![AONTAS logo] The Voice of Adult Learning

NATIONAL FET LEARNER FORUM REGIONAL EVENT

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
18th and 20th May 2021
Regional Report
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Further Education and Training Learner Forum is a national learner voice project, designed to capture the experiences of learners participating in Further Education and Training (FET) provision across Ireland. Each event is held in conjunction with one of the 16 Education and Training Boards delivering FET courses. The project takes a mixed methods approach, gathering learner voice through facilitated focus group discussions and a learner survey. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Forum has moved from in-person to online events.

The Louth and Meath Education and Training Board Forum events, held on the 18th and 20th May 2021, were part of the series of events taking place across the academic year September 2020 – May 2021. This report is based on feedback gathered at these events and through the Learner Survey. The views of 393 learners are reflected in this report: 63 from focus group discussions and 330 from the Learner Survey. Learners came from a range of course levels offered by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board: 58 from levels 1-3, 95 from level 4, 161 from level 5, 20 from level 6, and 1 from levels 7-10. There were 28 learners who were on unaccredited courses and 30 remain unknown. Each learner was asked to reflect on their experiences in their FET courses and on their learning during COVID-19. Featured below is a summary table of the key topics that emerged. Each recommendation is broken down by course level with a general feedback category used to present findings from learners whose course level remains unknown or where common feedback was provided across each level.

General Feedback

Areas Working Well	
Tutors	− Learners were grateful for tutors' support and guidance when learning remotely
Communication	− Learners appreciated the frequent and diverse communication from Louth and Meath Education and Training Board
Device access	− Learners received devices to continue their learning from Louth and Meath Education and Training Board in a timely manner
New Skills	− Learners developed new skills, particularly digital skills, from learning remotely

Areas for Improvement	
Face-to-face Learning	− Learners found face-to-face learning a better learning environment, and looked forward to returning to classroom as soon as possible
Peer contact	− Learners missed face-to-face interaction and engaging socially with their peers
Peer learning and support	− Learners felt they were missing out of peer learning opportunities when taking a course remotely
Physical Learning Materials	− Learners would like to be provided with paper or printed learning materials on request
Practical learning	− Learners taking practical courses found online learning particularly challenging
Online platform maintenance	− Learners would like tutors to be supported with online teaching and digital learning platforms
Participatory online learning pedagogy	− Learners would like tutors to facilitate online learning practices that encourage class participation

Levels 1–3

Areas Working Well	
Transformative learning	− Learners felt that taking their course had wider transformative benefits to their lives

Areas for Improvement	
Class hours and scheduling	− Learners at levels 1-3 would like their class hours to be reviewed to avoid fatigue when learning online

Level 4

Areas Working Well	
Mental health and wellbeing	− Learners taking level 4 courses felt supported with their mental health and wellbeing while learning remotely
One-to-one support	− Level 4 learners appreciated the one-to-one support they received from tutors and Education and Training Board staff

Areas for Improvement	
Motivation	– Learners struggled to find the motivation to learn remotely
Learning environment	– Learners found their at-home environment challenging when learning remotely

Level 5

Areas Working Well	
Flexibility	– Learners appreciated the flexibility afforded by online learning

Areas for Improvement	
Work Placement	– Learners requested timely information on alternatives to work placements that could not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions

Unaccredited courses

Areas Working Well	
Hybrid learning	– Learners enjoyed hybrid learning and would like to see aspects of it continue in the future
Peer contact	– Learners benefited from the peer contact they received through their courses during the COVID-19 restrictions

Areas for Improvement	
Internet connectivity	– Weak or unreliable WiFi was a barrier for learners

INTRODUCTION

For the past six years, the Forum has brought together learners from across the FET sector to ask their views on FET services in Ireland. The project is funded by SOLAS and delivered by AONTAS in collaboration with Education and Training Boards. The Forum is derived from the SOLAS FET Strategy 2020-2024, which states that, "we must continue the work of the FET learner forum in securing qualitative feedback at national and regional level on FET." While this is a national project, a series of regional events are held in an effort to reach a diverse and representative group within the FET sector. The Louth and Meath Education and Training Board regional events reported on here therefore sit within the context of a much broader national project. This report features four key sections. They are as follows:

- Methodology
- Detailed Results
- Survey Results
- Conclusion

In addition to this core report, the Appendix features a Learner Survey Questions and Responses.

METHODOLOGY

The key aim of this project is to ensure learners are given a safe space to share their voice and that all voices are respected. Participation at this event is voluntary. All comments have been anonymised to allow learners to speak freely. In order to be inclusive, "they" has been used throughout this report in place of "s/he" to refer to learners in the singular form.

Forum Events

To ensure learners had choice of opportunities to participate, two separate virtual events were held at the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, 18th May at 11am
- Thursday, 20th May at 11am

Information about each event was sent to learners by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board. AONTAS also promoted these events through their social media channels.

During the registration process, learners were asked to give consent for participation and to provide their programme data for reporting purposes. This information was used to preassign learners to focus groups according to their course level. Ten focus groups were held across the two events. As Figure 1 shows, 63 learners representing programmes from levels 1-6 took part in these events and another 330 learners representing programmes from levels 1-7 responded to the Learner Survey. Seven learners who participated in the events and 21 learners who responded to the Learner Survey were on unaccredited courses or courses with no level. The course level was unknown for 22 learners who attended events and eight learners who skipped the survey question about their course level.
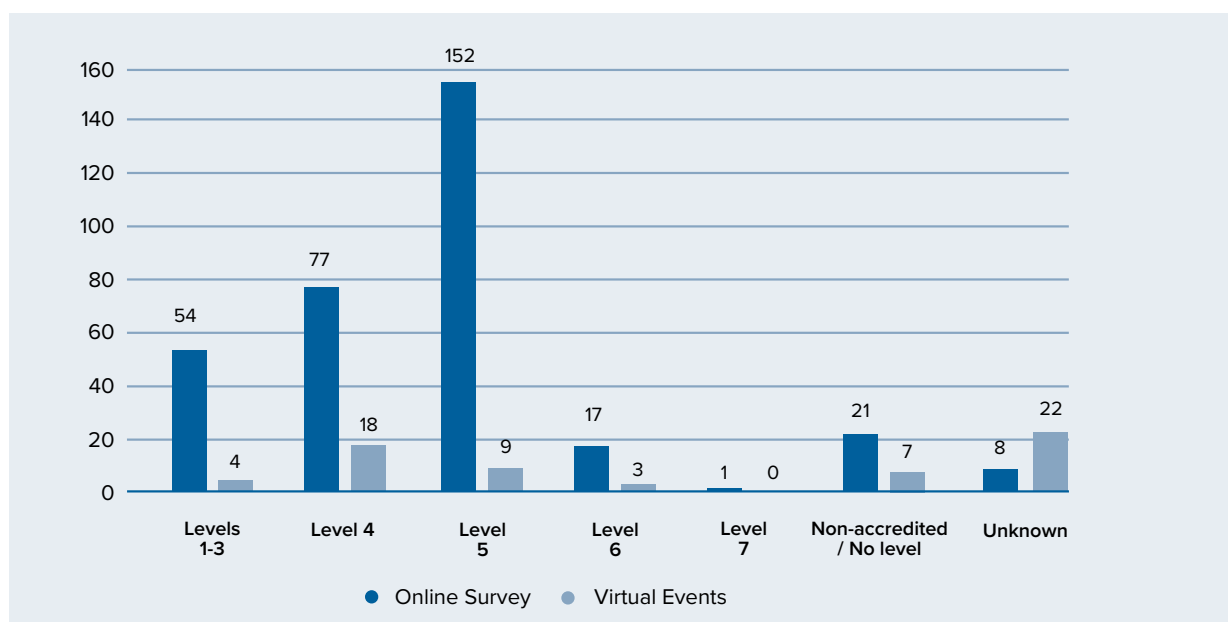

Figure 1 – Learner Representation by Level

AONTAS opened each event by delivering a presentation introducing the National FET Learner Forum. The presentation explained how learner feedback would be reported. Kelvin Harvey, Adult Education Officer, and Dr. Aisling Sheridan, Adult Education Officer, welcomed learners to each event and discussed the value of the Forum and learner recommendations. Learners were then divided into groups and assigned breakout rooms on Zoom. Each group was assigned a trained facilitator. Learners were given one hour to reflect on the following discussion questions:

1. *"What has been working well in your transition to remote or class-based learning during COVID-19?"*

2. *"What has not been working well in your transition to remote or class-based learning during COVID-19?*

3. *"What changes would you make to improve learning for next year?"*

The notes provided by facilitators from each of these discussions were then used to generate key recommendations for reporting.

The Learner Survey

Learners could complete the Learner Survey online (330 learners) or receive a paper copy posted to their centre. No paper copies were requested for this event. The online survey opened two weeks before the event, and remained open for seven days after the final event. Where applicable, results from this survey have been incorporated into the "Detailed Results" section of this report. A summary of survey findings can also be found in the "Survey Results" section of this report. A complete breakdown of survey data tables can be found in Appendix featured at the end of this report.

Learner voice is used throughout the "Detailed Results" section of the report and to provide context to the key findings generated. The points raised in this report will be combined with those from all other participating regional events in the annual report to provide a broad overview of learner voice in FET for the academic year 2020 – 2021.

Research Limitations

In keeping with the ethical principles of the National FET Learner Forum, AONTAS and Louth and Meath Education and Training Board wanted to ensure that these events were as inclusive as possible. AONTAS staff offered technical support to registered learners on an individual basis, and provided instructions for registering via EventBrite and joining Zoom calls in all preparation materials. However, we are aware that, by having the ability and means to attend an online event, the learners have already overcome some barriers to participation. There are learners who face challenges with device access, WiFi, and digital skills and are unable to attend online events. Thus, we recognise that the points of view represented in this report encompass only those of learners who have the digital skills and access necessary to take part in online events and an online survey.

DETAILED RESULTS

Learner feedback has been divided into five subsections by group level **(general feedback, NQF levels 1-3, level 4, level 5, and unaccredited)**, with **areas working well** and **areas for improvement** included for each. As there were a small number of levels 6-10 learners who shared their experiences, feedback from this cohort along with feedback that was consistent across all levels has been included in the general feedback section of this report. Learner statements have been integrated throughout to provide context for the feedback given. It is important to note that some of the areas highlighted in this report touch upon experiences or barriers learners faced before entering Louth and Meath Education and Training Board. These have been included here to remain true to the voices of learners at the event. While these may be beyond the capacity of the Education and Training Board to fix, they can be used to paint a better picture of the challenges learners face.

Virtual Learner Forum Events Results

General Feedback

Areas working well

Learners with Louth and Meath Education and Training Board appreciated the support they received from their **tutors** during the period of remote learning, describing them as "learner-focused," and "just great." Consistently across levels, tutors were praised for being available, attentive, and responsive to learners' needs. As one learner explained:

> *"The tutors are very welcoming and grateful for suggestions and feedback. They are interested and encouraging and look for feedback throughout. They would ask 'are we going too fast, or too slow?' They are very open to suggestions."*

Learners also like the clear instruction they received from tutors, with one learner sharing, "they (tutors) provide step by step guidance to complete the task." Flexibility and understanding around attendance and assignments on the part of tutors was also highlighted, with one learner surmising, "If people need to leave early, or may not be able to attend due to child caring or something like that, you are given time to complete assignments." They felt this support was crucial to their success with online learning.

Frequent and varied **communication** from Louth and Meath Education and Training Board was acknowledged by learners. Both tutors and staff stayed in touch with learners through WhatsApp, emails, phone calls, and (when restrictions allowed) socially-distanced house calls. One learner remarked:

> *"I found they were in constant contact - the course co-ordinator would check in with us personally every Monday morning and asked us would anything make it easier for us. That led to a better environment!"*

WhatsApp was specifically mentioned as an efficient way to contact tutors, and learners appreciated the quick responses they received, with one learner relaying, "we have a WhatsApp group, she (the tutor) answers any questions and supports us weekdays or week-ends. The support is there." Supportive communication from tutors and staff had a positive effect on the remote learning experience.

Learners praised how **device access** was quickly and efficiently organised by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board at the beginning of their courses or at the beginning of remote learning. One learner had a laptop "delivered to my door," and another learner echoed, "we were sent home with laptops that very first day." Devices were made available to those who needed them, with one learner sharing how their tutor "asked us if we all had laptops and leased laptops to us if we needed them." This support was considered vital to learners' continuation of their courses throughout the restrictions, and for this they were very grateful.

Across all levels, learners cited gaining **new skills** as one of the benefits of learning remotely. These included organisational skills, independent learning skills, and communication skills. One learner explained, "It's helped us to be more organised-you just had to be," while another echoed, "I learned to be more independent. There was no one there to motivate me to do assignments so I learned to be more reliant on myself." Learners were particularly pleased with the digital skills they had gained from taking their course, with one learner stating:

"I surprised myself in the last year loving Zoom, I've done so much. It's great for keeping in touch. I got a skill out of the course I didn't think I would."

Gaining these skills had a wider positive impact on learners' lives, with one learner sharing:

"I introduced Zoom to my local Irish Countrywomen's Association, it's great for keeping in touch especially with older people, and we have been keeping in touch that way for the last 12 months. Me doing these courses has been really positive in our group."

These skills were seen as an unforeseen benefit of taking a course remotely.

