



Annual Report 2016

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FOREWORD

Liz Waters, AONTAS President



2016 marked a new chapter of transformation and development for AONTAS, as Niamh O'Reilly took over as the new CEO of AONTAS. Niamh came through a very competitive recruitment process to be appointed to this role following former Director Berni Brady's departure. Niamh's huge passion for lifelong learning and her strong commitment to learners resulted in a number of key outcomes being achieved this year. As a creative leader with in-depth knowledge of the sector Niamh has undertaken an extensive organisational review in order to deliver on the objectives and actions outlined in the current Strategic Plan 2015–2018, Learning - A Lifetime's Work.

Niamh also set about implementing an ambitious two year plan for the organisation which includes a focus on increasing membership involvement in advocacy activities; strengthening AONTAS' position as the National Coordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL); and broadening the debate on the wider value and benefits of adult and community education.

2016 marked two key milestone events: the 10th anniversary of the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival, which took place from the 22nd–27th February and the first meeting of the National Adult Learner Forum which concluded the week. The 2016 festival provided a great vehicle to promote the invaluable work that is happening nationwide in adult and community education and showcased the range of local innovative adult and community education programmes.

AONTAS has always kept a strong focus on the learner's voice, believing that learners provide key first-hand insights that should inform the development of the services and

policies that affect their learning. AONTAS' success in bringing the learner to the heart of policy and provision came to fruition with the establishment of a National Adult Learner Forum, outlined in the SOLAS FET Strategy 2014–2019. The first land mark event took place on 26th February in the Mansion House, Dublin where 70 Further Education and Training (FET) learners were given the opportunity to share their feedback and contribute to the development of FET policy.

As President of AONTAS I look forward to continuing to support Niamh to develop the capacity and scope of the organisation while working in partnership with the Executive Committee and the staff team. A number of long standing members of the AONTAS Executive stepped down in 2016 and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their valuable time, commitment and contribution that they gave to the organisation: Liam Kilbride, Lorraine Cunningham, Lorraine Hennessey and Mary Farrell.

I would like to acknowledge the brilliant work and dedication of both the Executive Committee and the staff team in 2016.

AONTAS has achieved an impressive amount in 2016 and following an extensive organisational review, AONTAS has grown and developed its capacity to support members. As a powerful membership organisation, we have a unique and valuable contribution to make to the sector. AONTAS remains 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. We thank all members for their continued support in 2016.

AONTAS Staff

Niamh O'Reilly	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Jacinta Cuthbert	Head of Organisational Development
Katie O'Rourke	Communications Officer
Christine Hynes	Membership Services Officer
Kathryn Laing	Promotions Officer
Bríd Greenan	Information and Resources Officer
Karen Williams	Learner Supports Officer
Saorlaith Ni Bhroin	European Projects Officer
Suzanne Kyle	Community Education Network (CEN) Coordinator
Mairéad Tynan	Accounts and Administrator Officer
Jasmin Clancy	Reception Administrator

AONTAS Executive Committee

Ms Elizabeth Waters	President, An Cosán
Mr James Prior	Vice-President (elected May 2016), Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN)
Ms Tara Farrell	Hon. Secretary (elected May 2016), Longford Women's Link
Mr Colm Kilgallon	Hon. Treasurer, All Hallows College
Mr John D'Arcy	The Open University
Mr Gabriel Keating	Education and Training Boards Ireland
Mr Michael Kenny	Maynooth University
Ms Grace Finlay	AEGAI (Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland) (Co-opted on 24th September to replace Mary Stokes, elected May 2016)
Ms Liz O'Sullivan	AEOA (Adult Education Officers' Association) (Co-opted on 24th September to replace Crona Gallagher, elected May 2016)
Mr Chris O'Ralaigh	Individual Member (co-opted on 24th September 2016)
Ms Deborah Ryan	CEFA (Community Education Facilitators' Association)
Mr James Stuart Duffin	One Family (<i>resigned 26th May 2016</i>)
Ms Mary Farrell	Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (<i>resigned 11th May 2016</i>)
Ms Lorraine Hennessy	Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU) (<i>resigned 11th May 2016</i>)
Mr Liam Kilbride	Individual Member (<i>resigned 11th May 2016</i>)
Ms Lorraine Cunningham	Blayne Blades (<i>resigned 11th May 2016</i>)

OVERVIEW

RECOVER
BECOMING
HONESTY
MAGNIFICENT
COMPASSION
FEMINISM
DREAMS
EQUALITY
SOCIAL JUSTICE
KINDNESS

LOVE
HOPE
TRUTH
NEW BEGINNINGS
COMMUNITY
FAITH
RESILIENCE
GROWTH
CHANGE

CONFIDENCE
PROUD
TOGETHER
BELIEVE
STRONG
DREAMS
CREATE
TOGETHER

Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS



Introduction

I am delighted to present the AONTAS Annual Report for 2016, which documents the main outcomes of my first year as CEO. 2016 has provided a busy period of transformation, review and development for AONTAS. Having taken over the role of CEO on the 1st January 2016, I have set about implementing a two year plan for the organisation. Key activities included an extensive organisational review which resulted in the identification of a new organisational structure. We also updated our policies and procedures in line with good practice and as part of our obligations as a charity, to our funders and our members.

As an organisation, AONTAS is committed to advocating for the right of all adults in Ireland to quality learning throughout their lives, and to promoting the value and benefits of lifelong learning. We believe that lifelong learning is the key not just to economic success but also to personal, social and cultural development and as such has a range of outcomes and benefits for the learner.

As part of our 2 Year Plan, we are focussing on the potential of our engagement at European level to influence policy, engage in EU projects and to extend those opportunities to our members through ERASMUS+ mobilities. Under the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL), AONTAS is the National Coordinator of the 'Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow' Project and a range of activities are underway which includes the One Step Up (www.onestepup.ie) information referral service which supports those considering adult learning to make an informed choice.

Advocacy Work

Ireland is leading the way in making a commitment to learner representation at both a national and regional level. The Government committed to the establishment of a forum for adult learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy, published by SOLAS in 2014. AONTAS is leading out on this exciting new development which means that learners are now placed at the heart of the FET service. The first forum meeting took place on the 26th February when learners were given the unique opportunity to influence the policy decisions that affect them. Having made great strides in our advocacy work in relation to establishing the voice of the learner at the centre of the FET strategy, AONTAS is continuing to focus on other key issues that present challenges for its members - in particular 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 (CEN), AONTAS is focussed on strengthening the capacity of these groups to become strong advocates for their own work.

Promoting Adult Learning

In 2016 our work was strongly focussed on communications with the goal of promoting the value and benefits of adult learning. We implemented a new communications strategy which included a fresh new re-brand for AONTAS and the development of aontas.com which is ongoing.

To further highlight the learner voice we launched a promotional campaign entitled #ImAnAdultLearner. The aim of the campaign was to share inspiring learner stories to encourage others to return to education. Over 40 learner stories highlighted the impact that education can have in transforming people's lives. We estimate that we have reached over 500,000 people through this promotional work which resulted in a range of national and local, television, radio, print and online media opportunities including TV3 and the journal.ie.

Through this campaign learner stories and voices have gained national recognition and we finished the year with the launch of our publication 'I'm an Adult Learner 2016'. Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD launched the publication at the AONTAS General Meeting which took place as part of the European Vocational Skills Week (5th –9th, December 2016).

Conclusion

In this short overview I have summarised the key activities of 2016 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. Our Executive Committee met four 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 and leadership for the 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.

Niamh O'Reilly - CEO, AONTAS

Who We Are

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation, a non-governmental, voluntary membership organisation established in 1969. The name AONTAS is an acronym in the Irish language, Aos Oideachais Náisiúnta Tri Aontú Saorálach meaning 'national adult education through voluntary unification'. The word AONTAS itself is also the Irish word for 'unity' or 'union', so the intention of the founders of AONTAS was that it would be identified by its inclusiveness. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is core funded by the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, and receives project funding from other sources from time to time.

With over 500 members from the formal and non-formal adult and community education sector as well as across the lifelong learning spectrum AONTAS regards its membership as a key resource which provides the organisation with a grassroots, authentic understanding of adult and community education practice from both a practitioner and learner perspective. The membership profile comprises a rich mix of statutory, voluntary and community organisations as well as individuals who are deeply involved in and committed to the concept of lifelong learning. AONTAS affords statutory and voluntary members alike a unique space to meet and reflect on how provision for learners can be improved. Through our long track record of support for community education leading to the development of the AONTAS Community Education Network (CEN) in recent years, AONTAS has acquired a deep and historic knowledge of community education practice and a strong link to learners. Our individual members, including adult learners, mature students, tutors, facilitators, organisers and advocates of adult learning have a direct means to obtain information from AONTAS and the opportunity to link with other organisations. Ultimately we offer our collective members the unique opportunity to shape, promote and develop lifelong learning.

Why We Exist

The mission of AONTAS is to 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. We have a specific focus on the most educationally disadvantaged and our work seeks to ensure that all adults have the right to participate in adult learning that exhibits the following elements: Inclusion, learner supports, progression, positive learning outcomes, is learner focused, offers learner choice, a positive learning experience and is transformative. See the current AONTAS Strategic Plan (2015 – 2018) for more details.

Our Purpose

The work of AONTAS centres on: Advocating and lobbying for the development of a quality service for adult learners; promoting the value and benefits of adult learning and building organisational capacity.

With particular emphasis on those who did not benefit from education initially or who are under-represented in learning, AONTAS' work is aimed at:

- Widening participation in lifelong learning
- Ensuring community education is supported to offer quality learning opportunities to the most educationally disadvantaged
- Ensuring adult learners are central to local, regional, national, European and International adult learning policy

01



AONTAS STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 01

Advocacy and Lobbying for the
Development of a Quality Service
for Adult Learners

- **Overview of Advocacy**
- **National Adult Learner Forum**
- **AONTAS Community
Education Network**
- **European Impact**
- **AONTAS Representation**



Overview of Advocacy

AONTAS, as an advocacy NGO for adult learning has the capacity and experience to act as a link between national policy actions and what happens in practice on the ground. Through occupying this position AONTAS can critically assess the relationship between policy and practice and facilitate valuable dialogue between policy makers, practitioners and learners, thereby strengthening the voice, visibility and value of adult learning in the wider context of lifelong learning.

AONTAS has acted as a strong advocate for adult and community education. We actively and proactively respond to policy developments and build effective relationships with key policy makers in striving for a more equitable lifelong learning field.

AONTAS is active in representing adult learners on a variety of advisory and steering groups in particular relating to SOLAS and the Department of Education and Skills (DES). We are also active at European level through the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) and the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE). As National Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) we promote lifelong learning policy implementation at national level and actively engage with our European counterparts. AONTAS was nominated by the DES in 2014, and again in 2017, as the National Coordinator of EAAL. Delivering a programme in partnership with other key stakeholders in the sector aimed at promoting the benefits of adult learning with a particular focus on people with low levels of education and skills.

AONTAS has a long and historic commitment to community education through the AONTAS Community Education Network (CEN) (est 2007) and has been successful in ensuring community education is recognised and supported as a key part of the future Further Education and Training (FET) policy agenda. We pioneered the engagement of adult

learners in policy development and are now leading out on a part of the SOLAS FET Strategy which has resulted in a National Adult Learner Forum – the first forum event took place on the 26th February 2016.

In 2016 we have produced, in collaboration with our membership base, a number of documents relating to government policy including:

- Pre-election manifesto which focused on the main issues facing our membership
- General Election postcard as a tool for members
- Response to the Programme for Government
- Submission to the Department of Education and Skills (DES) Statement of Strategy 2016–2018
- Pre-Budget Submission: In preparation for Budget 2017, AONTAS produced a Pre-Budget submission titled: ‘Investing in community education as an effective mechanism for widening lifelong learning participation’ that was distributed to relevant policy makers
- Post-Budget Response

All documents can be found at:
www.aontas.com/pubsandlinks/publications.



National Adult Learner Forum 2016

Learners are central to the work of AONTAS and we strongly believe that a learner's own personal experience provides important information that can be used to improve services and policies. It's important that learners returning to education are consulted about the type of education and training they need, as well as the supports they require to complete the courses on offer.

AONTAS has previously consulted with learners to find out about their experience of these services and in recent years we have strongly advocated for the engagement of adult learners in policy development. The Government committed to the establishment of a forum for adult learners in the Further Education and Training Strategy, published by SOLAS in 2014. In line with the requirements of the SOLAS FET Strategy (2014–2019), and by way of SOLAS funding, AONTAS established a national advocacy platform for FET learners.

2016 marked the first ever National Adult Learner Forum event which took place on 26th February 2017. 70 learners from across Ireland met to discuss their achievements and challenges in further education. The learners

in attendance were nominated to join the forum by their local adult education groups, and included representatives from community education, the Youthreach programme, the Back to Education Initiative and the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

Stakeholder Engagement

The development of this work was supported by an Advisory Group which included representation from stakeholders including SOLAS, Department of Education and Skills, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INO), National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), and the Adult Education Officers' Association (AEOA). The Advisory Group receives monthly updates regarding the National Adult Learner Forum work.

As part of developing the National Adult Learner Forum for the future, AONTAS has continued to build on stakeholder engagement nationally to further inform ourselves of current learner participation from across FET, and to

support Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to strengthen that participation.

Niamh O'Reilly, CEO and Karen Williams, Learner Supports Officer have represented AONTAS at national meetings and attended events across Education and Training Boards (ETBs) regions with the aim of continuing to build and strengthen links with ETBs. Meetings include:

- Kerry ETB
- Community Education Centres: AONTAS attended various events held at community education centres to promote the National Adult Learner Forum including the Bray Traveller's Community Development Group and Roscommon Women's Network
- ETBI Meeting
- ETBI Reserve Members
- ETBI Conference, Kerry
- ETBI FET Forum

The National Adult Learner Forum Event

The first National Adult Learner Forum event took place in the Mansion House, Dublin on the 26th February 2016 and marked the closing event of the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival 2016. 70 learners attended on the day from a range of SOLAS funded programmes, and 15/16 ETBs were represented at the event. AONTAS developed a nomination process and a nomination form which was distributed to all 30 Adult Education Officers (AEOs) from across the 16 ETBs, they nominated suitable learners for the forum. Communication was also made with a number of other groups including the AONTAS Community Education Network (CEN) who were asked to source community education learners, who engaged in SOLAS funded programmes.

Speakers at the event included; Fiona Hartley, SOLAS and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cróna Ní Dhálaigh. We gained national media coverage on the day as well as a number of local media opportunities. A policy report from the National Adult Learner Forum has been produced which documents the main findings of the event.



AONTAS Community Education Network (CEN)

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

In spring 2016, Suzanne Kyle was recruited to coordinate the AONTAS CEN and administrative support was provided by the Membership Services Officer. The work of the network was guided by a voluntary Steering Group and in 2016 the network has continued to focus its work on advocacy, primarily on the proposed Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) policy changes that effect community education FETAC legacy providers ie: CEN members who were registered FETAC providers.

Key Community Education Network (CEN) Activities

A number of activities took place in 2016 with the aim of supporting the development of the CEN and its members. Two national meetings took place in June and October 2016. The first meeting focused on updates within the sector and provided the opportunity to share learning from other community education initiatives. A review also took place that allowed participants to reflect on the role and value of the CEN and to voice their views in relation to the future direction of the network. An input was also given in relation to the EPAL platform, and a question and answer session with QQI

A second national meeting of the CEN was held in October 2016. This meeting focused on the theme of Recognition and this allowed for an exploration of the value of recognition of, and within the community education sector.

As part of AONTAS' online engagement strategy a number of online meetings took place including a CEN skype Steering Group meeting and a webinar.

Submissions

Two CEN submissions were made to QQI in 2016:

- Submission on Core Policy and Criteria for the Validation of Education and Training Programmes
- Submission on Core Quality Assurance Statutory Guidelines

Much of the AONTAS advocacy work that took place in 2016 aimed to support the CEN. AONTAS has continued to focus on strengthening the capacity of the groups to become strong advocates for their own work. The proposed QQI policy on fees and re-engagement for legacy providers remained a priority for the CEN in 2016.

