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## Reengagement Final Panel Report

### Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

#### Part 1 Details of provider

##### 1.1 Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Scoil Mhuire Community School
Address:	Prosperous Road Clane, County Kildare
Date of application:	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022
Date of resubmission of application:	10 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
Date of online site visit:	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2022
Date of reconvene meeting:	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2023
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 and 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2023

##### 1.2 Profile of provider

Scoil Mhuire Community School is an Irish co-educational post-primary school, with 1,200 pupils and a staff of 80 teachers. It is funded by the Department of Education. Scoil Mhuire Community School is part of the community and comprehensive sector and is supported by ACCS (Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools).

The following staff positions in Scoil Mhuire Community School adult education delivery are funded by the Department of Education:

- The Director of Adult Education
- Two Assistant Principals (2 posts of responsibility)
- Two AP1s (Assistant Principal 1)

Other staff are funded from the income stream for adult education.

Programmes are self-financing and funded from fees. Minimum numbers of enrolled learners are required to ensure the costs of running a programme are met.

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The Board of Management administers the school with 10 members: two parents, two teachers, and six representatives from the trustees, who are the Presentation Sisters and Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). The Principal is the secretary of the Board of Management at its monthly meetings.

**QQI Accredited Programmes offered:**

Scoil Mhuire Community School offers part time QQI accredited programmes from levels 3 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), with major, minor and special purpose awards attached. The provider currently has no plans to deliver programmes in blended learning mode.

Domains of learning include:

- Business, administration and law, business and administration, secretarial and office work
- Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary, agriculture, horticulture
- Education, health and welfare, education & training, childcare
- Marketing and advertising
- Social sciences, journalism and information, social and behavioural sciences, sociology and cultural studies
- Arts and humanities, Arts, audio-visual techniques and media production
- Journalism and reporting
- Services, personal services, hair and beauty services
- Health and welfare, welfare, health, nursing and midwifery
- Education, teacher training without subject specialization

**Non-QQI Programmes offered:**

Programme	NFQ Level	Awarding Body	No. of Learners	Duration
Certificate in Make Up Level 2	4	ITEC	15 – 20	6 months part-time
Certificate in Psychology	7	Maynooth University	15 – 20	1 year part-time
Certificate in Accounting Technician	7	ACCA	15 – 20	2 years part-time
ECDL		ECDL	15 – 20	3 months
Microsoft Excel Office Specialist		Microsoft	15 – 20	3 months
Practical First Aid			15 – 20	2 months

**Collaborative Provision:**

Scoil Mhuire Community School adult education, operating as first provider, initially had collaborative arrangements in place with three community schools: Malahide Community School, Coláiste Chiaráin and Donahies Community School. Since the initial evaluation, the arrangement with Donahies Community School has ended while the other two arrangements remain in place. Memoranda of Understanding for each school were submitted as part of the provider's reengagement application. The provider's reengagement application document (page 38) indicates the provider is seeking an extension of scope of provision in relation to collaborative provision and being a first provider.

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The programmes will be of interest to learners who may wish to change career paths or who are entering the labour market for the first time and wish to find employment in healthcare, educational and business settings. The programmes will also offer local community opportunities to upskill and gain a QQI award, with the possibility of finding employment in hospitals, care homes, creches and businesses. The flexible delivery of part time day and evening classes will appeal to applicants who are already working. Those who complete the special needs assisting programme may work in local primary and secondary schools and a number of Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) who work in Scoil Mhuire Community School were certified through the provider's adult education programmes. Learners' ages vary. The majority of applicants for certified programmes is 75% female, however certain programmes such as digital marketing attract a higher percentage of male applicants.

**Part 2 Panel Membership**

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Anne Higgins	Chair	Former Quality Assurance (QA) Coordinator, Galway/Roscommon Education and Training Board
Winifred Jeffers	Panel member	Independent Further Education and Quality Assurance Expert
David Treacy	Panel member	Former Director of Further Education and Training, City of Dublin Education and Training Board
Laura Devlin	Report writer	Formerly Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire
Matthew Hurley*	Report Writer and Panel Member	Independent Consultant

\*As the original report writer was unavailable for the reconvene meeting of the panel, Matthew Hurley assumed the role in their absence.



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## **Part 3 Findings of the Panel**

### **3.1 Summary Findings**

#### **Panel findings following the original site visit:**

Following the virtual site visit on 21 October 2022, the panel acknowledged the long-standing track record of Scoil Mhuire Community School in the further education and training sector and made the following commendations to the provider:

1. The panel commended the team's commitment and enthusiasm during the virtual visit.
2. The panel acknowledged the time and work that had gone into the preparation of the QA documentation.
3. The panel thanked the team for their openness and engagement during discussions.
4. The panel commended the willingness of Scoil Mhuire Community School to take on the responsibility of acting as a hub for the satellite schools.

In advance of the virtual site visit, the panel sought clarification on a range of issues, including:

- Governance and staffing roles
- Areas of assessment
- Collaborative provision
- Online synchronous teaching
- The results approval panel
- Testing for English language proficiency
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for tutors
- Admissions
- Employment status of staff, AP1 etc.

The provider responded to these requests in a timely fashion, providing additional information which answered some of the queries raised by the panel. However, while acknowledging areas of good practice in the provider's quality assurance (QA) processes, the panel identified critical remaining areas of concern. It was the view of the panel that these needed to be addressed before a recommendation of approval of Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA manual could be made to QQI. The required changes primarily centred around the following areas:

#### Governance and Management:

The relationship and reporting hierarchy between the Board of Management and the Quality Committee structures needed to be clarified. Key staffing roles required more delineation of what responsibilities pertain to each position, and additional detail on the Results Approval Panel was required.



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**Collaborative Provision:**

As part of its reengagement submission, the provider sought an extension of scope of provision, to engage in a collaborative provision arrangement with the three (subsequently two) aforementioned satellite schools in which Scoil Mhuire Community School would be the first provider. However, the panel was not convinced that the legal implications of moving from a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the second providers had been sufficiently elucidated in the QA document. Additionally, the roles and obligations of who oversees and monitors the QA process in the satellite schools required clarification, as did the matter of ultimate responsibility and where this lies.

**QA documentation:**

The draft QA manual required overall review for typographical errors and omissions of information. Any informal processes in place needed to be included in the QA manual, for example, processes regarding complaints. Further, entry requirements needed to be clarified and data retention timelines confirmed.

The gaps in the admissions process needed to be addressed; for example, English language requirements, arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners, and age requirements for entry to programmes.

The above issues and other related concerns identified by the panel are discussed in detail under the relevant headings in Section 5 of this report. In addition, the QA manual needed to clearly set out the roles and responsibilities of both parties in the collaborative arrangements with the schools who would be acting as second providers.

