

# Review

## Our year and our work, 2016

**Policy** We worked with a range of people to implement national policies that support adults improve their literacy and numeracy skills. **Practice** We improved the quality of teaching by providing professional development events, training and new resources for tutors. **Access** We organised campaigns that raised awareness of the importance of improving literacy and numeracy skills.

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## Summary Annual Report 2016



**NALA**

National Adult Literacy Agency  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

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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**481,000** adults  
(24–64 years) do not have  
a Leaving Certificate

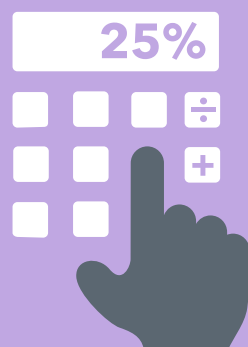
|17th



In a recent study\*, Ireland came  
**17th** out of **24** countries in  
an adult literacy survey



**1** in **6** adults find everyday text, such as  
a bus timetable or medical instructions,  
hard to read and understand.



**1** in **4** adults struggle with  
everyday maths such as  
working out a 20% discount  
or dividing up a bill

\* OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2012) also known as the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

# 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<sup>1</sup>, one in six people has a literacy difficulty and one in four people has a problem with numeracy in Ireland.

Since we were established by volunteers in 1980, we have been a leading campaigning and lobbying group on adult literacy issues. We have been involved in:

- making policy;
- training tutors;
- developing teaching materials;
- providing distance education services;
- doing research; and
- running national awareness campaigns.

Many people and organisations have contributed 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, 61,700 adults are attending adult literacy courses run by Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

## About this review

This review tells you about the work we did during 2016. Its sections follow the same order as our Strategic Plan 2014 – 2016 which has three main objectives under the themes of policy, practice and access. Each objective has five actions. You can read and download information about our strategic plan, accounts and publications at [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie). To help you, on page 78 some acronyms and specialist terms are explained.

<sup>1</sup> OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2012) also known as the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

# Our key achievements in 2016

## Individuals

We raised awareness of adult education services and helped people improve their literacy and numeracy.



**1,000**

Our Information Helpline referred over 1,000 callers to adult education services, including ETB Adult Education Centres and NALA's Distance Learning Service



**117**

mentions of literacy issues and services in national and regional papers and trade publications



**1,075**

people got QQI accreditation through our Distance Learning Service

**3,461 level 2 minor awards**

**700 level 3 minor awards**



**8**

media interviews on TV shows (3) and national radio shows (5)

**15**

regional radio interviews delivered by NALA CEO, Inez Bailey



**30,000 promotional leaflets and 2,500 posters**

distributed nationally through ETBs, Citizen Information Centres, Intreo and at events

**1 in 3**

One in three people were aware of our national literacy awareness campaign which involved radio, TV and digital marketing



**26,000**

number of engagements (likes, reactions, shares or comments) our Facebook posts received



**700**

information packs were sent to individuals seeking details of learning or tutoring opportunities

**4,680**

number of NALA's tweets our followers clicked on, liked, retweeted or replied to

# Students

We represented the views of adult literacy students and supported their learning.



**1,600**

students took part in learning activities funded by our Student Development Fund

**200**

people attended our student days in Dublin and Kilkenny

**68**

organisations received grants from our Student Development Fund



**40,000**

views for videos featuring adult literacy students



Student subcommittee meetings held – this is a national committee of adult literacy students

# Parents

We helped parents support their children's literacy and numeracy development.



**147,000**

people used our website [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie)

**2,000**

parents received a new family literacy resource pack, sponsored by EirGrid



**34,200**

clicks, reactions, comments or shares on the Facebook page for [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie)

## Further Education and Training (FET) tutors

We helped to improve the quality of teaching.



10

tutor worksheets shared through our e-zine, and they were clicked on over 1,500 times



2,970

views for videos from our professional development events

520

people attended our professional development events

90

FET professionals took part in integrating literacy workshops

84

tutors from

40

different adult education centres received training on how to use **writeon.ie**



3

main research projects, including two sets of case studies on motivational teaching practices and financial numeracy were carried out

## Healthcare providers

We worked with people in the health sector to help make their services more accessible to people with literacy needs.



We delivered **2 health literacy workshops**



Spoke at 4 conferences about health literacy



**45 pharmacies** and **2 general practices** were awarded the **Crystal Clear Mark**



Secured over **33 articles** in medical magazines, local and national newspapers about health literacy and NALA



Designed and piloted a health and wellbeing programme for older people



# Information providers

We helped remove barriers for people with literacy difficulties through our plain English campaigns and service.

700

people received our plain English training

*Handwritten signatures in cursive script, representing plain English.*

52

entries for our Plain English Awards

5,000

signatures presented to Minister Howlin calling on the Government to use plain English

90

organisations used our Plain English Editing and Training Service

4

We worked with 4 local authorities to improve their communications

1,000

members received our updated A-Z Plain English Guide to Political Terms



50 mentions of our plain English activities in national and regional newspapers



8,000

people visited **simplyput.ie** –our plain English website



34 community and voluntary sector organisations were sent our new 'Writing for the web' style guide

# Policy makers

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We worked with key stakeholders, detailed below, to implement national policies that support adults improve their literacy and numeracy through:

[Meetings](#)

[Briefing Papers](#)

[Presentations](#)

[Workshops](#)

National Strategy	Stakeholder
<b>Further Education and Training Strategy and National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- SOLAS</li><li>- Department of Education and Skills</li><li>- Education and Training Boards and their staff</li><li>- Education and Training Boards Ireland</li><li>- QQI</li><li>- Adult Literacy Organisers Association, Tutors, Adult Education Officers</li><li>- Students</li><li>- People with literacy or numeracy needs</li></ul>
<b>National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Children and Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Schools and teachers</li><li>- Home School Liaison Coordinators / Tusla</li><li>- Department of Education and Skills</li><li>- National Parents Council</li><li>- Parents</li></ul>
<b>Pathways to Work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Department of Social Protection (DSP)</li><li>- Front line staff and case managers in 13 DSP divisions</li></ul>

National Strategy	Stakeholder
<b>Healthy Ireland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Health</li> <li>- HSE</li> <li>- Hospitals</li> <li>- GPs</li> <li>- ICGP</li> <li>- Pharmacies</li> <li>- Irish Pharmacy Union</li> <li>- HIQA</li> <li>- Health media</li> <li>- South Dublin County Council</li> </ul>
<b>Putting People First</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local Authorities</li> <li>- Local Community Development Committees</li> <li>- Local Development Companies</li> <li>- Libraries</li> </ul>
<b>European Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ESPA</li> <li>- ELINET</li> <li>- EPALE</li> <li>- EAAL</li> <li>- EBSN</li> </ul>
<b>Community and voluntary groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Platform</li> <li>- Disability organisations</li> <li>- EAPN – European Anti-Poverty Network</li> <li>- Focus Ireland, Dublin Simon Community and Merchants Quay</li> </ul>

# A message from our chairperson



This was a very busy year for NALA. The Strategic Plan 2014-2016 was completed and an overview of its activities is outlined in this annual review.

With one body of work drawing to a conclusion, it was time to plan for the next Strategic Plan 2017-2019. Board members participated in a working group with NALA staff and our external consultants Eustace Patterson Ltd. We drew upon the extensive consultation process, which involved members and stakeholders, to plot a fresh direction. I believe the new Strategic Plan sets an exciting path for NALA.

Our work to implement quality standards across the organisation continued in what was a landmark year with the achievement of a significant award. NALA became one of the few organisations in Ireland to achieve the PQASSO quality mark. For the Board and staff, the award recognises the high standards of governance, planning, leadership and achievement in the organisation.

Throughout the year there were significant changes to the composition of the Board. Four new Board members with a varied set of skills and experience were co-opted. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Board for their considerable time, dedication and effort over the course of this last year.

I spoke at the 2016 AGM about participation on the Board, and I encourage members to put themselves forward for election. I would like to acknowledge the support of our members as your input is important in shaping the future of NALA and overseeing its responsibilities. NALA's membership continues to grow and this reflects a thriving organisation.

I would also like to thank the CEO and staff of NALA for their dedication and professionalism.

I hope you enjoy this annual review of NALA's work, and I thank you for your loyal support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor Moore', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Trevor Moore**  
**Chairperson**  
**National Adult Literacy Agency**

**"To help my  
kids I had to  
help myself  
first"**

*- Eamon, Kilkenny.*

Need help with  
writing, spelling,  
maths or technology?

Take the first step and **Freephone 1800 20 20 65**  
or **Text LEARN** to **50050** to see how we can help.

It's free & confidential  
**takethefirststep.ie**

Supported by your local Education and Training Board

**NALA**  
National Adult Literacy Agency  
Aisneacht Náisiúnta Litearthaíochtú na hAiséiríoch

**SOLAS**  
An tArdchomhairle Leanaíocht agus Solas  
Further Education and Training Authority

**etbi**  
Education and Training  
Boróid na hÉireann  
Board of Education and Training  
Ollscoil Éireann

Eamon Delaney, a student from Clonmel Adult Education Service, featured on one of the promotional posters for the 'Take the first step' awareness campaign. See page 52 for more about the campaign.

# An overview from our CEO



**Through this overview of the year gone by, I hope to share with readers a selection of highlights of NALA's work which culminated in the completion of our three year strategic plan. This plan was concerned with supporting the implementation of policy, supporting practitioners in their work and building awareness of the adult literacy issue in Ireland and options available to those who wish to return to learning.**

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January 2016 was marked by the launch of Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 by the Taoiseach and Minister for Education and Skills. This strategy sets out objectives including increasing participation in lifelong learning and focusing support on people with low levels of educational attainment. A target has been set against these two objectives to reduce the number of people in Ireland with a Level 3 qualification or lower. A critical measure of success will be the reduction of the number of people who score at the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy as defined by the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Having sought greater commitment to these objectives, NALA welcomed the publication and the high level focus it brings to our work over the next decade.

Such a document was also timely as NALA lobbied and sought commitments across all political parties for support for adult literacy. Before the general election at the end of February, all party manifestos made commitments, but to differing degrees. A Fine Gael minority government was appointed in May and it maintained the direction of education and training policy. A new Minister for Education launched a consultation process to inform a new Action Plan for Education and NALA made a submission to this in June.

