

Review

Our year and our work, 2014

Policy We worked with a range of people in the education sector to make sure that adult literacy and numeracy policy is implemented. **Practice** We improved the quality of teaching, learning and information provision. **Access** We raised awareness of the importance of having strong literacy and numeracy skills.

Summary Annual Report 2014



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Our mission

Our mission is to be the voice of adult literacy and numeracy in Ireland and, with our partners, influence policy and practice to support people in developing their literacy and numeracy.

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things in life that
can become the
biggest problem.

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About NALA

NALA stands for the National Adult Literacy Agency. We are a charity that:

- is the voice of adults wishing to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, and
- is committed to raising adult literacy and numeracy levels in Ireland.

According to the latest international survey, one in six people has a literacy difficulty in Ireland and one in four people has a problem with numeracy.

Since volunteers set NALA up in 1980, we have been a leading campaigning and lobbying group on adult literacy issues. We have been involved with:

- developing teaching materials;
- distance education services;
- policy-making;
- research;
- campaigns to raise awareness about adult literacy difficulties and services in Ireland; and
- tutor training.

Many people and organisations have given a lot to adult literacy work in Ireland. For our part, we have put literacy on the political agenda and secured funding to provide adult literacy services. Currently, 55,000 adults are attending adult literacy courses run by Education and Training Boards (ETBs) across Ireland.

About this review

This review tells you about the work we did during 2014. The sections follow the same order as our Strategic Plan 2014 - 2016. You can read and download information about our strategic plan, accounts and publications at www.nala.ie. On page 54 some acronyms and terms in this review are explained.

A message from our chairperson

Dear members,

Another busy and productive year of projects and activities in line with our current strategic plan is presently being brought to fruition and these are outlined for your perusal in the Annual Review.

I myself will be stepping down as NALA Chairperson in March at the conclusion of a four year term of office following an involvement of eight years in total as vice-chairperson and ordinary member prior to that. It has been a singular honour for me to have served on the NALA board over those years particularly as its chairperson. It has been a gratifying experience to have worked with a board which has maintained such a high level of vigilance on your behalf regarding the integrity, the good name, the mission and values of the organisation. The commitment of the board members to ensuring good governance at NALA has made discharging the duties of chair so much easier and for that I thank them.

Our corporate governance policies and procedures are kept under the watchful eye of our audit sub-committee under the chairmanship of treasurer Thomas McManus. Sterling work has been carried out in reviewing and updating policies and procedures on an ongoing basis ensuring compliance with all governance obligations.

One of the areas which has been a founding principle of NALA's since its inception has been that of listening to and promoting the voice of learners and being an advocate on their behalf. Towards this end NALA campaigned very actively to have learners included in the newly established Education and Training Boards. It was a source of immense satisfaction for all concerned when that principle was copperfastened in legislation. NALA itself, along with Aontas was appointed by the Minister as a nominating body for learners to the boards. I would like to congratulate all those learners who have taken up positions on the boards. They do so in the knowledge that NALA will continue to be fully supportive of them during this new and exciting venture which undoubtedly will not be without its challenges.

The voice of the learner is in my view one of the most important of those clamouring to be heard in Adult Basic Education. It is also unfortunately one which can become most easily overlooked as systems of provision develop and become more complex. Over the years NALA has consistently put in place vehicles through which the learners' voice can be strengthened and promoted at local, regional and national level. For example, through the Student Development Fund, learner participation in Evolving Quality Frameworks, Student sub-committees and Learner Ambassadors to name but a few of these initiatives. It takes enormous courage for any learner to step forward and to get involved on behalf of their fellow learners. They can only do so if the environment is encouraging and they themselves believe their opinions are respected and valued. It behoves everyone in Adult Basic Education, in every programme at every level to remember that the services exist to meet the needs of learners and not the needs of the institution itself. The learners' expression of their needs is crucial from the moment they access provision and must continue to be nurtured and encouraged throughout that provision. That is the challenge that is to be faced by all literacy workers at all levels if literacy is to remain true to its fundamental philosophy and ethos. NALA is to be commended for its work in keeping those values centre stage. It is why I have relished the opportunity to serve on its board.

As you the members peruse the Annual Review I hope that you too have occasion to feel some sense of satisfaction that we are all part of an enduring campaign whose ultimate aim is to bring about greater social and educational inclusion for all our citizens. In reviewing the activities of the past year I hope you will be happy that we at NALA have in some measure succeeded in advancing our mission of making society an easier place for learners to participate and develop their potential.

I wish you, the members, the board and staff of NALA continued success in pursuit of such highly commendable social and educational objectives. It has been a great pleasure for me to know that I have contributed in some way to that endeavour.



Gretta Vaughan
Chairperson
National Adult Literacy Agency

An overview from our director

This year the Agency embarked on a new strategic plan which focuses on working with three groups of people: policy makers; practitioners; and the general public, including learners. We plan to achieve three main objectives:

- 1) support implementation of policy on adult literacy;
- 2) improve quality of teaching, learning and information provision; and
- 3) build awareness of literacy and numeracy.

Starting with policy makers, most of our work in this area centred on the development of the first further education and training strategy under the lead of SOLAS. The strategy contains the first adult literacy strategy since 2000 with elements capturing areas NALA has called for since 2006. Implementation of the strategy, including the adult literacy elements, got under way towards the end of the year and NALA joined other important stakeholders on the strategic implementation advisory committee. We continued to work with Education and Training Boards Ireland and joined them along with SOLAS to form the national advisory committee for the adult literacy strategy.

NALA provided support and staff training to the Department of Social Protection to enhance its work with people who are unemployed and have literacy difficulties. This work was pioneered in Dublin North and based on its positive impact it was rolled out to a number of regions.

We also advanced health literacy with health stakeholders through our participation in the Healthy Ireland Council, meetings with the HSE, the Irish Pharmacy Union and MSD. A number of health organisations and local authorities also developed and agreed literacy-friendly policies in order to better serve their customers.

We continued to support practitioners across further education and training, mainly under the Education and Training Boards, to enhance their approach to teaching literacy and numeracy and their use of blended learning solutions. Practitioners and learners were involved in new research aimed at improving literacy and numeracy practice. During the year, we also worked to draw up an agreed framework for numeracy continuing professional development.

We asked adult learners to share their thoughts with us on how best to develop adult literacy levels in Ireland and to improve services for people with literacy difficulties. We encouraged people with literacy difficulties to take up free learning opportunities. Our 'An Post' sponsored advertising campaign was particularly helpful in this regard. We referred hundreds of callers to adult literacy and numeracy tuition, including our distance learning service and online learning programme, writeon.ie. We also added new learning content to writeon.ie and improved its accessibility.

We promoted the importance of parents helping their children learn through our involvement with the TV broadcast 'The Family Project'. We also further developed and promoted helpmykidlearn.ie as a resource for parents and others supporting children's learning.

During the year we continued to expand our plain English training and editing service. We launched a petition to garner support for the use of plain English in government communications aimed at the public. We secured FBD as a major sponsor of the Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) Conference in 2015. We also secured Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsman as one of our keynote speakers.

Overall, it has been a successful year, with the achievement of nearly all of our targets and outcomes. This was possible due to our continued funding, principally from SOLAS, the innovative work of the staff and the oversight by the Board. This is an excellent foundation from which to start on the second year of our plan.



Inez Bailey
Director
National Adult Literacy Agency

Our key achievements

Policy

Working with SOLAS

We contributed to the first Further Education and Training Strategy for Ireland.

