

Future FET

Transforming Learning Update

2021 Progress Update

SOLAS
learning works



etbi
Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*

**Further
Education
& Training**

Welcome

As we reflect on the first full year of implementation of the Future FET: Transforming Learning Strategy, it is clear to see that the transformation is well under way.

The enthusiasm and buy in from the further education and training sector for the strategy's vision to drive transformation, for not just learners and those seeking new skills and opportunities, but also to transform the economic and social landscape of Ireland, has been notable in every community across Ireland.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions we have seen huge energy and ambition across the entire Further Education and Training Sector.

Collectively, the elements of this ambitious and wide-ranging strategy have already begun to generate jobs, enhance learning pathways, promote inclusion for all learners, enable lifelong learning, meet key skills gaps of the economy and society and develop new models of delivery.

This is not just anecdotal. It has been borne out in the numbers as outlined in this report.

As we come to the end of 2021, the strategy has already seen increased numbers in learners engaging with FET from the foundational skills to the transitional.

It is an exciting time for the FET sector, with our sights firmly set on the future. As we progress through the lifetime of the strategy, the needs of individuals, communities, society and the economy will be met in ever more wholistic and inclusive ways as a result of our work.

It gives me great confidence to see all that we have achieved so early into the implementation of this strategy, and hope for what we can achieve together across the next four years, supporting inclusion, developing the skills needs of the future workplace and providing the best pathways for progression for people at all stages.

I look forward to witnessing the continued and expanding impact of our work.

Andrew Brownlee,
CEO of SOLAS

The Launch of the Future FET: Transforming Learning Report - A lookback



In July of last year, the 'Future FET: Transforming Learning' strategy was launched, setting out a vision for how the Further Education Sector will reposition FET as an attractive, in-demand and quality choice for those engaging in upskilling and lifelong learning, as well as for school-leavers.

The strategy was launched to a hugely positive response at the historic Richmond Barracks in Inchicore, Dublin 8, by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and Niall Collins TD, Minister of State for Further Education.

This was one of the first events to take place as the country opened up last summer, and while we were limited with in person attendance due to social distancing restrictions, over 5,000 watched the streaming of the event online. This interest in the vision for the future of further education and training sector in Ireland demonstrates the commitment of people in every FET setting to shaping and developing our country and improving participation and inclusion for every community.

One of the most important messages shared at the launch of the strategy was that FET is available in every community and has something for everyone, regardless of any previous level of education, offering a pathway to take them as far as they want to go. This was so inspiring captured in the story of Stephanie Thompson who addressed the launch and shared her experience.

Stephanie Thompson progressed from being an early school-leaver to a PhD candidate, through the Youthreach programme, the 'Moving On' programme, a PLC course which provided a pathway to Carlow Institute of Technology, and subsequently a Masters at Maynooth University. Stephanie is now a PhD candidate with a focus on domestic violence in Ireland and the role of the justice system from a victim's perspective.

Stephanie's story so fully encompasses just one of the pathways that the FET sector offers to people across Ireland, and the opportunities that will be expanded and developed to serve all communities.

The launch provided a great springboard from which to implement this strategy and unlock Ireland's full potential.

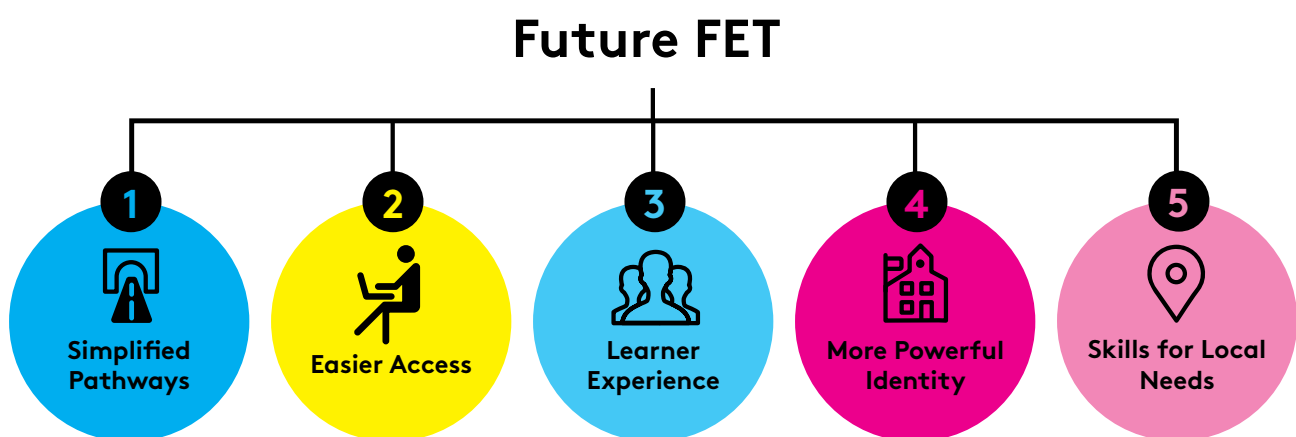
The full **Future FET: Transforming Learning strategy** is available to download [here](#).

The Vision

The learner is at the centre of all further education and training. The targets set out in the strategy encapsulate the core benefits that FET should be able to offer learners: a better chance of a job; the opportunity to progress to other education and training; the transversal skills that will allow them to integrate and engage effectively with society; a means of accessing education throughout a lifetime; vocational skills that are linked to regional and national critical skills requirements; and new models of delivery which can meet their rapidly evolving needs.

The **Future FET: Transforming learning Strategy** has set out six key objectives which will be achieved across the five-year plan, with significant progress seen already. The six objectives are set out below:

- **Generating Jobs:** Increasing the number of people getting a job after leaving a course.
- **Learning Pathways:** Increasing the number of people progressing within FET or to Higher Education after a course.
- **Active Inclusion:** Increasing the number of people receiving certification for Level 1-3 skills.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Increasing the numbers of FET lifelong learners aged 25-64.
- **Meeting Key Skills Gaps:** Developing additional qualifications in key skills areas.
- **New Models of Delivery:** Developing new apprenticeships and traineeships.



1



Simplified Pathways

FET is available in every community in Ireland, and offers a clear pathway to learners that can take them as far as they want to go.

2



Easier Access

FET is transformed in its delivery and expands the portfolio of opportunities for learners at any level to further their education.

3



Learner Experience

FET is for everyone and inspires people to believe in themselves to reach their potential.

4



More Powerful Identity

There is a greater awareness of FET and it is valued by learners, employers, Government and communities.

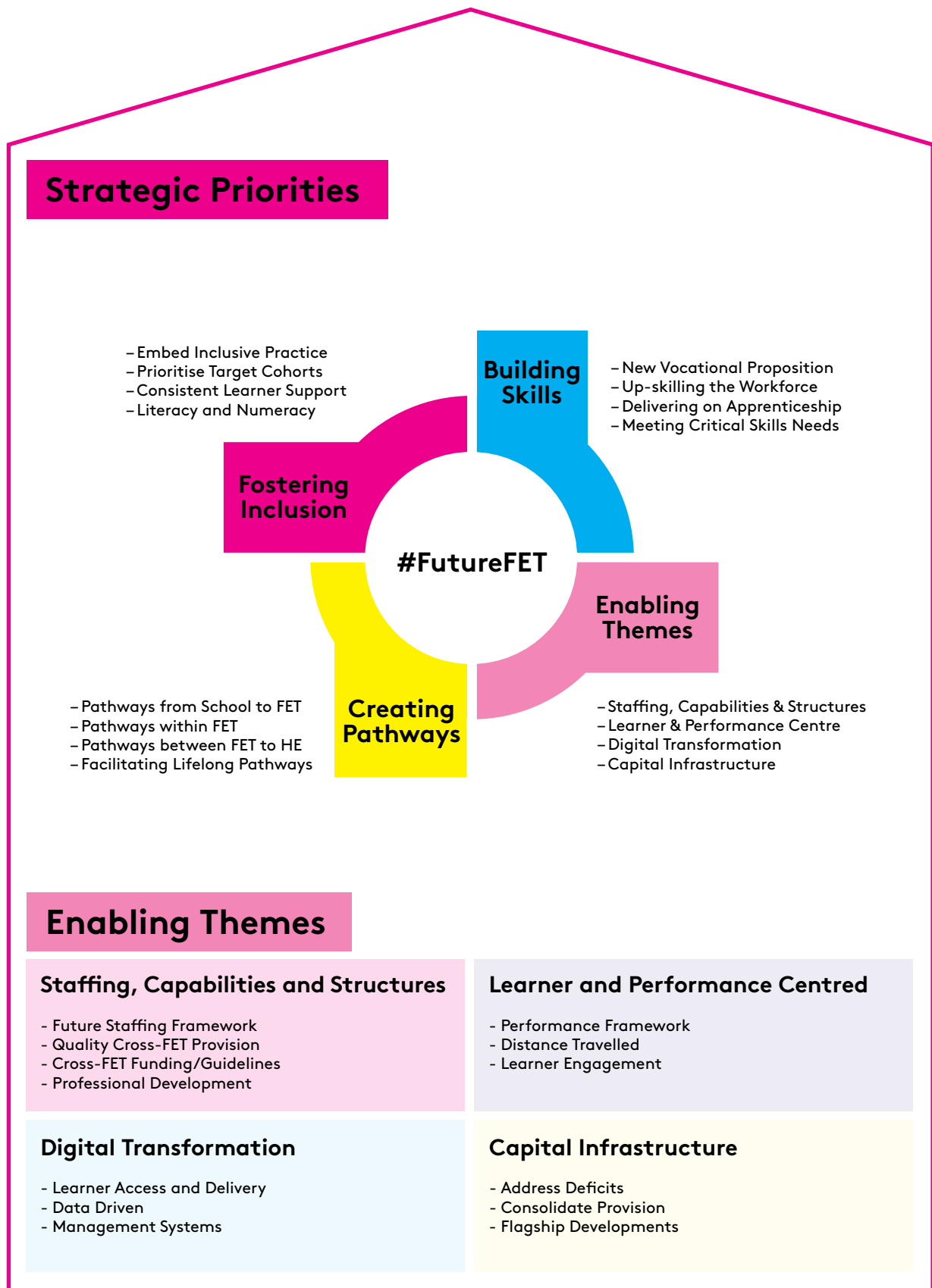
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Skills for Local Needs

The economic and social impact of further education and training is strongly evidenced by producing a stream of graduates with the necessary skills required for the labour market

The strategic priorities for the FET system include:



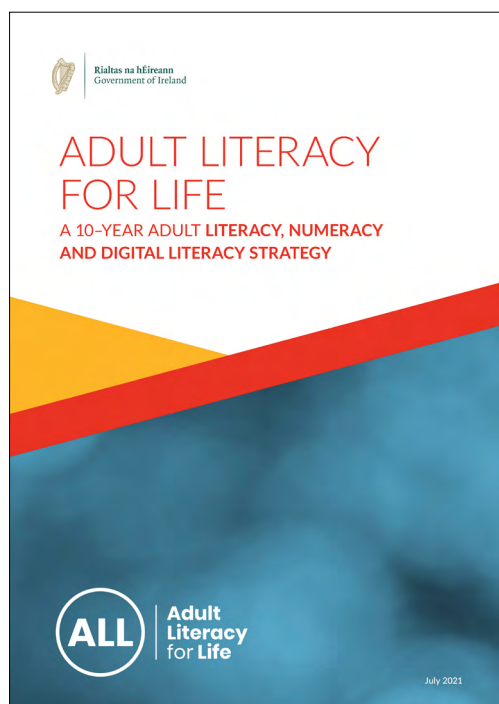
Key Achievements

Since the launch of the Strategy, significant progress has been made across the FET sector.

Links to FET and Apprenticeships options from the CAO website

The screenshot shows the CAO (Central Applications Office) website. At the top is a navigation bar with the CAO logo and links: Home, My Application, Apply, Courses, Handbook, and Contact. Below the navigation bar, a message states: "The mission of the CAO is to be the leading provider of centralised application processing services for Irish post-secondary education providers. CAO currently operates the centralised application system for Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)." It then says: "If you click on the links below, you can view a host of full-time higher education, further education and training and apprenticeship options available to post-second level applicants." There are three main sections: "Higher Education" (Levels 6/7 and 8, Honours degrees, ordinary degrees, diplomas and higher certificates), "Further Education and Training" (Levels 5 and 6, Full-time accredited programmes, including Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs), that include a substantial work experience component. Many of which offer an access route to further third-level studies.), and "Apprenticeships" (Levels 5-10, Apprenticeship is an accredited programme of structured education and training which formally combines and alternates learning in the workplace with learning in an education or training centre.). A "Please note" section states: "CAO is not currently accepting applications for further education courses or apprenticeships. For all queries and information about Further Education and Training or Apprenticeship options, click on the tabs above." At the bottom, it says: "You can apply for higher education courses via CAO by clicking on 'Apply' and following the instructions in the CAO Handbook and the CAO application form."

10 Year Adult Literacy for Life Strategy



11,500+

Skills to
Advance learners

55,000+

eCollege learners

16,700

Skills to Compete
learners

6

new apprenticeships

Capital and targeted funding

€10m in apprenticeship capital investment

€8m devolved capital fund for ETB

€32.5m Capital Funding budget for 2021

€14.5m for community education through MAEDF

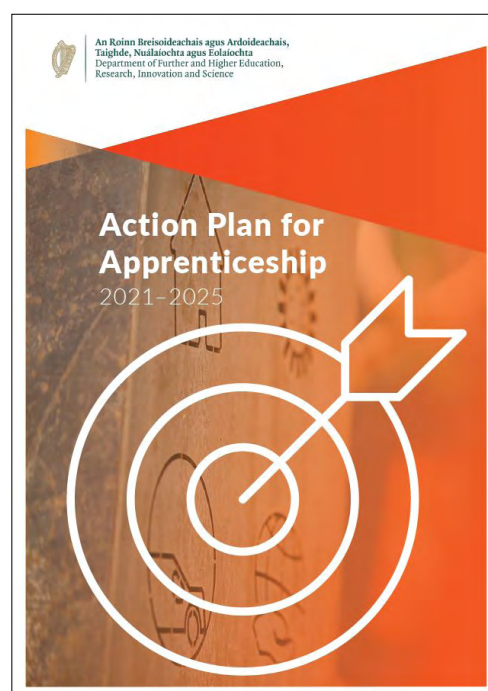
€5m fund for digital devices in 2020

**Increased Nearly Zero Energy Building
and Retrofit places**

Green Skills modules on FET programmes

**New Action Plan for Apprenticeship
2021-25 in place**

**Employer Incentive scheme extended
to end of 2021**



Skills

As the three core pillars of the strategy, we have outlined the developments in the last year on skills, pathways and inclusion, and the systemic, capital, structural and digital measures being implemented to facilitate this development.

11,500+

Over 11,500 learners on Skills to Advance courses since 2020

55,000

Over 55,000 learners on eCollege since 2020

13,000+

Over 13,000 learners on Skills to Compete courses since 2020

16,700

16,700 Skills to Compete places announced

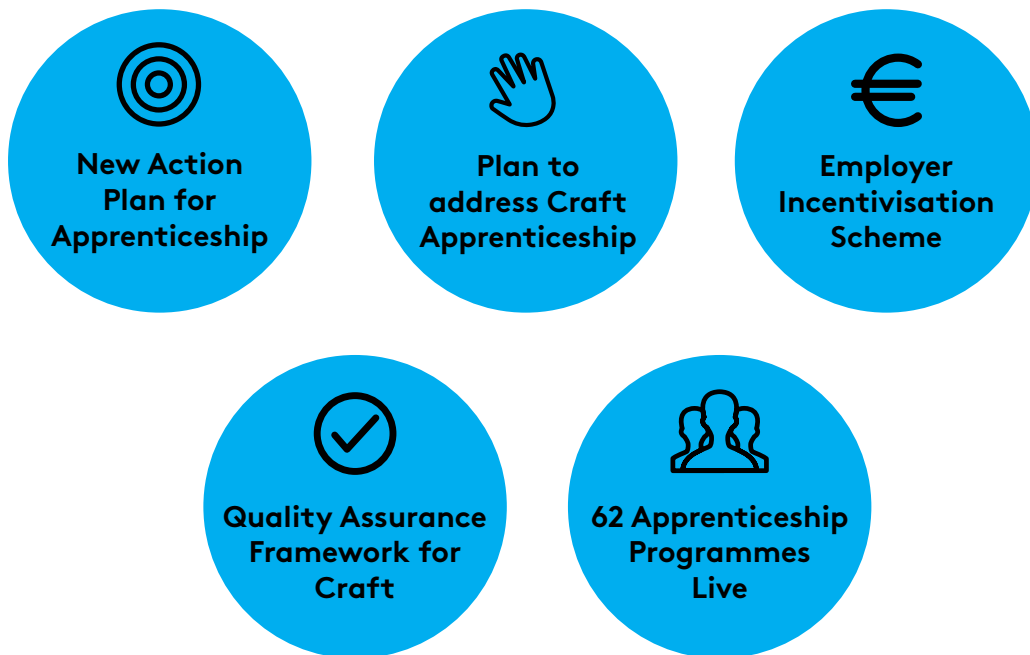


€3m reskilling support fund for workers affected by the Debenhams closure announced



New call for Skills to Advance Innovation Fund issued July 2021

Skills - Apprenticeship



Skills - Construction & Green Skills

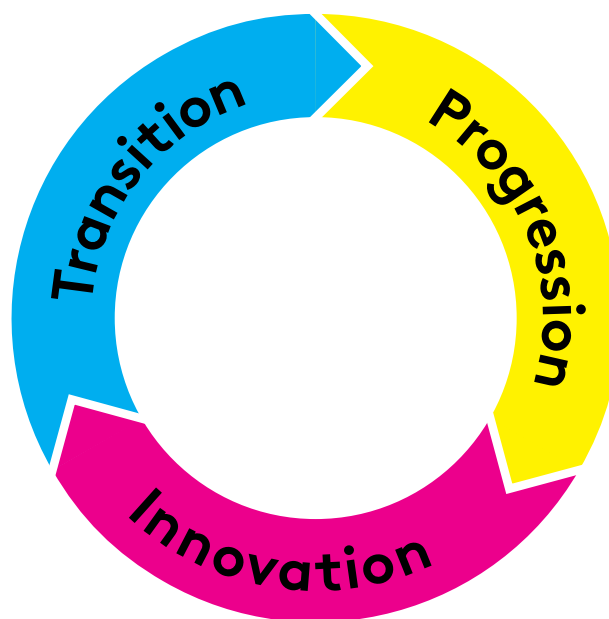


Skills – Research

- ✓ National Skills Bulletin 2020, 2021.
- ✓ Quarterly Skills Bulletins and dedicated research papers.
- ✓ Research on impacts of Brexit and Covid-19 at a regional and occupational level.

Pathways

1. On-going and planned
This is FET promotional campaigns.
2. Joint national 'Building Bridges' project aimed at expanding and improving outcomes for learners from Irish Prison Education.



1. FET – HE Transitions Reform Working Paper.
2. Partnership initiative between DFHERIS, SOLAS, HEA and QQI.
3. Standardisation of university entry requirements for FET graduates.
4. Comparability study of the major qualifications at NFQ level 6.

1. Links to FET and Apprenticeship options available via the CAO.
2. SOLAS Smart Choice platform (Labour Market Intelligence Digital and Interactive Resource) live.
3. FET components as part of the review of senior cycle. Initial focus on Transition year.
4. Women in FET Project for SOLAS International Women's Day event.

Inclusion

Strategic Research



Resources for FET practitioners developed and published including Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Screening and Assessment Toolkit for levels 4-6, Good Practice Guidelines for Numeracy provision, Inclusion of Learners with Intellectual Disabilities guidelines, ESOL Reports for levels 1-3, Family Literacy Practice in ETBs and FET in Numbers reports.

Targeted Funding



Over 1,000 community education projects supported through the Mitigating Against Educational Disadvantage Fund



€10m MAEDF call July 2021



€5m fund for digital devices in 2020

Staffing Capability & Structures

Develop

- FET Professional Learning and Development Strategy 2020-2024 published.
- Implementation structures being established.

Engage

- Ongoing strategic engagement with QQI & ETBs.
- Inaugural reviews of Quality Assurance in ETBs on-going.

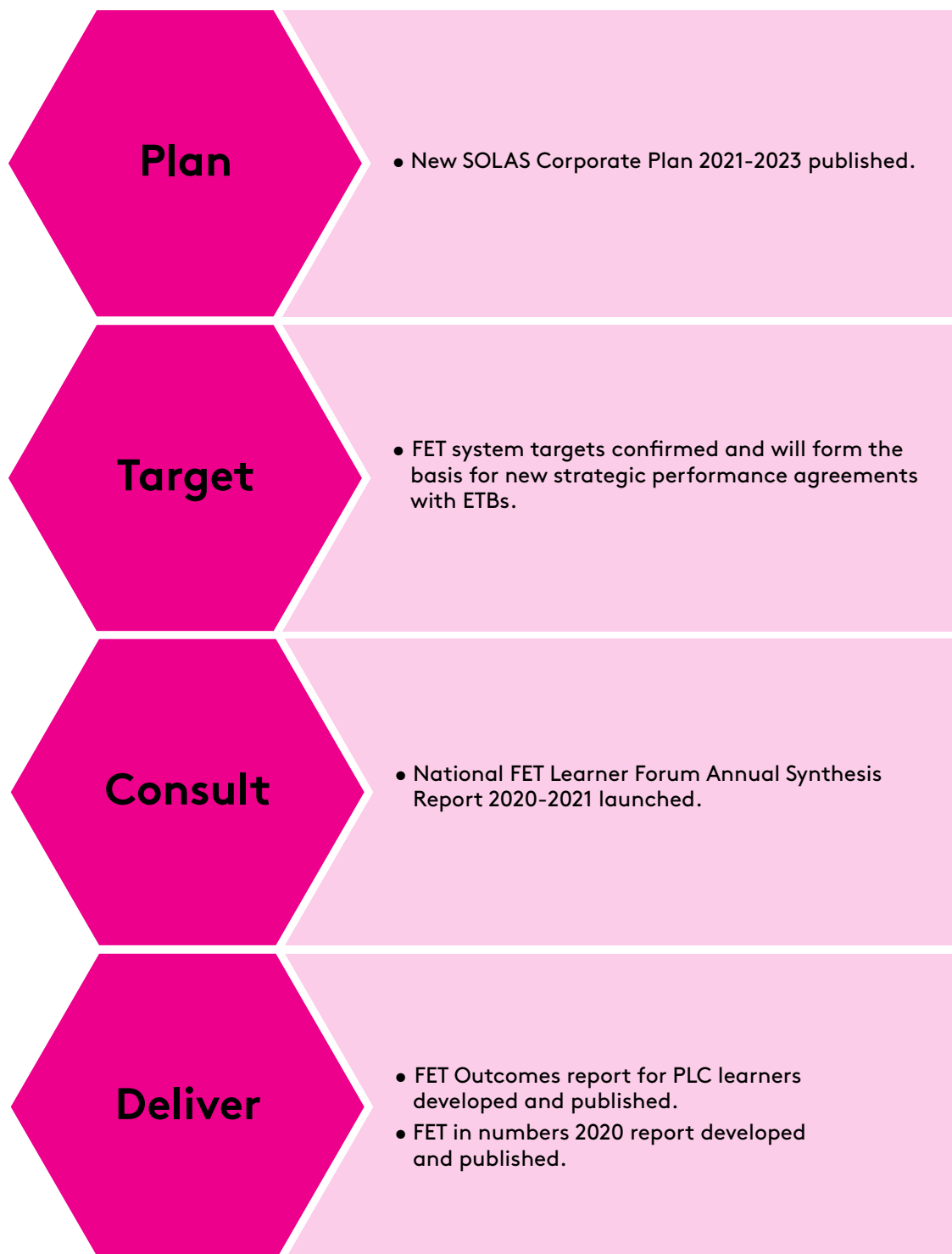
Review

- Review of the FET funding model near completion.
- Pilot with nine ETBs complete.

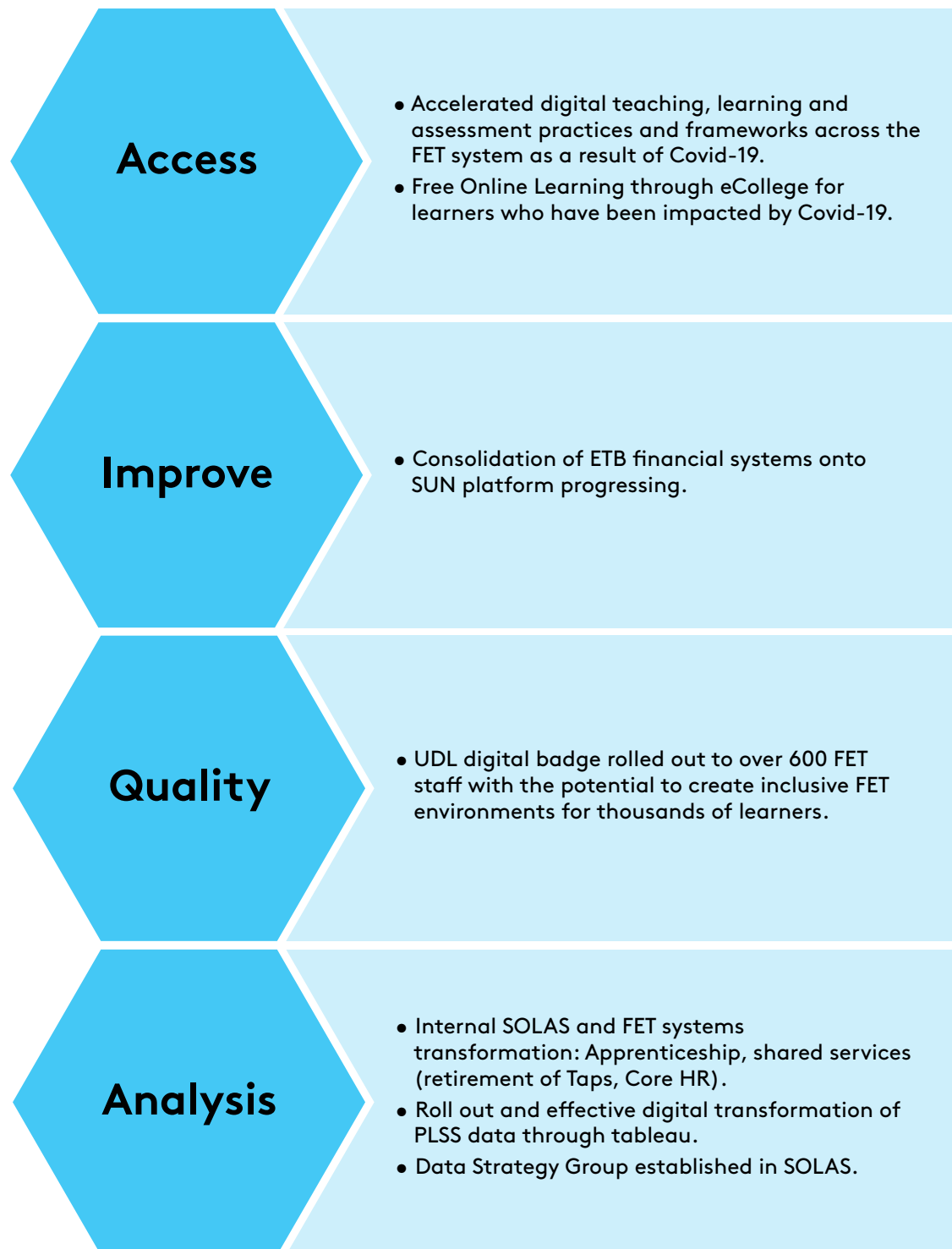
Coordinate

- Coordinated approach with the Department in relation to ETB staffing requests supported by business cases.

Learner & Perform



Digital Transformation



Capital Infrastructure

Examine

- Review of FET Capital Estates project completed.
- 450 properties logged.

Cooperate

- Sectoral property group with representation from ETBI & DFHERIS established to progress capital infrastructure work.

Progress

- New capital funding approach including mechanism for fast tracked approval of emergency health and safety projects.
- Call for FET College of the Future proposals to be progressed in second half of 2021.

Invest

- €10m apprenticeship capital investment.
- €8m devolved capital fund for ETBs in place for 2021.
- Two major strategic ETB projects being supported.
- €32.5m Capital Funding budget in place for 2021.

Spotlight on Fostering Inclusion

In September, a new 10-year strategy, Adult Literacy for Life to address unmet adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs in Ireland was published. The strategy was launched at an event at Liberties College, Dublin 8 by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education Research, Innovation and Science.

The strategy has been developed with the contributions of more than 2,000 individuals and organisations across Ireland and will support the work of the FET sector in promoting inclusion across Ireland for people who have not had their literacy needs met previously through education or society.

The new strategy sets out a road map for addressing literacy issues such as listening and speaking, reading, writing, numeracy and using everyday technology developing. Key elements of the strategy include:

- Creating a 'one-stop-shop' for literacy supports in Ireland;
- Expanding the current supports to cater to a greater number of people; and
- Developing flexible supports including online modules to increase access to services.

The most recent figures on literacy in Ireland show that the country is among the lowest performing of developed countries. The targets set out in the report for the coming years include reducing:

- The number of people adults in Ireland with unmet literacy needs from 18% to 7%;
- The number of adults in Ireland with unmet numeracy needs from 25% to 12%; and
- The share of adults in Ireland without basic digital skills from 47% to 20%.

You can find out more about the strategy [here](#).

