

“AONTAS has grown and developed into a powerful membership organisation, and has a unique and valuable contribution to make to the sector.”



**Annual Report &  
Financial Statements  
2015**



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## Section 1



## Foreword

**Liz Waters**  
*President, AONTAS*

2015 marked the end of an era for AONTAS, as Berni Brady, one of the longest-serving figures in Ireland's adult education sector, stepped down as Director of the organisation in December. Berni played a central role in the work of AONTAS for 33 years, becoming involved in AONTAS in 1987, when she joined the organisation's Board of Directors. At that time, she was working as an adult literacy tutor in The Dublin Adult Literacy Scheme. She was subsequently appointed Director of AONTAS in 1993.



Throughout Berni's time in AONTAS, she has kept a strong focus on the learner voice, believing that learners provide key first-hand insights that should inform the development of the services and policies that affect their learning. AONTAS has been really successful in bringing the learner to the centre of policy and provision, this has resulted in the establishment of a National Adult Learner Forum which took key focus of the work in 2015.

As Director, Berni has led a highly ambitious process of change and development, and established AONTAS as the leading voice for lifelong learning in Ireland. She has been a central figure in professionalising the adult learning sector in Ireland. At the same time, while ensuring the sector developed and introduced the highest possible standards of service delivery, she has always maintained a strong community development ethos. She will be sorely missed and on behalf of the Executive Committee we wish her well in the future.

In autumn 2015, we began the recruitment process for a new Chief Executive Officer to lead the organisation into its next phase. Following a competitive open recruitment process, with applications received from a wide range of national and international candidates, Niamh O'Reilly was appointed as Chief Executive Officer. Niamh previously served as Head of Strategic Development at AONTAS, and has been a member of the senior management team for seven years in the roles

of Head of Membership Services and Head of Strategic Development. We are confident that she will do an excellent job, she has a huge passion for lifelong learning and a strong commitment to learners. She is also a creative leader and has an in-depth knowledge of the sector and the issues and challenges facing it.

As President of AONTAS I look forward to working with Niamh on leading out on this new phase of work in partnership with the Executive Committee of AONTAS and the staff team. I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work and dedication of both the Committee and the team in 2015.

As we approach this new phase of change and transformation, I believe that AONTAS as an organisation is in a strong position to contribute to the development of adult and community education. AONTAS has grown and developed into a powerful membership organisation, and has a unique and valuable contribution to make to the sector. AONTAS is committed to supporting our members and will continue to be a strong advocate for the right of all adults in Ireland to quality learning throughout their lives, and to promote the value and benefits of lifelong learning.



## AONTAS Staff

**Bernadette Brady**  
— Director

**Jacinta Cuthbert**  
— Head of Organisational Development

**Niamh O'Reilly**  
— Head of Strategic Development

**Katie O'Rourke**  
— Communications Officer

**Christine Hynes**  
— Membership Services Officer

**Kathryn Laing**  
— Promotions Officer

**Wayne Flanagan Tobin**  
— Information Officer

**Karen Williams**  
— Learner Supports Officer

**Bríd Greenan**  
— Project Co-ordinator EAAL

**Mairéad Tynan**  
— Accounts and Administration Officer

**Jasmin Clancy**  
— Reception Administrator

**Aoibhie McCarthy**  
— Promotions Officer (Maternity Cover)

**Patricia Hayden**  
— Accounts and Administration Officer  
(Maternity Cover)

## Executive Committee

**Elizabeth Waters** *President*  
— An Cosán

**Liam Kilbride** *Vice President*  
— Individual member

**Lorraine Cunningham** *Secretary*  
— Blaney Blades

**Colm Kilgallon** *Treasurer*  
— All Hallows College

**Gabriel Keating**  
— Education and Training Board Ireland

**Michael Kenny**  
— Maynooth University

**Tara Farrell**  
— Longford Women's Link

**Cróna Gallagher**  
— Adult Education Officers Association

**Jim Prior**  
— Limerick CEN, Limerick ETB

**Mary Farrell**  
— Longford and Westmeath ETB

**Lorraine Hennessey**  
— Irish National Organisation for  
the Unemployed

**Deborah Ryan**  
— Community Education Facilitators'  
Association

**James Stuart Duffin**  
— One Family

**John D'Arcy**  
— Open University



## Overview

**Niamh O'Reilly**  
CEO, AONTAS

**I look forward to leading the organisation in this new phase of our work and building on the great work that was done by my predecessor Berni Brady.**

### Introduction

I am privileged to present the AONTAS Annual Report for 2015, which documents the work which was led out by my predecessor, Ms Berni Brady, in her final year as Director. Under Berni's directorship, 2015 brought about two key landmark achievements for the organisation: the establishment of the National Adult Learner Forum and delivering on our role as the National Co-ordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL).

In line with our lead role in delivering on the SOLAS Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy (3.1 Respond to the needs of learners), AONTAS engaged in a broad-scale consultation process with stakeholders in order to create a meaningful Forum in 2016, where learners from across Education and Training Board (ETB) areas and all programmes would have the opportunity to voice their experience of the FET system. The EAAL project also involved sustained engagement with stakeholders including NALA and Leargas, and importantly all Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Each ETB was supported to deliver a promotional activity which resulted in a range of locally defined events that engaged new and prospective learners.

Over the course of 2015, continuous engagement with other organisations, providers and stakeholders was a key feature of the work. In addition, Berni Brady's position on the SOLAS Board, with a remit to represent the voice of the learner, further enhanced the organisation's capacity to promote and advocate for a learner-centred FET service. 2015 ended with a celebratory

General Meeting entitled: *AONTAS – Marking a Continuing Story*, the event showcased the impact of AONTAS at National and European level under Berni's tenure. Members – past and present, high-level civil servants, academics, past and present AONTAS Executive Committee members, colleagues and friends gathered to acknowledge the extensive contribution that Berni has made to the field of adult and community education. Work is currently underway to document this impact through the forthcoming Adult Learner Journal (2016), which includes peer-reviewed articles from distinguished practitioners and academics from the sector.

I look forward to leading the organisation in this new phase of our work and building on the great work that was done by my predecessor Berni Brady. With the huge body of knowledge that the organisation can draw on from our membership, I am confident that our ability, creativity and strategic actions will ensure that learners stay at the heart of our work, and that we will collectively work together to strive for a quality adult learning system.

### European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL)

In 2014 AONTAS was nominated by the Department of Education and Skills to become the National Coordinator for the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). The EAAL highlights the need to raise awareness and increase participation in adult learning. The project is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union and co-financed by the Department of Education and Skills, through SOLAS.

Since 2012 AONTAS, along with partners NALA (The National Adult Literacy Agency) and ETBI (Education and Training Board Ireland), have been involved in carrying out activities under the EAAL Project; AONTAS managed the One Step Up initiative, NALA were responsible for the training of Learner Ambassadors and ETBI promoted adult learning activities at a local level.

In 2015 AONTAS, assisted by a Project Advisory Committee, which included the Department of Education and Skills, SOLAS, NALA, INOU, AEOA, ETBI and Leargas, had

the important role of co-ordinating three interlinked activities as part of the EAAL. AONTAS continued to manage the One Step Up initiative which provided information to thousands of adult learners through its Freephone Helpline, website referral, and calendar of events. AONTAS also supported Education and Training Boards to organise activities locally to promote their service; all 16 ETBs participated in the project. In total 1,312 learners and prospective learners were involved in activities with 57 adult learners acting as learner advocates and promoting the benefits of adult learning. As part of this work Berni Brady attended two National Co-ordinator meetings in Brussels to discuss the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning.

In addition to these activities, AONTAS sub contracted the analysis of the PIAAC research to NALA. The research shows that there is a significant number of adults with low basic skills - with 17.5% of adults at the lowest level in literacy. The in-depth research has been useful in understanding the needs of learners. A seminar attended by fifty-seven policy makers and practitioners was held in October 2015 to highlight the findings and to raise awareness of this research.

In 2015 AONTAS was successful in their application for a further two year EAAL project (2015-2018) - 'Learning today for a better tomorrow' which will continue to build and develop on the work of the previous project.

### Advocacy Work

Having made great strides in our advocacy work in relation to establishing the voice of the learner at the centre of the FET strategy with the National Adult Learner Forum, AONTAS has continued to focus on other key issues that present challenges for its members, particularly for community education providers. Recognition and value of the important work they do, not only in attracting people back to learning, who have been distanced from education and training and the labour market but also in addressing broader social inclusion and civil society issues, is a high priority for AONTAS. Through supporting the AONTAS Community Education Network, AONTAS has focussed on strengthening the capacity of the groups to

## AONTAS has continued to focus on key issues that present challenges for its members, particularly for community education providers.

become strong advocates for their own work. A major issue that emerged in 2014, and still remains a priority in 2015, is the proposed QQI policy on fees and re-engagement for legacy providers. AONTAS has continued to work with the CEN to explore the issues and to propose solutions for a way forward. This work has involved a political campaign which resulted in a meeting with the Department of Education and Skills and regular engagement with the QQI, through a QQI Community/ Voluntary Sector Joint Working Group, to seek a way forward. This work is still ongoing and AONTAS will continue to pursue the fees issue. AONTAS continues to be an advocate for community education as the FET strategy develops and will contribute towards policy and other developments as appropriate.

### Promoting Adult Learning

Promotion of the value and benefits of adult learning is a key activity for AONTAS and our communications strategy is designed to use a variety of ways to get the message across to a range of audiences. AONTAS uses its website, e-bulletin, publications and social media to promote the work of its members and to give a voice to the adult learner. AONTAS staff also participate in events and information fairs throughout the country. In 2015 we participated in 18 events and disseminated over 10,000 information booklets. We also work throughout the year with national and local media and at particular times to contribute to features and supplements on adult learning. The promotional highlight of the year is the Adult Learners Festival which in 2015 took place from the 23rd February – 28th February 2015. Over 350 events were organised by members throughout the country with a view to raising awareness about learning opportunities and celebrating



the range and variety of work taking place in the sector. The 2015 AONTAS STAR Awards took place on Monday 23rd February in Dublin, to recognise outstanding work in adult education. The ceremony marked the start of the ninth Adult Learners Festival. Nearly 300 people attended, representing thirty eight organisations shortlisted for the awards. The projects represented a wide range of adult learning activities including areas such as disability, mental health, sport and work place learning. The seven awards were presented by Professor Tom Collins, Chairperson of the Governing Body of the DIT. As well as promoting adult learning at home, AONTAS has a high level of participation at European level. For many years we have been active members of the European Association for Education for Adults (EAEA) and AONTAS currently supports Niamh O'Reilly, Head of Strategic Development in her role as a member of the EAEA Board. Niamh was re-elected in 2015 and contributed to policy influence at 5 meetings this year.