Against this political and policy backdrop, the continued implementation of the adult literacy and numeracy strategy dominated the work of NALA in line with objective one of our strategic plan. Working closely with Education and Training Boards (ETBs), their representative body Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), and SOLAS, NALA's primary work was to oversee the design and roll out of a new multi stakeholder awareness campaign. The campaign went live in September and is currently being evaluated. An Post generously supported this campaign with TV advertisements. The campaign was the first collaborative awareness campaign for all those committed to raising awareness of adult literacy and tuition options.

During the year NALA continued to support Adult Literacy Organisers and practitioners throughout the further education and training sector with events, training, resources and support. This helped to fulfil our second objective in the NALA strategic plan. Many of these events provided excellent opportunities for us to share research which captured good practice across ETBs. In addition to NALA events, staff also contributed to the Adult Learning Maths conference in Maynooth University as well as Elinet, the EU wide network of national literacy organisations. NALA continued to contribute to the Literacy Development Centre in WIT in their roll out of higher education programmes to support literacy practitioners. NALA also participated in the QQI Review of Levels 1-3, and we await the outcome of this work.

Our work with students during the year kept all in NALA, and those we work with, aware of the experience of people with literacy and numeracy needs. Our work is informed by their desire for more tuition, more supports and greater involvement in decisions that impact on their lives.

Outside of the further education and training sector, NALA continued to develop understanding of, and a commitment to promoting, health literacy in Ireland. It worked at community level with pharmacists and general practitioners, supported by MSD, and also in hospitals and local authorities who have increasing responsibility for supporting communities to develop their health and wellbeing. As well as providing training and resources, NALA also presented to healthcare students in UCD, NUIG and as a part of an all island health literacy conference organised by the Institute of Public Health. All of this work helped to build awareness of literacy, our third objective in the strategic plan, and the role many groups in Irish society can play in awareness raising. Our plain English work continued to act as a driver in much of this activity.



Discussing health inequalities with Professor Michael Marmot, as part of our work within the Healthy Ireland Council, highlighted the importance of a whole country approach to critical issues like adult literacy. For its new strategic plan, NALA has adopted his advice to countries looking to address health inequalities: do something, do more, do better. While adult literacy remains on the political agenda we need to do more in areas we have started work in and do better in established areas where there is room for improvement.

Throughout 2016, NALA worked with adult learners, members, ETBs, SOLAS and a wide selection of stakeholders to achieve our objectives. We are grateful to those who collaborated with us, and we look forward to using our reflections of the year gone by to improve our efforts in 2017. Finally, I would like to thank the Board for all their support during the year and commend my colleagues in NALA for their continued commitment to and passion for their work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inez Bailey'.

**Inez Bailey**  
**CEO**  
**National Adult Literacy Agency**

# Policy

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## NALA Strategic Plan: Objective 1

### **Support the implementation of policy**

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One in six Irish adults are at or below level 1 on a five-level literacy scale according to the most recent OECD Adult Skills Survey<sup>2</sup>. One in four Irish adults score at or below level 1 for numeracy, and two in five score at or below level 1 on using technology to solve problems and accomplish tasks.

The survey identified people who need support and included low-skilled adults, particularly unemployed people, foreign-language immigrants, older adults and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The survey showed that people with the lowest skill levels have low educational attainment, earn less income and more likely to be unemployed. They also risk being trapped in a situation in which they rarely benefit from adult learning, and their skills remain weak or deteriorate over time. But, the impact of skills goes far beyond earnings and employment. In all countries surveyed, individuals with literacy difficulties are more likely to report poor health, to believe that they have little impact on political processes, and not to take part in volunteer activities. They are also less likely to trust others. Taken together, the results emphasise the importance of literacy and numeracy skills for a more inclusive society – in people’s participation in the labour market, education and training, and in social and civic life.

Our policy work has a key role to play in providing significant opportunities that will improve the skills of people with literacy and numeracy difficulties and ensure they can fully take part in society.

In 2016, we worked with a range of stakeholders to implement national policies that support adults improve their literacy and numeracy skills. These national policies include:

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<sup>2</sup> OECD Survey of Adult Skills (2012) also known as the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

- Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014-2019<sup>3</sup>,
- National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy for Children and Young People 2011-2014<sup>4</sup>,
- Pathways to Work<sup>5</sup>,
- Healthy Ireland<sup>6</sup>,
- Putting People First <sup>7</sup>, and
- National Skills Strategy 2025<sup>8</sup>.

Also in 2016, before the general election, we met with all of the political parties and asked them to include adult literacy development in their election manifestos. We were delighted that our work paid off and that four political parties – Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Féin and Social Democrats – prioritised adult literacy in their manifestos.

## **Under Objective 1 we have five actions.**

- 1.** Work with SOLAS to contribute to the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy, including the national adult literacy and numeracy strategy, and its implementation through the development of briefing papers.
- 2.** Work with key stakeholders involved in the education of children to identify and influence ways to help parents support their children's learning.
- 3.** Work with the Department of Social Protection in designing labour market activation measures which will help unemployed people deal with literacy and numeracy issues.
- 4.** Develop and implement a health literacy action plan to build health literacy in Ireland.
- 5.** Roll out a literacy and numeracy friendly programme across a number of local authorities to improve their communications.

3 Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS (2014)

4 Department of Education and Skills (2011)

5 Department of Social Protection (Action Plan for 2016 – 2020)

6 Department of Health (National framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland 2013 – 2025)

7 Department of the Environment and Local Government (Action Programme for Effective Local Government 2012)

8 Department of Education and Skills (2012)

## Objective 1

### Action 1

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Work with SOLAS to contribute to the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy, including the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, and its implementation through the development of briefing papers.

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A key area of our work is to support the implementation of the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy <sup>9</sup>. The aim of the FET Strategy is to develop a world-class education and training system that meets the needs of all citizens.

In particular, our work centres on supporting the implementation of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy within the FET Strategy.

There are 12 elements in the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. Each element is being led and managed by SOLAS <sup>10</sup> in cooperation with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and NALA. These three stakeholders are joined by representatives of senior and middle management in the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). This includes two Education Officers, two Adult Education Officers and two Adult Literacy Organisers. This group makes up the National Advisory Committee for the implementation of the adult literacy and numeracy strategy. During the year, we met with this committee five times.

The focus of our work in 2016 was on the design and delivery of a new national awareness campaign which is detailed on page 52.

NALA also supplied background information on the areas of assessment and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) which were prioritised by SOLAS to be advanced in 2016.

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<sup>9</sup> The Further Education and Training Strategy 2014 – 2019 (SOLAS)

<sup>10</sup> SOLAS is the further education and training authority in Ireland.

In 2016:

- NALA presented at four meetings of the Strategic Implementation Advisory Committee (SIAC) about progress made on the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategy.
- NALA had an additional 16 meetings with SOLAS in support of the FET strategy.
- QQI asked us to present at a Recognition of Prior Learning Network showcasing writeon.ie as a model of best practice. NALA also contributed to the review of Levels 1-3 on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- The Department of Education and Skills (DES) launched a consultation on their draft statement of strategy and NALA made a submission which contained views from members.
- We participated in the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL) programme which will be coordinated by AONTAS and involve ETBI and SOLAS.
- A number of NALA staff participated and led Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on agreed themes as part of the European Basic Skills Network. Themes included workplace basic education, creation and implementation of basic skills policy and migrant education.
- NALA CEO, Inez Bailey, attended an EU conference on adult skills in Brussels in December. The focus of the conference was the Upskilling Pathways initiative (previously known as the New Skills Agenda and the Skills Guarantee) which aims to increase participation of people with lower educational attainment in adult learning.

## Objective 1

### Action 2

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Work with key stakeholders involved in the education of children to identify and influence ways to help parents support their children's learning.

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In 2016, NALA helped parents to support their child's learning through our work with Tusla<sup>11</sup> and Home School Community Liaison Coordinators (HSCLs). This project, which was sponsored by EirGrid, involved producing a resource pack for parents of children in DEIS schools<sup>12</sup>. You can read more about it on page 65.

We also continued to work closely with HSCLs in other areas and, in November, they contributed to and attended our Family Learning conference.

NALA continued to liaise with the Department of Education and Skills to promote [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie). We presented to resource teachers at the Irish Learning Support Association conference and we also had a display at the National Parents' Council's conference.

We connected with library members at the end of 2016 and sent them materials to help parents and guardians enhance their child's learning. The materials we sent included our At Home with Family Learning booklets along with posters and leaflets.

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11 Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is the State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

12 Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS). DEIS are schools that get special resources to meet the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

## Objective 1

### Action 3

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Work with the Department of Social Protection (DSP) in designing labour market activation measures which will help unemployed people deal with literacy and numeracy issues.

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Over the course of our strategic plan 2014-2016, we delivered training to 430 DSP staff. Research shows that unemployed individuals with literacy or numeracy difficulties are more likely to become long-term unemployed.<sup>13</sup> The purpose of this training was to raise awareness of literacy issues and to show staff how they could support unemployed people with literacy and numeracy needs.

The feedback on our work with the DSP has been very positive. This year we produced a report outlining the ways its staff have benefitted from our training. From May to June, we contacted regional managers and gave them follow up questions to ask a sample of the participants who had attended our training.

In response to the question 'How did doing the training **make a difference** in your Intreo office?' staff said they:

- are more aware of issues for customers with low literacy and numeracy including reading, writing and IT skills;
- are able to give more relevant advice and are able to empathise better;
- are now more confident in identifying clients who may have literacy issues and also in finding supports for them; and
- are more aware of adult education services and this enables case officers to provide better information to clients.

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<sup>13</sup> Literacy, Numeracy and Activation among the Unemployed (ESRI) 2012

Staff were also asked to identify **what changes they have made** since the training to make the practice and procedures in the service more literacy-aware. They said that:

- they had improved the way they provide information and literature to documents;
- they had referred more customers to ETBs than in previous years;
- they speak in plain language to customers and answer queries clearly, concisely and without judgement;
- they share the key points learned from the training with all new staff to ensure they know how to deal with clients who have literacy and numeracy difficulties; and
- they avoid abbreviating organisations such as ETB or DSP for customers.



## Objective 1

### Action 4

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## Develop and implement a health literacy action plan to build health literacy in Ireland.

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Health literacy is the ability to read, understand and act on health information and it is closely connected with health outcomes. Effective health literacy and numeracy involves a healthcare provider communicating clearly so the person receiving the information understands it correctly.

Patients who are better informed about their health have more effective consultations with their healthcare provider, are better informed about the medicines they are prescribed, are more likely to comply with their medication and as a result have improved health outcomes. In addition, those with limited literacy and numeracy skills are less likely to make use of health screening programmes, and tend to present to medical professionals at much later stages of disease which means that they are more likely to be hospitalised <sup>14</sup>.

In 2016, we continued our work to improve health literacy by promoting it with healthcare professionals and the general public.

## Crystal Clear Mark for Pharmacies and General Practices

Our Crystal Clear Mark, developed as part of our Crystal Clear Pharmacy and General Practice Programme, is Ireland's first health literacy quality mark. The mark is free to apply for and lasts two years. It is awarded to pharmacies and general practices that show their commitment to providing a health literacy friendly service to patients. This means they take account of the literacy and numeracy needs of their patients. The programme is funded by MSD and developed in partnership with them and the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU).

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<sup>14</sup> The National Adult Literacy Agency (Health Literacy in Ireland 2012)

In 2016, we awarded the mark to 45 pharmacies and two general practices. This means that there are 50 pharmacies and three general practices that have achieved the mark.

A full list of the pharmacies and general practices that have received the Crystal Clear mark is available at [www.nala.ie/crystalclear](http://www.nala.ie/crystalclear)

## Healthy Ireland

NALA's CEO, Inez Bailey continued to participate in Healthy Ireland Council meetings and contributed to the health literacy commitment in the HSE Implementation Plan for Healthy Ireland.

## Improving awareness of health literacy

This year NALA spoke about health literacy at four conferences:

- Health promotion conference in the National University of Ireland, Galway
- European Pharmaceutical Students' Association (EPSA) Congress, Helsinki
- Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH)
- Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) Summer School

We also delivered three health literacy workshops and gave inputs to staff from:

- Dr Steevens' Addiction Centre;
- UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science;
- The pain management team in Tallaght Hospital; and
- The Irish Heart Foundation.

We linked in with a number of health organisations to progress the area of health literacy. These included:

- HSE;
- University Hospital Limerick;
- St James's Hospital;
- New Children's Hospital; and
- Healthy Waterford.

During the year, NALA met with representatives from these organisations and discussed health literacy and its importance in all health work. In particular, we discussed the benefits of doing a health literacy audit. We looked at how an audit could help them to better measure how they are addressing health literacy in their places of work.

We have improved our health literacy audit tool, and we are hoping to use it in more health settings in 2017. We also worked closely with some third level-institutions on health-literacy research and auditing.

## Media coverage of health literacy

During the year, there were 32 articles in medical magazines and local and national newspapers about NALA and health literacy:

Publication	Number of articles
Irish Medical Times	3
Irish Pharmacy Union Review	5
Regional newspapers	22
National newspapers	2

There are also several health-related videos from our Family Learning conference available for free on our YouTube channel. These videos are promoted across our social media platforms to help reach healthcare professionals and literacy tutors. Throughout 2016 we also posted a range of health literacy-related articles on Facebook and Twitter.

## Objective 1

### Action 5

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Roll out a literacy and numeracy friendly programme across a number of local authorities to improve their communications.

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NALA worked closely with four local authorities to help them improve their services to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties.

The local authorities we worked with were:

- Cork City County Council, where we did a literacy friendly audit of the libraries' current practices and suggested actions to improve their services;
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, where we did an audit of libraries;
- Kilkenny County Council, where we did a plain English audit of a sample of their materials and developed a style guide; and
- South Dublin County Council, where we also worked with An Cosán, an organisation that delivers education and other services to women from disadvantaged areas. We worked with them to develop and deliver a Health and Wellbeing course for Older people (see page 30). We also delivered four literacy awareness training sessions to over 60 council staff during Social Inclusion Week in September.

Also in 2016, we presented to the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) with a view to getting a national approach to literacy across the local authority sector. The LGMA asked us to work individually with local authorities. In November, we presented at a conference for communications officers in local authorities. We spoke about becoming a literacy-friendly local authority and how it helps to 'leave no one behind'.

## Other literacy-friendly work

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During the year, NALA responded to organisations who contacted us seeking advice and solutions to addressing adult literacy issues in their places of work.

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With our support, the Irish Cancer Society commissioned UCC to study how the Society can deliver appropriate cancer prevention information for men over 40. The study focused on men from lower socioeconomic groups and took into account potential health literacy and numeracy barriers. The report will be launched in 2017.

Other organisations that we worked with on health literacy included the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) and homeless organisations Focus Ireland, Dublin Simon and Merchants Quay.

We also did a literacy audit of four exhibitions in the National Library of Ireland. We will continue to support organisations to become more literacy friendly through audits in 2017.

### What is a literacy friendly organisation?

A literacy-friendly organisation encourages commitment, in all parts of the organisation and among all levels of staff, to remove literacy-related barriers in their organisation.

# Practice

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## NALA Strategic Plan: Objective 2 **Improve the quality of teaching, learning and information provision**

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Good practice in adult literacy work starts with the needs and interests of individuals, and this is as true for tutors as it is for students. That is why, throughout the year, we worked closely with further education practitioners to develop and improve teaching and learning practices in adult literacy education.

NALA's work in enhancing adult literacy teaching and learning involves:

- encouraging the integration of literacy into vocational education and training and workplace learning;
- promoting a student-centred approach to adult literacy work;
- providing useful practitioner events and resources;
- providing professional development conferences and other events to highlight important issues in adult literacy and share literacy expertise;
- developing and providing teaching and learning resources; and
- commissioning and sharing research.

## Under Objective 2 we have five actions.

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1. Provide practitioner events and resources to facilitate the integration of literacy and numeracy across further education and training.
2. Supply professional development events to meet the needs of literacy and numeracy tutors, including volunteers and organisers.
3. Provide training to practitioners who want to use writeon.ie as a tool for blended learning and for the recognition of prior learning.
4. Provide a plain English information, editing and training service to those providing information to the general public.
5. Conduct research to help improve teaching and learning.

There was a great turnout at our Family Learning conference in November.

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## Objective 2

### Action 1

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Provide practitioner events and resources to facilitate the integration of literacy and numeracy across further education and training.

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It is vital that further education and training programmes are available to everybody, including people who have literacy and numeracy difficulties. To achieve this, it is necessary for literacy development to be integrated into vocational courses. This helps to ensure that people wishing to undertake education and training programmes are not excluded because of the literacy and numeracy demands of the course.

In 2016, in cooperation with Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), we provided two workshops for participants on integrating literacy and numeracy into further education and training (FET). We also cooperated with Maynooth University (MU) to provide a workshop for participants on the MU Higher Diploma in Further Education. A total of **90** FET practitioners took part in the ETBI-NALA and ETBI-MU workshops.

### Literacy-friendly health and wellbeing programme for older people

We were delighted to continue our partnership with South Dublin County Council and with An Cosán Community Education, Tallaght, in providing a literacy-friendly health and wellbeing programme for older people. Having successfully piloted the introductory course in 2015, we refined it in light of participant evaluations and delivered it to two further groups in 2016. We also designed and piloted a follow-up course for and with older people who had completed the introductory course.

**Thirty-two** older people completed the courses in 2016. Participants explored a range of health and wellbeing topics in a way that took account of health related language, literacy and numeracy issues.





Participants on health and wellbeing programme for older people.

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We would like to thank the following health and wellbeing professionals who provided expert input into many of the sessions:

- Ciara Murray and Ciara Langan, HSE occupational therapists;
- Aisling Byrne, HSE community dietician;
- Thomas McDermott from South County Dublin Sports Partnership;
- David Nagle, physical activity leader;
- Siobhan Butler and her colleagues from South Dublin Senior Citizens Club;
- Shaun Sharkey from Hickey's Pharmacies; and
- Suzanne O'Neill, horticulturalist.

## **'Well now!' Facilitator Resource**

The snappily titled 'Well now!' resource pack was developed based on the introductory, literacy-friendly health and wellbeing programme for older people. It includes a printed guide and a set of videos describing the programme from the perspective of its funders, organisers, tutors and participants.

## **Videos on integrating literacy in practice**

In 2016, we made a series of videos on integrating literacy and numeracy into FET programmes, in cooperation with a number of FET centres. The videos feature interviews with FET teachers, learners and centre managers. They describe what they do to overcome literacy barriers to participation and learning, and to develop essential language, literacy and numeracy as part of vocational learning. The videos are available for free on NALA's YouTube channel.

We would like to thank the management, staff and learners of the following centres who helped us to make the videos:

- Galway Roscommon ETB Training Centre (Mervue);
- Liberties College of Further Education, Dublin;
- Tolka Valley Community Training Centre, Dublin;
- North Wall Community Training Centre, Dublin;
- Kylemore Community Training Centre, Dublin;
- Newbridge Youth Training and Development Centre, Kildare.

## Objective 2

### Action 2

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Supply professional development events to meet the needs of literacy and numeracy tutors, including volunteers and organisers.

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This year was a very busy time for professional development events with **13** organised 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. In total, **518** people attended these events. This is a **12% increase** on the figure for 2015. After each event we carried out an anonymous survey with participants to measure the impact of the event.

We are delighted that the majority of respondents said that, not only did they learn something new at our event, but that they were also inspired to make some changes to their work practices based on what they learned. 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 January. The theme was 'Integrating technology into adult literacy work'. Participants were treated to a range of interesting and dynamic presentations and workshops on the growing role of digital technology in literacy and numeracy teaching. Everything from ideas on how to use technology when faced with limited equipment and connectivity to digital advocacy and activism were discussed and explored.

### English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) conference

In April, **66** tutors attended our ESOL conference. The title of our conference was 'Migration trends and implications for practice and accreditation'. There were presentations on topics such as social networking as a language learning tool, ESOL learners' written and spoken errors and migration trends in Ireland.



Laura Howe, An Cosán; Julie Goreham, Campaign for Learning; Anne O'Mahony, Tutor, Cork ETB; and Jim Devine, Policy Projects Innovation at our Tutors' Forum.

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## Numeracy conference

In June, **73** tutors attended our numeracy conference which was chaired by Terry Maguire, director of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. The title of the conference was 'Using informal methods in everyday maths'. Tutors were also offered a choice of eight numeracy morning and afternoon workshops and these were very popular with participants.

Among the guest speakers at the event were Tony Hayes, regional development officer with Project Maths, who spoke about the importance of adopting a visual approach when teaching numbers. Lorraine Harbison, a lecturer in mathematics at Church of Ireland College of Education, looked at using informal methods to solve calculations. The role of technology in the classroom was discussed by Patrick Johnson, a lecturer in mathematics at University of Limerick

## International Literacy Day conference

**Seventy-two** people attended our International Literacy Day (ILD) conference in September and **100%** of the attendees who responded to our follow up survey said that they had learned something new at the event. The theme of the event was 'Learning can change lives'. The event was chaired by Tony Moloney, a learner from Cork Education and Training Board (ETB) and member of NALA student subcommittee.



