

29 May 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are now 10 weeks into what are unprecedented times. As we move further into our new reality, the challenges we face continue to evolve and change. The overarching challenge now emerging is how society in general, and more particularly Cork Education and Training Board, meet the challenge of emerging from this crisis to a sustainable future, while at the same time ensuring appropriate measures are put in place to protect our staff and learners.

There has been a range of professional challenges that staff have had to overcome since this crisis erupted into our lives. Among these are;

- Engaging learners with new learning platforms
- Changes to State Examinations
- Changes to the norm for FET exam and Training assessments
- Coping with remote working to ensure continuity of all services
- Upskilling in the use of technology
- Maintaining a sense of community, and teamwork

I am conscious that this has been done in the context of additional personal responsibilities and in the absence of the time for preparation and planning that we would normally have. I am extremely proud of all our colleagues who have stepped up to provide a quality service to our learners and ensured business continuity in all facets of our organisation. I am also aware that you have contributed to your local communities and to the national effort, by getting involved in various initiatives and most importantly by following Government guidelines on staying at home.

We are now on a phased track towards the physical re-opening of our various services. Our new challenge will be to navigate how we return to our offices, schools, colleges, training centres and centres of education in what is still an evolving and uncertain climate.

I want to assure you that Cork Education and Training Board has been making every effort to implement all protocols and procedures as outlined by Government, HSE and HAS, so as to ensure your safe return to the workplace. This work is ongoing and includes a Covid-19 Response Plan. This plan is available on the Cork Education and Training Board website with supporting documentation.

I appreciate that you may have many questions. Indeed, in this fluid situation we recognise that as some questions are answered, additional questions arise. Over the coming weeks there will be increasing clarity from Government Departments on how we, as a sector, can deliver our services over the next academic

year. As such clarifications are issued, we will continue to work to co-ordinate and support staff, in how best to implement any arrangements that may need to be put in place.

I once again want to thank each and every one of you for rising to the challenge, for supporting each other, for continuing to balance family and social responsibilities, and for raising the profile of Cork Education and Training Board as an organisation that is making and will make, a positive contribution to our social, cultural and economic recovery.

While I am aware that this year holidays will be on a staycation basis, I hope you enjoy the break, wherever you may be. Take care. Stay safe. Be mindful of others.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine.

Le gach dea- mhéin,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Denis Leamy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Denis Leamy,
Chief Executive.