. We include transfer and progression options for our students to maximise their chances of pursuing further education and training and securing employment.

We acknowledge the importance of suitable facilities and resources for our students in our commitment to inclusive education. We are mindful of our responsibilities in relation to human rights and equality, both as a service provider and employer. We understand the importance of technology to enhance learning, collaboration, and communication among our students and stakeholders. To this end, we strive to ensure our digital systems are accessible, reliable, and protected.

We aspire to continue growing as a learning organisation and ensure our staff have access to professional development opportunities. This includes enabling staff to become reflective practitioners, enhance their skills, and collaborate with colleagues. We recognise that professional development can be facilitated in a variety of ways, from accredited programmes to workshops and professional learning networks.

We appreciate that much of the work of our organisation is made possible by the support and administrative staff in our schools, centres, and services and by the key support functions at Head Office. We place an extremely high value on the contribution made by the various committees which support LOETB at organisational level and in our schools and centres. We also work in partnership with key organisations and agencies at local and national level in pursuit of a quality service for our students.

Geographical Map of LOETB Locations



- Laois**
- Abbeyleix**
 - Abbeyleix FET Centre
 - Clonaslee**
 - Clonaslee College
 - Mountmellick**
 - Mountmellick FET Centre
 - Mountrath**
 - Mountrath METAC (Midlands Skills Outreach)
 - Portarlington**
 - Portarlington FET Centre
 - Portlaoise**
 - ▲ Administrative Offices
 - Dunamase College
 - ★ Laois Information Hub
 - 🎵 Laois School of Music
 - 🎵 Music Generation Laois
 - Portlaoise Adult Learning Hub
 - Portlaoise College
 - Portlaoise FET Centre
 - Portlaoise Institute
 - Rathdowney**
 - St. Fergal's College
 - Rathdowney FET Centre

- Offaly**
- Banagher**
 - Banagher College
 - Banagher FET Centre
 - Birr**
 - Birr FET Centre
 - Birr Outdoor Education Centre
 - Clara**
 - Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa
 - Clara FET Centre
 - Edenderry**
 - Edenderry FET Centre
 - Oaklands Community College
 - Kilcormac**
 - Coláiste Naomh Cormac
 - Mount Lucas**
 - National Construction Training Campus
 - Tullamore**
 - Kilcrutrin (Midlands Skills Outreach)
 - Midlands Skills Centre
 - 🎵 Music Generation Offaly
 - 🎵 The Academy of Music
 - Tullamore College
 - Tullamore FET Centre
 - ★ Offaly Information Hub

Overview of Services

LOETB is one of the main employers in the midlands with over 1,635 staff providing education and training for more than 4,811 students at post-primary level and over 21,500 beneficiaries on FET programmes and services. LOETB manages nine post-primary schools and is also joint patron of five Community Schools located in Mountmellick, Ballinakill, Mountrath, Birr, and Ferbane. The FET service operates thirteen multi-programme centres, including the National Construction Training Campus at Mount Lucas, two Learner Information Hubs strategically located in Portlaoise and Tullamore, and Centres at Midlands and Portlaoise Prisons.

LOETB also has an extensive programme of performance music education available through Music Generation Laois, Laois School of Music, Music Generation Offaly, and the Academy of Music, Tullamore. Under the Education and Training Board Act 2013, LOETB has a responsibility to support the provision, coordination, administration, and assessment of youth work services in its functional area and, through co-operation with other institutions, provide support to a wide variety of programmes and agencies to deliver education and training programmes that cannot be met by mainstream educational services in counties Laois and Offaly.

LOETB has a long history of working in partnership with various statutory, community, and voluntary groups. Management and staff of LOETB are represented on various boards and committees across Laois and Offaly. This partnership approach provides opportunities for groups and organisations to share information about services and to work together to identify gaps in provision locally and provide additional services where necessary.

Strategy Statement

Our vision is to actively lead the provision of high-quality education and training in Laois and Offaly. Our mission is excellence through education and training. We put learning at the heart of everything we do through the provision of a wide range of education and training programmes, services, and supports to young people and adults across the LOETB region. We believe that lifelong learning is key to personal development and wellbeing, social inclusion, and economic prosperity.

Our core values as a service provider are as follows:

Care

In LOETB, care is about the welfare, wellbeing, and safety of all members of the learning community. It is exemplified in meaningful relationships, connectedness, and empathy, alongside support and solidarity.

Community

In LOETB, community encompasses students, learners, staff, parents, and the local community. It is about having shared vision, values and purpose, a sense of belonging, and a voice that is listened to. It is exemplified in productive collaboration, positive contributions, and effective communication across all members of the learning community

Equality

In LOETB, equality is about treating all members of the learning community equally and recognising and celebrating the diversity of these members. It is exemplified in targeting resources on those who have need and prioritising a culture of inclusion.

Excellence in Education

The LOETB ethos establishes that excellence in education is underpinned by the core values of care, respect, community, and equality.

Respect

In LOETB, respect is about upholding the dignity, rights, and recognition of the identity and background of each member of the learning community. It is exemplified in relationships between all members of the learning community, and decision-making that impacts positively on the rights, feelings, and aspirations of the diversity of people within the school community.

The Statement of Strategy sets high-level objectives under four Strategic Goals:

1. Leading learning
2. Building sustainability
3. Working in partnership
4. Enhancing systems

Each goal has its own set of strategic priorities which will be met through a series of supporting actions. These goals and priorities were designed to help LOETB avail of the opportunities which will arise and meet the challenges it faces over the next five years.

Goal 1: Leading Learning

LOETB has a long history of excellence in education, with our foundations providing decades of quality education to our wider community. Reflecting on this history, LOETB wishes to position itself as a leader in education provision on a local, regional, and national basis.

LOETB is focused on the many aspects of education capabilities and organisational infrastructure required to lead educational provision as a service provider. In leading learning, LOETB also seeks to develop new, innovative, dynamic, agile programmes, practices, and provision that highlight and utilise innovative aspects in the delivery of education and training.

Goal 2: Building Sustainability

LOETB recognises that, while our organisation is continually improving how we operate, there is also an onus on us to undertake our business ethically without negatively impacting the environment, community, or society. To improve how we operate as a sustainable business, LOETB is planning a series of initiatives to minimise the effect our business has on the environment and on the community. Sustainability provides us with an opportunity to reflect, research, react, and realign the when, why, where, and how we conduct our business. It provides a valuable springboard for improvement in operations while concomitantly providing new opportunities in teaching and learning in the migration from a fossil fuel past.

Goal 3: Working in Partnership

There are many proven benefits from working in partnership, and one of the key partnerships that LOETB can be justifiably proud of is the learning partnership that occurs between each individual student, learner, and/or trainee that participate in the many programmes that we offer. It is our intention to enhance these learning partnerships through the continued development and building of relationships to achieve mutually expected outcomes for the learner.

In addition, our experience has shown us that organisational partnership provide many rich opportunities for research, efficiencies, business transformation, staff development, and organisational transformation. Through key stakeholder engagement, LOETB wishes to leverage the power of partnership to transform the organisation, building sustainable working relationships and partnerships which enhances the organisations capabilities to meet and exceed expected outcomes in service delivery.

Goal 4: Enhancing Systems

LOETB will lead high-quality education and training by being innovative, dynamic, progressive, and providing best practice support systems in finance, human resources, corporate services, administration, and governance. A robust culture of integrity and ethics will be supported through effective administrative structures, a strong corporate identity and compliance, built around our core values. A governance and support framework which will assist with the efficient and effective delivery of LOETB's education and training services is key to our organisational development.

Statement of Services

Goal 1 – Leading Learning		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Ensure that excellence in education continues to be delivered through prioritising the highest standards of learning, teaching, and assessment across all our schools, centres, and programmes.	Community of Practice (CoP) meeting consistently with clear structures around collaboration, key resource sharing, and planning. Continue access and delivery of programmes to support schools. Music Generation Laois (MGL) will continue to programme performance opportunities, workshops and masterclasses to enhance learner progression and experiences. MGL will continue to participate in regional, national and international opportunities for learners in 2026 Music Generation Offaly (MGO) will also continue to provide additional performance opportunities for learners and participate in collaborative projects in 2026. Programme-relevant CPD for MGL Music Educators in 2026. MGL MEs and wider team will participate in Music Generation (MG) National Development Office's (NDO's) Planning for Quality over 3 sessions in Jan, Feb and March 2026. MGO MEs will complete a mid-year review of programme aims with partners schools in February 2026 as part of MG NDO Planning for Quality. FET Working Group will develop Admission Guidelines for accredited programmes.	CoP meetings held consistently in 2026. Number of performance opportunities and workshops/masterclasses delivered, with prioritised opportunities for marginalised children and young people. Learner participation in regional, national and international events. Number of performance opportunities and participation in collaborative projects, with prioritised opportunities for marginalised children and young people. MGL & MGO Music Educators (MEs) will participate in Orff Schulwerk Training in Jan 2026. MGL and MGO Music Educators supported to participate in relevant training and conferences organised by national and specialist music organisations. Review completed. Admission Guidelines for accredited programmes implemented.
	Incorporate Key elements of LOETB AI Guidelines for Schools into mandatory AI literacy training to be provided to all LOETB teaching staff. Continue to support the review phase of the current School Self-Evaluation (SSE) cycle. Support subject department planning to embed SSE targets/actions. Explore opportunities for policy integration. Enhance preparation for the future implementation of inclusion framework. Deliver two in-person CoP meetings. Support the development of the Whole School Guidance (WSG) Plan. Continue to explore options for a Schools Support Digital Repository. Offer bespoke supports to schools for priority areas.	Mandatory AI Literacy training for all teaching staff to be designed, deployed and completed. Calendar of CoP meetings in place. Bespoke supports offered to schools. Opportunities for policy integration availed of. A series of 'add-on' events and opportunities programmed throughout 2026, with prioritised opportunities for marginalised groups and young people. Two in-person CoP meetings delivered. Workshop on the WSG facilitated. Resources continue to be added to the Padlet. Bespoke supports delivered to identified schools for priority areas.

Goal 1 – Leading Learning		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
	Engage with NCSE and ETBI on professional learning opportunities for Ethos and RISE Provision Mapping, SENCO and Special Class Co-ordinators groups. Administer STEAM competitions, while providing bespoke STEAM supports for students and teachers involved. Complete delivery of remaining training and equipment for the TY Digital Arts Programme. Deliver a showcase event in May 2026 to highlight student work and skills developed through the TY Digital Arts Programme. Provide a showcase opportunity for STEAM students in March 2026. Continue support through the Virtual Reality (VR) equipment loans for the STEAM Programme and DAP Programmes. Completion all VR training in schools.	NCSE and ETBI engaged with to provide opportunities for professional learning through the CoP model and the sharing of resources. Showcase events and competition entries provide evidence of increased participation and skills acquisition through the STEAM programme. All elements of the TY Digital Arts Programme delivered, including remaining training and equipment. Student showcase event held to highlight student work in May 2026. Showcase opportunity provided to STEAM students in March 2026. All participating schools display new range of acquired modern media creation skills, with VR content used by the wider school community as a key resource. VR training in schools completed.
Create a positive and supportive work environment that supports the wellbeing of staff in our schools/centres and offices.	Establish Workplace Wellbeing Group with schools, centres and OSD representation. Promote and support wellbeing initiatives, activities, and awareness campaigns, including access to the Employee Assistance Programme (Spectrum Life). Conduct a staff wellbeing survey to inform priorities, identify needs, and guide organisational wellbeing actions, taking account of equality and human rights considerations. Continue to support school staff to access ETBI E-Learning Course 'Supporting ETB Staff to affirm social class, ethnic and racial diversity.' Ethos leads to attend the Ethos Symposium in Q2. Support school staff to access the IMBV-E Moodle course and in-person PD. Ethos PLN will engage with the <i>Looking At Our Ethos</i> document to support the work of Ethos leadership teams in schools. Share details of upcoming Inclusion Week and provide opportunities for schools to share their events. Further enhance and support FET Care Teams through identified PD and wellbeing promotion.	Workplace Wellbeing Group established and operational. Wellbeing initiatives and supports promoted across the organisation, including increased awareness of the Employee Assistance Programme (Spectrum Life). Staff wellbeing survey completed and findings used to inform wellbeing priorities. Engagement with the eLearning course, IMBV-E Moodle course and in-person IMBV-E CPD. Ethos Symposium attended by Ethos leads in Q2. School staff supported to access the IMBV-E Moodle course and in-person PD. Engagement of Ethos teams with the <i>Looking At Our Ethos (LAOE)</i> document to support the enactment of the ETBI Patron's framework at school level. Opportunity availed of for schools to contribute events/activities and initiatives to the Inclusion Week calendar. Delivery of PD and wellbeing promotion to FET Care teams.

