**Apprenticeships and Traineeships in 2018: Pathways that value the range of Human differences**

My Name is Tara O’Halloran, I am the Beauty Therapy Instructor for Kerry ETB and I work in the Kerry ETB Training Centre in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

I am also the Worldskills Ireland National Examiner for Beauty Therapy and have had experience throughout my career in the value of this pathway to the range of human differences that present upon the various learning journeys that I have had the privilege to have been part of.

Traineeships and Apprenticeships are a multifaceted approach to training. The value of this to the different learners that decide to embark on these pathways is a focus on a training experience that is broad and diverse, that respects and appreciates difference.

The multimodal elements of classroom based instruction, the use of IT in delivery, practical hands on workshop training simulated to industry requirements and standards and also workplace experience and employer support throughout training are fundamental to these programmes. These elements provide a rich experience for all types of learners in a supportive and industry led environment.

These components all lend to support the various learning needs and information retention pathways of these learners. For the individual returning to training after a number of years in industry, the school leaver, the parent who has decided ‘it is my time now’ or the potential apprentice who wishes to work in an area that he or she loves, the programmes in 2018 allow our diverse applicants space to use this pathway to gain employment, excellence in training and value to their local economies.

It allows for best practice to be put into practice until it becomes perfect, leading exam and industry standard and eventually employment with opportunity to showcase the rich tacit knowledge and confidence that a trainee gains from booth classroom, workshop and industry.

In my experience of Traineeship delivery, the value of this to the learners has been a development of knowledge, inclusion, and development of their chosen skill and confidence.

Confidence to train and work in the Industry, make mistakes, learn and try again if necessary during the programme. Confidence to go forward for International Examinations. Confidence to consider opportunities for educational progression. Confidence to go for the job that they had always aspired to have and so some, confidence to open their own salons and spas. Many of which now are supporting and employing the new intakes over the last few years.

Our apprentices and trainees come from all over Ireland, they represent the craftsmanship, hospitality and warmth that we as a nation are so well known for. To have seen this showcased as part of the Worldskills and National Skills organisation at an International level over the last 4 years has been incredible. To see the value of each different skilled young person, supported by their employer to compete Internationally and keep Ireland top ten in the World for skills highlights the importance of this pathway to performance.

I would invite all attendees today to welcome the first National Skills Competition which will be held in the RDS this coming March 21-23rd. This event will bring trainees and apprentices together to celebrate the many diverse training journeys which will lead to an exciting all Ireland final in 30 skill areas.