



**NALA**

National Adult Literacy Agency  
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

# Literacy Matters

Keeping you up to date with literacy news in Ireland and informing you of the work NALA is doing



**"It was the best thing I ever did."**

Linda, a learner with NALA's Tutoring Service, shares her inspiring story of returning to education.

## **Also:**

- NALA launches three new workbooks for students
- Freephone calls soar during COVID-19
- Professional Development courses for tutors on integrating literacy and preparing learning materials



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## On the cover

Linda Waldron, a learner with NALA's Tutoring service.

Image: © Michael Donnelly Photography 2021.

[www.michaeldonnellystudios.com](http://www.michaeldonnellystudios.com)

The views expressed in Literacy Matters are not necessarily the views of NALA.



# In this edition

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## Literacy Matters: Summer 2021

We hope you are keeping safe and well. For this edition of Literacy Matters we wanted to share some new resources we have launched for learners and update you on our recent projects.

Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Colleen Dube, gives an overview of our priorities over the last few months and an update on work towards the new 10-year Strategy for Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy. Find out more on page 4.

Linda Waldron, a learner with NALA's Tutoring Service, shares how spotting a NALA advertisement on Facebook led her to take the first step back to education. Read Linda's story on page 6.

On page 10 we share how you can order your copies of recent workbooks we have published for adult literacy students.

We have recently launched some new Professional Development courses for adult literacy tutors on [learnwithnala.ie](https://learnwithnala.ie), our eLearning website. More information on how you can sign up is on page 24.

We continue to provide support if you or anyone you know would like to brush up on reading, writing, numbers or digital literacy. Call us on Freephone **1 800 20 20 65** or text **LEARN** to **50050**.

If you have a story for Literacy Matters please contact Aoife Mulhall, NALA Communications Officer, at [amulhall@nala.ie](mailto:amulhall@nala.ie)

**Best wishes from all the team at NALA**



# Welcome from Colleen

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## **Colleen Dube, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) describes NALA's recent work and our future priorities.**

As you may know I started as NALA's CEO on 9 November 2020. Starting a new job during COVID was not as hard as I thought it would be. This was due to the warm welcome and never ending help I received from NALA's Board, staff, members and wider stakeholders. It has been a whirlwind though - meeting everyone, getting up to speed on all of NALA's great work and identifying the areas and actions that need to be prioritised.

### **A new 10-year Strategy**

Right from the get go, I had to get stuck in to the inner workings of NALA as well as the essential business NALA does in developing policy. On my first Friday in the job, SOLAS launched the consultation process for the new 10-year Strategy for Adult Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy for Ireland. Since that time, I have collaborated with NALA's colleagues and Board on our inputs into the 10-year Strategy, which is due to be launched soon by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD.

For updates on the Strategy keep an eye on our website: [nala.ie](https://nala.ie)

We were delighted when Minister Harris accepted our invitation to attend NALA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in April. His commitment, understanding and sincerity to addressing unmet literacy, numeracy and digital needs was very welcome and reassuring.

### **Supporting learners**

It was very evident to me before I joined NALA, and even more so when I started, that the organisation has an impressive history and range of activity. As you can see from this issue of Literacy Matters, there has been no reduction in that activity during the COVID-19 pandemic. If anything the pace has increased. NALA's reach seems to know no limits. Not only does NALA support individual learners throughout Ireland but advises literacy professionals and other organisations how best to communicate with and support individuals who might have unmet literacy, numeracy and digital needs.

**"Learners are a constant reminder of why we do what we do and have encouraged us to prioritise 'Furthest Behind First' learners in our current and future work."**

**Colleen Dube, NALA CEO**



## **Enhancing the work**

One of the things that surprised me about NALA is how much great work is done by so few staff! So one of my priorities as CEO has been to review and revise how we are doing things to enhance what we do and our staffing levels. I am delighted that we have been granted additional funding from SOLAS this year that has enabled us to hire some new staff to support NALA's services.

I have also relished the opportunity to meet learners at our events and at Student Subcommittee meetings. They are a constant reminder of why we do what we do and have encouraged us to prioritise "Furthest Behind First" learners in our current and future work.

## **NALA's priorities**

Over the next few months I am looking forward to the launch of the Strategy and, all going to plan, our phased return to the office and in person meetings. This will be a new chapter for NALA with many opportunities and no doubt challenges.

Speaking of new chapters, the fifth chapter in NALA's Living History will be launched shortly along with three other research reports that are currently being completed.

I look forward to being able to provide you with future updates and insights. In the meantime, stay safe and enjoy the sun when it makes an appearance.

**Colleen Dube**

CEO, National Adult Literacy Agency



# Making a change

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**Linda Waldron, a learner with NALA's Tutoring Service, recently shared her inspiring story with the Irish Sun. Linda described how responding to a NALA advertisement changed her life.**

"In school I did up to the Leaving Certificate but at the same time I was working from 4.30am in Liffey Valley cleaning to 8.30am and then going to school. I missed a lot of days because I was just so tired. But I loved the working life.

