

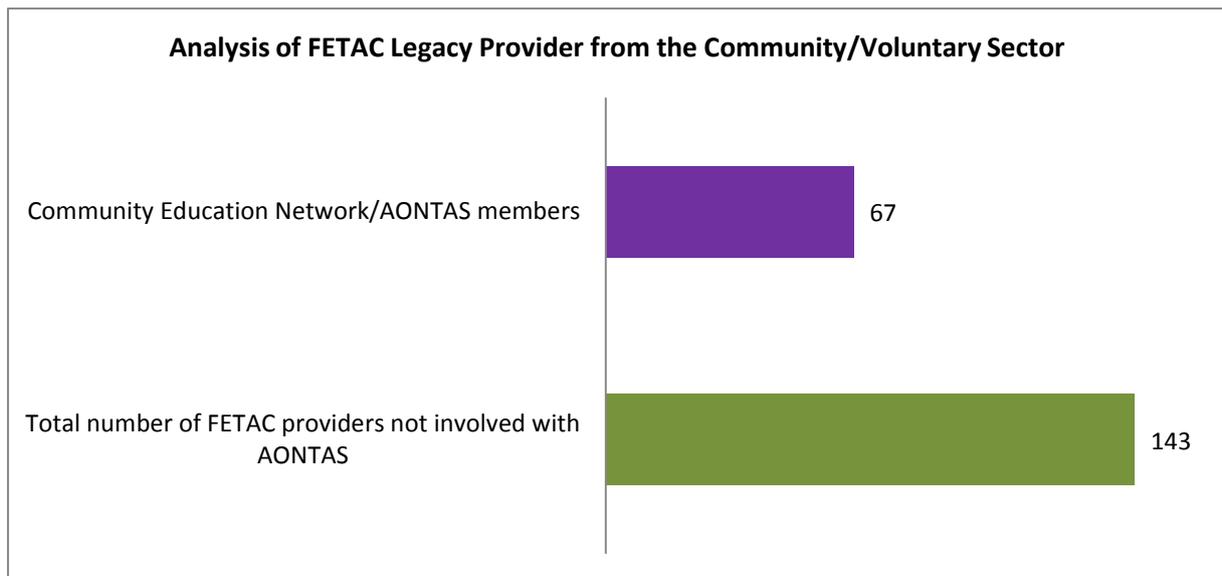


# Community Education Network Update on the QQI Fees Advocacy work (26<sup>th</sup> May 2014)

## 1. Update on research regarding the number of FETAC legacy providers in the CEN

*Initial Analysis of CEN members who are FETAC legacy providers*

Compare the number of AONTAS and CEN members to the list provided by QQI.



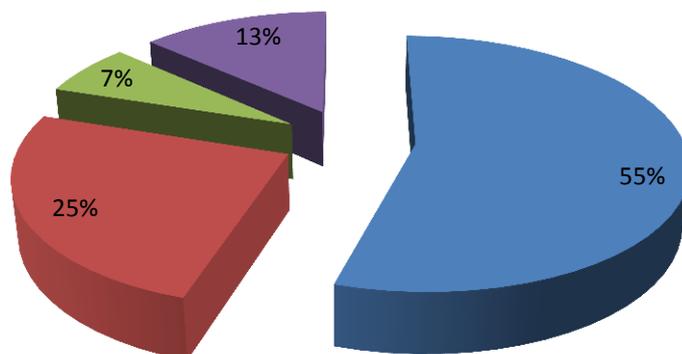
Of the 210 community/voluntary providers that are FETAC legacy providers (from QQI data), 53 are members of the community education network, 14 are AONTAS members and 28 are contacts for the AONTAS Adult Learners’ Festival. AONTAS/CEN members represent over 30% of FETAC legacy community and voluntary providers.

The most recent report on the number of CEN members was 107 organisations. The database has grown over the years to include over 300 contacts, however, we will be reducing this number by asking groups if they wish to remain members of the CEN (many have a remit outside that of the CEN). At a conservative estimate, 107 organisations are members of the CEN, this includes networks.

Of the 107 members of the CEN approximately half have their own FETAC Quality Assurance, however there is duplication as a number are Congress Centres. Taking out this duplication, 5 are linked to Congress Centres, leaving 48 CEN members with QA.

### Analysis of FETAC Legacy Provider from the Community/Voluntary Sector

- Total number of FETAC providers not involved with AONTAS
- Community Education Network members
- AONTAS members
- Adult Learners' Festival organisations



## 2. List of Parliamentary Questions in relation to QQI fees for community education groups

### March

**384. Deputy Jerry Buttimer** asked the **Minister for Education and Skills** if he will consider ensuring the community education sector is supported by a waiver of fees by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [\[13883/14\]](#)

**387. Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the **Minister for Education and Skills** the level of funding that would be required for his Department to subsidise the cost of Quality and Qualifications Ireland fees for community education providers. [\[13968/14\]](#)

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 384 and 387 together.

As the Deputy will be aware, QQI has, in accordance with Section 80 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, determined a number of fees which will apply to all providers seeking to engage with it, including those in the community and voluntary sector. The fees were determined in accordance with QQI's policy and fees which provides, inter alia, that fees will be comprehensive, coherent and reflect the amount and complexity of the work undertaken by QQI.

There is a significant amount of work involved in assessing applications from providers seeking access to QQI's awards, so that QQI can be assured that they meet their rigorous quality standards. The purpose of those standards is to ensure that providers have the capacity to provide quality programmes of education and training to their learners. The fees therefore underpin QQI's ability to ensure and monitor compliance with its standards. Furthermore, and importantly, the fees help to

ensure that only those providers which are serious about complying with those standards, and have the capacity to do so, apply to QQI.

It is not possible to estimate the total cost of these fees to the community and voluntary sector as that is entirely dependent on the number of providers from that sector which apply to QQI for initial access to validation and on the number and type of programmes which those providers submit for validation by QQI.

At the meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection on 19 February, representatives from QQI committed to continue to consult with stakeholders from the community and voluntary sector in order to explore how that sector can continue to provide quality education and training to learners.

## May

**57. Deputy Dara Murphy** asked the **Minister for Education and Skills** with regard to the Quality & Qualifications Ireland, if the Cork City Network of FETAC Quality Assured Community Education Providers will be added to the list of persons and groups that are receive waivers from fees; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [18930/14]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Ruairí Quinn):** As the Deputy will be aware, QQI has, in accordance with Section 80 of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act, 2012, determined a number of fees which will apply to all providers seeking to engage with it, including those in the community and voluntary sector. The fees were determined in accordance with QQI's policy and fees which provides, inter alia, that fees will be comprehensive, coherent and reflect the amount and complexity of the work undertaken by QQI.

There is a significant amount of work involved in assessing applications from providers, so QQI can be assured that they meet their rigorous quality standards. The purpose of those standards is to ensure that providers have the capacity to provide quality programmes of education and training to their learners. The fees therefore underpin QQI's ability to ensure and monitor compliance with its standards. Furthermore, and importantly, the fees help to ensure that only those providers which are serious about complying with those standards, and have the capacity to do so, apply to QQI.

At the meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Social Protection on 19 February, QQI committed to work with ICTU, AONTAS and other representative bodies to discuss how providers in the further education and training sector, including community and voluntary bodies, could work with QQI to ensure they can continue to provide a quality offering to their learners, particularly in the context of the emerging policy and provision landscape being developed in the further education and training sector. QQI has since met with both AONTAS and the ICTU to explore the concerns of the community and voluntary sector and a number of follow-up meetings are planned.

With regard to possible waivers, a system of waivers has always applied to certification or award fees for certain categories of learners in the further education and training sector. This system has not been changed. It is not intended to introduce a new system of waivers for providers of education and training, for the reasons outlined above.