Helping the unemployed

We worked with staff in the Department of Social Protection to make their services more accessible to people with literacy difficulties.

Representing students

We secured 20 adult literacy learner representatives on 16 ETBs.

Practice

Integrating literacy

247 participants from three ETBs attended 10 of our training sessions on integrating literacy.

Supporting tutors

550 tutors attended our professional development events and said that the events had inspired them to make changes to the way they worked.

Researching best practice

Tutors reported that NALA's research helped them to be more innovative in their teaching.

Access

Raising awareness

140,000 people watched The Family Project TV show each week, representing 11% of the viewing public.

Promoting services

5,320 people contacted our Freephone for information on literacy services and other queries related to our work.

Training Learner Ambassadors

We trained 40 Learner Ambassadors to give 90 presentations about adult learning opportunities in their local communities.

Sharing expertise

We participated in a European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET).

Raising awareness

We increased the number of organisations with good literacy policies and practices.

Prioritising health literacy

We worked with stakeholders in the health sector to improve health literacy in Ireland.

Getting learners accreditation

1,260 learners were supported to get more than 4,700 Level 2 Minor Awards and 970 Level 3 Minor Awards.

Giving training

160 tutors from 77 adult literacy centres were provided with training on how to use our e-learning website writeon.ie.

Providing plain English

We gave plain English training to over 600 participants and provided plain English editing to 70 organisations.

Supporting students

1,200 students took part in new learning activities, paid through our Student Development Fund. 165 students attended our student events in Dublin and Cork.

Helping parents

Over 100,000 people used our website helpmykidlearn.ie last year and 12,000 people are following our Facebook page.

Promoting plain English

Since mid-September, 1,200 people have signed our petition asking the Taoiseach to ensure that all public information is written in plain English.

Policy

In 2014, we worked with a range of people in the education sector to make sure that adult literacy and numeracy policy is implemented.

During the year we:

- contributed to the first ever Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy;
- nominated 32 learners to the 16 ETBs and secured 20 adult literacy learner representatives on 16 ETBs;
- took part in a European Literacy Policy Network (ELINET);
- produced guidelines for web-based basic skills support for staff who work with adults who need help getting a job and who have gaps in their basic skills;
- worked with the Department of Social Protection to make Intreo services more literacy-friendly;
- increased the number of organisations with good literacy policies and practices;
- worked with local authorities to develop a literacy-friendly approach; and
- improved awareness of health literacy among different stakeholders.



Further Education and Training Strategy 2014–2019

The first ever five-year strategy for the Further Education and Training (FET) sector was published by SOLAS in May this year.¹ There are five strategic goals, including one on 'Active Inclusion' which covers a national literacy and numeracy strategy. The strategy endorses many of NALA's priorities including the development of an awareness and promotional campaign, more flexible and intensive literacy provision and the integration of literacy and numeracy in Further Education and Training.

SOLAS set up a Strategy Implementation Advisory Committee to help achieve the implementation plan for the strategy. This group includes Education and Training Boards (ETBs), ETB Ireland, QQI, NCGE, AONTAS, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and NALA. SOLAS has also agreed that the Adult Literacy Forum (coordinated by the ETBs) will serve as the National Literacy and Numeracy Advisory Committee. This group will include NALA and SOLAS as well as a range of ETB representatives.

Learner representatives on ETBs

In 2013, we successfully campaigned to secure legislation to have learners represented on the new ETBs. In June 2014, the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn TD, asked NALA and AONTAS to nominate learners for each of the 16 new ETBs. We nominated a man and a woman to each board and the board then chose a learner representative. There are now 20 adult literacy learner representatives on 16 ETBs.

¹ The strategy is available online at <http://bit.ly/1z49ygT>

ELINET: European Literacy Policy Network

At a European level, NALA has joined 80 organisations from 28 countries in a new European Literacy Policy Network called ELINET. The network aims to analyse and influence literacy policies for children and adults in Europe, as well as raise awareness of literacy issues. Inez Bailey, Director of NALA is a member of the ELINET management board. As a core member of the network, we will contribute to the area of awareness raising and help with other areas relating to literacy policy.

Write on for work: Guidelines for web-based basic skills support

In December, NALA and the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) launched guidelines² for staff who work with adults who need help getting a job and who have gaps in their basic skills. The guidelines are for Department of Social Protection (DSP) frontline staff and or other service providers working in the area of employment activation.

The guidelines are based on a joint project between the Southside Partnership Local Employment Service (LES) and NALA's Distance Learning Service. The project helped over 60 unemployed young people in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown to get qualifications, work experience and progress to jobs or further training. See Table 1 for more information.

Table 1: Writeon – personal pathways to work

	Outcome
People recruited	66
People who got certification at level 3	46
People who progressed to further education and training	23
People who got work placements	44
People who got jobs	10

² The guidelines are available online at www.nala.ie

Working to make Intreo services more literacy-friendly

Intreo is a new service from the Department of Social Protection that provides people with one point of contact for all employment and income supports, in centres throughout Ireland.

The Dublin North³ region made contact with NALA to discuss how their Intreo services could better support unemployed people with literacy and numeracy needs. Part of this work included making their staff more literacy-aware and confident to respond appropriately to people with literacy and numeracy needs. We proposed that staff were trained in literacy awareness and how to refer people to local learning options including the interactive learning website www.writeon.ie. NALA provided this training to 45 staff over six half-day sessions in March 2014. The staff included case workers, front-line staff, area and office managers, and change management and training staff.

We also updated **Guidelines for Intreo staff on becoming more literacy-aware**. These have been circulated nationwide throughout the Department of Social Protection's new 'Change Management' structure.

In October NALA presented our work to the 'Change Management' forum in the Department. As a result of this, we were asked to give eight training sessions in centres in the Mid-Leinster and Mid-West regions, in November and December.

3 Dublin North covers six offices: Balbriggan, Ballymun, Coolock, Finglas, Kilbarrack and Swords.

Increasing the number of organisations with good literacy policies and practices

This year we continued to work with South Dublin County Council and St John of God Hospitaller Ministries as well as some new organisations. These were:

- Cavan County Council,
- Laois County Council,
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Citizens Information Service,
- Irish Cancer Society, and
- Tolco Clinic (HSE Addiction Services Treatment Clinic).

We worked with these organisations to look at how they could become more literacy-friendly. This means becoming more aware of adult literacy issues and removing literacy-related barriers, for example, helping people to fill in forms.

During 2014 we supported the five organisations mentioned above to follow a five-step process to become more literacy-friendly. These steps included:



Step 2 of this work included doing a **literacy audit** – this is a snapshot of an organisation and how it addresses literacy issues in policies and procedures, communications and staff training and development.

NALA facilitated a **workshop** with staff in these organisations using an audit tool. Through this process we identified existing good practice and areas for improvement.

We then wrote a **report** and **action plan** for the organisation and they decided how best to implement the actions. Some of the common suggestions in the action plans were:

- developing and adopting a literacy-friendly policy,
- delivering Literacy Awareness Training for staff, and
- using plain English in all communications, including training of relevant staff.

Working with Local Authorities to develop a literacy-friendly approach

The City and County Managers Association (CCMA) is the representative voice of the local government management network. It supports our initiative to promote a literacy-friendly approach to all Local Authorities.

In January we hosted a one-day training session for staff from 10 County Councils. As a result of this training session Cavan and Laois County Councils agreed to engage in the five-step process to become literacy-friendly. We facilitated a workshop for these County Councils. Staff completed an audit, and a report and action plan were drawn up for each County Council.

In September we also presented the literacy-friendly approach and process to Local Authority staff at their 'Access, Equality and Social Inclusion Development Day' in Athlone.

Improving awareness of health literacy

We have been busy this year working on health literacy with a number of stakeholders, including:

- Healthy Ireland Council,
- Health Literacy Advisory Panel,
- Department of Health,
- Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), and
- healthcare professionals.

Healthy Ireland Council

This year the Healthy Ireland Council was set up by the Minister for Health and Inez Bailey, NALA's Director, is one of the members. The Council is a national forum which will provide the platform to connect and mobilise communities, families and individuals into a national movement with one aim: supporting everyone to enjoy the best possible health and wellbeing. The group met twice this year.



Dr David Jordan, Caroline Brennan and Nigel Murphy from GiantLeap Productions are pictured celebrating their win at the Crystal Clear MSD Health Literacy Awards.

Health Literacy Advisory Panel

The Health Literacy Advisory Panel⁴ met three times in 2014. Our main focus was to progress health literacy and make the Irish health service more literacy-friendly.

We drafted a **Health Literacy Action Plan** which identified seven main stakeholders, including:

- Department of Health,
- Health Service Executive,
- HIQA,
- healthcare professionals,
- healthcare settings including hospitals and primary care centres,
- education and training settings, and
- the general public.

Department of Health

NALA met with the Department of Health to discuss the commitment to health literacy in Healthy Ireland – Ireland’s national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of our country over the coming generation (2013 – 2025). We then met with the HSE to discuss how we will progress health literacy and will meet them again early in 2015.

Working with HIQA

We worked with HIQA to develop **two guidance documents** for health and social care providers on communicating in plain English when working with adults and with children. These two guidance documents will be published in 2015.

4 Members include the HSE Health Promotion and Improvement and Social Inclusion Units, Irish Cancer Society, Irish Hospice Foundation, Temple Street Children’s University Hospital, University College Cork, University College Dublin and MSD.

Training for healthcare professionals (HCPs)

During 2014 we facilitated health literacy workshops and training for healthcare professionals. The workshops aim to raise awareness about health literacy with healthcare professionals and to explore how they can deliver a more literacy-friendly service. The healthcare professionals included:

- HSE nursing staff,
- Irish Pharmacy Union,
- People working in healthcare in Tallaght and the surrounding areas, and
- Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

Healthcare settings

We worked with Tolco Clinic (HSE Addiction Services Treatment Clinic) during 2014 on our five-step process to become more literacy-friendly. The audit report was drafted and finalised over the summer. In September we facilitated an awareness workshop with staff which identified more areas that could be improved.

“The Team at Tolco Clinic, HSE Addiction Services, is proud to say that since NALA’s intervention we believe, based on service user feedback, that we’ve created a much more user-friendly and tolerant clinical environment. The NALA Audit really opened our eyes to the important issue of health literacy. This truly has made a huge difference, from the clinic’s surrounds to the staff’s outlook.”

Roseanna Mac Giolla Riogh, Registered General Nurse, HSE Addiction Services, Dublin North.

Practice

In 2014, we worked to improve the quality of teaching, learning and information provision. Here are some highlights.

- 247 participants from three ETBs attended 10 of our training sessions on integrating literacy.
- 71 Further Education and Training practitioners took part in our professional development events on integrating literacy.
- 550 tutors attended our professional development events. 93% of participants said that they had learned something new and 82% said that our events had inspired them to make changes to the way they worked.
- 1,260 learners were supported to get more than 4,700 Level 2 Minor Awards and 970 Level 3 Minor Awards.
- 160 tutors from 77 adult literacy centres were provided with training on how to use our e-learning website writeon.ie.
- Tutors reported that NALA's research helped them to be more innovative in their teaching and helped them teach difficult topics.
- 600 participants did plain English training with us which is a 50% increase on 2013.
- 70 organisations paid for our plain English editing service.



hello!

Sometimes it's the
little everyday things
in life that can become
the biggest problem.

Send

Integrating literacy

In 2014 we worked with further education and training (FET) providers to support the integration of literacy and numeracy development into vocational programmes.

NALA training

We cooperated with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) to provide a continuing professional development (CPD) programme on integrating literacy for ETBs. Two hundred and forty seven participants from three ETBs attended 10 NALA sessions as part of this programme. Seventy one FET practitioners took part in other NALA CPD on integrating literacy. These were provided at the request of the National Learning Network, YMCA, St Michael's House, and Maynooth University (for participants on the Higher Diploma in Further Education).

Most participants in the CPD events were vocational teachers, tutors and instructors. Other participants included centre and programme managers, college principals, guidance counsellors and administration staff. Participants explored methods that teachers and learners can use in any subject to overcome literacy barriers to learning and to develop course-related literacy and numeracy skills. They also learned about the key features of a whole-centre approach to integrating literacy.

New accredited module for managers

The development of an effective whole-centre approach to integrating literacy requires strategic leadership from senior management. In cooperation with SOLAS Community Training and Maynooth University, we completed the pilot of a new professional development module specifically designed for FET centre managers. SOLAS funded the module development and the pilot as part of its strategy for integrating literacy in Community Training Centres (CTCs).

Thirty CTC managers completed the 48-hour module in 2014. Participants reported that it had helped refocus and refresh their centres' literacy and numeracy strategy. The module, which carries 10 credits at Level 7, is now available as a professional development resource to the FET sector.

Over 550 people attend our professional development events

In 2014, we organised ten professional development events for literacy and numeracy tutors, including volunteers and adult literacy organisers. The aim of each event was to provide tutors with information on the best and the most effective ways to teach. Over 550 people attended these events. After each event we surveyed participants to measure the impact of our event. Our surveys were done anonymously through Survey Monkey.

Here is a summary of each event and the survey results.

National forum for adult literacy tutors

One hundred and twenty tutors attended our national forum for adult literacy tutors in February. The theme of the forum was 'The importance of accreditation to learners at levels 1 to 3'. The day-long event provided tutors with valuable information about how to provide accredited literacy and numeracy programmes. There were also practical workshops on how to assess students for accreditation. Survey findings showed that:

- 92% of tutors who responded stated that they learned something new at the event; and
- 78% reported that the forum had inspired them to make changes to the way they work.



Liz Fay, Mary McDonagh, Kathleen Brangan and Marian O'Neill tutors from Crumlin College at the Tutors' Forum in January.

Numeracy conference

Eighty two tutors attended our numeracy conference in June. The title of the conference was 'What really counts in numeracy practice'. The morning session focussed on recent numeracy research and the use of problem solving and collaboration as a teaching method. There was a choice of nine different workshops about teaching numeracy in the afternoon. Our survey showed that:

- all the tutors who responded to our survey said that they had learned something new at the event; and
- 82% reported that the conference has inspired them to change how they taught numeracy.

International Literacy Day conference

Our International Literacy Day conference in September was attended by 144 people. It was about the value that technology brings to learning. It included presentations from people working in the technology industry as well as a range of workshops on using technology to teach literacy and numeracy. In our survey there was a very high satisfaction rating for the event:

- 95% of participants who responded said that they had learned something new at the event; and
- 92% reported that they could use what they learned at the event.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Forty two tutors attended our ESOL conference in November. The title of our conference was 'Progression for ESOL learners into further education and employment'. It covered topics such as how to help ESOL learners when they start in adult education and, also, how to help them move into higher education.

In our follow-up online survey we got very positive feedback for this event. Everyone who responded said that they had learned something new at the event and that they would use it to improve their teaching.

Family literacy conference

In November, a total of 73 family literacy tutors attended our conference, which was called 'Tips for your work in early language, literacy and numeracy development'. It was a great event as it gave tutors useful ideas and activities for engaging parents and children in family learning. We were delighted that everyone who responded to our survey said that they had learned something at the event and would use what they had learned in their work.

Five numeracy workshops

In response to a clear need for CPD in numeracy, we organised five numeracy workshops during Maths Week from the 11 to 19 October. We organised these events together with local ETBs. They took place in Donegal, Laois, Wexford, Kerry and Cork. The themes of the workshops included tips for teaching algebra, fractions and statistics. A total of 94 participants attended the five workshops. The feedback was very positive and showed that:

- 99% of the participants who responded said that they had learned something new from the workshops; and
- 95% reported that they can use what they learned from these numeracy workshops.

Impact of NALA conferences

Research summarised in Table 2 on the next page shows that the majority of the participants who attended our events in 2014 learned something new. This increased from an average of 93% for our events in 2013 to 97% for our events in 2014. There was also an increase in the number of participants who said that our events had inspired them to make changes to the way they worked. This was 82% in 2013 and 90% in 2014. This offers clear evidence that our professional development events improve the quality of teaching and learning in Ireland.

Table 2: The Impact of NALA conferences

	2013	2013	2014	2014
	Learned something new	Inspired changes to work	Learned something new	Inspired changes to work
National Tutors' Forum	96%	87%	92%	78%
Numeracy conference	94%	93%	100%	82%
International Literacy day	Not available	Not available	95%	92%
ESOL conference	92%	85%	100%	100%
Family learning conference	91%	64%	100%	100%

Guidelines for good adult literacy work

Our publication 'Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work' is the main document for tutors working in the adult literacy sector. Therefore it is important that tutors know about the guidelines and use them as a key reference for teaching and learning.

Before attending the 2014 Tutors' Forum, 76% of tutors who responded to our survey reported that they were aware of 'Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work'. This is a 16% increase on the previous year when 60% of tutors said they were aware of our guidelines.

Table 3: Awareness of 'Guidelines for Good Adult Literacy Work'

	2013	2014
Aware of 'Guidelines' before Tutors' Forum	60%	76%
Not aware of 'Guidelines' before Tutors' Forum	40%	24%

Distance Learning

We know that sometimes it can be hard to find the time to do a course. That's the great thing about our Distance Learning Service (DLS). Our team of tutors work in the mornings and evenings, seven days a week, providing telephone and online support. Learning Support Workers (LSWs) do an initial assessment with every potential distance learner first. If the learner is suitable for distance learning, they are then matched with a Distance Learning Tutor (DLT).

Table 4 on the next page outlines how the DLS supported learners. All over Ireland, people are using our DLS to improve their basic skills or get a qualification.

There has also been greater demand for support around the use of www.writeon.ie in Blended Learning contexts during 2014.

We converted www.writeon.ie to a HTML5 version during 2014 to make the site more accessible to more people. In addition, we will be adding a seventh topic about the environment, to the site during 2015.

We are also creating content at Level 1 that will be available on www.writeon.ie during 2015. Following usability testing and reviews in early 2015, we hope to add additional content during the year. We also plan to have accreditation available at Level 1 in 2016.



Liz Corkish at Bray Adult Learning Centre using www.writeon.ie

Table 4

2014 Summary of Distance Learning Work			
Learning Support Work	3 Learning Support Workers	277 initial assessments	210 hours working with Learners
Distance Learning	10 Distance Learning Tutors	2,475 Learning Sessions	1,301 hours contact time with Learners
Accreditation	1,260 Learners supported	70 Centres supported	4,728 Level 2 Minor Awards provided 970 Level 3 Minor Awards provided
Writeon	7,717 new learning accounts set up	13,735 different visitors to the website	20 minutes and 37 seconds was the average time on site
Training	12 free training sessions provided	160 tutors provided with training	77 centres represented in training

Doing research to improve teaching and learning

This year we researched effective adult literacy and numeracy teaching and learning methodologies. We collaborated with different stakeholders, including adult literacy organisers (ALOs) and literacy and numeracy tutors. We believe this approach to research allows organisations and tutors to share their teaching practices with a wider teaching community.

The result of our research was a series of case study reports that detail the day-to-day practice of literacy and numeracy tutors in Ireland. The reports are:

- What really counts: Case studies of adult numeracy practice in Ireland
- Read all about it: Case studies of teaching reading to adults in Ireland
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): Blended learning project

These reports are now a resource for tutors working in the area of adult literacy and numeracy. The case studies focus on different teaching strategies used by tutors to help their students to learn a range of literacy and numeracy skills. They provide useful ideas and tips, as well as how to teach specific topics such as algebra and how to use a blended learning approach.



Measuring the impact of our research on teaching practice

To measure the impact of our research, we asked tutors to take part in a follow up research project, called 'Action Learning Project'.

As part of 'Action Learning Project', we asked tutors to try one teaching strategy from 'What really counts: Case studies of adult numeracy practice in Ireland', with their learners and report back to us.

Tutors reported that the case studies provided them with examples of how to be more innovative in their approach to teaching numeracy to adults. Some tutors used strategies and resources in the case studies to teach topics that they knew their learners struggled with, such as measuring circles or algebra. Other tutors used ideas for games and group activities to motivate learners in class. Tutors also said that the case studies challenged them to experiment in the classroom. Overall, this project provided an opportunity for tutors to learn new ways to teach numeracy.

This research report is called, 'What really counts next: Action learning project with numeracy tutors'.

We will continue to measure the effectiveness and impact of our research in 2015.



Inez Bailey and Minister of State Aodhán Ó Ríordain at our research seminar in September.

Sharing our findings

To share our research with as wide an audience as possible, we presented our reports at conferences and events aimed at literacy and numeracy tutors in Ireland. We also promoted our research online and included it in our training that we offer to adult literacy tutors throughout the year.

NALA was also invited to present the findings of our numeracy and ESOL research at an international conference hosted by NIACE, NRDC, RaPAL and UCU. The Conference 'Mandated or Motivated: engaging adults in learning and supporting them to succeed' was held in October in London. The conference was attended by literacy and numeracy tutors and organisers and organisations that deliver tuition and training to adult learners. Tina Byrne, Research Officer, and Tommy McLoughlin, IT Officer, presented the data at the conference.

The value of learning together

Throughout our research work in 2014, tutors have repeatedly commented on the importance and value of networking with other tutors. They would welcome more opportunities to meet other tutors, share ideas and support one another in their practice. We hope to facilitate this in 2015.

Opportunities for academic research

In September we organised a seminar called, 'The causes and effects of poor adult literacy and numeracy in Ireland – opportunities for academic research'. Our aim was to discuss the role of academia and research institutions in carrying out research in the area of adult literacy and numeracy in Ireland. Sixty five people attended the event and we are now exploring opportunities for future research with St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and Trinity College Dublin.

NALA's research reports are available to download for free from the NALA website www.nala.ie

Providing plain English training and editing

This year was another busy year for our Plain English Editing and Training Service – perhaps our busiest yet. Over the year, we developed the service and prepared to host the 10th Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) Conference in 2015.

We delivered plain English training to 600 participants. This is a 50% increase on 2013 training figures. Participants came from all sectors. Some examples are as follows:

- 10 Government departments – The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform had the highest number of trainees (15),
- regulatory bodies – Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) had the highest number of trainees with 121 staff (87 of these were inspectors and regulatory officers) having received training between December 2013 and November 2014,
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (40 staff),
- public and private hospitals and other healthcare providers and or services,
- other organisations such as Childcare Ireland and FBD Insurance.

This year we tackled a more intensive mentoring model with 15 people in a healthcare institution. We worked with them on their policies. We also developed and tested a successful one-day proofing course and we are working on a plain English accreditation module with Waterford Institute of Technology.

Editing

We edited materials for 70 organisations. This is an increase of 10 organisations on 2013. Clients of our editing service who achieved our Plain English Mark, include the Department of the Environment, the Road Safety Authority of Ireland, CORU and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL).

PLAIN 2015 Conference

Our planning work on the PLAIN 2015 Conference involved many meetings on budgets and quality speakers. Highlights in this area were:

- Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsperson, agreeing to address our 2015 conference, and
- FBD Trust committing to be one of the lead corporate sponsors.

Simplyput.ie

We revamped our plain English website www.simplyput.ie. Over 5,000 individuals used the website about 6,500 times (sessions). This is a 10% increase on last year.



Access

In 2014, we worked with the general public, including learners, to build awareness of the importance of having strong literacy and numeracy skills. Here are some highlights of our work.

- Our research shows that there is very high awareness of literacy and numeracy levels, and where to go for help.
- 140,000 people watched The Family Project TV series each week, representing 11% of the viewing public. The repeat of the TV programme at the end of 2014 saw even higher ratings, with almost 50,000 more viewers per episode than the original broadcast.
- 5,320 people contacted our Freephone for information on literacy services and general queries related to our work.
- We trained and supported 65 Learner Ambassadors, 40 of whom gave 90 presentations to groups of people in their local community.
- 165 people attended our Student Days in Dublin and Cork.
- 63 organisations received grants from our Student Development Fund. This meant that over 1,200 students were able to take part in learning activities.
- Over 100,000 people used our website helpmykidlearn.ie last year and 12,000 people are following the website's Facebook page.
- To date, 1,200 people have signed our petition asking the Taoiseach to ensure that all public information is written in plain English.

SOMETIMES IT'S THE
LITTLE EVERYDAY
THINGS IN LIFE THAT
CAN BECOME THE
BIGGEST PROBLEM.

	€0.89
APPLES	€2.80
CEREAL	€4.20
VEGETABLE OIL	€1.10
DELI	€1.4
PRODUCE	€1.
PRODUCE	€0.
BOTTLED WATER	€2
EGGS	€
BUTTER	
BREAD	
WASHING UP LIQUID	
CONDENSED MILK	

Raising awareness of literacy and numeracy

In February we did research⁵ to find out what impact our awareness work has had. We surveyed over 1,000 people living in Ireland and asked them these two questions:

- What percentage of adults in Ireland do you think have low literacy or numeracy levels?
- If an adult wanted to improve their literacy or numeracy skills, do you know where could they get help?

The results of the survey show that there is very high awareness of literacy and numeracy levels, and where to go for help.

As outlined in the graphs 1 and 2, awareness of adult literacy and numeracy is broadly in line with the results of the most recent adult literacy survey. Most people surveyed knew that over one in five people has literacy difficulties, and one in four has numeracy difficulties.

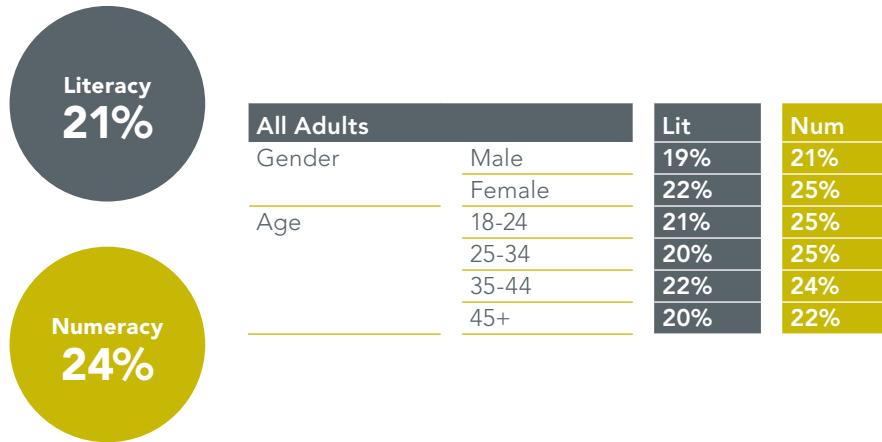
Over half of people surveyed knew where to go if they want to improve their literacy or numeracy. 61% mentioned adult education, literacy courses and ETBs (VECs), and 15% mentioned NALA.



At the beginning of the year James Coughlan from Dublin spoke to George Hook about his return to education in Dublin Adult Learning Centre, and how it changed his life.

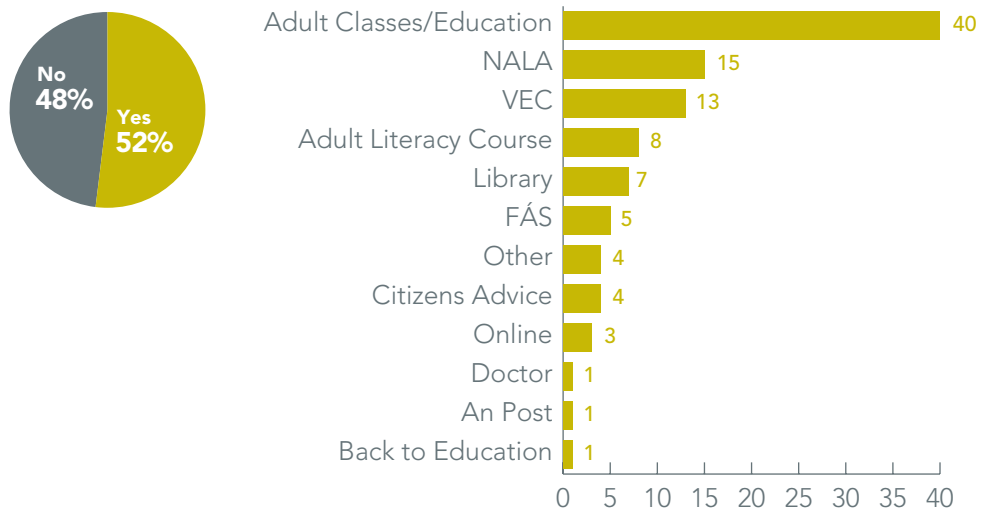
Graph 1: What percentage of adults in Ireland do you think have low literacy or numeracy levels?⁵

Just over 1 in 5 adults are believed to have low literacy and numeracy levels in Ireland.



Graph 2: Do adults know where to go for help with literacy and numeracy?

Over half of adults feel they would know where to go to improve literacy. Many talk about classes and community courses to improve literacy.



5 The research was conducted by Empathy Research on behalf of the National Adult Literacy Agency. There were a total of 1,097 participants in the survey. The survey was nationally representative of 18+ year olds living in the Republic of Ireland.

Promoting available learning opportunities

This year we continued to raise awareness of the benefits of improving basic skills and adult education services through:

- national advertising campaigns and media work;
- television programming;
- leaflets and posters;
- www.nala.ie; and
- National Adult Literacy Awareness Week and other events.

National advertising campaign and media work

An Post broadcast our joint TV advertising campaign for two weeks in January and two weeks in September. During these weeks, we received our greatest volume of calls and texts to our Freephone. See graph 3 on page 41.

We also organised student and staff interviews on radio, television and newspapers throughout the year. This resulted in about 23 interviews on TV and Radio. Highlights include interviews on RTÉ Radio, RTÉ TV News and Newstalk. We also recorded 190 mentions of our work in print media. These mentions relate mainly to The Family Project TV series, Crystal Clear Health Literacy Awards and National Adult Literacy Awareness Week.

Television programming

In 2014, we (NALA, RTÉ and Animo TV) were successful in our application to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland for funding of a second TV series of 'The Family Project'. It was broadcast on Monday nights on RTÉ 1 from 26 May to 30 June 2014. An average of 140,000 people watched the show each week, representing 11% of the viewing public. See page 45 for more information on this programme (family learning section).



Leaflets and posters

Often when we talk to adult literacy students we hear how sometimes it's the little everyday things in life that can become the biggest problem. Like reading the washing instructions on a jumper, checking a bill in a café or writing a text message. With this in mind, we developed a new leaflet and poster campaign to focus on everyday tasks and to show how easy it is to get on top of these problems. During the year we distributed 13,000 leaflets through social welfare offices and adult literacy centres.

Online

We recorded 83,000 unique visits to our website www.nala.ie, representing a 45% increase on last year. The pages on our website, after our home page, with the most views were:

- www.nala.ie/tutors - information for literacy tutors
- www.nala.ie/courses - information on literacy courses
- www.nala.ie/resources - literacy teaching and learning resources

About 70% of traffic comes from organic search, 16% from direct links, 8% from referral, 2% from social media, and 4% from email campaigns – that's a high rate for email, which indicates that the e-zines are working well to bring people to the website.

National Adult Literacy Awareness Week (NALAW)

During NALAW, we organised a number of events and did media interviews to raise awareness of the literacy issue in Ireland. We also worked with twenty ETB adult literacy services to circulate posters and leaflets to promote local literacy services and highlight the benefits of returning to education. Here is a list of our events:

- Monday 22 September: We launched a campaign and online petition for plain English. (See page 47)
- Wednesday 24 September: We held a seminar to showcase some of the educational TV programming produced by NALA and the BAI over the last few years, and explore new opportunities for collaboration.
- Friday 26 September: We organised a seminar where we discussed opportunities for more research on adult literacy and numeracy in Ireland. (see page 31)
- Tuesday 23 – Thursday 25 September: We attended the National Ploughing Championships. (see below)

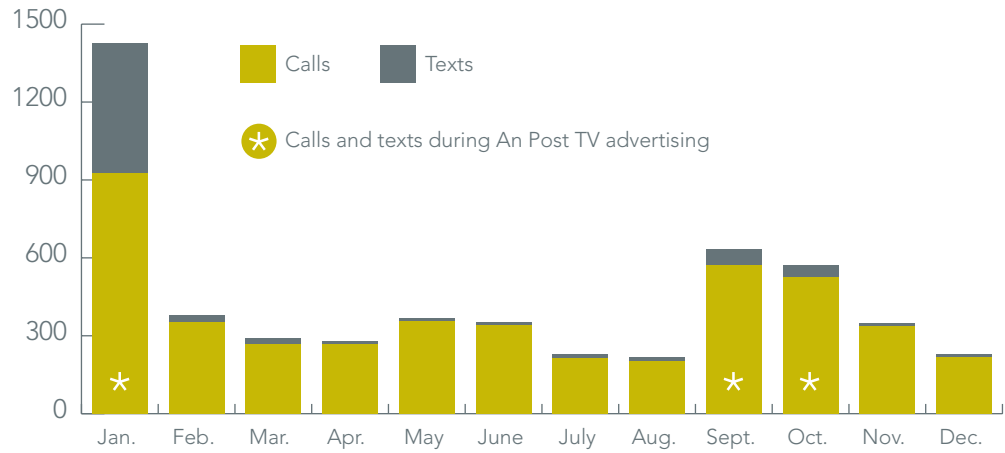
National Ploughing Championships

One of the highlights of the year was attending the National Ploughing Championships in Stradbally, County Laois. Even though it was our fifth year to attend the Ploughing Championships, the size of the event and the crowds surprised us. It's Europe's largest outdoor event and this year over 270,000 people attended. As always, it was students (pictured below) who made the biggest impact working at our stand – stopping people and telling them about literacy and their own journey back to education. It was another great opportunity to meet people and tell them about learning opportunities in Ireland.

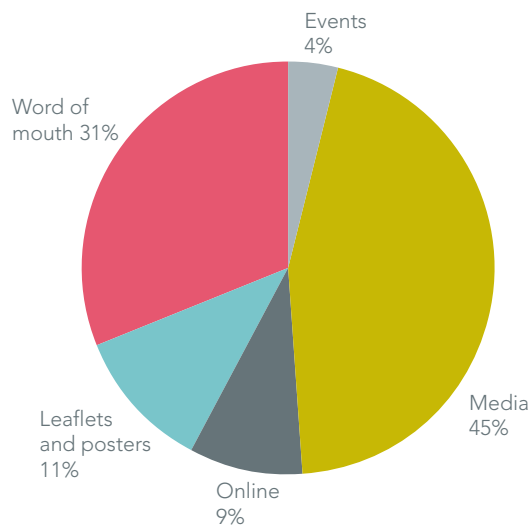


The impact of our promotional work

Graph 3: 2014 total calls and texts to NALA freephone



Where did callers hear about NALA



Source: 4,682 Freephone calls were recorded by BT Nortel contact centre reports. 783 Free texts were recorded by Saadian Technologies. Calls include requests for information on adult literacy services, general queries, distance learning service queries, voicemails, pranks and hang-ups. 'Where did you hear about NALA?' data inputted by NALA staff in Salesforce.

Learner Ambassadors take centre stage

This year we helped 65 people to become Learner Ambassadors in Ireland. A Learner Ambassador is a student who shares their personal experience of education with people in their local community. By sharing their story they often encourage other people to take up a learning opportunity and they promote local education services.

As part of this project, we provided training and support to make sure that everyone involved had the skills they needed to give public talks. Each Learner Ambassador received professional 'presentation skills' training on how to tell their story and promote adult education.

Since we started the project, 65 students have been trained as Learner Ambassadors and so far almost 40 of them have given 90 talks. These talks have taken place all over the country, for example at Men's Sheds meetings, Job Fairs and with community and voluntary organisations.

The feedback we have got from students has been amazing with many saying that their confidence improved after getting the training. Some Adult Education Centres have received new enrolment enquiries from 'hard to reach' adults after Learner Ambassador talks and interviews on local media.

This project was funded by the European Agenda for Adult Learning (2012 – 2014). In 2015, there are further plans to organise regional events with education providers (ETBs), using Learner Ambassadors to promote local education services.



Richard McCormack who attends Louth Adult Learning Centre in Drogheda has been a great Learner Ambassador, promoting the benefits of learning on national and local media.

165 people attend our student days

The NALA Student Days in 2014 were a great success. These days are a chance for literacy students throughout Ireland to meet each other and raise issues with our Student Subcommittee.

