



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

Comprehensive Policy Development Programme

Consultation Events Evaluation Report

Introduction

The first phase of QQI's comprehensive policy programme is to consult on a range of Green Papers that have been developed following an internal study of the issues and options in a range of policy areas. The consultation process involves the publication of the Green Papers on the QQI website and hosting a number of consultation events and seminars to seek stakeholder views and feedback.

QQI hosted two consultation events, in Dublin and Cork, on the 20 and 28 May 2013 respectively.

Following the events participants were asked to complete an evaluation sheet seeking their feedback and comments on the arrangements for and effectiveness of the event.

A four-point scale was used to capture delegates' views (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) and additional general comments were sought.

This report is concerned with the feedback received on the practical arrangements for the consultation events held in the following venues;

Croke Park, Dublin, 20 May 2013

Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork, 28 May 2013

It is divided into 3 sections;

1. Stakeholder Attendance Analysis
2. Event Evaluation Sheet Response Rate
3. Summary Event Evaluation Responses

1. Stakeholder Attendance Analysis

(category analysis)

Prospective attendees to both the Dublin and Cork events were asked to select sector specific categories when booking for the consultation event. These categories enabled QQI to gain an overview of the stakeholders interested in attending the consultative process. The figures below relate to those who availed of the on-line booking process and may vary slightly from specific delegates who attended on the day. It is however an accurate reflection and indication of the diversity of stakeholder attendance.

Category	Dublin	Cork
Community and Voluntary Sector	24	29
English Language Provider	8	11
FETAC External Authenticator Panel	8	4
FETAC Monitors	1	0
FETAC Programme Evaluators	2	0
FETAC QA Evaluators	1	0
FAS	3	2
Institutes of Technology	10	21
International Awarding Bodies	4	7
Linked Providers	1	2
Members of FETAC Standards Delivery group	0	0
Newly Registered FETAC Providers and Centres	0	0
Other	15	6
Private Provider 1 - 6	46	28
Private Provider 6 – 10	30	8
Professional Bodies	11	8
Provider/Centre Directors and Managers	4	4
Providers not currently registered with FETAC	7	5
Representative Organisations	17	3
Universities and Designated awarding bodies	23	7
Vocational Education Committees	25	40
Total	240	185

2. Evaluation Sheet Response Rate

At the Dublin event 107 evaluation sheets were submitted from a total of 243 participants which is a 44% response rate. This is considered a low response rate given that participants were provided with the sheets as part of their seminar pack. There are a number of reasons why the response rate may not have been as high as it should have been;

- Sufficient attention was not drawn to the evaluation sheets during the day which would have notified participants of their existence.
- The participants were broken into groups for the last part of the day and did not all reform as a collective, making it difficult to remind them to complete the sheets.
- Some participants may have left the event early and did not have an opportunity to return the evaluation sheet.

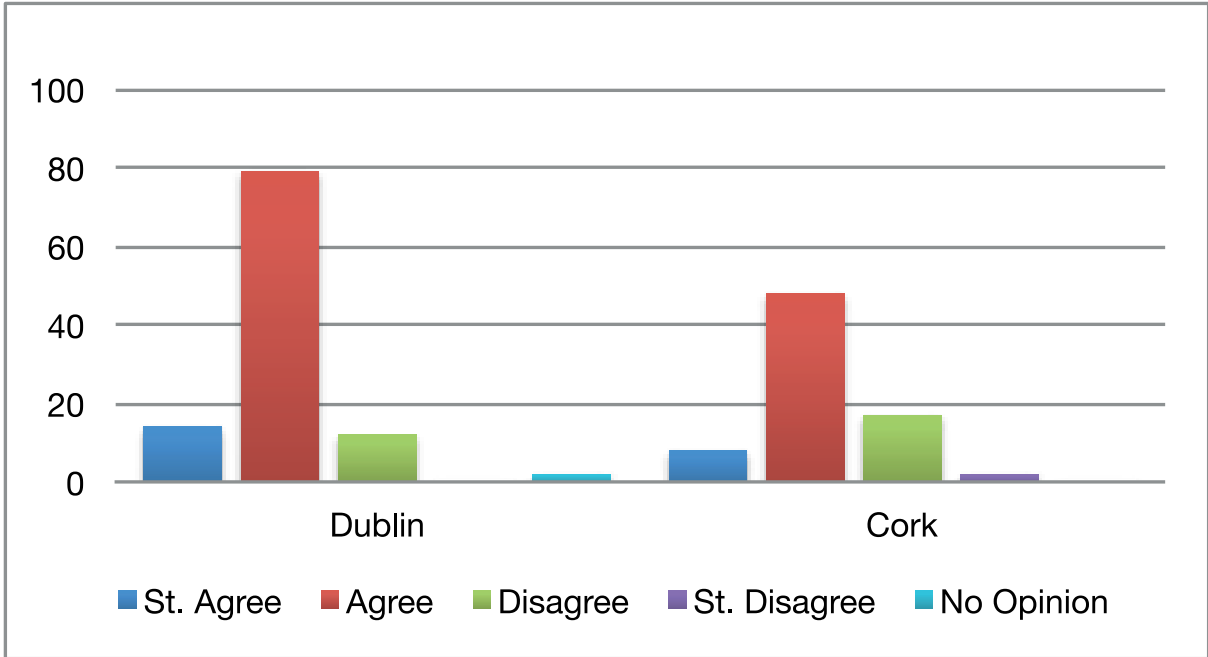
At the Cork event 54% of participants submitted the evaluation sheets with 76 respondents from a total of 138 attendees. Whilst this was up on the Dublin event, it still remains low in terms of feedback. The cause for this low level of feedback again may be attributed perhaps to participants leaving early and not having an opportunity to complete the evaluation sheet and to the groups not fully reforming collectively following the afternoon discussion groups for a formal closing at the end of the event.

3. Summary Event Evaluation Responses

The following is a break-down of the questions asked on the evaluation sheet and responses from participants. This summarises the feedback for the Dublin and Cork events for comparable purposes.

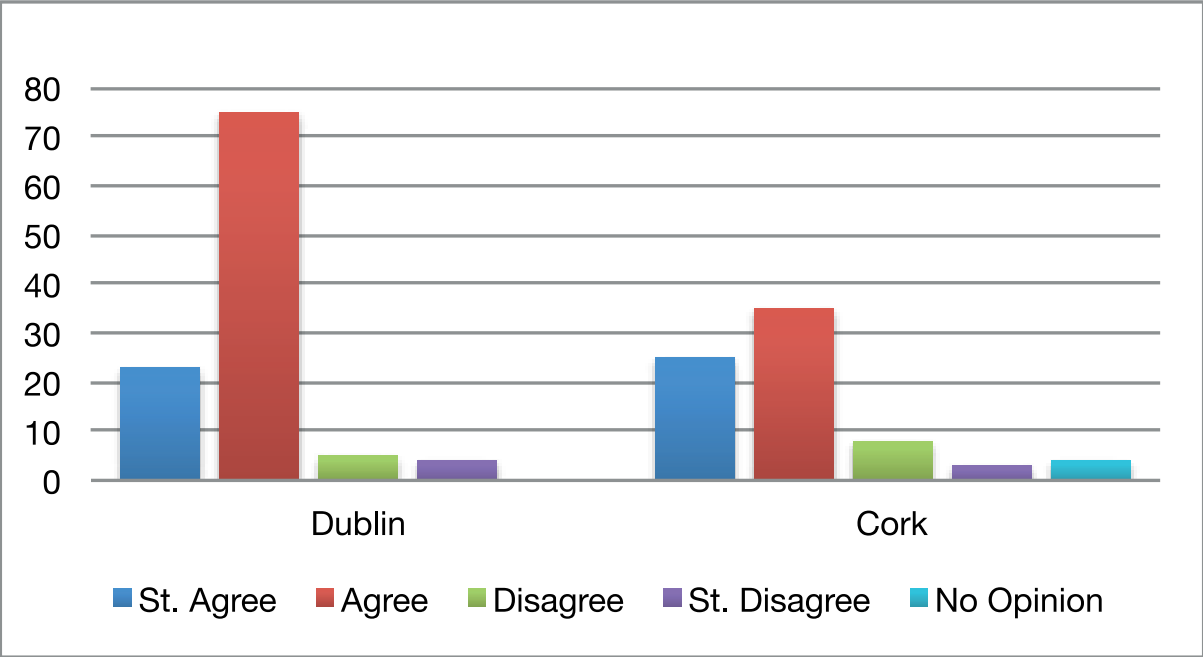
It was acknowledged that there were issues raised by participants with the Dublin venue in terms of noise levels and lack of break out rooms, in respect of question 6. These concerns were addressed in advance of the Cork event.

Q1. The Plenary presentations were helpful and informative?



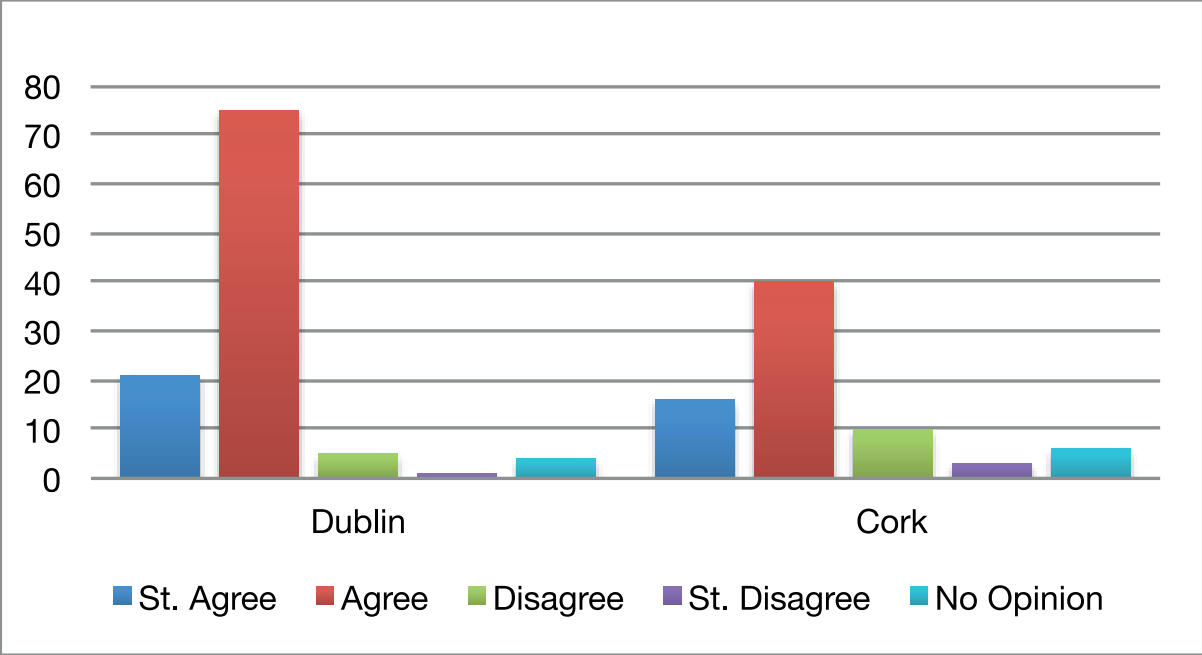
73% of respondents at the Dublin event considered the Plenary presentations helpful and informative. 11% *disagreed* with this sentiment; some participants felt that having four presentations back to back was too much and suggested that perhaps fewer speakers covering the same ground would have been a better approach. This also formed part of the feedback from Cork with 25% of the respondents *disagreeing or strongly disagreeing* that the plenary presentations were helpful and informative.

Q.2 The discussion groups provided an opportunity to discuss topics raised in the plenary sessions



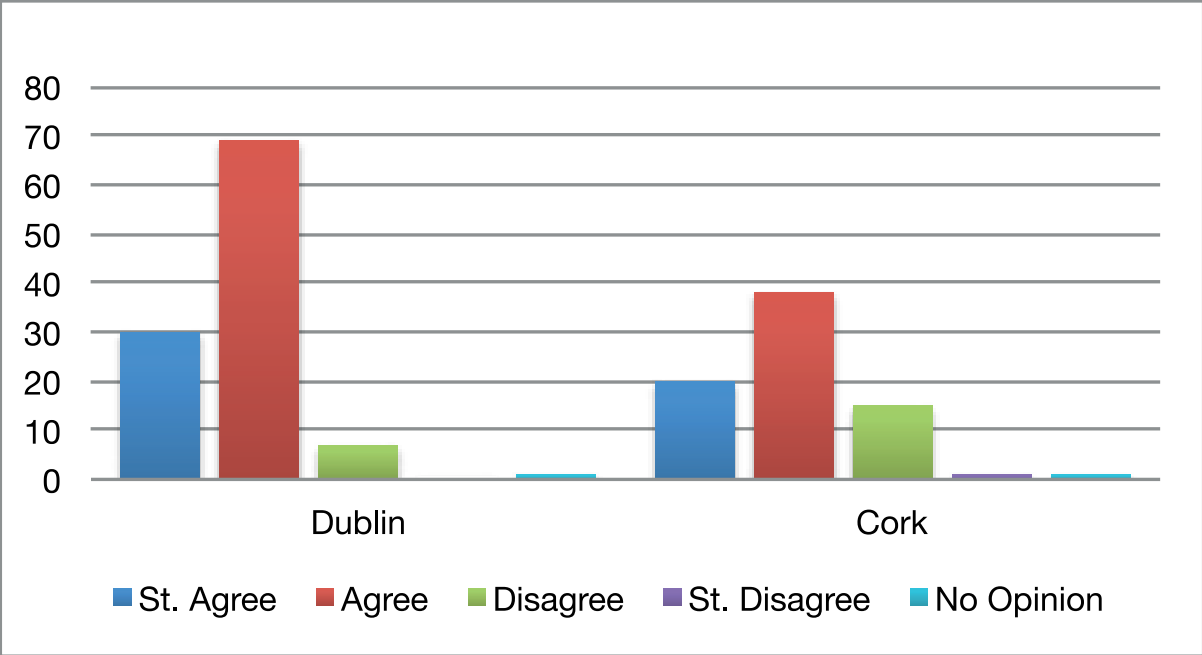
It was *agreed or strongly agreed* by 86% of the Dublin respondents while 73% of the Cork respondents that the discussion group did provide an opportunity to discuss issues raised, giving a strong indication that overall the discussion groups worked well in terms of seeking feedback and enabling participants to engage, debate and discuss.

Q. 3 The discussion groups (II) on the green papers were informative and provided an opportunity to discuss the key issues raised within the papers



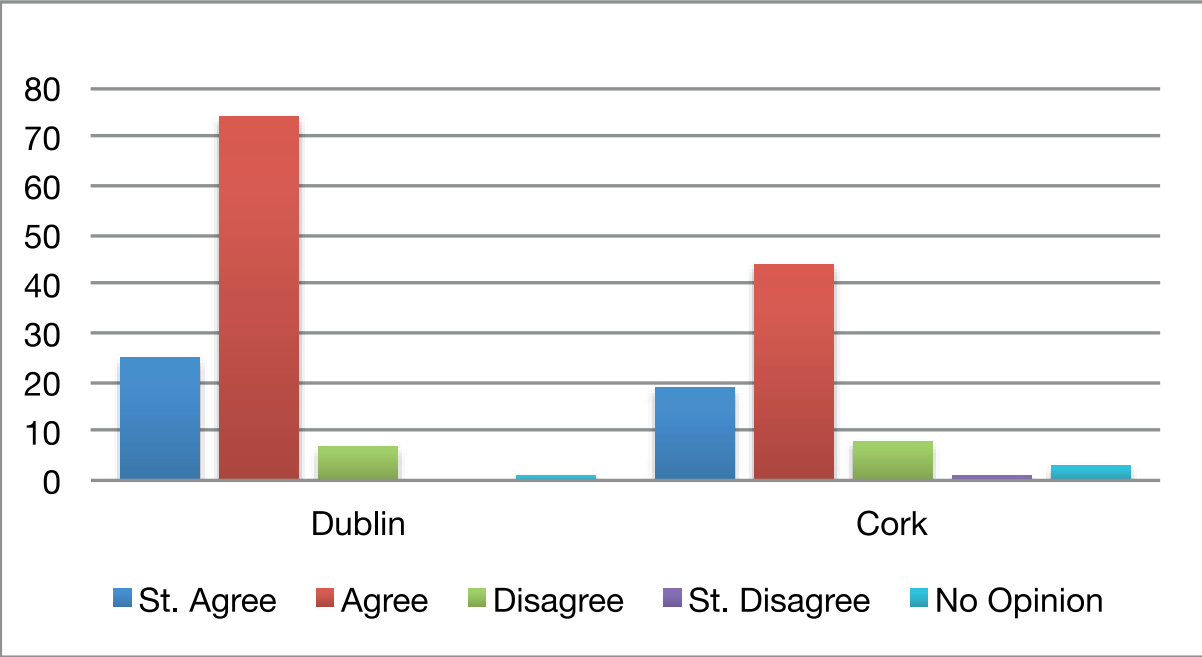
Those who completed the evaluation forms felt the discussion groups were informative. The feedback equates to 89% of Dublin respondents advising that they agreed or strongly agreed that the groups were informative and only 4.6% disagreeing with this. In Cork 73% agreed or strongly agreed that the discussion groups were informative while 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In Cork one of the participants commented that the group was not facilitated in a way that was conducive to discussion.

Q. 4 Overall I feel better informed having attended the event



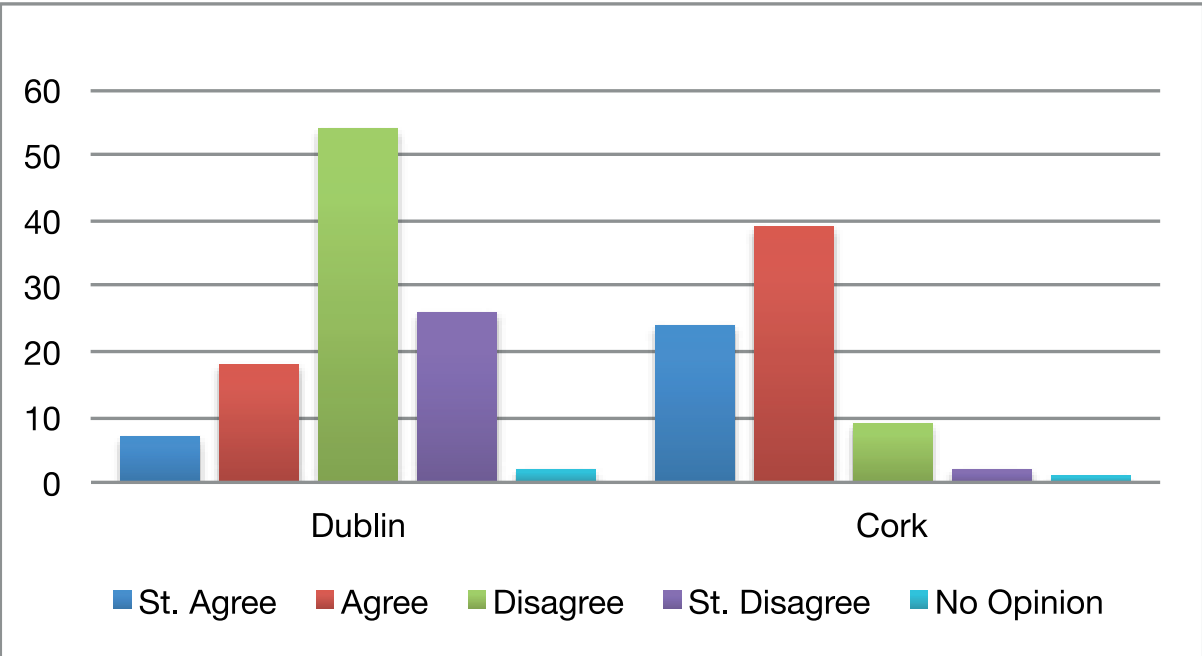
92% of Dublin respondents felt that they were better informed having attended the event while 6.5% disagreed with this. In Cork 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement while 19% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed with it.

Q. 5. I feel better equipped to contribute to QQI consultation process and to formulate my response following today's event



There was overall agreement with this statement, in Dublin 25% of respondents strongly agreed, 69% agreed and 6.5% disagreed. In Cork 25% strongly agreed, 57% agreed while 10% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Q. 6 The room and venue were conducive to discussion



The feedback for this question in relation to the Dublin event was negative overall, due mainly to noise levels and suitability of the venue when attendees were divided into groups for discussion purposes. Only 22% either agreed or strongly agreed that the venue and room were suitable for discussion. 50% disagreed with the statement while 24% strongly disagreed. This feedback was taken into consideration for the event in Cork, with separate break-out rooms organised for the groups. Over 80% of respondents in Cork either agreed or strongly agreed that the room and venue was conducive to discussion while 11.8% disagreed and 2.6% strongly disagreed.

Additional Comments Made

Croke Park, Dublin, 20 May 2013

Do you have any additional comments about the format of today's event?

- Needed additional breakout rooms
- Perhaps more info in talks on individual green papers. Groupings very effective in answering questions.
- Lunch could have been shorter to allow more time for discussion
- The room was very big and the sound was very poor at the discussion groups 1 and 2.
- Grouping was very effective in answering questions
- Venue was good for the plenary session, not so good for the discussion groups.
- Less narration at the beginning – more time for consultation
- Too many people from varying backgrounds. Would have worked better if more targeted to specific sectors.

Do you have any comments about issues raised at today's event

- Learner protection unworkable
- I would have a concern about the capacity of QQI staff given the small number of them to genuinely consult. There is so much for people to understand that they might need technical support to understand. You cannot genuinely consult with people if an issue is too complex for them to comprehend.
- I would like to see a similar event after the white paper is prepared.
- You need to brief providers first before holding consultation event.
- ATP and RPL needs more robust information and guideline documents

- There is a strong need to have a meeting like todays with learners they would quickly say how they are restricted in terms of access and progression.
- Clarification around Protection for Learners needed

Were there any key topics that were not raised at today's event that you would like covered?

- Issue of consulting with learners in a formal forum
- Timeline for September green paper discussions, when do they become white papers?
- Feedback from the consultation forum – when do we get this and in what format?
- More information on costs
- Clarity on the role of QQI versus Providers role and the changes due to legislation.

Do you have any other comments you wish to make on today's event?

- I found the event well presented in a way that made it easy to follow
- Great to meet other private providers
- A place to sit at lunch should have been provided
- Room not suitable for group discussions – too much background noise
- It's obvious a great deal of work has been done in a short period of time...and lots more to do! Well done and thank you.
- This blockbuster event gave an excellent opportunity for providers and awarding bodies to appreciate the mammoth task facing QQI.

Rochestown Park, Cork, 28 May 2013

Do you have any additional comments about the format of today's event?

- Discussion groups a good idea but too many were too large and could not function or allow input from all.
- It was open to too many sectors to have a meaningful discussion within sectorial groups
- The session on RPL allowed no discussion – just listening to the facilitator for the whole hour
- Plenary presentation – too much information to take in.
- Groups were too diverse with varying issues, more lead in time would have been appreciated.
- Content in plenary session was poor.
- Plenary presentations were not sufficiently communication orientated.
- More time should have been given to discuss key issues.
- Excellent – challenging event to organise, very effective in its execution
- Needed to be planned further in advance
- Discussion group on Access, Transfer and Progression was very disappointing, facilitator spoke for most of the time – no opportunity for open discussion.
- Group on programme accreditation was too large.
- Some discussion groups more inclusive and discursive than others.
- Discussion group lacked any discussion element, I found this very frustrating and convinced me that QQI are not connected to the professions delivering QQI awards.
- Great information from QQI staff which really helped us to understand the process.
- Where were the FAS staff, as one of the large QQI providers who are joining the VEC sector in the new ETBs?

Do you have any comments about issues raised at today's event

- Is there a distinction / what distinction do you make between QQI as an awarding body and QQI as having QA oversight of other awarding bodies?
- Concern that higher education is being pandered to at the risk of excluding further education
- Where are all the ideas going – how will they feed into final documents?
- Comments raised at all the workshops today were interesting and QQI staff were helpful and took all comments on board
- Optimistic and friendly atmosphere - would be unusual in the UK to see schools, colleges, universities, awarding bodies etc all in the same room discussing issues together.
- The theory of the day's consultation was good, great to have the opportunity. The reality was different, the discussion group facilitator was poor.
- Facility to comment on-line at a later date is very welcome.
- The workshops were very enlightening and I found them very informative
- I felt that QQI were a top heavy entity with little understanding of the Further Education sector and a lack of capacity to hear and / or listen to the concerns I and others tried to raise.
- Despite the new single body QQI, there is still talk of two different credit systems, it will cause confusion at level 6.

Were there any key topics that were not raised at today's event that you would like covered?

- Impact of provider fees on learner cost and access to education
- Consistency, accountability by QQI standards
- How do providers access interim help and assistance from QQI between May and December 2013 year end?
- A learner centred approach was identified early on but was not developed in later discussions.
- Main focus was on higher levels would have liked more discussion around levels 3 and 4.
- Social, personal and societal benefits of life-long learning and how they can be accommodated with NFQ and QQI
- Pricing and fees needs more open and urgent discussion.
- The enormity of the range of qualifications coming within the remit of QQI.

Do you have any other comments you wish to make on today's event?

- It should have been possible to limit group size so that everyone could at least sit in a chair.
- Good sessions – very informative even if still lots of questions
- Timescale too tight on consultation – why are QQI rushing through process without sufficient consultation
- Facilitators should be trained in facilitating skills
- I came with a lot of goodwill and anticipation but it was a very disappointing event. There was no sense of where QQI intends to improve systems based on the failings of previous processes or where its leadership will emerge.
- Great opportunity to be involved and consulted going forward.
- Interesting to hear about the issues around validating of further education courses in Ireland.

QQI, an integrated agency for quality and qualifications in Ireland.

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