

Interim Report 17th July 2020

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Foreword

Clare, Limerick & Tipperary County Managers

COVID-19 is having a severe impact on our region. There will be significant long-term social and economic challenges for the families, communities and economies of the almost 50,000 people across our three counties whose livelihoods will be affected as a result of this pandemic.

We are delighted to support the Midwest Response team and their ambitious programme to upskill and retrain members of our communities who have had their livelihoods swept away from them. This work will go a long way towards addressing some of the socioeconomic challenges we will undoubtedly face as a region in the coming years.

This document is evidence of our regions real potential to transform itself through collaboration, embracing technology and moving beyond the business-as-usual approach, which has plagued peripheral regional development for decades.

Project Ireland 2040 sets out a clear roadmap for balanced regional and rural development. At the heart of this framework is a strong economy supported by education, training and skills.

The performance of our respective local economies and our ability to realise the full potential of our region, in a sustainable way, is critically dependent on a number of factors. Central to this dependency is our ability to collaborate across industry, education and county boundaries.



Pat Dowling
Chief Executive



Dr Pat Daly
Chief Executive



Joe McGrath
Chief Executive



Comhairle Contae an Chláir
Clare County Council



Comhairle Cathrach
& Contae **Luimnigh**
Limerick City
& County Council



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

Executive Summary

This report is a summary of the initiative taken in the Mid-West Region to tackle the employment challenges created from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The European Commission recently launched its 2021-2027 budget. The new recovery instrument has been called Next Generation EU. In its press release, the commission said that “Relaunching the economy does not mean going back to the status quo before the crisis, but bouncing forward. We must repair the short-term damage from the crisis in a way that also invests in our long-term future”¹

Many thousands will lose their jobs due to this pandemic. As detailed in this report, a very significant voluntary effort started on March 30th 2020. Driven by close collaborations between State Agencies, Academic Institutions and Industry leaders’, specific programmes in Hospitality, Retail, Customer Experience, ICT and Pharma were managed by a team of volunteers.

This is not the first time the Mid-West Region has been challenged by large-scale unemployment. Lessons have been learned over the past 10 years on the social and economic impact of overdependence on a single employer and its relationship to regional development.

It is important that, as a region, we apply any lessons learned from previous experiences to tackling the challenges we will inevitably face in our labour market as a consequence of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Experience has thought us:

- Any initiative must be industry led. Skills shortages and future skills needs must be recognised and acknowledged throughout the process
- A collaborative approach is essential. We must use the strength of collaboration which has characterised our region over the past decade when devising a solution
- The focus should be on skills for jobs and job retention. The employee and employer need to be at the heart of decision making
- Any undertaking must be professionally managed and executed.

The focus of this initiative was to provide an immediate response to the sectors most severely impacted by Covid-19.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940

Our Key Objectives:

- Take a proactive approach to helping those who had their employment affected
- Take first-hand experiences of industry challenges and devise a strategy that would benefit everyone
- Capture data and insights that would benefit the region and country in designing a solution
- Use a data driven decision making process
- Alignment with the Next Generation EU instrument which calls for support in re-skilling and helping businesses create new economic opportunities

What We Did:

- 1,115 people upskilled through on-line certified courses during the period April 2020 – July 2020
- Adapted a Limerick & Clare ETB and Tipperary ETB course for the prevention of the spread of infectious disease. Originally designed for the HSE, the course was calibrated to meet the specific requirements for Hospitality and Retail as dictated by industry leaders
- Adapted the University of Limerick “e-Moderator” course, which facilitates better in-company learning post Covid-19
- Based on previous experience, appointed a formal steering committee, and applied a structured Project Management approach to oversee execution and delivery
- Applied professional communications structures (Ronan McGlade, BoxMedia) and developed a dedicated digital presence www.mid-westresponse.ie
- Focused on transferable skills. Selected courses which developed transferable skills enabling candidates to transition to other sectors if desired

Education and upskilling are key components of any economic recovery. This report demonstrates the capability, capacity and commitment of Industry, Academia, State Agencies and Local Authorities to collaborate, co-ordinate and deliver a significant economic response in the middle of a national lockdown. Given this region’s history of innovation and resilience, if the requisite resources are provided, it will rapidly transform itself into the low carbon digitally connected region of the future.

What We Want:

Our request today is for government support to create a Regional Enterprise Covid Response & Upskilling Team (RECRUT).

We have an ambitious target, which is explained in section 9, to transition, 2,000+ people from unemployment into Software Development, Data Analytics and Customer Experience (CX) professionals. We intend to establish a traineeship type model in ICT and CX that will act as an employment-based transition programme for those who want to restart their careers. Initially with 200, then scaling to 2000, RECRUT, together with the DEASP, will facilitate this transition from unemployment to jobs of the future. To achieve success, we need a structured team to define and scope the needs of industry and the needs of the job seeker.

Key Enablers of Success:

- Strong employer engagement
- Reflect the voice of the end customer and value creation in the upskilling offering as perceived by the employer for the in-company customer within specific sectors
- Pathway to transition for individuals between industry sectors is informed and easy to navigate
- Conducted a level setting of digital learning capabilities with respective industries
- utilisation of subject matter experts and mentors as key enablers to individuals growing within industry sectors as part of a national plan for upskilling

“The Midwest Response Group have showcased the ability of speed and precision to allow businesses and their employees to meet ever changing consumer requirements”

Denis Kelly, DK Solutions Ltd

1. Introduction

“I was delighted to be involved from the outset in the formation of the Midwest Covid-19 Response Group. We identified training requirements which were tailored for our sector and assisted us with the re-opening of the hospitality industry. We had the opportunity to upskill many of our hospitality teams with relevant courses that can be applied across various industries as we embrace a new post Covid world. I would highly recommend the online training platforms and the supports that were put in place to assist our employees adapt to this new way of learning”. *Dermot Kelly, Chairperson for the Shannon branch of the Irish Hotel Federation*

Midwest Response is an independent, voluntary not-for-profit group whose purpose is to deliver employment initiatives to the Midwest region of Ireland (Clare, Limerick & Tipperary) post Covid-19. Our regional and national stakeholders are driven by a passion to realign, train and upskill the Midwest workforce affected by the economic impact, therefore enabling a transition back to gainful employment, or reskilling to a new career.

In the Mid-West region, our highly globalised nature can be seen in our reliance on international tourism and the activity of foreign-owned multi-national enterprises that make a significant contribution to our employment market.

The Irish Central Bank estimate that economic activity, both within Ireland and globally, will begin to recover in Q3 of 2020. Covid-19 adjusted unemployment figures, which include people who are receiving unemployment payments after losing their job because of the pandemic, surged to 28.2% in April, before declining to 26.6% in May and 22.5% in June

At the peak of this pandemic, there were 54,800 people across Clare, Limerick and Tipperary in receipt of the Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP). These were additional to the 18,533 persons that were already in receipt a Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection payment. With a regional labour force of 226,900, a conservative estimate of peak unemployment levels in the Mid-West was 30%.

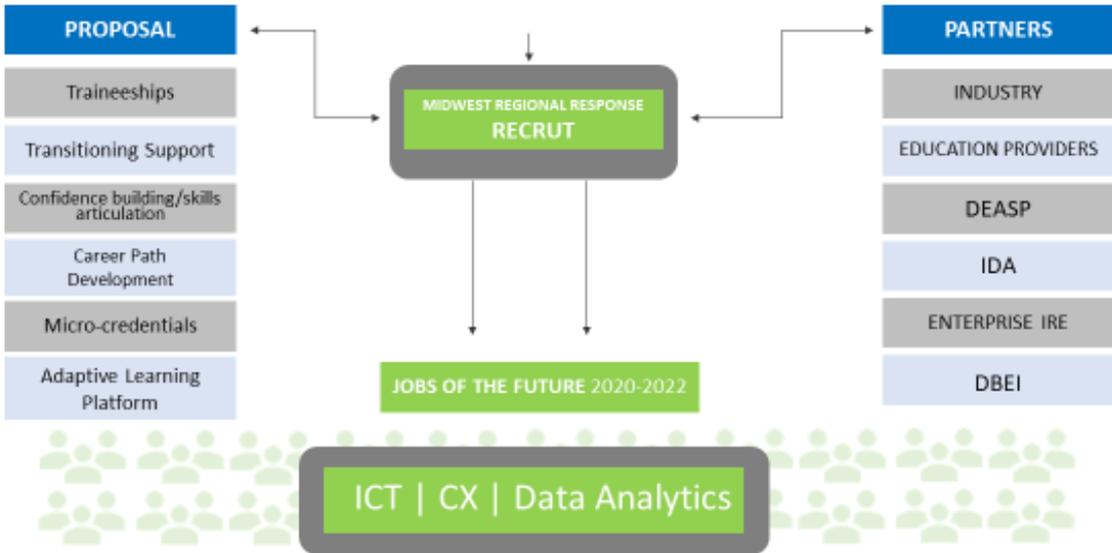
While no regional breakdown is currently available, nationally 40,000 companies have registered for Revenue’s Temporary Covid-19 Wage Subsidy Scheme.

Prompted by Barry O’Sullivan (VP of Manufacturing J&J Vision Care), Denis Kelly (former Global Senior Vice President of Services for Dell Technologies) and Eamonn Murphy, Interim Chairman, Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan, the Midwest Response steering committee engaged with industry leaders across a number of sectors to devise a response to the unprecedented employment challenges the region was facing.

Under Mr Eamonn Murphy’s leadership, it was agreed that the best intervention would be to provide training and support that will enable those affected by the economic impact of the virus to either return to their original employment with new skills, or to enable them transition into other sectors of the economy where there was a skills shortage.

Research and analysis was conducted to identify industries and employers within the region who were challenged by a skills shortage. These sectors will become the focus for the development of future careers. Noting the skills shortage in the ICT and CX sectors, a target of 2,000+ new digital careers was set.

2,000+ New Digital Careers | Data Driven & Industry Lead



2. Programme Description

Under the Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan, Midwest Response has brought together employees, employers and training providers to deliver a broad set of online training and upskilling courses for people who have had their employment affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In doing this we enabled impacted employees to either return to their original employment with new skills or, if not, transition to other sectors of the economy where there is employment opportunities.

Education and Skills are key components to Regional Development. To fully realise the benefits of upskilling and in particular, distance learning, it is important re-evaluate how best we absorb learning and utilise technology within our companies. The Midwest response programme will aim to work closely with industry leaders to identify skills gaps and employment trends, which emerge because of changes to the global economy. Our objective is to future-proof the careers of colleagues across multiple sectors by enabling them to have the ability to embrace innovation and technological change in the workplace. Diversification of the local economy and the agility of its workforce will drive inward investment along with the commercialisation of local and regional enterprise.

Initiated by ICBE, a working group is collaborating in assessing how e-moderation can contribute to more efficient upskilling. As part of this programme, a cohort of participants from a number of companies have participated in a level 9 online e-moderator course delivered by The University of Limerick. The support of an e-moderation strategy is a vital component for distance learning and it will facilitate the scaling of this programme from hundreds of participants to thousands.

The Mid-West is working hard to achieve Smart Region status. Post Covid-19, we aspire to be the most digitally connected peripheral region in EU, with the lowest possible carbon footprint. Under the guidance of Dick Meaney, former Senior Vice President of Analog Devices, a number of Smart Region initiatives are taking place each day across Clare, Limerick and Tipperary. Utilising our strongest resource, our people, we will construct a resilient, dynamic and adaptive labour force who will enhance the reputation of the Mid-West and support our Smart Region ambitions.

3. Theoretical Framework

For many, the reality of unemployment is traumatic. Your sense of personal worth and potential, which may well have been high when employed, is going to be challenged. Any educational intervention aimed at upskilling or re-skilling adults must be underpinned by a philosophy of education that respects the life experiences of those directly affected by Covid-19. The two main educational philosophers referenced in this Draft Report are Paulo Freire and Bernard Lonergan. This section of the report contains a synopsis of a more detailed document, which can be found on our Website www.midwest-response.com.

We will remain cognisant of the challenging journey for those unemployed individuals, not only at an economic level but also at a self-perception level. The approach we are taking requires us to take account of the learners' current situation, including;

- Current skills and competencies
- Current self-perception and self-esteem
- Current level of motivation to make progress within a new education experience.

We are obliged to take each participants fears, hopes, their perceptions of education and of themselves into account. All of these constitute a learner's view of the world and where they stand, which is a vital starting point of engagement.

Common Sense, Scientific Theory and Reflection – Bernard Lonergan

Lonergan provides a number of invaluable insights, which we intend to employ in the implementation of this project. He identified Common Sense Knowing, Scientific Theory and Reflection as the basis for all human learning. He believed that adult learners have an inbuilt desire to behave intelligently, an innate ability to learn effectively, and particularly common sense understanding. He believed that the intellectual requirements to create common sense is similar for all adults, and common sense is different to scientific understanding only in degree, not in kind. Most importantly, we are assured that common sense provides the basis for the development of new technical skills, which is the overriding objective of this project.

Given the interpersonal and service skills required for the Retail and Hospitality Sectors we are confident that adult learners who participate in this project will have the intellectual resources and common sense, to learn the new technical skills that will empower them to confidently re-

engage with the world of employment. Our challenge is to cultivate a learning environment, which will enable adult learners to draw from their available common-sense resource to build new skills.

A Natural Learning Environment - Paulo Freire

Freire offers the elements of the natural learning environment, which we aim to provide for adult learners who participate in this project. It is common sense to accept that the lived experience, all adult learners have, will provide a point of engagement and vital resource throughout the project. The overarching dialogical process will enable participants to uncover their sense of agency and problem-posing approach, which will enable the integration of lived experiences into a natural learning environment. Finally, the principal of solidarity, which aligns educators and learners as equal partners within a natural learning, non-judgemental environment, will provide ongoing support, particularly when misgivings and doubts are encountered.

In merging key contributions of both Lonergan and Freire we are confident we have a theory of action to provide a natural learning environment that is cognisant of adult learners' intrapersonal intellectual capacities and resources, and an interpersonal context where adult learners belong.

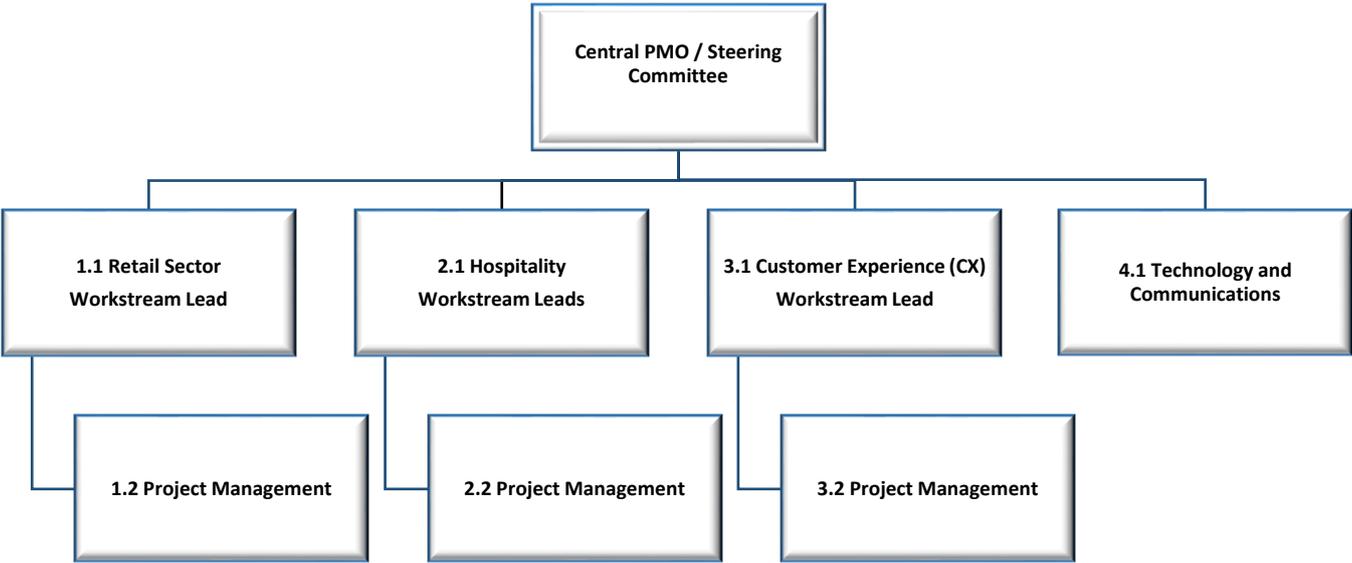
“As a retailer based in Tipperary, I was delighted to support the Midwest Response project by encouraging both my employees and fellow retailers in Tipperary to participate in this great initiative. Courses relevant to our industry were quickly identified, such as Infection Prevention & Control. Post successful training, the receipt of a digital & physical IP&C sticker from the group to acknowledge successful training was an added bonus for retailers to display on their premises and websites. The speed of execution and collaboration of all involved in this pilot is to be commended. I look forward to continuing my relationship with Midwest Response”. *Tom McGrath CSS Ltd.*

4. Pilot to upskill employees impacted by Covid-19

As a starting point, a cohort of participants from the Hospitality, Retail and Customer Experience sectors formed the basis for a pilot programme. These sectors were chosen as they represented employers and employees most severely affected by the crisis. Commencing in April and concluding in July, the purpose of the pilot was to test a simple operating model and to identify weaknesses or challenges that may impact the delivery of a larger “one to many” exercise.

A central PMO and Project Management team supported each industry workstream. The key focus for the Project Managers was to support the Workstream Leads in defining, co-ordinating, managing and reporting on workstream activities. Status reports on progress, risks and issues were reviewed by a steering committee weekly. A Technology & Communications workstream was also established.

Programme Structure:



Leveraging a tri-helix approach, the programme facilitated each industry to create its own narrative with government agencies and education providers supporting solution delivery.

Each participating employer was presented with a list of 60+ online, remote learning courses that could be started immediately. The criteria for course selection was simple; “Which of these courses would you like your employees to participate on thereby making them more valuable to your business and enhancing their employability prospects?”

The initial list of sixty courses was further reduced to a final list of thirteen. These modules represented a level of detail, industry standard and flexibility as determined by each sector.

The courses and training providers include:

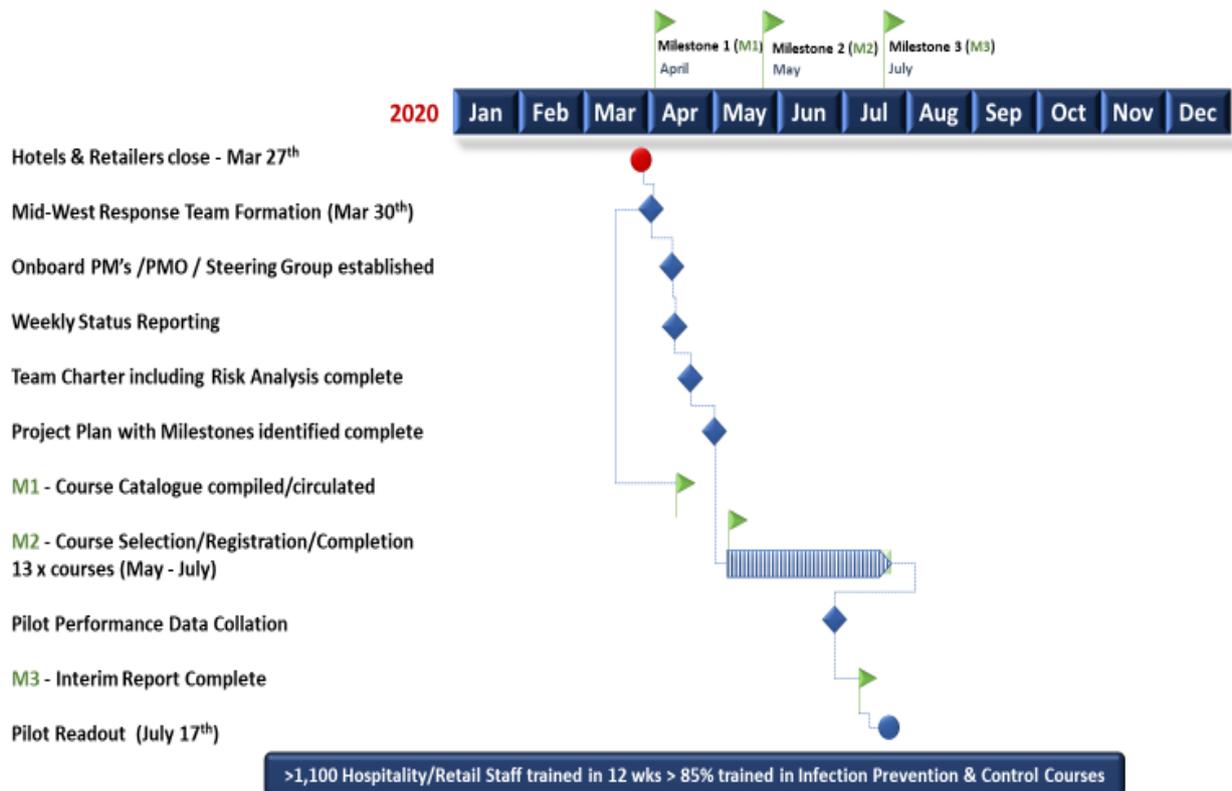
- Infection Prevention & Control for Hospitality & Retail - Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board
- Conflict Management - Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board
- ECDL-ICDL – Solas / Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board
- e-Moderator -Moderation for Online Learning – UL, ICBE Advanced Productivity Skillnet
- Digital Marketing - Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board
- Management & Leadership - University of Limerick
- Influencing & Negotiating Skills - Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- Personal Effectiveness & Time Management - Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- Professional Cert. in Customer Experience - The CX Academy, ICBE Advanced Productivity Skillnet
- Customer Service - Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- Social Media for Business - Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- Infection, Prevention & Control for Hospitality - Limerick Chamber Skillnet
- Covid-19 Hospitality Operations - Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board
- Covid-19 Risk Control: Assessment and Management - Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board

In support to hospitality and retail employers, a professional project management approach was taken to oversee the process of identifying and onboarding suitable candidates. The Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board collaborated to provide assistance for students who needed targeted interventions should they experience any learning difficulties.

“I’m currently attending a Conflict Management course, I’m really enjoying it and love that it’s online so study can be accommodated around my work/life balance. Thanks Midwest Response for your support to make this happen.”

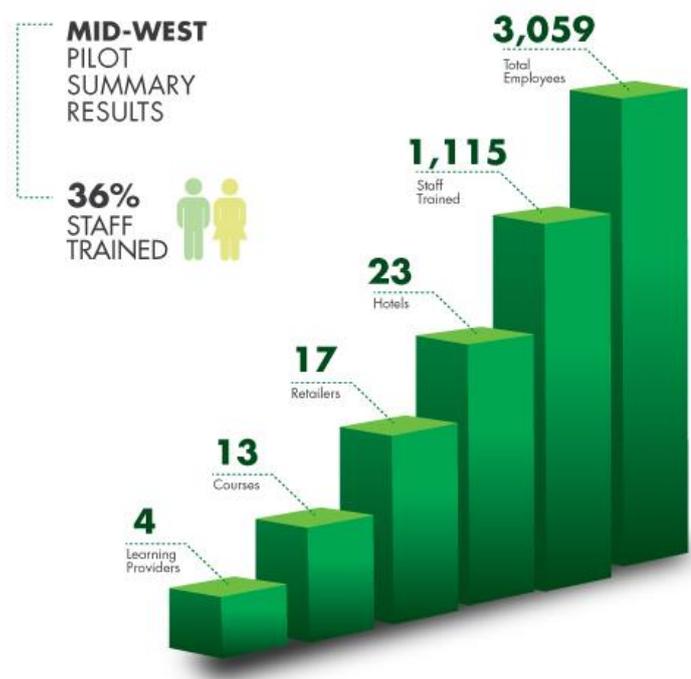
Karen Glynn – HR Manager – Woodlands House Hotel

Pilot Schedule:



5. Hospitality & Retail

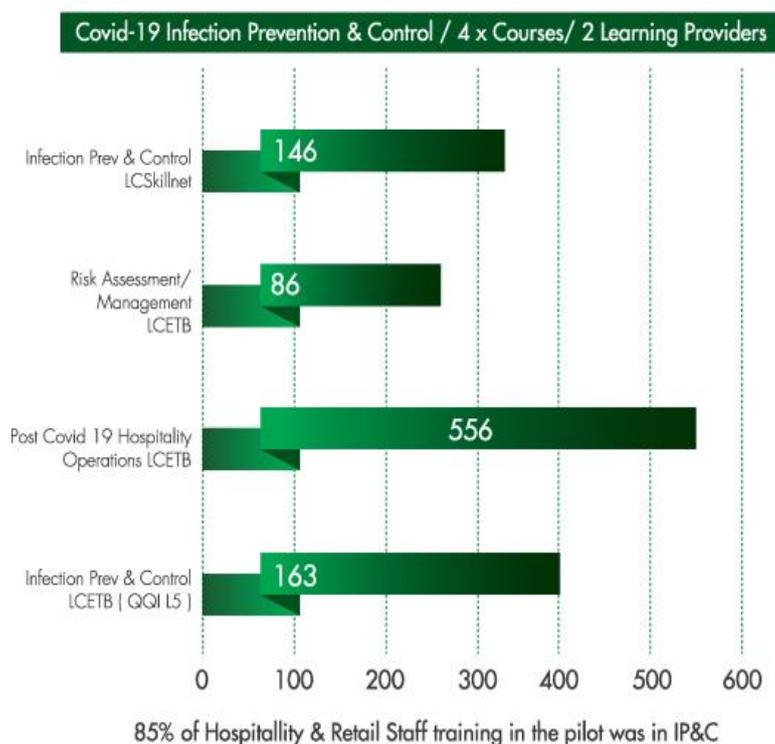
We engaged with 23 hotels and 17 retailers, representing 3,059 employees across the region. Over one thousand employees participated in training between April 2020 and July 2020. This was a remarkable achievement in a short period of time during a challenging period of national “lockdown” demonstrating the agility and collaboration of everyone involved.



The Hospitality & Retail workstreams comprised of two working groups.

- **Hospitality Group:** General & HR Managers, Regional Learning Providers, and Project Managers.
- **Retailer Group:** Business Owners, Regional Learning Providers, and Project Managers.

Both working groups undertook a review of over 60 distance learning courses ranging from short webinars to QQI Level 5 and Level 6 standard accreditations. Each course was reviewed on its ability to meet the current needs of the employer and to satisfy any skills gaps of their employees.

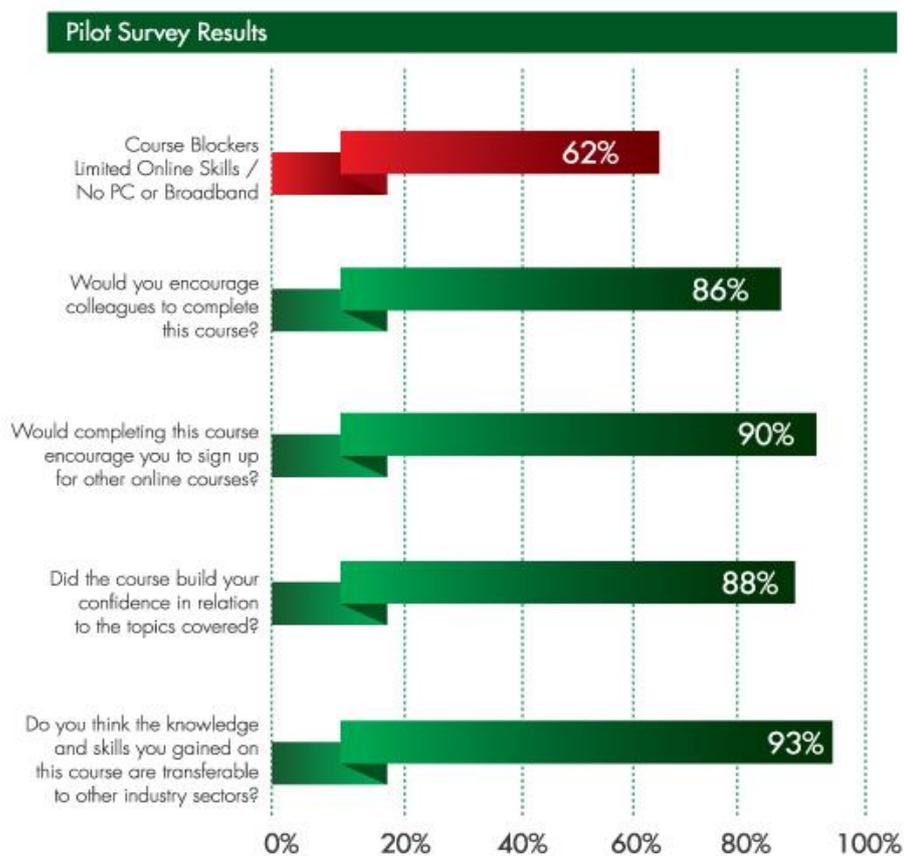


The Limerick & Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB) HSE QQI Level 5 Infection, Prevention and Control course was immediately highlighted for its relevance to the current public health emergency, which was disrupting each business. Together with Tipperary Education & Training Board this course was adapted by QQI to address the needs of both the Hospitality and Retail sectors.

6. Post Training Survey

On completion of each course, participants were surveyed for their feedback on the following:

- I. Did you find access the course content difficult?
- II. Would you recommend this course to a colleague?
- III. Would you sign up for further courses?
- IV. Did completing this course help build your confidence?
- V. Is the knowledge/ skills gained from this training transferable to other sectors?



7. Key Pilot Takeaways

- ✘ **Blockers to learning** - 62% of Survey Respondents advised, “Limited online skills and lack of a PC and/or good Broadband connection was seen as blockers to course participation”.
- ✓ **Courses selected matched the training needs of Employees** - 93% of surveys returned advised, “The knowledge and skills gained on this course were transferable to other industry sectors”.
- ✓ **Online training-built confidence**

- **90%** advised that completing this course encouraged them to sign up for other online courses.
- **88%** advised that the course built their confidence in relation to the topics covered.
- ✓ **Learning Advocates** - **86%** advised that they would encourage colleagues to complete this course they had completed.
- ✓ **Flexible learning mediums readily adopted** - Self-paced online courses suit participants in that they have opportunity to catch up before/after work. Training available 24/7.
- ✓ **Governance Structure** - The inclusion of a pro-active disciplined Project Management approach enabled a structured delivery with the creation of a dedicated PMO and Steering Committee to ensure milestone deliveries were met with stakeholders actively engaged at all stages of the pilot.

8. Growing Skills Requirements

a. e-Moderator

It is highly likely that Covid-19 will have a considerable impact on in-company learning. We now envision a remote workforce where the majority of the employees frequently work remotely. How will the learner cope in isolation and how will the company verify that the training intervention succeeded in its objectives? We believe that the role of e-moderators will be instrumental in absorbing new learnings into the Virtual Enterprises of the future.

On request from the Midwest Response Group, the University of Limerick, accepted a group of 20 senior training participants from across several MNCs to trial their e-Moderating for Online Environments programme. This intensive 5-week level 9 course was originally designed for academics and so the purpose of the trial was to gain an understanding of the changes required to make the course relevant for industry in this new virtual training environment. Working closely with the Midwest Response Group, the participants provided valuable structured feedback to the university and this will inform the next iteration of the course.

b. Data Analytics & AI

While the future is uncertain, it is clear our workers and enterprises will be operating in a changed economy in the coming years. Technology continues to herald new ways of doing business and

new economic opportunities. Emerging job roles will require new and different skillsets; *Future Jobs Ireland 2019*. With the advent of increasing digitisation, there is growing pressure on organisations to increase their overall data analytics maturity in order to become more data driven in how they make their business decisions. The ability to identify challenges, spot opportunities, and adapt with agility is not just a competitive advantage but also a requirement for survival. Innovative technological areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Augmented and Virtual Reality are fast becoming the tools of the future and will play a large part in the move to a low-carbon economy. Already AI is influencing customer service, transport, social media, security and finance and is anticipated to affect many more areas in future.

c. Micro-credentials and eBadges

“Micro-credentials are one of the hot rising ideas in the education space.” Forbes 2019

Micro-Credential are competency-based digital forms of certification, aimed to give recognition and validation for short learning programmes. They can promote greater access to higher education and more flexible pathways for career development and life-long learning. They provide a great way to extend the mind, inspire further education and advance career opportunities. We believe Micro-credentials are very suited to individuals impacted by the crisis that want to take small learning steps towards a new career.

9. Our Proposal

There is a real risk that 20,000 people in the Mid-West region will be unemployed at the end of this year. Skills shortages have been identified across ICT and Customer Experience, these areas have been highlighted as growth markets for the region. With the correct intervention, structures and management, these skills shortages can be offset against the oversupply of resource in other sectors, notably Hospitality and Retail.

Recent exercises have demonstrated that transitioning from sectors such as Hospitality or Retail into ICT and CX is a very credible option for many. The challenge is to inform and support those candidates who have the willingness to transform their careers. We will require an outplacement programme to help candidates articulate their existing skills, build their confidence, and provide them with a career pathway to a new role.

Following engagement with ICT and CX employers across the region, the Midwest Response Group have identified up to 2,000 opportunities in Software, Data Management and Customer Experience, which are considered appropriate for a traineeship type model. We propose to engage with the relevant training providers, stakeholders and host employers to mobilise this model and transition, over a 24-month period, up to 2,000 people from unemployment into new careers.

The proposal is conditional on a “JobBridge” type scheme whereby trainees retain their social welfare payment as part of INTREO ETB scheme while not impacting on the headcount of the host employer.

A three-phased approach is required to achieve this target.

Phase 1 – Define/Structure/Improve Candidate Journey

- Drive transition to jobs of the future. Speed is critical to this programme and coordination is required to ensure results. Initially, we will begin with 200 participants, scaling to 2000.
 - Profiling the skills and competencies businesses want, we will work with DEASP to identify potential candidates for training/traineeships.
 - We aim to continuously encourage learning progression and develop Life Long Learning skills
- Within 6 months of commencement, 200 future ICT & CX professionals will have commenced training

Phase 2 - Semi Automated Solution

- Automation of processes developed in Phase 1 to scale training/placements. Target 800+ 6 - 12 months post commencement

Phase 3 - Fully Automated Solution

- Delivery of an Adaptive Learning System to address the unique needs of each learner, allowing displaced employees to have access to a system that:
 - Captures career preferences
 - Allows users to create unique learning profiles and career pathways
 - Provides full visibility to open roles and competencies required
 - Ensures Guidance Counselling & Mentoring is part of the system support model
 - Target 1,000+ placements 12 months post commencement

10. Transitioning, Skills Articulation, Confidence Building

Outplacement - Steps to Transition to ICT & CX

1. Information seminars and advertising designed to show transitioning is a realistic option
2. Build confidence - help candidates to articulate their existing skillset through mentoring and coaching programme
3. Career assessment and review
4. Skills audit - Review of candidate profiles to identify core skills, curiosity and interest to learn



11. Traineeships

Traineeships will be a critical enabler to upskilling and reskilling both employed and unemployed people over the next two years. Traineeships are jobs focused as they have a direct link with specific employers.

Developed and delivered by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs), a Traineeship combines learning in the classroom and experience in the workplace to improve employment outcomes for participants and increase retention and productivity in the sector. Employers provide work-based learning opportunities and collaborate with Education and Training Boards (ETBs) on existing and new programmes to identify skills gaps in different sectors and industries.

There are currently over 75 programmes available nationally across a range of industries. New Traineeships are being developed on an ongoing basis across a range of industries and sectors in response to identified skill needs by ETBs. Traineeships are co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.



- Company Inputs
 - Mentors, Trainers, Online access, Training programs, Work Experience, Courses. Current and Future State. Technology - Present, Future and Emerging
- Processes
 - Online training. Self-paced training. Site Attendance (Training/Mentoring)
 - Webinars. Buddy/Mentor systems. Interactive Media. Hands-on Labs. Work/Study groups. AR/VR. Blended. Proctored. Discussion groups.
 - Instructor Led – Distanced. Virtual Classrooms.

- Outputs
 - Candidates – Entry, Mid and Advanced Level. Certifications. Industry membership. Experience. Core knowledge. Further upskilling requirements. Deeper inquiry. Front loading for Future State. Agile reputation.

- Benefits to the Host Company
 - Allows their own talent to move up the chain of value add
 - Higher skilled roles using proven talent
 - Brings greater value add roles to the region
 - Those moving up, give back to those moving in. Ensures success of those moving in.
 - Demonstrates significant tripartite investment – psychological contracts
 - Agile access to proven talent pool with quick turnaround times
 - This can be a **one-to-many** or a **many-to-one** relationship
 - Development for Mentor/Mentee

12. Adaptive Learning platform

This technique provides personalised learning, which aims to provide efficient, effective, and customised learning paths to engage each student. Adaptive learning systems use a data-driven approach to adjust the path and pace of learning, enabling the delivery of personalised learning at scale. We believe a specialist approach is required to manage the transition of a large cohort to growing sectors and that Adaptive Learning Tools will be central to this.

Benefits to the learner:

- Creates a personalized learning experience for each student
- Generates data and analytics for early interventions
- Maximises student learning efficiency
- Ensures students learn content and acquire knowledge
- Educates students using various methods and media
- Increases student engagement with the material
- Enables more meaningful interaction with students

13. Group Recommendations

Protecting Livelihoods - Transition 2000+ to Growing Digital Sectors

This initiative was unique and very successful. We suggest that based on our learnings and findings we are well positioned to inform a proposal to transition people who have been impacted due to the crisis, to growing sectors such as ICT, CX, and Pharma.

This initiative was achieved by people who volunteered their time to initiate and oversee its success. We have gone as far as we can and if we want to scale what was achieved, it needs resources and funding, but above all, it needs to adhere to the following principles;

1. Learn and build on the past
2. Industry led and career focused
3. Build on collaborative strengths of the region
4. Focus on skills and protecting livelihoods
5. Apply Lonergan's common sense philosophy of adult education (as outlined in section 3)
6. Strong project management structure
7. Alignment to new EU recovery Instrument which calls for support in re-skilling and helping businesses create new economic opportunities

Tools for development of future skills

1. e-Moderator programme to ensure absorption of learning (as outlined section 8)
2. Data Analytics for non-data scientists - cross functional collaboration is critical for good decision making
3. Adoption of adaptive learning tools - the group strongly recommends a feasibility study on Adaptive Learning and the benefits to the learner transitioning to new sectors

It is important to give hope to the thousands impacted adversely by this pandemic. The Midwest Response Group has sparked an awareness of upskilling and the benefits it brings. Development of key digital and innovation skills need to form part of any post Covid-19 response and future Regional Development Plans. We need to continue this collaboration, to focus on skills and competencies, to bring hope and to protect the livelihoods of those impacted by this crisis in our region.

Acknowledgements

This project was a huge undertaking during a very challenging time for many. A large voluntary effort saw the successful delivery of each workstream. We would like to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude to the following people for their support and expertise.

Eamonn Murphy, Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan
Denis Kelly, DK Strategic Solutions
Barry O'Sullivan, Johnson&Johnson
Vivienne Kiernan, ICBE
Geraldine Murphy, Ensure Project Mgmt Consultancy
Joe Leddin, Regional Skills Manager
Ronan McGlade, Box Media
Vincent Murray, Limerick City & County Council
Liam Conneally, Clare County Council
Pat Slattery, Tipperary County Council
Rory Corbett, Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan
Brian Harrington, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa
Stephen O'Connor, Limerick Strand Hotel
Michael Buckley, Debenhams, Limerick
Tom McGrath, CSS Ltd
Nicola O'Brien, Dell Technologies
Will Corcoran, IDA
Jim Lynch, DEASP
Jerry Moloney, Enterprise Ireland
Padraic McElwee, Clare LEO
Gerry Cahill, Roche
Elaina Fitzgerald, Irish Hotels Federation
Dermot Kelly, South Court Hotel, Limerick
Simon Hodgson, Dromoland Castle Hotel, Clare
Michael Vaughan, Vaughan Lodge Hotel, Clare
Donnacha Hurley, Absolute Hotel, Limerick
Karen Glynn, Woodlands Hotel
Claire Kennedy, Strand Hotel
Anne Callinan, Radisson Blu Hotel & Spa
Kathryn Shannon, Southcourt Hotel
Noelle Connolly, Connolly Men
Ann Clogan, O'Donnell's Boutique
Frank O'Mahony, O'Mahony's Bookstore
Colette Cotter, O'Mahony's Bookstore
Dee Ryan, Limerick Chamber
Niamh Jordan, Mid-West Project Management Forum
Mike Lynch, Mid-West Project Management Forum
Jerry Giltenane, Mid-West Project Management Forum
Ross Redmond, Mid-West Project Management Forum



Paul Patton, Limerick & Clare ETB
Eimear Brophy, Limerick & Clare ETB
Bernadette Enright, Limerick & Clare ETB
Ann Ledwith, University of Limerick
Geraldine Carroll, University of Limerick
Yvonne Delaney, University of Limerick
Helen Brown, University of Limerick
Vincent Cunnane, Limerick Institute of Technology
Liam Brown, Limerick Institute of Technology
Paschal Meehan, Limerick Institute of Technology
Orlaith Borthwick, Limerick Institute of Technology
Colin Cummins, Tipperary ETB
Anne Morris, Limerick Chamber Skillnet
Dick Meaney, Innovate Limerick
Mike Cantwell, Innovate Limerick
Gerry McDonnell, LEDP
Mary Ryan, Tipperary LEO
Anthony Fitzgerald, Tipperary County Council
Noel Colleran, Templemore College
Aidan Kelly, ICBE Advanced Productivity Skillnet
John Gleeson, Transact Campus Inc.
Stephen Ruschitzko, Resonation
Noel Gavin, Northern Trust
Eoin O Sullivan, Uber
Claire Conroy, Virgin Media
Paul Ryan, WP Engine
Niall Sheehan GM
Gerry Murphy, VMWare
Dermot Hynes, General Motors
Sarah Kieran, University of Limerick
Stephen Kinsella, University of Limerick