



APPRENTICESHIPS

HOW TO SECURE YOURSELF AN APPRENTICESHIP



Apprenticeships - Eligibility & Assessment

What is an apprentice?

An apprentice is a person who works for an employer in a chosen occupation and gains the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to become a qualified craftsperson.

What are the trades covered by the Standards Based Apprenticeship?

Agricultural Mechanics*
Aircraft mechanics*
Brick & Stonelaying
Carpentry & Joinery
Construction Plant Fitting*
Electrical*
Electrical Instrumentation*
Electronic Security Systems*
Farriery
Floor & Wall Tiling*
Heavy Vehicle Mechanics*
Industrial Insulation
Instrumentation*
Mechanical Automation and Maintenance Fitting*
Metal Fabrication
Motor Mechanics*
Painting & Decorating*
Pipefitting
Plastering
Plumbing*
Print Media*
Refrigeration & Air Conditioning*
Sheet Metalworking
Stonecutting & Stonemasonry
Toolmaking
Vehicle Body Repairs*
Wood Manufacturing and Finishing

What are the educational qualifications required to become an apprentice?

The minimum educational qualifications necessary to become an apprentice are 5 D grades in the Junior Certificate examination or equivalent, or successfully complete an approved Pre-Apprenticeship course, or be over 16 years of age and have at least three years relevant work experience approved by SOLAS. However, some employers may specify higher educational qualifications.

Are there any other requirements?

Yes – a person wishing to become an apprentice in one of the crafts marked with * above must pass the “Ishihara” Colour Vision Test 24 Plate Edition.

How do I become an apprentice?

You must obtain employment as an apprentice in your chosen trade. Your employer must be approved to train apprentices and must register you as an apprentice within 2 weeks of recruitment. Possible options include:-

1. A relative, neighbour or friend who works in the trade
2. Local or regionally-based companies operating in the trade
3. Register with your local Employment Office (Intreo) indicating your interest in becoming an apprentice. Local Employment Office staff try to match job vacancies with registered individuals where possible.

What is the minimum age?

The minimum age is 16.

How long does it take?

A minimum of 4 years. The only exception is for the trade of Print Media which is a minimum of 3 years.

How is an Apprenticeship structured?

Apprenticeship generally comprises of seven phases, three off-the-job and four on-the-job. The only exceptions to the above are the Floor/Wall Tiling and Print Media apprenticeships, which have five phases, three on-the-job and two off-the-job training phases.

Off-the-job training is provided as follows:-

Phase 2 : Training Centre

Phase 4 : Institute of Technology or College of Further Education

Phase 6 : Institute of Technology or College of Further Education

On-the-job training

Employers have responsibility for providing on-the-job training in Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7.

How much will I get paid during my apprenticeship?

You will be paid an apprentice rate. The actual rates paid may vary depending on the occupation and the sector of industry in which you are employed. You should seek details of rates of pay for apprentice from your prospective employer.

Can I select which Training Centre or Institute of Technology I attend?

No. While every effort is made to accommodate apprentices close to home, this may not always be the case. Apprentices are scheduled on the longest waiting basis on the day of scheduling to the nearest available training location to their home address.

What happens if I don't attend a Training Centre or Institute of Technology or College of Further Education when I am called?

SOLAS strongly recommends apprentices to accept whatever offers are made to them as failure to accept such offers will extend the period of apprenticeship training and may have financial repercussions throughout. Failure to attend after three calls will result in your apprenticeship being automatically suspended.

Can I take leave while on off-the-job training?

You are not entitled to take holidays during your off-the-job training phases.

Do I get paid when I am in a Training Centre or Institute of Technology or College of Further Education?

During off-the-job phases, all qualifying apprentices are paid an Apprentice Training Allowance by an ETB (Educational Training Board) and where appropriate, a contribution towards travel or accommodation costs.

If I fail my exams, can I repeat them?

If you are referred (ie have not met the required minimum standard in your assessments) you may repeat your exams on two more occasions, if necessary. However, failure in the final attempt will result in the termination of your apprenticeship. You may appeal the termination of your apprenticeship and if your appeal is successful, will be granted a final attempt.

What happens if my employer goes out of business or if I am made redundant during my apprenticeship?

Every effort will be made by SOLAS/ETB to help you progress through your apprenticeship if you find yourself in this situation. You should contact your Training Adviser assigned to you when you were registered as an apprentice who will be able to offer you advice and assistance.

If I am made redundant and can't get work in Ireland, can I continue my apprenticeship abroad

No, however work experience gained abroad may be considered for accreditation towards time served.

What are my career prospects?

On successful completion of your apprenticeship, a Level 6 Advanced Certificate Craft is awarded. This is recognised Nationally and Internationally as the requirement for craftsperson status. You may further develop your career i.e. company-based, cross-skilling, up-skilling, management or self-employment.

Further Study – Progression

On successful completion of your apprenticeship you are eligible for consideration for entry into related degree programmes provided by the Institutes of Technology provided you also meet other special entry requirements. Details of the higher education institutes offering progression from Advanced Certificate - Craft to levels 7 and 8 are available on the QQI.ie

I don't want to attend the Awards Ceremony, so can I get my cert without going?

Yes, you may apply to the local ETB office in your employment location.

If I lose my card/cert can I get a replacement?

SOLAS can provide replacement cards. Application for a replacement card should be made to Apprenticeship Services. Please phone: 01 5332500. A fee will be charged for all replacements. QQI will issue a record of award to those who have misplaced their original certificate. The forms can be obtained from Apprenticeship Services at the above number.

I've worked in a trade for a number of years but wasn't a registered apprentice, can this time be considered as part of my apprenticeship?

SOLAS will consider applications for exemptions from the Standards-Based Apprenticeship programme for trade-related experience. However applicants must be registered as an apprentice before an application can be considered.

What if I have Special Requirements or require Learning Support?

If you have any special requirements and need support i.e. dyslexia, numeracy, literacy, physical disabilities or medical conditions, **it is your responsibility to inform your ETB** at the time of registration so that these needs can be catered for when you attend Off-the-Job training.

Eligibility Criteria

Apprentices must be at least 16 years of age and have a minimum of grade D in any five subjects in the Junior Certificate or equivalent. However, employers may require additional minimum qualifications.

Where individuals do not meet the minimum requirements they may be registered as an apprentice by an employer if:

- They satisfactorily complete an approved preparatory training course and assessment interview. For information on these courses please contact your local [Employment Services Office](#);
- **or**
- Over 16 years of age with a minimum of three years relevant work experience. This work experience must be in a relevant designated industrial activity as SOLAS shall deem acceptable

Apprentices must be employed in their chosen occupation by an employer who has been approved by SOLAS. The employer must register the apprentice with SOLAS within 2 weeks of recruitment.

Assessment Criteria

Apprentices are assessed on a structured ongoing basis throughout their apprenticeship. Modular assessments are carried out during the off-the-job training phases. These assessments incorporate course work, standardised practical assessments and theoretical assessments. During the on-the-job training phases of apprenticeship the apprentice's competence is assessed to pre-specified standards by the employer.

Under the statutory rules an apprenticeship is deemed to be automatically terminated if the apprentice fails, after three attempts, to reach the required specified standard, in any of the off-the-job modular assessments. However, SOLAS provides a mechanism for both the apprentices and employers to appeal such a termination. In cases where appeals are successful the apprentice is afforded the opportunity of a fourth and final attempt.

Benefits

For Apprentices

- Apprenticeship is an excellent opportunity to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, competencies, experience and qualifications to build a successful career;
- Apprenticeship training is relevant and tailored to the needs of industry;
- Apprentices are paid as they progress through their apprenticeships;
- On completion of an apprenticeship, apprentices will become a craftsperson in their chosen occupation and hold a national and internationally recognised qualification; and
- Employers wishing to recruit apprentices may advertise their vacancies on Jobs Ireland. However, before registering an apprentice employers must be approved by SOLAS. Contact your local Services to Business Office based in your local [Training Centre](#) for more information on registration.

First Steps

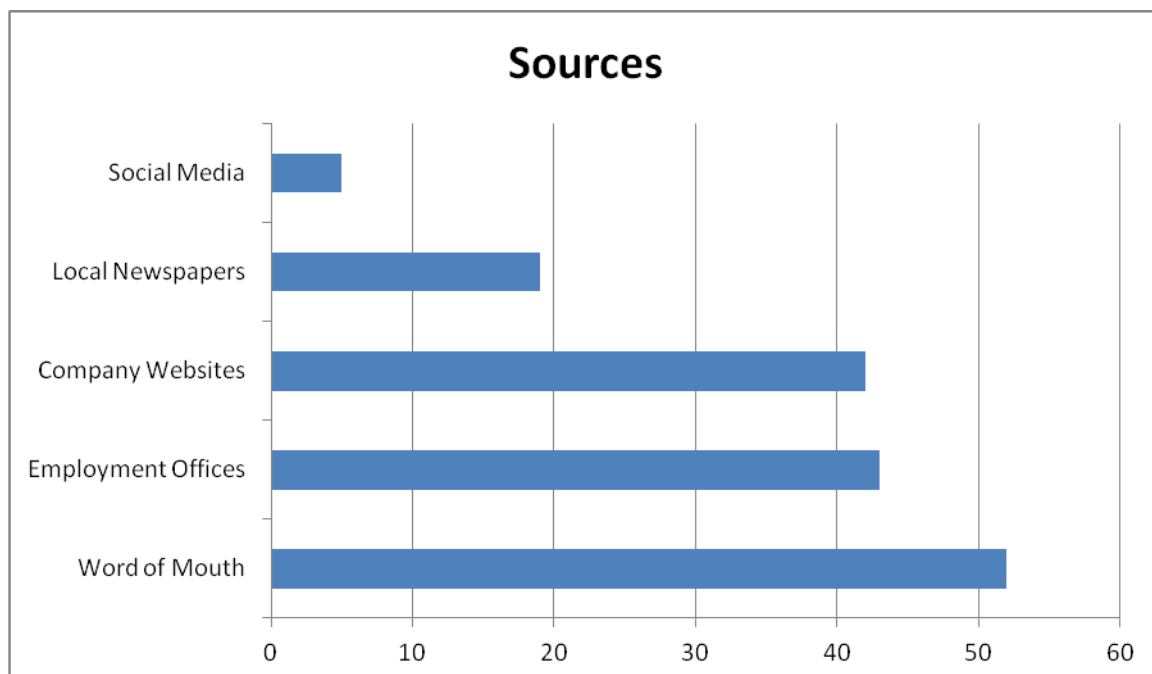
Once you decide which Apprenticeship you want to complete, the next step is finding an employer or a vacancy.

Competition for places with employers can be fierce, so you will need to show that you are committed, enthusiastic and passionate about the industry that you are hoping to enter.

If you are registered with your Local Employment Service, ask them if they can put you forward for any suitable free training or employment skills programmes which will enhance your CV and help to keep you motivated! Example of useful training to complete: Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Welding [would be of benefit for plumbing, electrical & fitter roles].

How Do I Find an Employer?

A selection of employers were asked what recruitment methods they used when recruiting new employees. Here is what they said:



Before you start contacting employers ensure that you have a winning CV. For support on how to write a high quality CV please speak to your Local Employment Service.

PLACES TO CHECK ON A WEEKLY BASIS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Call into your Local Employment Service and check job vacancy information boards.

www.wlp.ie

Hit Jobseeker tab for a list of weekly job vacancies

www.jobsireland.ie

www.indeed.ie



***Always tell the truth
on your CV!***

Employers will refer to your CV during the interview and you will be asked to give examples of when you have used these skills and qualities

What is the purpose of your CV?

A CV is a brief representation of you; it is an advertising tool which should sell your skills, qualities and experience to an employer.

You must remember that the main aim of your CV is to secure an interview.

How should I structure my CV?

There are many different types of CV, but there is no correct way to format your CV. You just need to remember that regardless of the CV format that you choose, it needs to "sell" you in the best possible light.

- **Skills based** - This type of CV emphasises your personal qualities, skills and voluntary work rather than your employment. It is very popular choice for school leavers, students and graduates.
- **Employment based** - For those with a good, long work history. This CV will highlight your job - specific skills and experience.

89% of employers asked said that their preferred method of application is a CV with a covering letter. Therefore, don't forget to include one with each application you make.

How to ensure your CV stands out from the rest - what employers suggest.

Employers are human being and just like you and me, they get tired. Just imagine if you had over 100 CV's to look through and you couldn't go home until you had done it. This is why it is important that your CV is clear, concise and stands out.

When asked employers listed the skills and qualities below are the most important when recruiting a new employee.

What should you do with this information? If you possess these qualities and skills, ensure that your CV highlights them!

QUALITIES

1. Adaptability
2. Initiative
3. Reliability
4. Enthusiasm
5. Flexibility
6. Ability to work unsupervised
7. Confidence
8. Well organised
9. Ambition and drive

SKILLS

1. Basic skills
2. Problem solving
3. Team work
4. Communication skills
5. Job specific
6. Academic [*some roles require Leaving Cert*]
7. Written/numerical skills

Take a few moments to write 5 reasons why you want to enter the industry you have chosen. This will help provide you with a focus for your CV, your cover letter and at interviews.



Basics are extremely important

- CV's should be clear, concise and up-to-date.
- Current employment & educational information should be included.
- Bullets points and a clear structure make it easier for an employer to read the CV.
- The CV should be tailored for each role so that it matches employer requirements.
- Ensure your contact number is correct on your CV. Set up a message minder on your phone and if you are unable to answer a call ensure you have a profession message set up on your phone asking the caller to leave their name and number and you will call them back as soon as possible.
- Jokey email addresses such as laughingcow@mygaff.ie or the nobraincells@hotmail.com can make a serious candidate appear immature/unprofessional. For the purposes of job seeking set up an professional email address with your name included.

81% of employers have stated that they would consider an applicant who had the right attitude and enthusiasm, but no experience.

Do your homework! Find out as much as you can about the company and what the job will involve. If you know anyone that works for them, ask them for advice.

Double check the time, date and venue of your interview



Plan your journey. Do a trial run if necessary to ensure that you arrive on time.

The day before your interview, decide what you are going to wear.



Organise all of your certificates in a folder and bring them with you to the interview [Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate, Safe Pass, Manual Handling, First Aid etc.. and any identification and licences as requested.

Know your CV, skills and abilities - WORD FOR WORD.

Think & prepare the questions that you may be asked and plan your answers.



SELL YOURSELF!

Remember you must be able to verbalise what is on your CV. If the interviewer has a CV in front of him, candidates may think they do not need to go through everything on it. But your CV is your main marketing/sales tool and you need to be able to discuss it in detail and describe to the employer how your skills and experience match the requirements of their vacancy.

Most Popular Interview Questions to prepare before your interview

1. Would you like to tell me something about yourself?

An interviewer will often ask the “Tell me about yourself question?” at the beginning of the interview to help put the candidate at ease. In theory it should be easier to answer this question rather than a more pointed question like “how would you add value in this role?” But the problem with the “tell me about yourself question ?” is that it is so broad.

In your answer there is a great opportunity to bring to the interviewers’ attention some key information that you want the interviewer to know about you. So yes give some general background information, quickly recapping on the main content of your CV, but do finish off your answer by sharing what you consider to be your key skills and main strengths and why you are so interested in this role and how you would be a great assets/great benefit to their organisation.

2. Why have you applied for this Apprenticeship role/what make you right for this role?

- I believe that I have the skills and qualities you are seeking to fill this position. Expand.....
- I have previous work experience in this field. Expand.....
- I have the relevant minimum training to commence working in this position. For example Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Basic Welding.....

3. What do you know about our Company?

- Check the internet for info on the company
- Ask friends and family if they know of anyone working there
- Check your library, check with the LES office, etc
(Be able to demonstrate in your interview an informed interest of the company)

5. Can you take us through your work experience to date?

Be able to articulate your employment record as printed in your CV, highlighting where you have previous work experience/summer work which are a match for the role you are interviewing for.

6. What do you look for in a job? *few examples... expand on each relevant point...*

- An opportunity to use my skills/learn more and to have job satisfaction
- To perform well for my employer
- To work as part of a team or/ on my own initiative
- To learn and to achieve my National Craft Certification and to qualify as a Plumber/Electrician/Fitter etc.

7. Why should we hire you/what makes you the best candidate for the job?

Consider the requirements of the job and compare these with all your own attributes - your personality, skills, abilities or experience. Where they match you should consider these to be your major strengths. The employer certainly will.

For example, team work, interpersonal skills, creative problem solving, dependability, reliability, originality, leadership etc., could all be cited as strengths. Work out which is most important for the particular job in question and make sure you illustrate your answer with as many examples from as many parts of your work experience, school, team sports or any voluntary work you have engaged in.

- Experience
- Ability
- Skills
- Personality
- Knowledge of the industry

8. Provide an example of how you have worked well in a team.

Most jobs will involve a degree of teamwork. The interviewer needs to assess how well you relate other people, what role you take in a group and whether you are able to focus on goals and targets.

Outline the situation, your particular role and the task of the group overall. Describe any problems which arose and how they were tackled. Say what the result was and what you learned from it.

Examples could include a project you completed in transitional year, a small business scheme [car washing, window cleaning etc] or summer jobs you have worked at.

9. What are your strengths?

Examples

- Previous work experience with a builder/contractor
- Suitably entry level certification [Junior Cert, Leaving Cert, Safe Pass, Manual handling etc]
- Work ethic
- Dependable/Reliable
- Willing to lend a hand at all levels
- Team worker
- Quick to learn
- Ability to adapt
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Punctual
- Organised
- Conscientious
- Excellent communication skills
- Negotiation skills
- Problem solving
- Decision making



**Select the
relevant
strengths &
back up with an
example**

Provide a good example of when you demonstrated this skill either in a previous job or in a vocational situation.

9. What are your weaknesses?

WARNING....Don't give them any!!!

Example of what to say.... I am sure like everyone I do have some weaknesses but I would like to assure you that I have no weakness that would prevent me from carrying this role and adding value to your company.

If the interview pushes you for a weakness it is always safer to identify the lack of a skill as an area for improvement. *For example* although I have basic Welding skills learnt through a local workshop. I am very keen to get formal training and receive a recognised certification to back up my skills.

10. Can you work well under pressure, to deadlines, etc?

Yes I can – these days it's a way of life..... give an example of how you have handled stress previously in employment/at college.

11. How do you handle stress/demanding workload?

- Stress can be a positive and can help you perform
- The important thing is being able to manage it so that it does not turn into distress!
- Managing it: draw up list of tasks to be completed, tick off as each is completed.
- Good time management helps and asking other team members to assist if a particular deadline is to be met.

12. Describe your personality?

Friendly, outgoing, determined, ambitious, good listener..... (refer back to job advertisement and what they were seeking). Be confident during the interview but not arrogant. Companies seek workers who not only have the skills to perform the job but also the personality to thrive within their organisation and to fit in with their existing employees.

14. Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

Working for [place where you are being interviewed] in this position. Also if there was an opportunity for promotion I would be very interested in progressing within your organisation.

15. How long would you stay with us?

I would very much like to stay with your company for the full 4 years to complete my apprenticeship. If you have an offer of full employment after this time I would be very interested in continuing my employment with your organisation and as I mentioned previously if there was an opportunity for promotion I would be very interested in progressing within your organisation.

16. Remember if there are any gaps in your CV – be able to explain them.

17. Have you any questions to ask us?

Keep them brief: there may be other interviewees waiting. It is probably unwise to ask more than three or four questions unless you are getting encouragement from the interviewer.

Ask about the work itself, training and career development: not about holidays, pensions and parking facilities.

Prepare some questions in advance: it is OK to write these down and refer to your notes to remind you what you wanted to ask.

17 Have you any questions to ask us? [continued..]

It often happens that, during the interview, all the points that you had marked down to ask about will be covered before you get to this stage. In this situation, say what you had planned to ask, and that you have already been given answers to your questions.

You can also use this opportunity to tell the interviewer anything about yourself that they have not raised in the interview but that you feel is important to your application.

- What type of projects are you currently working on? *[if applicable..]*
- I appreciate that i have not been able to tell you everything about my own experience, are there any particular areas in which you have doubts as to my ability to fulfil this role?
- Will you be holding second interviews?
- When should I expect to hear from you?

ALWAYS CLOSE THE INTERVIEW BY THANKING THE EMPLOYER FOR CALLING YOU FOR INTERVIEW. REITERATE TO THEM HOW INTERESTED YOU ARE IN THE POSITION AND THAT YOU LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM THEM.

Throughout your interview you will only be asked about two general topics;

1. Questions about you as a person – your skills & education

2. Questions about your past work experience

The work experience part is straightforward enough. That's the work you have done and you can think it through and recall.

Your skills are a bit harder to identify. Think of successful tasks or projects you were involved in and then ask yourself what skills you possessed that made that project work so well.

It might be creativity, negotiation or sales abilities, technical or other. Each one is a skill and very relevant. Make a list of skills you have and relate them to past work history, think it through thoroughly. You can also draw skills from any voluntary work you may be involved in or from sports you play.

It is only with long and patient preparation that you will have the full knowledge and will be confident and will be able to recall and demonstrate your skills.

Remember Employers are looking to employ an apprentice who will fit into their culture. If you present yourself as a confident individual, they will be confident in your abilities.

If you come across as really nervous; if you are not making eye contact or you are not that friendly – they may not be able to picture their team working with you.

It is important to put it across that you will fit in well. You would not be in front of them unless they thought you were suitable for the role, so you are halfway there already. Coming across and being personable is very important.



What is the Apprenticeship Wage?

Apprentice Training Allowances (Gross Wage Norms)

Training allowances for apprentices are calculated with reference to gross wage norms payable in industry for the different trade sectors. The actual allowance received will generally be less as it is based on the net take home pay calculated based on the Gross Wage Norm.

- Engineering Industry
- Construction Industry
- Motor Industry
- Printing and Paper Industry (3 year cycle)
- Electrical Industry (Trade 46)

Engineering Industry

Effective: 01 April 2007

| Year | Gross Wage Norm |
|----------|-----------------|
| Phase 2 | €197.47 |
| Phase 4 | €296.42 |
| Phase 6 | €439.51 |
| 4th Year | €531.49 |

Includes:

- Mechanical Automation & Maintenance Fitting
- Metal Fabrication
- Sheet Metalwork
- Toolmaking
- Farriery
- Industrial Insulation



Construction Industry

Effective: 04 February 2011

| Year | Gross Wage Norm |
|----------|-----------------|
| Phase 2 | €223.47 |
| Phase 4 | €335.79 |
| Phase 6 | €503.49 |
| 4th Year | €604.11 |

Includes:

- Brick & Stonelaying
- Cabinet Making
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Painting & Decorating
- Plastering
- Plumbing
- Floor/Wall Tiling
- Wood Machinery
- Wood Manufacturing & Finishing

Motor Industry

Effective: 01 May 2008

| Year | Gross Wage Norm |
|----------|-----------------|
| Phase 2 | €195.25 |
| Phase 4 | €293.17 |
| Phase 6 | €439.75 |
| 4th Year | €527.70 |

Includes:

- Agricultural Mechanics
- Vehicle Body Repairs
- Motor Mechanics
- Heavy Vehicle Mechanics
- Construction Plant Fitting



Printing and Paper Industry - 3 Year Cycle

Note: Printing Rates advised by I.M.P.A.
Effective: 01 November 2007

| Year | Gross Wage Norm |
|--------|-----------------|
| Year 1 | €323.63 |
| Year 2 | €345.21 |
| Year 3 | €388.36 |

Includes:

- Print Media

Electrical Industry (Trade 46) Employed by Electrical Contracting Firms (Industry 04/01/016)

Effective: 01 April 2007

| Year | Gross Wage Norm |
|----------|-----------------|
| Phase 2 | €242.58 |
| Phase 4 | €363.87 |
| Phase 6 | €525.72 |
| 4th Year | €647.01 |

Includes:

- Aircraft Mechanics
- Electrical
- Electrical Instrumentation
- Refrigeration & Air-conditioning
- Instrumentation
- Electronic Security Systems



Female Bursary

Women Apprentices

To promote the entry of women into the designated apprenticeships, SOLAS/ETBs offers a bursary to employers in both the public and private sectors to encourage an increased level of recruitment of women apprentices.

The bursary provides a total grant of €2,667 to each employer for each female apprentice recruited. The grant is a contribution towards wage and other apprentice costs over the first 28 weeks of phases 1 and 3 (on-the-job phases) of the Apprenticeship.

For further information contact your local training centre.

Childcare Allowances

Since September 2010 a new *Childcare Scheme is in place for trainees commencing programmes*. For information on the new Childhood Education and Training Scheme (CETS) please see the 'News/Publications' section on the Home Page www.fas.ie

For additional information or if you have any queries please contact:

Waterford Childcare Committee Ltd

Business Centre, Union Road

Kilmacthomas,

Co. Waterford.

Tel: 051 295 045

Email: info@cccw.ie

Additional Information

For more information please log onto <http://www.fas.ie/en/Training/Apprenticeships>

Waterford Training Centre - Apprenticeship Department - 051 301 500

Local Employment Service - Dungarvan - 058 44077