### Staff Changes

During 2015, AONTAS experienced a number of changes in the staff team, including the recruitment of three new staff members in March.

### Conclusion

In this short overview I have summarised the key activities of 2015 which are described in more detail in the body of the report. AONTAS also engages in a wider range of activities on a day to day basis and further details on the full range of activities can be accessed through the AONTAS website – [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com). Our Executive Committee met five times during the year under the Presidency of Liz Waters. The Committee continues to bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the work of AONTAS and provides strong support for the Director and her team. As an organisation we acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS for our work and we look forward to continuing to contribute our experience and expertise to the growth, development and success of the sector over the coming years.

## Section 2

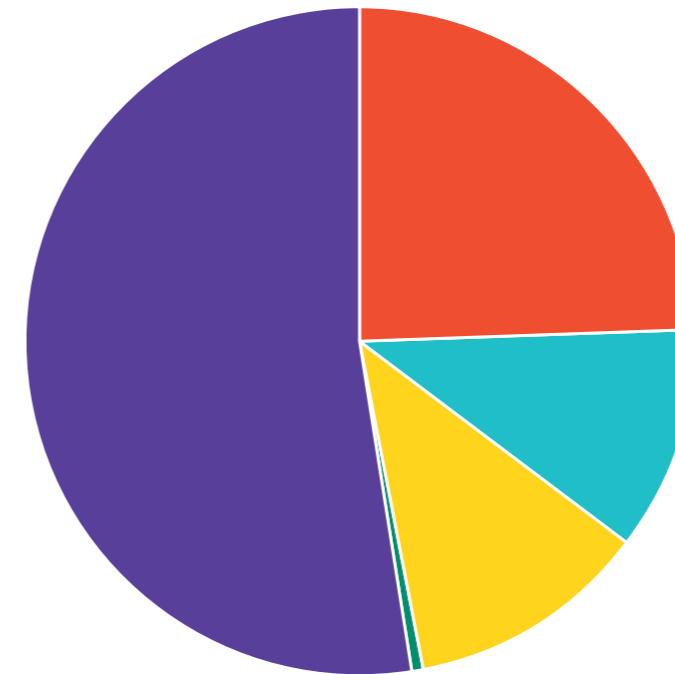


## AONTAS Membership Services

AONTAS' national membership body provides a grassroots, authentic understanding of the adult education and training community from both a practitioner and learner perspective.

As of 31st December the AONTAS membership comprised 491 members. A more detailed breakdown of membership is illustrated in the charts below. For further information on AONTAS members, please check the membership section of our website at [www.aontas.com/membership](http://www.aontas.com/membership)

Category	Members
Individual	259
Associate	2
Small Organisation	119
Medium Organisation	54
Large Organisation	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>491</b>



During 2015 AONTAS welcomed 82 new members to our organisation which included learners, providers, and associates along with other key stakeholders. Following on from our strategic approach to recruitment in 2014, AONTAS continued to focus on our objective to expand and grow our membership to reflect the diversity of lifelong learning.

### Membership Strategy

During 2015, AONTAS commenced a review of our membership services to inform a new membership strategy for 2016. In line with the key objectives of the AONTAS Strategic Plan – to expand our membership base and increase overall engagement with existing members – an assessment of membership services was initiated which involved the following:

- Analysis of AONTAS Membership trends and profiles.
- Evaluation of members' experiences.
- Evaluation of other member organisations and strategies.
- Consultations with AONTAS Executive Board and Staff.
- Strategic review of Fairs and Exhibitions in targeted areas.

The findings illustrated the importance of key services and the significance of how we engage with members, which will develop our membership recruitment and engagement going forward in line with AONTAS' overall strategic objectives (2015-2017).

### Membership Meetings

AONTAS hosted two national meetings for our members in 2015; The Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 13th May in Dublin and the General Meeting (GM) on 2nd December.

Over ninety members attended the AGM. In addition to carrying out the business of the AGM, the meeting sought to increase membership awareness of policy developments in Europe. Gina Ebner, Secretary General from EAEA presented an overview of some key advancements at a European level. Denise Shannon and Emma Grainger from Leargas also highlighted how members can engage with a range of European projects and resources. Motions were also discussed by members, including the issue of membership fees.



The AONTAS General Meeting, AONTAS – *Marking a Continuing Story*, took place in Dublin on 2nd December with over seventy people in attendance. The meeting charted the impact that AONTAS has had over the last 23 years in adult education with inputs from Professor Tom Collins, Chairperson of the Governing Body of the DIT and Henk Hijink, Learn for Life, Netherlands who gave an overview on the impact that AONTAS has had in Europe. The event also marked Berni Brady’s retirement and Niamh O’Reilly outlined her vision for the organisation as CEO Designate.

### Supporting the AONTAS Community Education Network

The AONTAS Community Education Network, which was established in 2007, as a platform for independent community education groups who are members of AONTAS, seeks to increase the visibility, raise the voice of, and promote the value of community education. Currently the AONTAS Community Education Network comprises over 100 independently managed groups in the community and voluntary sector

who offer community education programmes in a variety of settings.

During 2015, the CEN was co-ordinated by Niamh O’Reilly and administrative support was provided by Christine Hynes, Membership Services Officer. The work of the network was guided by a voluntary steering group comprising of Suzanne Kyle, LCEN, Avril Bailey and Liz Waters, An Cosán, Lia Clarkson, Warrenmount CED and Tara Farrell, Longford Women’s Link. The CEN focused its work on advocacy during 2015, primarily on the proposed QQI policy changes, including the proposed QQI fee for re-engagement, that effects community education FETAC legacy providers i.e. CEN members who were registered FETAC providers.



### CEN Key Activities

- A national meeting of the CEN was held on 24th March, it focused on the CEN advocacy activities and provided a space for discussion on the use of technology for teaching and networking in the community education sector.
- A second national meeting of the CEN was held on 14th October 2015, it focused on quality provision in community education, consulted on collaborative models of QQI engagement which informed the

QQI Community/Voluntary Sector Joint Working Group, explored effective methods for advocacy and how to raise the profile of community education at European level through EPALÉ.

- Throughout the course of 2015, CEN members were updated regularly.
- In 2015, the CEN Steering Group held three meetings, with one online.

**The AONTAS Community Education Network seeks to increase the visibility of, raise the voice of and promote the value of community education.**



## Supporting Adult Learners

Over the past number of years, AONTAS has had a strong focus on developing and building on our previous learner work and ensuring that the learner voice is at the core of all our activities. We have established, developed and maintained a wide range of partnerships and networks to reach learners and communicate their voice and views. We have supported and facilitated learners to voice their issues and concerns at national and local events such as the SOLAS learner consultation and the Lobby for Learning Days. Through feedback from various learner discussions at AONTAS events we have developed a clear learner strategy which allows learners to engage with AONTAS through many different platforms depending on their readiness. We have worked hard to ensure that the learner support work feeds into and supports the policy, promotion and membership strategy of AONTAS. Our key strategic goals in our current strategic plan, Learning: A Lifetime's Work, are designed to underpin and promote our learner support strategy. This work has led to a number of successful outcomes, most notably, leading out on the establishment of a National Adult Learner Forum which took key focus of this work in 2015.

### National Adult Learner Forum 2016

In 2015, AONTAS embarked on the development of a National Adult Learner Forum in line with the requirements of the SOLAS FET Strategy in Strategic Objective 3.1: Respond to the needs of learners. AONTAS has been tasked to systematically benchmark learners' views and satisfaction with their FET programme on an on-going basis through the establishment of a National Adult Learner Forum in 2016 and annually

thereafter. The first Forum is scheduled for Friday 26th February 2016. Thus far, AONTAS has developed an implementation plan for the Forum which outlines the key tasks needed to deliver on the Forum and highlights the areas of work required to build a sustainable, representative space. The areas of work include Stakeholder Engagement, Events, Research and Communications. This has been approved by SOLAS and AONTAS are currently on target with the work. Katie O'Rourke initially led out on this piece of work and following staff changes was replaced by the new Learner Supports Officer - Karen Williams. This National Adult Learner Forum work has involved:

### Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the National Adult Learner Forum work, AONTAS met with SOLAS and other identified partners to discuss the development plan for this work and to identify the best ways to collaborate to ensure a meaningful representation of a broad range of learners at the Forum and to create momentum for the event. A summary of stakeholder meetings was produced in March 2015 and was sent to SOLAS during the summer.

In April 2015 AONTAS held a Learner Engagement Seminar. Further Education and Training (FET) providers from all across Ireland were in attendance. The Seminar allowed providers to share expertise and learn more about how to engage the learner voice in their practice. Outcomes from the Seminar included a greater understanding of what models of learner voice activities happen across the FET sector. AONTAS also gathered information and engaged with key FET practitioners in order to promote the National Adult Learner Forum 2016. A report from the Seminar was compiled and was disseminated to a wide range of stakeholders.

As part of this work AONTAS developed a stakeholder strategy which was implemented in summer and autumn 2015. As part of the work of the National Adult Learner Forum, it was important to build links with stakeholders to ensure that the National Adult Learner Forum is a success and has support from all 16 ETB areas to ensure equal and meaningful learner representation, this includes Community Education, Training Centres and ETBs.

**We have developed a clear learner strategy which allows learners to engage with AONTAS through many different platforms depending on their readiness.**



Niamh O'Reilly, Head of Strategic Development; Katie O'Rourke, Communications Officer; and Karen Williams, Learner Supports Officer arranged numerous meetings and attended events across ETB regions; our main aim of these meetings was to develop our relationship with FET providers. These meetings had a clear focus on the National Adult Learner Forum work. We met with ETB Training Centres, Community Education Organisations and a number of ETBs.

A list of meetings included:

**ETB Training Centres:**

- Tallaght Training Centre, DDLETB.
- Baldoyle Training Centre, DDLETB.
- Loughlinstown Training Centre, DDLETB.

**Community Education Organisations:**

- Warrenmount Certificate Presentation Giving and Warrenmount 20 years Celebration.
- D8CEC Presentation Giving.

**Education and Training Boards:**

- Input at Galway and Roscommon ETB event.
- Presentations across Louth Meath ETB (Drogheda, Dundalk, Navan).
- Ashbourne Youthreach (Louth Meath ETB).
- Cork Adult Education Fair (Cork ETB).
- ETBI conference.

**The National Adult Learner Advisory Group**

AONTAS established a National Adult Learner Forum Advisory Group to advise on the development of the National Adult Learner Forum 2016. The Advisory Group consists of Stakeholders from SOLAS, Department of Education and Skills, INOU, NALA, ETBI and an AEOA. The first Advisory Group meeting took place on the 29th of September in Dublin. The meeting provided an update of the National Adult Learner Forum Work, an update on the AONTAS seminar: Engaging the Learner Voice and presented the initial plans for the National Adult Learner Forum event. The Advisory Group receives monthly updates regarding the National Adult Learner Forum work.

**The National Adult Learner Forum Learner Focus Group**

AONTAS also established a Learner Focus Group in order to get creative, engaging ideas for the first Forum event from a learner perspective. Three meetings took place in March, July and October 2015. The Learner Focus Group are contacted on a regular basis, to keep informed, and to give a learner perspective to the ongoing work.

**The National Adult Learner Forum Event**

AONTAS worked on the planning and promotion of the National Adult Learner Forum event throughout 2015. The Forum will have 80 learners of all ages from across the full range of Further Education and Training (FET) programmes. In order to engage a wide variety of learners, AONTAS is developing a video about the Forum that will be used as a promotional tool for the duration of the FET Strategy. AONTAS is raising the profile of the Forum by engaging with ETB management, practitioners and learners at various events and made a presentation about the Forum at a GRETB Seminar on 11th December.

AONTAS developed a nomination process and a nomination form was distributed to all 30 AEOs from across the 16 ETBs, they will then nominate suitable learners for the Forum. We also contacted members of the Community Education Network about sourcing community education learners, who engaged in SOLAS funded programmes, for the Forum event.

**AONTAS worked on the planning and promotion of the National Adult Learner Forum event throughout 2015.**

The Forum will be held in the Round Room in the Mansion House, Dublin. Speakers at the event will include; Fiona Hartley, SOLAS and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Críona Ní Dhálaigh. AONTAS are currently developing a detailed communications plan for the National Adult Learner Forum. AONTAS continues to engage with key stakeholders to ensure a successful event on the 26th February 2016.

Although the National Adult Learner Forum has remained the key focus of the Learner Support work in 2015, a number of other activities have taken place throughout the year in order to support and promote the voice of adult learners, including:

**ETB Learner Representative Networking Event – May 2015**

In June 2014, AONTAS and NALA were invited by the Minister of Education and Skills to act as nominating bodies for members of the new ETBs. After a rigorous process and consultation with our Executive Committee AONTAS put forward two nominees, one man and one woman, for 15 of the 16 ETB Boards. AONTAS secured 12 successful nominations in total (Dublin & Dun Laoghaire ETB, Galway and Roscommon ETB, Kerry ETB, Kildare and Wicklow ETB, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, Limerick and Clare ETB, Louth & Meath ETB, Mayo, Sligo & Leitrim ETB Tipperary ETB and Waterford and Wexford ETB). In May 2015 AONTAS and NALA organised a networking event for ETB Learner Representatives, the aim of the meeting was to share experiences, identify necessary supports and to discuss the role of AONTAS and NALA. The event also looked at exploring ways to support the learner representatives to be effective Board members.

**QQI Learner Representative**

AONTAS continues to support Ms Una Buckley as the learner representative on the QQI Board.

**SOLAS Board**

In autumn 2013 Berni Brady, Director of AONTAS was appointed by the Minister of Education and skills to the Board of SOLAS. She has a special remit to represent the voice of adult learners.



## Promoting the Value and Benefits of Adult Learning

The promotion of adult learning remained a key piece of work for AONTAS in 2015. At the beginning of January, the previous AONTAS Communications Officer left to work in another organisation. Following a recruitment process, the new Communications Officer is now Katie O'Rourke, formally the Learner Supports Officer. Katie, with other key personnel and the AONTAS Executive, worked on developing a new Communications Strategy for AONTAS that will be implemented from 2016.

The Adult Learners Festival remained an important aspect of our promotional work, and projects such as the European Agenda on Adult Learning continued to provide additional promotional opportunities. Data collection through the website [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie) and the Freephone Helpline gave us additional insights into the trends and challenges facing adult learners, which we used to inform our engagement with media.

### Communications Strategy

In August 2015, we began a full evaluation of all communications outputs from the organisation and looked at developing a new communications strategy that aimed at guiding AONTAS' public communications work in the coming years. This work also includes a complete re-development of the AONTAS website along with a re-branding of the organisation, which will take place in 2016. To ensure the AONTAS communications strategy is as targeted as possible, a communications survey was undertaken. We surveyed a select number of key stakeholders, including representatives of adult and community education organisations, media, elected representatives, policymakers and adult learners. The purpose of the survey was to assess the opinions and communications preferences of key stakeholders, this was used to inform the development of the communications strategy moving forward.

The communications strategy will aim to: ensure all those involved in AONTAS are clear about the processes in place for public communications, and their roles and responsibilities in relation to same, ensure consistency of appearance and style across all public communications outputs produced by AONTAS and identify public communications priorities and key messages for AONTAS in 2016.

### Media

Throughout the year AONTAS issued a number of press releases. These included:

- 16 press releases to local media, highlighting shortlisted STAR Awards projects.
- 5 national press releases, promoting the Adult Learners Festival, STAR Award winners and other relevant policy issues.
- 21 press releases to local media, inviting applications for the STAR Awards 2015.

AONTAS also held two photo opportunities, one for the launch of the Adult Learners Festival in the VTOS centre in Castlerea and the other for the launch of the STAR Awards nominations in Louth Meath ETB. The time period of August – September was also a busy time for AONTAS. We provided information about adult learning opportunities, case studies, trends and statistics to the Irish Independent, the Sunday Business Post and The Irish Times.

A number of media opportunities took place in 2015 including:

#### PRINT

**The Sunday Business Post**  
— Interview with Berni Brady, Director, information statistics piece and photo of VTOS learners in Castlerea (August).

**The Sunday Independent**  
— Interview with Berni Brady, Director on funding for training and education (August).

**The Irish Times**  
— Learners from VTOS in Laois and Offaly ETB were featured in a piece on adult learners receiving their Leaving Certificate results (August).

**The Irish Times**  
— Interview with Berni Brady and with an adult learner from An Cosán (September).

**Woman's Way**  
— Article on 'Returning to Education' (September).

**Education Matters**  
— Article on the National Adult Learner Forum (November).

### Learner Stories

Throughout the year learner testimonials were sourced from a wide range of learners to highlight the value of returning to education and training and to inspire others to do the same.

### Adult Learners Festival

The Adult Learners Festival and the Star Awards were used as opportunities to celebrate and promote the value of learning through learner videos from Star Awards projects, and the Adult Learners' Festival launch.

### Social Media

Social media, Explore magazine and the AONTAS website were used to promote our learner work through campaigns, blogs and learner testimonials allowing us to engage with a wide group of learners and to promote the value of adult learning.

**The Adult Learners Festival and the Star Awards were used as opportunities to celebrate and promote the value of learning.**

## RADIO

### Midlands 103 FM

— Star Awards

### Ros FM

— Star Awards

### Phoenix FM

(December)

### Athlone Community Radio

(December)

## AONTAS Online

AONTAS manages three websites:

- www.aontas.com
- www.adultlearnersfestival.com
- www.onestepup.ie

All three websites are publicised through a Google Grant which allows AONTAS to avail of free Google Adwords. In 2015 there was 96,017 individuals (users) to the AONTAS website. The website had 238,533 page views and 80% of users to the website were new visitors. The number of users peaked in the month of April when there were 12,418 visitors to the website.

## AONTAS e-bulletin

The AONTAS e-bulletin is sent weekly to more than 1,000 people including the AONTAS membership, providers and practitioners in the field of adult and community education as well as a range of other stakeholders. The bulletin contains membership updates, events, policy updates and international news and contacts.

## Social Media

AONTAS has developed an active online community of over 5,671 'followers' across its various social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and Youtube. Through our social media presence, AONTAS aims to promote useful and relevant content to our followers such as events and issues relating to adult and community education. AONTAS also forms new relationships with partner organisations and reinforces existing relationships with adult learning

# Over the course of 2015, the AONTAS Twitter account has achieved 670 new followers.

organisations and members through online responsive engagement.

## TWITTER

AONTAS has 3,562 Twitter followers. Over the course of 2015, the AONTAS Twitter account has achieved 670 new followers.

## FACEBOOK

AONTAS has 2,089 page 'likes' on Facebook. Over the course of 2015, the AONTAS Facebook page has achieved 574 new page 'likes'.

## YOUTUBE

During 2015, AONTAS' two Youtube channels were consolidated into one channel which now has 20 subscribers and is regularly updated with new video content:

- During 2015, a series of videos of the 7 STAR Award winning projects were developed and promoted as part of the 10th Annual STAR Awards Call for Nominations campaign. These videos were edited to form a submission for The Wheel's Better Together Video Competition, which provides a platform for Irish charities to showcase the work that they do; connect with members of the public and gain new supporters. The video submission promoted engagement with the STAR Awards and promoted the work of AONTAS.
- Under the EAAL project activities this year, AONTAS engaged and supported all 16 ETBs to organise a promotional event or video to create greater awareness at local level about the services available and give learners greater confidence to act as advocates for adult learning. Twenty three events were organised and a number of learner videos were produced by ETBs nationwide. In total, 1,312 learners attended events and 57 Learner

Role Models inspired others at events or through their testimonials on video. The first of these videos by Waterford and Wexford ETB has been promoted on the AONTAS Youtube channel and this will be followed by a series of additional videos into 2016.

- As part of the AONTAS General Meeting, and to mark the retirement of Director Berni Brady after 33 years of involvement with AONTAS, a video was produced which included adult learning practitioners and learners reflecting on Berni's contribution to the development of the adult and community education sector. This video was promoted on the AONTAS Youtube channel.

## The Adult Learners' Festival

The ninth Adult Learners' Festival took place from the 23rd February – 28th February 2015 using a particular theme for each day as follows:

- Celebrate Learning: Monday, 23rd February
- Green Learning: Tuesday, 24th February
- Learning Communities: Wednesday, 25th February
- Learning for Work: Thursday, 26th February
- Lobby for Learning: Friday, 27th February
- Family Learning Day: Saturday, 28th February

## STAR AWARDS CEREMONY

The 2015 AONTAS STAR Awards took place on Monday 23rd February in the Ballsbridge Hotel, Dublin, to recognise outstanding work in adult education. The ceremony marked the start of the ninth Adult Learners' Festival. Nearly 300 people attended the ceremony, representing thirty eight organisations shortlisted for the awards. The projects represented a wide range of adult learning organisations including areas such as disability, mental health, sport and skills for work. The ceremony kicked off with some inspiring singing by the Forget-Me-Nots who are a community choir from Dublin's North East. The awards were officially opened by Professor Tom Collins, Chairperson of the Governing Body of DIT. Una Buckley, an Adult

Learner Representative, gave the keynote address. Like the past eight Star Awards, the competition was stiff with 71 nominations received over the seven categories:

Small/Medium and Large organisations in Leinster and Munster, and then Connaught, Ulster and Nationwide. The judges then had the difficult task of shortlisting just 38 projects. For the third year running, the five judging panels travelled around the country to meet with these projects face to face and to choose their seven winning projects. The seven outstanding adult learning initiatives who beat such tremendous competition were:

- **Connaught** ALá Social Inclusion, Outreach and Training Project
- **Ulster** Supporting Active Engagement
- **Leinster** (Large) Positive to Work
- **Leinster** (Small/Medium) Boxing Clever
- **Munster** (Large) The Village Project
- **Munster** (Small/Medium) Making Connections
- **Nationwide** Skills for Work

## LOBBY FOR LEARNING DAY

In 2015 AONTAS ran a very successful social media campaign as part of the Lobby for Learning Day. The main elements of the campaign were; coordinated postings on Facebook and Twitter, promoted posts i.e. advertising and Q & A sessions. Over the course of the campaign AONTAS used infographics, information posts, learners' stories and key dates and events. The posts with the highest reach were about our information service such as the offer of a free 'What Next?' booklet or letting people know that we have an Information Referral Team who can answer queries.



**FESTIVAL EVENTS**

The ninth Adult Learners’ Festival took place from the 23rd – 28th February. It was a massive success with over three hundred and fifty free events taking place throughout the country. There was a huge range of events to cater to all tastes, interest and skills levels. From large learner gatherings in Leitrim to small groups learning skyping skills in Clare and everything else in between it was truly an inspiring and informative week. The events were held by a range of providers including libraries, ETBs, adult education providers, community groups, museums, galleries and private businesses. Saturday was also included again this year as Family Learning Day which increases the week from five to six days and focused on intergenerational learning.

**ADULT LEARNERS’ FESTIVAL LAUNCH EVENT – ‘A PERFORMANCE IN PROGRESS’**

Learners from Castlerea Adult Education & VTOS Centre in Co. Roscommon, helped launch the programme of events for the 9th AONTAS Adult Learners’ Festival. The launch event saw local artist, Steve McCahill, work with first & second year learners to create a piece of multimedia artwork that was dynamic, vibrant and which captures the festival theme of ‘Learning: A Lifetime’s Work’. This was put on display in the centre for the duration of the festival.

**ADULT LEARNERS FESTIVAL WEBSITE**

AONTAS has a separate Adult Learners Festival website which is linked to the homepage: [www.adultlearnersfestival.com](http://www.adultlearnersfestival.com). This is updated daily during the lead up to the festival and then monthly throughout the year. The website received over 25,000 pageviews during the festival period. On the ALF website the majority of people visited the ‘Festival in your area’ section. The second most visited section was the ‘STAR awards’ while the ‘resource’ page was the third. The top referrers to the website are; [aontas.com](http://aontas.com), [activelink.ie](http://activelink.ie) and [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie).

**FESTIVAL E-BULLETINS**

Festival e-bulletins were sent out once a month during the months March 2014 to October 2014 to our mailing database of over 4,000. From October until the beginning of March 2015 they were sent out weekly.

**SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY**

AONTAS used an integrated social media campaign which covered Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Pinterest. AONTAS uses social media to share content, promote the festival and to strengthen alliances and partnerships with other organisations.



**YOUTUBE**

AONTAS compiled a short STAR Awards video to provide a snapshot of what happened during the 2014 ceremony by profiling some of the award winners and what winning the award meant to them. This was circulated during the call for the STAR Award nominations.

**FACEBOOK**

During 2014 the Festival Facebook page and the AONTAS Facebook page were merged. This was done to maximize our return on promoted posts. Over the week of the Festival AONTAS ran a social media campaign.

The main elements of the campaign were;

- Co-ordinated postings on Facebook and Twitter
- Promoted posts i.e. advertising
- Q & A Session

Over the course of the campaign the page likes increased from 1,546 to 1,691. AONTAS used promoted posts as part of the campaign and over the week we promoted 12 posts. This was complemented with up to five non promoted posts per day. Our total reach over the campaign was 92,922. This can be broken down into reach and organic reach.

**Reach:** 83,158  
**Organic Reach:** 9,764

Over the course of the campaign we used infographics, information posts, learners’ stories and key dates and events. The posts with the highest reach were about our information service such as the offer of a free ‘What Next?’ booklet or letting people know that we have an Information Referral Team. The individual reach of these was over 13,000. From a single post about the Information Booklet 31 people requested a hard copy either through Facebook or by phone.

#### TWITTER

Our Twitter following increased to 3,180 and the Adult Learners' Festival had its own hashtag #adultlearnersfest for the festival.

#### PINTEREST

AONTAS use Pinterest as a way to collate photos that are sent in to us from around the country. These photos are pinned on 'AONTAS Festival Events Around the Country' Pinterest board and the link is promoted through Facebook and Twitter.

#### ADVERTISING

AONTAS' advertising covers both national and local media and is carried out through print, broadcast and online media. In print media AONTAS took out two advertisements in the national newspapers: one in the Ticket and one in the Irish Independent's weekend magazine. For radio AONTAS produced a 30 second advertisement in conjunction with RTE. The advertisement was played on three national radio stations, eight local stations and eighteen community stations for one week. Finally AONTAS took out a campaign with Entertainment.ie which saw the Festival being advertised through various display ads, which all linked to the Festival website.

#### GOOGLE ADS

AONTAS used a google grant initiative to run some online ads to advertise events happening around the country. 457 visitors were attracted by the ads and the ads were viewed 52,118 times.

#### MEDIA COVERAGE

Due to the dedication of the individual event organisers the festival gained great coverage in the local media. Our event organiser evaluation showed that nearly 40% of all events gained media coverage. There were 190 festival related articles in the local press. From the Clare Champion to the Kerryman and the Limerick Leader to the Wicklow Times the local newspapers featured information on events, advertisements and articles on STAR Award winners. Two articles in the national press also appeared featuring the Festival dates and the 'What Next?' booklet. Interest in the Festival generated radio coverage in the form of 18 interviews, event notices and

reporters being sent to events on both local and community radio.

#### INTERNET COVERAGE

The AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival was featured widely on the internet. The free Dublin event guide included information about events and the website. Information about the Festival was included on websites such as Activelink, The Wheel and Qualifax.ie. Events were also listed on cultural websites such as CultureFox, Discover Ireland, Entertainment.ie and Festivals.ie.

#### AONTAS Publications

All AONTAS publications are available on the AONTAS website and the 'Publications and Links' section is the most frequently visited section of the website after the Information section. The section includes reports, submissions, research as well as links to other relevant publications and sites.

#### EXPLORE MAGAZINE

During the year, one edition of the AONTAS magazine was produced about the Adult Learners Festival. 1,000 copies of Explore are printed and distributed to AONTAS member organisations, libraries, NGOs and policy makers.

**Due to the dedication of the individual event organisers the Adult Learners' Festival gained great coverage in the local media.**



#### THE ADULT LEARNER JOURNAL

The Adult Learner is the Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education founded in the mid-1980s. It is published annually and aims primarily to serve the needs of the adult education community in Ireland by providing a forum for critical reflection on the practices of teaching and learning. The Journal aims to continue to make knowledge, research and writing accessible to the widest possible audience and emphasises the implications of critique for practice. The Journal has a long established practice of giving priority to subject matter that addresses disadvantage, social exclusion, equality, workplace learning and the study of the teacher/student relationship. Community education, literacy, citizenship and access issues are also of importance in the Journal. The Journal welcomes papers which are relevant to those working across the broad field of Adult and Community Education and which make a contribution to debates both in Ireland and internationally. The Editorial Board is made up of a collaborative partnership between University College, Cork, University College, Dublin, Dublin City University, National University of Ireland Maynooth, The University of Strathclyde, Galway Roscommon

Education and Training Board and Tipperary Education and Training Board. The Board also includes two members of AONTAS staff, Berni Brady, Director who chairs the Board and Mairéad Tynan who provides administrative and secretarial support. The Journal has limited availability in hard copy but can be viewed or downloaded from the AONTAS website, where further details on how individuals can make contributions are made available each year.



## AONTAS as Advocate

In 2015, AONTAS built on the outcomes of previous advocacy work whilst also focusing on the issue of QQI re-engagement fees.

### Regulation of Lobbying Act

The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 was signed into law in March 2015 and commenced on 1st September 2015. The purpose of the Act is to provide a web-based Register of Lobbying to make information available to the public on the identity of those communicating with designated public officials on specific policy, legislative matters or prospective decisions. As AONTAS is involved in lobbying activities, we registered on [www.lobbying.ie](http://www.lobbying.ie) and will make our first return in January 2016.

### Stakeholder Engagement

AONTAS developed and maintained strong relationships with stakeholders across the Further Education and Training sector. AONTAS engaged in a range of stakeholder meetings as part of the National Adult Learner Forum. AONTAS also produced a submission in 2015 to the Development of the National Skills Strategy 2015-2025 which highlighted that a key priority of the strategy must be to remove the barriers that adult learners face, particularly the under-represented groups, when accessing education and training options.

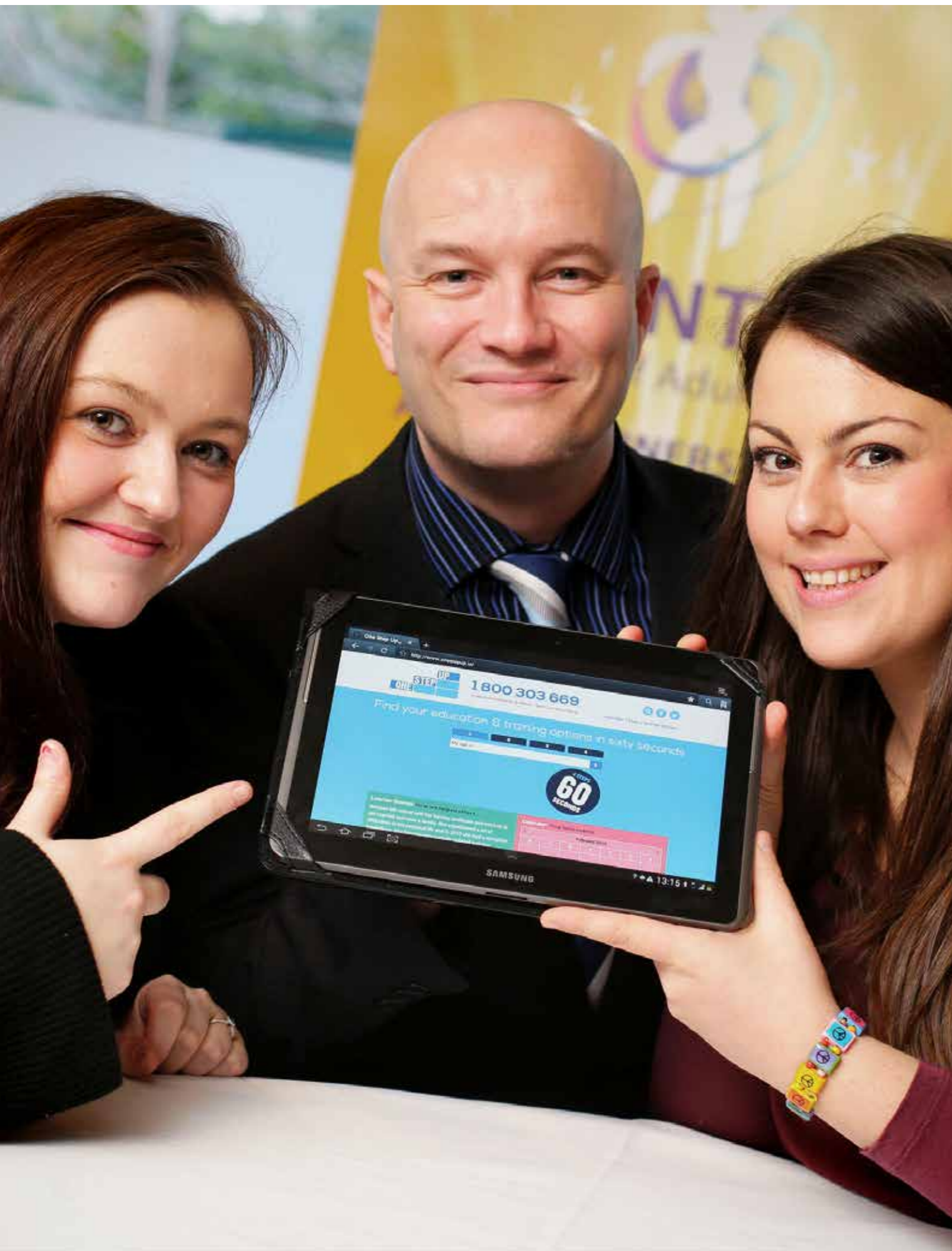
### QQI Re-engagement

In response to the needs of AONTAS Community Education Network members, AONTAS continues to work to ensure that community education learners can continue to engage in QQI accredited community education programmes. Following the establishment of the Quality and Qualifications Authority (QQI) a series of policy changes are in the process of development, most notably a new, once-off, process for existing FETAC legacy providers who will be required to re-engage with QQI which will incur a fee. Using a number of activities AONTAS has continued to engage in an advocacy and negotiation process with QQI.

- As part of this work AONTAS participated in all seven meetings of the QQI Community/Voluntary Sector Joint Working Group during 2015 in order to provide QQI with expertise to enabling their understanding of the needs of community education, improve communication between QQI and community education groups and to clarify re-engagement issues. Minutes from these meetings are available from the QQI website.
- Key outcomes include supporting the QQI Seminar on Re-engagement and Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines (30th June) which had approx.120 participants, raising awareness of QA and the proposed QQI re-engagement requirements amongst community education organisations.
- AONTAS made written submissions to the QQI draft Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Voluntary Providers of Further Education and Training consultation (July), to the QQI Strategy Statement (April) and participated in the QQI Consultative Forum (June and November).
- An article on the CEN advocacy work on the QQI fees issue featured in the summer edition of Be the Change (August).



**AONTAS continues to work to ensure that community education learners can engage in QQI accredited community education programmes.**



## Information Referral Service 2015

The AONTAS Information Referral Service continues to support adults wishing to return to learning and continued to be enhanced in 2015 by the development of the onestepup website and helpline supported by the EAAL Programme. The service receives calls, emails and website visits from prospective and current learners seeking information on courses, entitlements, funding and other supports as well as government labour activation measures. This work is supported by our information booklet, 'What Next?' which was updated and printed twice in 2015. Over 10,000 copies of the booklet were disseminated in 2015. The information booklet is also available on the AONTAS website and is a popular choice for website visitors. Many more people now seek information online and are then more likely to follow up with a telephone call if they need further assistance.

### Telephone contact

There has been a 65% increase in the number of people contacting the AONTAS Information Referral Service in 2015 showing the greater need for clear information for adults who wish to explore their training and education options. In 2015 AONTAS received 559 direct information requests compared to 538 in 2014 and 335 in 2013. Our analysis of these requests yielded the following information:

- 16% of people that called us heard about us directly through the Onestepup website.
- 40% were looking for specific courses, the most frequently requested as follows:
  - Computers/IT
  - Childcare
  - Teacher/Tutor

**Many more people now seek information online and are then more likely to follow up with a telephone call if they need further assistance.**

- 18% are looking to return to education.
- 17% of queries are regarding social welfare or funding issues.
- 11% wanted to do their Leaving Certificate.
- Information requests consisted of 63% female and 37% male.
- Information requests were high in January and August, phone calls peaked in September with over 76 queries.
- The top reasons why adults are returning to education are in order to gain employment, learn something new and to change career.
- Dublin, Cork, Galway, Meath and Wicklow were the top 5 counties from which information calls were received in 2015.
- 35% of people contacting the service reported the Leaving Certificate or equivalent as their level of education to date, 20% of people contacting the service had a third level qualification, 12% had the Junior Certificate or equivalent and 6% of people had no formal qualification.
- The two biggest obstacles reported in returning to education were lack of information and lack of support.
- 72% of people reported living in an urban area and 28% lived in a rural area (This is a change on last year when the bigger percentage was from rural areas).
- In 2015, 32% of people contacting the service were unemployed - 10% of which were long term unemployed, 30% of people contacting the service were employed and 10% of people were on an illness or disability payment.
- In 2015, 44% of people contacting the service were looking for full time education options, 41% for part time and 6% for distance learning options.



## European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) Project

### Website Support: One Step Up

As part of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL), AONTAS continue to manage the One Step Up website. The initiative which is funded by the Erasmus Plus programme of the European Union and co-financed by SOLAS supports a website [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie), a Freephone Helpline 1800 303 669 and online calendar of events. The overall objective of the project is to increase participation in adult learning, in particular targeting adults with basic skills. The initiative forms part of other activities taking place in Ireland to support the EAAL.

### EAAL Project Activities

In 2015, AONTAS carried out a survey with key stakeholders including learners and providers to get feedback on the usability of the One Step Up website. The results of the survey were extremely positive, showing the majority of people found the learner stories 'powerful or inspirational' and the contacts for the local Education and Training Boards (ETBs) the most useful.

The evaluation informed developments to the website which include shorter, concise FAQs, personalising the homepage with inspiring learners and adding links to local libraries within the events calendar. Improved functionality has made the website easier to navigate. A new events application has been embedded into the AONTAS Facebook page which means that any event on the One Step Up website is also promoted on Facebook.

### Online Calendar

As part of the One Step Up website learners can access information about education and training events taking place locally; these events include Open Days, Information days, Registrations and Information events. A total of 300 education and training events were promoted through the calendar on the website. The majority of these events were Information events; 49% or Open Days; 22%. 69% of these events were organised by ETBs who are key stakeholders in the project.

### EAAL Project Outcomes

There has been a good response to the One Step Up Freephone Helpline which provides an information referral service and directs adults seeking education and training options to the relevant place; between November 2014 and October 2015 there was a 4% increase in calls to the Helpline compared to the previous year. AONTAS carried out follow up calls with adults who contacted the AONTAS Freephone Helpline service in 2015 which showed, after contacting the service 35% of respondents were in education and training and a further 11% of respondents had signed up to a course. However, there are still barriers for adults in returning to education and the follow up calls highlighted this, 46% of respondents didn't find what they were looking for due to the availability of course offerings or due to funding issues. Data gathered from the web based referral service and Freephone call-backs have provided useful data for practitioners in the ETB as well as policy makers, for example those from the Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS who are members of the Project Advisory Group.

### Website Referrals – [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie)

The project helped create greater levels of awareness about adult learning. During the course of this project almost 17,000 people gained access to information (both online and over the phone) about services and supports that they needed to take up education and training. In 2015:

- There were 6,826 completed user profiles on the website. A user profile is the information gathered from a user's interaction with the site – i.e. answers to all four questions fully completed.
- 540 people contacted the Freephone Helpline in 2015.
- 48% were between 35-65 years and from the Dublin area but user profiles came from all over Ireland.
- 47% of users were looking for Courses (this is a 6% increase from last year) and of these 35% were Long-term unemployed.