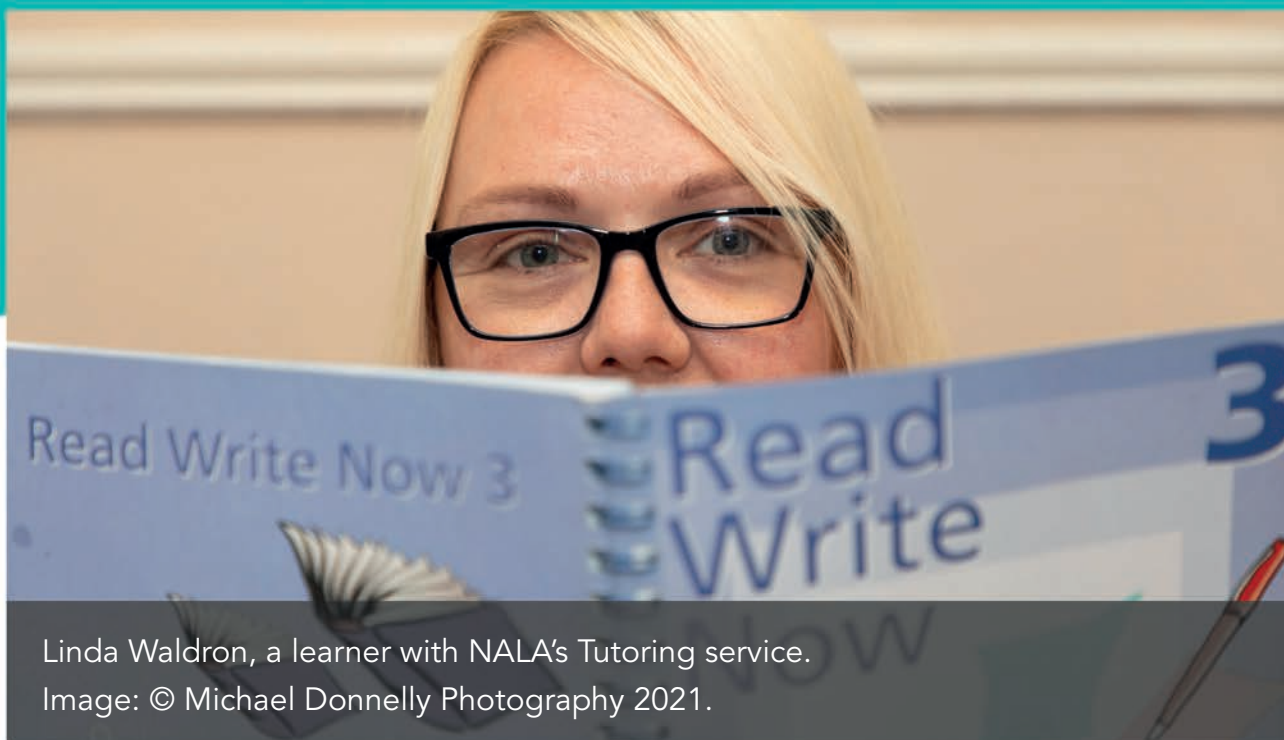
"In school I was a bit wild. I didn't want to be in school. I loved sports so I wanted to be outside, playing football and being out. But as I got older, I really regretted not paying attention. It is so important for young people and I really regret it. When I was reading a book, I wouldn't know a word - it wouldn't make sense. In school I was afraid to read, I thought I'd be laughed at. I wasn't sure what the words were and wasn't comfortable to try.

**"During the pandemic I saw the NALA ad and I just said I am going to make a change for myself. It was a big step for me. I usually hold myself back from anything like that. And it was the best thing I ever did."**

**Linda Waldron**

"It was so frustrating. And it wasn't the teachers fault. They were trying to help but I was just annoyed and frustrated. It is really hard in a classroom. If you had ideas, you were afraid to speak out, you weren't sure if you were even on the right track. It makes everything really difficult.

"I did the Leaving Cert Applied and got through all the projects but my attendance let me down. But it was okay, I loved working and helping people. I didn't put myself first, or my own needs first. I feel like I lost out on things, I was embarrassed. I felt more or less people would make fun of you if you didn't know a simple word, it left me mortified and ashamed."



Linda Waldron, a learner with NALA's Tutoring service.  
Image: © Michael Donnelly Photography 2021.

### **"It was a big step for me."**

"I now work as a cleaner in the Department of Social Welfare and it is a great job, but I don't want to always be doing cleaning, I want to improve my skills. I think I have a lot to give.

"During the pandemic I saw the NALA advertisement on Facebook and I just said I am going to make a change for myself. I am going to help myself and learn to read and write. It was a big step for me, I usually hold myself back from anything like that. And it was the best thing I ever did.

"Every Monday evening I chat to my tutor and I look forward to it. It is a free education - what more can you ask for? A woman was retiring in the Social Welfare office and I was reading out some of the messages to her, and someone commented on how I had come on so much and how terrific it was. I knew big words I didn't know before.

"And as I was reading, I was listening to myself get more confident, I was like a 10-year-old kid in school reading in front of the teacher. I have 12 nieces and now I can help the younger ones. I'd recommend it to anyone who is struggling with reading or writing.

"There are even courses you can do after and I am hoping to do some computer stuff and then maybe work towards an office job."



## **455**

people learned over the phone with NALA's Tutoring Service in 2020.

# Student writing

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**The Botanic Gardens is one of the most beautiful places to visit.**

**Have a read of the piece below, written by a learner with NALA's Tutoring Service, about one of the local places he has liked to visit during restrictions.**

My wife and I go to the National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin for lots of walks as it is close to our home.

The National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin Cemetery was founded 1795 by the Dublin Society. Today it is run by the Office of Public Works. The 19.5 hectares are situated between Glasnevin Cemetery and the River Tolka.

There are around 20,000 living plants in the gardens. Also there are some fantastic green houses which house many tropic plants. The palm house is probably the most famous.

There are a few gardens within the Botanic Gardens such as a rockery, rose garden and the bog garden. There are a number of buildings in the gardens such as a museum, café and a lecture theatre.

It is very hard to pick a favourite part of the gardens. Some of them are the rockery, the very unusual trees (one of them has the smallest acorns I have ever seen) and the lovely squirrels running all around the gardens. The Botanic Gardens is one of the most beautiful places to visit.

**Written by a learner with NALA's Tutoring Service**





# Learn with NALA

**We know that sometimes it can be hard to find the time to do a course. That's the great thing about Learn with NALA.**

Do you have access to a computer and would you like to brush up on your reading, writing, maths or digital literacy from the comfort of your home?

You can learn online for free and at your own pace with our eLearning website **Learn with NALA**. Here you can practise and improve your skills and get a qualification if you wish. Examples of courses available include:

**Level 1** Problem Solving

**Level 2** Using Technology

**Level 3** Computer Literacy

**Level 3** Internet Skills



**1,965**

people learned online through our eLearning website Learn with NALA in 2020.

**"I would like to say the courses have been very helpful to me, especially during the lockdown. I have done well with NALA so far."**