AONTAS continued to work with the network to explore the issues and to propose solutions for a way forward:

- Communication was made with former Minister Jan O'Sullivan in regard to QQI reengagement
- A consultation was carried out at the October CEN meeting, and subsequently with each CEN member who is currently quality assured by QQI, to assess the level of interest in, and feasibility of, a national consortium
- A proposal was developed and sent to the Department of Education and Skills in December 2016



European Impact

As part of the AONTAS 2 Year Plan, we focused on the potential of our engagement at European level to influence policy, engage in EU projects and to extend those opportunities to our members through ERASMUS+ mobilities.

Under the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL), AONTAS is the National Coordinator of the 'Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow' Project and a range of activities took place in 2016.

National Coordinators' Meeting

Saorlaith Ní Bhroin, European Projects Officer attended the National Coordinators' meeting in Brussels in September 2016 and shared an update on the 'Learning Today' project with other national coordinators. The focus of the meeting was European Vocational Skills Week and AONTAS made a series of recommendations to the European Commission in relation to the event.

Project Advisory Group (PAG)

The work of 'Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow' is guided by a Project Advisory Group (PAG). Two PAG meetings took place in 2016. Membership of the PAG includes 20 representatives from across academia, NGOs and Government Departments.

CEN Training

In recognition of the under-resourced and under-funded community education sector, AONTAS sought to provide continuous professional development (CPD) to staff/volunteers working in the sector.

A survey was designed to decipher the needs of CEN practitioners and was disseminated to the CEN via Survey Monkey.

31 respondents identified the following training needs:

- Quality Assurance
- Transformative Community Education
- Governance and Organisational Development

It was identified that An Cosán VCC had the infrastructure to support the roll out of online training. This training was named ‘Community Education for a Better Tomorrow’ and provided an innovative blended learning programme for community education practitioners.

“This new programme offered community educators opportunities to up-skill, enhance their capacity to engage with quality assurance structures and systems, and participate in the creation of quality assurance standards and processes specific to community education.”

This eight week blended learning programme involved six online sessions, self-directed learning, and two face to face workshops. Valuing the experience and expertise of CEN members, a flipped classroom approach underpinned teaching and learning strategies allowing participants to co-create knowledge about quality assurance in the community education sector. In order to ensure that the online course was made available nationwide, a call went out to the CEN to self-identify as potential hosting hubs. A number of organisations expressed an interest in hosting the online training. AONTAS designed a

selection criteria based on accessibility, experience, location and technical requirements.

- A call was put out to all CEN members to participate in the training. A total of 48 places were made available for participants
- There was more interest in Dublin, where many CEN members are concentrated. Eager to facilitate this demand, AONTAS increased its places in the two Dublin-based hubs
- The training included 2 workshops and 6 hub sessions. The programme was non-accredited with an emphasis on progression. Its estimated value was €300/participant.
- The eight-week course kicked off with a 1-day face-to-face workshop followed by six virtual sessions. The final face-to-face workshop took place in December 2016

Harnessing the Power of a Story

On 8th November 2016 AONTAS welcomed almost 100 participants to Croke Park for ‘Harnessing the Power of a Story’. The event aimed to demonstrate the power of the learner story and how it can be shared through traditional and digital media to reach broad audiences. The event, jointly hosted by AONTAS and EPALE Ireland, Léargas, included keynote speakers, Bryan Dobson, broadcast journalist, RTE and Senator Lynn Ruane.

Bryan Dobson shared important insights into story-telling and Senator Lynn Ruane told her own story of returning to education as an early school leaver. The event, which trended on Twitter, was attended by an enthusiastic audience who put a series of questions to the panellists. Participants also took part in a range of workshops from Blogging and Online Writing to Social Media.



ERASMUS + KA1

AONTAS submitted an ERASMUS+ KA1 mobilities application in February. Mobilities give staff and individuals opportunities to travel from one country to another for learning or professional experience. A call for interest to the Community Education Network (CEN) resulted in 7 interested community education groups. AONTAS secured 7 mobilities and the project will aim to support the professional development of those who work in the area of adult education, and enhance the work of the Community Education Network (CEN), supporting its development through learning exchanges and involvement in European work. The Information and Resources Officer supported the CEN consortium and met at the CEN meeting in June, October and facilitated an online meeting with consortium members in November which also gave an update on the project. Project learning will be integrated in to AONTAS' policy work and the experience gained by the Consortium will be shared to the wider CEN and through EPALE.



European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) Meeting – Dublin, April 2016

As part of the EAEA meeting in Dublin, AONTAS hosted a European Seminar on the 28th April focusing on the impact of European Policy on Adult and Community Education in Ireland:

- The Seminar took place in the Clock Tower building at the Department of Education and Skills
- At the event, AONTAS launched their European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) 2nd phase project report, 'Taking the Next Steps'
- This seminar provided an opportunity for a broad range of stakeholders to come together and discuss the impact of European policy and to explore how AONTAS can support their members to engage in future European policy and projects





AONTAS Representation

AONTAS has a strong track record of cooperatively, effectively and meaningfully engaging in representative work that ensures adult learners are at the heart of FET across the lifelong learning spectrum.

National Level

In 2016 AONTAS participated in and represented the voice of adult learners on key advisory, working groups or ad-hoc focus groups including:

- Strategy Implementation Advisory Committee (SIAC)
- Programme and Learner Support Systems (PLSS) Steering Group
- Steering Committee for the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy awareness-raising campaign
- SOLAS Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Consultation
- SOLAS workshop on the PLC Evaluation
- SOLAS Women in Further Education and Training (FET) event
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) event
- National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 – 2020 (Interim Review, Forum)
- National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education Steering Group
- QQI Consultative Forum
- Steering Group for the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019

AONTAS CEO Niamh O'Reilly was interviewed in relation to a number of consultations including:

- Research regarding barriers to participation in FET
- DCU (CPD framework)
- QQI Organisational Review

European/International Representation

AONTAS participated in and represented the voice of adult learners on the Board of European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA).

Niamh O'Reilly, CEO 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, re-elected in 2013 and re-elected in 2015 gaining the maximum number of possible votes for her third term. Niamh contributed to policy influence at 3 Board meetings – one in Dublin and two in Belgium. More information is available online at www.eaea.org.

AONTAS staff participated in the following events that had an EU focus:

- EUCEN (European University Continuing Education Network) conference in DCU
- ASTI SDG (promote lifelong learning) Seminar: 'Building alliances for education in sustainable development'
- FinALE partner meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark
 - AONTAS is a partner in this EAEA-led transnational project
 - The project aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of financing adult learning in Europe
- AONTAS is responsible for researching where best to invest
- NI Impact Forum Seminars (Adult Learning and Health and Adult Learning and Communities)

European Vocational Skills Week

AONTAS travelled to Brussels with a delegation from Ireland (AONTAS, NALA, ETBI, DSP, DES and SOLAS). AONTAS organised for two adult learners to attend the Adult Skills: Empowering People Conference in Brussels from 6th – 7th December.

The Conference hosted almost 300 attendees from across 32 countries, with expert plenary panels and diverse parallel sessions. Panellists Una Buckley and Alan Hand, adult learners, shared their insights, experiences and recommendations with attendees. As a result of this, Ireland was cited as a best practice in terms of engaging the learner voice. Examples of national promising practice were profiled by Liz Waters, Director, An Cosán, VCC and Tara Farrell, Deputy CEO, Longford Women's Link.

Learner Representation

AONTAS continued to support Learner Representatives on ETB Boards and on the QQI Board by creating opportunities for them to come together at various AONTAS events in order to support their role. Events included:

- The National Adult Learner Forum 2016
- AONTAS Annual General Meeting and General Meeting

Una Buckley continues to represent learners on the board of the QQI and AONTAS keeps updated with this work and offers support when needed.

02



AONTAS STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 02

Promoting the Value and
Benefits of Adult Learning

- **Overview of AONTAS
Communications Strategy**
- **Adult Learners' Festival**
- **Learner Story Campaign 2016**
- **Information Referral
Service/Publications**





Overview of AONTAS Communications Strategy

AONTAS has a unique position as the national voice of adult learning. In 2016 we capitalised on our existing body of knowledge. With our members, and other stakeholders, we focussed on promoting a broad understanding of the benefits and value of lifelong learning particularly in the current change context.

As an overarching umbrella body we worked to promote the range of learning opportunities available to people in the new restructured system. In our role as promoter AONTAS has identified two key objectives accompanied by key actions.

AONTAS believes that building the profile and status of adult and community education is a priority and has developed a communications strategy to support this work in order to ensure our message is clear and reaches the widest possible audience. Part of this work includes the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival and the Information Referral Service. We have built strong relationships with public representatives, public servants and other key stakeholders with a view to ensuring that they are fully informed about the importance of supporting adult and community education. In 2016 our work focused on: widening the lifelong learning participation rate, the value of community education and the wider benefits

of learning to the individual, families and communities.

AONTAS undertook an extensive evaluation of all communications outputs from the organisation in 2015 and developed a new communications strategy that aimed at guiding AONTAS' public communications work for the future. This work included a re-brand of the organisation and work began on the re-development of the AONTAS website. The new logo was introduced to stakeholders at the General Meeting in December 2016 and will be officially rolled out in early 2017.

The AONTAS Communications Strategy aims 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 the same. The Communications Strategy ensures consistency of appearance and style across all public communications outputs produced by AONTAS and identified public communications priorities and key messages for AONTAS in 2016.

In 2016 AONTAS focused heavily on communications work with the goal of promoting the value and benefits of adult learning. A number of key activities took place with far reaching results.



Adult Learners' Festival 2016

The Adult Learners' Festival is a nationwide celebration of adult learning coordinated by AONTAS. The 10th Adult Learners' Festival took place from the 22nd–27th of February 2016.

Over the last decade, the Festival has become a firm date in the adult learning calendar, with over 5000 learning events taking place nationwide as part of the Festival since its inception in 2007.

AONTAS STAR Awards Ceremony

The 10th annual STAR Awards took place on Monday 22nd of February in the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Dublin, to recognise outstanding work in adult education. 34 adult learning groups and organisations were shortlisted for awards. The projects represented a wide range of programmes and initiatives that addressed issues such as disability, addiction and mental health.

Eight outstanding adult learning initiatives were awarded the 10th annual STAR Awards:

- Ulster Large Organisation Category: Apel Community Development Pathway
- Ulster Small/ Medium Organisation Category: Pro-Social Drivers Programme
- Munster Large Organisation Category: The Soundscape Project
- Munster Small/ Medium Organisation Category: 'Belong' Drama and Film Group
- Leinster Large Organisation Category: Soilse Education and Detoxification Programme
- Leinster Small/ Medium Organisation Category: Befrienders Dublin
- Connaught Category: The Harvest Studios
- Nationwide Category: Training Options Programme 2012–2015 Disability Activation Programme

Promotional Activities

In support of regional events, AONTAS undertook a number of key promotional activities, including:

- Launch of the STAR Awards Call for Nominations
- Launch of the Adult Learners' Festival
- Nationwide Press, Radio and TV Advertising Campaign
- Nationwide Media Campaign
- Festival Website and Google AdWords Campaign
- Online coverage – External Websites, Newsletters and e-bulletins
- Social Media Campaign
- Adult Learners' Festival e-bulletin
- Network of Regional 'Local Links'
- Promotional Packs

Adult Learners' Festival Key Stats

- 337 adult learning events took place nationwide with an estimated reach of 20,000
- 71% of visits to the Adult Learners' Festival website during the 2016 Festival period were first time visitors to the site
- 80% of visits to the AONTAS website were first time visitors, indicating that the Adult Learners' Festival is an effective platform for engaging new online audiences
- 301 new AONTAS Facebook page 'likes'
- 183 new 'followers' on Twitter
- 5 national media articles
- Over 100 local articles covering 21 counties
- 6 local articles specifically focussing on the National Adult Learner Forum





Learner Story Campaign 2016

An ongoing promotional campaign took place throughout 2016 that focussed on sharing inspiring learner stories with the aim of encouraging others back to education and to promote the wider benefits of adult learning. Over 30 learner stories were shared through www.aontas.com and our social media platforms.

As our learner story campaign developed we ran an information campaign from 15th August – 7th September 2016 using the hashtag #ImAnAdultLearner. This campaign aimed to support the work of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) project and build on the momentum gained through our #MondayMotivation campaign – where a range of learner stories have been shared through our social media platforms on Mondays.

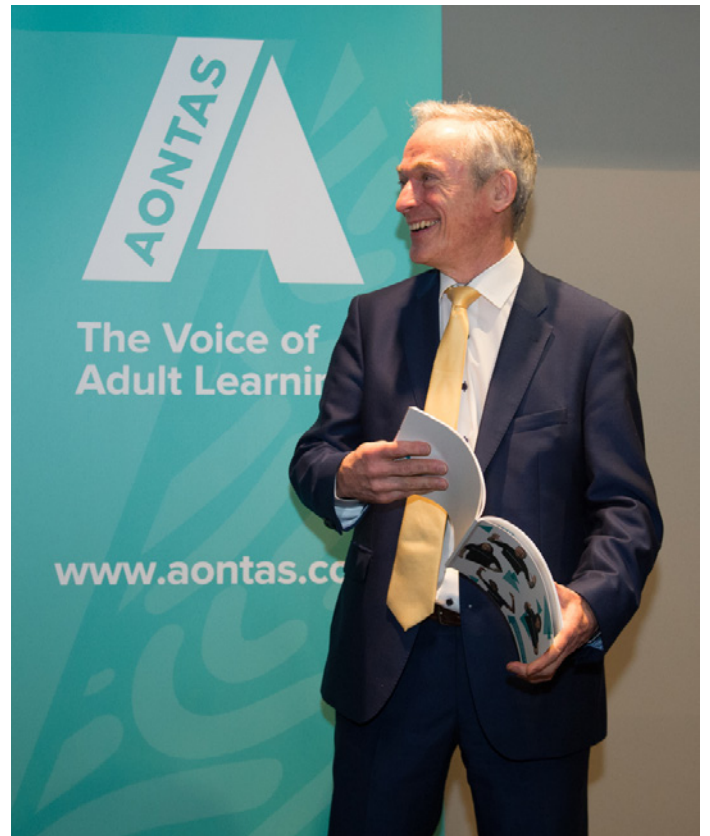
We used a number of approaches for the information campaign and focused primarily on paid promotion through social media channels including Facebook and Twitter. When our campaign ended on the 7th September we continued to post local information events in order to support the SOLAS/NALA Literacy and Numeracy Awareness campaign.

'I'm an Adult Learner 2016: Inspiring learner stories from across Ireland'

In December 2016 AONTAS produced a publication 'I'm an Adult Learner 2016'. Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD launched the publication at the AONTAS General Meeting which took 'as part of the European Vocational Skills Week (5th –9th, December 2016). The book came from our year-long promotional campaign entitled #ImAnAdultLearner which shared inspiring learner stories with the aim of encouraging others to return to education. The learner stories documented in this book clearly demonstrate the transformative effect that education can have on individuals, families and communities.

Key Outcomes:

- Total Reach of Media Coverage: Over 500,000
- AONTAS issued three blog posts over the course of the campaign which reached 13,000 people
- Total Social Media Reach: 1,092,888
- Total Video Views: 41,268
- People Talking About AONTAS: 19,946
- AONTAS' Facebook likes grew by 288 to 2,953 over the course of the campaign
- AONTAS gained 45 new followers through Twitter increasing our audience size to 4,008
- During this 25 day period, AONTAS earned 2.2K impressions per day
- 470 visits (sessions) to One Step Up website on one day (Tuesday 30th August 2016)
- 4,560 visits (sessions) to the website (15th August – 7th September) compared to 2,550 sessions the previous year
- 3,934 users of the website (15th August – 7th September) compared to 2,113 users the previous year





Information Referral Service

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, 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.

- There were 542 queries to the Freephone Helpline between January and December 2016
- The majority of people contacting the service were female 56 percent and male 44 percent
- A greater number of callers came from urban areas in Ireland 73 percent compared to rural areas 27 percent
- Queries came from all counties with a significant portion coming from Dublin, followed by Cork, and Limerick
- In addition to phone referrals above, 21,878 people used the One Step Up Website (www.onestepup.ie) to find their options
- The AONTAS 'What Next' booklet was reviewed in November/ December and a new booklet was developed in consultation with stakeholders. This will be launched in 2017
- Between January and December 2016, 406 'What Next' information booklets were posted to 30 organisations and a range of One Step Up promotional material was disseminated to members of the public, particularly the target group, who attended events

Fairs and Exhibitions

AONTAS attended 11 Education and Training Fairs/Events, which were attended by 3,625 people, and showcased the range of options available to learners or prospective learners. These events were organised by Local Development Companies/Partnerships, Education and Training Boards or the Department of Social Protection. AONTAS disseminated 2,400 What Next Information booklets at these events.

These include:

- Donegal ETB Adult Learner Fair, January
- Department of Social Protection, Education and Training Fair, Swords, March
- Education & Training Options Fair, Ballyfermot, April
- Leitrim Learners' Conference, Leitrim, April
- Department of Social Protection, Education and Training Fair, Dun Laoghaire, April
- Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival Launch, Limerick, April
- Kerry ETB Further Education and Training Fair, May
- All In - Be Part of It' Social Inclusion event, Library event, Dublin, May
- Life Long learning event Ballyfermot Library, September
- ETBI Conference Kerry, September
- Better Options 2016 College Fair for people with disabilities, Dublin, November

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. As part of the AONTAS Communications Strategy we have reviewed all publications to see how they fit in/ enhance the overall work of the organisation.

Information Booklet

A review of the 'What Next' booklet took place in autumn 2016 and an updated copy will be published in 2017 to reflect the changes in the sector

- AONTAS consulted with a number of stakeholders in order to produce a fit for purpose publication that reflects the changes of the sector

Adult Learner Journal (ALJ)

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.

The 2016 edition of the ALJ was published and paid tribute to the work of former AONTAS Director Berni Brady. ALJ Editorial Board meetings took place in March, July and October to guide this edition of the Journal. An extensive review has taken place for next year's edition of ALJ. The 2017 edition will focus on the theme of quality.

03



AONTAS STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 03

Building Organisational Capacity

—— **AONTAS Organisational Change**

—— **Build Capacity of AONTAS Members**



AONTAS Organisational Change

The objectives and actions of AONTAS are ambitious and far reaching. In order to deliver on them successfully AONTAS is committed to building our organisational capacity to the highest standards. We engaged in an extensive organisational review in 2016 and have implemented a new organisational structure and updated our policies and procedures in line with good practice and as part of our obligations as a charity, to our funders and our members.

AONTAS has recently undergone substantial changes with the retirement of the long standing Director after 23 years of service, significant staff changes (half of whom are in AONTAS less than or equal to 1 year) and a new CEO, (Niamh O'Reilly) starting on 1st January 2016.

Over the course of 2016 under the direction of the new CEO, AONTAS underwent an extensive organisational review process. The review was carried out to ensure that, at a time of significant change, resources are organised and structured in an optimal way to ensure successful implementation of the AONTAS Strategic Plan, the AONTAS work plan, and fulfil its obligations as a professional non-governmental organisation. The review was carried out by a highly qualified consultant under the guidance of the CEO and in collaboration with the AONTAS Officer Board. Given the extensive organisational review process a new organisational structure has been identified and is in the process of implementation.

Following the outcomes of the organizational review a restructuring process has been implemented which will:

1. Increase the impact of organisational work outputs
2. Optimise human resources and potential
3. Ensure value for money/higher return on resources
4. Meet all new regulatory requirements of the organisation and minimize risk

Team Changes

In Spring 2016 following a competitive recruitment process, AONTAS successfully recruited both a European Projects Officer and a Community Education Network (CEN) Coordinator. Saorlaith Ni Bhroin was recruited as European Projects Officer and is delivering on the European Agenda for Adult Learning project as part of our remit as National Coordinator.

Suzanne Kyle was recruited as CEN Coordinator (part-time) as part of the AONTAS Strategic Plan and our commitment to the Community Education Network, and its development and expansion at local, regional and national level. Suzanne brings substantial experience to the role from her involvement and knowledge of community education, local networks including Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN).



Build Capacity of AONTAS Members

Membership Meetings

AONTAS hosted two national meetings for our members in 2016; The Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May and the General Meeting (GM) on in December.

The AONTAS Annual General Meeting took place on Wednesday 11th May in Dublin. The event focussed on exploring common policy issues with allies across the education field. AONTAS marked the historical year by showcasing some learner projects that commemorated the 1916 Rising, including RADE's 'Personal Responses to the 1916 Rising' Exhibition and a short presentation and video from Kildare and Wicklow ETB's 'Remembrance and Rebellion' project. Niamh O'Reilly, CEO presented her vision for the organisation in her two year plan emphasising

the importance of membership engagement in all aspects of our work, whilst outlining the key areas of work in 2015. Stephen O'Brien from UCC provided a thought provoking input on the current discourse and focus of education in Ireland which was followed by a lively discussion.

The AONTAS General Meeting focussed on membership engagement and AONTAS launched a book celebrating the diverse paths taken by adult learners in Ireland at the event on the 9th December. The aim of the book was to highlight a wide variety of learner experiences whilst also demonstrating the role of adult learning in transforming peoples' lives. The book documents inspiring learner stories which AONTAS has shared every Monday in 2016 to coincide with #MondayMotivation.



During 2016 AONTAS CEO, Niamh O'Reilly sent regular updates to the membership with the aim of increasing membership engagement.

The AONTAS pre-election campaign focussed on supporting members to advocate at a local level. AONTAS developed pre-election campaign material including postcards that outlined key asks for members based on their main areas of concern. A Community Education Network (CEN) webinar also focused on how members could be involved in the pre-election campaign.

In 2016, AONTAS has provided regular updates to members on relevant policy developments (including EU updates) in order to strengthen their knowledge and support them in their own advocacy work.

AONTAS Members

In 2016 AONTAS had 508 members consisting of:

- 2 Associate Members
- 273 Individual Members
- 233 Organisational Members

Within the organisational category: 53% are Small organisations, 22% Medium and 23% are Large organisations.

While 63% of AONTAS Individual members are 'Reduced Fee', the remainder – 37% are regular Individual members.

04



TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statements for the year
ended 31st December 2016

Company Information

Trustees

Ms Elizabeth Waters
— *President*

Mr James Prior
— *Vice-President (Appointed May 2016)*

Ms Tara Farrell
— *Hon. Secretary (Appointed May 2016)*

Mr Colm Kilgallon
— *Hon. Treasurer*

Mr John D'Arcy

Mr Gabriel Keating

Mr Michael Kenny

Ms Grace Finlay
(*Appointed May 2016*)

Ms Liz O'Sullivan
(*Appointed May 2016*)

Mr Chris O'Ralaigh
(*Appointed May 2016*)

Ms Deborah Ryan

Mr James Stuart Duffin
(*Resigned 26 May 2016*)

Ms Mary Farrell
(*Resigned 11 May 2016*)

Ms Lorraine Hennessy
(*Resigned 11 May 2016*)

Mr Liam Kilbride
(*Resigned 11 May 2016*)

Ms Lorraine Cunningham
(*Resigned 11 May 2016*)

Company Secretary

Tara Farrell

Registered Office and Principal Address

2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street Ranelagh,
Dublin 6

Auditors

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

Bankers

Bank of Ireland
Baggot Street
Dublin 2

Solicitors

PJ Walsh & Company Solicitors
12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street
Dublin 2

Charity Number

CHY6719

Charities Regulatory Authority Number:

20013042

Company Number

80958

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2016

The Trustees present their Trustees' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016.

The charitable company 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 effective January 2015), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

The Trustees, who are also the directors of the charity, at the date of this report and those who served during the financial year together with the dates of any changes are set out on page 3.

Reference and Administrative Details

The organisation is a charitable company with a registered office at 2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin 6. The company's registered number is 80958.

The charity has been granted charitable tax status under Sections 207 and 208 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, Charity No CHY 6719 and is registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority. The charity has a total of 11 Trustees.

Trustees and secretary

The names of persons who at any time during the financial year and since the year end unless otherwise stated were Trustees of the company as follows:

Ms Elizabeth Waters
— *President*

Mr James Prior
— *Vice-President (Appointed May 2016)*

Ms Tara Farrell
— *Hon. Secretary (Appointed May 2016)*

Mr Colm Kilgallon
— *Hon. Treasurer*

Mr John D'Arcy

Mr Gabriel Keating

Mr Michael Kenny

Ms Grace Finlay (Appointed May 2016)

Ms Liz O'Sullivan (Appointed May 2016)

Mr Chris O'Ralaigh (Appointed May 2016)

Ms Deborah Ryan

Mr James Stuart Duffin (Resigned 26 May 2016)

Ms Mary Farrell (Resigned 11 May 2016)

Ms Lorraine Hennessy (Resigned 11 May 2016)

Mr Liam Kilbride (Resigned 11 May 2016)

Ms Lorraine Cunningham (Resigned 11 May 2016)

Tara Farrell held the position of company secretary for the financial year.

Principal Activities

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.

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

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.

Objectives and Activities

Key activities included our promotional work which looked at raising the profile and value of adult learning through the Adult Learner's Festival, our advocacy work which focused on addressing key issues facing members, delivering on our role as the National Coordinator of the European Agenda for Adult Learning, and holding the first meeting of the National Adult Learners Forum.

Financial Review

The surplus for the year after providing for depreciation and taxation amounted to €44,435 (2015: €97,643) and this was transferred to reserves at the year end. The principal source of funding for the charity is a number of grants received from the Department of Education and Science.

At the end of the year, the company had assets of €565,553 (2015: €409,075) and liabilities of €278,806 (2015: €166,783). The net funds of the company have increased by €44,435 (2014: €97,643) and the Trustees are satisfied

with the level of retained reserves at the year end. Of the net funds at 31 December 2016 of €286,727, €48,290 of this is attributable to restricted funds.

Reserves policy

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:

- i. Working capital requirements
- ii. Potential setbacks in income
- iii. Unexpected/ emergency expenditure

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Ireland governed by its Constitution. The company does not have a share capital and consequently the liability of the members is limited, subject to an undertaking by each member to contribute to the net assets of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding €6.35. The Executive Committee constitutes the Board of Trustees of the company under the terms of Article 28 of the Articles of Association of the company.

Contained within the AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation 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.

Future Developments

The directors are not expecting to make any significant changes in the nature of the business in the near future.

Exemptions from Disclosure

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.

Auditors

The auditors, Anne Brady McQuillans DFK, have indicated their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the provisions of Section 383(2) of the Companies Act, 2014.

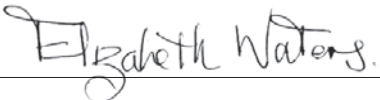
Statement on Relevant Audit Information

There is no relevant audit information of which the statutory auditors are unaware. The Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and they have established that the statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Compliance Statement

The Trustees are responsible for securing the company's compliance with its relevant obligations (compliance with both company and tax law) and with respect to each of the following three items, we confirm that it has been done. We confirm:"

Signed on behalf of the Board



Elizabeth Waters
Trustee

Date:

- the existence of a compliance policy statement;
- appropriate arrangements or structures put in place to secure material compliance with the company's relevant obligations;
- a review of such arrangements and structures has taken place during the year

Accounting Records

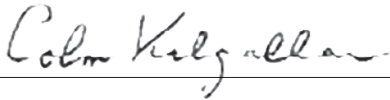
The measures taken by the Trustees to ensure compliance with the requirements of Section 281-285, Companies Act, 2014, regarding adequate records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of competent accounting personnel with appropriate expertise and the provision of adequate resources to the financial function. The books of account are maintained at the registered office at 2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Payment of Creditors

The Trustees 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 during the year.



Colm Kilgallon
Trustee

Date:

Statement Of Trustees' Responsibilities for the year ended 31 December 2016

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 as the directors 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 (effective January 2015) has been followed;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

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

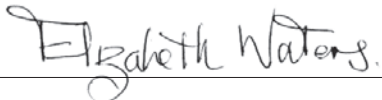
financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and with Irish Statute comprising the Companies Act 2014, and all Regulations to be construed as one with those Acts. They are 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 charitable company'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:

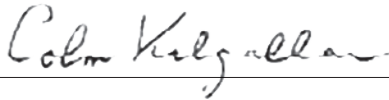
- there is no relevant audit information (information needed by the charity's auditor in connection with preparing the auditor's report) of which the charity's auditor is unaware, and
- the Trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit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

Signed on behalf of the Board



Elizabeth Waters
Trustee

Date:



Colm Kilgallon
Trustee

Date:

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

We have audited the financial statements of AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation for the year ended 31 December 2016 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Summary 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 charitable company'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 charitable company'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 charitable company and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and auditors

As described in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the charitable company'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).

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014. We state whether we have obtained

all the information and explanations we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit and whether the financial statements are in agreement with the books of account. We also report to you our opinion as to:-

- whether the charitable company has kept proper books of account; and
- whether the Trustees' Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

We report to the members if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding Trustees' remuneration and Trustees' transactions is not given and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

We read the Trustees' Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatement within it.

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 charitable 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 Trustees' Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

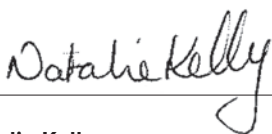
Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Trustees in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error.

In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

We have undertaken the audit in accordance with the requirements of the APB Ethical Standards including the APB Ethical Standard, Provisions Available for Small Entities, in the circumstances set out in Note 2 to the financial statements.



Natalie Kelly

for and on behalf of
ANNE BRADY MCQUILLANS DFK
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors
Iveagh Court
Harcourt Road
Dublin 2

Date:

Opinion

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 affairs of the charitable company as at 31 December 2016 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014

We have obtained all the information and explanations that we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the charitable company. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

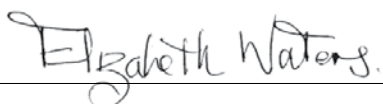
Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the provisions in the Companies Act 2014 which require us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of Trustees' remuneration and transactions specified by Sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made.

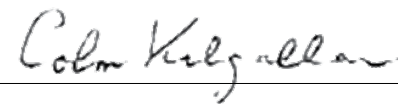
Statement Of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2016

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total	Total
		2016	2016	2016	2015
	Notes	€	€	€	€
Incoming Resources					
Generated funds: Activities for generating funds					
Income from Membership Subscriptions		32,832	-	32,832	19,284
Charitable activities:					
Department of Education and Skills - Solas FET Grant		-	935,442	935,442	986,850
Department of Education and Skills - Solas NALF Grant		-	151,011	151,011	92,761
Erasmus - European Agenda for Adult Learning Grant		-	113,189	113,189	117,019
Other Grants		5,600	8,080	13,680	21,198
Total incoming resources		38,432	1,207,722	1,246,154	1,237,112
Resources Expended on Charitable Activities					
Department of Education and Skills – Solas FET		-	924,358	924,358	874,555
Department of Education and Skills - Solas NALF		-	143,254	143,254	134,732
European Agenda for Adult Learning		-	89,209	89,209	124,630
Other Expenditure		42,287	2,611	44,898	5,552
		42,287	1,159,432	1,201,719	1,139,469
Total Resources Expended	5	42,287	1,159,432	1,201,719	1,139,469
Net movement in funds for the year		(3,855)	48,290	44,435	97,643
Reconciliation of funds					
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2016		242,292	-	242,292	144,649
Balances carried forward at 31 December 2016		238,437	48,290	286,727	242,292

Approved by the Trustees on _____ and signed on its behalf by



Elizabeth Waters
Trustee

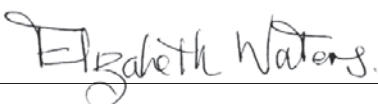


Colm Kilgallon
Trustee

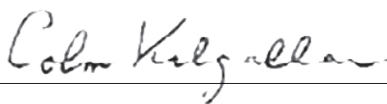
Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2016

		2016	2015
	Notes	€	€
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	9	9,712	14,870
Current Assets			
Debtors	10	36,775	13,404
Cash and cash equivalents		519,046	380,801
		555,821	394,205
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	11	(274,378)	(156,755)
Net Current Assets		281,443	237,450
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		291,155	252,320
Grants receivable	13	(4,428)	(10,028)
Net Assets		286,727	242,292
Funds			
Restricted trust funds		48,290	
General fund (unrestricted)		238,437	242,292
Total funds	16	286,727	242,292

Approved by the Trustees on _____ and signed on its behalf by



Elizabeth Waters
Trustee



Colm Kilgallon
Trustee

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 December 2016

Cash flows from operating activities	2016 €	2015 €
Net movement in funds	44,435	97,644
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	9,456	5,031
Amortisation of capital grants received	(5,600)	(5,600)
	48,291	97,075
Movements in working capital		
Movement in debtors	(23,371)	16,877
Movement in creditors	117,623	18,373
Cash generated from operations	142,543	132,325
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments to acquire tangible assets	(4,298)	(8,956)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	138,245	123,369
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January 2016	380,801	257,432
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December 2016	519,046	380,801

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

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 Accounting Standards Board, 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.

Restricted funds

Restricted funds represent grants, donations and other income which can only be used for particular purposes specified by the donors binding the Trustees. Such purposes are within the overall aims of the charity.

Unrestricted free reserves

Unrestricted funds represent amounts which are expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes. 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

Incoming Resources

Voluntary income or capital is included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charitable company is legally entitled to it, its financial value can be quantified with reasonable certainty and there is reasonable certainty of its ultimate receipt. Entitlement to legacies is considered established when the charitable company has been notified of a distribution to be made by the executors. Income received in advance of due performance under a contract is accounted for as deferred income until earned. Grants for activities are recognised as income when the related conditions for legal entitlement have been met. All other income is accounted for on an accruals basis.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost or at valuation, less accumulated depreciation. The charge to depreciation is calculated to write off the original cost or valuation of tangible fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

- Office equipment - 20% Straight line
- Fixtures and fittings - 20% Straight line
- Computer equipment - 20% Straight line

Taxation

As a registered charity, AONTAS, National Adult Learning Organisation has been granted charitable exemption by the Revenue Commissioners.

Grants receivable

Grant income receivable from the Department of Education and Skills through SOLAS and grant income receivable from Erasmus+ and Leargas is treated as being restricted as the income is applied for particular purposes. All other income receivable is treated as being unrestricted.

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

Grants are recognised when there is entitlement, certainty of receipt, and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Income is deferred when:

- The grant is to cover a period greater than the financial year in which it was received; or
- The donor specifies that the grant must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Pensions

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company. Annual contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the income and expenditure account in the period to which they relate.

Resources Expended

All resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis. Charitable activities include costs of services and grants, support costs and depreciation on related assets. Non-staff costs not attributed to one category of activity are allocated or apportioned pro-rata to the staffing of the relevant service. Finance, HR, IT and administrative staff costs are directly attributable to individual activities by objective. Governance costs are those associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

2. Provisions Available for Small Entities

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

3. Net Incoming Resources

Net Incoming Resources	2016 €	2015 €
Net Incoming Resources are stated after charging/(crediting):		
Depreciation of tangible assets	9,456	5,031
Amortisation of grants receivable	(5,600)	(5,600)
Amortisation of capital grants received	(5,600)	(5,600)
	48,291	97,075

4. Investment And Other Income

Investment and Other Income		
Amortisation of capital grants received	5,600	5,600

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

5. Analysis Of Resources Expended

Analysis of Resources Expended	Department of Education and Skills – NALF	European Agenda for Adult Learning	Other Expenditure	Department of Education and Skills – Solas	Total	Total
	2016 €	2016 €	2016 €	2016 €	2016 €	2016 €
Other Costs						
Office Costs				137,314	137,314	105,890
Adult Learning Festival				92,171	92,171	100,531
Premises				86,621	86,621	97,917
Learner Forum Seminar	35,939				35,939	19,590
Other Costs		26,462	10,620		37,082	78,027
Communications and Promotion Strategy				25,777	25,777	20,716
Policy, Research and Representation				16,195	16,195	20,693
Information/Resources				13,569	13,569	36,359
AGM and Membership Meetings				26,193	26,193	22,168
Executive Meetings				9,402	9,402	12,970
	35,939	26,462	10,620	407,242	480,263	514,861
Support Costs	107,315	62,747	34,278	517,116	721,456	624,608
Totals	143,254	89,209	44,898	924,358	1,201,719	1,139,469

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

6. Analysis Of Support And Governance Costs

Analysis of Support and Governance Costs	Support 2016 €	Basis of Apportionment
Salaries and related costs	721,456	Pro Rata

7. Employees and Remuneration

Number of employees.

The average number of persons employed (including Trustees) during the year was as follows:

	2016 Number	2015 Number
Administration	10	10
The staff costs comprise	2016 €	2015 €
Wages and salaries	630,967	505,285
Social security costs	49,618	52,853
Pension costs	40,871	66,470
	721,456	624,608

8. The number of employees whose total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the reporting period fell within the bands below were:

	Number of Employees
€80,001 – €90,000	1
€90,001 – €100,000	1

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

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

9. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Office Equipment €	Fixtures and Fittings €	Computer Equipment €	Total €
Tangible Fixed Assets				
Cost				
At 1 January 2016	11,713	50,026	75,405	137,144
Additions			4,298	4,298
Disposals			(27,298)	(27,298)
At 31 December 2016	11,713	50,026	52,405	114,144
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2016	11,713	49,822	60,739	122,274
Charge for the year		78	9,378	9,456
On disposals			(27,298)	(27,298)
At 31 December 2016	11,713	49,900	42,819	104,432
Net book value				
At 31 December 2016		126	9,586	9,712
At 31 December 2015		204	14,666	14,870

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

9.1. Tangible Fixed Assets Prior Year

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

10. Debtors

Debtors	2016 €	2015 €
Other debtors	17,569	7,422
Prepayments and accrued income	19,206	5,982
	36,775	13,404

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

11. Creditors	2016	2015
Amounts falling due within one year	€	€
Trade Creditors	35,987	41,459
Taxation and social security costs (note 12)	13,300	2,081
Other creditors	11,252	190
Accruals	175,302	9,098
Deferred Income	38,537	103,927
	274,378	156,755
12. Taxation and Social Security		
Creditors:		
PAYE	7,557	1,233
PRSI		
At 31 December 2015	11,713	49,822
	13,300	2,081
13. Capital Grant		
Capital grants received and receivable		
At 1 January 2016	19,494	19,494
Amortisation		
At 1 January 2016	(9,466)	(3,866)
Amortised in year	(5,600)	(5,600)
	(15,066)	(9,466)
Net book value		
At 31 December 2016	4,428	10,028
At 1 January 2016	10,028	15,628

Notes To The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

14. Grants and State Funding

State Department	Grant Agency	Type of Funding	2016 €	2015 €
Education and Skills	Solas	FET Grant	935,442	935,750
Education and Skills	Solas	National Adult Learner's Forum	151,011	92,761
EU	Erasmus+	Financing Adult Learning in Europe	8,080	
Education and Skills	Leargas	Operating Grant	15,837	4,445
EU	Erasmus+	European Agenda for Adult Learning	31,961	165,316
			1,142,331	1,198,272

This represents grant income received during the year.

15. Analysis of Net Assets by Fund

	Fixed Assets – Charity Use €	Fixed Assets €	Current liabilities €	Long-term deferred income €	Total €
Restricted Income					
Restricted Funds		322,668	(274,378)		48,290
Unrestricted Income					
Unrestricted Funds	9,712	233,153		(4,428)	238,437
	9,712	555,821	(274,378)	(4,428)	286,727

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2016

16. Analysis of Movements on Funds

	Balance 1 January 2016 €	Incoming resources €	Resources expended €	Balance 31 December 2016 €
Restricted Income				
Restricted Funds		1,207,722	(1,159,432)	48,290
Unrestricted Income				
Unrestricted Funds	242,292	38,432	(42,287)	238,437
Total Funds	242,292	1,246,154	1,201,719	286,727

17. Status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee not having a share capital. The liability of the members is limited.

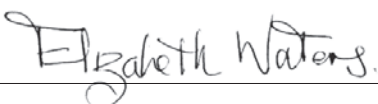
Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up while they are members, or within one year thereafter, for the payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before they ceased to be members, and the costs, charges and 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.

18. Staff Remuneration	2016 €	2015 €
Compensation for loss of office from charitable company	166,592	

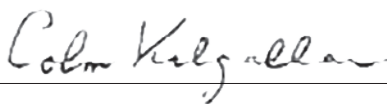
19. Post-Balance Sheet Events

There have been no significant events affecting the Charity since the year-end.

20. Approved by the Trustees on _____ and signed on its behalf by



Elizabeth Waters
Trustee



Colm Kilgallon
Trustee

APPENDIX 1

Media Coverage 2016

National Media

- Irish Independent, 10th December, 'Technology needs more central role in education'
- The Journal.ie, 20th November, 'I found it really tough because I couldn't even type': What it's like to go back to education
- Irish Times, 27th September, 'Older does mean wiser with lifelong demand for learning'
- Irish Times, 13th September, 'Solas revamp brings overdue direction to adult education'
- Irish Times, 13th September, 'What further education has done for me', two #MondayMotivation learner stories were profiled
- Sunday Business Post, 4th September – Niamh O'Reilly, CEO talks about Lifelong Learning
- Irish Examiner, 18th August, Double delight as father and daughter collect Leaving Cert results
- TV3, the Seven O' Clock Show, 17th August – Adult Learners Una Buckley and Carmel Murphy spoke about the benefits of returning to education
- Newstalk Breakfast Show, 17th August – Adult Learner Alan Hand spoke about returning to do his Leaving Cert as an adult
- RTE Drivetime, 17th August – Adult Learner Alan Hand spoke about returning to do his Leaving Cert as an adult
- The Journal.ie, 17th August, Father who returned to education received Leaving Cert results with his teenage daughter
- Changing Ireland, Spring 2016, Learners Give Views
- Today FM, lunch time news, 26th February – The National Adult Learner Forum was covered on the lunch time news with adult learners Tony Moloney and Alan Hand speaking about their experience as well as Niamh O'Reilly speaking about the importance of the forum
- Sunday Business Post, 31st January, 'New Adult Learning Chief aims to look beyond job Skills'
- Sunday Business Post, 31st January, 'Local events celebrate life-long learning'
- The Breakfast Show – Newstalk, 19th January 'CAO Deadline' – Adult Learner Alan Hand spoke about returning to do his Leaving Cert as an adult

Local Media

- InTallaght, 28th November, Nominations sought for prestigious awards from Dublin Adult Learning Initiatives
- Donegal Now, 25th November, Nominations sought for prestigious awards from Donegal adult learning initiatives
- Longford Leader, 24th November, Nominations sought for prestigious awards from Longford Adult Learning Initiatives

- Leinster Leader, 18th August, Former Laois politician delighted with his Leaving Cert results
- Nationalist, 15th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Carlow People, 23rd February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Nationalist, 23rd February Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Nationalist, 2nd February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clare Champion, 25th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clare People, 8th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clare Courier, 24th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clare People, 23rd February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clare Champion, 19th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clare FM, 7th February, STAR Awards shortlist
- Evening Echo, 19th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Tirconaill Tribune, 17th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Tallaght Echo, 3rd March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Northside People East, 2nd March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Northside People West, 2nd March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Southside People, 24th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Fingal Independent, 23rd February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Ballyfermot Echo, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Clondalkin Echo, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Tallaght Echo, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Lucan Echo, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Connaught Tribune, 11th March, STAR Awards
- Connaught Tribune, 26th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Galway Bay FM, 26th February, National Adult Learner Forum
- Galway Bay FM, 26th February, STAR Awards
- Galway Bay, 19th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Galway City Tribune, 5th February, STAR Awards
- Kerry's Eye, 3rd March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 8th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events.
- Kildare Nationalist, 1st March, KWETB
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Monasterevin, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 1st March, Athy, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 26th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Johnstown – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd March, Rathagan – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 8th March, Athy – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 8th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events

- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Kildare News – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 23rd February, Moone Timolin – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 23rd February, Narraghmoore Baltimore – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 23rd February, Monasterevin – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Post, 17th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kilcullen Diary – Blog, 14th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Liffey Champion, 13th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 9th February, Kildare – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 9th February, Kilmeade – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kildare Nationalist, 9th February, Athy – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 2nd February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Kilkenny People, 18th March, National Adult Learner Forum
- Kilkenny People, 19th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Laois Nationalist, 5th April, New forum gives learners a say in education policy
- Leitrim Observer, 24th February, STAR Awards
- Limerick Post, 19th March, STAR Awards
- Irish Art Review, 4th March, STAR Awards
- Travellers Voice, 29th February, STAR Awards
- Limerick Live 95FM, 24th February, STAR Awards
- Limerick Post, 20th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Limerick Post, 6th February, STAR Awards Shortlist
- Limerick Leader, 3rd February, STAR Awards
- Limerick Live 95FM, 3rd February, STAR Awards
- Limerick Post, 27th January, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Limerick Post, 27th January, STAR Awards
- Limerick Post, 23rd January, STAR Awards Shortlist
- Limerick Leader-Tabloid Edition, 20th January, STAR Awards Shortlist
- Limerick Leader, 20th January, STAR Awards Shortlist
- Longford Leader, 25th March, Longford Women’s Link
- Longford Leader, 19th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Longford Leader, 19th February, Killaloe – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Longford Leader, 19th February, Abbeylara – Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Meath Forum, 25th February, STAR Awards
- Meath Topic, 18th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events
- Meath Topic, 4th February, Adult Learners’ Festival Events

- Northern Standard, 14th January, STAR Awards
- Northern Standard, 10th March, National Adult Learner Forum
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Monasterevin, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 1st March, Athy, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 26th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Johnstown – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd March, Rathagan – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 8th March, Athy – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 8th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Kildare News – Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Leinster Leader, 23rd February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Offaly Topic, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Offaly Independent, 6th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Offaly Topic, 4th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Roscommon Herald, 8th March, National Adult Learner Forum
- Roscommon People, 19th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Nationalist & Munster Advertiser, 17th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Nationalist & Munster Advertiser, 10th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Nationalist & Munster Advertiser, 21st January, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Dungarvan Observer, 18th March, National Adult Learner Forum
- Waterford News & Star, 1st March, STAR Awards
- Waterford Today, 24th February, STAR Awards
- Waterford News & Star, 23rd February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Dungarvan Observer, 19th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Waterford Today, 17th February, STAR Awards
- Waterford Today, 17th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- New Ross Standard, 16th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Waterford Today, 3rd February, STAR Awards
- Athlone Topic, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Westmeath Topic, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Westmeath Topic, 18th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Athlone Topic, 4th February, Adult Learners' Festival Events
- Wexford People, 8th March, Adult Learners' Festival Events

Direct Interviews

- South East Radio, 19th August, Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO
- Connemara Community Radio, 18th August, Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO

- Dublin South Fm, 17th August, Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Communications Officer
- Dublin City FM, 24th February, Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO talked about the Adult Learners' Festival
- Connemara Community Radio, 23rd of February, Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Communications Officer, talked about the Adult Learners' Festival
- Wired FM, Limerick, 23rd of February, Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Communications Officer, talked about the Adult Learners' Festival
- Live 95FM Limerick, 22nd of February, STAR Awards winners, the Soundscape Project, talked about winning a STAR Award
- Kildare FM, 19th of February 2016, Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO talked to about the Adult Learners' Festival
- Ros FM, 19th of February 2016, Niamh O'Reilly, AONTAS CEO talked to Tom Dunne about the Adult Learners' Festival and the pre-election campaign
- Phoenix FM, Dublin, 19th of February, Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Communications Officer, talked about the Adult Learners' Festival and the pre-election campaign
- Raidió Corca Baiscinn, West Clare, 12th of February, Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Communications Officer, talked to James Flanagan about the Adult Learners' Festival
- NearFM, 6th February, Niamh O'Reilly CEO of AONTAS spoke about her new role as CEO
- Community Radio Castlebar, 2nd February Katie O'Rourke Communications Officer talked about options for adults returning to education

- Near FM, 25th January, Niamh O'Reilly, CEO of AONTAS spoke about the Adult Learners' Festival

Other Publications

- ETBI summer magazine, 'A Vision for Lifelong Learning', article by CEO Niamh O'Reilly

Contact Us

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Company Reg: 80958

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