Areas for Improvement

While learners in Louth and Meath Education and Training Board spoke very positively overall about their online learning experience, they missed **face-to-face learning**, and wanted to return to the classroom in some capacity as soon as it was safe to do so. Despite tutors and staff doing their best to support learners, they felt they were not getting the same experience learning remotely as they would in the classroom. Learners shared, "I feel at sea trying to learn alone and remotely," and, "I feel disadvantaged in my learning. We spent more time out of the centre than in, and would have learned more inside." Those who had the opportunity to engage in in-person learning agreed that it was preferable to remote learning, with one learner sharing, "I have been coming to the centre, I much prefer to, I learn more here." They looked

forward to returning to their centres when COVID-19 restrictions eased.

Peer contact and the opportunity to engage socially with course mates was greatly missed by learners. Across all levels, they missed the social aspect of their courses. This was consistent for both learners who originally had in-person classes, and those who had never taken part in in-person learning as part of their current course. One learner explained, "I would have liked to have met everyone in person, it's a real shame." Another learner added, "it's difficult not to see people." Some learners suggested ways that they engage socially with course mates, through WhatsApp groups and social Zoom calls. Nonetheless, it was felt that meaningful social interaction was difficult to replicate in the online learning environment.

Relatedly, learners felt they were missing out on **peer learning** opportunities while learning remotely. They described how usually, in the physical classroom, they would discuss coursework and learn from each other, but that this was difficult to do in the online space. One learner admitted, "It is fine learning online but I miss the support of my classmates." Another learner agreed with this sentiment, stating simply that, "reciprocal learning is missing."

Learners taking **practical courses**, or with practical modules as a part of their course, felt particularly disadvantaged while learning remotely. They found that courses that require hands-on instruction such as art or cookery are difficult to conduct in an online teaching and learning environment. One learner explained, "It's very hard for the teacher to point her camera down and explain the process to someone who doesn't have a clue about art." Another learner agreed, "working online was not possible for art." While these learners acknowledged their tutors were doing their best in the online environment, they nonetheless felt that they were missing out on a core component of their coursework while learning remotely. These learners hoped that practical courses would be considered as a priority when returning to in-person learning.

Access to **physical learning materials** when learning remotely was requested by learners. Some learners found it easier to learn from paper materials, rather than off a device screen. One learner explained how, at home, "there are no printing facilities available. I feel better when I print out my assignments and read them. That is what I am used to." Other learners echoed this sentiment, stating, "I am easily distracted, and I find reading off a computer so much more difficult than reading from a book," and, "paper is easier for me. I like turning the page." These learners would like to be provided with paper or printed learning materials on request.

Learners requested that **online platform maintenance** be consistent across Louth and Meath Education and Training Board courses. Some learner shared how their Moodle platform was updated regularly and in an organised manner, which helped them with their assignments. As one learner summarised, "In Moodle everything is updated and we get extra information there too." However, this was not the case for all learners, with learners admitting, "Moodle is handled badly, it is messy and it's not used correctly by [their tutor]." Another learner echoed this, stating, "I'm not so satisfied with how the Moodle was operating, it was not reliable and I had difficulty with assignments." Learners suggested tutors be provided with professional development opportunities on how to use and populate Moodle, and that course Moodle pages be updated regularly, so that learners can access materials needed for their assignments.

Learners requested that tutors use **participatory online learning pedagogy** to improve their virtual classroom experience. This was raised in relation to learners' concerns about the anonymity of online learning having a negative effect on the online learning environment. The features of Teams and Zoom allowed some learners to attend classes without speaking or showing their face, which learners felt both affected the learning environment and placed pressure on other learners to "carry the class." One learner argued:

> *"A lot of people muted themselves, turned off the camera, and just listened. I would always turn on my camera no matter how I looked. So, breakout rooms could be a problem, they would just sit back and let you do all the talking."*

These learners suggested that tutors encourage learners to turn on their cameras when possible. They also suggested that tutors create a space for peer collaboration on coursework and assignments where possible, and encourage group participation in online classes.

Levels 1-3

Areas working well

Learners taking levels 1-3 courses shared how their course had resulted in **transformative learning**, which had a positive impact on their lives. They cited confidence, communication skills and improved performance in their jobs as benefits to taking their course. One learner explained, "It's made my work much easier, and helped me with more opportunities." Another learner shared:

> *"My English classes are very useful to my life. Two years ago, I had no English. Now I can chat, read and write. It's really useful"*

These learners were grateful for the impact that taking a course had on their lives.

Areas for improvement

Learners at levels 1-3 found online learning challenging due to **class hours and scheduling**. They felt fatigued as a result of learning online, and found long hours doing online classes draining. One learner admitted, "after two hours on Zoom I have a big headache, and it is a little bit tiring for me." Another learner agreed, explaining "I miss class learning because I find the computer tiring." Overall, these learners looked forward to a return to the classroom setting, which would mitigate this issue. However, they also suggested learners be given a break during classes, or that class schedules be revisited to avoid long hours in front of a screen.

Level 4

Areas working well

Learners taking level 4 courses shared how Louth and Meath Education and Training Board prioritised and supported their **mental health and wellbeing** during remote learning. They reported that staff and tutors were mindful of the challenges of learning remotely and the stress learners felt, and provided a space for them to discuss them if needed. One learner explained, "if we have had a tough day, we can tell the coordinator, talk to them about life in general." Other learners had a dedicated member of staff who they could talk to about their mental health and wellbeing, with one learner stating, "we have a course counsellor. I talk to her once a week." Learners also cited ways in which their tutors tried to alleviate stress on learners, such as allowing for flexibility around coursework, with one learner expressing, "if you're struggling, it doesn't feel like there's a massive pressure to get assignments done." This support and flexibility was greatly appreciated by learners.

Level 4 learners also praised the **one-to-one support** they received from tutors, which they considered vital to their success when learning remotely. Learners were offered both general support and support on specific modules on their courses, both formally and informally. One learner explained:

> *"You could ask for help if you needed extra classes online. I asked for Maths and the tutor did one to one classes with me."*

Another learner shared how their tutor approached them offering extra support without them having to request it,

explaining, "I got a lot of support and sometimes, without even knowing that I needed it, a tutor would spot something." Other learners shared, "If you need Maths support you can ask for it," and "you are given support from day one." Learners greatly benefitted from these individualised supports, and considered them particularly important while learning remotely.

Areas for Improvement

Learners at level 4 struggled to find the **motivation** necessary to learn remotely. Learning without a tutor present made it harder for learners to apply themselves and maintain focus on their coursework. One learner explained, "my motivation is affected, I have to motivate myself much more," while another agreed, "when there is no one there to push you at home, I'm not motivated." This lack of motivation also led to learners being easily distracted while completing their coursework, with one learner admitting, "because you're using the laptop, sometimes you just want to go on Facebook or something else." Learners looked forward to having face-to-face classes with a tutor, in an environment where they feel motivated to learn.

Unsuitable **learning environments** posed a challenge for some learners. Some level 4 learners did not have a comfortable or suitable space to learn remotely. As one learner explained, "I have to work in my bedroom and from my knee! Sitting on the bed all day isn't good." Other learners lived in houses with young children, and found it difficult to complete their coursework without distraction, with one learner admitting:

> *"I feel like it [learning from home] was really difficult and very weird. I had to work in my bedroom and I have a little brother who is really loud."*

While learners added that their tutors were understanding of their lack of quiet and appropriate space to learn, they expressed frustration at interruptions to learning that could often arise when learning from home.

Level 5

Areas working well

Learners taking level 5 courses highlighted the **flexibility** that online learning afforded them. They shared how they were saving time and money while learning at home, with one learner remarking, "I don't have to waste time and money on travel now." This also meant that courses took less of a time commitment, with one learner explaining, "it's a busy day and if there is an online opportunity, it gives you more ability to attend the class remotely, which is good." Some learners were provided with recordings of their classes, which allowed them to both catch up on classes they were not able to attend in real time, and also to re-watch lessons to help with courses and assignments. This was seen as one of the biggest upsides to remote learning, with one learner explaining, "If you miss a class you can catch up by looking at the video recording, I find that very helpful." While challenges associated with remote learning were also highlighted by learners, the flexibility it allowed was seen as a silver lining to learning at home.

Areas for Improvement

Level 5 learners had mixed experiences with regards to **work placement** and alternative arrangements for work placement. Some learners received help finding placements and alternatives to work placement, and were grateful for this support. Other learners felt that arrangements for placement were made last minute, which caused concern and uncertainty. One learner explained:

"We were not given enough notice for placement on our courses. Placement news was very slow, we found out only a few weeks ago, and should have known earlier. We can't be just left not knowing what is going to happen."

Another learner felt that this lack of notice could have been avoided, maintaining, "placement was never going to happen, so they should have made a decision earlier. Finally, they're allowing us to do a different module." Learners requested timely notice of alternatives to placement, and for Louth and Meath Education and Training Boards to work collaboratively with learners finding placement, should it be a viable option in the next academic year.

Unaccredited Courses

Areas working well

Learners on unaccredited courses maintained **peer contact** through continuing their courses, and appreciated this social outlet during the COVID-19 restrictions. They shared how taking part in their classes online and keeping in touch with other learners helped to combat feelings of isolation. One learner shared:

"I would have had little interaction or have spoken to anyone over the last five months if I had not had online classes – online courses are great for people's wellbeing."

Another learner echoed this, stating:

> *"[Taking my course] definitely saved me from isolation and loneliness, it made a difference to my life. Having people to talk to online is not the same as in person but it's better than nothing."*

While learners appreciated this opportunity to maintain contact with their peers online, they nonetheless looked forward to being able to meet up with their peers in person, with one learner suggesting, "having learner gatherings, maybe once a month, to meet the social part of things that isn't fully covered by online learning."

Blended learning was praised by learners taking unaccredited courses, who felt that some blended element should be maintained after the easing of restrictions. While they acknowledged that some courses were best suited to in-person learning, they felt a combination of in-person and remote learning would be a good option going forward. One learner explained:

> *"While I felt very comfortable in the face-to-face classes as they were more interactive, online has been very successful for me also. It's great that we can still view things and get advice. I would like a combination of both types of class."*

Another learner echoed this, stating:

> *"The online lectures have been fantastic and the use of multi-media has been great. It's been the full package. A mixture of this with some face-to-face classes also would be fantastic."*

Learners had successfully adapted to online learning, and saw benefits to it that could be included in a blended model in the future.

Areas for improvemen

Internet connectivity was a barrier to engagement for learners on unaccredited courses. They shared how weak or unreliable WiFi meant that they or their course mates would be unable to fully partake in classes, or even miss out on classes entirely. One learner explained, "we can have poor phone signal or WiFi, especially in rural areas." Another learner suggested, "could broadband providers work closer with ETBs going forward? Helping students get online plays a huge role." Learners would like Louth and Meath Education and Training Board to engage with broadband and mobile internet providers, with the aim of ensuring learners can fully engage with learning remotely.

SURVEY RESULTS

This section highlights key findings from the Learner Survey. All questions and responses (except for those to demographic questions for privacy reasons) are available in the Appendix. As has been shown in Figure 1 in the Methodology section, the largest number of the survey respondents was from level 5 learners (152 out of total 330 survey responses). When the age groups were used to disaggregate answers below, the age groups of under 18 and 18-24, those of 25-34 and 35-44, and those of 45-54, 55-64, 65-69, and 70+ were aggregated respectively to have an enough number of responses per category. There were more responses from younger learners according to these aggregated age categories (122 for the up to 24 age group, 81 for the 25-44 age group, and 53 for the 45+ age group).

The majority of the learners who participated in the survey were female (71% of those who answered the question about gender). There were 118 learners who identified themselves as belonging to at least one of the vulnerable/minority groups, such as those living in Direct Provision, Traveller or Roma, non-native English speakers, lone parents, persons with a disability, and those born outside Ireland. A greater number of survey responses was from full-time learners (210 full-time learners in comparison to 106 part-time learners).

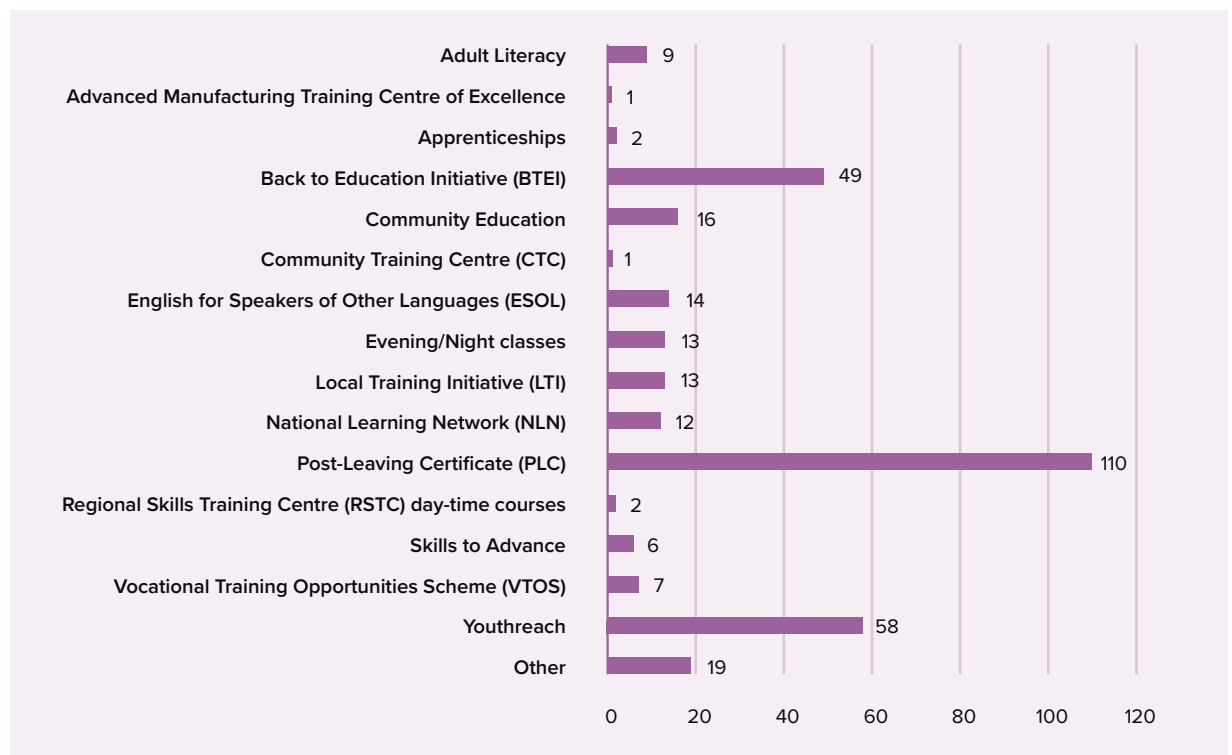| Course or programme	Count
Adult Literacy	9
Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence	1
Apprenticeships	2
Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)	49
Community Education	16
Community Training Centre (CTC)	1
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	14
Evening/Night classes	13
Local Training Initiative (LTI)	13
National Learning Network (NLN)	12
Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC)	110
Regional Skills Training Centre (RSTC) day-time courses	2
Skills to Advance	6
Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)	7
Youthreach	58
Other	19

Figure 2 – Course or programme title

As presented in Figure 2, learners were taking a variety of courses. The greatest number of learners were doing the Post-Leaving Certificate (110), followed by Youthreach (58) and then by Back to Education Initiative (49).

Recruitment, Registration and Induction

As outlined in Figure 3, there were a variety of reasons learners identified for choosing a course or going to their centre. Learners were allowed to choose more than one reason in response to this question. Overall, the top reason was, "to upskill or reskill" (114 responses), closely followed by, "to get a certificate" (111 responses). The third most common reason given was, "to progress to third level" (93 responses) and then, "to get a job" (86 responses).

However, there was some notable variation across the characteristics of learners. As presented in Figure 4, part-time learners were more likely to choose, "to upskill or reskill" (50 responses, or 47% of 106 part-time learners). Meanwhile, full-time learners were more likely to select, "to get a certificate" (81 responses, or 39% of 210 full-time learners) and "to progress to third level" (75 responses, or 36% of the full-time learners).
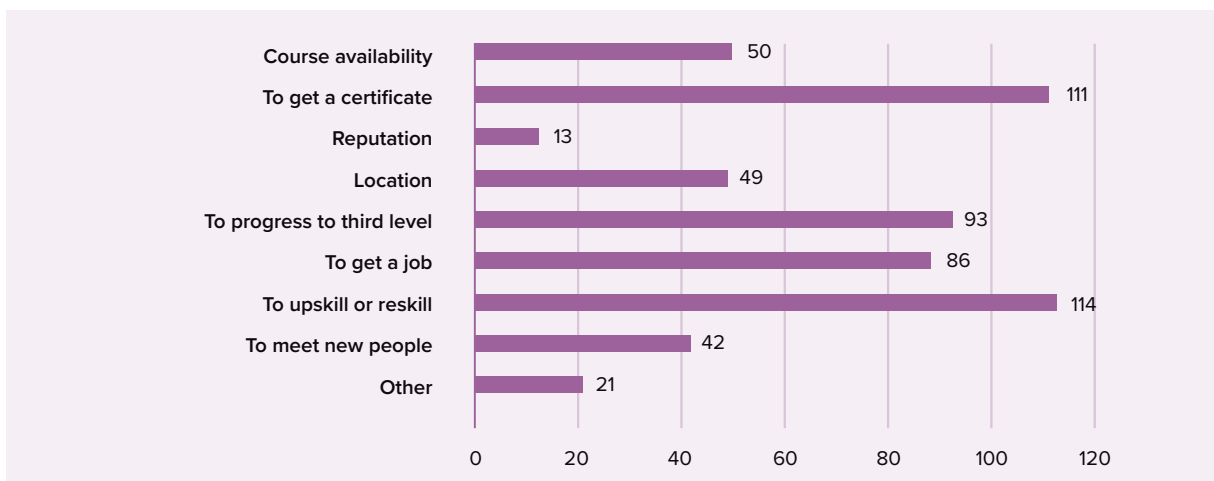
Figure 3 – Reasons for taking courses
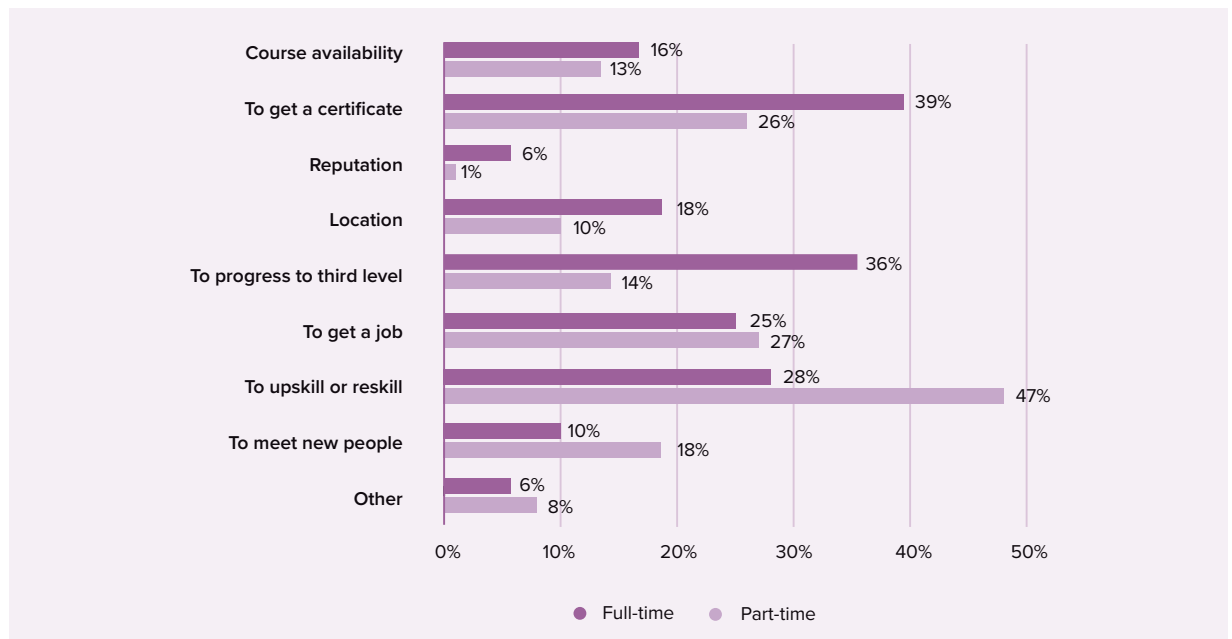
Figure 4 – Reasons for taking courses per part-time / full-time learners. Because of an unequal number of learners per time-status category, the percentage is used as a standardised measure, calculated as the number of learners per time-status category who chose an option divided by the total number of learners within the same category

As shown in Figure 5, there was also a large variation in terms of age groups. For example, learners up to age 24 were more likely to choose, "to get a certificate" (58 responses, or 48% of the 122 learners of this age group) than learners of the older age groups. The 25-44 and 45+ age groups were more likely to select, "to upskill or reskill" (42 responses, or 52% of the 81 learners from the 25-44 age group, and 35 responses, or 66% of the 53 learners from the 45+ age group) than the up to 24 age group. The 25-44 age group was most likely to choose, "to get a job" (34 responses or 42% of the age group) among all age groups. Meanwhile, the 45+ age group was most likely to select, "to meet new people" (15 responses or 28% of the age group) among all age groups.
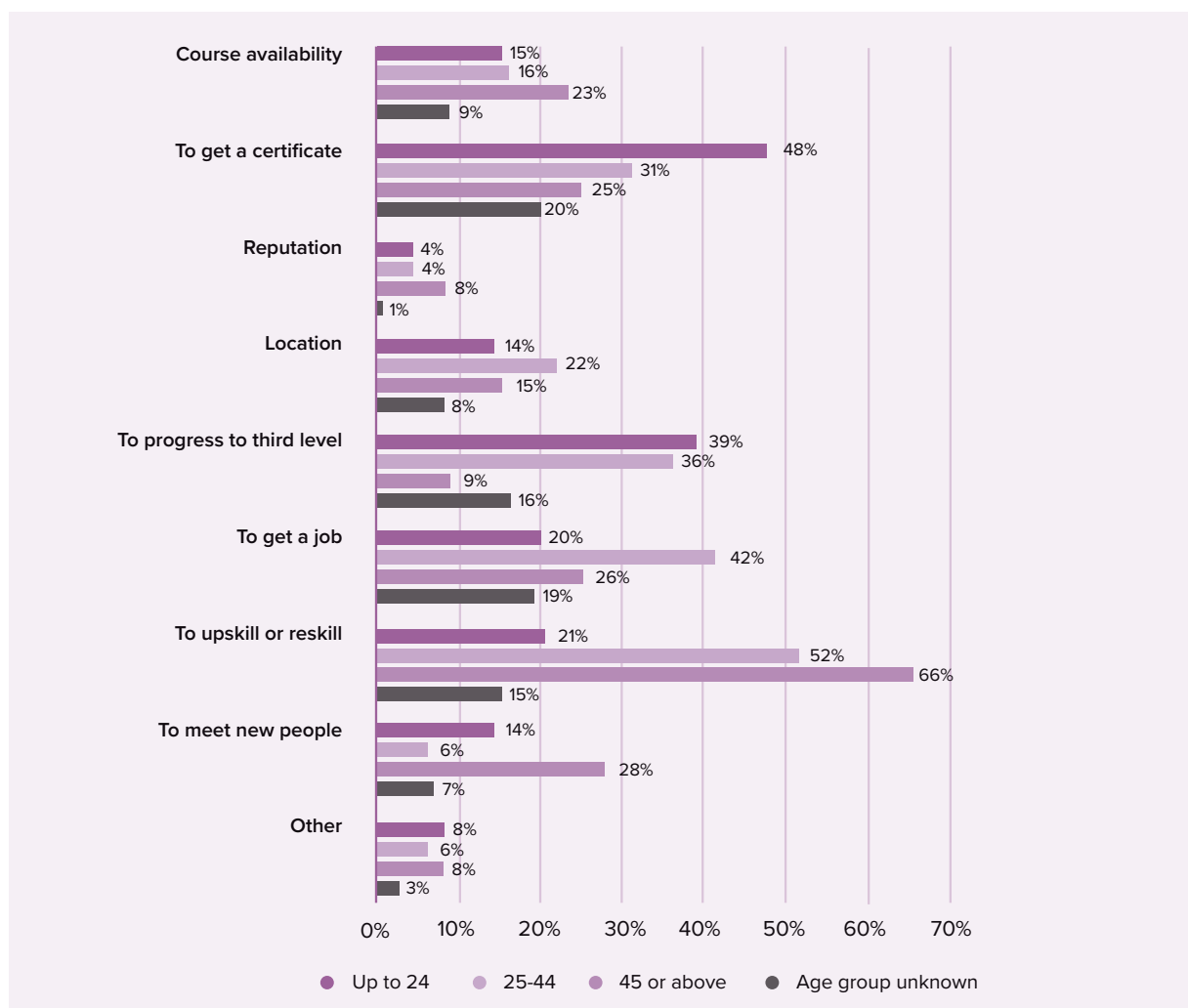
Figure 5 – Reasons for taking courses per age group. Because of an unequal number of learners per age group, the percentage is used as a standardised measure, calculated as the number of learners per age category who chose an option divided by the total number of learners within the same category

When learners were asked where they heard about their course, even in a time of online learning, the greatest number of respondents answered they heard about their course from a family member or friend (119 responses; see Figure 6).
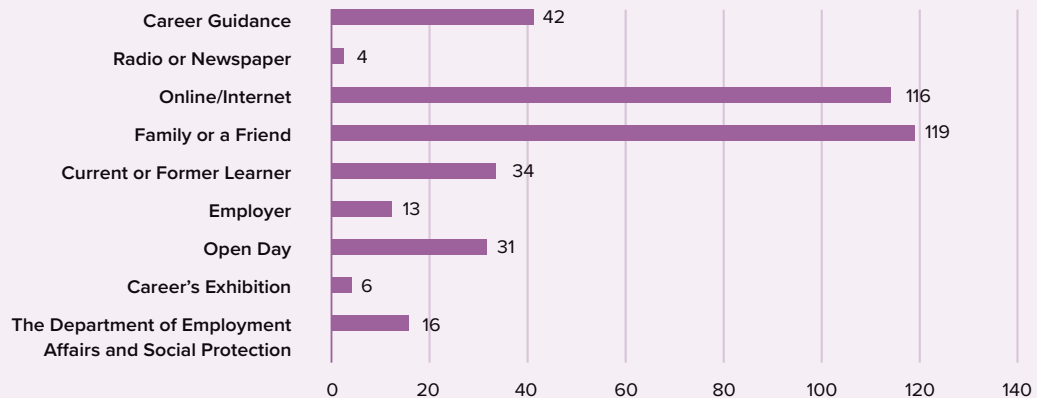
Figure 6 – Responses to "Where did you hear about your course?"

The survey used a scale of five levels of satisfaction ("very satisfied," "satisfied," "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied," "dissatisfied," and "very dissatisfied") to measure learners' satisfaction with different aspects of learning. Hereafter, for the brevity of presentation, the answers, "very satisfied" and "satisfied," are aggregated to the category, "satisfied"; the answers, "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied," are aggregated to the category, "dissatisfied." The disaggregated results are available in the Appendix. Overall, learners were satisfied with all different aspects of the recruitment, registration, and induction processes about which the survey asked (see Figure 7). For example, 95% or 274 out of 288 applicable responses indicated that these respondents were satisfied with customer service at the initial contact with their centre.
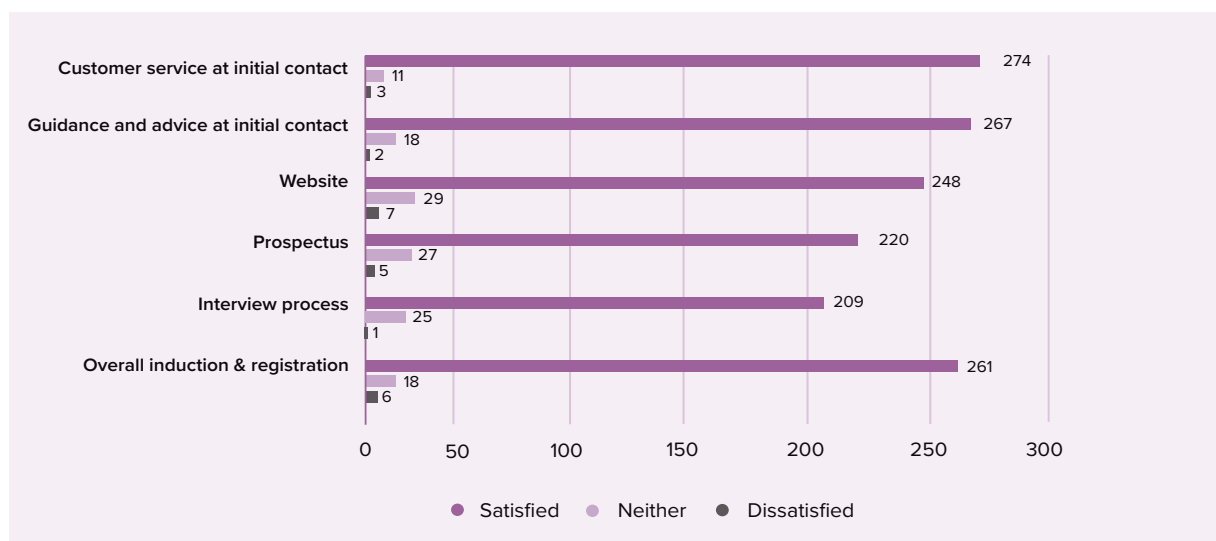
Figure 7 – Satisfaction with respect to recruitment, registration, and induction
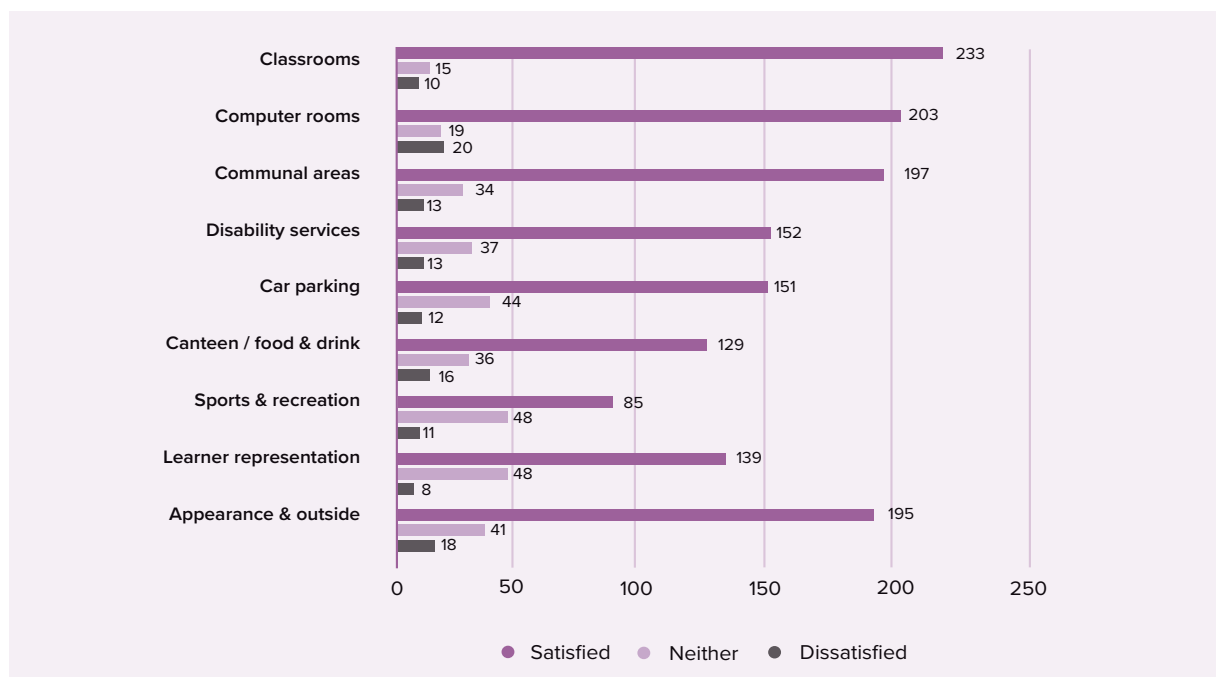
Figure 8 – Satisfaction with respect to facilities and services

Facilities and Services

Learners were overall satisfied with the facilities and services in their centres (see Figure 8). For example, 90% or 233 out of 258 applicable responses indicated that these respondents were satisfied with the classrooms of their centre. The areas such as disability services, car parking, canteen or food and drink facilities, and learner representation showed a lower level of satisfaction than the areas such as classrooms, computer rooms, communal areas, and overall appearance and outside grounds. Yet, in absolute terms, learners were, by and large, satisfied with all these areas, as greater than 70% of applicable responses answered so. The data suggests that a possible area for improvement is sports and recreation facilities. Forty-eight out of 144 applicable responses pointed out that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with these facilities; another 11 indicated they were dissatisfied with them.

Teaching and Learning

Learners were, by and large, satisfied with the teaching and learning at their centre (see Figure 9). For example, 93% or 243 out of 260 applicable responses indicated that these respondents were satisfied with their course or programme. The areas such as disability supports and open access to computer labs showed a lower level of satisfaction than the other areas. Nonetheless, in absolute terms, the level of satisfaction was sufficiently high. In other words, 133 (77%) out of 173 applicable responses were satisfied with disability supports, and 143 (78%) out of 183 applicable responses were satisfied with open access to computer labs.

COVID-19 and Remote Learning

The survey asked learners about how much they agree with a statement about their situations during the pandemic. It used a scale of five levels of agreement: "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Here, for the brevity of presentation, the answers, "strongly agree" and "agree," are aggregated to the category, "agree"; the answers, "disagree" and "strongly disagree," are aggregated to the category, "disagree." The disaggregated results are available in the Appendix.
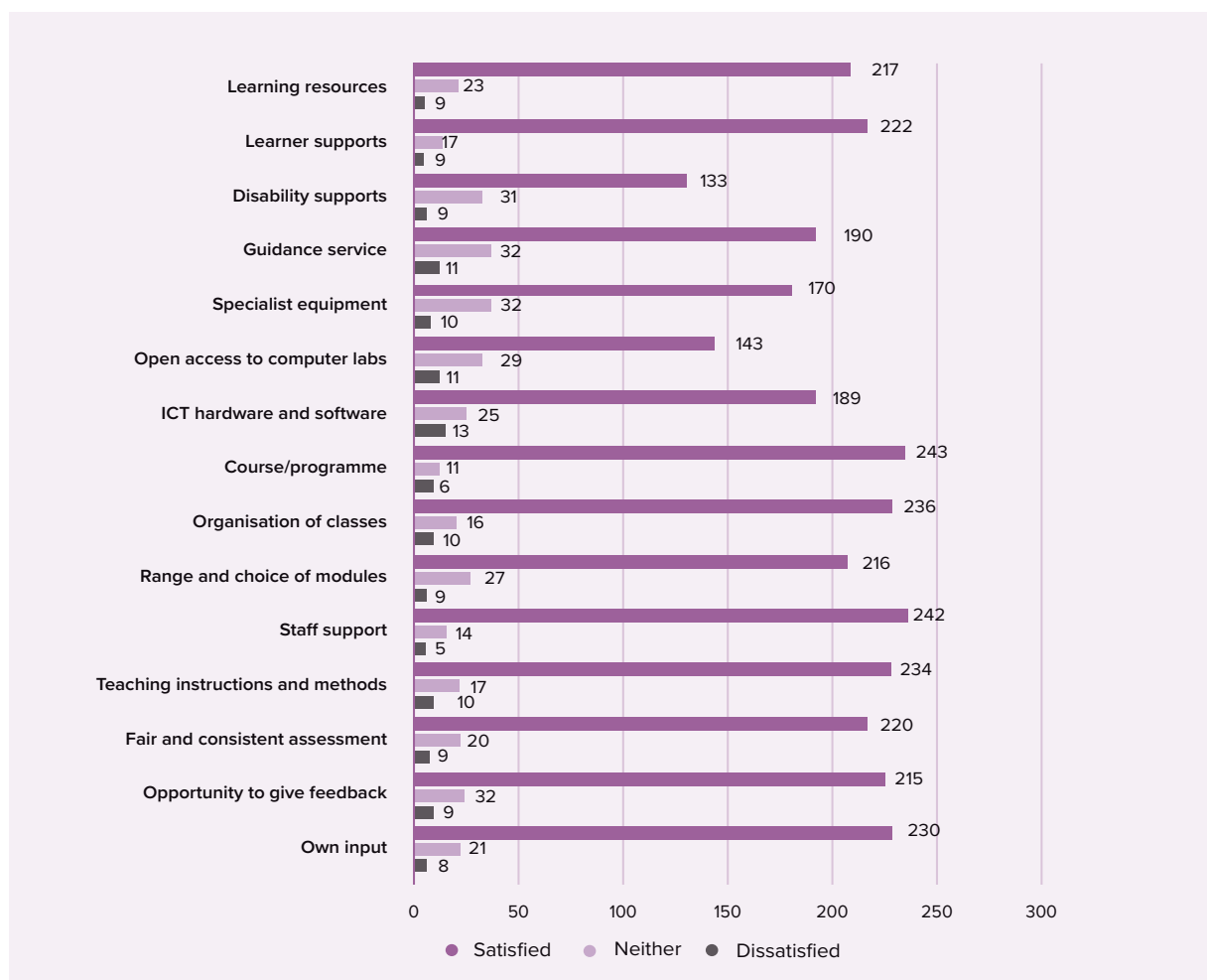
Figure 9 – Satisfaction with respect to teaching and learning
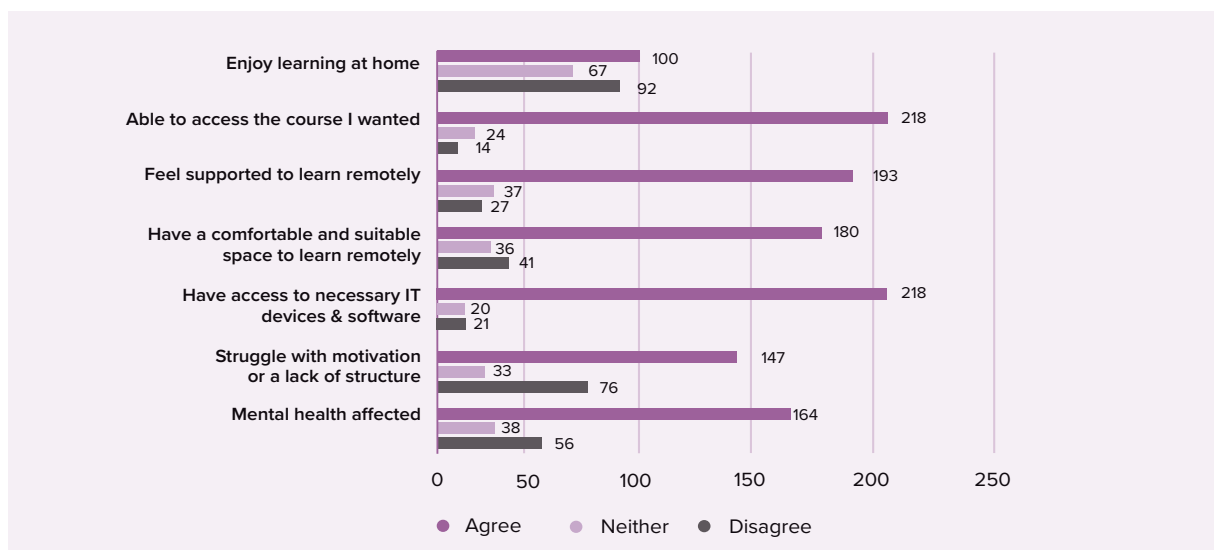
Figure 10 – Agreement with respect to statement about COVID-19 and remote learning

Overall, while learners felt supported to learn remotely, there was still a portion of learners who would like to return to face-to-face learning. The majority of applicable responses indicated agreement with the statements, "I was able to access the course I wanted this year" (85% or 218 out of 256 applicable responses), "I feel supported to learn remotely" (75% or 193 out of 257 applicable responses), "I have a comfortable and suitable space to learn remotely" (70% or 180 out of 257 applicable responses), and "I have access to the necessary IT devices and software to complete my learning" (84% or 218 out of 259 applicable responses) (see Figure 10). The highest level of disagreement

to any of the positive aspects of remote learning came in response to the statement, "I enjoy learning at home." While 39% or 100 out of 259 learners who gave applicable responses to the question agreed with this statement, a notable 92 (36%) disagreed, with further 67 responses (26%) indicating they neither agreed nor disagreed.

In addition, more than a half of applicable responses agreed with the statements, "I struggle with motivation or a lack of structure when learning online" (57% or 147 out of 256 applicable responses) and, "My mental health has been affected by the current crisis" (64% or 164 out of 258 applicable responses).
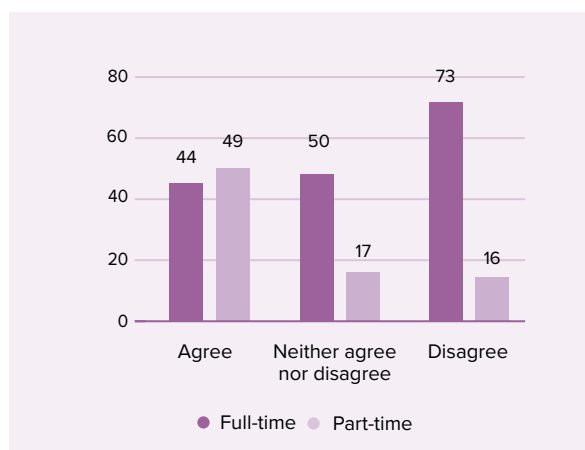
Figure 11 – Responses to "I enjoy learning at home" per part-time / full-time learners
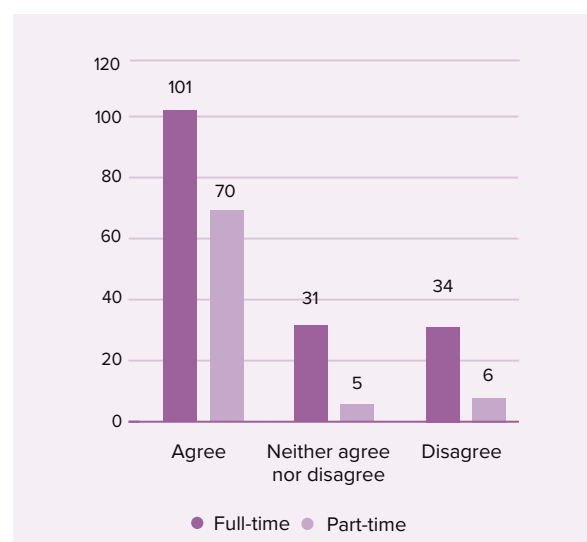
Figure 12 – Responses to "I have a comfortable and suitable space to learn remotely" per part-time / full-time learners

Full-time learners were more likely to express difficulty with respect to remote learning during the pandemic than part-time learners:

– 44% of applicable responses (73 out of 167) from full-time learners disagreed with the statement, "I enjoy learning at home," compared to 20% of applicable responses (16 out of 82) from part-time learners (see Figure 11).

– 20% of applicable responses (34 out of 166) from full-time learners disagreed with the statement, "I have a comfortable and suitable space to learn remotely," compared to 7% (6 out of 81) from part-time learners (see Figure 12).

– 68% of applicable responses (111 out of 164) from full-time learners agreed with the statement, "I struggle with motivation or a lack of structure when learning online," compared to 37% of applicable responses (30 out of 82) from part-time learners (see Figure 13).

– 74% of applicable responses (123 out of 166) from full-time learners agreed with the statement, "My mental health has been affected by the current crisis," compared to 44% of applicable responses (36 out of 82) from part-time learners (see Figure 14).

Figure 13 – Responses to "I struggle with motivation or a lack of structure when learning online" per part-time / full-time learners
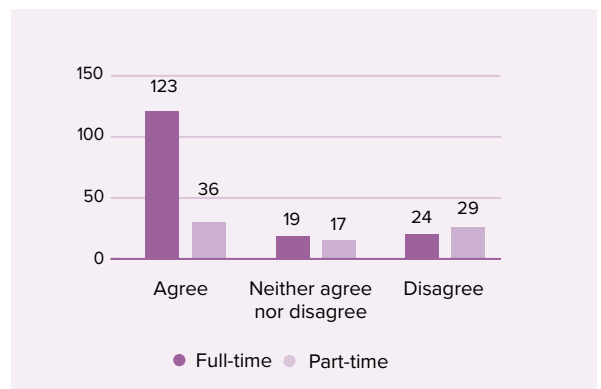
Figure 14 – Responses to "My mental health has been affected by the current crisis" per part-time / full-time learners
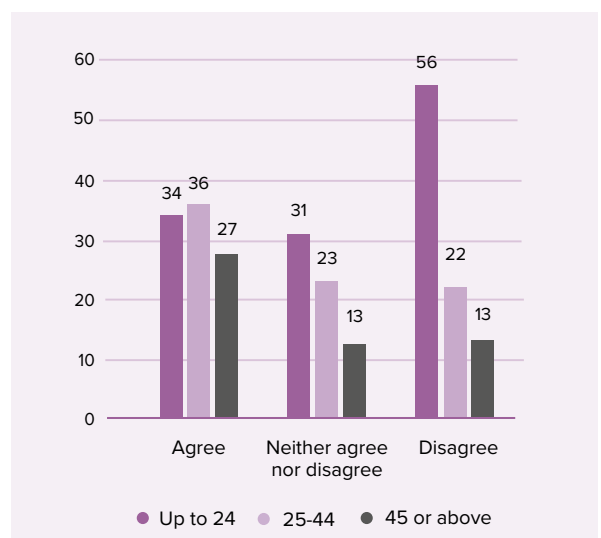
Figure 15 – Responses to "I enjoy learning at home" per age group

Younger learners were also more likely to express difficulty with respect to remote learning during the pandemic than older learners.

- 46% of applicable responses (56 out of 121) from the learners of the up to 24 age group disagreed with the statement, "I enjoy learning at home," compared to 27% of applicable responses (22 out of 81) from the learners of the 25-44 age group and 25% of applicable responses (13 out of 53) from those of the 45+ age group respectively (see Figure 15).

- 18% of applicable responses (22 out of 121) from the learners of the up to 24 age group disagreed with the statement, "I have a comfortable and suitable space to learn remotely," and 20% of applicable responses (16 out of 79) from the learners of the 25-44 age group did so, compared to 6% of applicable responses (3 out of 53) from those of the 45+ age group (see Figure 16).

- 73% of applicable responses (87 out of 120) from the learners of the up to 24 age group agreed with the statement, "I struggle with motivation or a lack of structure when learning online," compared to 48% of applicable responses (39 out of 81) from the learners of the 25-44 age group and 35% of applicable responses (18 out of 52) from those of the 45+ age group respectively (see Figure 17).

- 75% of applicable responses (91 out of 121) from the learners of the up to 24 age group agreed with the statement, "My mental health has been affected by the current crisis," compared to 62% of applicable responses (50 out of 81) from the learners of the 25-44 age group and 40% of applicable responses (21 out of 53) from those of the 45+ age group respectively (see Figure 18).
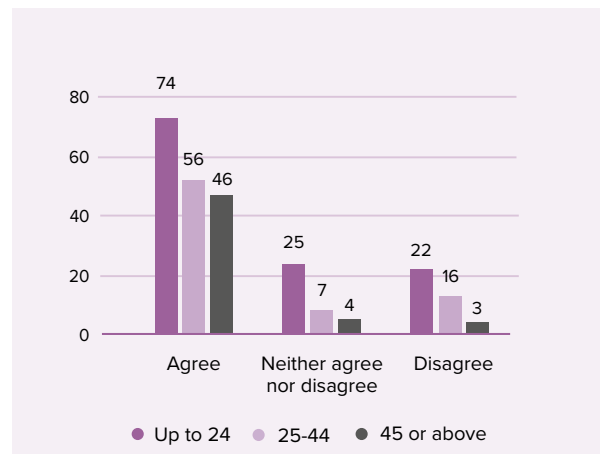
Figure 16 – Responses to "I have a comfortable and suitable space to learn remotely" per age group

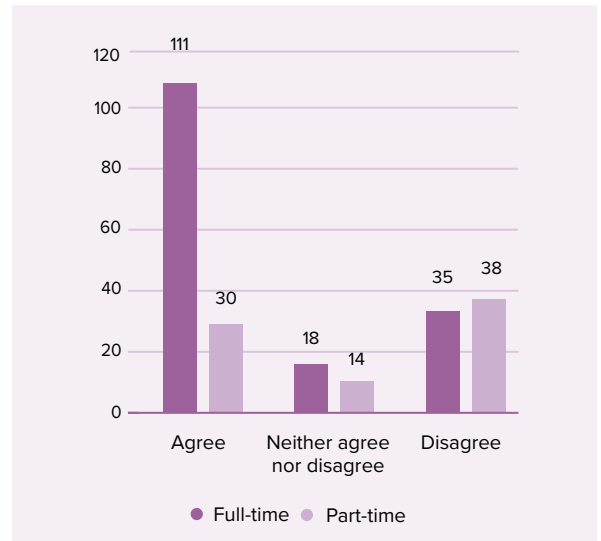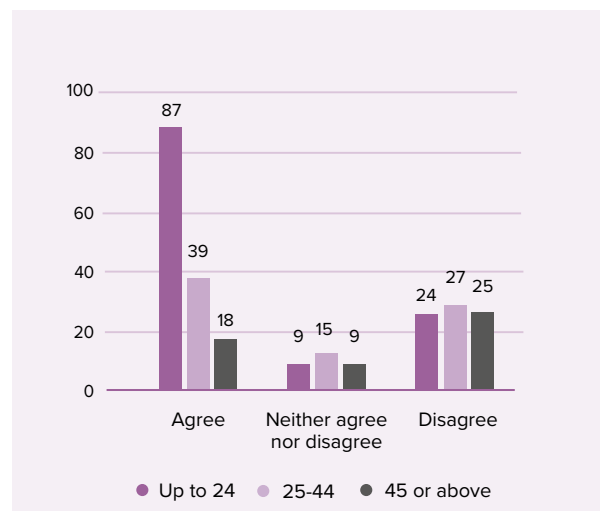*Figure 17 – Responses to "I struggle with motivation or a lack of structure when learning online" per age group*
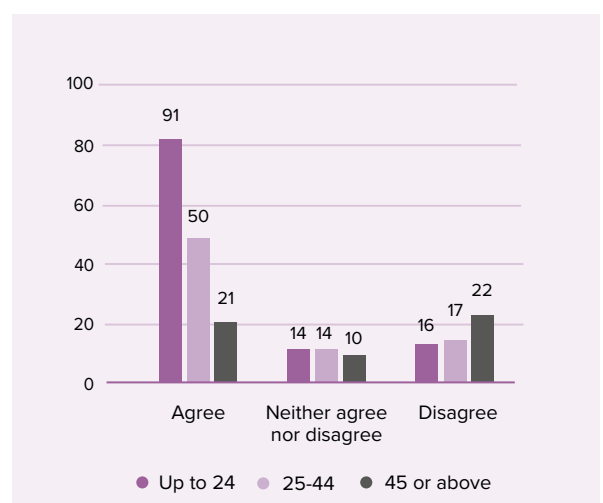
Figure 18 – Responses to "My mental health has been affected by the current crisis" per age group

CONCLUSION

Louth and Meath Education and Training Board learners were very happy overall with their experiences of learning remotely. They found the support and understanding their tutors showed them invaluable, and appreciated the communication and device access support they received from the Education and Training Board. They also highlighted new skills gained, particularly digital skills, as an unexpected benefit of learning remotely. However, the peer contact and peer learning aspects of their courses were greatly missed by learners, and they looked forward to returning to face-to-face learning when possible. They felt that access to physical learning materials and improved online platform maintenance would help them to learn remotely. Nonetheless, learners taking practical courses in particular felt their courses were negatively affected by COVID-19.

Learners on levels 1-3 found the experience of taking their course transformative, and shared that it had a wider positive impact on their lives. However, they expressed that learning on a device was draining, and asked that their class hours be revisited to avoid screen fatigue. Learners at level 4 felt that their tutors and other Education and Training Board staff supported their mental health and wellbeing throughout restrictions, and appreciated the one-to-one support they received. However, finding the motivation to learn when at home was a challenge, and learners struggled with the lack of suitable at-home learning environment. Learners on level 5 courses appreciated the flexibility of remote learning; however, concerns around work placements and alternative assessment arrangements remained for some learners. Finally, learners taking unaccredited courses found that learning during COVID-19 restrictions helped them maintain social connections with their peers, and felt that some elements of blended learning could be maintained when restrictions ease. However, these learners reported that weak or unreliable WiFi continues to pose a barrier to full participation in remote learning.

These results will be incorporated into a final report that collates results from regional virtual events held over the course of the academic year 2020-2021. Louth and Meath Education and Training Board will receive a copy of this report upon its final production in July 2021. AONTAS would like to take this opportunity to thank Louth and Meath Education and Training Board for their support of the National FET Learner Forum and your clear commitment to the promotion of learner voice. We hope you find these results beneficial to your future planning and development. If you have any questions about the information contained in this report please feel free to contact Kalianne Farren, Project Officer at kfarren@aontas.com, Laura Lovejoy, Research Officer at llovejoy@aontas.com, or Akisato Suzuki, Research Officer at asuzuki@aontas.com.

Appendix: Survey Questions and Responses

In open-ended questions, similar comments were grouped together with their total frequency being reported. In addition, if there were more than two learners who mentioned a particular theme in an open-ended question, these answers were grouped under that common theme. In the questions where learners were able to choose more than one option, the sum of all responses could exceed the total number of entered responses and/or survey respondents (330).

Course/Programme and Level

Course or Programme Title (323 responses)			
Adult Literacy	**Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence**	**Apprenticeships**	**Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)**
9	1	2	49
Community Education	**Community Training Centre (CTC)**	**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**	**Evening/Night classes**
16	1	14	13
Local Training Initiative (LTI)	**National Learning Network (NLN)**	**Post-leaving certificate (PLC)**	**Regional Skills Training Centre (RSTC) day-time courses**
13	12	110	2
Skills to Advance	**Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)**	**Youthreach**	**Other (please specify)**
6	7	58	19

Breakdown of Other (please specify)	
Applied Social Studies QQI Level5	1
Art classes	1
Care of the older person	1
Culinary Arts Level 6	1
ECDL	1
ESLO Programme	1
Further education and training award	1
IT and Office Skills Course	1
LMETB	1
Navan	1
O Fiaich college of further education	1

Pre-nursing studies	1
Pre-University Law with Criminology	1
Seasonal Gardening 21/30	1
Social care	1
VB	1

Course Level (if on an accredited NFQ/QQI course) (322 responses)							
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7-10	Non-accredited / no level
11	18	25	77	152	17	1	21

Are you a full-time or part-time learner? (316 responses)	
Full-time	Part-time
210	106

Recruitment, Registration and Induction

Where did you hear about your course? (Please select all that apply) (294 responses)				
Career Guidance	Radio or Newspaper	Online / Internet	Family or a Friend	Current or Former Learner
42	4	116	119	34
Employer	Open Day	Career's Exhibition		The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
13	31	6		16

Why did you choose to do your course or go to your centre? (Please select all that apply) (257 responses)				
Course availability	To get a certificate	Reputation	Location	To progress to third level
50	111	13	49	93
To get a job	To upskill or reskill	To meet new people		Other (please specify)
86	114	42		21

Breakdown of Other (please specify)	
Apprenticeship	1
Because of College	1
Day service	1
Good command of the language will allow me a good integration and to excel well in society	1
I dropped out of secondary school	1
I had a bad experience in school	1

I wanted to take a new career path	1
Interested in Gardening	1
Learn English	1
Leisure	1
Online	1
Preferred to normal education route	1
Struggling in school with anxiety and stress etc.	1
They help you find work if you ask them	1
To get back to education	1
To go to college	1
To improve my art	1
To make a progress	1
To pass the time	1
To see what it's like to work behind the camera for a TV show or film	1

How satisfied were you with the customer service you received when you initially contacted your centre? (294 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
187	87	11	2	1	6
How satisfied were you with the guidance and advice you received when you initially contacted your centre? (295 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
190	77	18	1	1	8
How satisfied were you with the website for your Education and Training Board or centre? (296 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
147	101	29	6	1	12
How satisfied were you with the prospectus (information booklet) you received from your centre? (290 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
120	100	27	4	1	38

How satisfied were you with the interview process for your course or programme? (289 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
131	78	25	0	1	54

How satisfied were you with the overall induction and registration process for your course or programme? (291 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
163	98	18	3	3	6

Did you receive the following information about your course and centre? Please select all the information you got below. (294 responses)				
Course information	College Policies	Learner Contract	Learner Handbook	I did not receive any of the above
249	135	125	115	27

What could your centre do to improve its registration and induction policies? Please leave your comments below. (151 responses)	
Communication / information / advertisement (21 responses)	
Advertise better the learning outcomes of the course	1
Advertise registration on social media	1
Answer the questions quickly	1
By email and Cadoo message	1
Ensure that the people working know about all of the courses available and are familiar with the start dates	1
I had to call several times in a week to be sure I would get admitted. There was no correspondence from the center with their prospective students. They need to improve on that	1
I wasn't aware of this course after searching online for it. The social welfare told me about it	1
It would have been handy to know if I was accepted via email or letter	1
Make courses easier to find and more advertising; one of the courses I am attending there are only two of us	1
Make the end results of all course options clear to make the choice easier	1
More advertisement on courses available	1
More detail to be given about the amount of work that the course entails. It would be good to be given career advice before picking the course. Teachers are brilliant	1
More information	1
Not enough advance notice of Community Courses	1

Provide clearer, non-contradictory, information about fees. Provide a school calendar	1
Sent more relevant information to learners	1
The only thing I wasn't happy about was that I was able to do my course after a year I applied for it. It was a very long wait in my opinion and my private circumstances changed - I got a job - so it was hard for me in the begging to be able to do it. I got no response for whole year so that was disappointing	1
To create a concrete awareness of the duration of the course, instead of telling students after the course has fully commenced	1
To inform me personally about the induction	1
Well, with Moodle until recently I've been missing a few of the Moodle classes and have less time to work on my projects as a result of lack of information	1
Would let students know that working experience will be not provided	1
Registration (6 responses)	
Having to fill out a new form every time you enroll for another term is a total pain. Have been filling out the same information for the past 3 years. Your name and PPS number should be sufficient	1
Improve the Registration Form. It's a bit of an ordeal	1
It may be easier to registrar via phone for those who find navigating internet daunting	1
It needs to improve on how you register for the course that [she] is doing because when I register it did not let me do it so I had to [go to] the person in charge of the community education service	1
Make online registration easier	1
Use online registration for participants in community education classes	1
Website (5 responses)	
I am pretty satisfied with the online registration. It is simple and easy to follow. I would say consistency within the website is important and it should be easy for applicants to contact admissions by email or phone	1
Improve the FETCH website; it is very user unfriendly	1
Improve the website as for it particularly clunky	1
Provide clear and only necessary information to learner, as too much information can cause chaos. Second, provide information on point of contact in terms of emergency. Most importantly, update the website as many pages show 404 error stating page not found	1
Put them on the website	1
Other (106 responses)	
None / Nothing / Nothing at all	25

Nothing as it is effective and it is a good system / Nothing at all was happy with the way it was / Nothing comes to mind / Nothing; everything is prefect / Nothing; everything is great / Nothing; I think it's well [redacted] / Nothing; it is perfect just the way it is / Nothing it was perfect / Nothing it's brilliant work they are doing / Nothing that I know of / Nothing they did a very good job / Nothing to be done. Why fix what doesn't need fixing? / Nothing; you are fine / Nothing, everything was totally transparent / Nothing, I thought they've done a great job! / Nothing, the experience I got was very good / Nothing. It was all fine	17
I cannot think of any improvements needed / I can't think of any / I do not have any recommendation / I do not think anything could be improved; I think it is already really well done / I don't have any advice / I don't think there is anything that can be improved on / I don't think there is anything to improve on as I like it and find it helpful as it is / I don't think it needs to change / No issues	9
Everything is perfect / I thought everything was good	3
It's all good / It's all okay	3
I'm happy with it	2
A little comment: The huge opportunities and doors that the Healthcare course has to offer for your future	1
All fine	1
Before the course, make small interview - check skills, ability	1
Career guidance, more details about courses, technology needed, academic writing class for students a long time out of school	1
Change nothing; everything was satisfactory	1
COVID really hit the center with a bang. In my opinion and if COVID had not taken over we would be able to meet both tutor and people that would be in our class for a cuppa and a chat before we sign up. Other than that, it's really good	1
ECDL. All good	1
English course	1
Face to face talks	1
Get more people in the centre	1
Given that we began during COVID I feel they went above and beyond to keep everyone safe. It was very much appreciated	1
Good	1
Happy with this	1
I am very happy to speak English and write a little. Thanks	1
I believe my local NLN centre does not need to improve its registration and induction policies. I was happy and found no issues at all	1
I found it an excellent service	1
I found it hard this year with online learning and I found it caused me a lot of anxiety; also, a lot of the times I had a deadline for assignments and then there would be an IT issue	1

I improve English grammar, reading and speaking	1
I think it's perfect they are well organized	1
I think the center needs to improve its online service and introduce debates on a well chosen subject	1
I think they're doing fine as is	1
I think we didn't have the usual registration and induction due to COVID so we only had online induction which was perfectly adequate	1
I was satisfied with the way it was organised	1
Induction was very long and off putting. I think it would be better if it was shortened	1
It's very good for now	1
It was a very smooth set up with nothing that proved an obstacle	1
Make paper work easier	1
Meet all lectures we will have	1
No, everything was fine	1
No fire escape exits or meeting points shown	1
Not make their students wait two months for their Moodle login	1
Online application is best	1
Play for football tournaments	1
Process fine	1
Reduce content for repeat students/course participants	1
Registration and induction in our centre were provided in higher standards	1
Satisfied	1
Send induction information online through email	1
Shelter	1
Shelter for smoking and a lift for special needs. Maybe an SNA	1
Some of the teaching skills and more help in the assignments from certain teachers	1
Sorry, I cannot remember too much about the registration. The assessment was very stress full for me. I do not remember receiving a booklet but may have	1
They do all	1
They don't need to improve	1
Try make it easier	1
We just filled out a form sent to us by our instructor. I found it fine	1
Would like when I was doing test to be able to go back and look at questions	1
Not applicable / don't know / no opinion (13)	

Facilities and Services

How satisfied were you with the theory rooms (classrooms) of the centre? (276 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
127	106	15	8	2	18

How satisfied were you with the computer rooms in your centre? (276 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
113	90	19	13	7	34

How satisfied were you with the communal areas (shared spaces such as corridors, reception, etc.) in your centre? (275 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
96	101	34	11	2	31

How satisfied were you with the services for learners with disabilities in your centre? (274 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
76	76	37	9	4	72

How satisfied were you with the car parking facilities at your centre? (276 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
75	76	44	9	3	69

How satisfied were you with the canteen or food and drink facilities at your centre? (276 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
74	55	36	10	6	95

How satisfied were you with the sports and recreation facilities at your centre? (275 responses)					
Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
46	39	48	7	4	131

How satisfied were you with the opportunities for learner representation at your centre (e.g. learner councils, learner representatives)? (273 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
74	65	48	7	1	78

How satisfied were you with the overall appearance and outside grounds of your centre? (275 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
92	103	41	13	5	21

In your opinion, how could the services and facilities at your centre be improved? (143 responses)	
Space / room (15 responses)	
A bigger study area would be nice	1
A booking system for classrooms for extra curriculars. Larger areas for lunchtime/ free classes	1
A smoking area added	1
Ashbourne Youthreach facilities, especially the corridors and stairs, are very narrow and can get quite crowded and it's easy to get hurt	1
I think rooms are small	1
I think that there needs to be more space for students to socialise	1
Little more space wouldn't hurt	1
Make more space in the canteen	1
More facilities, not so crowded in the canteen areas	1
More open spaces	1
Narrow corridors for disabilities, no lift to get upstairs. Internet not reliable. Overall facilities rundown and stuffy in rooms every day	1
Smoking area :)	1
Smoking area and place for playing a bit of football or some sport like that	1
The hall to be expanded or maybe turned into more classrooms and then Ardee Youthreach could get even more students and be known	1
There could be a shed of some kind outside of the main building which could be used as a studio for music. It would be a good way of teaching all kinds of different instruments without disrupting other classes	1
Building in general (10 responses)	
I'd say increase the number of tables and chairs available for students to sit because a lot of them get taken and it's difficult to find a place to sit down	1

If funds were available, my local NLN centre (Mullaghboy, Navan) badly needs a refurbishment. The building is old. It's up for sale. I acknowledge it may take years for new building and I will be long finished my course. Hopefully future students will enjoy new or improved facilities someday. Staff and students have done the best they can to make the place attractive	1
If we had our own building and weren't in a prefab that would be great	1
In my opinion the tutors are more than excellent. The building is old and the grounds outside are very uneven with potholes etc. This can be of difficulty to anyone in a wheelchair. I think the local bus should come back into the center and have mentioned this on the regional monthly meetings which I think are a great system and we can have our say	1
More bathrooms	1
More lifts available	1
New building	1
Plenty of ground work needed	1
The classrooms could be kept a bit cleaner, e.g. ground is swept everyday because our classroom everyday had dirty floors	1
The O Fiaich campus in the town is very run down and could do with a complete makeover. I was only out at the main campus twice but found it very strange to be in a secondary school setting	1
Canteen / food and drink facilities (11 responses)	
Access to canteen and more toilets	1
For the break/lunchroom to reopen but with COVID it's hard to do that	1
Have a small restaurant rather than food stall outside	1
If it wasn't for COVID, our canteen would be open to us	1
Larger canteen area and food heating facilities to bring your own food	1
Larger canteens	1
More room and more choices in food and drink options in the college canteen	1
Open the canteen after COVID	1
Put in a vending machine for drinks, crisps and chocolate bars	1
The canteen was very cramped. The centre is clean and looks well. I did not use carpark	1
More tables and chairs in the canteen	1
Outside facilities (9 responses)	
A shelter for our back garden so when standing there for break we won't be destroyed in the rain	1
A smoking shelter is need because students are getting soaked in the rain and coming back in soaking	1
Outside facilities put in place for break times during COVID	1

Outside was only to look after smokers. No covered siting places for lunch time. Or at least few benches near doors would be nice. Thank you	1
Possibly make the smoking area bigger and more coverage in the wet and cold	1
Shelter	1
Shelter for our breaks out our back garden as when we are on our smoke break if it's raining we have to stand in it	1
Shelter for the back	1
Shelter for the garden; more choices for lunch	1
Car parking (7 responses)	
Become more inclusive of a building, more parking spaces, better canteen facilities	1
By dedicating more than one car park for people with special needs	1
Free car park for students	1
Free car park	1
Free Parking not available in Trim for LMETB ECDL course at the old school	1
Give free parking for students attending classes	1
Unpaid parking, no canteen due to COVID, no tea/coffee making	1
Appearance (6 responses)	
Add some colour to the outside buildings so that people can distinguish between each building and to brighten the college grounds up and make it feel more like a positive happy environment	1
Cleaner grounds make it more eye pleasing	1
Cutting the grass. Painting the walls	1
Landscaping at Navan is poor in car parking area and area behind portacabins is very shabby with rubbish, weeds and builders' debris and fencing. Outside tables would create a nice area	1
Repaint	1
Visually more appealing, more bright walls and murals created by students on the walls	1
Computer (4 responses)	
Computers could be maintained better; always freezing or very slow	1
Computers need to be updated as computer crashed quite a bit given that it's a training centre. Photocopier in room didn't work either	1
Faster computers	1

They could, we're using old work computers that have to constantly pause to catchup on the task you're doing, even opening Microsoft Word is a pain because you have to sit there for a good minute waiting for it, they're old and not great so I would recommend getting newer budget laptops like Chromebook that way everyone can have their work both in the classroom and at home with no issues and it wouldn't cost much money. Updating the technology in my opinion is an important part of the education system because if you can't rely on your technology like the computers in our centre because they are literally years old (2010) then you should get newer ones you can rely on and getting and updating to the latest technology means everyone has a fair experience that also will stay with you for five or more years as most machines made in 2020/2021 are future proof	1
Other (61 responses)	
Good / At the minute they are fine / I found every good / I think facilities are good / I think it's all fine / I think it's good / It's already good / That's fine / The facilities are fine the way they are / They couldn't / They do all they can do it's very good / I think they are great / This school is very good and the teachers are also / Very good / Very satisfied with our conditions	15
I cannot think of any improvements / I do not have an opinion on improvements / In my opinion I don't think anything should be improved / No advice / No comment / No issues / No need for improvement / Not much is needed to be improved, from my little time present on the grounds I was of the opinion that there was no issues / Nothing from my side / Nothing that I know of	10
No / None / Nothing	10
All good	2
Add more or give me more reason to be invested in the facilities/college	1
Always nice to have free parking	1
Could use a map for every student, via an app perhaps?	1
Easier access to info	1
Ensure that there are no empty cans left about	1
Get an SNA	1
Hard to tell as due to COVID we were not in the center much but the toilet facilities could be improved. It would be good to have more interaction from the LMETB staff about the course	1
I think it is great service and nothing should be improved	1
I'm happy with the services and facilities at my centre	1
I'm not sure. I had access to everything I needed	1
In our learning centre, services and facilities are in high standards	1
It needs to improve the place for online course learning	1
It's perfect	1
Make more online courses available	1
Maybe you could add a library	1

More leisure and recreation	1
More sports	1
My centre was very presentable and up to standard	1
Perhaps I'm not sure if we just weren't informed or the college doesn't do but some extra curricular activities	1
Providing a library to support the learning needs or digital library resources such as eBooks, audio, video, and podcast to improve the learning experience	1
Record classes in case students can't make it, so that they can replay later and not miss out on any information and don't fall behind	1
Slow down	1
The services that the center is offering are very satisfied but due to COVID-19 the students were not able to use all of them. I hope the next year it will be better	1
They are ok. I think the one-way system could be looked at. I know it's in place due to COVID-19	1
Not applicable / don't know / no opinion (20 responses)	

Teaching and Learning

How satisfied were you with the learning resources (books, handouts, etc.) used on your course or at your centre? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
131	86	23	4	5	13
How satisfied were you with the learner supports on your course or at your centre? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
136	86	17	3	6	14
How satisfied were you with the learner supports on your course or at your centre? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
136	86	17	3	6	14
How satisfied were you with the supports for learners with disabilities on your course or at your centre? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
75	58	31	6	3	89

How satisfied were you with the guidance service on your course or at your centre? (260 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
127	63	32	7	4	27

How satisfied were you with the specialist equipment or resources on your course or at your centre? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
91	79	32	5	5	50

How satisfied were you with the open access to computer labs outside of class times on your course or at your centre? (259 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
89	54	29	4	7	76

How satisfied were you with the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) hardware and software available on your course or at your centre? (261 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
104	85	25	9	4	34

How could the teaching and learning resources available at your centre be improved? (141 responses)	
Teaching and support (21 responses)	
A better understanding of how each individual student learns. Although I did adapt to new ways of learning	1
Actually, take into account students who have learning disabilities. I got help but I felt as though it wasn't really applicable in my course modules. I don't think it was taken into consideration by the module teachers	1
Again, recording classes would be helpful	1
Being available to do one-on-one teaching if a student is quite anxious or misses a class or is far behind on work	1
First, the rooms: I think they are small. Sharing of videos and audios concerning the courses (listening)	1
Go in depth when explaining things	1
Helping out a little bit more with different people's way of learning	1
I did the programming course in VTOS and I would've liked more of programming classes	1

I say that teachers need to improve on the online Zoom education service and courses	1
Manage conferences, meetings, seminars and events related to the students' course of study	1
Modernise learning more	1
More quality time with teachers	1
More handouts given out to students	1
More notes	1
More time for the ECDL Course, especially with COVID	1
Next year if Zoom is still a thing, teachers need to take into consideration that with not being face to face it's a lot harder to ask questions about things and it's a lot harder to do over email/text; their briefs need to be better, I found every single brief I received was terrible and considering I went to normal college last year the difference was miles apart. All the assignment briefs in (centre) made no sense and had to be explained further every time	1
One teacher in particular needs to learn how to organize and then how to explain and teach better. All of us were confused as to what she wanted from us in every single class. Lucky the internet is helpful	1
One teacher was very lazy and offered very little guidance, repeating the same information yet expecting us to understand things she never went through in class for an assignment. If we struggled it was our fault, not hers as always. No other module came off as this one as we all performed well in others so clearly it is the teacher [in that course]. Ironic	1
Provision of more resources, other than courses, to expand the horizons of knowledge being learned	1
Replying to emails quicker would have helped a lot this year, and also if the teachers gave a bigger deadline	1
Standard issue of folders, notebooks etc. by tutors delivering the same course (Supplies differed by tutor)	1
ICT (17 responses)	
Again, computers could be maintained better	1
As I said in the last one, update the computer systems because they're way too old even if they are just for research because the computers have to catchup and it gets very frustrating, also get better displays; these HP monitors are really bad	1
Because of COVID-19, access to most of the above was not available. Computer were slow and printer almost never worked. I was not aware of support services, which may have helped at time. But again COVID-19 could have made this impossible	1
Better funding (and time allocated over the summer) for computer systems and updates rather than getting started with no computers in September	1
Better ICT facilities and more of them	1
Get better computers	1

Good Broadband in my area	1
Improving computer rooms	1
Maybe buy some new computers	1
More access to computer in the common area	1
Reliable internet; no internet when we went to do exams	1
The computer system at our centre needs updating	1
To have more laptops during COVID	1
Update computers, both hardware and software	1
Upgrade all computers	1
Use proper Internet security and IT specialist to clean hard drives and improve	1
We had internet issues. The teacher was unable to connect to the projector at times	1
Space / rooms (5 responses)	
Better wood work room	1
Bigger area for students to socialize	1
Computer rooms need updating, many computers were not in operation. Theory classrooms had no space	1
Not much is needed to be improved on; perhaps investing in more laptops would be of benefit	1
Spaces in rooms and more computer rooms available	1
Others (76 responses)	
All good / All was very good / Everything was fine / For me it's ok / I am satisfied / I cannot think of any improvements / I don't think they need to be / I don't think there is any way it could be improved as it is already good / I had no difficulties with any resources this year and have no complaint about them / It couldn't / It's perfect / I think it's fine as is / I think it's good / No advice / No improvement needed / No issues / No need for improvement / Nothing has to be improved they do; they're best / Nothing it's perfect / Nothing should be improved / Nothing that I know of / Nothing, they are all amazing! / There isn't much improvement to be made to the teaching and learning resources / They are good, no need for improvement / They are perfect / They are perfect enough / They are very good as they are / They couldn't	28
Our Teacher was excellent / My teacher is very good / My tutor was very good / The teachers themselves are phenomenal, friendly, and knowledgeable. Change nothing / They are extraordinary teachers / They couldn't. Our teacher goes above and beyond the call of duty to help us out in any way she can. Another teacher also gives help over the WhatsApp group, day or evening / My teachers were very awesome! They went above and beyond in most cases. I'm referring to [the two teachers]. And all the books and materials were delivered on time / My teachers were very good, I really don't know / Was great; all the teachers are amazing / Very good teaching	10
None / Nothing	10

Good	2
Better communication	2
At the minute, we are doing everything online due to COVID, but the short time we were there before Xmas 2020, the teaching and learning resources were fine	1
COVID prevented in class teaching but the two tutors performed incredibly well in what was a stressful time for everyone	1
Those have to be happy enough	1
Easier access to info	1
Face to face	1
For the equipment to be fully working	1
Give more funding	1
Guidance counsellors could be more involved	1
Have access to books with limited information so we don't have to search across the internet for them	1
I just found my guidance counsellor wasn't very responsive	1
I think that the teaching and learning have been an amazing experience throughout with tutors; they deliver excellent overall in all aspects	1
I think they are really accurate and they give a hand if you ask for it	1
I'm happy with the resources at my centre	1
If it is not COVID-19 during the course, all will be a different situation in school	1
In my opinion, the teaching and learning resources at my centre need no improvement and are 100% good. I give my reason as follows: I'm really delighted with the Microsoft Surface Go tablet provided to me and every student on the IT & Office Skills course. I really appreciate having on loan from the Rehab Group this Assistive Technology device	1
It is good; just with COVID-19 no canteen	1
It was good that we were able to go to the class in small groups during COVID for our word processing class. It is however only a small group so it would have been nice to be able to have a bigger room to accommodate all students for a full day together rather than two smaller classes but that is a more personal thing that I would have liked to meet the other students in the class too	1
More smoking breaks and more classes outside	1
Mostly all is ok. No canteen facilities but again I think this is due to COVID-19	1
Shelter	1
Slow down	1
Students should be meeting with a guidance counsellor to discuss their future plans for work or progression onto third level education but this did not happen at all	1
They are a little outdated but we could use them okay	1

Tutors were fantastic and passionate about their modules. Individual learning plans for students were run by the tutors, more tools or resources should be given for this type of learning	1

Not applicable / don't know / no opinion (22 responses)

How satisfied were you with the course/programme you undertook? (260 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
176	67	11	2	4	0

How satisfied were you with the organisation of classes? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
141	95	16	6	4	0

How satisfied were you with the range and choice of modules? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
132	84	27	6	3	10

How satisfied were you with the support from staff? (261 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
171	71	14	3	2	0

How satisfied were you with the teaching instructions and methods used? (261 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
148	86	17	4	6	0

How satisfied were you with the fair and consistent assessment? (261 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
140	80	20	5	4	12

How satisfied were you with the opportunity to give feedback on your course? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
144	71	32	6	3	6
How satisfied were you with your own input to the course? (262 responses)					
Very satisfied	**Satisfied**	**Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Very dissatisfied**	**Not applicable**
134	96	21	2	6	3

What could your Education and Training Board or centre do to improve your course? (130 responses)	
Organisation of courses / classes (34 responses)	
Add a higher-level music course	1
Aim to have all modules completed at the same time; we will be finished one half of the course in June/July but not finished the other half until November, which is very frustrating	1
Consider course duration when choosing the amount of content to include in the course. There was immense pressure on us with assignments on top of assignments to a point where our focus was just on assignments forgetting that there is exam content to study as well	1
Don't include modules that are irrelevant to the course such as communications	1
Extra time	1
For a part-time course, it's very long	1
Give more options for additional modules	1
Give more options for level 5	1
Have more classes in the week	1
Have more students in the class	1
Have really missed getting outdoors with our gardening class	1
I think the board needs to give the committee group at 3 courses to do in their centre as you only allowed one course to pick	1
I would like if there was a little less repetitiveness with the course and we could learn more things	1
I would say a bit more diversity in the selection of teachers as, while having the same teacher for a lot of the classes is easier, it also gives me less information about a topic	1

Instead of simply introducing themselves, teachers could conduct a survey and then share the results with students while inserting their own responses to the question in order to build up a personal connection with students. Also make printers or scanners available to help students	1
If they would offer work experience or offer place to do that experience, that would be perfect	1
Include computerised bookkeeping with the manual bookkeeping	1
Make it two years	1
Maybe more feedback requested from students	1
More days for grooming	1
More examples from the practice, more personal and critical opinions	1
More extra help, one to one classes for foreign learners	1
More learner engagement	1
More smoking breaks, more classes outside	1
More subject choice as many jobs or apprenticeships require at least a pass in five subjects. I would rather the QQI subjects were replaced with more leaving cert subjects as you have more of a chance of passing five classes that way	1
More support from teachers needed	1
More teacher time	1
More time on specific subjects	1
More variety of courses for people with intellectual disabilities	1
Nothing; maybe it could do a childcare PLC or add more PLC courses	1
They could add more group things	1
They could continue with more QQI levels such as doing QQI level 5	1
When COVID-19 is lifted, we should get to work experience	1
Work experience for nursing studies students should be in a hospital	1
Assessment (8 responses)	
Fewer assignments	1
Have an assignment calendar available for all students at the beginning of the year so they know how many assignments they have for each module. Also have a class so students can talk to a guidance counsellor once a week to discuss their options for the future and where they are going to progress to next	1
I think just trying to spread assignment due dates over a longer period of time because I felt throughout the year we had a lot of assignments due in the same day and days one after another	1
I think the centre must to continue to do a good job and sometimes individual assessment	1
Fewer assessments	1

More involvement and information about the assessment of modules. I have had only two results even though I have almost completed six	1
Nothing, to me it was very good. But my classmates did complain about the number of assessments we got	1
Possibly having a due date for graded work so that students have a rough idea of when to expect their grades	1
Others (82 responses)	
None / Nothing	15
All good / Everything about the course was excellent / Good / I am fine with what the teachers did and there is no improvement needed / I cannot think of any improvements / I'm happy with it / I'm happy / I think it is fine and highly recommend it / It was all excellent excelling in this time of year / It was very well run / It's perfect / My course was brilliant / Very good / Very Satisfied	14
Absolutely nothing / No advice / No need for improvement / Nothing at the moment / Nothing I can think of / Nothing; I had a lovely experience and really enjoyed it / Nothing; I think it's really well excepted / Nothing; it's a brilliant course / Nothing; It's perfect / Nothing that I know of / Nothing; very happy / Nothing, we were given great help throughout our course / The course is very good as it is	13
A smoking shelter	1
Ability to give complaints about teachers not providing assignment due dates or becoming abusive	1
Academic writing class at the start of a course	1
Again, it is hard to really comment as we didn't get much time on campus this year so whether there could be any improvement is hard to say. The remote learning in general was very well catered to though	1
Balance modules running concurrently for workload and crossover/confusion	1
Because of COVID, our learning was quite limited and restricted so there's not much I can elaborate on with this question	1
Better communication	1
Blended learning for the future with a mix of practical in person and zoom	1
Business law was the hardest because the teacher simply wasn't up to par in the same way the other teachers were so most of the time, I was teaching myself, which is hard to do when it was already your weakest subject. I found that other students struggled with this same teacher, as he just wasn't as skilled in being helpful. I think to improve; a new business law teacher would be beneficial	1
Certify it	1
Difficult due to COVID-19	1
Don't be afraid to put your own personal touch to your lessons, rather than sticking to the entirety of an outdated curriculum. You're teaching adults here, not children	1
Ensure the computers are up to date	1
Get better teachers	1

Go on trips somewhere outside of Drogheda	1
I am only four weeks in to my course so I don't feel I know yet if there are improvements to be made	1
I don't think they could do anymore for us. We're trying to do a course through COVID and lockdown, having to do online classes but can always get in touch with our tutors, who have been more than helpful	1
I think some students register and don't attend many classes. I feel they should not really be allowed to complete the course if they are not attending. It's not fair on everyone else that is doing the work. Anyone not attending 70% of classes should be put out	1
I think the course would have been 100X better and easier if the pandemic was finished	1
I was satisfied with the help and support I got from my instructor	1
It is good for now	1
It is too early for me to be able to comment	1
Make online available	1
Make sure the learner has a clear understanding from the start of the Commitment required so they are not overwhelmed by the work load	1
More money	1
More pay	1
My local ETB/training centre is doing a really great job. A new building would be lovely but due to COVID-19 pandemic and other factors, I understand why it has not happened	1
Not much	1
Nothing required; my tutor was excellent and well prepared in advance for each stage of the course	1
Open canteen after COVID-19	1
Our course had four non-native English speakers and the tutors coped extremely with the various abilities and levels	1
Questioning our Laws more	1
See aforementioned point about a module. Evaluate that teacher, collect information from students as it is not as it would seem with her	1
Shelter	1
The staff are incredible, all with their own skills and abilities fit just for the courses they teach. I have nothing to advise them on and feel unqualified to advise them on improving. The course itself was fantastic, highly informative and each subject was greatly different from each other	1
There was a lot of people in my course asking to copy my work; I think more should be done to prevent the people who actually put the work in getting taken advantage of when trying to help other students	1
They are putting 110% into our course, so no need to improve	1

Timetables were announced at the last moment, the same with dates of exams. It would be handy to know the timetables in advance	1
To have a level 6 in SNA	1
We were unlucky to be doing this course in the middle of a COVID problem. The trainers went over and above to facilitate our needs which in my opinion was excellently handled	1
Not applicable / don't know / no opinion (6 responses)	

COVID-19 and Remote Learning

How are your courses being completed at the moment? (260 responses)			
Remotely (online)	**In my centre**	**Blended (a mix of online and at the centre)**	**Other (please specify)**
145	62	52	1
Breakdown of Other (please specify)			
Waiting to start and finish my working experience			1

Do you agree with the statement "I enjoy learning at home"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Not applicable**
36	64	67	51	41	1

Do you agree with the statement "I was able to access the course I wanted this year"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Not applicable**
121	97	24	10	4	4

Do you agree with the statement "I feel supported to learn remotely"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Not applicable**
92	101	37	18	9	3

Do you agree with the statement "I have a comfortable and suitable space to learn remotely"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Not applicable**
77	103	36	28	13	3

Do you agree with the statement "I have access to the necessary IT devices and software to complete my learning"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Not applicable**
111	107	20	16	5	1

Do you agree with the statement "I struggle with motivation or a lack of structure when learning online"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
64	83	33	53	23	4

Do you agree with the statement "My mental health has been affected by the current crisis"? (260 responses)					
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not applicable
84	80	38	41	15	2

Any other comments on learning during COVID-19 (131 responses)	
Feeling of difficulty / hardship (35 responses)	
Learning was fun but it was hard	1
Can be difficult	1
Changing government guidelines made things difficult; staying online would have been fine but reopening and closing made things difficult with transitioning	1
COVID has been difficult for all. It is however an opportunity for self-exploration and improvement in a time where we cannot interact with each other. Although difficult, we all are able to pave a path for our own life with and without a pandemic	1
COVID has slowed down my learning experience	1
Found it very lacking of interest on doing my course work so I got lazy at times	1
Harder from home	1
Hated it	1
I did not like an online course as I needed a lot of help with work and I was on my own learning at home	1
I didn't like being at home and wanted to be in the centre, so why did you not let us back in when other schools went back?	1
I didn't like working at home as it was a struggle every day to get my work done	1
I do not like learning during COVID; doing work remotely is not as good	1
I have been badly affected with the lack of courses during COVID-19	1
I have three children at home so I struggled at times to concentrate	1
I thought it was very hard	1
Impossible as I have kids; I need to be in a college	1
It can be quite stressful because you are learning from home most of the time and you lose the balance between work and home, which causes a lack of motivation and interests	1
It has been a tough year for everyone	1

It has been difficult at times	1
It has been extremely difficult on young people's metal health	1
It is difficult and hard to get motivated when you learn better in a classroom	1
It is very difficult to learn from a teacher who is trying to teach half the class online while the other half are in front of them	1
It takes a lot of commitment to be able to concentrate and excel in the course without stimulation due to lockdown	1
It was hard	1
It was hard because there were some things such as work experience which we were unable to do because of COVID	1
It was very difficult	1
It's been difficult but at least it's dying down	1
It's harder to get used to half days because you don't get as much complete	1
Just not as motivated and wasn't sure when documents had to be submitted	1
No motivation. Loneliness	1
Nothing to note beyond the obvious. It was more difficult to learn from home, though there were no other options unfortunately	1
Online is harder	1
Online learning was tough and there wasn't enough support from teachers. Too many irrelevant assignments from irrelevant subjects such as word processing and communications	1
Very frustrating and hard	1
Very hard to learn when at home	1
Positive sides of online learning (16 responses)	
Doing courses gave me something to get up for	1
Even online we were given opportunities to chat on the classes and it helped us to get to know each other	1
I like to study remotely more than with a mask	1
I really like studying online; my teacher is great	1
If anything, I became more tech savvy with Zoom calls	1
Improved my technology skills during this time and became more confident in "Zoom" groups	1
It gave opportunity to learn remotely; otherwise I couldn't manage it with three children	1
It has forced me to become more organised and structure my learning myself, which is no bad thing	1
It has given me an opportunity to challenge myself and capabilities in using Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Also, I realised a different way of life and living is possible!	1

It really was a lifeline being able to catch up with all my class and tutor over the lock down. I think we helped each other through it	1
It was not easy but the course chosen by me motivated me to finish as it was my objective and it is what I want to do	1
It's been a tough year but we still managed to complete the course so I'm happy enough overall	1
Learning remotely by Zoom has been a great experience and helped keep our minds active and yet kept us socially connected. I would recommend classes online for future learning	1
Online classes were a great help in keeping connected and I hope they continue	1
The Community-based classes were absolutely wonderful during COVID. I really don't know what we've had done without them. It was so good to see other faces	1
The courses kept me focused and gave me a purpose	1
Physical class / social interaction (12 responses)	
Being in the center is better	1
Benefits are less stress for attending at specific time, not paying for parking saved money, and tutors delivery of modules were thorough. Prefer social interaction in class with both tutor and students, found not having a hard copy of resources difficult as I have a disability	1
I want to back to the class	1
I'm hoping we will return to full-time classroom based in September as I really struggle with concentration with the online learning and it's not as enjoyable	1
It is hard time for us unfortunately. I would prefer attending to the school then doing course online	1
Lacked the interaction with other students which would benefit for assignments. It was a bit lonely. I felt alone when on the online class	1
Some positives as you could do a course in Kerry from your own home, but you miss the interaction and support from your fellow learners. It is better than nothing but it is like all the work without the fun	1
That you can't really get to know one and other that well when it's all online	1
The only problem I have is that I don't have an access to new programs and computer space and I would have all of that If I would learn in class	1
I do believe online learning could be a thing of the future, being in class doesn't suit everyone but for me I do prefer classroom environment and meeting new people	1
We missed out on socialization, which is important for helping motivate some people. It felt like we were all alone sometimes	1
You miss hanging out and seeing your peers or just having an instant one on one with your tutor. During online COVID classes these had to be scheduled and it takes much more time than necessary	1

Others (41 responses)	
Access to online library is a requirement	1
All good	1
Amazing and flexible, making it easier on all of the class mates and families involved in the height of the restrictions	1
Appreciative with how supportive the teachers were during this time	1
Bigger rooms with better airflow	1
Can the lessons be recorded so if you miss your class you can view it later?	1
COVID is ugly	1
COVID crises teach us that there is no one-size-fits-all, some of us loved to do it on campus some online and both options should be available	1
Do not make people learn online where not necessary because it has a detrimental effect on mental health	1
Everyone did their best with the situation that was given to them unexpectedly	1
I believe it's individual differences. For me I am self-motivated	1
I do not like COVID-19	1
I got used to remote, online learning. It's good and beneficial to my health (mental and physical) to be back in the centre, on the part time basis. I'm slowly adjusting to it. I couldn't handle full time just yet. Re-entry back to society is not easy but my tutor is very understanding and helpful to me and all the students	1
I think as a class we're doing pretty good considering all that's going on	1
I think my teacher's done a great job helping us through COVID-19 and online learning	1
I think the learning is good evolution during COVID	1
I think there should have been a time allocated at the end of the day for students to ask teachers about the course or class as it was one class continuous after another; it was hard to get clarification or explanations from a lot of the teachers in regards to work from the module	1
I was happy to learn online remotely, do the exercise when I have free time. It was hard at the beginning, but I got more experience later	1
I would rather have a blend of being online and at home	1
I'm quite content at the minute because I want to stay safe, keep my family safe and others safe	1
In a very difficult situation, tutors did their best to help with any queries but they were very restricted	1
It gets easier as it goes on	1
It was an achievement for LMETB and personally to complete the course during such difficult times	1
It's tedious	1

Just want football back	1
Luckily, I haven't been negatively affected	1
Made rushing the work very hard once we got back	1
More online courses should be available. I prefer online learning opposed to classroom settings	1
More support from staff and assignment support	1
My class has had a rollercoaster of a year with what has been going on since the lockdowns. However, our teachers were there providing academic support, technology assistance, and motivation when we needed help in balancing our responsibilities and priorities	1
Need to get a raise	1
Not all students have laptops or internet	1
Not as bad as people make it out to be, easier	1
Not getting work experience has been unfortunate	1
Our course tutor has been so supportive and helpful throughout this experience. she has helped us greatly	1
Our instructor has gone over, above and beyond in helping us in any way he can. Without his support I don't know if I could have stuck with the course	1
Take it easy on the amount of exams and assessments you give to students. Just because they're at home most of the time due to quarantine, it does NOT mean they're doing nothing all day outside of online college. People have lives too, and homework, assessments AND exams are all stressful to everyone	1
The tutors have been very supportive during COVID and like us all really wants to be with us learning in class	1
There was plenty of additional support available for learning during COVID-19 which really helped me to with online learning	1
There wasn't enough support for me when doing online learning	1
Well organized	1
Not applicable / no opinion (27 responses)	

Voluntary Demographic Information (data not provided for privacy reasons)

What is your age?							
Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-69	70+

What is your gender?				
male	female	non-binary	prefer not to state	prefer to self-identify

Would you identify as being from any of the following groups? Please select all that apply.					
Living in Direct Provision	Traveller or Roma	Non-native English Speaker	Born outside Ireland (Where?)	Lone Parent	Person with a disability

What is your current employment status?				
Employed full time	Employed part time	Employed on a zero-hour contract	Unemployed and not currently seeking work	Unemployed and seeking work
Unemployed temporarily due to COVID-19 (with plans to return to work when restrictions are removed)	Home Carer	Full-time Parent	Retired	Other (please specify)

Have you ever been asked about your experience in Further Education and Training before?	
Yes	No

Would you like to stay connected with AONTAS to receive updates on the National FET Learner Forum and opportunities for learners in Further Education and Training? If so, please provide your name and email below. We will not share this information with your ETB or link to your survey results. You can also simply email Kalianne Farren at kfarren@aontas.com directly if you prefer.

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