NALA CEO, Inez Bailey; Deirdre Fitzgerald; Aoife McCormack; Mary Swaine; Mary Concannon; Margaret Scully (student); Elaine Clifford, all from Kerry ETB at the launch of ILD

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Some of the guest speakers at the event included Dr Vicky Duckworth, a lecturer from Edge Hill University in the UK, who gave a presentation on the social and emotional elements of adult literacy tuition.

Also, Deirdre Hickey, from Galway City Adult Education Guidance and Information Service, Galway and Roscommon ETB, spoke about the role of boundaries in adult learning.

## Family literacy conference

In November, **65** people attended our conference on strengthening relationships between home and community. The theme of the event was 'recruitment and engagement strategies for family learning projects'. The event was chaired by Clare McMahon, Director of FET Support Services, ETBI and feedback from attendees showed that it was a very engaging, interesting and enjoyable conference.

Some of the guest speakers included Ann Hegarty, a literacy activist and researcher, who spoke about engaging men in family learning projects.

Mark ffrench-Mullen, a librarian from Dublin City Public Libraries, and Declan Markey, education coordinator with Ballyfermot and Chapelizod Partnership, spoke about a project to involve parents in promoting oral literacy.

Another presentation, from Joann Power, ALO and Sue Jackman, tutor, from Waterford and Wexford ETB, looked at an inter-agency approach to family learning.

## Numeracy workshops

We organised **eight** numeracy workshops during Maths Week in October. These events, run in conjunction with local ETBs, took place in Limerick, Sligo, Cork, Tuam, Clonmel, Kilkenny, Mallow and Navan. The workshops covered topics such as teaching and learning algebra, financial maths, trigonometry, technology, problem solving, statistics and geometry. In total, **122 people** attended the eight workshops.

## NALA 'top tips' videos

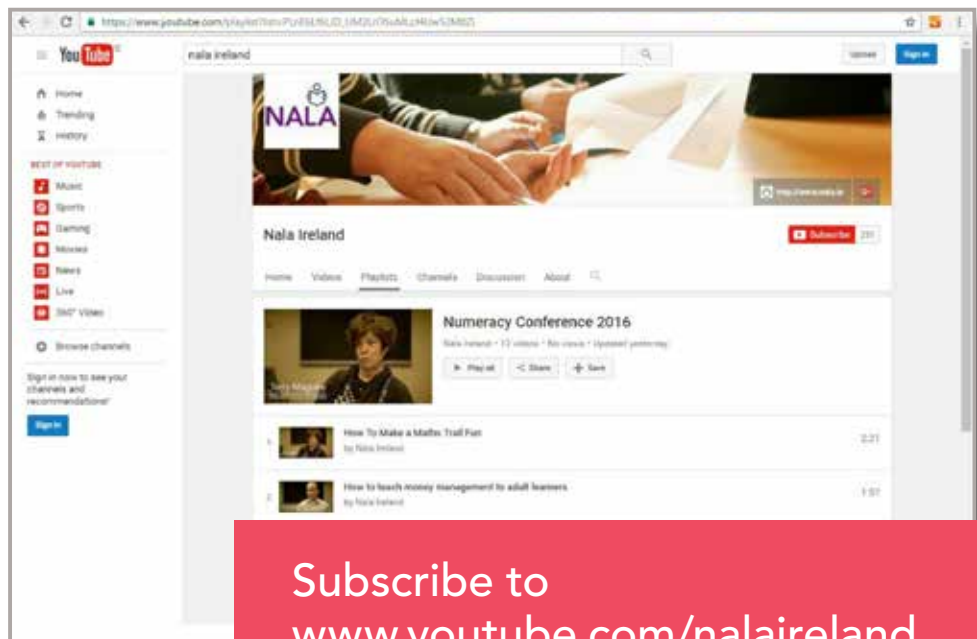
At each of our conferences, we make short videos with speakers and workshop facilitators where they share tips or best practice from their area. These videos are available for free on our YouTube channel. The following is a list of the videos that were produced and promoted in 2016. All of the videos were promoted through our YouTube, Facebook and Twitter platforms as well as our ezine which is sent to all our members.

### Tutors Forum videos (Nine videos viewed 990 times)

- Using Google apps for education and Chromebooks in an adult education setting
- Using assistive technologies to support literacy, productivity and organisation
- Digital advocacy and activism
- Using technology when you have limited equipment and connectivity
- Using technology in the numeracy classroom
- Empowering students through digital media
- TED talks, Khan Academy, blogs and videos in the adult literacy classroom
- Addressing fears around technology
- Building confidence and skills around technology

### ESOL conference videos (Eight videos viewed 955 times)

- How to support ESOL literacy learners with spiky profiles
- How to make ESOL classes engaging and interactive
- How to avoid teaching unnecessary vocabulary
- How to use social networks as a language learning tool



Subscribe to  
[www.youtube.com/nalairland](https://www.youtube.com/nalairland)  
 to see our latest tutor tips videos

- How to deal with learners' written and spoken errors
- Teaching English to migrants in Ireland
- How to use social media as learning spaces
- How to use writeon.ie in a blended learning way with ESOL students

### **Numeracy conference videos (Eleven videos viewed 560 times)**

- How to make a maths trail fun
- How to use 'Green Maths' and other examples to engage students
- How to use apps to show maths are part of everyday life
- How to use practical examples to teach geometry and trigonometry
- The joy of teaching literacy and numeracy
- How to teach money management to adult learners
- Maths and the eureka moment
- Ideas to demystify algebra
- Tips for mastering fractions through exploration
- Tips for taking a visual approach to numbers
- Tips for engaging students in the numeracy classroom

## International Literacy Day videos (Six views viewed 460 times)

- How to overcome issues of social inequality in the classroom
- How to empower adult learners
- How to have boundaries when teaching adult education
- How to use collaborative learning in adult education
- How to create transformative learning spaces
- Examples of good practice in adult literacy work

## What is the impact of our events?

Table 1 shows that the vast majority of the participants that attended our events in 2016 learned something new. 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.

**Table 1: Impact of NALA conferences 2014 to 2016**

	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016
	Learned something new	Inspired changes to work	Learned something new	Inspired changes to work	Learned something new	Inspired changes to work
National Tutors' Forum	92%	78%	100%	94%	100%	95%
Numeracy conference	100%	82%	100%	100%	100%	70%
International Literacy Day conference	95%	92%	100%	50%	96%	92%
ESOL conference	100%	100%	93%	73%	92%	77%
Family literacy conference	100%	100%	100%	56%	100%	95%

Our surveys were done anonymously using Survey Monkey.



## Objective 2

### Action 3

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Provide training to practitioners who want to use writeon.ie as a tool for blended learning and for the recognition of prior learning.

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NALA has been offering a Distance Learning Service (DLS) since 2000. It is designed to fit learning around the needs of students. The free service provides high quality education for people who want to improve their basic skills.

In 2016, the service enabled **1,075** learners to achieve level 2 and level 3 QQI accreditation through our website writeon.ie. Learners can use writeon.ie on their own, with the support of a Distance Learning tutor, or through blended learning in a centre.

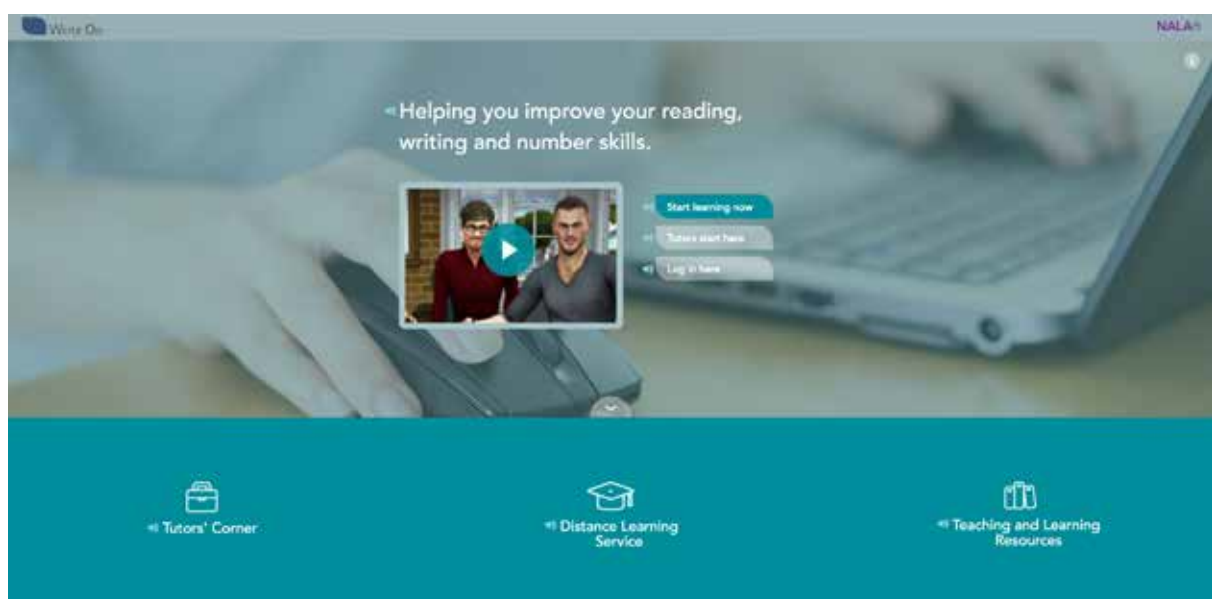
We provided training to **84** tutors from **40** different adult education centres on how to use writeon.ie as a tool for blended learning and for recognition of prior learning. We also offered support on using writeon.ie to tutors and independent learners through our Freephone service.

As well as the level 2 and level 3 QQI accreditation, learners also now have the option to gain a NALA Certificate of Achievement for learning at level 1.

Table 2 outlines how the DLS supported learners to improve their basic skills in 2016.