**Aisling, learner**

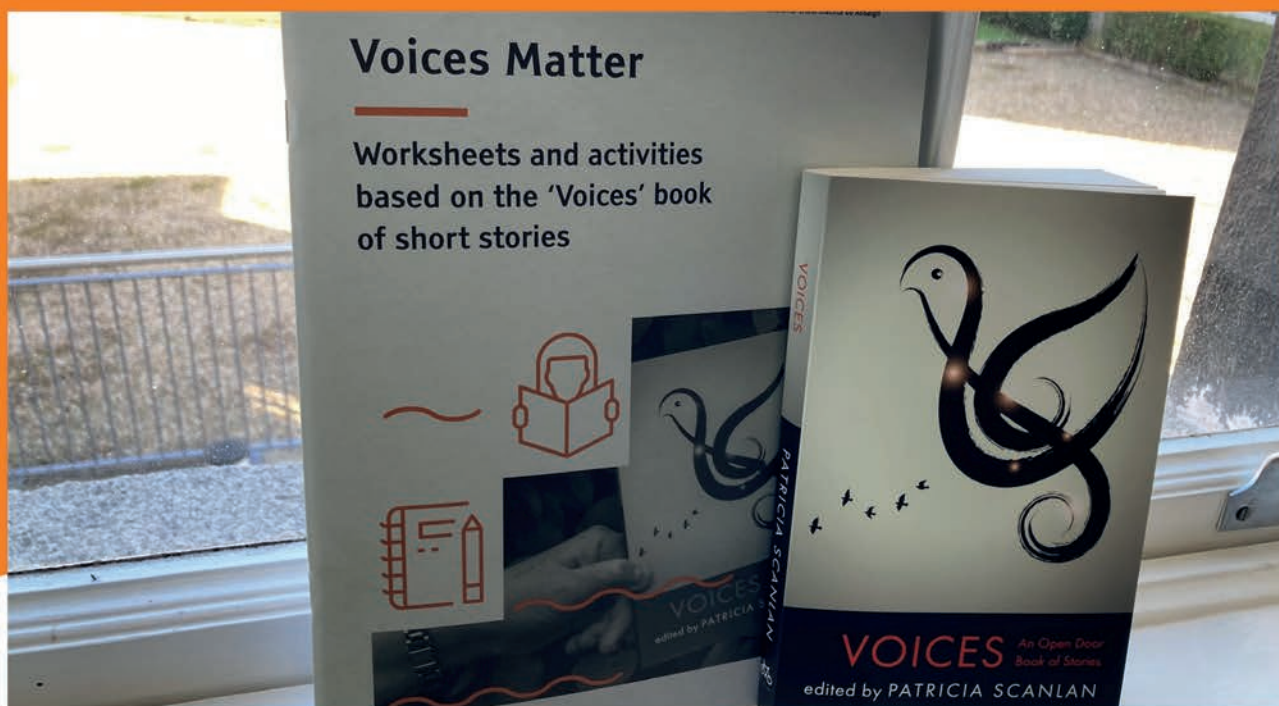
You can learn how to use computers, get better at maths or get ideas so you can help your child with homework. Maybe you want to improve your spelling or write a CV?

Ring us on our Freephone **1 800 20 20 65** to find out more about Learn with NALA or if you need help signing up. We are open 9.30am - 5pm, Monday - Friday.

We can also give you information about your local adult literacy centre run by the 16 Education and Training Boards around the country.

Visit **[learnwithnala.ie](https://learnwithnala.ie)** to start learning today.





# NALA workbooks for students

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**Three new workbooks for adult literacy students were funded by SOLAS and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.**

## **Voices Matter**

The **Voices Matter** workbook has worksheets and fun activities based around each of the 27 short stories in VOICES.

It has activities for you to:

- > develop and practise your reading, writing and spelling skills; and
- > reflect on the themes in the stories and have some fun.

The Voices Matter workbook is free and can be ordered from NALA.

The VOICES book of short stories is written for emerging adult readers by 27 of Ireland's finest authors and edited by Patricia Scanlan. It is part of the Open Door series and published by New Island Books.

You can read a copy of VOICES through your local adult literacy centre, borrow a copy from your local library or buy in local bookshops or online directly from [newisland.ie](http://newisland.ie)

## "That's Interesting!"

Since 2013, NALA has produced 'The Distance Learner' worksheets every month for students and members of NALA.

**"That's Interesting!"** brings together some of these worksheets into one pack. The worksheets can be used to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers and each includes a piece of text followed by exercises. The texts cover a wide range of topics, from human stories and current affairs to traditions and history.

## Digital Matters

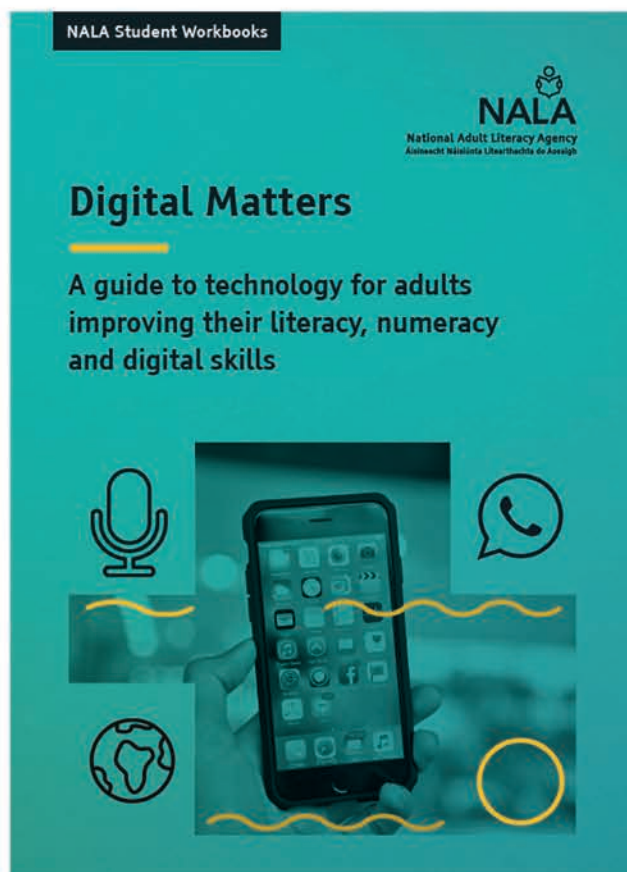
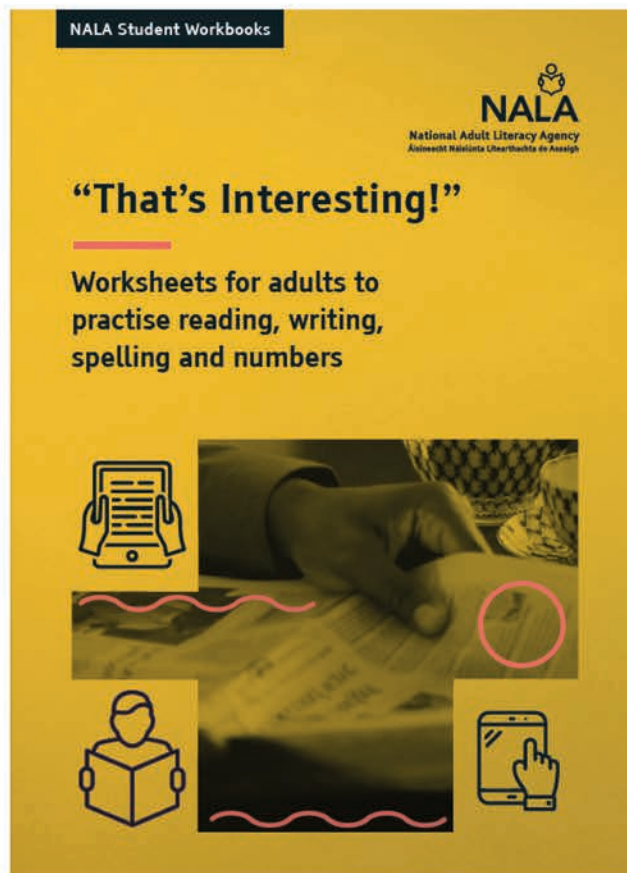
The **Digital Matters** guide brings together information on technology such as using computers and phones. The guide has practical instructions including how to search the internet and download applications (apps) to your smartphone. It also has information on social media platforms and useful podcasts.

## Order workbooks

You can order your free **Voices Matter**, **"That's Interesting!"** or **Digital Matters** workbooks by giving NALA a call on **1 800 20 20 65** or emailing **info@nala.ie**

The workbooks are also available to download on our website:

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



# How to get a COVID-19 vaccine

**To get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) vaccine most people need to register for a vaccine when it's their turn\*. This information might be useful if you know someone who is unsure about what they need to do.**

\* The rollout of the vaccination programme continues to change. Visit the HSE website for up to date information: [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie)

The HSE are advertising on television, radio and newspapers when certain age groups can register. If you are still unsure when it's your turn to register, talk to your GP or your healthcare team.

## How do I know when it's my turn to register?

The COVID-19 vaccine will offer you protection from COVID-19 (coronavirus). You can find out when it's your turn to register on the website [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie) or through HSE advertisements on television, on radio and in newspapers. People who are most at risk from COVID-19 are being vaccinated first. People who are in a certain age group are being vaccinated next.

## How do I register when it's my turn?

You can register online or by phone.

### Online

To register online go to [www.hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie)

### Phone

To register by phone call the HSE Freephone on **1800 700 700**. You can call this number 8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday.



# Look out for your COVID-19 vaccine booklet

#ForUsAll



COVID-19  
VACCINE  
Public Health  
Advice



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## What do I need to register?

You will need these details:

- a mobile phone number
- an email address
- your Personal Public Service (PPS) number
- your Eircode or address

You can still register by phone if you do not have all of these details.

## What happens after I register?

After you register, either online or by phone, the HSE will send you a text message with your vaccination appointment details 3 to 7 days before your appointment.

## Can I register at my local pharmacy?

You can get your COVID-19 vaccine at a local pharmacy if you are not already vaccinated and are:

- aged 50 or over
- aged 18 to 34

You will need to book your appointment by calling the pharmacy directly. Find a list of participating pharmacies and their phone numbers here:

<https://www2.hse.ie/Apps/Services/PharmaciesServiceList.aspx>

## Where can I find out more?

For more information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme visit the HSE website: [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie)



# Ireland Reads campaign

**Ireland Reads aims to celebrate reading and all the benefits it can have for well-being and enjoyment.**

Ireland Reads is a new campaign to get the whole country reading and this year led up to a national day of reading on 25 February. Irish libraries teamed up with national agencies including NALA, Children's Books Ireland, SOLAS, publishers, booksellers, authors and others for the campaign which is part of the Government's Keep Well initiative.

During February, we asked people to 'take a pledge' on the Ireland Reads website to squeeze in a read on Thursday 25 February. You could read anything at all, an article in a newspaper, magazine, short story or a book, and spend as little as 10 minutes reading. On Thursday 25 February, the 'Ireland Reads' campaign had 930,000 minutes pledged to read and there was a 30% increase in users of BorrowBox, the online platform for borrowing library books, during the week.

**"Books are windows to so many worlds, both real and imaginary. Regular readers sleep better, have lower stress levels, higher self-esteem, and lower rates of depression than non-readers."**

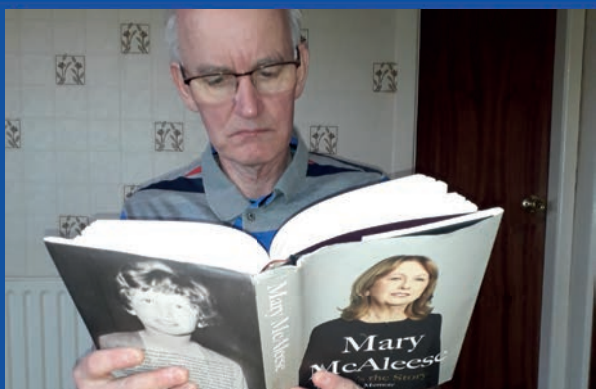
**President Michael D. Higgins**

The Ireland Reads website offers a 'Find a book' service where you can put in how long you want to read for, type of book and level and it recommends a book for you. Go here to check it out:

**[irelandreads.ie/#find](https://irelandreads.ie/#find)**

You can then order the book in your local library, check it out on BorrowBox or buy from your local bookstore.





**KEEP WELL**



Kilise na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

**"I absolutely love reading now - it has opened up a whole new world to me. I love reading about people's lives, people in authority."**

**Michael Duffy**



## Reading Matters

On Wednesday 24 February, NALA organised a webinar looking at why 'Reading Matters'. The webinar looked at the science, the stories and the soul of reading and was chaired by writer and journalist Martina Devlin.

We had four great speakers. Michael Duffy, literacy ambassador, spoke about his return to learning journey and the joy he gets from reading now. Sabina Brennan, neuroscientist and psychologist, looked at the brain and what reading does for it.

John Shortall, County Librarian for Carlow libraries, talked about how reading opened up a world of "freedom, escape and happiness" for him and how libraries have adapted to COVID. Sarah Webb, writer, talked about the joy and comfort of reading - novels, poetry, graphic novels, children's books.

You can watch the webinar back here:  
[nala.ie/today-is-ireland-reads-day/](https://nala.ie/today-is-ireland-reads-day/)

## Have your say

After the great success of the VOICES short story book, we are now talking to New Island about a series of easy to read non-fiction books for 2022. We are also looking at another book of short stories for 2023.

We are interested to hear from you about what you would like to see more of.

Did you enjoy the stories in VOICES and using the workbook? What topics were not covered and what other exercises would you like in a workbook?

Let us know your thoughts by emailing Helen Ryan at [hryan@nala.ie](mailto:hryan@nala.ie) or ring her directly on **01 412 7919**.

**"If you get lost in a book you're truly in the present moment."**

**Sabina Brennan**

# Freephone calls soar during COVID-19

**The NALA Freephone Service received an additional 1,000 calls during the last 12 months.**

In the last year, NALA has seen a 44% increase in calls to our Freephone Service compared to the same period in the previous year. The increase in calls was a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Reason for calling

Many of the callers were people who had just lost their jobs, parents who struggled with understanding information from schools and older people who wanted help using technology to stay in touch with family. We shared details of the calls at our virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Saturday 24 April where we were joined by NALA members and Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD.