Sixty students came to our event in Cork and over 100 attended our event in Dublin. Students attended workshops on storytelling, numeracy, debating and using online courses. After the workshops NALA's Student Subcommittee gave an update on new developments in the education sector and listened to issues that affect learners.

The evaluation of both events was very positive. Students enjoyed the workshops and the chance to learn about the work of the Student Subcommittee. They felt it was important that they could talk about their concerns and be listened to.

Most of all, students told us that they were relieved to know that they were not the only one who has literacy difficulties. They also said it was inspiring to see how many people have improved their lives by going back to education.

In Cork, students voiced their fears about services being cut and how important it was that they made their voice heard on these and other issues. They asked NALA to keep putting pressure on the Government to keep a focus on literacy services. Following this day, the Student Subcommittee asked for and received more guidance from NALA about how to raise awareness of these issues at a local and national level.

Thanks to everyone who helped to organise the Student Days and make them so enjoyable.



Lee, Ana and Judith at our student day.

Over 1,200 students take part in events funded by NALA

In 2014, 63 organisations received grants from our Student Development Fund. Sixty of these applications were from Education and Training Board centres. This meant that 1,257 students were able to take part in new learning activities outside the classroom. This is a 43% increase from last year when 879 students benefitted from the fund.

The funding was spent mainly on student trips to places of historic interest and or with an educational value, for example:

- Spike Island;
- Glengowla mines;
- Knock and Croagh Patrick mountain;
- Newgrange;
- Armagh Planetarium; and
- an ECO tour in IKEA.

A condition of receiving our grant is that recipient organisations have to gather student feedback on topics set by NALA. This is one of the ways we gather the views and experiences of adults who are improving their literacy and numeracy skills. This helps to inform our work. In 2014, the topics that we asked students for feedback on were:

1. How can we make sure that student issues are heard by our Education and Training Board?
2. How can we support the student representative on our Education and Training Board?
3. How can we make sure that students' experiences are known when decisions are made that have an impact on us?

We look forward to sharing this information with you in 2015.

Supporting parents with their children's learning

Parents who help their children learn at home have a very positive impact on their child's educational achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy. This year we continued to promote the importance of involving parents in their children's learning through our television series in May and June. We also supported parents by providing them with lots of ideas on www.helpmykidlearn.ie, Facebook and Z-cards.

Television programme 'The Family Project'

'The Family Project' was broadcast on RTÉ One television from the 26 May to 30 June 2014. An average of 140,000 viewers watched the programme each week, representing 11% of the viewing public. With children only spending about 15% of their time in school, the aim of 'The Family Project' was to show parents how to do more in the home to help their children learn. Each week, a different family tried to tackle a problem that had a particular impact on them, for example a child finding reading difficult. In each programme, educationalists and celebrity mentors worked with the family to help them overcome the problem and highlighted the educational resources that are available nationwide.

The series was repeated again in November and December and attracted even higher ratings – almost 50,000 more viewers per programme than the original broadcast.



In the first episode of 'The Family Project' John Lonergan worked with a family from Inchicore to help improve their son's self-confidence.

Fun activities on our website

Our website helpmykidlearn.ie provides parents with simple and fun educational activities that they can do with their children. This year it continued to grow in popularity. We recorded over 106,000 visitors in 2014. This is a 24% increase from last year.

The website also received a major boost by getting rated in the top twenty websites⁶ that make your children smarter. This resulted in an additional 3,854 people visiting the website. 400 people also signed up to the helpmykidlearn.ie e-zine this year. This brings to 1,200 people who receive monthly tips from us on how to support their children learn.

Major Facebook campaign

Facebook is one of the easiest and most effective ways to communicate with the general public. So, in November, we began a major Facebook campaign targeting parents of children in Ireland to Like (follow) our Help My Kid Learn Facebook page.

Every day we posted interesting and fun content, encouraging likes, shares and comments to make it easier for parents to get ideas to help their children learn. This has resulted in a dramatic increase of 12,000 people 'liking' our page and getting information directly into their newsfeed every day.

160,000 Z-Cards

Before children went on summer holidays we circulated 160,000 Z-cards to primary schools to give to children's parents.

Help My Kid Learn Z-Cards are credit-sized cards that fold out like a map. Each card has 24 great ways to keep children entertained and learning all through the summer – be it on car journeys, rainy days or out and about. Both teachers and parents loved them and we have been asked to provide more of them again next year.

This project was sponsored by EBS.

⁶ <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/technology/20-excellent-websites-that-make-your-children-smarter.html>

New petition asks the Government to provide information in plain English

NALA often get calls or messages from members of the public who are confused about letters or forms from some Government departments and elsewhere. They ask us what we are going to do about it. Though some of our Government departments are trying to present information in plain English, others need to do better.

Earlier this year, our research showed that almost 95% of Irish adults are in favour of plain English. About half of them (48%) find official documents, including information from the Government difficult to understand. They also find jargon, terms and conditions, and financial information challenging.

These are the reasons why we launched a petition asking the Taoiseach to ensure that all public information is written in plain English. Plain English makes information quick and easy for everyone to understand.



Karen O'Leary, National Consumer Agency, Peter Tyndall, Ombudsman, and Inez Bailey, National Adult Literacy Agency, at the launch of our petition for plain English.

Seventy people attended the launch of our petition in September. They included representatives from the Department of Public Expenditure, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Employment, people from the ETBs, companies and individuals who use plain English and those who aspire to use it. The Ombudsman, Peter Tyndall, spoke at the launch about how his office tries to use plain English. The Director of the National Consumer Agency (NCA), Karen O’Leary, also spoke at the launch and formally stated that the NCA supported the petition as a way to encourage other organisations to write and present their information more clearly to consumers.

We want people to sign the petition to help us promote the use of plain English by Government and its agencies. In four months 1,200 people have signed our petition.



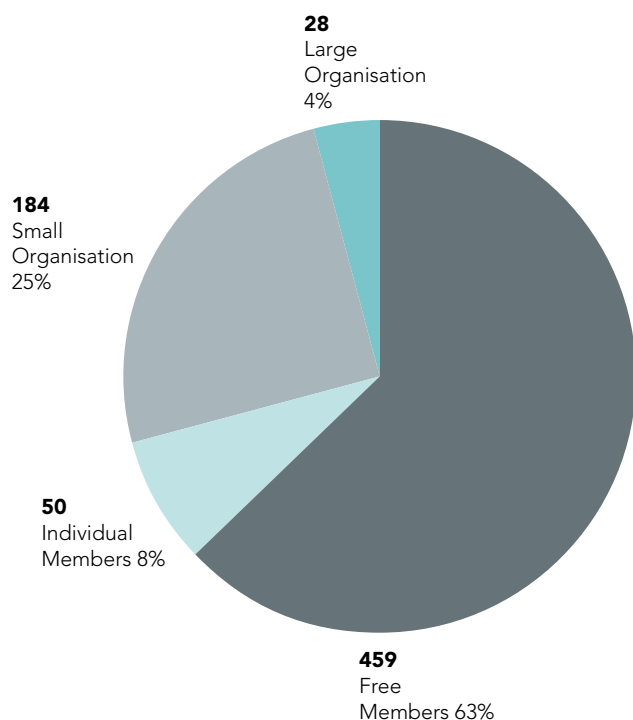
Seventy people attended the launch of our petition and plain English training seminar in September.