Goal 1 – Leading Learning		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Provide appropriate fora supporting staff to share best practice in all our schools and centres.	Complete Maturity Model and associated plans. Develop implementation plan for Altitude Charter. Further promote these resources and the bridging programme, including with our partners. Initial training offered to new staff in Q1. Instruction certificate renewal training in Q1. Continue to support schools to provide refresher and initial training to staff. Continue to support CoP groups in priority areas throughout the year. Continue to support school staff to access ETBI IMBV-E Moodle course and in-person CPD and IMBV-E website. Continue to support schools with access to TPL in areas identified through the RISE provision mapping process. Support remaining teachers in completing modules before winding up the initiative. Further training for centre staff and roll-out of Universal Design (UD) approach in September 2026. Deliver a minimum of two FET training days including COP facilitation. Continue active membership of LAIT in each county. Share best practice at FET training days.	Plan for Altitude Charter developed and implementation commenced. Plan implemented. Bridging programme rolled out to additional FET Centres. New staff avail of initial training. CPI Instructor renewal training completed. Engagement with CPI initial and refresher training. Calendar of CoP meetings covering key areas throughout 2026. Engagement with eLearning course and IMBV-E CPD. TPL needs identified through RISE/Provision Mapping process. Engagement with NCSE through the CoP structure. Targets met for number of modules completed over the three-year course of the partnership. UD Approach implemented in Mountmellick FET Centre in September 2026. UD Training commences in 2 additional FET centres. Training days delivered. Active membership of LAIT continued. Resource sharing continued and evidenced in assessments.
Ensure staff have access to the most up to date and relevant Professional Development opportunities (prioritising these with financial support for all staff).	Establish a central Learning and Development function within Corporate Services to provide coordination, oversight, and visibility of Professional Development activity. Identify PD priorities and skills gaps across OSD departments and promote relevant training opportunities, including those available through FET and other sources, where appropriate. Support access to prioritised PD opportunities for staff, including schools where feasible, within available time and funding. Publish FET QA Manual in Q1.	Central Learning and Development function established within Corporate Services. Professional Development priorities identified across OSD departments. Relevant PD opportunities communicated and supported within available resources. FET QA Manual published.

Goal 1 – Leading Learning		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Support and promote a culture where Young People (in particular, those who are vulnerable, marginalised and at risk) will have a voice in decision-making in youth service provision, training, education, and the wider formal and non-formal education systems.	Provide governance and oversight of UBU Your Place Your Space, Targeted Grant Scheme, and other targeted and universal grant schemes. Provide governance and oversight of Local Creative Youth Partnership awarded programmes. 'Isle of Song' to be externally evaluated, with children and young people actively involved in decision-making throughout the project.	Number of grant schemes awarded, administered, and reviewed on time. Number of awarded programmes administered, reviewed, and evaluated on time. Increase in training programmes delivered and site visits. MGL 'Isle of Song' songwriting programme with children and young people from Laois and Offaly completed, with a Music Educator undertaking the Youth Voice Advisor role.
Establish LOETB as an employer of choice.	Continue to maintain staffing levels in schools and centres. Update Induction booklet as required. Work with software provider to progress recruitment system. Continue to monitor remote working practices and update policy and procedure as required.	Numbers of positions filled and number of vacant posts. Induction booklet issued to all new staff. Recruitment software fully utilised for recruitment activity. Hybrid working practices monitored by line managers, with feedback informing updates to policy and procedures where required.
Ensure the health and safety of all students/learners and staff.	Establish and resource a dedicated Health and Safety Officer role to strengthen organisational capacity, providing sustained focus on health and safety across schools and centres. Strengthen health & safety governance and compliance oversight.	Health and Safety Officer role filled by Q2 2026. Health and Safety function operational, with clearly defined responsibilities and active engagement across schools and centres. Compliance Officer post filled by Q2 2026. Scheduled compliance inspections completed across schools and centres in Q3 & Q4 2026. Quarterly compliance reports presented to SMT/ARC in Q3 & Q4 2026.
Ensure all necessary child safeguarding measures are in place in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.	All schools complete updated training provided by Oide in preparation for the introduction of the new Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025. All BOMs access ETBI training in the new Child Protection Procedures. All schools to ensure compliance with current child safeguarding requirements.	Updated training completed. All school boards of management have adopted the updated Child Protection Procedures no later than their last meeting prior to 31 December 2026. BOMs complete training in the new Child Protection Procedures. All schools fully compliant with Child Protection Procedures. Ongoing support provided locally by LOETB.
Ensure full compliance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools	Provide Compliance Officer oversight of statutory child protection requirements.	Scheduled compliance checks completed.

Goal 1 – Leading Learning		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Support students/learners at risk of educational disadvantage in line with current national policy	Strengthen and build upon existing education support structures to ensure families in the BOTP and IPAS categories are effectively supported in securing appropriate school placements and access to school transport for children living in Accommodation Centres. Secure funding to expand inclusive programmes for children and teens. Develop Maturity Model outcome plans for Centres/ Services Develop Altitude Charter implementation plan. Any outstanding training to be undertaken by Care Teams.	Processes to secure timely school placements and, where required, (Accommodation Centres) appropriate transport for children under the BOTP and IPAS categories, maintained and strengthened. Targeted communications and structured briefings delivered to school leadership to ensure awareness and uptake of additional supports available to schools in responding to the needs of BOTP and IPAS students. MGO continue to provide creative and performance opportunities. Maturity Model outcome plans developed. Altitude Implementation Plan developed. Care team training successfully completed.

Goal 2 – Building Sustainability		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Develop a sustainability forum with representation from each facility that introduced measures to reduce the costs associated with resource usage such as energy, water, and waste, and to reduce and better manage the institution's GHG footprint.	Continue to progress energy audits on FET building stock. Apply funding to priority works identified through audits to reduce fossil fuel usage and improve energy efficiency. Strengthen engagement with Green Teams in schools and centres to identify and progress sustainability actions.	Energy Audits complete on all FET estate. Funding secured and applied to priority energy efficiency works. Green Teams active within schools and centres progressing identified sustainability actions.
Ensure current and proposed buildings are up to current and potential future sustainability requirements.	Install and utilise energy metering systems across all FET buildings to support monitoring of energy consumption and system performance. Monitor energy consumption to ensure building systems are operating efficiently.	Energy metering installed and operational across all FET buildings by Q4 2026. Energy consumption and fossil fuel usage monitored and reported. Measurable reduction in energy consumption and fossil fuel usage across the FET estate.
Increase environmental sustainability across the organisation through green procurement and paperless offices.	Increase the use of green criteria in procurement competitions. Move high volume forms and approvals to digital workflows and e-signatures.	Increase in the application of environmental criteria (e.g., energy efficiency, recycled materials) to new tenders. Reduction in paper usage compared to last year.
Ensure climate action plans to 2030 are embedded in our practices.	Green Team to lead implementation of the Climate Action Plan, coordinating actions and monitoring progress on key 2030 targets. Deliver C&I ECO UNESCO Climate Literacy programme.	Climate Action Plan actions progressed. C&I ECO UNESCO Climate Literacy programme delivered, with pilot completed in Portlaoise FET in Q2.

Goal 2 – Building Sustainability		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Psychosocial risks and dealing with same.	Workplace Wellbeing Group to work with Health & Safety Officer in managing Psychosocial Risks. Upskilling and awareness training, as required, for appointed staff.	Psychosocial risk assessment completed to include consideration of equality and human rights impacts, in accordance with the organisation's Public Sector Duty obligations. Minimum of two wellbeing initiatives delivered by the Workplace Wellbeing Group in response to identified risks. Relevant policies and procedures kept under review and training maintained.
Actively promotes and commits to sustainability through our education programmes, processes, and policies.	Explore the Sustainability Policy templates for Schools through the SSE CoP. Continue to liaise with Green Schools teams on school sustainability initiatives and updates on the Climate Action Roadmap. Display project work on sustainability goals at STEAM showcase event, with opportunities for wider public, as well as local government, to encounter student perspectives. Expansion of sustainability pilot.	SSE CoP meeting on Schools Sustainability Policy Template. Opportunities availed of for Green Schools teams to give updates on sustainability initiatives. High participation levels in Development Goals project, accompanied by strong public dissemination of student created solutions. Pilot delivery and review.
Provide professional learning opportunities to support all members of the school community in delivering the highest professional standards.	Explore the Sustainability Policy templates for Schools through the SSE CoP. Continue to liaise with Green Schools teams on school sustainability initiatives and updates on the Climate Action Roadmap.	SSE CoP meeting on Schools Sustainability Policy Template. Opportunities availed of for Green Schools teams to give updates on sustainability initiatives.
Provide staff, learners and communities with the awareness and skills to actively support sustainability in the region.	Launch Green Academy in Q1 2026, promoting all greens skills provision.	Green Academy launched and skills delivered.
Provide learners with the skills to attain meaningful employment in a thriving green economy.	Commence pilot programme in September 2026, thriving as a family farm. Level 4 programme to be piloted in September 2026. Continue promotion of upskilling modules.	Pilot commenced. Pilot commenced. Upskilling modules delivered.
Support employers to transition the Midlands to a Green and digital regional economy.	Programme to be piloted Q1 2026.	Pilot delivered and reviewed.
Deliver Youth Work in line with Government strategy and community needs through the provision, coordination, administration, and assessment of youth services in Laois and Offaly.	LOETB Youth Services to provide governance and oversight of UBU Your Place Your Space, Targeted Grant Scheme, and other Targeted and Universal Grant Schemes. LOETB Youth Services to provide governance and oversight of Local Creative Youth Partnership awarded programmes.	All Grant Schemes awarded, administered and reviewed on time. All Local Creative Youth Partnership programmes awarded and administered in line with annual Local Creative Youth Partnership budget, work plan, and relevant agreements.

Goal 3 – Working in Partnership		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Actively contribute at national fora as required.	Continue to participate in national fora in 2026. REALT and FET represent LOETB on both the Laois and Offaly multi agency Community Integration Fora.	Active participation continued. Attend and report on all meetings in Laois and Offaly Community Integration Fora by REALT and FET.
Collaborate with other ETBs, ETBI, Government bodies and statutory agencies in developing responses to the challenges in education and training	Continue to engage with the RISE/Provision Mapping process. Participate in Inter-ETB Maths Competition. Continue to engage with the LOETB All Stars Programme. Ethos Leads engage with Ethos Symposium. The Department are continuing to advance its strategic engagement with TESS and the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in relation to the future development and delivery of the School Completion Programme (SCP). ETBI and the ETBs are requested to maintain collaborative engagement with the Department and TESS to support the establishment of a new employment framework for the SCP workforce. A range of implementation activities shall be progressed in 2026 which includes planning for a phased approach, involving an initial cohort of ETBs. Notwithstanding this phased approach, all 16 ETBs will continue engaging with relevant stakeholders over the coming months and into 2027 to advance and deliver the objectives and associated deliverables of the SCP reform. Accordingly, all 16 ETBs shall have due regard to the developing policy framework in the implementation of its 2026 Service Plan, including a commitment to continued stakeholder engagement and, where appropriate, the incorporation of relevant actions and enabling measures to support implementation. Continue to provide supports and training for both programmes, as well as successfully hosting accompanying showcase events. Deliver Health Literacy, Family Literacy, Climate Literacy and Financial Literacy themed programmes. Continuation of programmes in 2026. Level 4 Construction Programme to be developed and submitted to QQI by June 2026. Continue preferential access for LOETB schools to both Agri Aware and Intro to Ag Programmes. IT for Farmers and Mart project will be provided in 2026. Collaboration with Teagasc on LSW for Ag Colleges.	Continued engagement with Rise/Provision mapping events. Inter-ETB Maths competition participation. LOETB All Stars Programme engagement. Ethos Leads' participation in Ethos Symposium. Ongoing engagement with the Department, TESS, ETBI and relevant stakeholders in relation to the SCP reform programme evidenced through participation in phased planning arrangements, stakeholder engagement processes, and the progression of relevant actions and enabling measures, where appropriate, during 2026. Further increase in participation levels in STEAM Programme. Successful completion of TY Digital Arts Programme with high levels of engagement and strong skills attainment among learners and teachers through provision of quality training. Potential extension of both programmes for school year 26/27. Programmes delivered. Programmes continued. Submission to QQI and validation of programme. Preferential access continued. Programmes delivered. LSW for Ag Colleges progressed in collaboration with Teagasc.

Goal 3 – Working in Partnership		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
	Continued delivery and expansion of the programmes, to include the following new programmes FreezeBranding, Debudding, Herd Breeding, Sheep Scanning and Tractor Driving. Review of programme and outcomes.	Delivery of all existing programmes and roll-out of new programmes. Programme reviewed.
Assist the DEY as needed, to meet the needs arising from the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and provision for international protection applicants.	Attend and contribute to weekly national REALT coordinators team meeting. Engage with the new DEY CMS system. ARP to commence again in 2026.	Active participation in team meetings. Weekly reports presented to DEY and CMS inputs completed on a weekly basis. ARP delivered.
Support partnerships and effective communication among staff in ETB offices, schools, and centres, to build a strong team culture.	Continue to engage with CoP groups for SENCos, Special Class Co-Ordinators. Collaboration with NCSE through CoPs on identified professional learning needs. Continue to provide updates for schools on Inclusion Week activities and calendar. Support structured engagement initiatives that strengthen working partnerships between OSD, Schools and FET.	Continuation of CoPs and best practice through Inclusion week. Engagement with NSCE through CoPs on addressing identified professional learning needs. Updates provided to schools on Inclusion week activities. Three structured information sessions involving OSD, Schools and FET delivered in 2026, with feedback captured and reviewed to inform future engagement. Cross-organisational working and steering groups involving OSD, Schools and FET supported through agreed terms of reference, scheduled meetings and follow-up of actions.
Deliver real-time data to managers (principals, centre managers) to support their decision making and compliance.	Attend and present reports to Principals and Deputy Principals on REALT in local schools.	Meetings attended and reports presented. Improved retention/outcomes based on improved data.
Improve internal and external communication with all stakeholders through a variety of media.	Establish a coordinated communications function involving Schools, FET and OSD Communications representatives to ensure consistent and aligned communications in support of LOETB's Strategy. Develop and commence implementation of a Digital Development Plan for school, centre and service websites to support consistency, accessibility and compliance with LOETB and statutory requirements. Plan and deliver targeted communications campaigns to support LOETB strategic priorities and significant organisational or national initiatives. Develop a new organisational SharePoint site to enhance internal communication, improve accessibility of information, and support engagement with staff.	Schools, FET, and OSD representatives engaged in coordinated planning of communications priorities aligned to LOETB's Strategy. Shared communications resources developed and made available for use across Schools, FET and OSD. Digital Development Plan for school, centre and service websites developed and approved. Priority website improvements identified in the plan and commenced during 2026. Campaign materials (e.g., briefing notes, digital content, posters, or info packs) produced and issued for at least two targeted communications campaigns. Campaign materials (e.g., briefing notes, digital content, posters, or info packs) produced and issued for at least two targeted communications campaigns. New SharePoint site designed and launched. Staff guidance and training provided on site usage.

Goal 3 – Working in Partnership		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
	Develop practical plain English and accessibility guidelines, including a short checklist, for use in LOETB communications, and apply these standards to central, school and FET centre websites to enhance accessibility and compliance. Develop an Internal Communications Policy to support clear and consistent communication across LOETB.	Plain English and accessibility checklist applied to priority internal and external communications. Website accessibility audits completed and identified barriers addressed. Internal Communications Policy developed and introduced.
Actively prioritise building and maintaining relationships with our key internal and external stakeholders.	Collaboration with Teagasc on extension of MOU.	MOU extended.
Prioritise fostering and developing collaborative opportunities that support school development.	Continue to support the SSE process through the sharing of resources, CoP and bespoke supports for schools. New joint AI strategy scaffolded through Digital CoP. Continue to engage with the LOETB All Stars Programme of events.	CoP meeting consistently and sharing of resources. TY CoP further developed and supported. Dig-CoP successfully implements Stage 1 of new AI strategy through a joint approach to DLPs. Continued engagement with LOETB All Stars Programme of events.
Continue to act as a lead proponent of partnership in our region.	Support the Laois and Offaly Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs), established under the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, through participation in the established forum. Support the implementation of the Laois Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) through active participation in the delivery of assigned actions.	LOETB representation in place and active on the Laois and Offaly LCSPs in 2026. LOETB actions under the Community Safety Partnership framework progressed as agreed. Assigned LECP actions progressed in 2026 in line with LOETB's role as either Lead, Joint Lead or Support Agency. LECP progress reports submitted in line with agreed reporting arrangements.
Enhance our innovative and inclusive approach to sectoral programme development.	Develop Mental Health Nursing Tertiary Degree with TUS Athlone.	Programmes developed.
Utilising the partnership approach to establish sustainable pathways for learners.	Plan embedded in 2026. Continue implementation of TY Ag programme across second level schools and integration to LOETB Youthreach services in Q4 of 2026. Continue roll out of Cleanroom Operations TY programme. Develop further opportunities for LOETB schools to engage with the Career Exploration aspect of the new TY Programme, including through the Digital Arts Programme. Maintain current partnerships across LOETB and actively seek new opportunities and collaborations.	Cluster meetings held and Plan embedded. Programme delivered. Programme delivered. Increased engagement with the Career Exploration aspect of the new TY Programme. A series of collaborative projects and performances delivered with MGL and MGO and partners across LOETB.

Goal 3 – Working in Partnership

Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Develop networks which enable information sharing, collaboration between the non- formal education sector, family support services and youth services to bring about better use of existing resources, practices, and initiatives, to better support creativity for Young People in Laois and Offaly.	LOETB Youth Services to organise a minimum of 3 Coordination Group Meetings in 2026. LOETB Youth Development Officer to regularly attend scheduled SICAP, LCDC, LECP, and CYPSC meetings in 2026. LOETB Youth Development Officer to regularly attend scheduled Comhairle na nÓg Meetings. LOETB Youth Services to remain informed and ahead of changing demographics to ensure services and creative programmes remain relevant to new communities and committees in Laois and Offaly. MGL will actively pursue funding opportunities both locally and nationally in 2026. MG Offaly will also actively pursue fundin	Coordination Group Meetings schedule and minutes. Participation and attendance at SICAP, LCDC, LECP, and CYPSC meetings. Youth Service attendance at LCDC and Comhairle na nÓg Meetings. Increased partnership approach to projects with a range of organisations across Laois and Offaly. Funding secured from local and national cultural/ music/education organisations.

Goal 4 – Enhancing Systems

Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Continue to develop our capacity to use the Irish language across the organisation. Meet expected targets in the recruitment of staff with required levels of skills in the Irish language and languages of the local community.	Provide oversight and coordination of the organisation's obligations under the Official Languages Acts to support the development of Irish language capacity across the organisation. Ensure recruitment and workforce planning processes take account of Irish language competency requirements and other relevant language skills reflecting local community needs. Embed Irish-language and bilingual communications practices across LOETB communications in line with statutory obligations under the Official Languages Acts.	Irish language training or awareness initiatives delivered to staff in 2026. Participation in Irish language training or awareness initiatives monitored and reported with summary included in the Annual Report. Irish language and other relevant language skill requirements identified as part of workforce planning for roles where such skills are required. Language requirements reflected in job specifications and recruitment advertisements where applicable. Priority public-facing communications issued in Irish or bilingually in line with statutory requirements.
Be change leaders and encourage an organisational culture where change is welcomed.	Facilitate and support short, practical “change in practice” learning sessions where teams from across the organisation share changes implemented, what worked, and what didn't.	At least one “change in practice” session delivered in 2026, with learning points captured and shared.

Goal 4 – Enhancing Systems		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Further develop ICT infrastructure to support business strategic objectives, shared services systems, data protection systems and business continuity	Continue implementation of the ISMS Implementation Plan. Integrate ISMS controls into shared services systems and business continuity planning. Develop and implement guidance on the responsible, secure and ethical use of AI tools across the organisation, aligned with ISMS and data protection requirements. Deliver staff awareness and AI literacy training in accordance with our obligations under the EU AI Act.	Achievement of ISMS objectives. Information Security Risk Register updated and reviewed at least quarterly. Shared services systems assessed against ISMS control requirements. Access control reviews completed for all shared services systems. Business continuity plans developed, communicated and aligned with identified risks. AI policy and usage guidelines approved and communicated. AI tools proposed for organisational use reviewed through a documented risk assessment process prior to adoption. AI literacy training delivered to staff.
Develop appropriate management information and reporting systems across the organisation.	Finalise requirements and progress procurement of a compliance and awareness management solution aligned to ISMS and organisational risk requirements.	Procurement process completed in accordance with public procurement rules. Solution selected supports phishing simulation, staff training, and monitoring staff engagement with policies and procedures.
Ensure the highest standards of financial and risk management to support schools and centres to operate within funding and corporate governance requirements.	Review and update the Risk Management Framework to ensure a consistent, best-practice approach to risk identification, escalation and oversight across the organisation. Strengthen compliance and assurance arrangements through the work of the Compliance Officer, supporting effective audit, risk and governance oversight.	Updated Risk Management Framework approved and in operation in 2026, including organisational (i.e., corporate) and functional risk registers. Compliance Officer in place and supporting follow-up of audit recommendations, with progress reported to the Audit & Risk Committee.
Introduce structures to meet evolving work patterns.	Review and update Remote Working Policy to ensure it remains aligned with organisational needs and evolving work patterns.	Updated Remote Working Policy approved and communicated in 2026.
Develop an excellence in Lean Management principles, to improve resources management.	Apply Lean problem-solving approaches, through the Director OSD leadership forum, to address specific operational issues impacting efficiency and resource use. Continue to build on efficiencies with the recruitment-related software provider to add additional services to the platform.	At least two Lean problem-solving exercises sponsored through the Director OSD leadership forum completed in 2026, with efficiency improvements implemented. Package optimised for recruitment with more functions added to move to an end-to-end process.
Focus on delivering excellent customer service, streamline communications and response timelines	Review, update and communicate the Customer Service Charter to clearly set out customer service standards and expectations. Review existing arrangements for receiving and responding to customer queries to ensure effective communication flow and response times.	Customer Service Charter reviewed. Updated Customer Service Charter published on website, communicated to staff, referenced in key customer-facing communications, and made available at office reception points. Arrangements for dealing with customer queries reviewed, with any improvement actions identified and progressed, where required.

Goal 4 – Enhancing Systems		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Develop organisational wellbeing to ensure staff are supported in their work.	Continue to update relevant policies, as required. Workplace Wellbeing Group to focus on improving access to and awareness of supports.	Policies and procedures kept up to date and staff training facilitated, where required. Existing supports actively promoted to all staff. Availing of supports normalised through effective messaging and use of real examples, where appropriate.
Work with employees to develop and build staff competencies through a targeted guidance system for OSD staff.	Embed dedicated professional learning & development coordination role to oversee and align development opportunities for OSD staff.	Professional learning & development priorities identified through engagement with departments/ stakeholders and documented by the PL&D coordinator in Q1 2026. Identified professional learning & development priorities translated into a coordinated development plan for OSD staff.
Ensure equality and human rights is at the heart of everything we do.	Implement Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Implementation Plan.	Actions identified in Implementation Plan are initiated, and progress monitored throughout 2026. Public Sector Duty Steering Group active in coordinating and overseeing implementation of the Duty Implementation Plan. Awareness raising activity on equality and human rights obligations delivered.
Respond to changes and developments in education to ensure that innovative systems are in place which support the delivery of high-quality education experiences for all students in our schools and centres.	Continue engagement with the LOETB All Stars Programme of Events. Gather data from all stakeholders to form the basis of a comprehensive review of the programme. SNA teachers will come together with the Healthcare CoP to work on SNA modules at Level 5 and 6 in Q1.	Schools' engagement with the LOETB All Stars events continued. Engagement with the programme through workshop attendance, participation levels and reported skills gained. CoP meetings held.
Develop a five-year Youth Work Plan that is informed by young people and key stakeholders.	Youth Work Plan 2023-2027, priority actions monitored and reviewed.	Youth Work Plan 2023-2027 monitored as detailed in the Plan.
Conduct an area profile needs analysis to identify emerging needs and gaps in youth service provision, to better support evidence-based applications for new and expanded youth service funding opportunities.	Youth Development Officer to engage with relevant statutory bodies and agencies in relation to supporting evidence-based applications for new and expanded youth service funding opportunities.	Engagement with relevant statutory bodies and agencies in relation to supporting evidence-based applications for new and expanded youth service funding opportunities.

Goal 4 – Enhancing Systems		
Priority	Action 2026	Performance Indicator 2026
Identify opportunities to streamline governance, administrative and related processes to optimise efficiencies and continue to comply with Code of Practice for the Governance of ETB's.	Strengthen internal governance arrangements by implementing a quarterly compliance plan and undertaking reviews of key governance processes.	Statements of Internal Control reviewed in Q1 for accuracy and regulatory compliance. Quarterly compliance reviews undertaken by the Compliance Officer across schools and centres, with findings reported and follow-up actions identified. Audit recommendations, including sectoral audit recommendations, tracked through the quarterly compliance process, with follow-up actions monitored.
Attendance rates at board meetings.	Support the Chair and the Board by monitoring attendance and reminding Board members of their obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs.	Board meeting attendance recorded and reported. Board members reminded of attendance obligations.
Board Self Assessments.	Board to undertake self-evaluations in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs.	Self-evaluation questionnaires completed in Q4 and reviewed by Chair of Board with assistance and follow-up support from CE and OSD Staff.
Financial expertise on audit and finance committees.	Replacement Board and Committee members will be appointed in accordance with necessary requirements.	Board and Committee members appointed in accordance with necessary requirements.
Board appraisal of work carried out by Finance and Audit & Risk Committees	Support the Chairs of the Finance and Audit & Risk Committees to ensure reports on committee activity are provided to the Board in line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs.	Reports from the Finance and Audit & Risk Committees provided to the Board and recorded in Board documentation.
Self-Assessment by Finance and Audit & Risk Committees.	Committees to review their effectiveness in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs.	Review of effectiveness completed by committees and noted by the Board.
Staff Development	Professional Learning and Development Coordinator to conduct training needs analysis, including financial management training requirements.	Professional Development programme established, incorporating financial management training where required.
Departmental returns and reporting deadlines.	Continue coordination and oversight of Departmental returns to ensure accurate and timely submission in line with required deadlines.	All Departmental returns submitted on time and to the required standard.
Risk Management Policy	Maintain an ongoing process to identify, assess and manage significant risks to the achievement of our strategic objectives, with oversight by the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee.	Updates to the Corporate Risk Register presented to the Board and Audit and Risk Committee.
Internal Controls	Provide documented assurance to the Board to support its annual review of the effectiveness of internal controls.	Documented assurance presented to the Board to inform and support approval of the Statement on Internal Control.

Overview of Major Capital Projects

In 2026 the following major capital projects will continue:

Oaklands Community College, Edenderry

Stage 2(b) report submitted for approval. Prequalification of contractors complete and submitted.

Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Clara

Stage 2(a) submitted with design to accommodate 400 pupils. Discussions around land acquisition ongoing.

Dunamase College

Stage 2(b) process ongoing. Planning lodged. Response to Council's Further Information request lodged.

Portlaoise College and Portlaoise Institute

Stage 2(a) report submitted for approval. Demand analysis for Institute complete and due for submission in Q1 2026. Funding agreement to be finalised.

Tullamore College Extension

Stage 1 report submitted. Awaiting response. Ground investigation survey and traffic assessment ongoing.

Projected Receipts and Expenditures 2026

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board Projected Receipts and Expenditures

	Year ended 31/12/2026	Year ended 31/12/2025
	€	€
RECEIPTS		
Post Primary Schools & Head Office Grants	49,282,287	47,339,334
Further Education and Training Grants	51,793,719	55,784,325
Youth Services Grants	1,169,718	1,091,855
Agencies & Self-Financing Projects	4,210,316	4,532,861
Capital	5,756,844	15,869,620
	112,212,884	124,617,995
PAYMENTS		
Post Primary Schools & Head Office	49,657,969	47,041,591
Further Education and Training	51,793,719	52,399,440
Youth Services	1,169,718	1,154,309
Agencies & Self-Financing Projects	4,210,316	4,410,773
Capital	15,605,323	12,201,373
	122,437,045	117,207,486
Cash Surplus/(Deficit) for Year		7,410,509

Note:

The 2025 outturn is subject to audit.

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board Projected Expenditures - Schools and Head Office

Post Primary Schools & Head Office Payments	Year Ended 31/12/2026	Year Ended 31/12/2025
	Total	Total
PAY	€	€
Instruction	40,154,903	37,870,936
Administration	3,158,638	3,010,526
Maintenance	895,619	842,426
	44,209,160	41,723,888
NON-PAY	2,597,056	2,727,971
ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES		
Free Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Grant	614,601	770,003
School Services Support	462,330	426,664
Senior Cycle Books	374,798	304,666
DEIS Grant	165,000	203,353
ICT Digital Strategy for Schools	173,962	188,107
Transport Escort	150,000	140,024
ICT M365 Licence Uplift	127,100	97,491
DEIS PP Summer Programme	80,000	76,231
Book Grant	31,605	68,765
ESBS Admin Support	32,395	60,504
Science Implementation Grant	105,864	53,725
Other, 18 in number	534,099	200,199
	2,851,753	2,589,732
	49,657,969	47,041,591

Note:

Breakdown of 2025 spend of any project with a spend in excess of €50,000.

The remainder are represented under the heading "other".

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board Projected Expenditures - Further Education and Training

Further Education and Training Payments	Year Ended	Year Ended
	31/12/2026	31/12/2025
	Total	Total
	€	€
VTOS	1,771,183	2,223,952
Youthreach	2,411,967	2,261,761
PLC	2,188,825	2,102,163
Apprenticeships	6,537,803	7,910,943
FET Operational Costs	6,262,898	5,852,141
Co Operation Hours	5,381,161	5,211,977
Green Skills, NZEB, Retrofitting	6,709,583	5,124,120
FET Payroll	5,088,039	4,950,448
Back to Education Initiative	4,555,802	4,621,881
FET Provision Support	1,788,991	2,894,892
Traineeships Contracted	1,813,370	1,986,665
Specialist Training Providers	1,800,000	1,758,314
Community Training Centre	1,748,761	1,677,228
Adult Literacy	1,132,418	1,083,102
Other 7 in Number	2,602,918	2,739,853
	51,793,719	52,399,440

Note: Breakdown of 2025 spend are projects totalling 95% of total spend in 2025. The remainder are represented under the heading "other".

Appendix 1

FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICE PROVISION 2026

Overview of Further Education and Training (FET)

Overview of FET Services

Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) is a leading provider of responsive, future-focused Further Education and Training aligning regional delivery with current and future National FET Strategies.

LOETB has repositioned itself to become the National lead in the following high-priority sectors; Agriculture, Construction, and Climate Solutions.

- Through the National Construction Training Campus at Mount Lucas, LOETB continues to facilitate and accelerate the Construction sector's transition to **Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)**, and its response to Ireland's housing issues. Our commitment to Traineeship and Apprenticeship development is illustrated in provision that responds directly to the needs of industry and offers attractive career pathways to prospective trainees and apprentices.
- Our **Agricultural Strategy** focuses on Environmental Sustainability. The provision of skills supports and studies that promote economic, social and environmental sustainability (delivering practical, scalable solutions for soil health, water quality, and biodiversity).
- LOETB's Climate Solutions initiative supports Ireland's transition to a low-carbon economy by embedding climate action, sustainability, and green skills across Further Education and Training provision. Through flexible programmes, including traineeships and stackable micro-credentials, LOETB responds to regional and national skills needs across key sectors such as construction, energy, agriculture, forestry, and manufacturing, while strengthening pathways to employment and further education.

LOETBs FET Delivery Model

LOETB offers a unique combination of specialisation and integration across its 20 FET sites in Laois and Offaly. In 2025, this integrated, whole of FET approach served **24,213 beneficiaries**, providing programmes tailored to their specific educational and skills requirements, while serving as a vital catalyst for their personal and professional ambitions.

FET provision in LOETB continues to represent excellent value for money, providing an overall cost per FET beneficiary of €2,269 with a scheme wide learner retention rate of 84%, and a 70% Certification rate (for learners on certified programmes).

Each FET Centre, including specialist facilities such as the Midland Skills Centre and the National Construction Training Campus at Mount Lucas, offers learners visible pathways toward enhanced educational or employment outcomes. These objectives are supported by flexible full-time, part-time, and modular progression options. Furthermore, LOETB specialises in sectors that underpin critical industries and drive innovation nationally, particularly through the delivery of climate solutions. These efforts are central to Ireland's Just Transition Region and its strategic focus on the green economy.

Central to our ethos is a commitment to Inclusivity and Accessibility for our learners. We continue to deepen our commitment to the Altitude Charter and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Through a multidisciplinary Care Team approach and the rollout of sensory spaces, we ensure that the most marginalised—including those in prison education and the Traveller community—have, through education, the opportunity for equitable access to prosperity.

LOETB is transforming the learner experience by evolving traditional assessment models. Our two-year phased plan to transition from standard Assessment Instrument Specifications (AIS) to a Universal Design model ensures assessments are inclusive and resilient against the challenges of Artificial Intelligence. Innovation extends to practical supports, such as embedding audio in exams and expanding Communities of Practice (CoPs) to ensure consistent, high-quality teaching across all disciplines.

Our impact is amplified through strategic partnerships. From pilot Tertiary Degree programmes in Mental Health Nursing with TUS to agricultural support services delivered alongside Teagasc, and bespoke construction programmes designed and implemented with industry partners and aligning with government policies, LOETB bridges the gap between FET, Higher Education, and industry. By fostering these connections, we create seamless, “stackable” pathways that empower learners to navigate a rapidly evolving, low-carbon economy with confidence.

FET Priorities in 2026

Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills

Construction

As the construction sector moves towards greater efficiency, sustainability, and digital integration, LOETB is driving the national agenda by developing cutting-edge training programmes, traineeships, and industry-led initiatives. With a comprehensive suite of accredited courses, flexible online learning options, and a pipeline of new qualifications, LOETB and the National Construction Training Campus in Mount Lucas are ensuring that Ireland's workforce is equipped with the skills and expertise needed to meet the demands of the evolving built environment, in line with the Government of Ireland Housing for All Strategy. In 2026 LOETB will embellish its MMC Skills Pathway, launched last year, with the development of a **QQI Level V Special Purpose Award – MMC Installation and Assembly**.

Comprising three standalone component awards; ICF Installation and Assembly, Timber frame Installation and Assembly, and Light Gauge Steel Installation and Assembly, this award is focussed on an industry-identified pinch point in the MMC process, the handshake between off-

site manufacture and on-site erection, and is being developed with sectoral partnership on three expert panels that will determine content and most attractive delivery mechanisms, and oversee the pilot phase.

LOETB has commenced the development of a **QQI Level 4 Major Award in Construction**. There is currently no major award in Construction at Level 4. LOETB has delivered a “Pre-Apprenticeship” programme for learners interested in different Craft Apprenticeships in Mountmellick FET for the past two years – this programme consists of a combination of awards at different levels (levels 3 and 4) and from different awarding bodies (QQI and C&G). The success of the programme has demonstrated that there is demand for a specific construction programme. The proposed programme will be submitted to QQI for validation by end of Q2 2026, and once validated, will be available to other ETBs for sharing for purposes of differential validation.

Agriculture

LOETB’s agricultural education and training provision is strategically aligned with national policy and sustainability objectives, expanding to address skills gaps, support progression pathways and meet the evolving needs of the sector.

LOETB has developed a **QQI Level 4 Major Award in Agriculture** to address skills gaps and support progression pathways for early school leavers, mature learners, and individuals entering the agricultural workforce. Scheduled for delivery in Q4 2026, the programme focuses on key sector priorities, including sustainability, animal care, machinery operation, and health and safety, providing learners with a strong foundation to employment or further education and training in the agricultural sector.

The “**Skill Not Speed**” Tractor Driving skills programme is currently in development with the Association of Farm & Forestry Contractors in Ireland (FCI Ireland) to respond to the growing need for safer and more competent tractor operation within the agricultural and contracting sectors. The programme will place a strong emphasis on practical driving skills, hazard awareness, and responsible behaviour, prioritising safety and competence over speed.

In 2026, the Artificial Insemination, Livestock Scanning, and Hoof Trimming programmes at Levels 5 and 6 will progress through QQI validation to ensure they meet national quality standards and are formally recognised. Importantly, they are tailored to the needs of part-time farmers, equipping participants with specialist skills that not only improve herd management and animal welfare on their own farms but also create opportunities to generate supplementary income by offering AI, scanning, and hoof trimming services to other farmers.

Climate Solutions

Workforce skills development will have a strong focus on green economy skills, recognising that current skills gaps can only be addressed by upskilling the existing workforce. Acquiring green and digital skills enables workers to enhance career opportunities, build sustainable career pathways and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving labour market. Consequently, individuals in sectors such as **Micro - Generation, Solar PV, Domestic Heat Pumps, Retrofit, NZEB and Remote Working** are accessing targeted upskilling opportunities strengthening both their own prospects and the resilience and productivity of the wider workforce.

To support this, LOETB is establishing the **Climate Solutions Academy** as a one-stop hub for all green skills and sustainability education. The Academy will consolidate and expand LOETB's climate-focused programmes, providing learners and businesses with accessible training across sectors such as construction, energy, manufacturing, agriculture, and biodiversity. It will support the development of practical green skills, promote career pathways in the green economy, and enable organisations and individuals to meet emerging environmental and sustainability challenges.

Embedding environmental sustainability across our Further Education and Training (FET) provision is a central strategic priority, reflecting our commitment not only to climate action but also to developing future-ready skills that respond to the evolving needs of society and the economy.

We have adopted a whole-of-FET approach to sustainability, ensuring that environmental awareness and sustainable practices are integrated across all levels and areas of provision—from short courses and community education to apprenticeships.

Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion

LOETB is committed to providing inclusive education opportunities and to ensuring that all learners experience a high-quality and consistent learning environment across its provision. This commitment extends beyond LOETB centre-based programmes to include community-based provision, second providers and partner organisations. Our collaboration with Offaly Traveller Movement (OTM) is an excellent example of this where we provide bespoke Community Education and Adult Literacy courses and partnered on a very successful Collaboration and Innovation Tin Smithing project. Through this collaborative and culturally sensitive approach LOETB, OTM, National Apprenticeship Office and Irish Traveller Movement developed the first Traveller Specific Pre Apprenticeship Local Training Initiative.

LOETB's commitment to inclusive education is further strengthened through the adoption of the **Altitude Charter** and is underpinned by the following undertakings:

- Completion of the Maturity Model across all programmes within the scheme.
- Continued rollout of Universal Design (UD) Centres.
- Further development of sensory spaces across provision.
- Building on the experience of the 2025 project with Special Education Schools to develop a similar initiative with Additional Education Units in schools.
- Ongoing exploration of best practice in Assistive Technology and accessible assessment methods to enhance learner support.

These measures underpin LOETB's provision and ensure continued support for learners who are most marginalised and disadvantaged, including those engaged in Prison Education Centres, Community Education, Adult Literacy, ESOL, Community Training, and higher-level programmes.

LOETB is dedicated to placing the learner at the centre of all planning and provision to facilitate successful, high-quality outcomes. This learner-centred approach is achieved through integrated centres that offer learners the opportunity to access programmes on a part-time or full-time basis

across multiple levels. Clear and tangible progression pathways are identified, and appropriate supports are provided through Adult Guidance Services and Learner Support Workers across all centres. LOETB have also implemented a **Care Team** approach in our Centres to ensure that a personalised, multi-disciplinary support framework is in place enabling learners to maintain their overall well-being and academic success through this wraparound consistent structure.

In addition, robust processes to support learners with additional needs have contributed to improved learner retention and outcomes. This approach has been further embedded through the implementation of key FET policies over the past year, including:

- **Admissions Policy**
- **Consistent Learner Experience Framework**
- **Attendance Policy**

The appointment of our Access Officer has further enabled us to establish many of the above processes and these have been embedded in our practices through the development of a wide reaching Learner Support Group who work closely with the Access Officer and have received appropriate training to instil confidence in them to deliver on their role effectively. This approach means that we successfully implement the All, Some, Few Model, ensuring UD is integrated into our practices leading to a quality, consistent experience for our learners.

Quality with Innovation

LOETB's approach to quality assurance is hands-on and supportive to all stakeholders. While the QA Support Service is made up of a small team, the approach is such that each centre and service has a **dedicated QA** contact who provides support, advice and training as required in that centre or service, and who is a visible presence in the centres throughout the year. This ensures that QA is seen as a constant and not just action that is taken when issues arise. The approach helps to prevent issues from arising and helps to promote a culture of continuous improvement and consistency across the service. Annual QA updates take place in centres and QA induction is provided on an ongoing basis, and a bank of resources and support videos are made available to all staff.

LOETB's Quality Assurance and Inclusion teams are collaborating with Community Training partners on a phased project to cease use of the traditional **Assessment Instrument Specifications** (AISs) and transition to a **Universal Design model** for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment which involves locally devised assessments that will meet the needs of the diverse range of learners that avail of community training initiatives. This two-year phased plan commenced in Q4 of 2025 with the intention that all AISs will be removed from use by the end of 2027. This project involves the provision of training and support for all second provider staff throughout the project and aligns perfectly with LOETB's adoption of the Altitude Charter. The project will ensure a future-ready, inclusive learning environment across all LOETB FET provision, including our external partners.

LOETB's Quality Assurance team works closely with the Access Officer to help to identify innovative and efficient means to ensure an inclusive learning experience for all learners. In 2025, an initiative was introduced whereby audio was added to exams so that learners could listen to the questions rather than needing to be in a separate exam centre with a reader. This provided

several advantages – firstly the learner could join their class group and didn't feel separated from them during exams, and from a resource perspective the arrangement meant that fewer rooms were needed, and fewer readers were required during exam periods. This initiative will be further rolled out to all programmes in 2026 (except Apprenticeships, where the facility to run Theory exams on Moodle has been ceased due to SOLAS instructions).

In 2026, LOETB's team, with the support of the Access Officer, will focus on encouraging a UD approach to assessment for all programmes, in order to help combat the inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by learners for assessment purposes. Teaching staff will be encouraged to explore multiple means of assessment with less focus on producing large volumes of text for assessments. This will require provision of training for teaching staff in relation to UD and assessment design.

LOETB facilitates a growing number of communities of practice for teaching staff to help to achieve consistency across provision and to support teaching staff by providing a support network. The establishment of a Business/IT Community of Practice in 2025 has led to teaching staff working together to develop banks of resources and assessments and to share good practice. CoPs also exist with great success for teaching staff in the following areas: Healthcare/Nursing, Early Learning and Care, Special Needs Assisting, ESOL. In 2026, the expansion of CoPs will include the establishment of Social Studies and Work Experience.

In 2026, LOETB will focus on capacity building within the staff team in programme development and validation. There is huge demand from external agencies and from local and national industry for programmes that are responsive to changes in technology and industry, and LOETB aims to meet the demands for new programmes as efficiently as possible. The programme development process requires subject matter expertise obviously, but also expertise in programme writing that meets the requirements of QQI and other awarding bodies, and expertise and experience in programme building and scheduling that meets the needs of all stakeholders. LOETB aims develop capacity amongst its QA and other staff teams to meet the demands of the programme development process in 2026.

Collaborating for Impact

Construction

In 2025, LOETB collaborated with ESB Networks to develop a new apprenticeship programme at Level 5 in Electrical Overhead Lines Technician. The apprenticeship aims to attract new entrants into the electrical overhead lines industry and to address skills shortage in the industry. The Consortium Steering Group for the apprenticeship, is made up of representatives from ESB Networks, from the eight contracting companies that carry out overhead line work for ESB Networks, a representative from Connect trade union, and the Regional Skills Forum. Pending validation, this programme, which will be delivered at the National Construction Training Centre at Mount Lucas, will be launched in October 2026, with three intended intakes per annum thereafter.

Agriculture

LOETB, in partnership with Teagasc, learner support provision was extended to all seven agriculture colleges. The Learner Support Workers provide tailored academic and pastoral support, helping

learners balance educational commitments with farm and employment responsibilities. This targeted support has contributed to enhanced learner confidence, improved retention, and clear progression pathways.

In addition, LOETB and Teagasc have jointly delivered two QQI-accredited programmes, Sustainable Farming in the Environment and Crop Nutrition Management. The aim of this collaboration is to strengthen provision in key priority skills areas and support the development of a skilled workforce aligned with national agricultural, sustainability, and sectoral development objectives.

Climate Solutions

LOETB have launched **Embedding Sustainability into Business** a programme developed in partnership with cross-sector stakeholders to help SME's translate sustainability goals into practical action. The programme responds directly to identified regional skills gaps, equipping business owners, managers, and employees with the tools to embed sustainability across strategy, operations, and reporting.

AI, cybersecurity and digitalisation are essential for organisational resilience and competitiveness. LOETB is actively responding through programmes like **Operational Excellence**, which develops digital, data-driven, and process improvement skills, alongside dedicated AI and cybersecurity training. These initiatives ensure learners are equipped to work effectively in advanced manufacturing, logistics, and business improvement roles, supporting continuous improvement and organisational resilience.

Funding Allocation for 2026

LOETB receives funding for the provision of FET Services annually from the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science via SOLAS.

Allocation for LOETB	2025 Final Allocation	2026 Allocation			
	Total	Pay	Non-Pay	Allowances	Total
Core Funding for a Strategic & Effective ETB	13,705,352	6,054,497	5,898,700		11,953,197
Workforce Skills Development & Transformation	4,227,400	2,287,580	2,089,333	350,000	4,726,913
FET Pathways	21,141,365	14,985,662	1,829,971	3,517,390	20,333,023
Apprenticeship	7,528,200	2,373,750	1,484,134	2,700,000	6,557,884
Strategic Investment	8,349,928	65,729	6,643,854		6,709,583
Overall Allocation	54,952,245				50,280,600

Table 1: Funding Allocation for LOETB

In 2026, LOETB will utilise this funding to deliver:

Core Funding for a Strategic and Effective ETB

Learner Support and Guidance:

In 2026, LOETB will continue to strengthen its commitment to placing the learner at the centre of all planning, delivery, and support. Our focus is to further enhance high-quality learning experiences across all FET Centres and Services by providing flexible, learner-centred pathways and robust learner supports that ensure positive progression and successful outcomes as follows:

- Further enhance the **integration of services** in all FET Centres through the establishment of quarterly meetings between Centre and Service Managers. These collaborative meetings enable cohesive planning at Centre level ensuring that there is provision available at all levels, on a full time and part time basis where possible. This leads to tangible and visible pathways for learners with multi entry and exit points.
- Though the FET Guidance Service, enhance clarity around progression pathways, ensuring learners can seamlessly move between levels and learning options.
- Continue to embed learner-centred practices in all centres.
- Support the Care Team Approach implemented in Autumn 2025 by providing targeted training to Care Teams with a specific focus on well-being, learner resilience, and early intervention strategies.
- Ensure a consistent wraparound structure is in place to promote learner well-being and academic success.
- Strengthening and Ensuring **Consistent Supports** for Learners with Additional Needs
- Continue to provide a guidance service to all FET Programmes in the FET integrated model
- Continue to support and develop the **Learner Support Group** across LOETB

Buildings:

The FET Estate strategy is focused on the retrofit/energy upgrade of several ETB owned buildings across the scheme. These buildings, originally Vocational schools, require extensive works including windows and doors upgrades, external wall insulation, roof insulation and heating upgrades.

LOETB will use the funding available (Minor Capital Works, Devolved Capital Grant and Green Devolved Capital Grants) to upgrade at least one FET building annually. In 2026, we will commence the works in Birr OEC and Abbeyleix FET Centre (both recently identified as two of LOETBs largest energy users), with plans to commence works in Mountmellick FET Centre and Portarlinton FET Centre in 2027.

LOETB is working closely with DFHERIS and SOLAS on two significant capital projects at the National Construction Training Campus:

SIUF/P: LOETB has submitted Stage 2a on the new MMC Training facility to DFHERIS and SOLAS

National Demonstration Park for MMC: The Groundworks element of the project have been completed and fee proposals for Rhattigans and OCC have been submitted to DFHERIS and SOLAS. These fee proposals relate to:

- Pad 1: Semi-Detached (ICF and LGS): PCC
- Pad 2a: Apartment Block: Pre-cast: Rhattigan
- Pad 2b: Terraced Units: ICF, LGS, Timber Frame: OCC

Quality/Certification:

In 2026, LOETB will focus on capacity building within the staff team in **programme development and validation**. There is huge demand from external agencies and from local and national industry for programmes that are responsive to changes in technology and industry, and LOETB aims to meet the demands for new programmes as efficiently as possible. The programme development process requires subject matter expertise obviously, but also expertise in programme writing that meets the requirements of QQI and other awarding bodies, and expertise and experience in programme building and scheduling that meets the needs of all stakeholders. LOETB aims to develop capacity amongst its QA and other staff teams to meet the demands of the programme development process in 2026.

In 2026, the QA team, with the support of the Access Officer, will focus on encouraging a UD approach to assessment for all programmes, to help combat the inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by learners for assessment purposes. Teaching staff will be encouraged to explore **multiple means of assessment** with less focus on producing large volumes of text for assessments. This will require provision of training for teaching staff in relation to UD and assessment design.

Regional Programme Development Pilot:

LOETB are in early discussions with SETU exploring a pilot Regional approach to programme development and delivery. LOETB will use SETU's Delegated Authority to develop a single special purpose award at Level 5 e.g. Construction, Climate etc. This process will be based on an expansion of LOETBs QA agreement with SETU, allowing LOETB to co-design and develop new awards in a shorter timeframe ensuring that our response time to industry is more efficient and agile.

The pilot award will allow for modularised progression options allowing learners to build qualifications over a period through SETU and LOETB.

Funding for FET Provision for Workforce Skills Development & Transformation

(Employment Progression, Learning in Employment)

Employment Progression:

Construction

Construction provision in St. Andrews will continue to expand in 2026, with a strong focus on industry aligned programmes across construction trades, modern methods of construction and sustainability focused skills in retrofitting. These programmes will be delivered through flexible learner-centred models designed to remove barriers to participation, supporting approximately **1,000 learners** from the hardest to reach backgrounds to progress into employment and further education.

The engineering sector is key driver of economic growth in the Laois and Offaly region, spanning manufacturing, construction and energy. LOETB is addressing the growing demand for a skilled workforce through structured training for new entrants, which combines on the job and off the job training. For those already employed, targeted upskilling enhances existing skills and career progression.

Utilities Traineeship provision has increased in upskilling opportunities through STA areas including Works Supervisor, Fusion Welding, Butt Fusion welding, Leak detection and Pressure testing. 545 trainees in 2025. Figures for 2026 can increase to 1000 but is subject to additional funding

Agriculture

The Sustainable Agriculture programme developed by LOETB and is delivered in partnership with Gurteen Agricultural College. It was introduced in response to the Bord na Móna (BNM) brown-to-green transition, at a time when many employees - many whom were part-time farmers - were potentially facing redundancy.

The programme leads to the Green Cert qualification, with sustainability principles embedded throughout, making it distinct from a traditional Green Cert programme. It is designed for farmers within the Just Transition Region who wish to upskill, enhance their knowledge of their enterprise, and maximise its potential.

Learning in Employment

Agriculture

Central to LOETB's agricultural strategy is the delivery of education and training programmes focused on sustainability, particularly for part-time farmers in the Laois and Offaly regions. Many of these farmers rely on supplementary off-farm income. LOETB's approach seeks to sustain part-time farming by upskilling farmers to generate additional income opportunities within the agricultural sector, optimise land use, and support long-term environmental and economic sustainability. In 2026, over **1,100 participants** will participate in programmes covering Hoof Trimming, Artificial Insemination, Scanning, Animal Welfare, and Breeding for a Sustainable Agricultural Future.

Through education, advice and engagement with experts in their field, Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) aim to empower farm families with the knowledge, resources, and support needed to thrive in today's ever-changing agricultural landscape. The **Farm Family Programme** by LOETB takes a holistic approach and offers personalised agricultural guidance, access to essential information, and extension services. It provides financial and succession planning advice, along with support for technology adoption. Additionally, the programme assists farmers in conducting farm assessments to evaluate sustainability and biodiversity levels, followed by the development of tailored farm plans for each individual's farm.

By addressing the challenges of our farm families in the region, the outcome of this programme will enable said families to enhance their knowledge and skillset along with their livelihoods, sustain future generations and overall play a vital role in advancing sustainable agricultural development. Key stakeholders engaged with LOETB on this programmes development include Teagasc, Mountbellew Agri College, Aisling Meehan Agri Solicitor, IFAC, FBD, AIB, EMBRACE Farm among other relevant industry representatives.

LOETB will continue to engage with participants through the **Thriving as a Family Farm Programme**, which will build on the foundations of the Family Farm Programme with a focus on **farm business and diversification**. This follow-on programme will support farm families to explore new agri-enterprise opportunities, enhance resilience, and develop sustainable, diversified farming models that not only respond to evolving market and environmental demands but more importantly make farming families economically and socially sustainable.

LOETB's equine pathway allows learners to progress from NFQ Level 5 to Level 6, building advanced skills in horse care, training, and stable management. Graduates are job-ready for roles across the equine sector and have the option to progress into higher education, creating clear career pathways and supporting the region's equine workforce.

Climate Solutions

Modules such as Circular Economy in the Workplace, Resource Efficiency for a Sustainable Workplace, Sustainable Supply Chain Procurement, Digital Skills for Business and AI for Business will form the core of programmes offered directly to businesses.

In addition to this, LOETB will continue the delivery of the LEAN Management programmes, which have already demonstrated significant impact. Since their inception, these programmes have delivered cost savings exceeding €15.02 million across four years and have upskilled over 250 participants from 35 companies.

Together, both the Micro Qualification programmes and the Lean Management programmes support businesses in adopting sustainable, low-carbon practices, improving operational efficiency, and upskilling their workforce. They align directly with SOLAS Green Skills Strategy 2030, helping enterprises build resilience, embrace innovation, and strengthen competitiveness in a rapidly evolving, climate-conscious market. In 2026, we expect to engage 960 participants, further expanding the reach and impact of these initiatives.

Funding for FET Pathways

(Pathways, Youth Provision, Community Education, Adult Literacy for Life)

Pathways:

In 2026, LOETB will continue to offer a broad range of FET programmes under the Pathways pillar, offering flexible and accessible routes into and through FET. Projected beneficiary numbers are as follows: BTEI (4,500), Youthreach (265), VTOS (220), PLC (1,180), and FET Pathways from School (2,181). BTEI continues to support adults wishing to upskill or re-engage in education, while Youthreach and VTOS provide structured pathways for early school leavers and unemployed adults. PLC programmes act as a key bridge into employment and higher education, and the expanding FET Pathways from School cohort reflects strengthened collaboration with post-primary schools and a growing awareness of FET as a high-quality destination. Together, these programmes ensure that learners at every stage can access the right starting point and progress towards sustainable employment, higher education, or further study.

Central to the strength of these programmes is the integrated nature of LOETB's FET Centres. Provision of programmes are not delivered in isolation but as part of a connected system that enables learners to move through the levels with support and clarity. This enables learners to begin at an appropriate starting point and progress confidently towards higher levels, employment, or further study. This coherence allows learners to experience LOETB FET as one joined-up, supportive system instead of separate standalone programmes.

Guidance plays an essential and continuous role in this structure. Our guidance service ensures that learners are well informed prior to entry, supported during their studies and advised in appropriate progression routes as they complete their courses. This integrated model not only strengthens learner retention and success but also underpins LOETB's commitment to offering high quality, responsive and inclusive further education opportunities.

Youth Provision:

In 2026, LOETB will continue to support our young learners through Youthreach and our second providers in Tullamore Community Training Centre. For 2026, our projected number of learners is 342. We are adding different modules to our Youthreach provision to reflect the demand for our strategic priorities in the **Climate, Agriculture and Construction Sectors**. For instance, in Mountmellick FET Centre, we are offering modules at Level 3 and Level 4 Construction while in Banagher FET, we will be offering agriculture modules for our Youthreach learners.

In addition, through the support of our guidance service, we have several learners in their final year in Youthreach, completing a QQI Level 5 module Healthcare/Business/Engineering in our FET centres offering PLC courses. The modularisation of PLC programmes has enabled these learners to take a single module in Spring 2026, supporting their transition to full Level 5 programmes in Autumn 2026. This approach helps build confidence, eases anxiety, and supports a smoother progression from Youthreach into larger FET learning environments.

Community Education:

LOETB will provide community education programmes for **2,538 beneficiaries in 2026 across** Laois and Offaly who are experiencing social isolation, marginalisation or who may not have had a positive experience of education previously. Programmes will take place in conjunction with agencies and community groups across the two counties as well as in our FET Centres where a tangible pathway for further opportunities will be available to them. An excellent example of one of our innovative programmes in 2025 was the Creative Painting Project “Through Our Eyes” which was developed through a partnership between LOETB, B Braun, and the Portlaoise dialysis clinic team. “Through Our Eyes” provided people attending dialysis with the opportunity to engage in painting to reflect on and express their lived experiences within a supportive clinical environment and the feedback received from learners and healthcare professionals was very positive.

Adult Literacy for Life:

Through innovative projects in conjunction with Community Groups, Agencies, LOETB FET Centres and the Adult Literacy for Life Regional Literacy Coalition, LOETB will provide literacy programmes to 3,050 beneficiaries in 2026, including ESOL. In addition, we provide a wide range of educational programmes in our two Education Centres in Portlaoise maximum security prison and Midlands prison. There are several thematic programmes which we have developed over 2025 which we will focus on delivering in 2026 across the two counties:

- Health Literacy programme developed in conjunction with the HSE
- Climate Literacy which was developed as part of a national Collaboration and Innovation (C&I) project with Kilkenny Carlow ETB and ECO-UNESCO
- Mart project and Farmers IT which was developed as part of an ALL project
- Financial Literacy workshops in conjunction with MABS, AIB and other financial institutions
- Family Learning which we have enhanced through PD and projects such as Hug your Book and Breakfast Buddies.

In addition, LOETB have partnered on several C&I Fund applications and will complete those projects, if successful, in 2026. We also undertook a project in conjunction with Offaly Local Development Company and the ALL NPO examining Youth Literacy. The research will be launched in 2026 and responding strategies developed to support young people experiencing literacy difficulties.

LOETB will also support 485 beneficiaries through Community Training by working in partnership with the Tullamore Community Training Centre, NLN in Tullamore and Portlaoise and three LTIs who provide essential educational opportunities to some of the most marginalised learners.

Adult Literacy and Community Education as Access Tools:

LOETB effectively enable access to Further Education and Training through both Community Education and Adult Literacy in our integrated centres where learners are provided with opportunities to progress, avail of Adult Guidance and participate in upskilling/taster programmes.

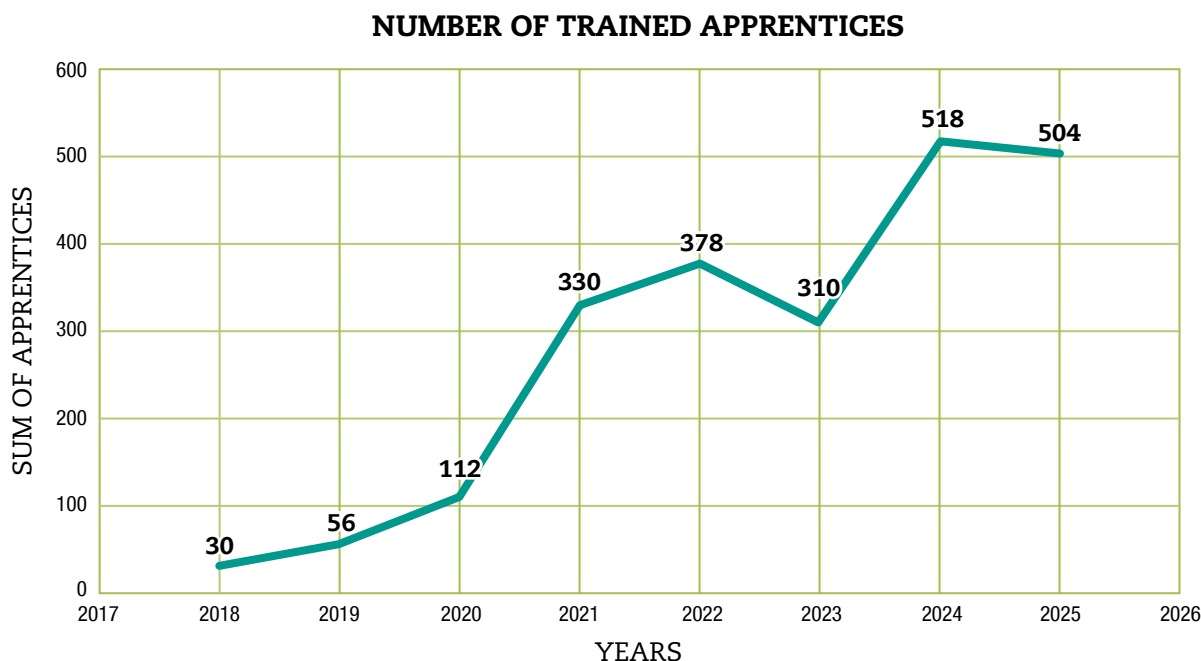
Both funding streams are used by LOETB to actively enable Access to our main scheme provision supporting FET learners to plan and undertake their own learning journey.

Apprenticeship Funding

(Craft and Consortia led)

Craft Apprenticeship:

The craft apprenticeship backlog has generated innovative responses and LOETB have been central to this in growing significant capacity in our apprenticeship team resulting in an unprecedented growth in LOETB Phase 2 apprenticeship training. From 2019-2025 LOETB increased phase 2 apprenticeship provision by 83%. In 2025 LOETB provided Phase 2 training to 504 electrical & plumbing apprentices. Due to the reduction to the 2026 apprenticeship budget, we plan to train 320 electrical and plumbing apprentices this year. LOETB is also currently planning to expand our plumbing Phase 2 provision with a new workshop at Banagher FET centre in Offaly and Phase 2 electrical apprenticeship at Mountmellick FET centre in Laois.



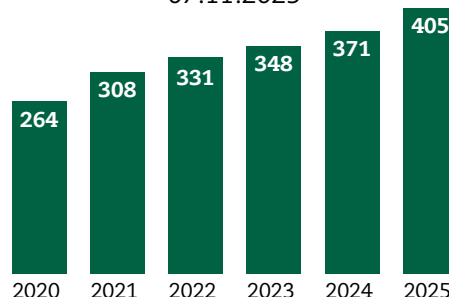
Registration of New Apprentices in Laois Offaly

The Government has set a target of 10,000 new apprentice registrations per year (The Action Plan Apprenticeships & Traineeships in Ireland 2021-2025. Department of Education & Youth. [action-plan-for-apprenticeship-2021-2025.pdf](#)). The Further Education and Training Strategy aims to modernise and expand the apprenticeship system and LOETB staff have a fundamental role to play in this regard.

LOETB currently works with 405 Active Employers compared to 371 in January 2024. This represents a 9% increase since last year and an increase of 53% in Active Employer numbers over the last five years.

Active Employers 2020 – 2025

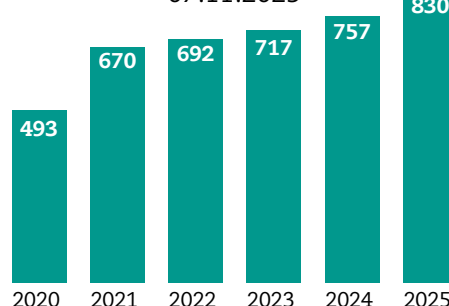
07.11.2025



Our live Apprentice Population shows 830 registered apprentices currently in LOETB compared to 757 (10% increase) the previous year and a 68% increase in apprentice numbers in our region over the last five years.

Apprentice Statistics 2020 - 2025

07.11.2025



This historic data helps to inform us on the potential increase in registrations that we can expect to see in the 2026. The economic forecast from the ESRI Ireland shows that 40,000 more people are needed in the construction sector if the government wants to reach targets of 50,000 new homes per year ([Population projections, the flow of new households and structural housing demand](#) ESRI).

Apprenticeship 2016+:

Scaffolding Apprenticeship:

This is a two-year practical programme with eight modules, developed in consultation with industry. (CIF, SIPTU, HSA, NASAC). As part of this programme, Apprentices will engage in on-the-job training with a SOLAS approved employer. Off-the-job training will take place in the classroom. On completion of the programme, the Apprentice will hold a nationally recognised QQI Level 5 Certificate in Scaffolding.

2026 Annual intake: 36 Apprentices

2026 RPL intake: 30-40 existing scaffolding employees will complete in 2026.

Strategic Investment Funding

(Reach Funding, Specialist Skills Development, Skills to Advance Innovation Projects, ETB Strategic Initiatives, Climate Action Initiatives, Self-Financing Courses)

REACH:

LOETB promotes Reach funding with community groups and agencies across the two counties. In 2025, we supported seventeen community groups through funding and across 2025 and 2026, LOETB will provide Community Education and Adult Literacy courses through collaborative, outreach programme delivery in conjunction with these community groups.

Specialist Skills Development:

The emergence of Modern Methods of Construction as a key tool in responding to Ireland's housing needs and the construction sector's transition to more sustainable practices has resulted in LOETB's development of a range of awareness and specialist skills development programmes that reflect the MMC process - MMC Essentials to Digital Technologies MMC (Including BIM) to an NVQ Diploma in Construction using Off site Manufactured Assemblies - Modular and Portable Building to Management of Construction Projects.

Government's Housing for All plan and the €12.2 billion investment in Uisce Éireann recognises that a highly skilled Water Utilities workforce is required to eliminate "connection bottlenecks" by installing water mains, managing complex network operations, and implementing sustainable drainage systems. The Skilled Utilities Operator Traineeship at Mount Lucas, trains new entrants to the sector in specific accredited skills—such as Self-Lay and Water Main Layer operations—which allow developers to accelerate project timelines by having certified staff handle utility connections directly. This technical upskilling ensures that the delivery of "serviced land" keeps pace with construction, directly enabling the state to meet its target of 300,000 new homes by 2030.

It has also accelerated awareness by the sector of the need to upskills its existing workforce and LOETB utilises its Skills To Advance portfolio to offer workforce development opportunities in Works Supervision, Fusion Welding, Butt Fusion welding, Leak detection and Pressure testing.

Innovation Projects:

LOETB has two Mobile Training Units promoting modern construction skills to schools, Local Councils and community groups all over Ireland.

The focus of the Apprenticeship Careers Training Unit is to showcase multiple Apprenticeship trades with visual and interactive stations. Digital construction, Virtual reality and Modern methods of construction all form part of the training experience.

The NZEB Mobile Training Unit is transitioning its focus in 2026 to MMC and the Zero-Emission Building (ZEB) standards that are scheduled to be introduced in Ireland for New Public Buildings from 1 January 2028 with All New Buildings (Residential & Commercial) expected to meet ZEB standards from 1 January 2030.

This Mobile Unit delivers a bespoke Construction skills experience using practical training sessions that include, Desk top models, Virtual Reality and practical application. There is an emphasis placed on Modern Methods of Construction and its application in both new build and retrofit projects. The assessments have been designed to complement the Leaving Certificate Construction Studies curriculum.

The Mobile Training Units will train over 2000 students annually during the academic school year and showcase the changing trends in the sector that enhance Construction's attraction to both male and female school-leavers.

Agriculture

In 2026, we will continue to deliver the Intro to Ag programme in partnership with Agri Aware, building in the success of earlier pilots. This programme has been developed on response to the decline in the number of students choosing Agricultural Science. This programme provides post-primary students with a practical and engaging introduction to contemporary agriculture, highlighting sustainability, innovation and modern farming practices.

LOETB will continue the Agricultural Science Coordinator programme in 2026, expanding its reach to fifth- and sixth-year students. The Educational Coordinator will deliver workshops on farms, in school laboratories, and classrooms, aligned with the Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science curriculum. The programme aims to increase student engagement and encourage more learners to choose Agricultural Science as a Leaving Certificate subject, while providing hands-on, curriculum-relevant experience that supports both learning and practical skills. It is envisaged 5,000 learners will engage with the Intro to Ag programmes in 2026.

TY Cleanroom Operations Programme

LOETB designed and developed a TY programme in collaboration with the LOETB secondary schools. The TY Cleanroom programme is offering students the opportunity to explore careers in the med-tech, bio-pharm industries. The programme involved creating learner packs, teacher booklets and resources for the TY coordinators so that they can teach a short module to their students this academic year. The module will finish with a practical element which will take place in our state-of-the-art cleanroom facilities at Midlands Skills Centre. In 2026 we will deliver this programme to 7 secondary schools.

ETB Specific Initiatives:

LOETB Consistent Learner Experience Framework

LOETB have clearly outlined our commitment to inclusive education through our innovative and learner centred structures and policies including:

- Appointment of FET Access Officer
- Integrated FET Centres
- Integrated supports in Centres such as Literacy and Guidance
- Consistent Learner Support Framework developed and implemented
- Learner Support Workers dedicated to all Centres and Services.

- Specific training provided for Learner Support Group. This will be further enhanced in 2026 through a monthly online drop in 'clinic' for Learner Support Workers to efficiently promote peer to peer best practice and troubleshoot
- Clearly defined consistent approach to the provision of targeted learner support through our Needs Assessment process and associated training provided
- Multi-disciplinary Care Teams established across the scheme
- AIS to UD model of teaching, learning and assessment
- Full Centre roll out completed in two centres with more planned for 2026.

LOETB have demonstrated commitment to inclusive education through the adoption of the Altitude Charter in a whole of FET, learner support is everyone's business approach which we intend to further enhance through the expansion of the Inclusion Team to support the FET Access Officer.

Construction

The National Construction Training Campus is host to Ireland's first National Demonstration Park for Modern Methods of Construction. The site will see different construction typologies on a single site spread over multiple pads. Typologies will include Insulated Concrete Formwork, Precast Concrete, 3D Volumetric, Light Gauge Steel and Timber Frame.

LOETB will bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and site-ready expertise by utilising the National MMC Demonstration Park as a "living classroom" where students can interact with full-scale housing units showcasing diverse advanced building systems. This immersive experience is bolstered by a bespoke outdoor training rig—Ireland's first dedicated modular assembly platform—which allows learners to practice the physical installation, precision lifting using the Mount Lusas fully operational Tower Crane, and jointing of MMC components in a controlled environment.

To complete this "factory-to-foundation" pipeline, a SIUF funded planned indoor training space will focus on high-end digital construction skills, employing advanced simulators and VR/AR technology to train operators in BIM integration, and automated manufacturing. By synchronising these three environments, LOETB provides a holistic training circuit where learners can master a project's digital twin indoors before executing its physical assembly outdoors, ensuring they are fully equipped for the modern, tech-driven construction landscape.

Agriculture

LOETB is developing a state-of-the-art Agricultural Hub in Birr to serve as a centre of excellence for agricultural education, training, and innovation. The Hub will provide hands-on learning, classrooms, and laboratories, delivering programmes from introductory courses to QQI Level 4–6 awards, as well as upskilling modules for school leavers, farmers, and agri-professionals.

Aligned with national priorities, the Hub will focus on sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture, modern farming practices, animal welfare, and precision technologies. Partnerships with Teagasc, Agri Aware, and industry stakeholders will ensure programmes meet sectoral skills needs. The Hub will also act as a regional focal point for community engagement, workforce development,

and career progression, strengthening pathways into employment, further education, and lifelong learning in the agricultural sector.

Tertiary Degrees

LOETB was one of the first ETBs to pilot Tertiary Degree offerings in partnership with the National Tertiary Office and South East Technological University, Carlow.

We currently have 3 Tertiary Degrees in Place – to date **54 students have studied in Portlaoise Institute on the following SETU Degree courses:**

- Bachelor of Business Studies
- Bachelor of Science in IT Management
- Bachelor of Science in Software Development

LOETB is currently putting in place a pilot Tertiary Degree programme in **Mental Health Nursing**. This programme is a partnership between LOETB, Tipperary ETB and Limerick Clare ETB where each ETB will have 5 ringfenced and designated places on the **BSc (Hons) in Mental Health Nursing at TUS Athlone**. We will pilot this programme in Tullamore FET and hope to build on the already established strong relationship between LOETB and TUS Nursing Department. This is a 1+4 model and the first cohort of students will be in the September 26 intake.

Other LOETB Tertiary Pathways

Advanced entry routes and direct pathways from FE to Year 2 of undergraduate degree programmes in HE, underpinned by long established partnerships between LOETB & HEIs. These pathways are not formalised so are maintained through strong inter institutional relationships.

Tullamore FET to TUS Athlone:

Course Titles: Bachelor of Business

Pathway: Direct entry into Year 2 of Degree course from LOETB L6

Partners: LOETB & TUS, Athlone

Birr FET to TUS Athlone:

Course Titles: Bachelor of Business L8, Bachelor of Accounting and Finance (with placement)

Pathway: Direct entry into Year 2 of Degree course from LOETB Advanced Certificate in Business L6

Partners: LOETB & TUS, Athlone

Abbeylax FET to NCAD, TU Dublin, Limerick & Athlone:

Course Titles: A range of undergraduate degree pathways in design, fine art, history of art and design, including Bachelor of Arts (Hons) programmes such as Ceramics, Sculpture and Combined Media, Painting and Fashion.

Pathway: Advanced & direct entry into Year 2 of Degree courses from LOETB Advanced Certificate in Art L6 Partners: LOETB & NCAD, TU Dublin, TUS Limerick and Athlone.

Portarlington FET to SETU, Carlow:

Course Titles: Bachelor of Business L7

Pathway: Advanced entry into Year 2 of Degree course from LOETB Advanced Certificate in Business with Finance and Business with HR, L6

Partners: LOETB & SETU, Carlow

Prisons Education Pathway

A Footbridge to the Pathway is a pilot initiative between South East Technological University's (SETU) Lifelong Learning Department (LLL), Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB), and the Irish Prison Service (IPS), and is a degree programme in Community Leadership and Development delivered to students in Portlaoise Prison, Ireland's maximum-security prison. 12 men undertook the programme and to date, 66 modules have been completed. This project has been shortlisted for an Aontas Star Award in 2026.

Course Title: Community Leadership and Development

Pathway: Delivery of Level 6 SETU Major Award to LOETB learners in Portlaoise Prison Education Centre

Partners: LOETB, Irish Prison Service (IPS) & SETU, Waterford

Agriculture

Course Title: BSc (Hons) Agricultural Science and Sustainability

Pathway: Progression into Year 2 of the Degree course is available through entry from LOETB's and Gurteen College's Certificate in Farming - Sustainable Farming (Part-Time) programme. Learners will be required to complete a small number of bridging credits, also available in Gurteen college to meet full entry requirements.

Partners: LOETB, Teagasc & Agriculture Colleges (Gurteen & Mountbellew) & TUS (Thurles)

Expert Groups

Mount Lucas's training model is built on a "co-design" philosophy, where every programme is rigorously developed through Industry Expert Groups to ensure absolute market relevance. These groups—comprising industry employers, representative bodies like the CIF, statutory agencies such as the HSA, and academic partners like TU Dublin—collaborate to define occupational profiles and critical skills gaps. This partnership extends far beyond the boardroom: industry partners actively engage in pilot phases by enrolling employees as first-adopters, providing real-world feedback that refines course content before full validation. By integrating this continuous feedback loop, LOETB ensures its curriculum remains agile and precisely aligned with the evolving technical demands of the national construction and utilities sectors.

European Initiatives

Mount Lucas strengthens its role as a leader in sustainable construction through high-impact European collaborations, most notably as a core partner in the Build Up Skills Ireland (BUSI2030) initiative. Working alongside the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS), the Irish Green Building Council (IGBC), and the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Mount Lucas helped

spearhead the National Upskilling Roadmap, which identifies the critical pathways for 120,000 additional workers needed to meet Ireland's 2030 climate and housing targets.

This momentum has evolved into the INSIDE-CoVE project, an international network of Centres of Vocational Excellence across six European countries. In this partnership, Mount Lucas collaborates with TUS and IGBC to pioneer a three-layered curriculum—Digital, Green, and Inclusion—designed to harmonise construction standards across Europe. By integrating BIM as a "universal language" and focusing on the AEC (Architecture, Engineering, and Construction) ecosystem, these partnerships ensure that the training delivered at Mount Lucas is not only nationally relevant but also aligned with the highest European standards for innovation and workforce welfare.

Glossary

AG	Agriculture
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ARC	Audit and Risk Committee
ARP	Additional Resource Provision
BOTP	Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection
CE	Chief Executive
C&I	Community & Industry
CMS	Content Management System
CoP	Communities of Practice
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPI	Crisis Prevention Institute
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committees
DEY	Department of Education and Youth
DEIS	Delivering Equality of opportunity In Schools
Dig-CoP	Digital –Community of Practice
DLPs	Designated Liaison Persons
ECO	Environmental Conservation Organisation
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESBS	Education Shared Business Services
ETB	Education Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FET	Further Education & Training
GHG	Green House Gases
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMBV	Identity Multi-Belief and Values
IPAS	International Protection Accommodation Services
LAIT	Local Authority Integration Team
LAOE	Looking at our Ethos
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCSPs	Local Community Safety Partnerships
LEC	Laois Education Centre
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LOETB	Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board
LSW	Licensed Social Worker
MEs	Music Educators

MGL	Music Generation Laois
MGO	Music Generation Offaly
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NDOs	National Development Offices
NZEB	Nearly-Zero Energy Buildings
OSD	Organisation Support & Development
PL&D	Professional Learning and Development
PLN	Personal Learning Network
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
REALT	Regional Education and Language Team
RISE	Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SMT	Senior Management Team
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SSE	School Self Evaluation
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics
TPL	Teacher Professional Learning
TY	Transition Year
UBU	UBU' Your Place Your Space
UD	Universal Design
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VR	Virtual Reality
WSG	Whole School Guidance



**Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Laoise agus Uíbh Fhailí**