**"COVID-19 took us all by surprise and many of us felt overwhelmed by it. However for those with unmet literacy and digital needs it has been an especially difficult time."**

**Colleen Dube, NALA CEO**

Our CEO Colleen Dube described what led to this significant increase: "COVID-19 took us all by surprise and many of us felt overwhelmed by it. However for those with unmet literacy and digital needs it has been an especially difficult time. Workers with low educational attainment have been most impacted by the restrictions, volumes of information and digital transition."



**3,370**

calls to our Freephone were recorded from April 2020 - March 2021.

"They have experienced greater levels of unemployment and no doubt social isolation and stress. While many people are likely to return to work, there is a real risk that some people may find their jobs gone once restrictions are lifted. It is important we acknowledge these challenges and try to alleviate them for those most at risk.

"Throughout the pandemic, NALA has been able to provide continuous and vital support to our learners and wider stakeholders. We are committed to reaching and supporting those with the greatest unmet literacy, numeracy and digital needs to reach their potential and fully participate in life and society."

**"They needed to know someone was listening and we took the time to talk to them and discuss what options they would have if they wanted to return to education."**

**Jennifer Dowling,  
NALA Freephone Service**

## New Strategy plans

NALA has been calling for a new strategy to address these inequalities and is looking forward to seeing the Government's new 10-year Strategy for Adult Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy. Now more than ever it will be vital that we support people with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs, so that individuals have the capacity to process information, make constructive choices, self-advocate and ultimately respond to external pressures and change.

Speaking at our AGM, Minister Simon Harris TD said: "One in six Irish adults can't read, or struggle with reading. This is not a figure I can live with. We will deliver an inclusive strategy that is good for individuals with literacy needs, their families, employers and society as a whole.

"I am determined to see an end to unmet literacy needs, including digital literacy. My department will work across Government to promote plain English and to support adults with the skills they need to navigate daily life, achieve their ambitions and reach their full potential, in work and at home."



# In their own words

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**An inspiring peer-to-peer literacy project took place with Portlaoise Prison's Education Unit, NALA, Waterford Institute of Technology and Laois and Offaly Education Training Board, with support from the Dublin Adult Learning Centre.**

Seven students were supported to complete the NALA and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) Developing Literacies 1 Module and graduate as literacy tutors. Three of the tutors described their experience and what taking part has meant to them.

## Peer Literacy Tutor 1

"I took part in the training because I understood how difficult life could be for people without literacy skills. I recognised prisoners who were struggling with prison-life literacy such as filling in forms for the shop, to obtain property and to add numbers to their phone cards. More significantly, I discovered many prisoners wanted to write letters to their families, especially their children, and could not due to literacy issues. I had the desire to help these people and the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) and Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) provided the opportunity to do so.

"Prison life consists of days, weeks and months with no meaning. Boring, lonely and monotonous days, just passing time until you are released. However, prison education offers hope, opportunity, structure and purpose. I felt if we could engage with prisoners around literacy and demonstrate the benefits of reading, writing and communication, then maybe they would become confident and engage further with the school.

"Prison is rock bottom, however, it can be a platform for success if literacy becomes the foundation. For me, it was a no brainer to engage with NALA and WIT. Although I have huge aspirations and see a lot of qualities in each individual prisoner, I would feel I have achieved success if it meant one prisoner's mother, child or partner was to receive their first small letter of hope, love and progress from their loved ones since the time they entered prison."



**"You're helping somebody, while also helping your own personal development, maturity, confidence and self-esteem."**

**Peer Literacy Tutor**



"I guess it inspired me to continue on the path I am following in terms of progressing within my sentence and achieving academic goals I have set for myself. It helped me diversify my skill set and challenged me to learn new skills such as teaching, transferring lessons from the group to the peer-to-peer sessions, and it boosted my confidence.

"It was not easy to shake off concerns that I was not good enough to be a tutor or wondering were people going to pre-judge me based on my conviction. To be teaching a student was very strange at times and I often questioned myself and my ability to be of any benefit to my learner.

"I gained further confidence in myself and a feeling of self-worth from achieving this Level 6 qualification. I helped my student and the skills he learned he still uses today.

"For example, he continues to read the newspapers online and openly speaks about his ability to use the internet. You would not be human if you did not gain some sort of self-satisfaction from how your student has progressed, and I must admit, it was a great feeling. You're helping somebody, while also helping your own personal development, maturity, confidence and self-esteem.

"The course encouraged me and my student to continue studying, learn new skills and not to be afraid of challenges. The conclusion I make from this course is my learner gained the ability to spell, break down words, use the internet and more, and I learned how to teach, be patient and there are no boundaries to what I can achieve academically. In that sense you could conclude that we were both students who were teaching each other."



## Peer Literacy Tutor 2

"The reason I became involved in the NALA and WIT course to be a literacy ambassador is because it is never too late to learn new skillsets. Also this was the first time NALA and WIT had run this course in a prison environment. I wanted to know if I could do this course; I shouldn't have worried too much. With our NALA teacher Ann, and the teachers in the Education Unit, I had plenty of encouragement, and the training, to finish this course.

"I was told that when I finished this amazing course I would be helping students in prison with their literacy needs. I enjoyed doing this course because I have learned that not all students or learners will have the same level of reading or writing skills. One in six adults in Ireland have problems reading and understanding information, also, half of us lack basic digital skills. As this course went on and I learned more about the work NALA does, the more confidence I got that I knew I would be able to help people in this community, in prison.

**"I get a good vibe watching and encouraging this student to grow and build his confidence so that he can develop his literacy skills and his relationship with himself and his family."**

**Peer Literacy Tutor**

"When I finished this course I worked with a student who wanted to do Level 3 communications and I helped him to do this. I have got great satisfaction out of helping the student. I also get a good vibe watching and encouraging this student to grow and build his confidence so that he can develop his literacy skills and his relationship with himself and his family."

## Peer Literacy Tutor 3

"I signed up for the NALA and WIT course because, although I could read and write when I came to prison, I had very little education and no confidence in my ability to do any sort of exam. In fact, just thinking about doing anything like that used to give me cold sweats and butterflies in my stomach, but then I started to go up to the school, admittedly just to get off the landing and avoid the yard. I started having chats with the teachers. They obviously saw some potential in me from the conversations that we were having and convinced me to start off with small things. As I started to see results and get certificates the feeling of achievement I got was something that I had never felt before and it was a great boost to my confidence.