Consequently, at the conclusion of the virtual site visit on 21 October 2022, the panel came to the decision to recommend that QQI refuse approval of Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft core QA procedures and the application to extend the current scope of provision to include collaborative provision as first provider pending ten mandatory changes.

Following this recommendation and its ratification by QQI's Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC), the provider had a period of up to six months to address these mandatory changes and make a revised application to QQI.

**Panel findings following the reconvene meeting:**

Following submission of the provider's revised documentation, the Panel reconvened on 11 September 2023 to evaluate the work completed during the interim period and ascertain whether the original mandatory changes had been satisfactorily addressed.

During the evaluation, the panel agreed that the provider had taken a considered and comprehensive approach to addressing the mandatory changes, providing important new details and amendments in previously highlighted areas, including: the membership of the Quality Committee, the complaints



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process, the records retention schedule, the stated entry requirements, and crucially, collaborative provision as a first provider.

With these changes in place, the panel was more reassured with the proposed practice outlined in the QA Manual and application form regarding the provider's plans for collaborating with second providers.

In view of this, the Panel is pleased to make a revised recommendation to QQI to approve Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures and its application for an extension of scope of provision to include collaborative provision as first provider with one condition of QA approval.

### 3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

#### 3.2.1 With regard to Scoil Mhuire Community School's application for reengagement with its current scope of provision.

	Tick ✓ <u>one</u> as appropriate
<b>Approve</b> Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures	✓
<b>Refuse approval</b> of Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures <b>pending mandatory changes</b> set out in Section 7.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
<b>Refuse to approve</b> Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures	

#### 3.2.2 With regard to Scoil Mhuire Community School's application for an extension of scope of provision to include collaborative provision as a first provider

	Tick ✓ <u>one</u> as appropriate
<b>Approve</b> Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures	✓
<b>Refuse approval</b> of Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures <b>pending mandatory changes</b> set out in Section 7.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
<b>Refuse to approve</b> Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures	



## Part 4 Evaluation of provider capacity

### 4.1 Legal and compliance requirements:

	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Yes/No/ Partially</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>4.1.1(a)</b>	<i>Criterion: Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Scoil Mhuire Community School commenced offering adult education classes in September 1983. The provider first engaged with FETAC (subsequently QQI) in 2007.
<b>4.1.2(a)</b>	<i>Criterion: Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	The school has an established presence in Ireland since 1983. The number of learners has grown to approximately 4,000 learners per year.
<b>4.1.3(a)</b>	<i>Criterion: Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Scoil Mhuire Community School acting as first provider has collaborative arrangements with two community schools: Coláiste Chiaráin and Malahide Community School, with these schools acting as second providers. The panel was not originally satisfied with the provider's MOU and the proposed MOA, considering the content too vague. Similarly, the QA processes for monitoring the satellite schools as outlined in the application were inadequate.</p> <p>However, these matters were subsequently satisfactorily addressed in the revised documentation, with the provider updating its MOU as well as its QA Manual to clarify and enhance its proposed practice.</p>
<b>4.1.4(a)</b>	<i>Criterion: Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	As mentioned above, the provider is engaged in collaborative arrangements with satellite schools where Scoil Mhuire Community School is the first provider. The panel originally deemed the QA processes for this collaboration to be





			unsatisfactory; however, the reasons for this were subsequently addressed in the provider's revised documentation.
<b>4.1.5(a)</b>	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Documentation submitted indicates the school is compliant with all regulations and legislation. A statutory declaration signed by the Principal of Scoil Mhuire Community School and witnessed by a practicing solicitor was submitted with the application.
<b>4.1.6(a)</b>	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrolls learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Scoil Mhuire Community School started offering adult education classes in September 1983. It formally engaged with FETAC in 2007 and is now in the process of reengagement with QQI. The provider also offers programmes between levels 3 – 6 on the NFQ, accredited by bodies including ECDL, ACCA, ITEC and Maynooth University.

### Findings

The panel was not originally satisfied that Scoil Mhuire Community School's application met all legal and statutory requirements as defined under Criteria 4.1. In relation to compliance with QQI requirements for reengagement, the panel was of the view that the Memorandum of Understanding and the proposed Memorandum of Agreement were not fit for purpose. There was very little detail contained in the documents submitted with the application. For example, the governance structures for the second providers were not clear, with no indication of who would have ultimate oversight and responsibility for programmes leading to QQI awards provided by these second providers. There was also insufficient detail provided on the specific roles and responsibilities aligned to collaborative provision. Further, the legal and quality assurance consequences of changing from a Memorandum of Understanding to a Memorandum of Agreement with the secondary providers was not sufficiently articulated in the documentation.



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In relation to the provider meeting all legal requirements under this criterion, the panel had set three mandatory changes (Nos. 8, 9 and 10) concerning the provider's collaborative provision arrangements.

On evaluation of the revised documentation and the provider's responses to these mandatory changes, the panel is overall satisfied that the matters have been addressed.

#### 4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4.2.1(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Scoil Mhuire Community School is a post primary community school funded by the Department of Education. Six adult education staffing posts are funded by the Department. Programme funding for adult education comes from income in the form of fees. A signed state indemnity confirmation statement and a tax clearance certificate were included in the reengagement application.
4.2.2(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Scoil Mhuire Community School has been successfully delivering adult education programmes since 1983. The provider's provision is sustained by funding for six members of adult education staff from the Department of Education. Funding for the delivery of programmes is sourced from income from fees.
4.2.3(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision-making structures in place?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	The panel originally observed a lack of clarity over where ultimate decision-making lay in relation to collaborative provision. Documented quality assurance procedures required comprehensive revision, amendment and elaboration, including the management of data retention, entry requirements and the complaints procedures.  These issues were subsequently satisfactorily addressed through clarifying amendments and important enhancements to the provider's QA documentation.



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4.2.4(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	The Director of Adult Education is the main designated contact person for communication with QQI.
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### Findings

The panel was not originally satisfied, based on the evidence submitted, that Scoil Mhuire Community School met all of the governance and regulatory requirements under Criterion 4.2.3(a). In particular, the panel was of the view that aspects of governance, management roles and documented QA processes required revision.

Consequently, the panel identifies nine proposed mandatory changes (Nos. 1-6 for documented QA and Nos. 8, 9 and 10 for governance).

On evaluation of the revised documentation and the provider's responses to these mandatory changes, the panel is overall satisfied that the matters have been addressed.

### 4.3 Programme development and provision requirements:

	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Yes/No/ Partially</b>	<b>Comments</b>
4.3.1(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Scoil Mhuire Community School has been delivering FETAC/QQI accredited programmes since 2007 leading to major awards at levels 3,4, 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.</p> <p>The panel originally had concerns about the provider’s proposed collaborative provision arrangements and identified three mandatory changes in relation to this; however, these issues were subsequently overall addressed in the revised documentation.</p>
4.3.2(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Some adult education staff positions are funded by the Department of Education, for example the Director of Adult Education role, two Assistant Principal roles and two AP1 roles. Other adult education staff are funded from the income stream from programmes.</p>
4.3.3(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>The panel is satisfied there is compliance with requirements in the areas of cooperating with the Authority, fair and consistent assessment procedures, protection of enrolled learners and providing information to the Authority as required.</p>
4.3.4(a)	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>Scoil Mhuire Community School adult education section has use of the extensive campus and the facilities, which is funded by the Department of Education, with over 50 classrooms, science labs, computer rooms and a practical room.</p>



			The panel was provided with a video tour of the facilities and was satisfied that the premises were satisfactory.
<b>4.3.5(a)</b>	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Graduates have the option of transferring or progressing to other further education and training (FET) or higher education and training (HET) institutes who offer programmes leading to awards on the NFQ in related areas. Progression pathways are published in brochures, on the website and in the learner handbook.
<b>4.3.6(a)</b>	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	Assessment briefs are designed by tutors. The designated Administration Officer in relation to the QQI provision is an Assistant Director of Adult Education, whose responsibilities include assisting in assessment planning and monitoring the security of briefs. The Board of Management receives periodic reports from the Quality Committee, including an overview of assessment results.
<b>4.3.7(a)</b>	<b>Criterion:</b> <i>Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?</i>	<b>Yes</b>	The funding for each programme comes out of current income in the form of fees. Programmes are self-financing therefore, if the number of enrolled learners does not meet the minimum necessary to cover costs, the programme does not run.



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## Findings

The panel was not originally satisfied that Scoil Mhuire Community School satisfied the requirements under Criterion 4.3. A major area of concern for the panel was the provider's collaborative provision arrangements with satellite schools. Scoil Mhuire Community School is the first provider, and acts as a hub for the satellite schools who offer some of Scoil Mhuire Community School's programmes leading to QQI awards as second providers. The panel noted the onerous responsibility for Scoil Mhuire Community School in taking on the oversight of the QA processes and related issues for the satellite schools, which will have implications for staffing resources.

The Memorandum of Understanding did not articulate where the roles and responsibilities lay for overseeing quality assurance processes for the collaborative arrangements. The proposed Memorandum of Agreement would bring additional legal and compliance requirements which the provider will need to consider. Questions remained for the panel as to who would monitor the QA processes in the satellite schools and the responsibilities attached to the role of the Director of Adult Education in relation to second providers

The panel thus set three mandatory changes concerning the provider's collaborative provision arrangements (Nos. 8, 9 and 10).

On evaluation of the revised documentation and the provider's responses to these mandatory changes, the panel is overall satisfied that the matters have been addressed.



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#### **4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training**

Following the virtual site visit on 21 October 2022, the panel was satisfied that overall Scoil Mhuire Community School has the capacity to provide sustainable education and training within its current scope of provision. Evidence was submitted of sufficient resources, premises and financial viability.

However, regarding the provider's application to extend its current scope of provision to include a collaborative arrangement, the panel was not satisfied that the provider had demonstrated sufficient preparation for the undertaking, particularly in relation to the legal and quality assurance management of such an agreement.

At the conclusion of the visit, the panel identified several issues in the provider's QA processes which required revision or elaboration; for example, management roles and responsibilities, information around the complaints process, and data retention timelines. The draft QA manual also needed to be reviewed to address typographical errors and inaccurate information highlighted by the panel in discussion with the team.

Consequently, the panel set a series of mandatory changes in relation to these issues, which are detailed in this report, under Sections 5.1 (Governance), 5.2 (documented QA), 5.3 (Programmes of Education and Training), 5.7 (Learner Supports), 5.8 (Information and Data Management) and 5.12 (Topic Specific QA Procedures – Collaborative Provision).

As indicated earlier in this report, at the conclusion of the virtual site visit on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022, the panel came to the decision to recommend that QQI refuse approval of Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft core QA procedures and the application to extend the current scope of provision to include collaborative provision as first provider pending ten mandatory changes.

On evaluation of the revised documentation and the provider's responses to the mandatory changes, the panel is overall satisfied that the primary issues have been addressed and that there can now be greater confidence in the robustness of Scoil Mhuire Community School's QA procedures and collaborative arrangements.



## Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Scoil Mhuire Community School

*The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Scoil Mhuire Community School's quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). Sections 1-11 of the report follows the structure and referencing of the Core QA Guidelines.*

### 1 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

#### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

At the outset, the panel noted that the hierarchy of reporting within Scoil Mhuire Community School's own governance and management structures was sufficiently clear and demonstrated where responsibility lay. The Director of Adult Education is responsible for the day to day running of the adult education centre and reports to the Principal and the Board of Management (BOM). The BOM has delegated responsibility to the Quality Committee to oversee academic affairs and to ensure appropriate separation of corporate and academic decision making, as required under QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016). The Results Approval Panel reports to the Quality Committee (QC).

The panel further noted a positive development in the provider's implementation of new governance configurations in preparation for reengagement, guided by advice from QQI. Reporting structures were clear and transparent, externality was ensured on committees where decisions are made and the views of both teachers and learners were represented on the Board of Management and the Quality Committee. In discussion, the panel was informed that the membership of the QC had evolved to include the Director of Adult Education, the Programme Officer, the Administrative Officer, the Quality Officer, the Deputy Principal, a teaching representative and an independent Chair.

However, the panel was not satisfied with the provider's collaborative provision arrangements. To put the arrangement in context, in 2020, Scoil Mhuire Community School, acting as first provider, initiated a pilot collaborative provision project with the support of the ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit (FESU) and QQI was informed. Under the pilot, three schools from the community and comprehensive sector, namely Malahide Community School, Coláiste Chiaráin and Donahies Community School agreed to deliver programmes leading to QQI awards as second providers for Scoil Mhuire Community School although the arrangement with Donahies Community School subsequently ended in the period between the initial evaluation and reconvening of the panel. An appraisal of the project was carried out by the provider and the panel was informed that the experience had been very positive.

The provider views such collaborations as central to making accredited programmes as widely available as possible across the community comprehensive sector.

While commending the provider's commitment to acting as a hub for satellite schools, the panel was not convinced that the arrangements held up to scrutiny for legal compliance and quality assurance requirements. The application documentation indicated that the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the second providers would comply with Scoil Mhuire Community School's quality assurance procedures. However, in discussion, the panel queried whether Scoil Mhuire Community School had fully considered the practical implications of overseeing quality assurance for additional



schools, or sufficiently reflected on the inevitable requirements of additional staff and resources that such a partnership would necessitate. The panel inquired where responsibility lay for sourcing additional staff required and who would be accountable for overseeing the quality assurance of collaborations in the satellite schools.

With regard to the proposed Memorandum of Agreement to be signed with the respective boards of management in the schools, the panel noted that this agreement would create additional responsibilities and legal compliance requirements which needed to be considered by Scoil Mhuire Community School as the first provider.

The panel was not convinced the reporting structures for collaborative provision were robust enough as described in discussion with the team. It was not clear where oversight of reporting structures in the satellite schools lay, or if there had been any consultation with the first provider in relation to a reporting hierarchy. Reports from the second providers feed into Scoil Mhuire Community School's QC and BOM for review. It was the provider's intention to invite a Director of Adult Education from one of the satellite schools to become a member of Scoil Mhuire Community School's QC. In practice the Directors of Adult Education from the satellite schools would be invited to attend QC meetings at Clane. The panel was of the opinion that at least one of the other Directors of Adult Education should be included as a member of the Quality Committee and this extension to the QC membership should be included in the proposed Memorandum of Agreement.

The panel queried whether the provider had given any consideration to terminating an agreement with a second provider should a case arise. Any conflict resolution or termination strategy needed to be included in the Memorandum of Agreement. Page five of the application referred to a possible expansion of collaborative provision; any consideration of this nature also needed to be articulated in the Memorandum of Agreement.

For the reasons cited above, the panel was not convinced that the Memorandum of Understanding contained enough safeguards in relation to legal compliance, the effective monitoring of quality assurance of programmes or a contingency plan in the event of conflict or termination of a partnership. The absence of such important information indicated to the panel that considerable review and revision was required by the provider in relation to the MOU/MOA, ensuring that it adequately reflected the responsibilities of both parties.

As indicated earlier in this report, the panel had set three mandatory changes (Nos. 8, 9 and 10) concerning the provider's collaborative provision arrangements; see details in Section 5.1 of this report and Section 7.1 for a summary of the mandatory changes.

**Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

On evaluation of the revised documentation, the panel was pleased to see the provider's considered and comprehensive response to the originally identified concerns. This response included the important appointment of another Director of Adult Education from one of the second provider schools to the Quality Committee, confirmation of three external members on the Quality Committee (including the newly appointed additional Director of Adult Education and a learner advocate, as advised), and assurance that formal selection criteria was in place to ensure the independence of the Chair.



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Further, the Memorandum of Agreement which will form the basis of the provider's collaborative relationships has been changed to a more contextually appropriate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and this has been updated in accordance with the requirements of mandatory change 9. The QA Manual has also been updated to reflect the updates and amendments to the MOU.

## 2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit**

On a general note, the draft QA manual required overall review for typographical errors, inaccuracies and omissions of information. These are detailed in Section 7.1 of this report.

In discussions with the Scoil Mhuire Community School team, the panel noted that some QA procedures had not been fully documented or articulated in the draft QA manual, but were in fact well established practices by staff. For example, the team referred to a notebook held in the administration office in which staff record day-to-day problems that may occur in relation to learners, programme content or facilities. This informal process of highlighting issues via a two-way flow of information often resulted in a swift resolution of a problem.

The panel was cognisant that this omission of recording processes can sometimes occur when providers are in the process of developing and revising their QA documentation for the purposes of reengagement.

The panel recognises that QA systems are dynamic and that Scoil Mhuire Community School was in a cycle of implementing improvements to its QA procedures. It was important that such informal practices were recorded and any changes made to QA procedures since the provider submitted its reengagement application also needed to be documented. For example, the revised membership of the QC needed to be updated in the draft QA manual.

Overall, the panel identified several areas for revision and amendment in the provider's documented QA processes.

The complaints procedure, as detailed in the draft QA manual, was not clear. The informal process needed to be separate from the more formal process, the latter of which typically involves recording and submitting the complaint in writing.

The data retention schedule required amendment to ensure compliance timelines as outlined in the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).



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The provider also needed to review the privacy policy to articulate clearly the personal information gathered, how it would be used and shared, and the legal basis for processing the data. It also needed to indicate how integrity would be assured in the management of such data.

Information in the school brochure around entry requirements for the level 5 special needs assistant programme needed to be clarified, as did the minimum age for entry to programmes.

Regarding collaborative provision, the panel did not see much evidence in the documents submitted on how QA procedures were agreed and established in consultation with the second providers. Scoil Mhuire Community School's own QA processes were adequately documented (with some gaps identified by the panel) but there was no indication of a two-way channel of communication between the schools. Establishing QA processes in consultation with second providers is one of the main responsibilities of a first provider. In discussion with the Scoil Mhuire Community School team, the panel was informed that second providers are consulted with and invited to quality assurance meetings, but this practice needed to be formalised in the draft QA manual.

The panel identified six proposed mandatory changes (Nos. 1-6) in relation to the provider's documented approach to quality assurance. These are summarised in Section 7.1 of this report.

**Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

Overall enhancement of the provider's documentation was the subject of much work during the interim period; efforts which included, among others: cross-checking the QA Manual with the learner and tutors handbooks for consistency and accuracy; greater procedural detail about how the provider deals with learner issues and how these are recorded (in the administration office's notebook); separation of the informal and formal stages of the complaints process; and clarification around deadline dates for appeals.

The panel noted additional changes made to the provider's data retention schedule which, while much improved, could still be further enhanced. These improvements, as well as the panel's rationale for a condition of QA approval and two items of specific advice, are explored in more detail under 'Information and Data Management'.

**3 PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING****Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

**Findings following the original site visit:**

The concerns raised by the panel related to the provider's collaborative provision arrangements as discussed previously in Section 5.1 (Governance) and Section 5.2 (Documented Approach to QA).

In other areas of programme management, the panel was of the opinion that quality assurance processes were satisfactory. It was clarified in discussion that learners registered with one of the second providers would be officially affiliated (for certification purposes) with Scoil Mhuire Community School, who administers its QA processes and uses its own internal verifiers and external authenticators.

A review of programmes is carried out every two years, with the Programme Officer preparing a draft evaluation which is subsequently submitted to the QC. The QA processes, internal verifiers and external authenticators assigned to programmes all lie under the management and quality control of the first provider.

**Recruitment**

Learners can enrol online with an easy payment system in operation, or may apply in person at the school. The minimum age for entry is eighteen years. Some learners may be referred via the INTREO facility. The provider is not in a position to provide supports for learners with limited English language skills and such applicants may be advised to attend a language programme prior to registering with Scoil Mhuire Community School.

For applicants to the level 5 special needs assistant programme, the importance of the work placement module is stressed. However, the information in the school brochure for admission to this programme was incorrect and needed to be amended, while the minimum age requirement for admission to a programme needed to be clarified. The school brochure referred to an Irish language requirement for entry criteria; this was incorrect and also needed to be amended to reflect the correct information as stated in the admissions policy.

The panel identified a mandatory change (No. 7) in relation to the SNA programme and minimum age requirements. See Section 7.1 of this report. Access, transfer and progression

On completion of a programme, learners have the option of transferring or progressing to other further education and training (FET) or higher education and training (HET) institutes who offer programmes in related areas of study, leading to a qualification within the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) award band. The programme design team endeavours to seek out and document suitable transfer and progression opportunities, which may involve meetings and discussions with other FET and HET providers. The Quality Assurance Officer is a member of the programme design team. Information on transfer and progression pathways is included in programme brochures and the school website. Transfer and progression options are also explained in the learner handbook and addressed at induction.



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#### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The process is used by Scoil Mhuire Community School for access to programmes and for exemptions. Any queries can be referred to a representative from the ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit, with whom the provider has a good working relationship and who can provide advice on applicants' qualifications. This representative also has the expertise to provide guidance and support with funding applications for the further education sector. Requests for admission by RPL are considered on a case-by-case basis, with the Quality Assurance Officer providing guidance and support to applicants.

#### **Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

In the revised QA documentation, the issues relating to the entry requirements for the level 5 SNA programme have been addressed through the removal of references to the Junior Certificate and Irish language proficiency. A requirement around Garda Vetting has, however, been added into the admissions process.

## **4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

### ***Panel Findings:***

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

The provider has a complement of suitably qualified and experienced staff in place. However, in discussion with the panel it was evident that there are time constraints on staff allocations across the school, which requires careful and optimal utilisation of personnel. The core adult education team are all active teachers in the secondary school with reductions in their timetable to enable them to contribute to the management of the adult education programmes. The panel was informed of a reduction in teaching hours for post holders as per the Department of Education regulations. The Director of Adult Education has a reduction of twelve hours and the AP1 posts in adult education have a reduction of 4 hours per week. The adult education office has one full time and two part time posts in place. The Deputy Principal post has hours assigned to the adult education centre as the need arises. Eighty part time tutors per week are generally assigned to all of the adult education programmes. Twelve to fourteen staff deliver programmes leading to QQI awards.

Section 4 of the draft QA Manual provided comprehensive detail on the recruitment, management and development of further education staff across the adult education centre. Longer term posts (over 24 weeks or pro rata) are advertised in line with Department of Education guidelines.

Staff vacancies are advertised on educationpost.ie. Part time staff for short term posts are recruited for two or three hours a week and sign a contract each term. The provider is proud of the calibre of teaching staff and turnover rates are not high.

The provider has a good range of supports in place for staff, both online and face to face. Staff participate in an online induction process. Information Technology (IT) support is available to staff 24



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hours a day. Continuing professional development (CPD) is encouraged, team meetings are facilitated online and instructional videos and webinars are available. Training can also be provided on an individual basis. Staff are encouraged to check the Further Education Support Service (FESS) website regularly for upcoming relevant in-service training. At least one in-service session is offered in the night school, providing an opportunity for adult education tutors to attend.

## 5 TEACHING AND LEARNING

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

During the virtual site visit, the panel had the opportunity to open a discussion with teaching staff on the overall approach to teaching and learning at the school. The school has a very diverse cohort of registered learners. It was clear that staff are committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where learners can thrive and achieve their best possible outcomes. An ethos that promotes learning is fundamental to the school's teaching and learning strategy.

A collaborative approach to modes of delivery is encouraged, with staff employing a range of delivery methods to accommodate the full range of learning styles in the classroom. This flexible learning model ensures learners from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds are accommodated. Tutors deliver classes face-to-face with the option to deliver one or two classes online per term. Classes are delivered synchronously. There are no proctored exams with skills demonstrations etc. taking place online. All notes are published on the Google classroom site and are available to learners. Ongoing support is provided by staff for learners who may experience academic or personal issues and external supports and links to outside agencies can also be made available if required.

Regular feedback is sought from teaching staff and learners. Reviews of assessment take place each term, the information is evaluated by the Programme Officer and a report is produced. The monitoring and review processes in place at Scoil Mhuire Community School are the same in the satellite schools. Surveys are distributed in all schools to learners and staff. Second provider staff are invited to attend meetings of the Quality Committee at Scoil Mhuire Community School.

The panel had set a mandatory change in relation to membership of the Quality Committee (see Section 7.1) which was subsequently satisfactorily addressed in the revised documentation.

The same induction process is implemented across all schools. External authenticators work across all schools. Regular meetings occur between tutors and the Director of Adult Education. Scoil Mhuire Community School is fortunate in being able to draw on the support of a full-time dedicated Quality Assurance Officer.

**6 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS****Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

**Findings following the original site visit**

The draft QA manual set out the provider's arrangements for rechecks, reviews, appeals, complaints, extenuating circumstances and compassionate consideration. The panel originally identified two mandatory changes around appeals (Nos. 5.c and 6) and the role of the external authenticator on the Results Approval Panel (No. 5.d). On page 67 of the QA Manual, the reference to standardised grading criteria also needed to be amended for clarity.

Consistency of Assessment design

Different tutors may teach the same module and will collaborate in designing briefs. Staff also liaise with other schools and ACCS to exchange experiences and observations on assessment design. Assessments for programmes are reviewed each term for consistency. The Quality Assurance Officer will assess briefs and check that all the learning outcomes are assessed.

Emphasis is placed on ensuring briefs are aligned to learning outcomes. Module descriptors are checked, to ensure compliance with the assessment strategies specified. Prior to assessment, learners are informed about what to expect. Internal verifier and external authenticator reports are consulted to identify any inconsistencies.

Internal Verification process

Internal verification of programmes submitted to QQI for certification purposes takes place three times a year. The approach is to review about 25% of learners. Marking schemes are utilised to look at how the breakdown of marks is arrived at and how each criterion is marked.

Appointment of External Authenticators (EA)

The Quality Committee works from a selection panel and sanctions the appointments. The panel identified the need for an amendment on page 87 of the draft QA Manual in relation to the role the external authenticator. External authenticator reports are presented to the Quality Committee for review.

Assessment of work experience

The work placement module is a key component on the Special Needs Assistant programme. The workplace supervisor is responsible for providing the learner with appropriate activities to enable them to achieve their intended learning outcomes and practical competencies. Placements are vetted and insurance cover is put in place for learners.

The work experience tutor is responsible for monitoring the quality of work placements and reporting on it to the Quality Assurance Officer. Feedback is submitted by the workplace supervisor and their report of the learner's input is graded. The tutor monitors the learner's work experience journal, supervisor feedback, assessment results and the external authenticator report. The provider is cognisant that major changes will be implemented in the future in relation to work placements in the area of childcare in particular, with an additional requirement to carry out onsite monitoring.





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### Oversight of assessment briefs in second provider schools

During the initial phase of collaboration, a mentoring system was in place, daily meetings were organised with support and advice provided to the satellite schools on all aspects of programme monitoring. Scoil Mhuire Community School, as first provider, issues assessment briefs to the satellite schools. As mentioned previously, a Director of Adult Education from one of the satellite schools would be invited to sit on the Quality Committee. An external representative from a second provider would also be invited to sit on the Results Approval Panel. Reports are reviewed by the Quality Committee, which in turn reports into the Board of Management.

#### **Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

During the interim period, the provider made a number of pertinent changes to its documentation to appropriately address the panel's original concerns around assessment. These changes included: removal of the phrase 'standardised grading criteria'; removal of references to a national appeals process; amendment of the results approval process to note that the external authenticator is not a member of the results approval panel but may be invited to meetings as deemed appropriate or necessary; and clarification around deadlines for appeals.

## **7 SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS**

### ***Panel Findings:***

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

During the virtual site visit, the team emphasised the welcoming and inclusive environment which aims to provide a positive learning experience for all. Section 7 of the draft QA Manual articulated this ethos, with a commitment from Scoil Mhuire Community School adult education centre to provide a broad range of integrated supports and resources. These are implemented under the following categories:

##### Learner perspective and learner experience

Facilities are well-maintained and are conducive to learning, with appropriate high-quality equipment and resources. Information on programme content and duration, fees, payment plans etc. is available on the website, in brochures, at induction and in communication with administration staff.

##### Pastoral care/Reasonable Accommodation

Management may be informed by tutors of any concerns about a learner. Depending on the nature of the concern, the Quality Assurance Officer or Administration Officer may contact the learner to ascertain the extent of the difficulty. The learner may be offered access to counselling or career guidance.

The draft QA manual lists a comprehensive series of accommodations and supports available to learners;



- Physical modifications to a location
- Learning materials in accessible format
- Additional time/alternative formats/a reader/scribe
- Alternative assignments for oral presentations (such as written assignments or one-to-one presentation)
- Flexibility with in-class discussions
- Separate room/space for examinations or practical skills tests
- Flexible attendance requirements
- Additional time with allowances for breaks
- Assignments made available in electronic format
- Use of email to facilitate communication

#### Access to services

Learners register digitally and if attending a second provider school are allocated an e-mail which brings them into the Scoil Mhuire Community School domain. Students are informed that their data is maintained under the first provider's domain. Learners are provided with access to a broad range of services, including computing services, photocopying and administrative support. IT support is available 24 hours a day.

The Information and Data Officer is an Assistant Director of Adult Education and manages the website, the easy payment system for fees and the programme learning support system (PLSS).

#### Learner representation

Learners have access to staff, providing an opportunity to raise any concerns. Learners can also e-mail the provider directly. The full-time administration staff are also available each day of term to take calls from learners.

Page 96 of the draft QA manual indicated that the provider proposed to include a learner representative on the Quality Committee. Consideration was also being given to inviting a class representative, nominated by the tutor, to present the views of the class on any issues that arise.

#### Guidance

Guidance is provided to learners on programmes by the adult education staff. Information on the programmes including details of eligibility, expectations, previous learning and potential career pathways is made available. Referrals may also be made to adult guidance services in KWETB (Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board).

The panel identified a mandatory change (No. 5.b) in relation to learner supports.

#### **Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

In response to the panel's mandatory change, the provider removed the phrase 'restorative practice' from the QA Manual. The Panel is therefore satisfied that the original issue has been addressed.



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## 8 INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is overall satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA, with one condition of QA approval and two items of specific advice identified as a matter of ongoing enhancement.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

The panel was originally of the opinion that the provider's records retention policy required revision. In particular, the data protection policy and the schedule for the length of time records are retained needed be amended. For example, the provider's documentation stated that it retained projects for six months after the completion and marking of an assessment. The panel emphasised that the retention schedule needed to be in line with the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and GDPR.

In discussion, the panel was informed of a revision to the provider's practice which had not yet been formally documented in the draft QA manual. The current practice was to delete data following a review of the assessment process.

In relation to second providers, the panel emphasised the potential risk attached to the transfer of data, with responsibility for data integrity lying with the first provider.

The provider also needed to review its privacy policy to ensure learners are informed about the personal information gathered, how it is used and shared, and the legal basis for processing the data. The reference to the Data Protection Act of 1998 – 2003 was out of date and needed to indicate the current 2018 Act, which is the most up to date version.

The panel identified a mandatory change in relation to data and privacy (No. 4). See Section 7.1 of this report.

#### **Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

While important revisions had been made during the interim period to address the mandatory change, particularly in relation to the retention schedule, the panel identified a number of areas requiring further attention. Specifically, the revised retention schedule states that assessment evidence is held for a period of three months, which the panel recommends the provider to reword. Specifically, assessment evidence should be deleted following completion of the assessment process (following certification and the lapse of the appeals window), rather than a three month window based on no defined rationale.

Further to this, the panel noted that the QA Manual and Appendix D5 of the QA Manual-Appendices (p.69) categorises learner results, statement of results and certificates as non-personal data, which the panel highlights is not the case. Indeed, learner assessment data, including results, is considered personal data and must therefore be given the same degree of sensitivity as any other personal data.

Finally, the panel noted an absence of clarifying detail in the QA Manual that, as first provider in its collaborative arrangements, Scoil Mhuire Community School's data management and protection practices govern the transfer and sharing of learner data with and between collaborating providers.



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One condition of QA approval and two items of specific advice have been identified in relation to these issues:

**Condition 1**

Scoil Mhuire Community School must correct its categorization of learner results and associated records as non-personal data to reflect that this is personal data.

**Specific Advice 1**

The Panel recommends that Scoil Mhuire Community School review and reword its retention period for assessment evidence to clarify that such records are held until completion of the assessment process.

**Specific Advice 2**

The Panel recommends that Scoil Mhuire Community School clarify in the QA Manual that its data management and protection practices, as well as retention periods, govern the transfer/sharing of learner data between it and collaborating partners.

## 9 PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

**Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

**Findings following the original site visit:**

The provider's key methods of communication for the public, stakeholders and potential applicants are programme brochures, prospectus, website, QA documentation, Facebook, learner handbook and reports. The Quality Committee maintains oversight of information for publication. The Director of adult education approves programme information prior to publication, consulting with the IT and Data Administrator in relation to all material. Relevant staff are delegated areas of responsibility in relation to communications.

The Director reviews the website on a monthly basis and subsequently the information is updated, for example ensuring all amendments and updates required to the draft QA manual and the programme brochure are also reflected on the provider's website. The Director of Adult Education is responsible for communications with QQI.



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## 10 OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

Having delivered adult education programmes for almost forty years, relationships have been built up within the education and training community. These interactions provide opportunities to meet with other professionals and engage in networking activities. Staff are encouraged to attend National Association of Adult and Community Education Directors (NACED), FESS and other conferences, seminars and workshops. Programmes accredited by other bodies in addition to QQI, for example ITEC, Microsoft and ECDL, are offered by Scoil Mhuire Community School.

External authenticators are selected on the basis of having expertise in programmes within the adult education sector. Authenticators are sourced by the Quality Assurance Officer from industry, higher education and local government who are appropriately qualified. It is anticipated that all external authenticators will be chosen from the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) National Panel established in 2019.

Prior to engagement, the Quality Assurance Officer provides all external authenticators with a contract detailing the respective roles and responsibilities. Details are retained electronically on a secure database, to comply with all GDPR requirements.

However, the panel originally identified a number of issues regarding the provider's application for an extension of scope of provision to include collaborative provision as a first provider. While these matters have been addressed overall, some specific advice remains as a matter of ongoing enhancement. This is detailed further under Criterion 12 – Topic Specific QA Procedure: Collaborative Provision.



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## 11 SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

In discussion with the panel, the provider detailed the self-evaluation process undertaken in preparation for reengagement with QQI and what lessons had been learned from the process. A gap analysis identified areas for improvement. A new quality assurance system was approved and signed off by the Board of Management. The review informed management's decision to establish a new Quality Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Board of Management and has delegated authority to oversee and monitor all QA processes. The provider continues to implement and test its QA system, with the ongoing advice and support of ACCS and NACED.

The Director of Adult Education is responsible for establishing a self-evaluation team, and agrees the terms of reference, the scope and a timeline for the work. The membership comprises programme team staff, the programme lead, the Quality Assurance Officer, a learner or recent graduate and an employer or industry representative. The Director of Adult Education coordinates and provides administrative support and ensures that all members understand their roles. The Board of Management approves and oversees the provision of resources in terms of time and expertise.

The provider expressed confidence that the process of self-evaluation had resulted in a greater clarity of roles and responsibilities, with upskilling of staff on programme development, an improved staff induction process, enhanced IT supports and risk assessment procedures now in place.



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## 12 TOPIC-SPECIFIC QA PROCEDURES: COLLABORATIVE PROVISION

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that the provider has addressed QQI's requirements under this area of QA.

#### **Findings following the original site visit:**

The panel was not originally satisfied that QQI's requirements under this criterion of QA had been addressed.

As part of its application for reengagement, Scoil Mhuire Community School is applying for an extension of scope of provision to include collaborative provision where it is the first provider. The provider is currently in collaborative arrangements with Malahide Community School and Coláiste Chiaráin for the provision of adult education programmes leading to QQI awards in these schools. These schools are running programmes as second providers, using Scoil Mhuire Community School as a hub / first provider.

In evaluating the QA documentation, the panel concluded that overall the governance structures for the collaborative relationship are not clear.

The panel identified serious gaps in the content of the Memorandum of Understanding and the proposed Memorandum of Agreement. For example, the information does not provide a clear picture of where responsibility lies for overseeing and monitoring the quality processes of the second providers, as required by QQI and how this might be managed with the QA governance structures of Scoil Mhuire Community School. The document needs to set out what programmes are covered by the agreement; how new programmes can be applied for by second providers and the process for terminating the agreement by either party. Nor is the reporting hierarchy across the schools sufficiently evident in the documentation.

It is the opinion of the panel that the Memorandum of Understanding and/or the Memorandum of Agreement are critical in the context of complying with all QQI requirements for delivery of programmes under a collaborative arrangement. In their current format, the panel is not convinced they are sufficiently developed. The management team indicated that the intention is to expand their QA procedures to other second providers beyond the current schools. The panel is of the view that the QA manual must be expanded, to demonstrate how consultation with partners occurs, how QA procedures with second providers are established, how new partners are selected, how responsibility for monitoring second providers is delegated and how the reporting hierarchy across all schools are effectively managed and monitored. The document must detail where responsibility lies for the ownership of programmes, accountability for funding and costs, the management of data protection and how a termination of agreement is handled in the event of a dispute.

To summarise, at the end of discussions there were outstanding questions remaining for the panel, concerning the provider's collaborative provision arrangements. It was difficult for the panel to envisage how the provider's QA processes worked in practical terms across second provider schools.



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The panel set three mandatory changes concerning the provider’s collaborative provision arrangements (Nos. 8, 9 and 10); see details in Section 5.1 of this report and Section 7.1 for a summary of the mandatory changes.

**Findings following the panel’s reconvene meeting:**

It was evident to the panel that much work had been done to address the original issues, including the revision of the MOA to a more context-appropriate MOU, revisions to both the QA Manual and MOU to reflect the responsibilities of both the first and second providers, and a documented process regarding the introduction of new second providers.

While pleased to note that the work completed demonstrated genuine improvement, the panel identified one additional item of specific advice pertaining to the language used on page 59 of the QA Appendices document which should state that that the second provider school agrees “to assign responsibility for coordinating collaborative arrangements to a **named role** and ensure the person in the role has the resources and capacity to fulfil the duties and responsibilities.”

**Specific Advice 3**

The Panel recommends that Scoil Mhuire Community School amend the language on page 59 of the QA Appendices document to state that the second provider school agrees “to assign responsibility for coordinating collaborative arrangements to a **named role** and ensure the person in the role has the resources and capacity to fulfil the duties and responsibilities.”





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## Evaluation of draft QA Procedures – Overall panel findings

### **Findings following the original site visit:**

It was the original view of the panel that the issues identified during the virtual site visit were of a significant nature and needed to be addressed before a recommendation of approval of the draft QA procedures could be made to QQI. The major issues to be resolved concerned the provider's governance structures and how they pertain to the proposed arrangements for collaborative provision. Other areas which needed to be addressed included the provider's documented QA processes, data protection, the records retention schedule, and privacy policy.

Consequently, at the conclusion of the virtual site visit on 21 October 2022, the panel came to the decision to recommend that QQI refuse approval of Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft core QA procedures and the application to extend the current scope of provision to include collaborative provision as a first provider pending ten mandatory changes.

### **Findings following the panel's reconvene meeting:**

The panel agreed that the provider's genuine efforts to address the mandatory changes had significantly enhanced the QA documentation, particularly in relation to collaborative provision as a first provider. While one condition of QA approval and three items of specific advice have been identified, these are simply to further the provider's already significant enhancements and ensure the strength of the QA system.

Thus, the Panel is pleased to make a revised recommendation to QQI to approve Scoil Mhuire Community School's draft QA procedures and its application for an extension of scope of provision to include collaborative provision as first provider with one condition of QA approval.

## Part 6 Conditions of QA Approval

### 6.1 Conditions of QA Approval

1. Scoil Mhuire must correct its categorization of learner results and associated records as non-personal data to reflect that this is personal data.

## Part 7 Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

### 7.1 Mandatory Changes

**With regard to Scoil Mhuire Community School's application for reengagement with its current scope of provision:**

1. Document in the QA Manual the informal recording process in place for any learner issues identified, which are currently entered on a daily basis in the notebook held in the administration office, including follow up.
2. At least one of the other Directors of Adult Education from the second provider schools must attend each of the Quality Committee meetings, and this additional membership of the QC must be updated in the QA Manual. Ensure the Chair remains independent of the Board of Management. Increase external representation on the QC, including the addition of the learner voice.
3. Separate the complaints process into two sections. The informal process should be separate to the formal process, the latter which is outlined on the chart.
4. Review the retention of data schedule and amend the information and retention periods in the QA Manual.
5. The QA Manual, the tutor handbook and the learner handbook need to be reviewed to ensure that errors are corrected and that information is consistent. Corrections should include the amended information provided to the panel pre the online site visit.
  - a. Amend the phrase 'standardised grading criteria' on page 67 of the QA Manual.
  - b. Amend the phrase 'restorative practice' in relation to student supports.
  - c. Amend the information on page 89 on the QA Manual and page 29 of the learner handbook, in relation to appeals; 'QQI operates a national appeals process'. This is not correct.
  - d. Amend page 87 of the QA Manual; 'the role of the EA includes participation in the RAP process'. This is not an accurate reflection of current practice.
  - e. Amend the typing error on page 100 of the QA Manual in relation to complaints; under section 7.6 this should read 'college provides form...' not forum.
6. Clarify the deadline dates for appeals on pages 28 and 29 of the learner handbook; the deadlines are the same timeframe, but the language is confusing.
7. Amend the information in the brochure around entry requirements for the level 5 SNA programme;
  - a. A level 3 junior certificate is not sufficient for entry to a level 5 programme.



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- b. Amend the information in the brochure regarding a requirement in the Irish language for admission to the level 5 SNA programme.

**With regard to Scoil Mhuire Community School's application for an extension of scope of provision to include collaborative provision as a first provider:**

8. Include a new section in the QA Manual to include the areas covered by the MOA with second providers and an additional chapter on the monitoring of implementation.
9. Review the content of the MOA, to adequately reflect the QA policies and procedures, setting out the responsibilities of first and second provider. This should include naming the programmes covered by the agreement and the reporting structures between Scoil Mhuire Community School and the satellite schools / second providers.
10. The QA Manual should clearly set out the procedures for the introduction of any new providers as second providers to Scoil Mhuire Community School.

## 7.2 Specific Advice

The following items of specific advice were identified at the conclusion of the panel's reconvene meeting on 11 September 2023.

1. The Panel recommends that Scoil Mhuire review and reword its retention period for assessment evidence to clarify that such records are held until completion of the assessment process.
2. The Panel recommends that Scoil Mhuire clarify in the QA Manual that its data management and protection practices, as well as retention periods, govern the transfer/sharing of learner data between it and collaborating partners. Further to this, data protection of learner assessment evidence being transferred – Everything in first provider manual governs it so transferred data should come under this as well.
3. The Panel recommends that Scoil Mhuire amend the language on page 59 of the QA Appendices document to state that the second provider school agrees "to assign responsibility for coordinating collaborative arrangements to a **named role** and ensure the person in the role has the resources and capacity to fulfil the duties and responsibilities."



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## Part 8 Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
3 – 6	Major, Minor, Special Purpose	Education, health and welfare, business, administration and law, arts and humanities, social sciences, journalism and information, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary, services
Delivered part time, face-to-face only including collaborative provision as a first provider		

## Part 9 Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of Scoil Mhuire Community School.

Name:

Date:

25.09.2023

## **Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the panel in the course of the Evaluation**

Document

Assessment Handbook for Learners
Tutor Handbook
Draft Quality Assurance Manual
Memorandum of Understanding for three community schools: Donahies, Coláiste Chiaráin and Malahide
Memorandum of Agreement Template
Risk Register
Application Form
Tax Clearance Certificate
Signed Statutory Declaration
State Indemnity Confirmation Statement
Appendix to Self -Evaluation Report; Legislative and Regulatory Check List
Signed Chartered Accountant's letter, confirming accounts conform to Irish Company Law
Revised Documentation (2023)

## Annexe 2: Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Pádraig Nolan	Principal Scoil Mhuire Community School/Secretary Board of Management
Seamus Scully	Director of Adult Education
Gerard Dunne	Quality Committee Chairperson
Pádraig Brennan	Deputy Principal/Governance officer
Colette Breslin	Quality Assurance Officer
Edmond Behan	Administration officer
Gerry McGowan	IT and Data Administrator
Catherine O'Sullivan	ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit
Zena Egerton	Tutor
Sharona Ferguson	Tutor
Tracey Ní Scolaí	Programme development and validation

*Appendix: Provider response to the Reengagement Panel Report*



## Scoil Mhuire Adult Education

Community School, Clane, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Tel: 045 - 868255

Email: [info@clanesm.com](mailto:info@clanesm.com) [www.clanesm.com](http://www.clanesm.com)

Marie Mattimoe,  
Quality Assurance  
Awards Directorate,  
26-27 Denzille Lane,  
Dublin 2.

6 October 2023

Scoil Mhuire Community School,  
Clane,  
Co. Kildare.

Re: QQI Reengagement Final Panel Report

Dear QQI,

Scoil Mhuire Community School and everyone here in the Adult Education Team would like to thank the Reengagement Panel for the Final Report which we have considered with interest.

First, we are very appreciative of your time and attention while working with our draft documentation and we value your input, recommendations and advice.

Second, we would like to confirm that we will promptly address the one Condition of QA Approval and the three areas of Specific Advice as outlined in the report.

This letter also confirms that no factual inaccuracies were noted in the report by Scoil Mhuire.

With kind regards,

  
Edmond Behan

Director, Adult Education,  
Scoil Mhuire Community School.