



AONTAS – The National Adult Learning Organisation

Borders, Boundaries & Bridges: Learning with our Neighbours
An adult learning conference organised by the Northern
Ireland Forum on Adult Learning and AONTAS

Friday 12th October, 2018

Niamh O'Reilly, CEO, AONTAS

Overview of adult learning in Ireland

- Current levels of adult learning participation
- Issues impacting learners
- Policy system for adult learning
- AONTAS vision for the future of Adult Learning

Current levels of Adult Learning Adult Education Survey 2017

- Adult Education Survey – last over 12 month period in 2017.
- Statistics relate to aged 25-64 years
- Participation in lifelong learning among adults in Ireland (53.9%) was higher the EU-28 average of 45.1% and Ireland
- Labour Force Survey lifelong learning participation rate is 8.3%

Unequal Participation in Lifelong Learning (LLL)

- Highly skilled individuals - with a lifelong learning participation rate of 9%
- People low in basic skills (2.5%)
- However the beneficial impact of adult learning for the latter cohort is far greater ([BeLL, 2014](#))

Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)

By prior level of education



Ireland

Highly skilled **9%**

Medium skilled **5.6%**

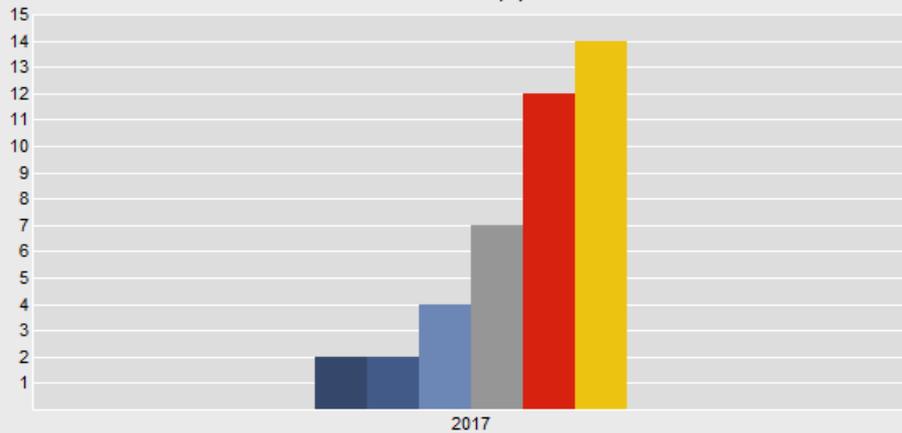
Low skilled **2.5%**

Source: Eurostat (EU-LFS, 2016)
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Current levels of Adult Learning

Adult Education Survey 2017

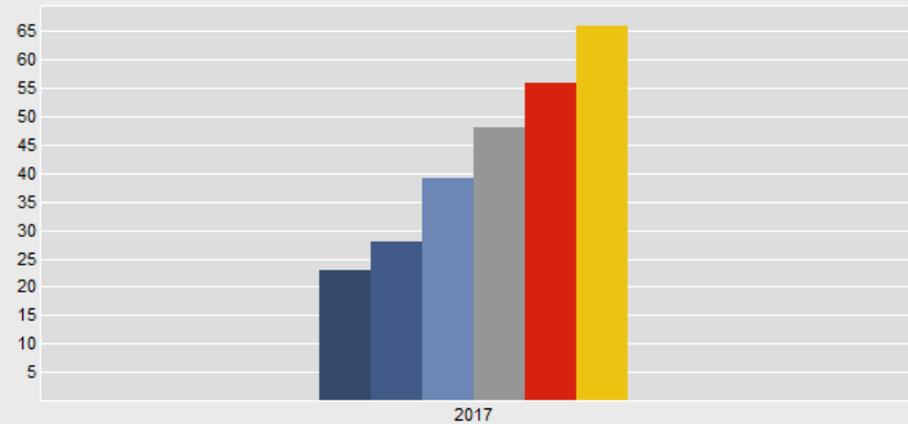
Formal (%)
by Highest Level of Education Completed and Year
Both sexes (%)



Primary or below Lower secondary Upper secondary
Post leaving certificate Third level non-degree Third level degree or higher

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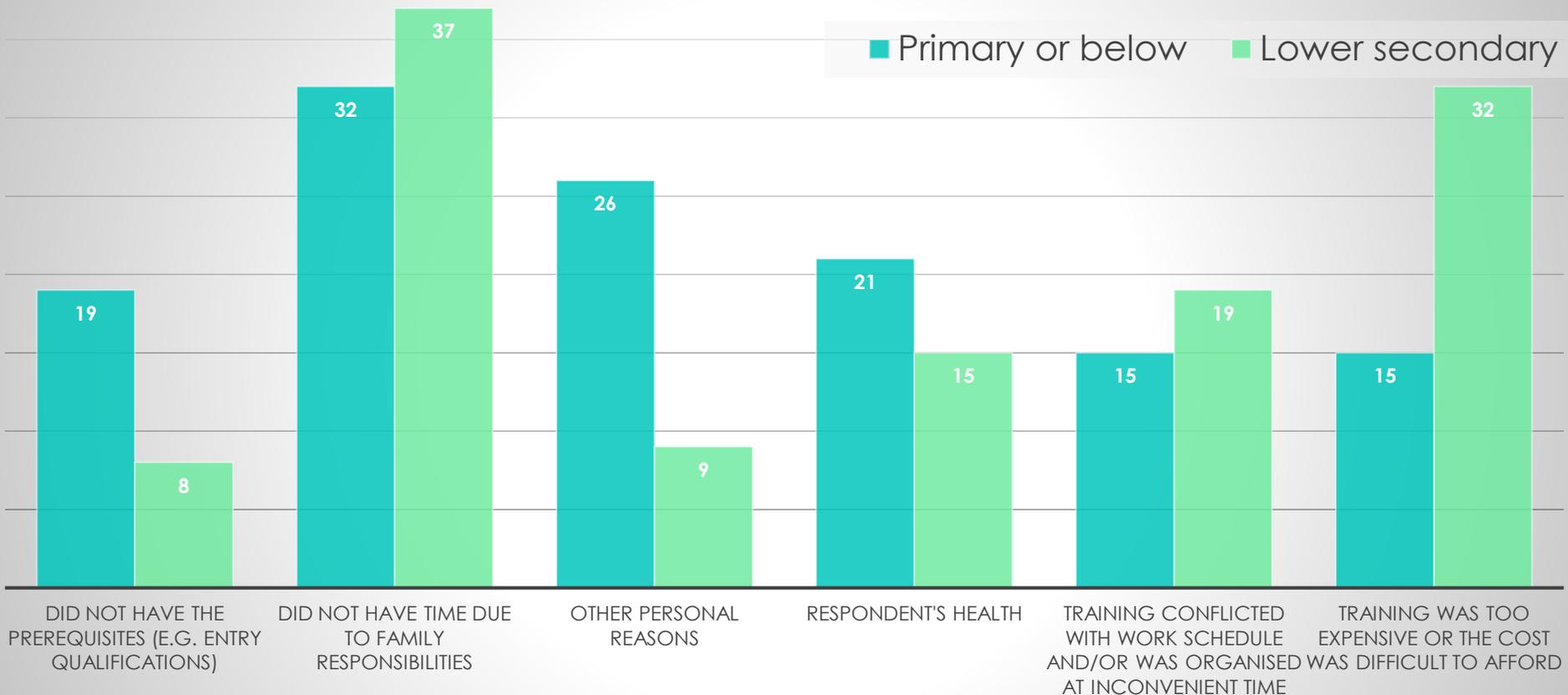
Non-formal (%)
by Highest Level of Education Completed and Year
Both sexes (%)



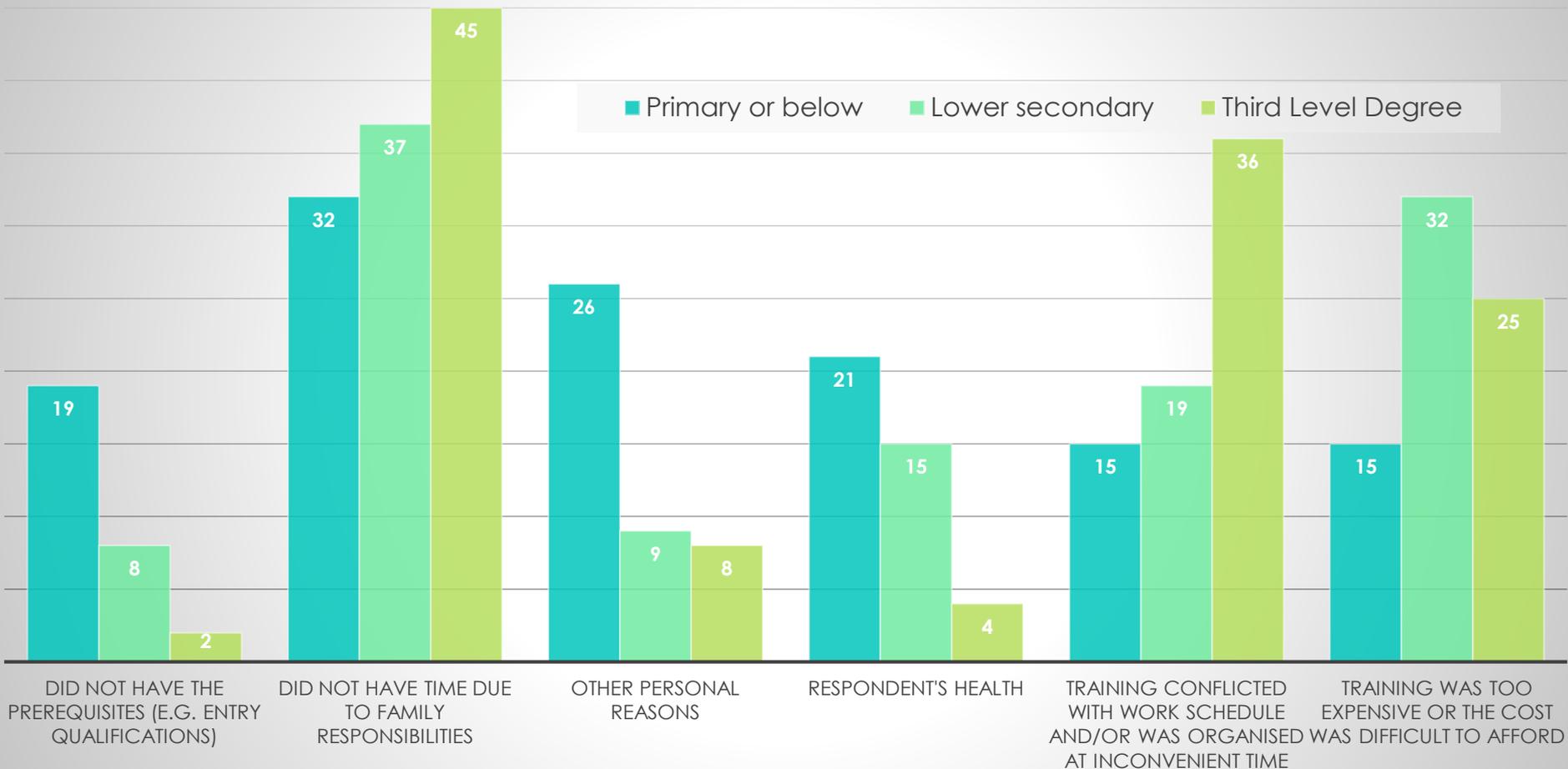
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Barriers to participation in lifelong learning (AES, 2017)



Barriers to participation in lifelong learning (AES, 2017)



Widening Lifelong Learning Participation

High skilled LLL
participation 9%

Low skills LLL
participation
2-3%

Self-directed learning and ongoing
lifelong learning

Self esteem, self-directed learning,
learning to learn skills

Equity of Access to the NQF

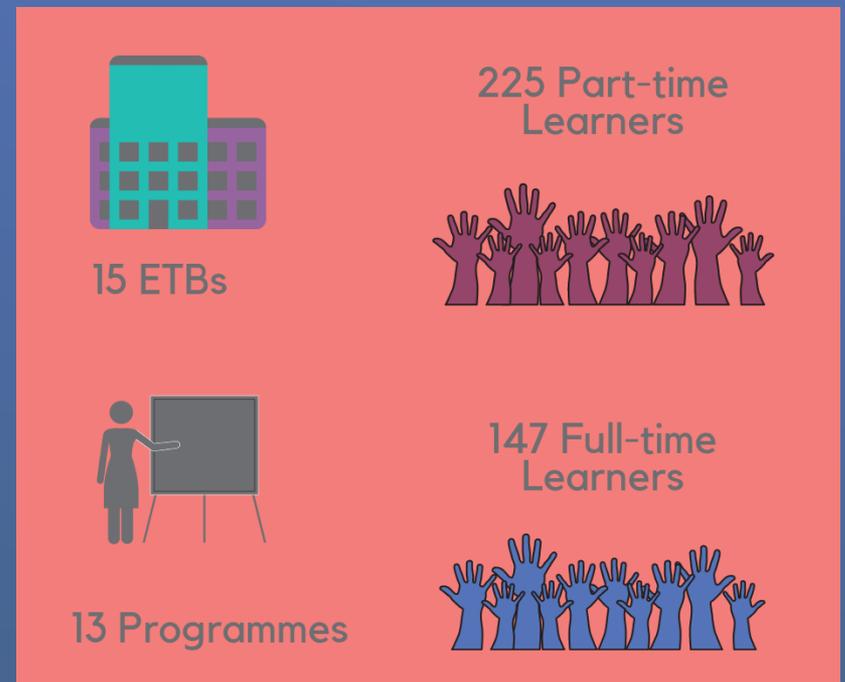
Welcome learning environments that
suit – community education
organisations, ETBs, Higher education

Information, guidance, childcare
availability/funding, financial supports,
transport/mobile/online, timing

Learners Perspectives



National FET Learner Forum in 2018



What Learners are Saying

"The tutors in our college were absolutely superb"

"It was tough going at the start, as you said I could do with the help and support from other people all round, get you the bit of confidence to go on and do it"

"My goal is to keep on doing these courses and hopefully to get a job from it"



RECOMMENDATIONS

Work Placement



FET Information and Promotion

Funding

NFQ Awareness and Progression



Access to Courses

Childcare

Recognition of Prior Learning

Mental Health Support

I have had to cut down on groceries weekly to attend this course

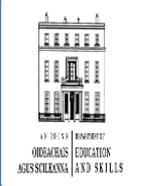
Bus is €40, but I only have €11.50 Travel Allowance

Not advertised enough

Addressing Issues facing adult learning

- **Type of programmes**
- Accredited and non-accredited learning and RPL
 - Minor awards in the local community, full awards, non accredited programmes that build learning to learn skills, support a daily structure and provide social, cultural capital and community engagement.
- Part-time, full-time, flexible programmes at times that work around learners' commitments (family or otherwise)
- **Essential Learning Supports that can mean make or break**
 - Bursaries for expenses, Food/travel allowances
- Mentoring, Counselling
- Onsite/funding for childcare
- Guidance, Outreach

Summary Irish Policy Structure for Adult Learning – ‘Further Education’



Department of
Education and
Skills



SOLAS
Further Education
and Training
Authority



Quality and
Qualifications
Ireland (QQI)



Higher
Education
Authority

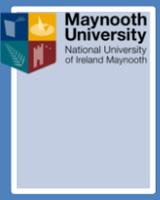
<http://www.solas.ie/SkillsToAdvance>



Education and
Training Boards
(ETBs)



Community
Education
Providers



Higher Education
Providers (HEIs)



Education and Training Boards (ETBs) in Ireland



etbi
Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Baird Oideachais agus
Olltána Éireann*

AONTAS Vision for Adult Learning

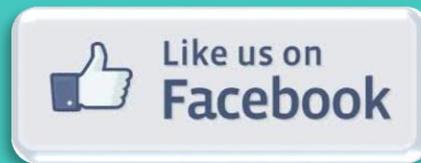
Lifelong learning for All

- Equitable
- Diverse in provision (p/t, local, RPL, community education/ETB/Higher Ed)
- Learner centred
- Barriers to participation are addressed
- Recognition and funding support for adult learning for:
 - Social inclusion and cohesion
 - Active citizenship, democracy, and participation
 - Migration and demographic change
 - Sustainability
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Employment and digitalisation



Keep up to date with AONTAS work

Website: www.aontas.com



Freephone Helpline: 1800 303 669

Visit: www.onestepup.ie