Strengthening our effectiveness as an organisation

Over 700 members and counting

NALA had 731 members in 2014. This was almost a 10% increase since 2013 when we had 666 members. Our members include:

- 459 non-paying individual members (63%)
- 60 paying individual members (8%)
- 184 small organisations (25%)
- 28 large organisations (4%)



Breakdown of members

Individual members (free and fee paying):

- 33% are students
- 24% are voluntary tutors
- 11% are paid tutors, Adult Literacy Organisers or co-ordinators of a literacy centre
- 11% are a member of the public with an interest in literacy
- 21% did not let us know

Small organisation members include:

- local ETB adult literacy centres,
- Youthreach centres,
- Community Training Centres,
- Prison and probation related organisations,
- National Learning Networks, and
- community and other support organisations.

Large organisation members include:

- Education and Training Boards,
- Libraries,
- community and voluntary sector organisations, and
- corporate organisations.

Benefits of membership

70 organisations availed of our membership benefit of accessing QQI accreditation for students in their centre, through the Distance Learning Service www.writeon.ie

57 centres received the NALA Student Development Fund, another membership benefit.

In 2014 NALA continued to improve our own internal processes for members. We continued to deliver regular information, keeping members up to date with developments.

Administration

Some highlights of the Administration Team's work in 2014 include:

- providing administrative support to 26 conferences, seminars and training programmes, including registration processing for 849 delegates;
- coordinating the distribution of almost 50,000 leaflets, research reports, learner resources and information on literacy services produced by NALA on topics such as returning to education, family learning, and other literacy matters;
- operating the Resource Room for members, including providing advice on available titles, promotion, invoicing and shipping. NALA sold 1,777 books in 2014; and
- provided invoicing and credit control for NALA's Plain English, and Literacy Integration Advisory Training (LIAT) services and membership.

Improvements to our Freephone service

As part of NALA's commitment to strengthening our effectiveness as an organisation, a review of the Freephone infrastructure was carried out over the summer of 2014. The review suggested ways to improve our call handling and reporting and we made changes to our system in the autumn. Since then, we have noticed the following improvements:

- our average service level has improved by 10%;
- callers are answered, on average, within 16 seconds;
- we have reduced by 30% the number of callers hanging-up before speaking with someone or being able to leave a message; and
- our call logging system (basic information that we record) is more comprehensive, which has allowed us to report more specifically on the type of literacy advice we give to callers.

Communicating our work

Our communications work allows us to keep our members, education partners and the general public up to date with changes in the sector and the work we do. In 2014, we continued to provide information through our website www.nala.ie, social media and newsletters. Here is a summary of our work.

	2014	2013	Percentage change
nala.ie	83,000 unique visitors	57,000 visitors	45% increase
E-zine	3,400 subscribers	3,100 subscribers	10% increase
Facebook	2,137 followers	1840 followers	16% increase
Twitter	1,600 followers	1,300 followers	23% increase
Literacy Matters	2 magazines issued	2 magazines issued	Unchanged

Structure and funding

We are a member-based organisation. Our membership is open to all people and organisations interested in or involved in adult literacy development. At our annual general meeting, members elect an executive committee that oversees our work. The executive committee includes students and tutors, adult literacy organisers and people involved in adult and further education and training, and the private sector.

We are a registered company with limited and charitable status. We receive a grant from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) through SOLAS that enables us to staff our office in Dublin. The DES, along with other Government departments, State Bodies, the European Union and the private sector, also funds specific research and development work. All staff are paid according to the public sector general service pay scales.

NALA complies with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations.

You can view or download a copy of our full audited accounts, details of our organisation's structure, staff and executive committee and all our publications from www.nala.ie.

Some acronyms and terms explained

Advocacy — Actively supporting or arguing for a cause, idea or policy, which may involve raising awareness, recommending particular actions and, or, speaking up for individuals' rights.

AGM — Annual General Meeting

ALOA — Adult Literacy Organisers' Association

AONTAS — The national adult learning organisation

Blended learning — This refers to a mix of different teaching and learning techniques. For example, a blended learning approach can combine face-to-face tuition with computer based learning.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) — This is the way members of professional associations maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills and develop the personal qualities required in their professional lives.

CORU — CORU is Ireland's multi-profession health regulator. Its role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education and training of health professionals.

DES — Department of Education and Skills

Distance learning — Distance learning occurs when learners and tutors are separated by either space or time. For example, a student can follow an online computer programme from their home while their tutor is in another location.

DSP — Department of Social Protection

ESOL — English for Speakers of Other Languages

ESRI — Economic and Social Research Institute

ETB — Education and Training Board

ETBI — Education and Training Boards Ireland – the national representative association for Ireland’s 16 Education and Training Boards

EU — European Union

Evaluation — A process of studying something carefully and measuring its features against certain standards to see what is good or needs to be improved.

FÁS — Foras Áiseanna Saothair – the former national training and employment authority – now SOLAS

FET — Further Education and Training

Framework — A model or system used to organise information or to plan, develop or decide something.

HSE — Health Service Executive

Implement — Put something into place, for example carrying out the recommendations.

Integration of literacy and numeracy — Designing and delivering education and training programmes in a way that develops the course-related language, literacy and numeracy as part of the core subject.

INOUE — Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

ITT — Institute of Technology Tallaght

Learning opportunities — The range of literacy learning options, such as individual and group tutoring, workplace literacy programmes and distance education.

Level (1 – 10) qualification — One of the 10 levels of qualifications a person can get in Ireland.

Mission — An aim of a group, an organisation or a person.

MSD — Merck Sharp & Dohme Ireland (Human Health) Ltd

NCGE — National Centre for Guidance in Education

NGO — Non-governmental organisation

Numeracy — A lifeskill that involves the competent use of everyday mathematical skills and the confidence to manage the mathematical demands of real-life situations.

Objectives — Planned results to be achieved within a stated period in the future.

Outcome — What happened or the result of something.

Partnership — Two or more people or groups working together on an activity or to reach a particular goal.

Plain English — Plain English is a way of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it.

Policy — A course of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or person.

Putting People First — An Irish Government plan to improve Local Government

QQI — Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) — A process used to evaluate skills and knowledge acquired outside the classroom to recognise competence against a given set of standards.

SOLAS — The new authority for further education and training (replacing FÁS)

Stakeholder — A person or group with an interest (a stake) in the actions or policies of an organisation, which means that they may affect the actions or policies and or be affected by them.

Strategic — Something that forms part of or relates to a long-term plan to achieve an aim.

Survey Monkey — Survey Monkey is an online survey tool.

WIT — Waterford Institute of Technology

YMCA — an organisation that offers a variety of services to the community, including youth programmes, job training and education programmes.

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Literacy learning websites:
www.writeon.ie
www.helpmykidlearn.ie

Plain English website:
www.simplyput.ie

Freephone support line:
1800 20 20 65

What's next

Looking ahead to 2015

Policy We will continue our work with a range of policy makers concerned with the implementation of Government policy. This will include those responsible for the Further Education and Training Strategy, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Children and Young People, Pathways to Work, Healthy Ireland and Putting People First, as well as the Public Libraries Strategy. **Practice** We will continue our work with the range of practitioners to improve the quality of teaching and learning. These will include supplying relevant learning content and information on new and proven teaching and learning approaches and methods. **Access** We will continue our work with the general public, including learners, to build awareness of the importance of having strong literacy and numeracy skills to more effectively manage their employment, health, family and community life.

www.nala.ie



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh