



Craft Transfer Plan Newsletter

September 2026



This newsletter aims to provide a stakeholder update on the Plan for the Transfer of Curriculum Development, Assessment and Awarding for Craft Apprenticeship to Providers (the “Craft Transfer Plan”). It reflects progress made during May–September 2026 and highlights key activities currently underway.

Continued Progress of the Craft Transfer Plan

Significant progress has been made over recent months as the project steering committee continues to collaborate on the delivery of the Craft Transfer Plan. The focus has been on strengthening governance arrangements, mobilising the HE and FET project teams and developing structures that will support future delivery of craft apprenticeship programmes.

Ministerial Engagement

On 8 July 2026, representatives from DFHERIS, SOLAS, HEA and QQI met with Minister James Lawless to provide an update on the progress of the Craft Transfer Plan. Discussion focused on implementation progress, governance structures and the next phase of detailed planning required to support the transfer.

The Minister welcomed the recruitment of the Higher Education and Further Education and Training Project Delivery Teams. The Minister requested a focus on the development of the Provider Alliances and the detailed project implementation plan.

FET Project Delivery Team Established

The FET Project Delivery Team has now been established to support the implementation of the Craft Transfer Plan across the Further Education and Training sector.

The team will work closely with the already established Higher Education Project Delivery Team, and the Craft Transfer Plan Steering Committee to develop the detailed project implementation plan.

FET Project Delivery Team Members

- John Fitzgibbons, former FET Director with Cork ETB, will act as the FET Project Delivery Team Lead
- John Cassidy, Area Manager Training Services, WWETB
- Carol Quinlan, Quality Assurance Officer, CETB



Provider Alliance Development Underway

Work is continuing on the development of the Provider Alliances that will bring together Further Education and Training and Higher Education providers involved in the delivery of craft apprenticeship programmes. The Steering Committee agreed that the Provider Alliances should follow a Family of Trades structure.

The Alliances will play a central role in supporting collaboration across providers and in developing future approaches to curriculum, assessment and quality assurance. Terms of Reference are currently being developed, with input from both FET and HE project teams.

Deloitte Supporting Project Risk Management

A recent key milestone is the engagement of Deloitte to support the development of a comprehensive project risk register. Deloitte will work with key stakeholders across the apprenticeship sector to identify project risks and mitigation measures that will support successful delivery of the Craft Transfer Plan. Once established, the risk register will be managed by the Craft Transfer Plan Steering Committee.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement remains a core principle of the Craft Transfer Plan. The Steering Committee approved the project's formal Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Strategy, developed collaboratively by SOLAS, HEA and QQI.

The strategy will continue to guide engagement with apprentices, employers, education providers, representative bodies and other stakeholders as the project progresses.

Looking Ahead

Priority activities for the coming months include:

- Completion of the Deloitte risk management exercise.
- Further development of the detailed implementation plan.
- Progressing the establishment of the Provider Alliances.
- Continued development of quality assurance arrangements, including the National Quality Assurance Framework.

The Steering Committee remains committed to ensuring that the transfer is carefully planned and implemented in a way that supports apprentices, employers and providers while strengthening quality assurance arrangements across the craft apprenticeship system.