"It also made me feel that I could go on and do my Junior and Leaving Certificate exams, something that I had always thought was impossible for me. I just wanted to help someone in a similar situation that I myself was once in – to discover that feeling and I was in a position to help them as those teachers have helped me and continue to help me. Also, when I was told about the programme, the first thing that popped into my head was I wish there'd been a programme like this available when I first started my education in prison.

**"Watching the joy on the face of the person, watching as they gained confidence when they finally realised that they could actually do the work by themselves – that was, for me, very fulfilling."**

**Peer Literacy Tutor**

"I wanted in some way to repay the kindness and patience shown to me by all the teachers that have helped me over the years and pass that on to others. What I got out of the course, which I didn't really expect, was the sense of satisfaction. Watching the joy on the face of the person who I was working with and also watching as they gained confidence when they finally realised that they could actually do the work by themselves – that was, for me, very fulfilling."

## Find out more

To find out more about the prison literacy projects that NALA is involved in, please contact Ann Hegarty, NALA Literacy Innovation worker, at [ahegarty@nala.ie](mailto:ahegarty@nala.ie)

# Time for reflection

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**Adult education centres around the country have continued to find innovative ways to help students keep learning and use their creativity to reflect on their experiences of the pandemic.**

## **People on People video project: North Wexford Adult Literacy Service**

A group of learners from North Wexford Adult Literacy Service in Gorey, part of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board, took part in a video project to reflect on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each individual in the group, together with their tutors, wrote about their personal experience of life during the pandemic. They then created a video where each person's voice was recorded reading their piece, and these recordings were played over silent video footage of the person standing still. The project titled "People on People" was a very powerful and moving process for all involved. The group described the project as therapeutic as it gave them time to reflect over their experiences during the past year. Taking part also helped the learners build their communication skills and their confidence grew tremendously.

If you would like to find out more about "People on People", get in touch with North Wexford Adult Literacy Service (Bunclody, Gorey and Enniscorthy). Email Kristin Gray, Adult Literacy Organiser, at [kristingray@wwetb.ie](mailto:kristingray@wwetb.ie) or Edel Finan, Adult Literacy Tutor, at [edelfinan@wwetb.ie](mailto:edelfinan@wwetb.ie)

## **Dublin Lives: Coolock Darndale Adult Literacy Service**

The Dublin Lives section on the website of Coolock Darndale Adult Literacy Service, part of City of Dublin Education and Training Board, showcases a collection of student writing. The pieces are shared with audio and interactive exercises and cover a range of topics including reflections on lockdown, history, travel, gardening and music. The website was recognised as a Highly Commended Initiative under the Learner Voice category at the AONTAS Star Awards 2021. Find out more by visiting: [coolockals.ie/dublin-lives/](https://coolockals.ie/dublin-lives/)



## Living with History project: Nenagh Community Training Centre

At Nenagh Community Training Centre (CTC) learners formed a committee titled "Our Living with history project capturing their experiences of COVID-19 Pandemic." Using funding from the NALA Student Development Fund they decided to create a time capsule. The time capsule captured their memories from the last year including their newsletter, artwork, a 2020 stamp and photos of classes conducted through Zoom and Google Classroom.

The learners also wrote some pieces on how the pandemic had impacted them. They created art around the centre capturing positive affirmations and their feelings about COVID-19 and returning to the centre. They also designed an urban garden to reflect new beginnings on returning to work, the learners produced artwork to display on the garden wall.

**"Our Living with History project capturing learners' experiences of COVID-19 pandemic gave us an insight into the social, mental and physical experiences of our learners and their families."**

**Nenagh Community Training Centre**

Describing the project Nenagh Community Training Centre said:

"Our Living with History project capturing learners' experiences of COVID-19 pandemic gave us an insight into the social, mental and physical experiences of our learners and by default their families.

"This enabled us to focus on the feedback and structure the programme for each of our learners. This had a huge impact on all our 'Nenagh CTC Family' and the wider community, the funding enabled us to have a practical element by creating and designing the time capsule box."



# Short practical courses

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**Join over 140 tutors who have signed up for NALA's online Professional Development courses.**

## Integrating Literacy

Are you are interested in getting practical tips and ideas about integrating literacy into your course? You can sign up for NALA's Integrating Literacy series which is available on [learnwithnala.ie](https://learnwithnala.ie)

There are three courses available:

- Introduction to Integrating Literacy
- A Practical Guide to Integrating Literacy
- Integrated Literacy Lesson Planning Workshop



**"I thoroughly enjoyed this course. I learned the importance of getting to know the learner's strengths and identifying their literacy needs."**

**Claire O'Connor,  
Louth and Meath ETB**

## Preparing Learning Materials

This course covers the preparation, design, writing and development of learning materials for your students. It includes tips on writing materials for distance learning, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

This course will be launching on [learnwithnala.ie](https://learnwithnala.ie) later in 2021.

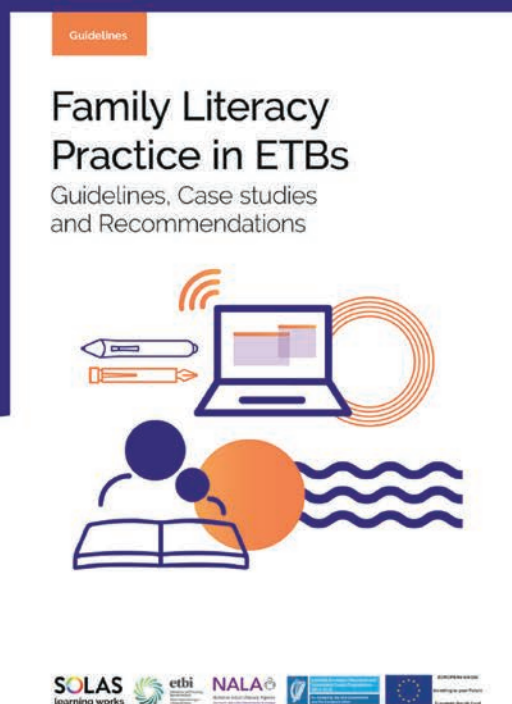
For more information about NALA's online professional development courses please contact Gillian Harris at [gharris@nala.ie](mailto:gharris@nala.ie)

# Marking Progress

## Putting the Guidelines into practice for your Education and Training Board (ETB).

Throughout the course of the Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014 - 2019, NALA was commissioned by SOLAS to complete a number of significant reports. These studies have produced evidence-based guidelines on inclusion across the contexts of family literacy, numeracy and the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in the adult literacy service.

Marking Progress has the research into family literacy as its particular focus. It aims to work collaboratively with interested ETBs to resource the implementation of locally relevant Family Literacy Guidelines.



## Family Literacy workshops

This spring the Marking Progress team ran a series of incredibly popular workshops which attracted over 70 participants. The workshops provided attendees with the space and time to explore the guidelines detailed in the report **Family Literacy Practice in ETBs Guidelines, Case studies and Recommendations**.

## Resources

As part of the project, we also have gathered a range of stimulating and exciting resources and case studies from family literacy groups around the country.

To access the resources and for further information on the project and upcoming workshops visit our website:

[nala.ie/marking-progress](http://nala.ie/marking-progress)

# Keeping learners engaged

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**Angus O’Riordan, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor, shares a range of useful learning techniques for students.**

Angus is an ESOL tutor with SPIRASI (Spiritan Asylum Services Initiative) and the Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC). Speaking at our recent ESOL webinar series, Angus described the importance of identifying the learning style of your students.

“Think about the three different learning styles, the visual learning style, the auditory learning style and the kinaesthetic learning style. Then there is the reading and writing learning style as well which is the more traditional form that we are so familiar with and that we often employ in our classrooms.

**“We’re not just thinking of one particular type of learner in our lesson, we’re thinking about all of them combined and how that multisensory approach can be employed.”**

**Angus O’Riordan,  
SPIRASI and Dublin Adult  
Learning Centre**

“The idea is that we’re not just thinking of one particular type of learner in our lesson, we’re thinking about all of them combined and how that multisensory approach can be employed.

“A lot of techniques and approaches can complement each other and there is often crossover between them as well. What works for a visual learner can also work for auditory learner.”

## **The visual learner**

Angus described some tools that can be used with visual learners. Visual learners learn best through visual formats, like diagrams, charts and graphs.



"A photo essay is a nice thing to use in the classroom. Give out a sheet of paper to learners, there's no writing on it, it's just images. The learners can discuss it, they can pick what they want from it. You can follow that up with tasks and questionnaires. Tools like Jamboard or Padlet are a nice and modern way of brainstorming.

"In the classroom we're quite used to using images. Putting those images into a video editing tool like iMovie or Movavi and adding a bit of music over them brings it a little bit more to life. A previous colleague of mine from SPIRASI, Eimear Gilmartin, has set up Listenhere.ie, a web platform where they're asking people to send in short videos. It's a really good way to engage your learners through the visual, the auditory and text as well."

## **The auditory learner**

An auditory learner learns best by hearing and listening. Angus gave examples of ways you can work with an auditory learner.

"With the development of multimedia through our phones, tablets and laptops it is so easy now to make a quick recording and then present it to the classroom.

"Book Creator is something that DALC started using at the beginning of the lockdown last year. It is a nice way to complement the visual and the auditory at the same time. It's very learner friendly and easy to use.

"I find music is a really good way to close the week out. On YouTube you've a lot of videos where they put the lyrics on the screen. You can discuss some of the new vocabulary that comes up and you can discuss the meaning of the song."

## **The kinaesthetic learner**

A kinaesthetic learner learns best through touch and movement as Angus explains:

"They're actively engaged in learning by doing, by testing, by trial and error. Using Lego for building sentences, the bricks represent various parts of language. You could just use coloured paper too if need be."

## **Find out more**

You can watch Angus's full webinar on NALA's YouTube channel where he shares more resources that can be used to keep the learner engaged:

[youtube.com/watch?v=tDw9a8q-s38](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDw9a8q-s38)

# Is your pharmacy Crystal Clear?

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## MSD Ireland and NALA open a call for new applications for Ireland's only health literacy quality mark.

The Crystal Clear programme was developed in collaboration with the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU), Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) and NALA. It is supported by Healthy Ireland. The Crystal Clear mark recognises the critical role pharmacies play in helping people understand their health issues and the steps they need to take to improve their health.

### The Crystal Clear mark

The mark is awarded to pharmacies where there is evidence of, and commitment to, providing a literacy friendly service. This requires taking account of the literacy and numeracy needs of people and looking for ways to consistently communicate clearly. The mark is awarded for three years and it is free to apply.



A Crystal Clear pharmacy receives a certificate and sticker to display in their pharmacy.

Colleen Dube, NALA CEO described its benefits: "We know from research that people who are better informed about their medicines are more likely to take the medication correctly and have improved health. As many people find clear and concise health information difficult to obtain, understand, or use, the Crystal Clear Programme enhances pharmacies' communication and customers' understanding of health information and benefits."

Eoghan Hanly, President of the Irish Pharmacy Union, said: "The Crystal Clear programme offers practical guidance to pharmacies on how to communicate clearly with people, and the mark recognises those who demonstrate best practice in this area. We are delighted to support such an important initiative and that 104 pharmacies around Ireland have this mark. We hope more pharmacies will apply and achieve the award in 2021."





Mairead McCaul, Managing Director, MSD Ireland (Human Health) added: "At MSD, the patient is at the heart of everything we do and previous research we have carried out has shown that patients are calling for healthcare professionals to speak to them in a manner that is more easily understood.

"In response to this, the Crystal Clear Programme offers pharmacies guidance on how they can communicate more clearly with patients and recognises this when they achieve the Crystal Clear quality mark. This mark shows their community and patients they are taking necessary steps to improve the patient communication, experience and understanding."



**104**

pharmacies have been awarded the Crystal Clear mark across 19 counties.

To become a Crystal Clear Pharmacy, you can apply by completing an online audit consisting of 10 questions. These questions look at:

- > communication;
- > staff awareness and responding sensitively;
- > policies and procedures; and
- > evaluating and improving.

There are seven remaining counties who do not have a Crystal Clear pharmacy yet so we particularly welcome applications from Laois, Leitrim, Longford, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo and Wicklow.

Pharmacies who wish to participate in the Crystal Clear Programme can view our Guide to Becoming a Literacy Friendly Pharmacy and complete the online audit here:

[nala.ie/health-literacy/crystal-clear-mark/](https://nala.ie/health-literacy/crystal-clear-mark/)



# Climate Jargon Buster

## A new Climate Jargon Buster website provides plain English explanations for common climate terms.

The website [climatejargonbuster.ie](https://climatejargonbuster.ie) was developed by the Department of the Taoiseach in collaboration with a group of young people from Comhairle na nÓg with support from the Environmental Protection Agency Ireland.

NALA was delighted to help with the development of this resource, which is designed to be of help to anyone looking to understand the language used in relation to climate action.

The Project was devised following feedback received from young people last year about the complexity of the terminology associated with climate science and policy and how it creates barriers to participating and engaging. NALA worked with the Department of the Taoiseach to ensure that the website and terms were written and presented in plain English. Both the website and terms have been awarded the NALA Plain English Mark.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## Climate Jargon Buster

An A-Z plain English guide  
to climate action terms



## Interactive and accessible

The website enables visitors to browse in a number of ways. You can search by terms or by categories such as policy, energy, agriculture, transport or enterprise. There is also an A-Z of climate terms or you can take the Climate Quiz to test your knowledge.

In thanking the young people involved in the Project, the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin said: "Climate change is the biggest challenge facing our planet, but the language around it is complex and not easy to understand. This website is a practical and useful resource that will help people gain a greater understanding of climate action."

Speaking at a meeting with the young people involved in the Project, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD said: "Young people have led the way on climate action, and I want to ensure that they continue to be centrally involved in our response to climate change. The Project shows the value of collaborating with young people, and I hope it will be of use to everyone with an interest in protecting our environment."

You can find out more by visiting the website here:

**[climatejargonbuster.ie](https://climatejargonbuster.ie)**





# Student Development Fund

**NALA awards €40,000 to over 50 adult literacy centres around the country.**

We were delighted to have 51 successful applications to our Student Development Fund this year. The NALA Student Development Fund is a grant for centres to pay for a group activity for students outside the classroom. In 2021, because of COVID-19, NALA also made grants available for technology to enhance learning for students.

Centres who receive the fund are also asked to gather student feedback on a topic set by NALA. The student feedback gathered then informs NALA's work.

We received some very exciting applications from centres and their learners including:

- Workshops on environmental themes chosen by students including biodiversity, sustainable living and waste.
  - Partnering with a Technological University to develop an App that assists teaching phonics.
  - Purchasing a Zoom H8 Recorder to make podcasts.
  - A Barista Training Programme for students who want to gain experience in the hospitality and catering industry.
  - Augmented Reality (AR) smart glasses to be shared across centres so that tutors can work with two learners at a time.
- A creative writing workshop with one of the authors from VOICES.

We can't wait to share more information about these exciting projects in the winter edition of Literacy Matters.

# Watch our recent webinars

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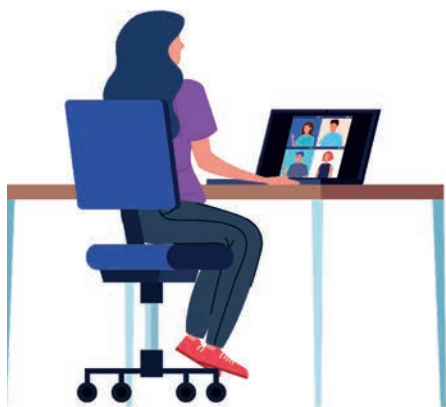
**NALA has hosted a range of webinars over the last few months that you might find useful.**

## **Health literacy workshop**

In this online workshop for healthcare workers we shared information on health literacy, numeracy and digital literacy and delivering a literacy friendly service with 10 quality standards. We also shared practical tips and ideas on communicating more effectively.

## **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) webinar series**

Are you teaching ESOL and looking for new ideas for the classroom? Our ESOL webinar series in May discussed learning techniques, activities and resources for keeping learners engaged.



## **Remote learning series**

In this webinar series we covered several topics within remote teaching including stress reduction techniques, Google Classroom and tips on podcasting.

## **Tutors Forum**

In January and February, we held a series of webinars for adult literacy tutors. We had a range of speakers who spoke about tips for blended learning with students who are new to technology, creative writing ideas and strategies for motivating learners.

## **Family learning webinar series**

Our series held last November provided some excellent resources. We covered topics like creating a mindful classroom, fairy tales and folklore, reading and using the library, telling stories via Zoom and building resilience for you and your child.

All webinars are available to watch back on the NALA YouTube channel:  
[youtube.com/nalaireland](https://www.youtube.com/nalaireland)



# Dates for your diary

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## Upcoming NALA webinars and training.

### Online plain English training

14 July 2021, 9.30am - 1.30pm

Do you find it difficult to develop clear reports, policies, leaflets, promotional, training or web materials? If so, our next online plain English training session might be for you. This half-day session is €130 per person or €110 per person for community and voluntary organisations.

### Family Literacy workshop

15 July 2021, 2.00 - 3.00 pm

NALA's Marking Progress project is hosting a free and interactive workshop about the Family Literacy Practice in Education and Training Boards (ETBs) Guidelines, Case studies and Recommendations Report. This workshop for Adult Education Officers and Adult Literacy Organisers will give you the opportunity to examine how the Guidelines can be used at local levels through a series of activities.

### Literacy for life webinar series

September 2021

In Ireland, more than half a million adults have low levels of literacy. Even more have low levels of numeracy and digital skills. Join us this September as we host a range of webinars on this significant challenge for our country and discuss how we can overcome it.

## Getting started with Learn with NALA

9 September 2021, 1.00pm - 2.00pm

NALA is hosting a webinar for newly registered Learn with NALA centres to familiarise them with how to get started on the eLearning website. The session will include logging in, registering learners, registering for a course, getting started with a course and navigating the website.

## Student webinar series

October 2021

Our webinar series for adult literacy students will cover topics such as tips for online learning, public speaking, being wise online, well-being and creative writing.

## Literacy awareness training for teachers

October 2021

In this free webinar we will discuss what primary and secondary school teachers can be aware of when it comes to the literacy needs of parents or guardians and how to create a literacy friendly classroom.

For more information on upcoming webinars, training and events please visit our website: [nala.ie/news-and-events](https://nala.ie/news-and-events)

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The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a charity and membership based organisation. We work to support adults with unmet literacy and numeracy needs to take part fully in society and to have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs. NALA does this by raising awareness of the importance of literacy, doing research and sharing good practice, providing online learning courses, providing a tutoring service and by lobbying for further investment to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

## Message for NALA Members

If you have any queries about your membership or would like to update how you hear from us, please contact Margaret Murray, NALA Student and Membership Officer, at [mmurray@nala.ie](mailto:mmurray@nala.ie) or call **01 412 7928**.

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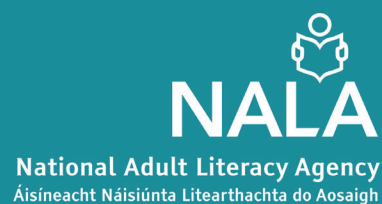
**Websites:** [www.nala.ie](http://www.nala.ie)

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

**Email:** [info@nala.ie](mailto:info@nala.ie)

 [nalairland](https://www.facebook.com/nalairland)

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