- 35% described themselves as Long-term unemployed, 29% Employed and 16% described themselves as Unemployed.
- Of those seeking basic skills 40% were employed
- Of those seeking basic skills the majority were in employment and 64% described themselves 18-25 years.

#### Engagement with OneStepUp.ie:

- 17,513 website users, with 76,321 page views.
- 6,826 completed user profiles captured through the campaign.

#### EAAL Promotional Activities

As national co-ordinator of the EAAL project, AONTAS has a role in promoting all the activities and outcomes that took place between November 2014 and October 2015. AONTAS promoted the One Step Up website and Helpline with learners, providers and important stakeholders who work with adults with low basic skills. Promotional activities included print and online advertising campaigns as well as targeted social media campaigns. Other activities included:

#### Stakeholder Engagement

AONTAS engaged with its members and key stakeholders in the project. AONTAS informed relevant organisations and agencies about the project including the ETBs, Department of Social Protection, Citizens Information centres and Libraries. Promotional material on the One Step Up project was sent to these organisations and agencies in May. The project has assisted in building relationships and reaching those 'hard to reach groups' for example the Department of Social Protections has included the [www.onestepup.ie](http://www.onestepup.ie) in its presentation of information to groups seeking employment or training opportunities, as part of its service to unemployed people. Information was also disseminated via E-bulletins and through external websites of the INOU Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, Age Action and on [www.activelink.ie](http://www.activelink.ie).

#### Presentations

Presentations on the role of AONTAS were delivered, and information on One Step Up was disseminated to over 100 frontline staff from the Department of Social Protection and Louth and Meath ETB who engage directly with the target group - those with basic skills.

#### Fairs and Exhibitions

The AONTAS information team attend Education and Training Fairs or Exhibitions, throughout the country, which showcase the range of opportunities available to people who are considering their options. These events range in size and are organised by local community groups, Local Area Partnerships, ETBs, libraries and the Department of Social Protection to provide encourage and provide information to prospective learners. A flyer developed in the first project was updated to reflect the current project and to promote the One Step Up website and Freephone number. An A4 poster and bookmarks were also developed in order to reach the target group. These materials were disseminated to adults attending the event but also with other providers exhibiting at the event. This was an effective way of reaching the target group.

Fairs and Information Events – AONTAS staff attended a number of fairs and information events throughout 2015 to promote AONTAS work as follows:

- Youth Initiative Event, February
- DSP Fair Finglas, February
- DSP Jobs Fair Ashbourne, February
- Bray Institute of Further Education Open Night, May
- Ilac Centre Library Information Stand, May
- Baldoyle Training Centre Fair, May
- Wicklow Further Education and Training Centre Open Night, June
- Loughlinstown Training Centre Education and Training Fair, August
- Ballina Education and Training Fair, September
- Cork Adult Education & Training Exhibition, September

- National Ploughing Championships, September
- 'We Mean Business' Trade and Community Exhibition, Monaghan, October
- More Options Fair, Tallaght, October
- Roscommon Education and Training Fair, October
- More Options Fair, Clondalkin, November
- Avondhu Blackwater Partnership Education Fair, Mallow, November
- Access to Success Meath, November
- Ahead Better Options Fair, November

#### Education and Training Board Promotional Activities

As part of the activities of the EAAL, AONTAS engaged and supported all 16 ETBs to organise a promotional event or activity to create greater awareness at local level about the services available, and to support learners to act as advocates for adult learning. The majority of ETBs organised an event, 4 ETBs produced a video and 1 ETB produced a leaflet; all of these activities raised awareness about the education and training opportunities available locally and highlighted the benefits for adult learners.

The project was successful in engaging with over a thousand learners nationwide. In total 23 events were organised as part of the project; these events were Open Days, Information events or taster courses to encourage adults to take part in adult learning or sign up for a course. The events were also an opportunity for ETBs to show the range of courses and services they have on offer. In total 1,312 learners and prospective learners looking for courses, information or guidance participated in these events. Four ETBs chose to produce a video to promote their services. The videos featured learners from various programme including Literacy and Community Education speaking about the benefits they have gained from adult learning. In some case learners were involved in the production of the video which helped them develop skills in media production. One ETB produced a leaflet providing information on the Adult Educational Guidance Service and supports offered through their service. Learners were also involved in the publications and their testimonials were printed anonymously on the leaflets. Overall fifty seven learners were

**Many more people now seek information online and are then more likely to follow up with a telephone call if they need further assistance.**

involved in sharing their experience and the benefits of learning at the events organised and also on the videos and leaflet produced by some ETBs.

### Plans for the Future

AONTAS continues its important role of National Coordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning, and is one of a few NGOs across Europe managing national activities. In 2015, AONTAS were successful in their application for a new project, which runs from November 2015- October 2017. The next phase 'Learning today for a better tomorrow' will focus on building on the success of the current project and support the work of the FET (Further Education and Training) strategy.

AONTAS will continue to manage the One Step Up Initiative as well as utilising its networks to support greater participation in EPAL (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe) by working in partnership with Leargas to develop a list of key contributors for EPAL.

New activities of the project will see AONTAS work in partnership with the National Advisory Group of the Skills for Work Programme to highlight the achievement of the programme and promote it as a model of good practice, using employers currently engaged in the programme as 'champions'. AONTAS will also support the Skills for Work Programme to organise a seminar targeted at employers with a view to encouraging them to engage in workplace learning for low skilled people.

Further activities will see AONTAS working with the Community Education Network to develop and deliver virtual in service training to upskill practitioners working in the sector to engage with the new structures and systems to ensure Community Education providers can continue to deliver quality programmes for their learners.



As a national coordinator AONTAS has a role in the dissemination of best practice, thus two seminars will be organised for policy makers and service providers to share information from national and European developments, and learning from the current project, including the research undertaken by NALA. A promotional campaign will also be used to share all aspects of the project and to disseminate project findings and outcomes.

## Representation at home and abroad

As well as our ongoing engagement with stakeholders, AONTAS staff and Executive Committee members represent AONTAS and the voice of adult learning at home and abroad at conferences, seminars, focus groups and other relevant events. In 2015 AONTAS represented the interests of adult and community education and learners on:

- Board of SOLAS
- PLSS Steering Group, SOLAS
- SIAC, SOLAS
- QQI Community/Voluntary Joint Working Group
- Advisory Group on Access to Higher Education
- European Association of Education for Adults (EAEA)
- Governing Authority, University of Limerick
- Adult Learner Journal Editorial Board

### EAEA and representation at a European Level

Niamh O'Reilly has represented AONTAS and its members on the Board of the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) having been first elected in 2011 and re-elected in 2013. Niamh was re-elected in 2015 and received a strong mandate from EAEA members as one of the three Board member to gain the maximum number of possible votes for her third term. Niamh contributed to policy influence at 5 Board meetings in Belgium,

Portugal and Finland. More information is available online at [www.eaea.org](http://www.eaea.org). In September, through the EAEA Executive Board, AONTAS made a representation at the European Commission to senior staff of the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen. AONTAS stressed the importance of both accredited and non-accredited community education provision and its role in meeting the needs of the most hard to reach, in particular the unemployed.

### International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) World Assembly

The ninth world assembly took place in Montreal, Canada in June and it provided a forum for over 600 adult educators from over 80 countries around the globe. This year's theme was "Adult learning and Education to create the world we want". The assembly was attended by an Irish delegation which comprising Liz Waters, AONTAS President, Berni Brady, AONTAS Director, Niamh O'Reilly, Head of Strategic Development, AONTAS and Una Buckley, Learner Ambassador. The assembly programme consisted of a mixture of plenary and workshop activities concluding the adoption of a Final Declaration outlining the priorities for the next four years. The Irish delegation presented at two workshops; Berni Brady and Una Buckley at "The Adult learners' Movement; comparative national experiences" and Liz Waters and Niamh O'Reilly at "A National Advocacy Network; Raising the voice of Community Education in Ireland".

**AONTAS staff and Executive Committee members represent the voice of adult learning at home and abroad at conferences, seminars and focus groups.**

## Section 3

# Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

REGISTRATION NUMBER 80958

CHARITY NUMBER 6719

CHARITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY NUMBER 20013042

# Company Information

## Trustees

Ms. Elizabeth Waters  
— *President*

Mr. Liam Kilbride  
— *Vice-President*

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham  
— *Hon. Secretary*

Mr. Colm Kilgallon  
— *Treasurer*

Ms. Alice Emma Bennett  
(resigned May 2015)

Mr. John D'Arcy

Mr. James Stuart Duffin  
(elected May 2015)

Ms. Mary Farrell

Ms. Tara Farrell

Ms. Crona Gallagher

Ms. Lorraine Hennessy

Mr. Gabriel Keating  
(elected May 2015)

Mr. Michael Kenny

Mr. James Prior

Ms. Deborah Ryan  
(elected May 2015)

## Company Secretary

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham

## Auditors

Anne Brady McQuillans DFK  
Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors  
Iveagh Court  
Harcourt Road  
Dublin 2

## Business Address

83–87 Main Street  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6

## Bankers

Bank of Ireland  
Lower Baggot Street  
Dublin 2

## Solicitors

P.J. Walsh & Company Solicitors  
12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street  
Dublin 2

## Registered Office

83–87 Main Street  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6

# Trustees' Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

The Trustees' present their Trustees' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2015. The charity is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP in accordance with FRS 102, effective January 2015), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

## Objectives and Activities, Business Review and Future Developments

The principal activity of the company is to ensure that every adult in Ireland has access to appropriate and affordable learning opportunities throughout their lives, thus enabling them to contribute to and participate in the economic, social and cultural development of Irish Society.

2015 brought about two key landmark achievements for the organisation: the establishment of the National Adult Learner Forum and delivering on our role as the National Coordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). Both of these projects were the key focus of our work and involved extensive and sustained stake holder engagement in order to ensure that the projects had a successful outcome. Other key activities included our promotional work which looked at raising the profile and value of adult learning through the Adult Learners' Festival, and our advocacy work which focused on addressing key issues facing AONTAS members.

Over the coming year AONTAS will strengthen this work, increase its European impact, increase membership engagement, and strengthen and develop relationships with key stakeholders across the education sector in order to ensure the broad benefits of adult and community education are valued and supported.

The company is limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

The Trustees' expect that the present level of activity will be sustained for the foreseeable future.

## Companies Act 2014

The Companies Act 2014 commenced on 1 June 2015. AONTAS will be converting to a company limited by guarantee, under Section 980/1190(5)/1247(4) Companies Act 2014.

## Financial Review Results

The surplus for the year after providing for depreciation and taxation amounted to €97,643 (2014: €95,490).

## Going Concern

The company is dependant on income provided from government funders, membership and donations. As with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the challenging macro economic environment. The Trustees have reviewed all relevant information and are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the

foreseeable future. Consequently, the Trustees consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

### Structure, governance and management

The Executive Committee constitutes the Board of Directors of the company under the terms of Article 28 of the Articles of Association of the company:

Ms. Elizabeth Waters  
— *President*

Mr. Liam Kilbride  
— *Vice-President*

Ms. Lorraine Cunningham  
— *Hon. Secretary*

Mr. Colm Kilgallon  
— *Treasurer*

Ms. Alice Emma Bennett  
(resigned May 2015)

Mr. John D'Arcy

Mr. James Stuart Duffin  
(elected May 2015)

Ms. Mary Farrell

Ms. Tara Farrell

Ms. Crona Gallagher

Ms. Lorraine Hennessy

Mr. Gabriel Keating  
(elected May 2015)

Mr. Michael Kenny

Mr. James Prior

Ms. Deborah Ryan  
(elected May 2015)

There were no changes in Trustees between 31st December 2015 and the date of signing the financial statements.

### Selection and Election of Trustees

Contained within the AONTAS constitution is a mechanism whereby representatives from the membership are elected to become a member of the Executive Committee and Officer Board. In the case of all elected positions not being filled, there is an additional mechanism whereby the elected Board can co-opt a person to fill the vacancy. Candidates for co-option must be agreed by the Board and will be selected on the basis of relevant skills and expertise required to allow the Board to function at the optimum level of excellence.

### Books of Account

To ensure that adequate accounting records are kept in accordance with Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act, 2014, the Trustees have employed appropriately qualified accounting personnel and have maintained appropriate computerised accounting systems. The accounting records are located at the company's office at the business address.

### Exemptions from disclosures

There are no omissions of the names of any Trustees, executive officers or senior staff members for any extenuating personal circumstances.

### Funds held as custodian Trustee on behalf of others.

AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation do not act as custodian Trustees on behalf of others.

### Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trustees' have assessed the risks and have taken measures to manage these risks in AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation as follows:

### MARKET RISK

In common with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the deteriorating external economic conditions. The Trustees are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

### FRAUD RISK

This risk is mitigated by maintaining segregation of duties for receipt of funds and the payment of creditors. The Trustees' have put processes and controls in place to ensure that detailed checking is carried out at all stages to ensure the accuracy and validity of all transactions.

### Payment of Creditors

The company acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the EC (Late Payment) Regulation 2002. It is the company's policy to agree payment terms with all suppliers and to adhere to those payment terms.

### Research and Development

The company did not engage in any research and development activity during the year.

### Auditors

The auditors, Anne Brady McQuillans DFK, have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 380 of the Companies Act, 2014.

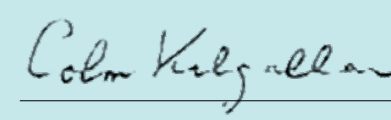
### Events after the Balance Sheet date

There have been no circumstances or events subsequent to the year end, which require adjustment to or disclosure in the financial statements or in the notes thereto.

*On behalf of the Board*



**Ms. Elizabeth Waters**  
**President**



**Mr. Colm Kilgallon**  
**Hon. Treasurer**

Date:

## Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the net income or expenditure of the charity for that year. In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the Charities SORP (updated 2015) has been followed.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and with Irish Statute comprising the Companies

On behalf of the Board



**Ms. Elizabeth Waters**  
President

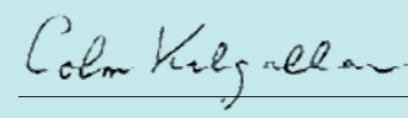
Date:

Act 2014, and all Regulations to be construed as one with those Acts. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the Republic of Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditor in connection with preparing the auditor's report) of which the charity's auditor is unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.



**Mr. Colm Kilgallon**  
Hon. Treasurer

## Independent Auditors' Report to the Members of AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS for the year ended 31 December 2015 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account), the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Accounting Policies and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

### Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

As described in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and the accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

### Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Trustees; and the overall presentation of the financial statements.

In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the annual report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

### Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

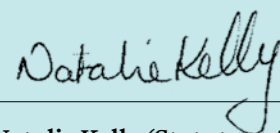
- give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland of the state of the company's affairs as at the 31st December 2015 and of its net incoming resources and cashflows for the year then ended: and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014

**Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Act 2014**

- We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purpose of our audit.
- In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company
- The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account
- In our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Report is consistent with the financial statements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Act 2014, which we require us to report to you if, in our opinion the disclosures of Trustees' remuneration and transactions specified by law are not made.



**Natalie Kelly (Statutory Auditor)**  
for and on behalf of  
Anne Brady McQuillans DFK  
Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors  
Iveagh Court  
Harcourt Road  
Dublin 2

Date:

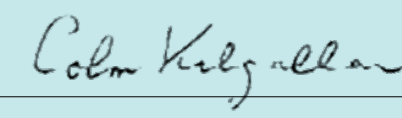
## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)

		Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total	Total
		2015	2015	2015	2014
	Notes		€		€
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>					
Charitable activities	3	1,007,330	218,512	1,225,842	1,054,831
Other trading activities	3	-	11,270	11,270	-
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1,007,330</b>	<b>229,782</b>	<b>1,237,112</b>	<b>1,054,831</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities		919,262	220,207	<b>1,139,469</b>	959,341
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		88,068	9,575	<b>97,643</b>	95,490
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		88,068	9,575	<b>97,643</b>	95,490
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		144,649	-	<b>144,649</b>	49,159
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		232,717	9,575	<b>242,292</b>	144,649

On behalf of the Board



**Ms. Elizabeth Waters**  
President



**Mr. Colm Kilgallon**  
Hon. Treasurer

## Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

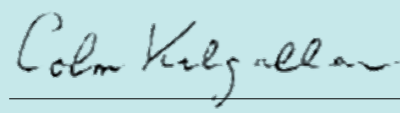
	Notes	2015		2014	
		€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Tangible Assets	9		14,870		10,945
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	10	13,404		30,281	
Cash at bank and in hand		380,801		257,432	
		394,205		287,713	
<b>Liabilities</b>					
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	11	(156,755)		(138,382)	
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			237,450		149,331
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>			252,320		160,276
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year</b>	13		(10,028)		(15,628)
<b>Net Assets</b>			242,292		144,649
<b>Funds</b>					
Unrestricted Funds	14 & 17		232,717		144,649
Restricted Funds			9,575		-
<b>Total Funds</b>			242,292		144,649

The notes on pages 55–61 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



Ms. Elizabeth Waters  
President



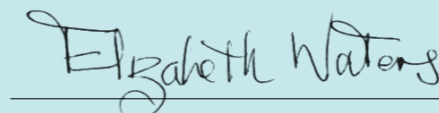
Mr. Colm Kilgallon  
Hon. Treasurer

## Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

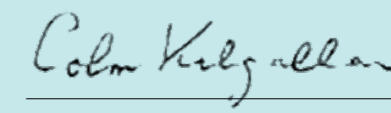
	Notes	2015	2014
		€	€
<b>Cash flow from operating activities:</b>			
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	16.1	132,325	166,982
<b>Cash flow from investing activities:</b>			
Purchase of computer equipment		(8,956)	-
<b>Cash flow from financing activities:</b>			
Net cash provided by (used in) financing activities		-	-
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>		123,369	166,982
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period</b>		257,432	90,450
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>		380,801	257,432

The notes on pages 55–61 form part of the financial statements.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



Ms. Elizabeth Waters  
President



Mr. Colm Kilgallon  
Hon. Treasurer

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

## 1 Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the company's financial statements.

### 1.1 Compliance with accounting standards

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP in accordance with FRS 102, effective January 2015) and with generally accepted accounting principles in Ireland and Irish statute comprising the Companies Act 2014. They comply with the financial reporting standards of the Financial Reporting Council, as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland. The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the charitable company's financial statements.

### 1.2 Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All tangible fixed assets are initially recorded at historic cost.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation, less residual value, of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Fixtures, Fittings and equipment	—	20% Straight Line
Computer equipment	—	20% Straight Line
Office equipment	—	20% Straight Line

### 1.3 Leasing Commitments

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged against income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

### 1.4 Income Resources

Grant income receivable from the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS and grant income receivable from TUI, Erasmus + Study Visits, Teagasc, EAAL, ASTI, Largas - Erasmus and sponsorship income is treated as being restricted as the income is applied for particular purposes. All other income receivable is treated as being unrestricted.

Voluntary income including donations, gifts and legacies and grants from the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS that provide core funding or are of general nature are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

### 1.5 Resources Expended

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Contractual arrangements and performance related grants are recognised as goods or services are supplied. Other grant payments are recognised when a constructive obligation arises that result in the payment being unavoidable.

- Costs of raising funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.
- Charitable activities include expenditure associated with the educational programmes include both the direct costs and support costs relating to this activity.

### 1.6 Pensions

AONTAS operates a defined contribution scheme and pension benefits are funded over the employees' period of service by way of contributions from the company and employees. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate. The assets are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund.

### 1.7 Reserves

It is the policy of AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation to retain sufficient reserves to cover future commitments in relation to its on-going function and mandate. The provisions are intended to finance:

- Working capital requirements
- Potential setbacks in income
- Unexpected/emergency expenditure

### 1.8 Designated Reserves

The Trustees have resolved to build up a designated reserve amounting to three months expenditure. Where such funds are no longer required for the intended purpose, they will be released to the General Reserve.

## 2 Going Concern

The company is dependant on income provided from government funders, membership and donations. As with many government funded charities, the company is affected by both the budgetary constraints implemented by the national government and the challenging macro economic environment. The directors have reviewed all relevant information and are confident that the company has adequate financial resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Consequently, the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

<b>3 Sources of Income</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
<b>Charitable activities:</b>		
<b>Restricted Funds</b>		
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - National Adult Learners Forum	92,761	-
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS EAAL 1st Phase	-	61,163
Erasmus + EAAL 2nd Phase	61,366	13,211
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS EAAL 2nd Phase	35,512	-
Erasmus + EAAL 3rd Phase	9,123	-
Department of Education & Skills Computer system	5,600	3,866
Erasmus + through Leargas	7,205	2,530
Erasmus + Study Visits	3,813	-
Infonet expenses	132	1,616
ASTI Festival Sponsorship	500	500
St. Patricks Cathedral Festival Sponsorship	500	-
Teagasc Festival Sponsorship	1,000	1,000
TUI Festival Sponsorship	1,000	1,000
Vita Project	-	12,335
Miscellaneous Income	-	1,212
	<b>218,512</b>	<b>98,433</b>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>		
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS: Grant in Aid (Core Funding)	986,850	933,900
Members' subscriptions	19,284	21,966
Miscellaneous	1,196	532
	<b>1,007,330</b>	<b>956,398</b>
<b>Other trading activities:</b>		
<b>Restricted</b>		
Other Income	11,270	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,237,112</b>	<b>1,054,831</b>

<b>4 Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) for the year is stated after charging:</b>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	5,031	5,396
Operating lease rentals - Office equipment	4,962	5,046
Auditors' remuneration	6,881	6,860
<b>5 Employees</b>		
<b>Number of employees</b>		
The average monthly numbers of employees during the year were:	10	10
<b>Employment costs</b>		
Wages and salaries	505,285	489,905
Social welfare costs	52,853	51,943
Other pension costs	66,470	72,799
	<b>624,608</b>	<b>614,647</b>
<b>The number of employees whose remuneration was greater than €60,000:</b>		
€60,000 to €70,000	1	1
€80,001 to €90,000	1	1
€110,001 to €120,000	1	1

**DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION AND TRANSACTION**

No remuneration has been paid or is payable to any charity Trustee directly or indirectly from the funds of the charity. However, the Trustees' were reimbursed for their attendance at Executive Committee meetings. The total reimbursement for 2015 was €2,666 (2014: €1,573).

**KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL**

Key management personnel's remuneration is set by the board.

**6 Pension Costs**

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions are made by both the employee and the employer. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the company in an independently administered fund. The pension cost charge represents contributions payable by AONTAS to the fund and amount to €66,470 (2014: €72,799).

**7 Taxation**

No charge to current or deferred taxation arises as the company has been granted exemption by the Revenue authorities in Ireland.

## 8 Non Audit Services

In common with many other businesses our size and nature we use our auditors to assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

9 Tangible Assets	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Fixtures, fittings and Equipment	Totals
	€	€	€	€
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1st January 2015	66,449	11,713	50,026	128,188
Additions	8,956	-	-	8,956
At 31st December 2014	75,405	11,713	50,026	137,144
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1st January 2015	55,809	11,713	49,721	117,243
Charge for the year	4,930	-	101	5,031
At 31st December 2015	60,739	11,713	49,822	122,274
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31st December 2015	14,666	-	204	14,870
At 31st December 2014	10,640	-	305	10,945

9.1 Tangible Assets Prior Year	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Fixtures, fittings and Equipment	Totals
	€	€	€	€
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1st January 2014	66,449	11,713	50,026	128,188
Additions	8,956	-	-	8,956
At 31st December 2014	75,405	11,713	50,026	137,144
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1st January 2014	50,587	11,640	49,620	111,847
Revaluation	-	-	-	-
On Disposals	-	-	-	-
Charge for the year	5,222	73	101	5,396
At 31st December 2014	55,809	11,713	49,721	117,243
<b>Net book value</b>				
At 31st December 2014	10,640	-	305	10,945
At 31st December 2013	15,862	73	406	16,341

10 Debtors	2015	2014
	€	€
Other debtors	7,422	23,869
Other taxes and social security costs	-	517
Prepayments	5,982	5,895
	<b>13,404</b>	<b>30,281</b>

Included in other debtors is the following:

Membership fees	7,422	7,115
Balance due from Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - EAAL 1st Phase	-	16,754
	<b>7,422</b>	<b>23,869</b>

Included in other taxes and social security costs above are the following:

<b>PRSI</b>	-	<b>517</b>
-------------	---	------------

## 11 Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

Trade creditors	41,459	3,360
Other taxes and social security costs	2,081	-
Deferred income	103,927	119,039
Accruals	9,098	15,983
Payroll due	190	-
	<b>156,755</b>	<b>138,382</b>

PAYE	1,233	-
PRSI	848	-
	2,081	-

12 Deferred Income	Balance at beginning of year	Received 2015	Statement of Financial Activities 2015	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS	51,100	935,750	(986,850)	-
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - EAAL 2nd Phase	61,366	(25,854)	(35,512)	-
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - EAAL 3rd Phase	-	217,428	(113,501)	103,927
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - National Adult Learners Forum	-	92,761	(92,761)	-
Erasmus+ through Léargas	6,573	(5,941)	(632)	-
	<b>119,039</b>	<b>1,214,144</b>	<b>(1,229,256)</b>	<b>103,927</b>

**13 Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year**

Government Grants				
At 31 December 2014			15,628	-
Increase in year			-	19,494
Released in year			(5,600)	(3,866)
At 31 December 2015			<b>10,028</b>	<b>15,628</b>

14 Reconciliation of Movement in Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2015	Total 2014
	€	€	€	€
At beginning of year	144,649	-	144,649	49,159
Net movement in funds	88,068	9,575	97,643	95,490
<b>At end of year</b>	<b>232,717</b>	<b>9,575</b>	<b>242,292</b>	<b>144,649</b>

**15 Reconciliation of Net Cash Flow to Movement in Funds**

	2015	2014
	€	€
<b>Increase/(decrease) in cash for the year:</b>		
Movement in net funds for the year	123,369	166,982
Opening net funds	257,432	90,450
	<b>380,801</b>	<b>257,432</b>

**16 Cash Flow Statement**

16.1 Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities	2015	2014
	€	€
Net income for the reporting period	97,192	95,490
Depreciation charges	5,031	5,396
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	16,877	(14,672)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	13,225	80,768
<b>Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities</b>	<b>132,325</b>	<b>166,982</b>

16.2 Analysis of Cash and Cash Equivalents	Opening balance	Cash flows	Closing balance
	€	€	€
Cash in hand	257,432	123,369	380,801

17 Analysis of Movement in Finds	Balance at beginning of year	Incoming Resources	Resources expended	Balance at end of year
	€	€	€	€
<b>Restricted Income</b>				
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - EAAL 3rd Phase	-	9,123	(9,123)	-
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - EAAL 2nd Phase	-	96,878	(96,878)	-
Department of Education & Skills Computer system	-	5,600	(5,600)	-
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS - National Adult Learners Forum	-	92,761	(83,186)	9,575
Other	-	25,420	(25,420)	-
	-	<b>229,782</b>	<b>(220,207)</b>	<b>9,575</b>

<b>Unrestricted Income</b>				
Designated reserve	20,000	-	-	20,000
Department of Education & Skills through SOLAS	120,910	986,850	(895,043)	212,717
Other	3,739	20,480	(24,219)	-
	144,649	1,007,330	(919,262)	232,717
	<b>144,649</b>	<b>1,237,112</b>	<b>(1,139,469)</b>	<b>242,292</b>

**18 Comparative Information**

Prior year figures have been regrouped for comparative purposes.

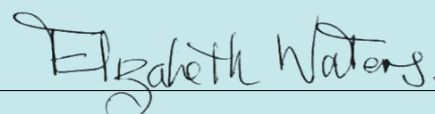
**19 Status**

The liability of the members is limited.

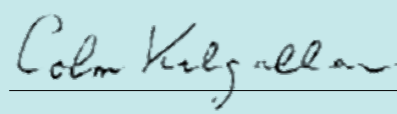
Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members or within one year thereafter for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves such amount as may be required, not exceeding €6.35.

**20 Approval of Financial Statements**

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 11 April and signed on its behalf by



**Ms. Elizabeth Waters**  
President



**Mr. Colm Kilgallon**  
Hon. Treasurer

## Analysis of Expenses for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

<b>Resources Expended</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
<b>Administration</b>		
Salary costs	231,612	212,883
Pension scheme	44,642	46,529
Staff training and expenses	7,208	4,129
Sundry staff costs	4,397	3,306
Postage and courier services	4,332	12,152
Stationery	3,858	5,867
Telephone	7,969	6,263
Travel and subsistence	7,633	3,294
Executive and general committee expenses	12,193	8,465
Legal fees	155	67
Audit and accountancy fees	6,881	6,860
Bank interest and charges	773	630
Representation and affiliation	22,035	10,593
Miscellaneous	197	197
Rent of venues and equipment	-	1,867
Research and projects apportionments	(92,774)	(53,058)
	<b>261,111</b>	<b>270,044</b>

<b>Resources Expended</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	€	€
<b>Premises</b>		
Light and heat	3,490	3,593
Rent and rates	52,495	52,515
Repairs and maintenance	21,626	15,627
Leasing charges	4,962	5,046
Insurance	5,273	6,617
Cleaning	5,040	3,258
Depreciation of computers and office equipment	5,031	5,396
	<b>97,917</b>	<b>92,052</b>
<b>Development</b>		
Salary costs	326,526	328,965
Pension scheme	21,828	26,270
Accommodation and subsistence	-	6,247
Printing and publications	-	29,529
Conferences / seminars / membership meetings	17,397	8,678
Public relations strategy	16,929	197
Adult learners' festival	102,815	96,937
Information resources	37,851	1,216
Organisational development	4,595	3,293
Recruitment	35,199	130
	<b>563,140</b>	<b>501,462</b>
<b>Research and Projects</b>		
Research	16,843	8,905
Erasmus + EAAL 2nd Phase	98,599	52,341
Vita Project	-	34,537
Erasmus+ EAAL 3rd Phase	9,123	-
Erasmus+ through Leargas	9,550	-
National Adult Learners Forum	83,185	-
	<b>217,300</b>	<b>95,783</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,139,468</b>	<b>959,341</b>