**Table 2: 2016 Summary of Distance Learning Service**

<b>Initial assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>3</b> Learning Support Workers involved in initial assessment</li><li>• <b>187</b> initial assessments were done with potential learners. If this assessment shows that a learner is suitable for distance learning, they are matched with a Distance Learning Tutor</li><li>• <b>180</b> learners were matched with a Distance Learning Tutor</li></ul>
<b>Distance learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>7</b> Distance Learning Tutors</li><li>• <b>238</b> learners availed of 2,141 learning sessions with a Distance Learning Tutor</li><li>• Distance Learning Tutors work with learners over the phone, email or by post – sending and receiving learning resources. On average, each learning session was 30 minutes.</li></ul>
<b>Accreditation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>1,075</b> received awards</li><li>• There were 4,161 awards in total. This includes 3,461 level 2 minor awards and 700 level 3 minor awards.</li></ul>
<b>Adult Education Centres using our DLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners from <b>92</b> centres received awards using writeon.ie</li></ul>
<b>WriteOn.ie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>6,318</b> new learning accounts set up</li><li>• <b>13,508</b> different visitors to the website</li><li>• <b>21 minutes and 16 seconds</b> was the average time on the website</li></ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>6</b> free training sessions provided</li><li>• <b>84</b> tutors provided with training</li><li>• <b>40</b> centres represented in training</li></ul>



## New look and content for writeon.ie

Following a review of the website's teaching and learning content, we made a number of improvements to the site. We have redesigned the homepage to make it more user friendly and to include more information for learners and tutors about how the website works. We also included non-accredited numeracy content for writeon.ie which will appear on the website in 2017. The aim of this new content is to support students in their numeracy learning and to help bridge the gap that many learners experience when they are going from level 2 to level 3 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## The programme and Learner Support System (PLSS)

In November a NALA staff member received training, organised by the ETBI and SOLAS, in using the new Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS). The Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) will enable better sharing of data within FET and across the education sector and other Government departments. NALA offers adult learners the opportunity to improve their literacy, numeracy and IT skills online using writeon.ie. Each person's learning is tracked and stored and, on completion, is submitted for recognised QQI awards at levels 2 and 3. The PLSS allows NALA to publish its writeon.ie courses on a database which can be accessed through a new website, [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie). Fetchcourses.ie is a further education and training course hub that was developed by SOLAS and the ETBI and brings all up-to-date information on FET courses together in one place for first time.

## Objective 2

### Action 4

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Provide a plain English information, editing and training service to those providing information to the general public.

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Our plain English service helps organisations remove literacy-related barriers to customers accessing their services. In 2016, the demand for the service was greater than ever which means that more people are now receiving information in a way that makes it easier for them to understand and act on.

### Plain English editing and training

During the year, **90** organisations paid for our Plain English Editing and Training Service. The health sector is by far the biggest user of our editing services.

Regulators are also increasingly interested in our editing and training service. For example, we worked with new regulators like the Policing Authority of Ireland and long-standing regulators such as the Road Safety Authority to improve the clarity of their communications.

### Plain English Mark

Our Plain English Mark is a logo that organisations can include on their websites or printed documents to indicate that their materials meet international plain English standards. Examples of documents that now feature our Plain English Mark include:

- The Central Statistic's Office Guide to Filling in the Census
- The Governance Code for the Community and Voluntary Sector
- Donegal County Council's Tenants Handbook
- Various EirGrid documents.

## Case study

A highlight this year was Longford County Council's Development Plan which won a major Irish Planning Award. The win was in large part due to our plain English summaries of the plan's chapters, many of which were quite complex. We were very pleased for Longford County Council and for the recognition of our work.

## Training

This year we delivered plain English training to **700** participants. This is an increase of **100** people from 2015. Training evaluations, reviewed externally, consistently showed trainees' satisfaction with the quality of training and resources they received.

Some examples of government departments and other organisations who used our training services in 2016 include:

- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- The Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources
- The Department of Agriculture
- Thirty-four organisations from the Community and Voluntary Sector (funded thanks to 'The Wheel's Training Links Grant Project')
- UCD Higher Diploma in Safety and Health at Work
- BelonG To, a youth group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender young people in Ireland.

## Developing and sharing resources

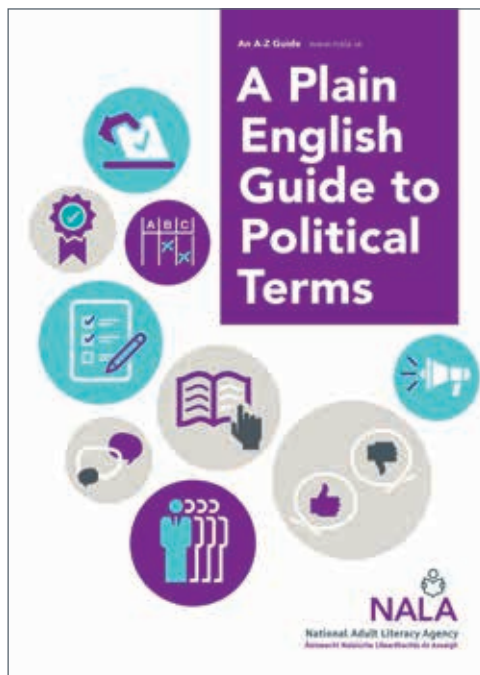
There was an increase this year in the number of organisations requesting help with developing or updating resources. More organisations sought our help to update and or develop plain English style guides. Examples include:

- The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (this guide has been circulated widely across the Public and Civil Service)
- The Office of the Revenue Commissioners
- The 'Writing for the web' style guide for the community and voluntary sector (developed thanks to funding from the Wheel's Training Links Grant Project) which we shared with over 34 organisations in the community and voluntary sector, and with our members.

These guides feature our Plain English Mark.

Another valuable resource we shared this year was our updated **A-Z Plain English Guide to Political Terms**. It came out just in time for the election discussions early in the year. We shared this resource with over **1,000** of our members and at other events for adult literacy tutors and clients of our Plain English Editing and Training Service.

A new booklet is also being developed in partnership with leading law firm Mason Hayes & Curran. The booklet will profile legal cases in Ireland which would not have happened, or would have been less contentious, if the organisations' communications had been clearer. It will be launched at the second Plain English Awards in Ireland in January 2017.



## Objective 2

### Action 5

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## Conduct research to help improve teaching and learning.

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Research is a key element of NALA's work, and we are committed to the use of research in building on our previous work and promoting the use of evidence-based practice.

In 2016, we were involved in three main research projects including two sets of case studies and an analysis of national and international literature on family-literacy programmes.

### Case studies

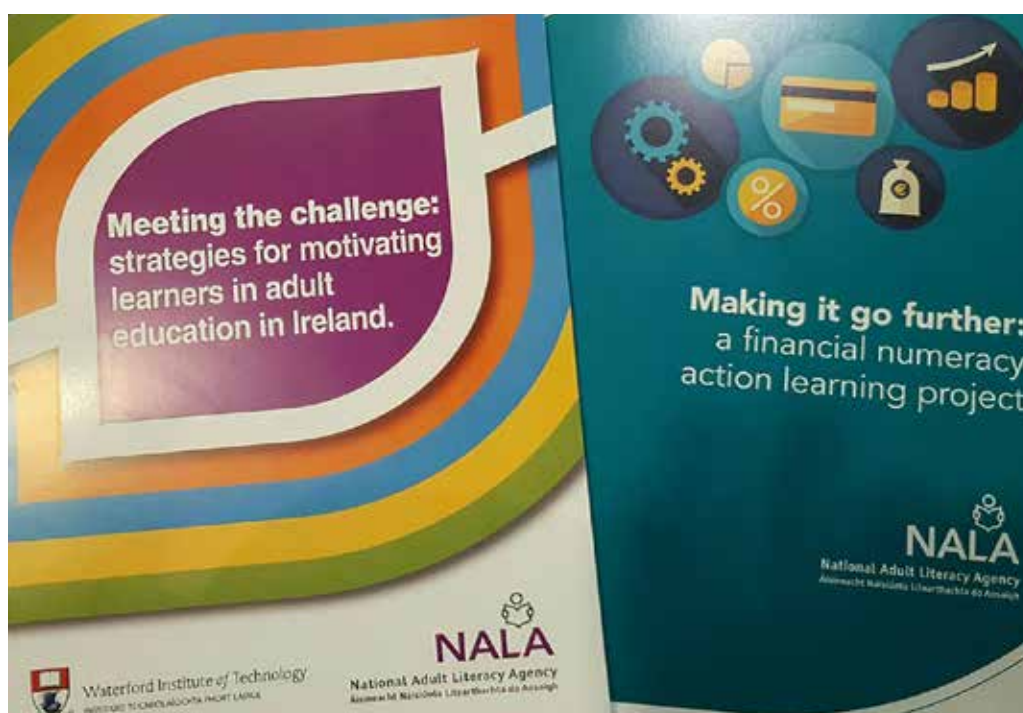
#### Meeting the challenge

This report is the latest in a series of research reports that describe a range of adult literacy and numeracy programmes in ETBs. It uses a case study approach and presents current teaching and learning practice in adult literacy and numeracy provision in the context of the changing profiles of learners. The research looks at teaching practices that tutors can implement to increase engagement with learners who are reluctant or have low motivation levels.

#### Making it go Further

In December 2015, we published *A Wealth of Practice*, a set of case studies describing financial numeracy teaching practice in Ireland. The case studies focused on the strategies tutors used to teach financial numeracy to adult learners.

Following the launch of *A Wealth of Practice*, we invited numeracy tutors to take part in an action-learning project to try to capture and document the immediate impact of the financial case studies. This resulted in **Making it go Further**, a report that identifies teaching and learning ideas and resources that tutors tried out with their own learners and developed into resources to share with other practitioners.



These resources include:

- a set of worksheets and materials to help learners understand and compare the different costs of borrowing money;
- an activity looking at the comparable costs of the same volume of different types of liquid (petrol, bottled water, milk, perfume);
- activities to help learners compare mobile phone costs and data usage;
- an initial assessment tool designed to assess learners' numeracy capabilities when dealing with money;
- how to use a graphic novel about money dilemmas with a group of young people; and
- a video resource for tutors on teaching adults about money.

This research takes place in the context of the Further Education and Training Strategy (FET) 2014-2019<sup>15</sup>. The FET Strategy, which aims to develop a high quality integrated system of further education and training in Ireland, includes a literacy and numeracy strategy with twelve elements that prioritises numeracy. This research forms part of NALA's contribution to the implementation of the FET strategy and was completed in collaboration with the ETBs.

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<sup>15</sup> Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS (2014)



## Analysis of national and international literature on family literacy programmes

Research shows that parental involvement in a child's learning has more of an impact on their educational outcomes than any other demographic measure including social class<sup>16</sup>. However, to date, there has been little detailed study in the area of family literacy in Ireland. To address this, the review we carried out summarises the main points from national and international literature and examines existing studies and policy statements about the contribution that family literacy programmes can make to the literacy skills of adults and children. This is also an area for development in the FET strategy.

## Sharing our findings

To reach as many people as possible with our research, we shared our work online, in publications and at events in 2016. Our research also informs continuing professional development workshops and seminars organised by NALA.

## Online

We promote our research online through our ezine, Facebook and Twitter. We also share our research videos, including a new one related to the Making it go Further report, on our YouTube channel.

## Publications

In 2016, we worked with three tutors on writing an article that was published in the Research and Practice in Adult Literacies (RaPAL) journal. The article, **Action learning with Irish numeracy tutors**, describes how the tutors took part in a NALA research project concerned with adult numeracy. The report, **What really counts: case studies of numeracy practice in Ireland (2015)**, focused largely on the strategies tutors use to teach numeracy to adult learners. The article outlines what three tutors did and the effect it had on their practice. It demonstrates how action research can be empowering for tutors and allows them to share their practice with their peers.

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<sup>16</sup> Parental Involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis ( Fan, X. & Chen, M. 2001)

## At events

We presented the findings from our research at NALA events and shared our research with organisations at home and abroad including SOLAS, ETBI and RaPAL.

In 2017 and beyond, NALA will remain committed to producing research that informs both policy and practice. In order to do this, we will continue to place the adult literacy learner at the centre of all our work and to reflect and capture their views through our research work.

## Find out more

Our research reports are available to download for free at [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

## Adult Skills, Lifelong Learning and Positive Ageing in Ireland

In April we had our first meeting to plan a new research project examining the relationship between adult skills, participation in lifelong learning and positive ageing in Ireland. This project is linked to previous research undertaken by NALA that examined the results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) <sup>17</sup>.

The new research project is a collaboration between NALA, Dr Sarah Gibney from the Health and Positive Ageing Initiative in the Department of Health, and Dr John Comings and Dr Steve Reder, two US based researchers. The research aims to segment the Irish population by their literacy and skills profile and examine the barriers to participation within those segments similar to previous work carried out in the US by Dr Comings and Dr Reder.

The research will identify the various profiles of adult learners in Ireland based on their educational attainment, literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, this study will describe the socio-demographic, labour market, and positive ageing characteristics of each profile of adult learner. The research will utilise data from PIAAC and from the forthcoming Age Friendly Cities and Counties (AFCC) survey. In August the research team working on the project agreed the research plan and next steps.

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<sup>17</sup> OECD Adult Skills Survey (2012)

The evidence arising out of this research will be utilised to inform policies aimed at increasing the numbers of adults engaged in lifelong learning under the Further Education and Training Strategy, National Positive Ageing Strategy and Healthy Ireland Strategies. The research will also be used by the Age-friendly Ireland Programme, which involves local multi-agency planning structures, to consult with older people and develop integrated city and county strategies, to promote and advance older people's positive ageing and social inclusion across Ireland.

## **Strategic thinking in research and practice**

In 2016 we started developing two new strategies for research and practice. The research strategy will produce evidence to show why literacy matters to Irish society. The strategy will be used to raise awareness among key decision makers and among the general public. The practice strategy will enable NALA to be more effective in supporting people who deliver adult literacy education and training.

# Access

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## NALA Strategic Plan: Objective 3

### **Build awareness of literacy and numeracy**

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At NALA we are actively engaged in raising awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy skills, both at an individual and at a societal level.

At an individual level, we work to raise awareness of learning opportunities and services, and to promote the benefits of adult education and lifelong learning so that people with literacy and numeracy needs can fully participate in society.

Literacy students are vital in bringing to life literacy issues and motivating others, in a similar position, to do something about their own literacy. We work closely with students to help us raise awareness whilst also ensuring their own views are heard and inform our work.

We also know that parents who are engaged in their child's learning have a significant positive impact on a child's educational achievement. We work to promote the role that parents can play in improving children's literacy and numeracy, specifically parents in communities identified as disadvantaged; parents who left school early; and parents with literacy or numeracy difficulties.

At a societal level, we campaign to secure support for the greater use of plain English in all public information. We carry out work with organisations to help them implement plain English guidelines and be fully accessible to people with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Our aim is to get more organisations that deal with the public to adopt a whole-organisation approach to literacy and numeracy. Plain English benefits all of us and is particularly helpful for people with low literacy levels.

## Under objective 3 we have five actions.

1. Promote awareness of available learning opportunities.
2. Work with adult learners to gather their views and support them to contribute to the organisation of learning options.
3. Promote awareness of the importance of involving parents in their children's learning and encourage the use of the website [www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie)
4. Run awareness campaigns aimed at developing the public's health literacy.
5. Build a campaign to secure the public's support for the greater use of plain English in communications with the public.

NALA communications manager, Clare McNally doing a TV interview at our Student Day in Kilkenny



## Objective 3

### Action 1

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## Promote awareness of available learning opportunities.

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This year NALA managed a new national literacy and numeracy awareness campaign on behalf of SOLAS. The campaign was an important action in the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014-2019<sup>18</sup>, and a wide range of stakeholders were involved including ETBI, ETBs, Libraries, Skills for Work, Skillnets, AONTAS, ISME, IBEC, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc, BIM, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health.

### Take the first step

The campaign was called 'Take the First Step' and encouraged people to take the first step to return to education to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The campaign, which was launched on International Literacy Day on 8 September and ran until 22 September, included national radio advertising, video and digital advertising on social media, posters and a great deal of public relations activity. An Post also supported the campaign by funding national TV advertising that encouraged adults with literacy or numeracy difficulties to return to education.



Jockey Johnny Murtagh and writer Patricia Scanlan (front, l-r) joined learners Gerardine Dunphy and Chris Carthy (back, l-r) at the launch of the awareness campaign.

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<sup>18</sup> Department of Education and Skills and SOLAS (2014)

## Research and planning

Before the development of the awareness campaign, NALA did extensive research with the target audience. We spoke to early school leavers, long-term unemployed people, parents of school-aged children and older people about their perceptions and attitudes towards education. We did this to get a deeper understanding of what would work for them in a campaign.

The research showed that many people regretted having left school early and had very different motivations for wanting to return to education. These included wanting to improve basic skills to get a qualification or get a job; a desire to support children with homework; and also personal reasons such as the wish to improve their self-esteem and confidence. We knew that we needed to develop a campaign that would speak to different people. Our research also showed that our target audience would relate best to real people and not actors or celebrities. From experience, we knew that students sharing their stories would be the most effective strategy to motivate others to improve their basic skills. While advertising on TV and radio remained important, Facebook came out as the best way to reach almost all groups.

The end result was a campaign that profiled four amazing individuals who had addressed their literacy difficulties and benefitted from returning to education. The four ETB students profiled were:

- Eamon Delaney, aged 38, from Kilkenny. Eamon attended Clonmel Adult Education Service which is run by Tipperary Education and Training Board.
- Chris Carthy, aged 53, from Sligo. Chris returned to education at Sligo Adult Learning and Education Service (ALEC) which is run by Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board.
- Gerardine Dunphy, aged 52, from Meath. Gerardine attended adult education classes in Navan which were run by Louth and Meath Education and Training Board.
- Tony Moloney, aged 59, from Cork. Tony attended Youghal Adult Education Centre which is run by Cork Education and Training Board.

Like thousands of people all over Ireland, these students left school early and had struggled with literacy and numeracy difficulties throughout their lives. The campaign focused on the benefits of returning to further education, as well as demonstrating that this issue is not confined to any particular group.





## How it worked

The awareness campaign encouraged those interested in improving their basic skills to Freephone 1800 20 20 65, Text LEARN to 50050 or log onto [www.takethefirststep.ie](http://www.takethefirststep.ie).

Once they called or texted, NALA put them in contact with their local ETB Adult Education Centre or told them about other free services that would help them meet their needs.

When people called the Freephone number, our staff asked if they found the call helpful. Almost 100% of callers who answered this question said that they found the service helpful. Some callers also said that, while they had been aware of other adult literacy awareness campaigns for years, they never followed up to enquire about getting help. This time, they had the courage to take the first step and make the call.

At a glance:

- **2,500** campaign posters were sent to literacy services around the country
- **30,000** promotional leaflets were distributed nationally
- **40,000+** people watched the online videos of Eamon, Chris, Gerardine and Tony
- **3,000** social media interactions - likes, comments or shares
- NALA provided information to over **450** people about their local ETB adult education service



## What Freephone callers said:

**"I've been wanting to call for the last 10 years but hadn't the confidence."**

**"It's so refreshing to be able to text. I can't believe you responded! I feel so lucky. Thank you so much."**

**"I can't believe all the help is available for free."**

## Post campaign research

Following the campaign, we commissioned external research to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign and to explore how improvements could be made for future campaigns.

The research shows that the campaign performed strongly. Some of its findings are presented below.

- One in three (34%) Irish adults recalled some element of the campaign which is impressive for a relatively low-budget campaign (the sample was nationally representative).
- Level of recall rose above 50% amongst those with literacy or numeracy difficulties and those with a friend or relative with difficulties.
- Strongly considered to be informative, with credible, real life situations.
- Considered very effective in communicating the message that improving skills can bring lots of benefits.
- Awareness that courses are available locally and free of charge rose from 48% before the campaign to 63%.
- Attitudes towards literacy and numeracy services and difficulties are also more positive amongst those who had seen the campaign.



Students Eamon Delaney and Donna Murray, along with Fair City actor Bryan Murray, before their appearance on TV3's Saturday AM show.

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## Other promotional work

### 1. Interviews with literacy students

Students have a unique ability to encourage people who are thinking about improving their literacy and numeracy skills to do something about it. They know about the barriers and stigma that can prevent people from attending a course. In 2016, we secured interviews and features with students in the following media and often callers to our Freephone said that hearing or reading these interviews was the trigger that made them make the call.

### TV and Radio

- RTÉ Today with Sean O'Rourke Show - twice
- TV3 Saturday AM Show - twice

### Press

- Irish Examiner
- Irish Independent
- Irish Daily Mirror
- The Herald

Adult learners  
Joe Higgins and  
Ann Quinn on  
RTE's Today with  
Sean O'Rourke  
show.

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## 2. Facebook campaign

Our Facebook advertising campaign uses images and messages to target adults in Ireland with an unspecified education level. Our Facebook advertising was seen 550,000 times which resulted in 38,000 clicks to the 'need help' section of our website.

## Making Ireland Click

In November, NALA CEO, Inez Bailey was interviewed on Making Ireland Click, a new TV series that encouraged all citizens to do more with and embrace online technology. As a result of the programme NALA received several phone calls from people who wanted to find out where they could go to improve their digital literacy skills. Our Freephone administrators referred these callers to local ETBs.

## National Ploughing Championships

The National Ploughing Championships is a great place to meet people from all over Ireland. Every year, the number of people attending the event grows and this year was no exception, with a massive 283,000 people descending on Scraggan in Co Offaly. As always, the enthusiastic team of students who managed NALA's stand tried their best to talk to each and every person that was there! The students had many great conversations with people who were very interested to hear the students' personal stories about returning to education.

The students also gave out a map that had details of all ETB Adult Education Centres around the country and students advised people to follow up with their local centre if they were interested in returning to education. Two of the students, Michael Power and Kevin O'Duffy, also did an onsite interview with Midlands Radio.

## **Shopping centres**

During National Adult Literacy Awareness Week, we had a promotional stand in three of the country's main shopping centres. From 12 – 17 September, we had a stand in the Ilac Shopping Centre in Dublin. Students and NALA staff managed the stand throughout the week. This meant that they could chat to members of the public about literacy and give out details about local ETBs and education opportunities.

On 15 September, we arranged for a stand in Mahon Point Shopping Centre in Cork. Brid Murphy, an ALO with Cork ETB, managed this stand along with several local students including Tony Moloney, who gave an interview to Cork 96FM from the shopping centre. We also had a stand in Eyre Square Shopping Centre in Galway on 16 September. This stand was attended and managed by Sheila Holland-Fox, ALO with Galway Roscommon ETB, along with local adult education students. We also managed to secure an in-studio interview for Sheila with Galway Bay FM on 15 September.

## **The impact of our promotional work**

Our promotional work in 2016 resulted in us providing over 1,000 individuals with information about our literacy service and referral information to other adult literacy services. We often referred individuals to more than one service, for example an ETB Adult Education Centre and or NALA's Distance Learning Service. Table 3 on the opposite page counts each referral to a service and this comes to 2,051. Over 725 information packs were sent out to callers by post or by email.

**Table 3: Number of referrals made to services**

<b>ETB Referred to</b>	<b>Total</b>
Cavan and Monaghan	<b>25</b>
City of Dublin	<b>288</b>
Cork	<b>90</b>
Donegal	<b>17</b>
Dublin and Dun Laoghaire	<b>143</b>
Galway and Roscommon	<b>47</b>
Kerry	<b>26</b>
Kildare and Wicklow	<b>61</b>
Kilkenny and Carlow	<b>19</b>
Laois and Offaly	<b>26</b>
Limerick and Clare	<b>52</b>
Longford and Westmeath	<b>31</b>
Louth and Meath	<b>59</b>
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim	<b>36</b>
Tipperary	<b>24</b>
Waterford and Wexford	<b>44</b>
WriteOn	<b>426</b>
DLS	<b>574</b>
Other	<b>63</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2051</b>

## European Agenda for Adult Learning

In 2016 NALA collaborated with AONTAS as a partner in the third phase of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (EAAL). The EAAL highlights the need to increase participation in adult learning of all kinds (formal, non-formal and informal learning) whether to acquire new work skills, for active citizenship, or for personal development and fulfilment. The theme of the EAAL in Ireland is 'Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow'.

NALA was represented at two project advisory group meetings along with the other key stakeholders: AONTAS, SOLAS, ETBI, Léargas, INOU, An Cosán, TUI, University of Limerick, Maynooth University, QQI, Skills for Work, DCU and the Department of Education and Skills.

In 2016 the project undertook a number of actions to promote lifelong learning, exchange best practice and celebrate learner role models. Through this awareness raising activity, supporting practitioners and engaging stakeholders, the project increased awareness of the benefits of adult education and attracted new learners into further education and training programmes.

The EAAL project continues into 2017 with more actions planned, including a joint seminar organised by NALA and ETBI. The theme of the seminar will be literacy and wellbeing as ETBs have noticed an increase in the number of referrals of students with complex psychosocial and mental health issues.

## **ELINET: European Literacy Policy Network**

At a European level, in 2016, NALA successfully completed its work with 80 ELINET organisations from 28 countries. The network aims to analyse and influence literacy policies for children and adults, as well as raise awareness of literacy issues across Europe.

NALA CEO, Inez Bailey was a member of the ELINET management board. Her work involved attending meetings and contributing to the governance of the project as well as its future direction.



## Objective 3

### Action 2

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Work with adult learners to gather their views and support them to contribute to the organisation of learning options.

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At NALA, students and their views play a crucial role in shaping the work that we do. We strive to ensure that feedback from adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties is heard and taken into account by policy makers.

### 197 students attended our student days

Our student days in 2016 were very popular with **197** students (almost 40 more than in 2015) attending two events in Kilkenny and Dublin. Almost all of the students were attending ETB adult literacy centres. Such was the demand from students, that many centres organised a bus to go to the student days with high numbers of people attending from Cork, Wexford, Tipperary and Drogheda.

NALA's student subcommittee during one of their meetings in 2016

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Members of our student subcommittee with hurling manager and guest speaker Brian Cody at the Student Day in Kilkenny

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NALA was delighted to have John Lonergan, Former Governor of Mountjoy Prison, speak to students at the Dublin student day. He praised students for getting back to education and gave his own thoughts on things a person can do to be happy. In Kilkenny, Brian Cody, Kilkenny hurling manager, spoke to students about the importance of teamwork and perseverance in the face of failure.

At each student day, there was a variety of workshops for students. These included workshops on using technology and how to bring learning issues or problems to ETBs.

The student days are a very important way for NALA to find out about issues that affect students. At the student days in 2016, learners said they:

- want more tuition hours and classes over the summer;
- did not know enough about the services before they started a class;
- had a bad experience at school but adult education is more positive;
- would like to get a student card; and
- think that not every learner gets the same information about qualifications.

Other issues students raised were the difficulties of joining a group when first returning to education, and how having literacy difficulties was a contributing factor to depression. NALA published a short report on student days<sup>19</sup>. It includes recommendations from students about adult education services they would like to see provided. This report is available on NALA's website.

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<sup>19</sup> Report on NALA Student Days (2016)



NALA is grateful for the support of ETB Adult Literacy Organisers and tutors in letting students know about the student days. We would also like to thank the NALA student subcommittee for the work they do in organising and facilitating the student days.

## Over 1,600 students take part in events funded by NALA

In 2016, **68** organisations received small grants from our Student Development Fund. **Sixty-two** of these organisations are ETB centres. This means that NALA's Student Development Fund enabled **1,634** students to take part in new learning development activities outside the classroom.

The funding was spent on trips to areas of historical and educational significance and participation in health and wellbeing courses.

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 and the Further Education and Training Strategy.

Blanchardstown  
Youthreach say  
thank you to NALA  
for funding their  
educational trip

---



The topics in 2016 were:

1. Barriers to education
2. Technology in our lives
3. Progression

NALA looks forward to sharing this feedback with you in 2017.

## **Advisory Group for setting up the National Adult Learner's Forum**

NALA took part in a national advisory group to set up the National Adult Learners' Forum. This group met three times during 2016.

The forum is a platform that gives adult learners an opportunity to share their views at national level and to help influence policy. The first National Learners' Forum for Further Education and Training (FET) was held in the Mansion House in February when 80 learners from across Ireland met to discuss their achievements and challenges in further education. The learners who attended were nominated to join the forum by their local adult education groups, and included representatives from community education, the Youthreach programme, the Back to Education Initiative and the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

NALA's Student and Membership Officer took part in the advisory group which was made up of representatives from AONTAS, SOLAS, ETBI, the Adult Education Officers' Association, the INOU and the Department of Education and Skills. Adult learners attended the last meeting of the Advisory Group in 2016. NALA also liaised with AONTAS about our Student Days and the Student Development Fund.

## Objective 3

### Action 3

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Promote awareness of the importance of involving parents in their children's learning and encourage the use of the website [www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie)

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Parents are a child's first teachers and they are very important in the development of a child's early literacy skills. However, it can be difficult for parents to help their child develop and learn. In 2016, we continued to support parents to develop their child's literacy and numeracy development through our **stakeholder work** and **online activity**.

### Stakeholder work

In February and September 2016, NALA gave presentations to new Home School Community Liaison Coordinators (HSCLs) at their continuous professional development training. At the presentation we showed HSCLs how they could enable parents to support their child's learning and introduced them to our online website [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie). We also spoke about the importance of HSCLs and parents linking with local ETB adult literacy centres.

NALA had carried out a pilot to make it easier for HSCLs to bring the website to parents in November 2015. This resulted in us developing a one-hour information session that HSCL could give to parents of children in DEIS schools. Following that, and with sponsorship from EirGrid, NALA created a new resource pack for parents who attended the information session with HSCLs.

The resource pack shows parents and guardians who have children in DEIS schools how they can support their child's literacy and numeracy development through fun, everyday activities in the home.



The pack includes:

- The Boredom Buster – a large collection of fun learning activities that parents can do with their children no matter what the weather,
- a colouring sheet for children, and
- a tea towel reminding parents of the importance of talking, playing, reading, writing and counting with their children.

All of the items come in a colourful tote bag.

NALA produced resource packs for 2,000 parents all around the country. The packs were delivered to parents by HSCLs in conjunction with Tusla, the child and family agency.

## Workshops at 2016 NALA Student Days for parents and guardians

At the two NALA student days, in Dublin and Kilkenny, ETB family learning practitioners gave workshops on fun things that parents and guardians could do to help their child learn. In their workshops the family learning tutors also included tips on using [www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie).

## Promotion of the website by the Department of Education and Skills

NALA was delighted that the Department of Education and Skills included information on [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie) in a letter to school principals in May 2016. As a result, NALA received requests for promotional material from 44 schools.

## Online activity

More and more parents are using the internet to find out about fun things they can do to help their child learn. Our online activity involves delivering information through daily updates on Facebook, a monthly ezine and regular updates on [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie). We worked with our stakeholders to promote the website and we also promoted it through Facebook and Google advertising. This has resulted in:

- **147,000** people using [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie);
- **1,671** people receiving our ezine which is a 9% increase on December 2015; and
- **19,214** likes for the [helpmykidlearn.ie](http://helpmykidlearn.ie) Facebook page.

## Objective 3

### **Action 4:**

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#### Run awareness campaigns aimed at developing the public's health literacy

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During the year, we continued our work to improve health literacy by promoting it with healthcare professionals and the general public.

This work involves our Crystal Clear Mark for Pharmacies and General Practices, speaking at a range of health conferences and working with healthcare organisations. It also involves our ongoing work with Healthy Ireland, a Government project which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health

For more information about this work please see page 23.

## Objective 3

### Action 5

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Build a campaign to secure the public's support for the greater use of plain English in communications with the public.

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In 2016, we built on the momentum from the NALA-hosted 2015 Plain Language Association International conference. We worked to ensure that plain English was a priority for the Government and also for many individuals and organisations around the country.

### Work with PLAIN

Our work with the Board of PLAIN (there were 12 meetings with the Board and its subcommittees throughout the year), has helped us to keep abreast of planned international plain English initiatives and projects. This includes the 2017 plain language conference in Austria, a follow-on conference from PLAIN's last conference which we hosted in 2015.

### Raising our profile

This year, our plain English and health literacy activities were covered 50 times across national and regional newspapers. We were also encouraged by the positive reception we received from Minister Brendan Howlin in January when we presented 5,000 signatures from the Irish public from our plain English petition. The petition called on the Government and its agencies to use more plain English. This was a very valuable exercise for NALA, and it led to more contacts for us in the Government and several meetings with high-level officials.

NALA also submitted a response to the consultation on 'Creating the National Action Plan 2016-2018'. Our call to use plain English has been adopted as a measure in this draft plan.



NALA CEO, Inez Bailey presents our plain English petition to Minister Brendan Howlin

## Plain English Awards

In September, we once again partnered with leading law firm Mason Hayes & Curran (MHC) to launch our second Plain English Awards. This year, we encouraged businesses and organisations from different sectors (Financial, Health, Regulatory and Public Sector) to send us documents that they think are outstanding examples of plain English.

The awards were launched with a photo call featuring NALA CEO, Inez Bailey, MHC managing partner, Declan Black, and journalist and broadcaster, John Murray. Media coverage of the launch featured in **three** national newspapers (The Irish Independent, The Irish Examiner and The Herald) and **two** regional newspapers. As well as this, Inez was interviewed on **one** national radio programme (The Ray D'Arcy Show) and **five** regional radio programmes. Declan Black was interviewed on Newstalk's Down To Business show.

The Plain English Awards were also promoted on LinkedIn where posts received over 50,000 views and 108 interactions (comments, likes or shares) from people.

**Fifty-two** entries were submitted to the Plain English Awards from a wide range of organisations and businesses across the financial, health, regulatory and public sectors. The winners will be announced at a ceremony in 2017.



Journalist and broadcaster, John Murray; NALA CEO, Inez Bailey; and MHC managing partner, Declan Black at the launch of our Plain English Awards

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## Simplyput.ie

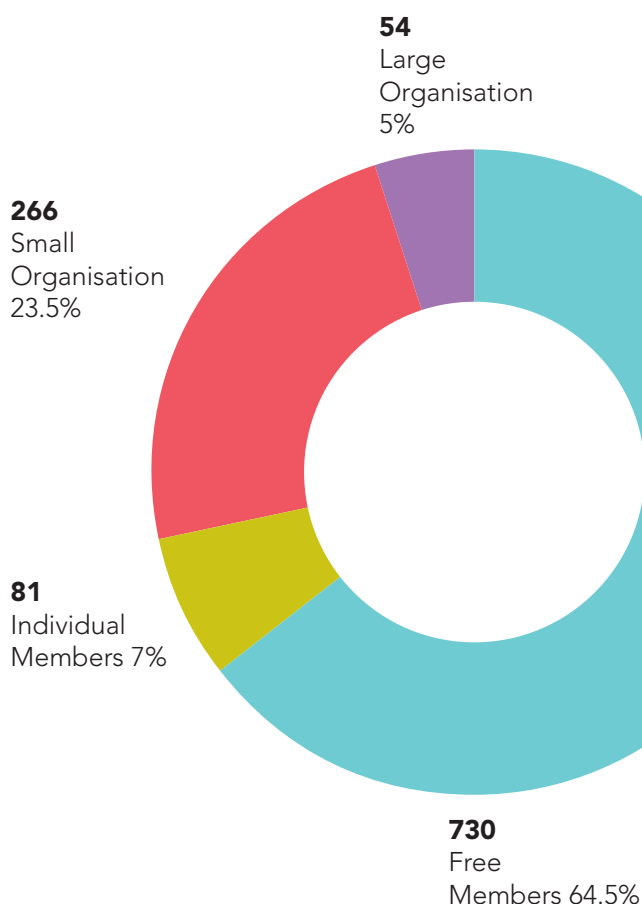
Over **8,000** people visited our plain English website [simplyput.ie](http://simplyput.ie) and the majority of these (over **6,500**) were people who were new to the website. There were **17,000** page views on [simplyput.ie](http://simplyput.ie).

# Strengthening our effectiveness as an organisation

## NALA membership up by 6% in 2016

NALA had **1,131 members** in 2016. This represents a 6% increase in members since 2015.

The biggest increase was in our small organisation members which grew from 238 in 2015 to 266 in 2016. It is also great to see our number of free members increasing from 703 in 2015 to 730 in 2016. Income from membership fees was €20,875 which is a 13% increase from 2015.



## **Our individual and free members are:**

- adult literacy students;
- tutors;
- people working in education; and
- members of the public who are interested in literacy.

## **Our large organisation members are:**

- ETBs;
- county libraries;
- partnership companies;
- education-related national organisations; and
- organisations that are engaged in work with NALA through its Plain English Service, Literacy Awareness Training and solidarity work in the community and voluntary sector.

## **Our small organisation members are:**

- adult literacy centres;
- Youthreach centres;
- schools and community training centres;
- prisons, probation or Garda projects;
- National Learning Networks;
- disability support organisations; and
- traveller organisations.

You can see a list of our large and small organisation members on **[www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)**

In 2016, NALA updated its 'Internal Processes for Membership' document. We also implemented a reminder process for members about their subscription and made it easier for free individual members to renew membership. Members also contributed ideas and suggestions for NALA's new strategic plan.

NALA very much appreciates its members support.

## 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 2016, we continued to provide information through our website **www.nala.ie**, social media and newsletters.

Here is a summary of our work.

	2016	2015	% difference
www.nala.ie unique visitors	140,000	114,000	22% increase
www.nala.ie page views	536,000	490,000	9% increase
Ezine subscribers	4,163	3,680	13% increase
Facebook followers	4,025	3,000	34% increase
Twitter followers	2,639	2,000	32% increase
Literacy Matters	2 Magazines issued	2 Magazines issued	

## Social media interactions and engagement

Our Facebook and Twitter platforms enable us to have a two-way dialogue with our online followers.

- In 2016, NALA's tweets were engaged with, which means they were clicked on, liked, retweeted or replied to, **4,682** times by our followers.
- Our Facebook posts were clicked on, reacted to, commented on or shared over **26,000** times by our fans.

## Newspaper coverage

In 2016, NALA's activities were covered:

- **87** times in regional newspapers
- **10** times in national newspapers
- **20** times in trade media publications

## Radio and TV

- During 2016, NALA spokespersons appeared on three TV shows and were interviewed on five national radio shows
- NALA CEO, Inez Bailey did 15 regional radio interviews

## Administration

- The Administration Team provided event support to over **900** delegates at **20** events in 2016.
- The Information Helpline referred over **1,075** callers to educational opportunities like adult education centres and NALA's Distance Learning Service. On average, each caller was given information on two routes to learning.
- The Team had a busy year supporting members by assisting with invoicing, renewal of memberships and registering new members.
- Over **30,000** NALA resources were distributed to members, including workbooks, family learning resources and research reports.
- Over **700** information packs were distributed to individuals seeking details of learning and tutoring opportunities.
- NALA's bookshop for members became an online-only store and **265** books were sold to members.
- The Team prepared nearly **1,500** packs and other materials for distribution at training and sponsored events.

# Structure and funding

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The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a member-based organisation. Our membership is open to all people and organisations interested in adult literacy and numeracy development.

At our annual general meeting, members elect a Board that oversees our work. The Board includes students and tutors, people involved in adult and further education and training, and the private sector. In 2016, the Board met seven times.

NALA is a registered company with limited and charitable status. We receive a grant from SOLAS that enables us to staff our office in Dublin and carry out our work. SOLAS, 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 is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association and a Constitution which you can view at [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

NALA complies with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations. NALA was recently awarded the PQASSO Quality Mark at level 1. This widely recognised award offers both users and funders external verification of the quality and credibility of an organisation.

You can view or download a copy of our full audited accounts, details of our organisation's structure and board members, staff and executive committee and all our publications from [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

**CEO: Inez Bailey**

**Chairperson: Trevor Moore**

**Patron: Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland**

**Registered company number: 342807**

**Charity number: CHY 8506**



# 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

**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

**EAAL** — European Agenda for Adult Learning

**EBSN** — European Basic Skills Network

**EirGrid** — State-owned company that manages and operates the transmission grid across the island of Ireland.

**ELINET** — European Literacy Policy Network

**EPALE** — European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe

**ESOL** — English for Speakers of Other Languages

**ESPA** — Education and Services for People with Autism

**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

**FET** — Further Education and Training

**HSE** — Health Service Executive

**ICGP** — Irish College of General Practitioners

**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

**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

**NGO** — Non-governmental organisation

**Numeracy** — A life skill 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

**Outcome** — Outcome means 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

**PQASSO** — PQASSO, or Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations, is a performance evaluation system and quality mark for charitable organisations

**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

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[www.helpmykidlearn.ie](http://www.helpmykidlearn.ie)

Plain English website:  
[www.simplyput.ie](http://www.simplyput.ie)

Freephone support line:  
1800 20 20 65

# What's next

In 2017, we will begin the work that will enable us to achieve the objectives of our new Strategic Plan 2017-2019.

These objectives are:

- build awareness of the importance of literacy for a more inclusive society;
- lead innovation in the teaching and learning of adult literacy, numeracy and basic digital skills;
- seek further investment in raising adult literacy levels in Ireland; and
- strengthen our organisational capacity to deliver on our strategic objectives.

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**[www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)**



**National Adult Literacy Agency**  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh