



kcetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
*Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board*

SERVICE PLAN

2026

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A message from the Cathaoirleach of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board



2026 marks a year of purposeful ambition for Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB). As we continue to serve our communities across both counties, our focus remains firmly on delivering high-quality education and training that empowers learners, strengthens local enterprise, and enriches civic life.

KCETB's work is grounded in a belief that education is a transformative force. This year's plan builds on that conviction by expanding opportunities across further education and training, enhancing teaching and learning in our schools, and deepening our partnerships with industry, community organisations, and national agencies. These collaborations ensure that our programmes remain relevant, responsive, and accessible to all.

I want to acknowledge the dedication of our staff, whose professionalism and commitment continue to shape the success of our learners. Their work across classrooms, training centres, administrative offices, and community settings reflects the values that define KCETB: inclusion, innovation, and service.

As Chairperson, I am proud of the progress we have made and confident in the direction we are taking. The 2026 Annual Service Plan sets out a clear roadmap for growth, quality improvement, and learner centred development. It positions KCETB to meet emerging challenges while embracing new opportunities for the people of Kilkenny and Carlow. It positions KCETB to meet emerging challenges while embracing new opportunities for the people of Kilkenny and Carlow.

On behalf of the Board, I extend my thanks to our Chief Executive, senior leadership team, and all who contribute to the mission of KCETB. Together, we look forward to another year of meaningful impact and shared achievement.

Cllr. Andrea Dalton

Cathaoirleach

Foreword by the Chief Executive



As we enter 2026, Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board continues to advance its mission of providing high-quality, inclusive, and quality, inclusive, and future focused education and training for the communities we serve. The Service Plan 2026 is based on the objectives and actions set out in the Statement of Strategy 2022-2026 and highlights a series of priorities which KCETB will progress during the current year. This years' Service Plan reflects a period of ambition, as we deliver on our current commitments while laying the groundwork for the next phase of

KCETB's strategic development.

Our priorities for 2026 centre on strengthening learner pathways, enhancing quality across all services, and deepening our engagement with partners in enterprise, community, and national agencies. These priorities are shaped by the evolving needs of learners, the demands of a dynamic labour market, and the national policy landscape guiding the education and training sector. A key focus for the year ahead is the development of KCETB's new Strategy Statement for 2027–2031. This process will involve extensive consultation, reflection, and analysis to ensure that our future direction is grounded in evidence, informed by stakeholder voices, and aligned with national priorities.

Our work this year will also continue to prioritise:

Strengthening teaching, learning, and assessment across our schools, youth and FET provision.

Expanding access and inclusion, ensuring that all learners can participate fully and successfully.

Supporting staff development and organisational capacity, recognising the central role of our people in delivering high quality services -quality services.

Enhancing digital transformation, enabling innovation and improving learner and staff experience.

Deepening partnerships that support economic development, community wellbeing, and lifelong learning.

These priorities reflect KCETB's commitment to continuous improvement and to delivering meaningful outcomes for learners.

I want to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of our staff across the organisation. Their commitment to learners and communities is the foundation of KCETB's success. I also thank the Board for its leadership and support as we navigate this important year of strategic planning and service delivery. Together, we will ensure that 2026 is a year of purposeful progress strengthening our current work while shaping a bold and forward-looking vision for 2027–2031. KCETB remains steadfast in its mission to empower learners, support communities, and contribute to the social and economic vitality of Kilkenny and Carlow.

Dr Lindsay Malone

Chief Executive

Acknowledgement of the KCETB Board's Leadership and Service

The Board of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board plays an essential role in ensuring strong governance, clear strategic direction, and robust oversight across all KCETB services. Their leadership helps uphold accountability, transparency, and high standards in the delivery of education and training to our learners and communities.

We extend our sincere gratitude to each Board member for their commitment, time, and thoughtful stewardship. Their dedication greatly strengthens KCETB and enables us to pursue our mission with confidence, integrity, and ambition. Their service is deeply valued and genuinely appreciated.

As we look ahead, we look forward to working together in 2026 to continue building on this strong foundation and to further enhance the impact of KCETB for all those we serve.



***The Board and Executive Leadership team of Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board***

1. Profile/Background of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) was established on 1st July 2013 under the Education and Training Boards Act, 2013. KCETB has a corporate structure which is made up of a democratically appointed board and an executive management team.

KCETB serves the geographical area of Kilkenny and Carlow with a combined population of circa 166,128 people and provides a comprehensive range of quality education, training and support services. All programmes are designed to meet the needs of young people and adults throughout the region.

The services we provide include second-level education, Further Education and Training and youth work support, in addition to other community-based education programmes and services. Many services are delivered at local level across Kilkenny and Carlow.

The focus of KCETB's service is on:

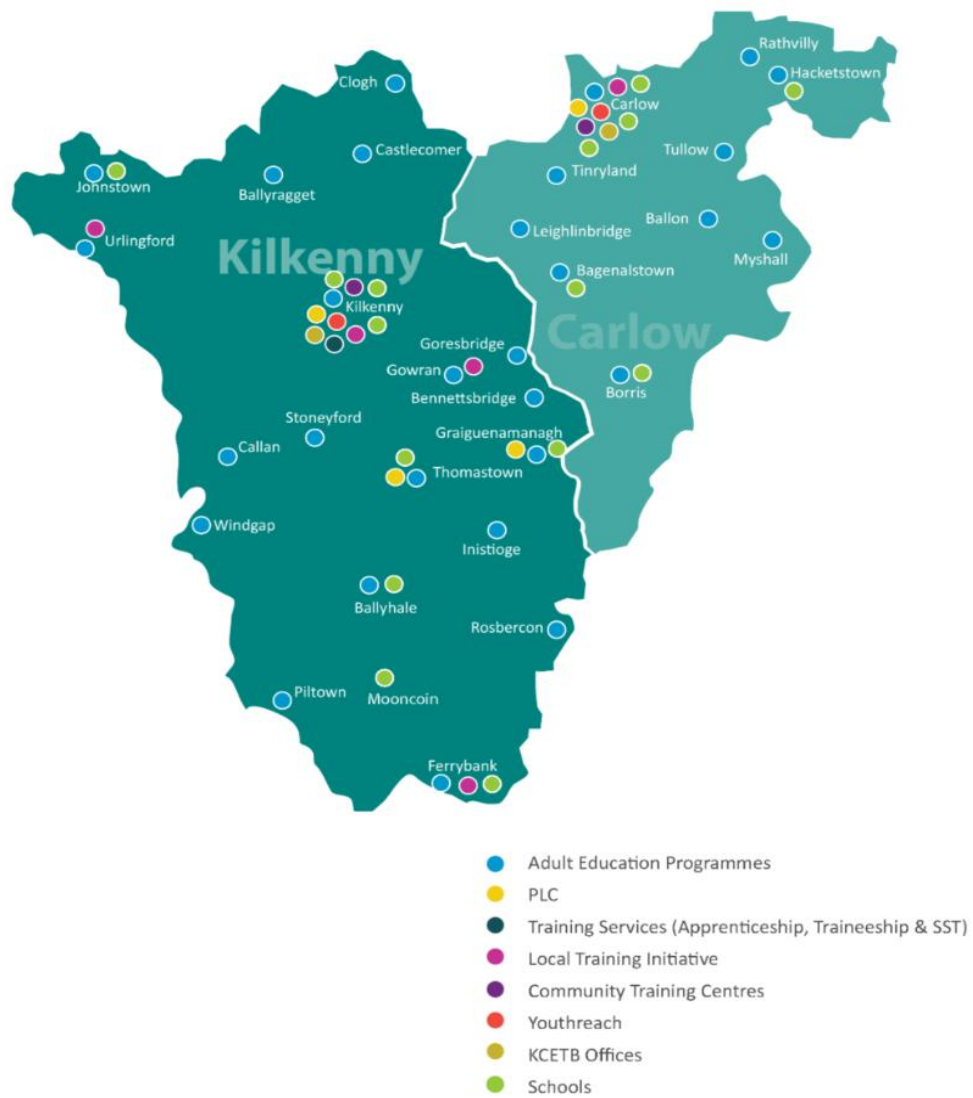
- Students and/or their parents/guardians
- Adult learners
- Communities throughout the two counties
- Young people and volunteers
- Voluntary and sporting organisations

The number of participants who availed of KCETB services in 2025 is illustrated below:

Service	No. of Participants
Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second Level	5,477
Further Education and Training <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full Time (including Apprenticeship)• Part Time	2,128 14,415
Further Education and Training Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Office Supports• Music Generation• Adult Guidance Services	7,000 12,300 3,950

2. Geographical Map

The geographical location of KCETB services is illustrated below:



3. Statement of Strategy

The Mission, Vision and Strategic Themes in the KCETB Statement of Strategy 2022 – 2026 are illustrated below:

Our Mission

To enable learners to reach their potential through education and to participate in the life of our area and of the country.

Our Vision

To lead the development of high-quality education and training opportunities across Kilkenny and Carlow, engaging with learners and communities through all stages of lifelong learning.

Our Values

KCETB is the largest provider of education, training and youth work opportunities in Kilkenny and Carlow.

We recognise the importance of our role in our community and are aware of our responsibility to deliver high-quality services.

Our work is underpinned by our core values:

01

Value Learning

We value learning and place the learner at the centre of our work. We believe that learning has the power to change lives and build communities.

02

Aim for Excellence

We aim for excellence in education and in the provision of all our services. We promote a culture of continuous improvement in our schools, centres and services.

03

Build Relationships

We build relationships with others that are collaborative and respectful. We recognise that working together is key to our success.

04

Promote Awareness

We are accountable to others and promote openness and transparency. We know that as a public body we must maintain high standards.

05

Enhance Community

We recognise our role as a provider of services in our community. We are a learning organisation and work to enhance our community through our education, training and support services.

Strategic Themes

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high-quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches.

Theme: Building influence, Driving Impact

Goal 2: Build our influence, promote our services and extend our reach, making KCETB the quality option.

Theme: Our people and our team

Goal 3: Build the leadership capacity and performance of our people and team by promoting a learning-for-all culture in KCETB.

Theme: Our organisation

Goal 4: Build a strong, robust organisation with capacity and potential.

Theme: Partnership and Innovation

Goal 5: Collaborate with our partners building evidence and insights for future learning and new models of service delivery.

Process for Service Plan Development and Strategic Alignment

This Service Plan is developed to support the implementation of KCETB's Statement of Strategy 2022-2026. The Statement of Strategy sets out our priorities and aims over a five-year period, and it is important that there is a process in place to support its delivery.

In developing the Service Plan, a consultation process was undertaken with senior managers across all areas of provision to ensure that the actions set out for delivery during the Service Plan cycle are consistent with the overall priorities and aims set out in the Statement of Strategy.

The consultation process also ensures that the outcomes set out for 2026 are achievable and are aligned to their respective areas of service provision.

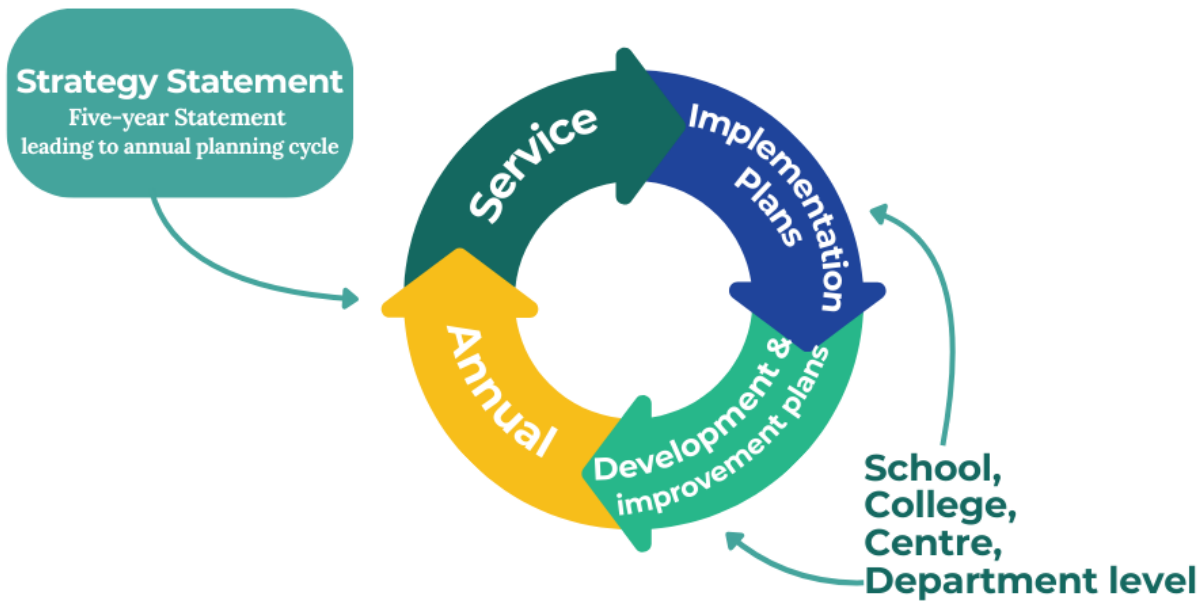
The following groups are in place to help, and/or resources, where required, to ensure that outcomes are delivered:

- Executive Leadership Team
- OSD Leadership Team
- FET Leadership Team
- Schools Leadership Team

These groups meet regularly and provide cross-sectoral support to the relevant Director to facilitate the delivery of the Service Plan.

4. Planning Cycle Workflow

The Planning Cycle Workflow facilitating the implementation of the Statement of Strategy is illustrated below:



The above process is utilised to ensure transparency, clarity of purpose and to keep a focus on actively working to deliver what is to be achieved over the lifetime of the *Statement of Strategy*.

5. Statement of Services 2026

Under the terms of the Performance Delivery Agreement between the Department of Education and Youth and KCETB, the following goals and priorities were identified. The specific actions for the achievement of these priorities, together with the associated performance indicators and targets to be delivered, are as follows:

ETB Service Plan

ETB Service Plans for 2026 will provide details of relevant actions, performance indicators and targets to meet ETB goals and priorities in the format below including, but not limited to, each of the following:

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Optimise Student/ Learner Experience	Provide a positive learning experience for all learners, including learners from marginalised groups	Strengthen the student voice through Student Councils and Learner Fora.	Active Student Councils/ Learner Fora.	Trained Student Councils/learner Fora.
		Provide broad curriculum in schools/centres.	Annual Review of curriculum provision.	Provision of appropriate curriculum to meet student needs.
		Continue to support high quality teaching and learning.	Maintain TEL progress in teaching, learning and assessment.	Continue ICT upgrade and supports for teaching and learning.
			Instructional Leadership Programme Training and Development Programme in place.	Engagement with the Instructional Leadership Programme for teachers across schools.

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Optimise Student/ Learner Experience	Support students / learners at risk of educational disadvantage in line with current national policy	Support national initiatives in schools.	DEIS and School Inspection reports.	Recommendations of reports implemented in schools.
		Continue to develop inclusive learner framework in schools/centres.	Leading Inclusive Schools.	Integration of SEN Provision Mapping & Active KCETB Community of Practice for SENCOs in Schools
			Allocate and manage REACH Fund grants for community-based projects that address climate action, sustainability, digital inclusion, and social participation.	REACH fund distributed to community groups in Kilkenny and Carlow.
		Review of Youthreach curriculum.	Curriculum reviewed to enhance learner experience.	Implementation of Bí Cineáltas Policy.
	Implementation of recommendations from Youthreach Whole School Evaluation.			

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Optimise Student/ Learner Experience	Support students / learners at risk of educational disadvantage in line with current national policy.	Continue the DEIS to FET Transitions Group.	DEIS to FET Transitions Group Meetings.	Programme of work delivered to support delivery of transition projects
				Host two DEIS to FET events annually
		Implementation of Public Sector Duty on Human Rights and Equality	Establish Implementation Plan	Lead on Public Sector Duty obligations and develop policies to support a diverse and inclusive workforce
				Establish Public Sector Duty Steering and Implementation Working Group.

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Optimise Student/ Learner Experience	Ensure all necessary child safeguarding measures are in place in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools 2017 (revised 2025)	Child Protection Training for leaders and BOMs	Effective School Inspection and Safeguarding Inspection reports	Compliance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools & implement updates to the policy in 2026
		Develop overarching Child Protection Policy for the KCETB organisation	Child Safeguarding Policies in place and annual review	Overarching Child Protection for KCETB implemented
	Ensure full compliance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2025)	Child Protection Policies and Procedures	Child Safeguarding Policies in place and annual review	Compliance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools & implement updates to the policy in 2026
	Ensure compliance with Adult Safeguarding Policy	Training for Adult safeguarding.	Safeguarding training provided	Annual Review of the KCETB Adult Safeguarding Policy and update as appropriate

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Protection Programmes	Assist the DEY, as needed, to meet the needs arising from the Irish Refugee Protection Programme and provision for international protection applicants	Provision of English Language Classes to those comprehended by IRPP in Kilkenny and Carlow	<p>Provision of English language classes to Syrian Refugees</p> <p>Provision of EAL language classes to students and adults as required</p> <p>Enrol Ukrainian students and IRPP students in schools as appropriate</p>	<p>Liaise with statutory and voluntary agencies to identify needs</p> <p>Provision of EAL/English in schools and FET</p> <p>Provision of school places and EAL support for students</p>

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Attendance rates at BOM meetings	Individual BOM should re-emphasise the requirement for attendance at all board meetings as per the Code of Practice for Governance of ETBs.	Five school BOM meetings held per school.	All schools to hold the regulated 5 BOM meetings.
	Board Self-Assessments	All boards should carry out self-assessments, using the questionnaire included in the Code of Practice, to identify areas where improvements are required.	Board self- assessment based on Code of Practice template.	Governance refresher training provided for Board members.
				Annual Board self-assessments completed.
Financial expertise on audit and finance committees	Appointments to audit and finance committees should be made by the board in consultation with committee chairs.	All appointments to ARC and FC in consultation with committee chairs.	External and Internal board members to have financial, audit and/or other relevant expertise	

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Financial expertise on audit and finance committees	External members of committees should bring the required audit and financial skills and experience to the role	External appointments follow open call for expressions of interest	Written reports and minutes submitted to board following each committee meeting.
	Board appraisal of work carried out by Finance and Audit & Risk Committees	The chair of each board should ensure that board members are provided with written reports on the work carried out by the Finance and Audit & Risk Committees, as required under the Code of Practice for Governance of ETBs	Reports on work programme of ARC and Finance Committee provided to the Board.	Written Annual Report submitted to board by each committee.
				Recommendations on the Service Plan, Annual Financial Statements and System of Internal Control to be provided to the Board by the ARC and FC.

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Self-Assessment by Finance and Audit & Risk Committees	The chairs of both the Audit & Risk Committee and the Finance Committee should ensure that a self-assessment exercise is completed annually as required under the Code of Practice for the Governance of ETBs.	ARC and Finance Committee to conduct self-assessments based on COP.	Annual self-assessment by ARC and Finance Committee.
	Staff Development	<p>The chief executive should ensure that;</p> <p>1) a member of staff is appointed as the training manager</p> <p>2) training needs analysis is carried out on an annual basis</p> <p>3) a training programme on financial management is developed and implemented</p>	Learning and Professional Development Co-ordinator to be appointed and training provided as appropriate.	Develop and promote training and CPD for staff across all disciplines.
				Develop "Learning for All" professional development plan for staff.
				Engagement of school staff in senior cycle redevelopment training through Oide.
Produce an Annual Report detailing CPD initiatives				

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Staff Development	<p>The chief executive should ensure that;</p> <p>1) a member of staff is appointed as the training manager</p> <p>2) training needs analysis is carried out on an annual basis</p> <p>3) a training programme on financial management is developed and implemented</p>	Learning and Professional Development Co-ordinator to be appointed and training provided as appropriate.	Financial and Governance Training provided on an ongoing basis by the Finance and Corporate Services Departments.
				Engagement of school staff in senior cycle redevelopment training through Oide.
				Produce an Annual Report detailing CPD initiatives.
				Financial and Governance Training provided on an ongoing basis by the Finance and Corporate Services Departments.
				HR Training provided as required.

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Staff Development	<p>The chief executive should ensure that;</p> <p>1) a member of staff is appointed as the training manager</p> <p>2) training needs analysis is carried out on an annual basis</p> <p>3) a training programme on financial management is developed and implemented</p>	Learning and Professional Development Co-ordinator to be appointed and training provided as appropriate	Induction programme for all new staff.
	Departmental reporting deadlines	Returns to the Department must be accurate and reporting deadlines adhered to.	Reports to be submitted by deadline date	Adherence to deadline date.

Goal	Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
Governance	Risk Management Policy	Returns to the Department must be accurate and reporting deadlines adhered to.	Governance Reports requested by the Department to be submitted by deadline date	Risk Registers, Audit Registers and Assurance Declarations will be maintained.
				Ongoing management of Governance, Risk Management and System of Internal Control.
			Health, Safety and Welfare Work Programme in operation.	H&S Programme commissioned with ASM Health and Safety Consultants.
				Revise Safety Statements for FET centres.
				Revise H&S SOPs for Schools based on updated safety statements.
Site Visit H&S health checks to schools.				

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
<p>1.1 Promote high-quality teaching and learning across all education and training programmes.</p>	<p>Provide a programme to support high quality teaching and learning enhancing skills and promoting innovative approaches</p>	<p>Professional Learning opportunities provided to staff to enhance skills</p>	<p>Induction Programme for new teachers as teacher leaders in the classroom.</p>
			<p>Annual Event for teachers in sharing good practice and Professional Learning Communities</p>
			<p>Instructional Leadership CPD programmes delivered</p>
			<p>Continue delivery of SETU modules in Teaching and Learning</p>
			<p>Deliver a Certificate in Building Capacity and Enhancing Leadership in Intercultural Understanding and Diversity (Level 8) programme from SETU.</p>

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
1.2 Support a diverse range of learners with specific needs to participate in education and training in our schools and centres.	Build the capacity of schools and centres to support students with specific needs through exemplars and models of good practice.	Continue roll-out of SEN project in schools.	Active KCETB SENCO Community of Practice.
		Continue to support high quality teaching and learning for students with specific needs.	Allocate specific resources to support learners with specific needs to complete FET courses.
		Ensure that resources are utilised to assist students with specific needs.	Expand outreach, assessment, and flexible learning pathways to support adults in improving literacy, numeracy, digital, and workplace communication skills.
			Establish an Admissions Office in Kilkenny.
			Delivery of Fund for Students with Disabilities in line with SOLAS guidelines.
Delivery of Learner Support Programme.			

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
1.3 Promote the use of ICT to enhance quality and innovation in teaching, learning and assessment.	Develop an ETB wide strategy to support digital and technology enhanced learning promoting innovative approaches to teaching, learning and curriculum delivery.	Develop KCETB-wide ICT Strategy.	Draft KCETB-wide ICT strategy for consideration by stakeholders.
			Schedule of CPD to promote ICT in teaching and learning.
		Expanded digital ICT.	AI awareness, training and guidance to staff in schools, centres and offices.
			Continue to develop and enhance e-Portfolios.
			Expand range of ICT programmes offered through FET.
			Monitor the uptake of KCETB cyber security and GDPR courses.
Increased use of ICT and digitisation for Teaching, Learning and Assessment.	Introduce micro-credential KCETB digital badges to recognise learner achievements.		

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target	
1.4 Promote a culture of self-evaluation and quality assurance to support the delivery of excellence in education, training, youth and other services.	Continue to build the capacity of schools and centres to engage in planning and self-evaluation and reach quality benchmarks.	Monitoring of centre inspection/evaluation reports.	All schools engaged in school self-evaluation process and recommendations implemented.	
	Further develop the Quality Assurance Framework for the ETB to support quality provision.	Quality Improvement Plan 2026 in place.	QA governance framework in operation with monitoring of progress and targets.	Formal approval from QQI for Blended Learning delivery.
			Action Plan arising from Inaugural Review report being implemented.	Six meetings of QAOC per year.
		Delivery of agreed benchmarks and targets through Strategic Performance Agreement.	Implement new FET Strategy and delivery of agreed targets with SOLAS.	

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
1.5 Promote the wellbeing of our learning communities through creativity, innovation and extracurricular activities.	Continue to build the learner support structures across schools, centres and services.	CPD supports to staff engaged in areas of wellbeing and extracurricular activities.	Pastoral/Care Teams in place in schools that meet regularly to support students.
			Further development of support structures in FET.
	Deliver a series of themed initiatives to promote education modules on sustainability and practices throughout our organisation.	Establish Climate Action and Sustainability Steering Group and Implementation Group.	Implementation of the Climate Action and Sustainability implementation plan.
			Update KCETB Climate Action Roadmap
		Establish Green Teams in all Schools, Centres and Offices.	Continue to advance the Green Schools Initiative in all Schools.
		Promote Annual sustainability initiatives in Schools and FET Centres.	Deliver training programmes that support Green Skills targets across various sectors.
			Implementation of several themed innovative projects including Hybrid Classrooms, DEIS to FET initiatives and Promote debating, games and green initiatives in schools.

Theme: Teaching, Learning and Quality Standards in Service

Goal 1: Promote high quality teaching, learning and service delivery standards, embracing new methodologies and innovative approaches

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
	Provide opportunities annually for activities which support creativity, innovation and the wider benefits of learning across the organisation.	Promote opportunities to support extra-curricular learning.	Implementation of several themed innovative projects including Hybrid Classrooms, DEIS to FET initiatives and Promote debating, games and green initiatives in schools.
		Develop policy to support access, transfer and progression for learners.	Publish a KCETB FET Learner Handbook. Implementation of several themed innovative projects including Hybrid Classrooms, DEIS to FET initiatives.
			Implement the Wider Benefits of Learning Tool.

Theme: Building Influence, Driving Impact

Goal 2: Build our influence, promote our services and extend our reach, making KCETB the quality option.

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
2.1 Adopt a strong leadership role identifying current trends and future opportunities for growth and development.	Optimise the use of our analytics and data to determine our performance and identify opportunities to enhance existing provision and develop new areas	Regular reports from PLSS, QBS and MIS.	Reports from PLSS, QBS and Tableau analysed and cascaded to centres with follow up on recommendations.
			Review engineering provision with employees and regional stakeholders.
		Timely provision of reports; financial, staff and other to DFHERIS, SOLAS and other agencies.	Governance reports to Department provided within deadlines as required.
			Schools using the School Self Evaluation process to gather and analyse data.
			School Improvement plans reviewed and updated.
Liaise with SOLAS to plan for future Apprenticeship and Industry needs.			

Theme: Building Influence, Driving Impact

Goal 2: Build our influence, promote our services and extend our reach, making KCETB the quality option.

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target	
2.2 Invest in the KCETB brand and profile to promote our identity, position and reputation.	Develop a Communications Strategy to enhance the profile of the ETB and its learners	Establish Communications Steering Group and working group.	Agree a KCETB Communications Workplan to include brand guidelines and calendar of events.	
			Members of Executive Team complete the Public Relations Institute Certificate in Executive Communications for ETB.	
			Continued implementation of College of FET branding and initiatives.	
	Develop a school and FET promotional programme	KCETB promotional activities to promote schools and FET services.	Compliance with Irish Language Act	KCETB Website/Annual KCETB Newsletter/Infographics and videos to promote ETB as school patron and service provider & appropriate Excellence Awards.
				Increase visibility of Irish language in complying with Irish Language Act requirements
				Implement Irish Language Implementation Plan.
	Establish Irish Language Development Steering and Implementation Group.			

Theme: Building Influence, Driving Impact

Goal 2: Build our influence, promote our services and extend our reach, making KCETB the quality option.

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
2.3 Develop KCETB as a learning organisation, promoting one voice and one team focused on future learning.	Identify an annual schedule of events which showcase learner achievements and promote participation.	Exhibitions and Open Days actively promoted.	Schedule of learner events promoted and delivered including KCETB Schools Debating Competition 2026.
		Promote and encourage engagement including with relevant awards.	KCETB engagement in appropriate Excellence Awards.
			Establish a FET Learner Engagement Forum.
			Host major sectoral events including the DFHERIS Staff Event and the KCETB Apprenticeship Expo and KCETB Excellence in Education Showcase Event.

Theme: Building Influence, Driving Impact

Goal 2: Build our influence, promote our services and extend our reach, making KCETB the quality option.

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
2.4 Position KCETB as the 'quality option' aligned with the learning, community and business needs of our area	Set out a range of initiatives to build stronger links with employers, higher education institutions and communities.	Participate in LGMA, DSP protocols and other networks.	Active participation in regional and local networks.
			Establish MOU with new Local Area Employment Service
			Participation in job / employment events with DSP.
		Actively engage with SOLAS FET for enterprise strategic priority.	Series of meetings to support the ETB / DSP Protocol at Area and Local levels.
			New programmes and supports for employers delivered.
		Assess feasibility of a CRM system for tracking employer engagement.	Conduct a cost benefit analysis for CRM system for KCETB.

Theme: Our people and our team

Goal 3: Build the capacity, performance and leadership of our people and team by promoting a learning for all culture in KCETB

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
3.1 Ensure KCETB has competent staff in place to meet the strategic needs of the organisation	Engage with the Department of Education and Youth and DFHERIS regarding the staffing needs of KCETB in meeting our objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan.	Engage with DEY and DFHERIS on teacher allocation and staffing supply issues; targeted recruitment campaigns; upskilling of staff in areas of shortages.	Targeted support for areas of shortage; competitive recruitment campaigns and supporting upskilling.
		Actively engage with the ETBI Promotional Campaign for ETB Careers.	KCETB engaged locally in the ETBI Promotional Campaign for ETB Careers to promote career opportunities in the region.
		Further develop FET Structure and conduct a strategic analysis of senior posts in FET.	Apply for sanctions for new FET posts.
			Engage with DEY/DFHERIS regarding staff to meet the strategic needs of the organisation.

Theme: Our people and our team

Goal 3: Build the capacity, performance and leadership of our people and team by promoting a learning for all culture in KCETB

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
3.2 Support leadership development throughout the organisation.	Provide induction, mentoring and leadership support for staff across the organisation	Manage Induction training programme.	Induction Training for new staff delivered.
		Management and leadership training for staff.	Continued delivery of Middle Leadership Programme within KCETB schools.
			Continue development the leadership capacity of senior leaders within KCETB.

Theme: Our people and our team

Goal 3: Build the capacity, performance and leadership of our people and team by promoting a learning for all culture in KCETB

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
3.3 Promote a culture of high performance and growth through learning for all within KCETB.	Continue to build networks and communities of practice to support capacity building and the sharing of good practice.	Use the Office 365 and MS Teams Platform to support Communities of Practice.	Further development of Communities of Practice.
	Support the well-being of staff through a range of initiatives annually.	Continue to promote initiatives that support staff welfare including the Employee Assistance Programme.	Review of engagement of KCETB Staff with Employee Assistance Programme.
		Provide a Certificate in Building Capacity and Enhancing Leadership in Intercultural Understanding and Diversity (Level 8) programme to Senior Leaders.	Certificate in Building Capacity and Enhancing Leadership in Intercultural Understanding and Diversity delivered.

Theme: Our Organisation

Goal 4: Build a strong, robust organisation with capacity and potential

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
4.1 Develop a fit for purpose organisation to support the delivery of education and training.	Continue the review of functional areas of OSD.	Initiate the HR update review.	Report available from the review.
	Develop an Action Plan to assess, address and report on the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty of KCETB.	Establish the Public Sector and EDI Steering Group and Implementation Group.	In line with Public Sector Duty obligations develop policies to support a diverse and inclusive workforce.
			Implement the Public Sector and EDI Implementation Plan.
Engage with the Investors in Diversity Programme through The Irish Centre for Diversity.	Annual Staff Feedback exercise conducted to inform EDI.	Annual staff survey completed and findings analysed to support organisational planning.	

Theme: Our Organisation

Goal 4: Build a strong, robust organisation with capacity and potential

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
4.2 Develop a governance framework that supports the current needs and future potential of the organisation.	Continue to build the governance and risk management framework of the organisation in the key areas of finance, human resources and corporate services	Corporate Governance Programme including System of Internal Control to facilitate compliance and reduce corporate risk.	Annual SIC Checklist to be completed.
			Ongoing review and enhance Governance, Risk Management, the System of Internal Control and Compliance.
4.3 Build our ICT capability to support service delivery throughout the organisation	Develop a strategic framework to enhance the digital capability of the organisation to support service delivery	Develop and implement a KCETB Information Security Management System (ISMS) aligned with national cybersecurity frameworks, to strengthen security governance, risk management, data protection and ICT service delivery across Schools, FET and OSD.	Engage with IAU, ICT-ETBI and KOSI at national level to progress towards the ICT/Cyber Security baseline standards.
			Continue to roll-out digital phone system in FET.
			Windows 11 migration to continue in 2026.
		Digitisation of files in HR.	HR to determine specification of requirements and conduct tender competition.
			Continued engagement with ESBS re Finance Shared Services Programme roll out.

Theme: Our Organisation

Goal 4: Build a strong, robust organisation with capacity and potential

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
<p>4.4 Enhance our infrastructure and facilities to support our delivery of services.</p>	<p>Progress the delivery of strategic infrastructural projects and plan for the refurbishment of facilities to support sustainability, energy management and access initiatives</p>	<p>KCETB will continue to actively progress the delivery of strategic infrastructural projects and plan for the refurbishment of facilities to support sustainability, energy management and access initiatives.</p>	<p>KCETB will continue to actively progress the delivery of strategic infrastructural projects and plan for the refurbishment of facilities to support sustainability, energy management and access initiatives.</p>
			<p>Progression of projects at Kilkenny Schools Campus, Borris College, GCC, Coláiste Mhuire, Duiske College Grennan College, Coláiste Eoin, a new headquarters facility in Carlow, College of FET in Kilkenny, Grennan Equestrian Centre and Grennan Mill.</p>
			<p>Review and update SOLAS estate strategy with Energy usage.</p>
	<p>Pension records of staff to be reviewed and uploaded to Core Portal system.</p>	<p>The review and uploading of records will enable KCETB to report on its pension liability and enable staff to access the pension module of Core Portal to forecast retirement benefits.</p>	<p>All legacy pension details to be uploaded on Core system by end of 2026. Project proposal discussed with ESBS.</p>

Theme: Partnership and Innovation

Goal 5: Collaborate with our partners building evidence and insights for future learning and new models of service delivery.

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
5.1 Develop new strategic alliances and partnerships to extend our core services and develop new areas of provision.	Provide opportunities to strengthen links with students and parents through student and parent councils and learner fora.	Initiate a review of external engagement activity.	KCETB engage as partners in the EDU Well European Project.
			Establish a profile of KCETB external engagement activity.
			Advancing innovation and skills through the Powerhouse partnership with SETU, Carlow Chamber, Carlow Kilkenny Skill-net and industry.
5.2 Strengthen our existing alliances with our education partners to enhance and promote our services.	Continue the roll out of the Youth Work Plan to co-ordinate and deliver on national priorities.	Priorities agreed for Youth Work and aligned to KCETB Statement of Strategy.	Progression of Annual Youth Work Priorities.
			Support UBU funded youth services.
	New UBU Service in Kilkenny launched and developed.	Support the roll out of the new UBU service in North Kilkenny.	
	Analyse operation of Erasmus+ to determine future operations of programme.	Initiate a review of Erasmus. Develop new procedures for Erasmus applications and mobilities.	Revised policy and procedures in place for Erasmus.

Theme: Partnership and Innovation

Goal 5: Collaborate with our partners building evidence and insights for future learning and new models of service delivery.

Priority	Action	Performance Indicator	Target
5.3 Focus on innovation and explore new models of service delivery.	Plan for the development of community national school provision in KCETB.	KCETB will actively engage with the national survey for the potential reconfiguration of primary schools for Kilkenny and Carlow.	Compete in Patronage Campaign as appropriate.
	Continue to implement a simplified learning pathways structure for FET learners.	Continue to review and implement current pathway structures.	Provide Transition Year programmes incorporating iVET modules along with hands-on Culinary, Barista, and Continue delivery of tertiary programmes in Kilkenny and Carlow.
	Continue to offer new models of delivery with higher education in the SE region.	Continue to work with HE institutes.	Offer 1 st year of degree programmes in partnership with SETU.
	Pilot approaches to enhance curricular delivery through blended learning, eCollege and new models of delivery.	Increase in the number of courses offered through eCollege, traineeships and innovative projects.	Pilot new Micro Qualifications.



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Overview of Services 2026

6. Further Education and Training

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) provides a wide range of quality-assured, diverse Further Education and Training programmes through its FET Centres in Carlow and Kilkenny. 22 individual programmes are funded through SOLAS (including Apprenticeship), with other initiatives and services funded through DCEDIY and DES. The FET Service offers full-time and part-time programmes accredited by QQI, City and Guilds, CIDESCO, ITEC and other awarding bodies.

KCETB is committed to delivering an inclusive, innovative, and learner-centred Further Education and Training (FET) service that responds to regional and national skills priorities. Our purpose is to upskill learners and apprentices in our region, in core competencies required for an innovative and inclusive economy, supporting productivity, sectoral specialisation, social cohesion, and lifelong learning. KCETB's 2026 provision will strengthen learner pathways, workforce skills, community engagement, and enterprise collaboration, ensuring equitable access and measurable outcomes.

During 2025, the number of learners commencing a FET programme with KCETB increased, with over 16,500 beneficiaries attending a FET course/programme. In addition to this over 350 new apprentice registrations occurred with employers, adults attended for Adult Guidance services, and young people attended services and events funded through the Youth Office and Music Generation

The KCETB FET focus aligns directly with the FET Strategy 2026–2030 pillars:

- **Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills:** Develop foundational, transferable (digital, AI, green), interpersonal, and sector-specific skills aligned with today's and tomorrow's labour-market needs.
- **Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion:** Ensure equitable access for under-represented groups, disadvantaged communities, and learners with barriers to participation, and fostering social inclusion.
- **Quality with Innovation:** Deliver high-quality, inclusive learning environments, progressive teaching methodologies, blended and digital approaches, and FET-wide universal design.
- **Collaborating for Impact:** Strengthen partnerships with industry, higher education, schools, community organisations, and statutory agencies to deliver integrated, learner-centred pathways.

For 2026, KCETB will advance the FET strategic priority areas outlined below.

These strategic priorities provide the overarching direction for KCETB's Further Education and Training (FET) Service and articulate the long-term ambitions that will guide planning, investment and programme development in the year ahead.

6.1 Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills

In 2026, KCETB will strengthen its role in developing a future-ready workforce by delivering agile, industry-aligned FET programmes. Provision will be targeted to meet prioritised regional and national skills needs, with a particular focus on healthcare, engineering, manufacturing and green skills. Flexible delivery models—including blended, modular and workplace-based learning—will support employers and learners to adapt to evolving skills requirements and reinforce KCETB's contribution to a resilient and competitive regional economy.

6.2 Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion

KCETB will continue to ensure that FET provision promotes equitable access to learning and meaningful participation for all, particularly for learners who are underrepresented or furthest removed from the labour market. Programmes will be designed to foster lifelong learning, social inclusion and sustainable employment, supporting greater workforce participation and contributing to economic prosperity and social cohesion across the region.

6.3 Quality with Innovation

A strong culture of quality assurance, evidence-based practice and continuous improvement will underpin all FET delivery in 2026. KCETB will continue to embed innovative pedagogical approaches, deepen employer engagement and strengthen learner-centred programme design. These measures will enhance learner outcomes and ensure that provision remains relevant, high-quality and responsive to changing skills ecosystems.

6.4 Collaborating for Impact

KCETB will prioritise collaboration with employers, enterprise agencies, regional stakeholders and community partners to drive impactful FET provision. Through strategic partnerships, KCETB will ensure that programmes are closely aligned to labour market needs, advance workforce development and maximise value for learners, employers and the wider region.

Key Priorities for the FET Service in 2026

While the strategic priorities above outline the long-term direction and ambition for FET in KCETB, the following operational priorities represent the concrete actions, projects and developments that will be progressed during 2026 to deliver on that strategic intent. These priorities translate the broader vision into specific implementation steps, capital developments and targeted initiatives.

Operational Priorities

- Progress the FET College of the Future development in Kilkenny, alongside other priority capital investments
- Establish a centralised FET Admissions Office in Kilkenny
- Review energy consumption across the FET estate in line with the KCETB Estates Strategy

- Pilot new micro-qualifications in collaboration with employers and regional stakeholders
- Complete a comprehensive review of engineering provision with employers and regional stakeholders to ensure alignment with emerging industry needs.

Planned programmes for 2026 with estimated starter numbers are detailed below:

2026 Programmes		
FET Provision		Planned Starters
Apprenticeship Training	Phase 2 Kilkenny Phase 4 & 6 Carlow	350
Community Training Centres	Kilkenny & Carlow	75
Local Training Initiatives	Carlow	50
PLC	Kilkenny & Carlow	1,500
Specialist Training Providers	Kilkenny & Carlow	30
Specific Skills Training	Kilkenny & Carlow	350
Tertiary	Kilkenny & Carlow	35
Traineeship Training	Kilkenny & Carlow	50
VTOS	Kilkenny	50
Youthreach	Kilkenny & Carlow	50
Totals Full time		2,540
Adult Literacy Groups	Kilkenny & Carlow	1,500
BTEI Groups	Kilkenny & Carlow	1000
ESOL (including Refugee Provision)	Kilkenny & Carlow	300
FET Cooperation Hours	Kilkenny & Carlow	750
FET Pathways	Kilkenny & Carlow	75
Online ECollege	Online	100
Skills to Advance / Skills to Work	Kilkenny & Carlow	700
Total Part-time		4,425
Community Education	Kilkenny & Carlow	5000
Total Programme Provision		11,965

In addition to the above programmes the Adult Guidance and Information Service, Youth Services, and Music Generation all work with a diverse range of adults and young people across a few locations in Kilkenny and Carlow.



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7. Organisation Support and Development

The Organisation Support and Development (OSD) team, under the Director of OSD, supports the Chief Executive in the delivery of corporate governance and the management of services throughout KCETB.

KCETB's education and training services are supported by an executive and management team whose work underpins the delivery of education and training throughout our schools and centres.

The OSD Directorate aims to develop the appropriate structures and systems to achieve the highest quality services throughout the organisation and endeavours to secure the appropriate resources necessary to deliver the Statement of Strategy.

Organisation Support and Development



The OSD Directorate is comprised of 4 Departments:

1. Corporate Services – Information, Technology, and Governance (ITG)
2. Corporate Services – Building Projects, Estates and Procurement (BEP)
3. Human Resources
4. Finance

The OSD Directorate has offices at both Carlow HQ and in Kilkenny city. Finance and ITG are located at HQ Carlow with Human Resources and BEP both primarily located in Kilkenny.

7.1 Corporate Services – Information, Technology and Governance (ITG)

The Corporate Services (ITG) department provides a range of supports and services across KCETB including the following:

- ISMS
- ICT
- CYBER Security
- Data Management, Data Protection, FOI, Policy Management and Archives
- Corporate Affairs
- Communications
- Governance and Compliance
- System of Internal Control
- Risk Management
- Risk Registers – Corporate, OSD, FET and Schools
- Audit Registers
- Assurance Declarations
- Compliance Report
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance Committee
- Policy Management
- Internal and external auditor engagement and facilitation
- Board and committee training
- Blended working arrangements
- Business Continuity

7.2 Corporate Services - Buildings, Estates & Procurement (BEP)

The Buildings, Estates & Procurement Dept (BEP) department provides a range of supports and services across KCETB including the following:

- Capital and Buildings
- School infrastructure
- FET infrastructure
- HQ infrastructure
- Climate Action and Sustainability
- Energy Management
- Disability Access Building Programme
- Maintenance and Facility Management
- Leases
- Procurement, Procurement Plan and Tender Competitions
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Stock Control
- Insurances

7.3 Human Resources

The Human Resources department will continue to provide HR and IR services and support across KCETB. The Human Resources work programme includes the following:

- Industrial / Employee Relations
- Recruitment, selection and appointment of all staff
- CPD and induction programme
- Employment contracts
- Staff allocations and utilisation
- Leave management
- Personnel policies and procedures
- Garda vetting
- Pensions
- Payroll

7.4 Finance

The Finance department provides a range of financial and treasury services across KCETB. The Finance work programme includes the following:

- Financial management
- Financial Forecasting
- Budgetary control
- Treasury services
- Budgeting and financial allocations for schools and centres across KCETB
- Creditors payments
- Receipts
- Learner and apprenticeship payments
- Travel and subsistence
- ESF, SOLAS, FAR and other Departmental financial returns
- P2P SUN systems

The Finance Department is operating the SUN financial system which has provided an enhanced capacity for financial management and compliance across KCETB. Negotiations are ongoing with ESBS in respect of the possibility of transitioning to Finance Shared Services. Further development will be carried out in conjunction with ESBS in 2026.



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8. Schools

KCETB provides a comprehensive range of quality education programmes through its second-level schools designed to meet the needs of young people and adults. It has developed a range of educational provision to address the diverse and ever- changing demands of students and learners. Today, KCETB operates and manages 13 second-level schools that provide a broad-ranging curriculum. It has developed extensive partnerships at local level and provides a range of educational supports to enhance the quality of its school provision.

KCETB has responsibility for a total of 13 co-educational, multi- denominational second-level schools/colleges. They are:

Abbey Community College, Ferrybank	Duiske College, Graiguenamanagh
Borris Vocational School	Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach
Coláiste Cois Siúire, Mooncoin	Grennan College, Thomastown
Coláiste Eoin, Hacketstown	Kilkenny City Vocational School
Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown	Coláiste Aindriú, Bagenalstown
Coláiste Pobail Osraí, Cill Chainnigh	Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale
Tyndall College, Carlow	

KCETB schools are state, co-educational, multid denominational schools underpinned by the core values of: Excellence in Education; Care; Equality; Community and Respect. As the state provider of education, the ETB sector defines a multi-denominational school in the following way:

In ETB schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

Our schools provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. They strive to enable every student to realise their full potential, regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. Our schools promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

In ETB schools, students of all religions and beliefs are treated equally. The school environment and activities do not privilege any particular group over another whilst, at the same time, acknowledging and facilitating students of all religions and beliefs.



The aim of our second-level schools is to provide a quality, inclusive, holistic education that will enable each individual to reach his/her full potential so that they may lead a fulfilling life and contribute to the development of society. The school communities strive to achieve these aims by offering:

- An extensive curriculum, catering for the intellectual, physical, social and personal development of students
- A co-curricular education programme
- A pastoral care programme of support

KCETB's schools/colleges were founded as a response to local educational needs and this tradition of meeting the needs of students is ever-present throughout the school community. The innovation and management of change is clear from the range of programmes on offer.

Partnership is also a key concept in the development of our schools/colleges and is apparent in our active Student Councils and Parents' Associations. We also work in partnership with other stakeholders, particularly in the youth, sport, religious, community development and business sectors to enhance the educational experiences of our students.

The Department draws attention to the ongoing strategic engagement with TESS and the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in relation to the future development and delivery of the School Completion Programme (SCP). ETBI and the ETBs are currently working in collaboration with the Department and TESS to support the establishment of a new employment framework for the SCP workforce.

This work is being progressed in the context of the proposed transition of SCP delivery as a Section 56 commissioned service model under the ETB sector. The objective of this approach is to enhance consistency, accountability, and long-term sustainability in the provision of SCP supports at a national level.

In this regard, ETBs are expected to have due regard to this developing policy framework in the preparation and finalisation of their Service Plans, including, where appropriate, the inclusion of relevant actions, commitments, or enabling measures that will support the implementation of these arrangements.

All schools offer the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Programmes and a range of the following:

School	Programmes Offered					
	J.C.	J.C.S.P.	T.Y.	L.C.	L.C.A.	L.C.V.P.
Abbey Community College,	√		√	√	√	√
Borris Vocational School	√		√	√		√
Tyndall College, Carlow	√	√	√	√	√	√
Coláiste Cois Siúire, Mooncoin	√		√	√		√
Coláiste Eoin, Hacketstown	√		√	√		√
Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown	√	√	√	√	√	√
Coláiste Pobail Osraí, Kilkenny	√		√	√		√
Duiske College, Graiguenamanagh	√	√	√	√		√
Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach	√		√	√		√
Grennan College, Thomastown	√		√	√	√	√
Kilkenny City Vocational School	√	√	√	√	√	√
Coláiste Aindriú, Bagenalstown	√	√	√	√	√	
Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale	√		√	√		√

Junior Certificate Schools Programme (J.C.S.P.); Transition Year Programme (T.Y.); Leaving Certificate Applied (L.C.A.); Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (L.C.V.P.).

KCETB continues to provide a broad range of programmes throughout its schools/colleges. In addition to the Junior and Leaving Certificate Programmes, our schools also offer specialised programmes like the Junior Certificate Schools Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

Second Level Enrolments

The number of students enrolled in each school in 2025/2026 is illustrated below:

School	2025 /2026
Abbey Community College, Ferrybank	1,004
Borris College	558
Tyndall College	1,050
Coláiste Cois Siúire, Mooncoin	167
Coláiste Eoin, Hacketstown	361
Coláiste Mhuire, Johnstown	659
Coláiste Pobail Osraí, Kilkenny	214
Duiske College, Graiguenamanagh	141
Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach	342
Grennan College, Thomastown	334
Kilkenny City Vocational School	301
Coláiste Aindriú, Bagenalstown	142
Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale	204
Total	5,477

KCETB schools cater for 5,477 students. 2026 will see further progress on the Kilkenny Schools Campus, a €40m plus project to build two post-primary schools on a green-field site as part of the development of the Breagh Valley.

There is a focus on the progression of substantial additional and replacement accommodation projects at Borris College, Gaelcholáiste Cheatharlach, Coláiste Eoin, Scoil Aireagail and Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown. Another project in the pipeline is further additional accommodation for Grennan College, Thomastown for two ASD Units and the opening of additional special classes in Coláiste Eoin and Coláiste Aindriú. The Department of Education and Youth has appointed a Project Manager to identify viable solution(s) to replace some existing accommodation and provide increased accommodation using the Department's Modular Accommodation Framework for Duiske College.

9. Projected Receipts and Expenditure

	** Projected Year ended	*DRAFT Year ended
	31/12/2026	31/12/2025
	€	€
RECEIPTS		
Schools & Head Office Grants	54,917,936	53,403,198
Further Education and Training Grants	32,181,113	32,618,159
Youth Services Grants	2,034,332	1,823,837
Agencies & Self-Financing Projects	5,500,000	5,249,117
Capital	2,940,920	8,262,398
	<u>97,574,301</u>	<u>101,356,709</u>
PAYMENTS		
Schools & Head Office	54,917,936	53,210,285
Further Education and Training	32,181,113	31,251,456
Youth Services	2,034,332	1,798,665
Agencies & Self-Financing Projects	5,500,000	5,126,936
Capital	6,011,258	6,314,600
	<u>100,644,639</u>	<u>97,701,942</u>
Cash Surplus / (Deficit) For Period	(3,070,338)	3,654,767

* The 2025 outturn is subject to audit

Schools & Head Office

Schools & Head Office Payments	Year ended 31/12/2026 €	Year ended 31/12/2025 €
PAY		
Instruction	45,218,574	43,132,528
Administration	3,584,286	3,416,216
Maintenance	996,284	937,112
	<hr/> 49,799,144	<hr/> 47,485,856
NON-PAY	<hr/> 3,031,948	<hr/> 3,132,629
ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES		
Schoolbooks Schemes	521,087	1,235,915
Student Support Services	530,541	503,279
Summer Programme	200,000	202,890
Bus Escort Grant	120,000	112,018
DEIS Grant & Home School Liaison	140,000	131,565
Transition Year	96,200	89,486
Others	479,016	316,647
	<hr/> 2,086,844	<hr/> 2,591,800
Total	<hr/> 54,917,936 <hr/>	<hr/> 53,210,285 <hr/>

Further Education and Training

Further Education and Training Payments	Year ended 31/12/2026	Year ended 31/12/2025
Further Education and Training	€	€
CORE Funding	5,769,492	5,607,785
Workforce Skills Development/Transformation	10,124,614	10,144,667
FET Pathways	9,429,981	9,041,130
Apprenticeship Funding	6,646,722	6,266,740
Discretionary Funding	210,304	191,134
Total	32,181,113	31,251,456

10. Glossary / Acronyms

KCETB	Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board
ARC	Audit & Risk Committee
BEP	Buildings, Estates & Procurement
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DEY	Department of Education and Youth
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DSP	Department of Social Protection
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ESBS	Education Shared Business Services
ESOL	English for Speakers of other Languages
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FC	Finance Committee
FET	Further Education and Training
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IAU	Internal Audit Unit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISMS	Information Security Management System
ITG	Information Technology and Governance
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OSD	Organisation, Support and Development
PSCAM	Public Sector Climate Action Roadmap
PSD	Public Sector Duty
QA	Quality Assurance
QAOC	Quality Assurance Oversight Committee
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
REALT	Regional Education and Language Teams
RM	Risk Management
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SERSF	South East Regional Skills Forum
SETU	South East Technological University
SIC	System of Internal Control
SOLAS	National Further Education and Training Authority
SPA	Strategic Performance Agreement
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning

KCETB Further Education and Training Service Provision

Business Case

Prepared and Submitted to SOLAS

2026



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Executive Overview of KCETB's Strategic Priorities

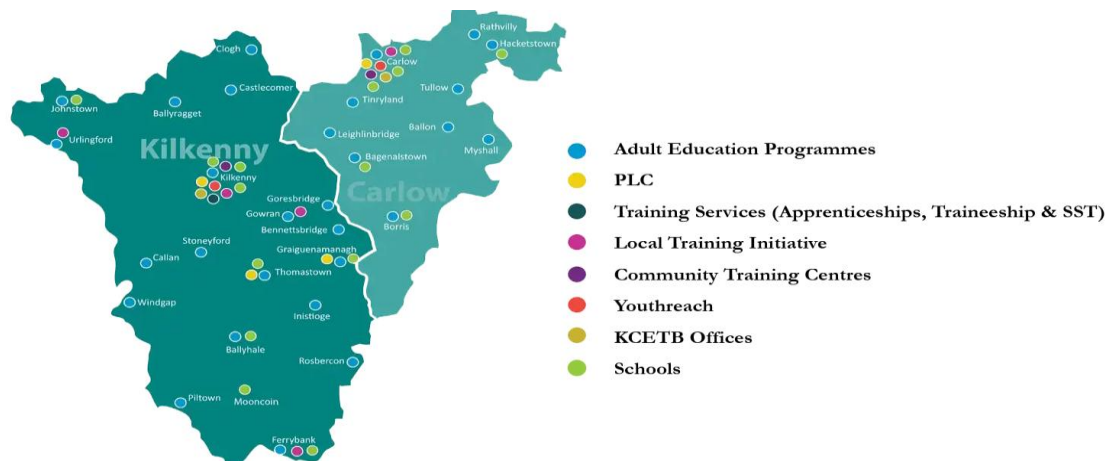
Executive Overview of KCETB's Strategic Priorities

In 2026, KCETB will drive a bold and future-focused FET agenda that strengthens learning, skills, infrastructure, and community impact across the region. Anchored in our Strategy Statement and the College of the Future vision for Kilkenny, we will advance future-ready knowledge and skills by expanding innovative provision, digital transformation, and green-skills training aligned with regional and national priorities. We remain committed to inclusion for prosperity and cohesion, ensuring high-quality, flexible, and accessible pathways supported by strong learner services and UDL-embedded practices.

A central priority for 2026 is the acceleration of climate action and a transformative estates and capital development strategy, including major capital projects, modernised teaching facilities, low-carbon buildings, and a renewed focus on energy reduction and sustainable design across our centres. These developments will provide state-of-the-art learning environments capable of supporting emerging sectors and new modes of delivery. Underpinning all priorities is a commitment to collaborating for impact, strengthening partnerships with employers, SETU, community organisations, other ETBs, and European networks such as Erasmus to build a connected, resilient, and internationally engaged FET ecosystem. Together, these strategic priorities position KCETB to lead a modern, inclusive, and climate-responsive FET system that supports economic growth, social equity, and long-term regional transformation. 2026 is a pivotal strategic planning year for KCETB, during which the new FET Strategy and the upcoming Tertiary Strategy will shape and inform KCETB's long-term direction, ensuring a clear, ambitious, and future-focused roadmap beyond 2026.

Overview of Further Education and Training (FET)

Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) is a leading provider of education and training in the southeast, enabling over 25,000 annual learners to reach their potential by offering education pathways in schools, colleges, training centres and community settings. Our remit includes the management and operation of 13 post-primary schools, two colleges of further education and training, an extensive range of adult and community education services in 30 locations across Kilkenny and Carlow, the co-ordination of youth services, and the promotion of music education through Music Generation. Our organisation employs over 1,400 people and operates an annual budget of over €100 million. Our tagline is *Flourish through learning* and our core belief is that learning has the power to change lives and build communities. KCETB's regional FET footprint is evidenced in the visual below, followed by the learner registrations.





KCETB is committed to delivering an inclusive, innovative, and learner-centred Further Education and Training (FET) service that responds to regional and national skills priorities. Our purpose is to upskill learners and apprentices in our region, in core competencies required for an innovative and inclusive economy, supporting productivity, sectoral specialisation, social cohesion, and lifelong learning. KCETB’s 2026 provision will strengthen learner pathways, workforce skills, community engagement, and enterprise collaboration, ensuring equitable access and measurable outcomes. Our focus aligns directly with the FET Strategy 2026–2030 pillars:

- **Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills:** Develop foundational, transferable (digital, AI, green), interpersonal, and sector-specific skills aligned with today’s and tomorrow’s labour-market needs.
- **Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion:** Ensure equitable access for under-represented groups, disadvantaged communities, and learners with barriers to participation, and fostering social inclusion.
- **Quality with Innovation:** Deliver high-quality, inclusive learning environments, progressive teaching methodologies, blended and digital approaches, and FET-wide universal design.
- **Collaborating for Impact:** Strengthen partnerships with industry, higher education, schools, community organisations, and statutory agencies to deliver integrated, learner-centred pathways.

FET Priorities in 2026 (new FET strategy objectives)

Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills

KCETB will prioritise the delivery of responsive, industry-aligned programmes that equip learners with future-ready skills. Provision will focus on areas of identified regional and national skills demand, including healthcare, engineering, manufacturing and green skills. Flexible delivery models, including workplace-based and blended learning, will support both employed learners and employers to adapt to changing skills requirements.



Key KCETB Activities:

Launch Level 5 AI and Resource Efficiency Certificates

Deliver accredited programmes focused on applied AI skills and sustainable resource-efficiency practices across Healthcare, Engineering, Manufacturing, Green Skills, and Hospitality.

Implement Digital Badging and Establish Green Teams

Introduce micro-credential KCETB digital badges to recognise learner achievements and create Green Teams within centres to drive sustainability initiatives and promote environmental best practice.

Deliver TY iVET and Practical Skills Workshops

Provide Transition Year programmes incorporating iVET modules along with hands-on Culinary, Barista, and Electrical skills workshops to support early career exploration.

Integrate PLC Programmes with Training Services

Strengthen alignment between PLC courses and Training Services pathways to ensure seamless progression, shared resources, and consistent employer-driven training options.

Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion

FET provision in 2026 will continue to support inclusive access to education and training, enabling participation from underrepresented groups and those furthest from the labour market. Programmes will support lifelong learning, workforce participation and progression, contributing to regional prosperity and social cohesion.



Key KCETB Activities:

Scale Adult Literacy for Life to 2,000 Learners

Expand outreach, assessment, and flexible learning pathways to support an estimated 2,000 adults in improving literacy, numeracy, digital, and workplace communication skills.

Develop Youthreach/BTEI Cross-Service Programmes

Create integrated programme pathways that allow Youthreach and BTEI learners to share modules, access common supports, and progress smoothly between services.

Support Community Groups Through the Reach Fund (€184,000, 2025)

Allocate and manage Reach Fund grants for community-based projects that address climate action, sustainability, digital inclusion, and social participation, ensuring strong local impact and measurable outcomes.

Quality with Innovation

KCETB will maintain a strong focus on quality assurance and continuous improvement across all FET provision. Innovative delivery approaches, employer engagement and learner-centred programme design will support positive learner outcomes and ensure provision remains relevant, effective and responsive to evolving skills needs.



Key KCETB Activities:

Enhance Learner Support Services and Embed UDL

Strengthen learning-support structures across centres and fully integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, while using the Wider Benefits of Learning Tool to capture social, personal, and economic learner outcomes.

Integrate VTOS, PLC, and College of FET Provision

Create a coordinated model that aligns VTOS and PLC pathways within the College of FET, enabling shared modules, smoother learner transitions, and more efficient use of teaching resources.

Expand Vocational Programme Portfolio

Deliver and grow programmes in Horsemanship (Levels 4–6), Beauty Therapy, Barbering, and Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry, ensuring strong employer links and clear progression routes.

Implement Smart Classroom Tools and Blended Learning

Increase the use of digital platforms, interactive smart technologies, and blended-learning models to enhance teaching quality, learner engagement, and flexible delivery.

Collaborating for Impact

Collaboration with employers, regional stakeholders, enterprise bodies and community partners will underpin FET delivery in 2026. Through strong partnerships, KCETB will ensure that provision is aligned to labour market needs, supports workforce development and maximises impact for learners, employers and the wider region.



Key KCETB Activities:

Strengthen Strategic Partnerships Across Agencies

Implement and actively participate in the DSP/ETBI Interagency Framework, the LGMA/ETBI Protocol, Traveller Interagency structures, and Community Integration Forums to ensure coordinated service delivery and support for diverse learner groups.

Develop Apprenticeship Collaborations

Expand apprenticeship partnerships with SETU Carlow, employer networks, and national apprenticeship consortia to increase access, enhance programme quality, and meet evolving regional skills needs.

Promote Staff Engagement in Apprenticeships

Promote and support KCETB staff to undertake apprenticeships as learners, building their technical skills, industry understanding, and professional development while strengthening organisational capacity and modelling lifelong learning through apprenticeships.

Deepen Engagement with Local Employers and Education Providers

Build sustained relationships with local employers, PLCs, and community education organisations to align training with labour-market demand, create placement and progression opportunities, and support lifelong learning pathways.

KCETB Key Collaboration Activities for 2026

KCETB will strengthen local, regional, and international partnerships through a wide range of collaborative initiatives, including:

- Engagement with cultural and economic development projects such as Pan Celtic Carlow with Carlow County Council.
- Advancing innovation and skills through the Powerhouse partnership with SETU, Carlow Chamber, Carlow Kilkenny Skillnet and industry.
- Delivering the SERSF Digitisation & LEAN Mapping Project with regional ETBs, SETU and Skillnets.
- Contributing to international research and policy via the European EDU-WELL Project with DCU.
- Participating in national design-thinking dialogue through the Big Idea Strategy Launch in Leinster House.
- Hosting major sectoral events including the DFHERIS Staff Event and the KCETB Apprenticeship Expo.
- Collaborating regionally through Carlow Institute's Elephant in the Room.
- Supporting national quality and progression pathways via the QQI RPL Event with SETU
- Showcasing leadership in inclusion through contributions to the AHEAD Conference.
- Promoting coordinated learner pathways through KCETB's own Guidance Counsellor Event.

Erasmus+ and European Connectedness

Erasmus+ is vital for KCETB's European connectedness because it gives learners, staff, and centres direct opportunities to engage with partners across Europe, building a shared sense of belonging, mobility, and collaboration. Through Erasmus projects and exchanges, KCETB strengthens cultural understanding, brings new pedagogical practices back into classrooms, and ensures its programmes remain aligned with European standards and innovation. The initiative also opens doors for learners—many experiencing international travel or work placement for the first time—broadening their horizons, confidence, and employability.



For KCETB as an organisation, Erasmus creates lasting networks with European colleges, training centres, and employers, positioning KCETB as an active contributor within the wider European education community and affirming its commitment to openness, inclusion, and lifelong learning. KCETB have FET mobility projects to Italy, Berlin, Spain in 2026.

Funding Allocation for 2026

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

Table 1: Funding Allocation for KCETB

Allocation for KCETB	2025 Final Allocation	2026 Allocation			
		Pay	Non-Pay	Allowances	Total
	Total				
Core Funding for a Strategic & Effective ETB	5,607,135	3,767,201	2,002,291		5,769,492
Workforce Skills Development & Transformation	10,075,457	7,284,346	2,645,268	195,000	10,124,614
FET Pathways	10,236,076	4,172,807	3,577,174	1,680,000	9,429,981
Apprenticeship	6,495,429	909,142	987,580	4,750,000	6,646,722
Strategic Investment	210,000	15,304	195,000		210,304
Overall Allocation	32,624,097	16,148,800	9,407,313	6,625,000	32,181,113

Core Funding for a Strategic & Effective ETB

Strategic Priorities for 2026

Core Funding in 2026 extends beyond sustaining existing provision and represents a strategic investment in organisational capacity, service quality and long-term readiness. Through a continued focus on organisational resilience, workforce development, learner-centred provision, digital advancement and regional responsiveness, KCETB will strengthen its capacity to deliver inclusive, high-quality Further Education and Training (FET) services that respond effectively to the needs of learners, communities and the wider economy.

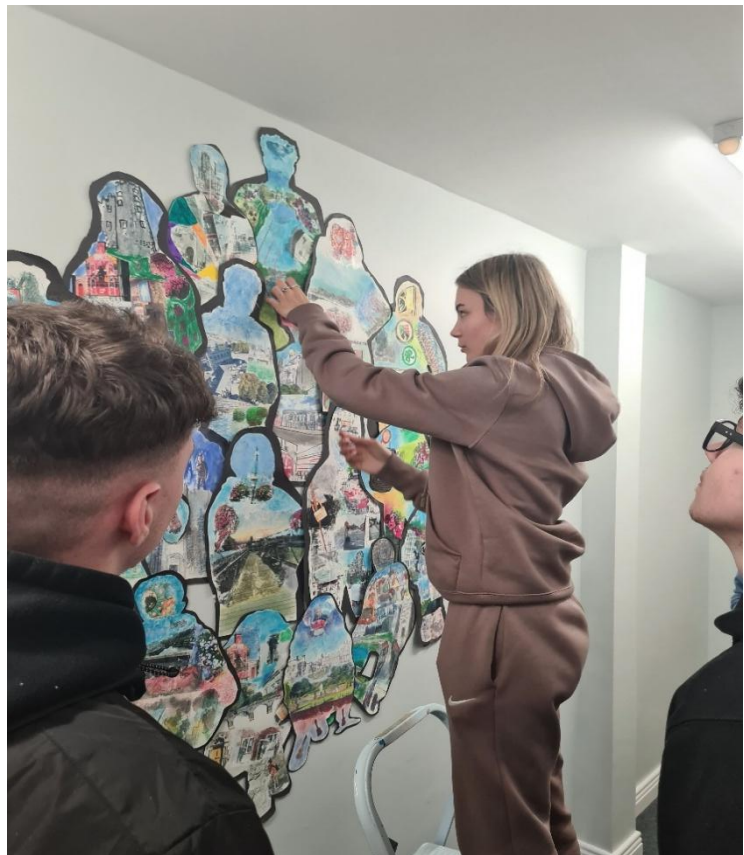
A key strategic priority for KCETB is the building of sustainable, effective and clearly defined learner pathways across FET provision. An integrated and transformative approach to the use of Core Funding will support learner, more progressive service delivery models, ensuring that resources are deployed in a way that maximises impact and supports continuous improvement across the organisation.

Learner Support Services

The continued development and enhancement of the FET Learner Support Service remains a core strategic priority in 2026. Since the appointment of a dedicated postholder in summer 2024, this service has become an integral element of a fit-for-purpose FET provision across KCETB. From the learner perspective, the service plays a critical role in supporting an increasingly diverse learner cohort, including learners presenting with a range of diagnosed and undiagnosed needs.

The Learner Support Service is central to the development of a FET-wide Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach, ensuring that learning opportunities are inclusive, accessible and responsive. Over the past 20 months, the postholder has successfully integrated into the wider KCETB FET team and has initiated, progressed and collaborated on a number of key strategic actions, including:

- FET Learner Support and Wellbeing Mapping Report
- Development of a Learner Support Portal and Staff SharePoint
- FET-Wide Learner Handbook 2025–2026
- FET Learner Support and Wellbeing Newsletter
- Online FET Learner Needs Assessment for people with disabilities, including LENS (Learner Educational Needs Summary)
- Learner Wellbeing online events
- Joint initiatives with the FET Guidance Service
- AONTAS Learner Voice Forum (March 2025)
- Learner End-of-Course Feedback Survey and subsequent “Listening to Learners and Making Improvements” actions.



KCETB is also actively engaged at national level, including membership of the national Reasonable Accommodations in FET group (led by AHEAD and ETBI) and co-chairing the Reasonable Accommodations in FET task group under the Quality Assurance Oversight Committee, supporting the implementation of national strategic actions.

Regional Literacy for Life (Adult Literacy)

KCETB remains strongly committed to the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy and to supporting adults with unmet literacy needs across the region. KCETB continues to play an active role in the Adult Literacy for Life National Programme Office, the Collaboration and Innovation Fund, and the Regional Adult Literacy Coalition.

In 2025, a key action of the Regional Adult Literacy Coalition was the completion of local research. In September 2025, the Coalition launched the research report *“Exploring perceptions and experience of unmet literacy needs among staff providing services to the public.”* This research will inform further actions within the 2026 Coalition Action Plan.

The role of the Regional Literacy Co-ordinator (RLC) remains fundamental to this work. When the existing RLC was seconded to the ALL National Programme Office in September 2025, KCETB responded promptly by appointing a replacement to ensure continuity of service. In 2026, the RLC will focus on promoting the Collaboration and Innovation Fund, delivering Literacy Awareness Training (LAT), progressing the 2026 Coalition Action Plan, and strengthening referral pathways in collaboration with the local Adult Literacy Service.



Learning Support and Quality Assurance

In 2026, KCETB will continue to develop front-line learning support services to complement FSD-funded provision and to ensure access for learners who are not eligible for FSD supports. This work will strengthen equity of access and learner outcomes across FET services.

A further strategic priority within Core Funding is the development of new programmes to ensure continuity of provision in line with QQI deactivation schedules. In 2026, KCETB intends to develop new awards in the areas of Youth Work and Healthcare, in collaboration with the ETB sector.

In addition, KCETB will initiate a strategic project under the Tertiary Education Pilot to visualise FET-to-HE progression pathways. This work will include mapping FET programmes to Higher Education Institutions to identify progression opportunities, enhance learner navigation of pathways, and support informed learner choice.

Funding for FET Provision for Workforce Skills Development & Transformation

(Employment Progression, Learning in Employment)

As part of the Workforce Skills Development & Transformation allocation, KCETB will deliver targeted upskilling and reskilling programmes for employed learners and employers across key sectors. Provision in 2026 will respond to identified regional skills needs, national policy priorities and employer demand, supporting employment progression, productivity and workforce resilience.

Priority Sectors

Healthcare

KCETB will continue to support the healthcare workforce through the delivery of programmes aligned with regional demand and national strategies. Provision will include Care Skills, Care of the Older Person, Supervisory Skills in a Healthcare Setting, Dementia Care and Support, Person-Centred Planning and Gerontology. These programmes will enhance workforce capability, support quality care delivery and promote progression opportunities within the sector.

Engineering

In response to sustained regional demand for skilled welders, KCETB will continue to deliver high-quality beginner and intermediate welding training. Programmes will be delivered in a workplace setting in Carlow, supporting employers to upskill existing staff and strengthening regional engineering capacity.

Electrical

Industry across the region continues to experience persistent skills shortages in key electrical and industrial automation disciplines. This challenge is consistently evidenced through national labour market analysis, regional employer surveys, and employer representative bodies. KCETB's response would be to deliver the following areas of training:

- Electrical Instrumentation
- Programme Logic Controller
- Testing and Verification
- Electrical Troubleshooting and Fault Finding
- Electrical Principles



Manufacturing

The focus for manufacturing provision in 2026 will be the delivery of LEAN Practitioner training. This training will support enterprises to improve efficiency, productivity and competitiveness, while equipping participants with practical skills in process improvement and continuous improvement methodologies.

Green Skills

Green Skills will remain a priority area for KCETB, with provision rolled out on an ongoing basis in response to climate action and sustainability objectives. An additional strategic focus in 2026 will be the restructured internal delivery of Green Skills through Digital Badging, with a view to regional rollout and increased flexibility for learners and employers.

Hospitality

KCETB will continue to support the hospitality sector through a broad range of training programmes designed to meet employer needs and support workforce development. Provision in 2026 will include short skills-focused programmes such as Barista Training, alongside structured progression pathways through a Pre-Apprenticeship programme in Professional Cookery and the Commis Chef Apprenticeship programme.

Collaboration between Training Services and Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) provision has commenced, with a focus on integrating hospitality programmes and creating clear learner pathways. Engagement with local employers will underpin this work, supporting work-based learning, progression opportunities and a cohesive regional approach to hospitality skills development.

Skills for Work

In 2026, KCETB will build on the progress achieved in previous years under the Skills for Work initiative. Strong working relationships have been developed with local employers, particularly in the delivery of ESOL training for employees. KCETB aims to expand its ESOL online provision in 2026 to increase flexibility and reach. Additional areas of identified demand include Digital Literacy (e.g. Excel), Family Learning initiatives such as Literacy Launchpad (CPD for childcare practitioners), and Gaeilge.

Employment Progression and Full-Time Provision

Programme planning for employment progression-oriented provision, as listed on the National Course Catalogue (NCC), includes 26 programmes at Carlow Institute, with a projected 572 learners. Total Post-Leaving Certificate (PLC) provision for 2026 is projected at over 1,200 learners in Carlow, with additional provision at the College of FET, Kilkenny.

Pre-Apprenticeship in Carpentry (Full-Time)

The College of FET, Kilkenny proposes to deliver a Pre-Apprenticeship in Carpentry, focusing on core carpentry skills alongside transferable skills applicable across construction trades. The programme will include tool and machinery competencies, health and safety, and the ability to read and interpret basic technical drawings. The course will be targeted at school leavers and adults returning to education, with progression to a Carpentry Apprenticeship as a key outcome. Group capacity will be 15–20 learners.

Traineeship in Beauty Therapy – Specialist Training (Full-Time)

The College of FET, Kilkenny proposes a Traineeship in Beauty Therapy designed to equip learners with specialised skills for enhanced career opportunities in the beauty industry. The programme will include a minimum of 30% work-based learning, supported by specialised short courses such as Hot Stone Massage, Deep Tissue Massage, Special Effects Masterclass, Lash Lift and Extensions, Brow Lamination and Threading, Spray Tanning, Advanced Waxing, First Aid and Manual Handling. Learners will graduate employment-ready, having gained practical experience within salon and business settings. Group capacity: 24 learners.

Traineeship in Barbering (Level 5, Full-Time)

The College of FET, Kilkenny also proposes a Level 5 Traineeship in Barbering, integrating structured classroom learning with work-based experience. The curriculum will focus on technical barbering skills, current trends, tools and technologies, hair science, client management, health and safety and business development. This blended approach will ensure learners graduate as skilled barbering professionals with quality industry experience. Group capacity: 24 learners.

Youth Work

KCETB will also engage in sectoral collaboration to support the development of a new Level 5 Youth Work programme, contributing to workforce development in this important community and social care sector.

Funding for FET Pathways

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

KCETB's FET Pathways funding in 2026 will continue to expand opportunities for learners across Carlow and Kilkenny, focusing on progression, integration, and inclusivity. Provision includes school-to-FET pathways, post-secondary programmes, adult literacy, youth provision, and innovative collaborations to address gaps and unmet demand.

Transition Year Pathways Initiatives

KCETB Training Services has expanded Transition Year (TY) pathways to three pilot initiatives:

- Barista Training
- Electrical Workshops: 'A Spark into the World of Electrics'
- Culinary Workshops: 'Sweet and Savoury Culinary'

Q4 2025 piloting demonstrated strong engagement, and Q1 2026 has seen 12 schools participate in the Culinary Programme alone. The programme creates clear progression pathways from TY culinary tasters → Pre-Commis programme → Commis Chef Apprenticeship.

KCETB proposes to develop an integrated Transition Year programme in collaboration with College of FET Kilkenny, Carlow Institute of Further Education and Training, and Training Services. The programme will provide TY students with exposure to skills-based FET provision, while extending access to schools across both counties and ensuring clear, coherent opportunities and progression pathways.

iVET Module: The Initial Vocational Education and Training (iVET) module will continue to be rolled out to Transition Year students across selected schools, providing hands-on experiences and insight into further education and training options, strengthening links between second-level schools and KCETB. KCETB has developed two iVET modules in the above spaces of Electrical and Culinary based on current expertise. Further areas will be explored.

Access, Transfer, and Progression

KCETB College of FET Branding

In 2026, KCETB will continue its commitment to clear and consistent branding of FET provision across Kilkenny and Carlow, unifying College of FET identity across PLCs, VTOS, BTEI, and Training Services.

Integration of VTOS Core Programme

2026 marks the second year of integrating VTOS (core) into College of FET Kilkenny. Staff, resources, and facilities are now shared across full-time QQI Level 4–6 courses, enabling responsive provision aligned with economic, societal, and strategic requirements. VTOS Core and Dispersed places will reduce from 195 to 30 in 2026.

Integration of Full- and Part-Time Provision

Opportunities will be created for integration across full- and part-time programmes in some education and training areas, optimising resources, buildings, and teaching staff while strengthening the College of FET Kilkenny brand.

Learner Support and Guidance

Learner Support Service: The Learner Support and Wellbeing Co-ordinator will continue to provide comprehensive support across KCETB FET centres, including:

- FET Learner Handbook

- Standardised Needs Assessment tools and Learner Educational Needs Summary (LENS)
- Coordination of learner wellbeing initiatives

FET Guidance Service: All learners, including Training Services, Youthreach, Adult Literacy, Community Education, PLCs, and VTOS participants, have access to guidance counselling. Guidance Counsellors provide one-to-one and group support onsite across centres, as well as through the Adult Guidance Service for learners not currently enrolled in FET courses.

Projected Adult Guidance Service Beneficiaries (2026): 4,400



Adult Literacy for Life

The Adult Literacy Service prioritises reaching adults with unmet literacy needs, including those with disabilities, lone parents, and other vulnerable groups. Programmes are aligned with the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy, FET Strategy, National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, and Ireland’s Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy.

Projected Adult Literacy Learners (2026): 2,400
ESOL provision remains a key element, alongside initiatives targeting broader literacy, numeracy, and

digital literacy needs across Carlow and Kilkenny through partnerships, Regional Adult Literacy Coalition activities, and the Regional Literacy Co-ordinator role.

Youthreach and BTEI Cross-Service Collaboration

To address waiting list pressures, KCETB has developed a cross-service General Learning programme between Youthreach and BTEI, currently supporting 10 learners.

- **Collaborating for Impact:** Shared resources create immediate capacity for learners otherwise unplaced.
- **Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion:** Ensures vulnerable or early school leavers remain engaged.
- **Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills:** Equips learners with foundational and transversal skills.
- **Quality with Innovation:** Pilot success supports programme re-run in September with plans to expand capacity.

Youth Office – UBU Your Place Your Space Project

Responding to demographic and socio-economic trends in Northwest Kilkenny, this initiative provides a dedicated safe space for marginalized youth (including 15% with disabilities, migrant, and Traveller communities).

- **Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion:** Targets areas of high deprivation (St. Joseph’s Terrace, Canal Road).
- **Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills:** Delivers resilience-based initiatives and problem-solving competencies for early school leavers.
- **Collaborating for Impact:** Strong interagency partnerships with Ossory Youth, Foróige, local schools, and integration with 48-bed family unit for conflict-affected families.
- **Quality with Innovation:** Innovative outreach ensures access for 100–120 young people annually, overcoming rural isolation and transport barriers.

New Programmes (2026)

Horsemanship Level 4 – Full-Time

The College of FET, Kilkenny proposes a Level 4 Horsemanship course covering: Equine Hoof Care, Health, Animal Welfare, and Stable & Yard Routines. Learners will have progression opportunities to Level 5 and Level 6 Horsemanship.

Group Capacity: 10–15 learners

Apprenticeship Funding

(Craft and Consortia led)

We currently deliver Phase 2 Electrical Apprenticeship training for 112 learners per annum and support the Phase 4 and Phase 6 Electrical Apprenticeships in SETU Carlow. Given that Phase 2 Electrical is not a current priority, KCETB are reviewing the utilisation of the workshops to support other programme needs. In addition, we provide apprenticeship training for Commis Chef (18 learners per annum) and the Accounting Technician Apprenticeship, which commenced in September 2025 and currently has 16 apprentices enrolled. Year 1 of this programme will progress to the next phase in September 2026, and recruitment will commence again.

KCETB plans to further expand its apprenticeship provision in 2026. At present, we support 1,293 live apprentices on the system, with a further 165 apprentices on hold but remaining active. In 2025, KCETB supported 355 apprentices through their Phase 4 and Phase 6 placements.

KCETB experienced significant growth in apprenticeship activity in 2025 and aims to build on this momentum in 2026.

Areas for growth:

KCETB has identified the following apprenticeships that would be beneficial to the region based on registrations, current provision delivered and employer need:

- Hairdressing
- Auctioneering
- Digital Marketing
- Data Analytics
- Butchery



A training needs analysis has been concluded with employers in Q4 2025 and areas above were highlighted. We have a high volume of registrations in the Hairdressing space and currently apprentices are travelling further afield for their off the job training.

Strategic Investment Funding

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

KCETB's Strategic Investment Funding in 2026 will support targeted initiatives across multiple priority areas to respond to regional employer needs, sectoral trends, and national skills priorities. Provision will complement existing apprenticeships and FET pathways, supporting workforce competitiveness, innovation, and tailored upskilling. Key focus areas include:

- SME Digitalisation and Productivity
- ICT, including Cyber Security for SMEs
- Green and Sustainable Skills

- Tourism, Hospitality, and Customer Experience
- Healthcare and Social Care Workforce Development
- Leadership and Change Management

Additional strategic projects include:

- **Sustainability Digital Badging** – initially piloted with staff, with plans to expand to industry to promote green skills and awareness.
- **Mental Health Awareness Training** – targeted at companies and businesses across the region to support workforce wellbeing and organisational resilience.
- **Level 5 Specific Purpose Certificate in Enhancing Productivity with AI** – delivered via Training Services Skills to Advance process for staff. Approx. 40+ participants.
- **Level 5 Specific Purpose Award in Resource Efficiency for a Sustainable Workplace** – subject to resources, supporting staff to identify and implement resource efficiency measures across water, energy, waste and materials. Approx. 40+ participants.
- **Green Teams Micro-Credential** – climate action awareness project, initially for 100 science students, with planned scale-up across KCETB centres.
- **Heritage Provision:** In collaboration with the Heritage Council delivery of provision in the Heritage and Cultural area as dictated my regional and national research building on the successful pilot programme ‘Introduction to Thatching’.

Climate Action, Sustainability & Estates Transformation

KCETB is seeking SOLAS approval for a dedicated Assistant Principal Officer (APO) with responsibility for Climate Action, Sustainability & Estates Transformation. The cost of the post will be covered within the initial allocation to KCETB. A number of posts were vacated last year which were not filled and this would replace one of those.

This post is essential to enabling KCETB to meet its obligations under:

- The FET College of the Future (FCotF) infrastructure and transformation programme, which places strong emphasis on strategic capital investment, estate modernisation, and sustainability.
- The national Green Skills 2030 Strategy, which identifies FET as central in preparing the workforce to halve Ireland’s emissions by 2030 and transition to a low-carbon economy.
- The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate and the requirement for ETBs to decarbonise their estates, improve energy performance, and lead climate action regionally.

Given the scale of KCETB’s capital development pipeline—including the FET College of the Future for Kilkenny, a project driven by consolidation, climate action, and specialist green-skills provision—this post is not optional; it is strategically critical.

Wider Benefits of Learning

KCETB continues to lead in the development of the *Wider Benefits of Learning Tool*, collaborating with ETBI, other ETBs, and Research Consultant Dr. Aisling McElearney. Following a productive 2025, 2026 will see significant progression of this initiative. Achievements to date include:

- Training for Adult Educators and Guidance Counsellors, including a local session in January 2026 on initial stages of supporting learners/clients to complete the Tool.
- Planned training on UDL and Wider Benefits of Learning, trauma-informed approaches, and learner data collection and management.
- Inclusion of Community Education, Adult Literacy, ESOL, and Adult Guidance in 2026 project roll-out.

This initiative supports learner reflection, progression, and the capture of holistic educational outcomes, embedding a culture of evidence-informed practice across FET services.

Reach Fund 2026

The Reach Fund remains central to KCETB's commitment to community education, ensuring funding is directed to areas of greatest need. Key highlights for 2026 include:

- **Collaborating for Impact** – Stronger engagement with community partners, with the recent webinar series for Reach 2026 attracting approximately 100 attendees.
- **Inclusion for Prosperity & Cohesion** – Approximately €184,000 allocated to community education projects in 2025, ensuring financial barriers do not prevent disadvantaged learners from participating.
- **Quality with Innovation** – Streamlined funding processes continue to support innovative local projects efficiently.
- **Future-Ready Knowledge & Skills** – Sustained funding enables delivery of courses that equip learners with essential life and work skills, contributing to regional employability and workforce readiness.

Strategic Partnerships (Local)

KCETB maintains active engagement with key local partnerships to strengthen collaboration and delivery impact. These include:

- DSP/ETBI Interagency Framework
- LGMA/ETBI Protocol
- Membership of local committees, including the Traveller Interagency Group (Carlow & Kilkenny), Kilkenny Leader Partnership, and Community Integration Forum (Carlow & Kilkenny).
- Membership of the Kilkenny and Carlow Chamber



Through these partnerships, KCETB supports the development of sustainable, collaborative relationships that enhance community education, inclusion, and sectoral responsiveness.



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Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
*Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board*

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