

Literacy Matters

Keeping you up to date with literacy news in Ireland and informing you of the work the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is doing.

"My motto is always
learn and never
give up."

Anzhela Zhurba



Free resources
for adult literacy
students and tutors.

Page 10

Welcoming students from Ukraine

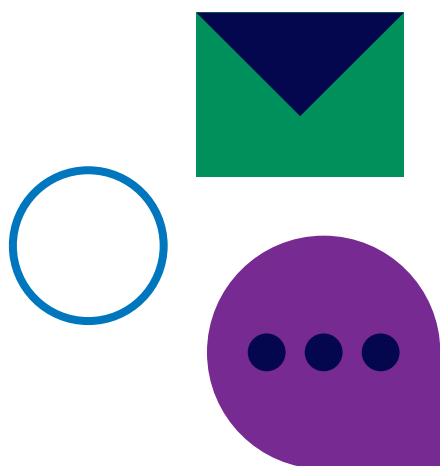
Adult education centres around the country support students recently arrived from Ukraine.

Students attend first NALA Student Day in two years in Dublin.

Numeracy-Meets, a series for numeracy tutors.

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

In this edition

Welcome to the summer edition of Literacy Matters. In this edition we share stories from learners who have returned to education and an update on what we've been up to in the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

We are hugely impressed by the amount of work that Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and adult education staff and students are doing to support Ukrainians arriving in Ireland. Your rapid response is invaluable in helping them cope at this incredibly difficult time. Read a powerful piece on page 4 by Anzhela from Kyiv, Ukraine, who is now attending City of Dublin ETB. On page 6, you can read how Galway and Roscommon ETB have been supporting their new students.

We were delighted to have students from all around the country join us for our Student Day in Dublin. After two years, it was great to be able to meet in person again for a day of talks and workshops. Read more on page 16. On page 22 we share information on our monthly That's Interesting worksheet, where students can practise reading, writing and numbers.

We continue to provide support if you or anyone you know would like to brush up on reading, writing, maths or technology. Call us on **Freephone 1800 20 20 65** or text **LEARN** to **50050**.

If you would like to submit a story to Literacy Matters, or if you would like help promoting your adult literacy service this September, contact Aoife at amulhall@nala.ie

Best wishes from all the team at NALA

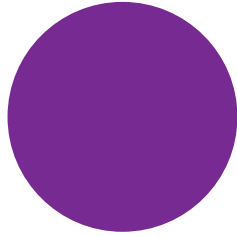
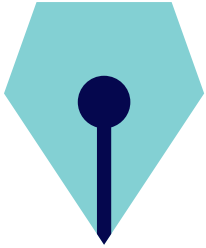
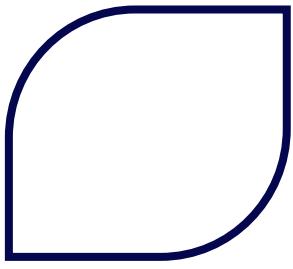
Using Quick Response (QR) codes

In this edition we use QR codes to share links and further information. To open these on a smartphone:

1. Open your Camera app and point it steadily for 2-3 seconds towards the QR Code you want to scan.
2. A website link will appear. Tap on this link. This will open it on the internet browser on your phone.
3. If nothing happens, you may need to go to your Settings app and enable QR Code scanning.



Scan on your phone



Anzhela Zhurba, at Parnell Education Centre, part of City of Dublin Education and Training Board (ETB)

Never give up

Always learn and never give up, writes student Anzhela Zhurba from Ukraine who attends English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes at Parnell Education Centre. Anzhela would like to dedicate her piece to her tutors.



"Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom."

Roger Bacon

The Ukrainian people lived in a wonderful country - Ukraine - happily where they could study, work, spend their leisure time with families and friends, bring up their children and explain to them the importance of the English language. One day - 24.02.2022 - changed everything. The Ukrainians had to flee their houses because of the Russian military invasion and aggression. Nowadays the Ukrainian people are in different countries which support them at this extremely difficult war time

An ocean of opportunity

The Irish people are among those who stand with Ukraine and give all the Ukrainian people an opportunity to study English which helps everyone remove a lot of barriers from their life. The Ukrainian adults are proud of their children who have understood the importance of English and can help their parents fill in some necessary forms, make an order in a café, do shopping and communicate with their peers at Irish schools. Not only the youth, but also the Ukrainian adults, in spite of their age, have decided to do some courses to study English which opens an ocean of opportunity for them. As my motto is **"Always learn and never give up"**, I joined the ESOL Centre at Parnell Adult Education Centre, part of City of Dublin ETB a month ago to enhance my language skills and make new friends.



"All Ukrainian people will be able to speak English fluently due to the incredibly helpful tutors and resources of the ESOL Centre."

Anzhela Zhurba

Friendly atmosphere

I really appreciate all our tutors who can create a pleasant learning environment and friendly atmosphere to make all students feel confident to speak and discuss interesting topics such as how to start business in Ireland, which places are underwhelming and which one should be visited by everyone and many others. They are really patient and explain unknown words in understandable way. During our online classes we listen to the Irish news to improve our listening skills and discuss them to make our speaking skills better. Also it helps to engage us into the Irish community and its real life. To refine our writing skills, we create haiku. Let me introduce one of them:

Dublin's eminent!

People are amiable!

We thank them for that!

Moreover, we practice using phrasal verbs and idioms putting them into the sentences to be like the native speakers. Also it's absolutely gripping to decide which noun or collocation is one odd out and explain the reason why. Thus, I'm sure that Ukraine will win, a lot of Ukrainians will be able to find a new job here in Ireland and invite our new Irish friends to our renovating country. And all Ukrainian people will be able to speak English fluently due to incredibly helpful tutors and resources of the ESOL Centre. English helps us be successful.

Anzhela Zhurba, Kyiv, Ukraine



Welcoming students from Ukraine

Creating a safe learning environment has been vital to supporting students recently arrived from Ukraine, writes Kevin Kelly from Galway and Roscommon ETB.

In North Galway we have been working with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners for many years and were eager to rise to the challenge and provide classes for those fleeing Ukraine. We now have Ukrainian learners attending English classes in the centres across the region and continue to register more learners on a weekly basis.

The levels of English are varied, the majority are beginners, some elementary and varying degrees of intermediate learners. Most have joined ESOL classes and some have also joined Family Learning Programmes.

An invaluable resource

Following an initial meet and greet with the learners, we did an initial assessment and assigned them to established groups, who receive four hours of English per week and who follow a planned curriculum. Moreover, the Ukrainian learners receive an additional 3 hours per week, which is just for Ukrainian learners for additional language support to meet their high initial needs. There was an initial change to the group dynamic in most groups, due to the usual challenges which present when new learners join an established group. However, that issue resolved itself very quickly and the transition has been very smooth.

The new learners are very engaged, express themselves with confidence and are beginning to communicate effectively both in and out of the classroom. The established learners have been an invaluable resource in sharing advice and tips on how to get started in a new and different country.



"We look forward to providing a safe learning environment and helping people establish a new life at this difficult time in their lives."

Kevin Kelly

Motivated and determined

The learners are motivated and determined and a notable observation is that they request homework and recommendations on how to advance quickly. The team in the centres have provided information on accessible, user-friendly apps and websites to assist them in their language learning outside class. Furthermore, the team has noticed more rapid progress with learners who are already working in the community. The main language difficulties the learners experience are with listening and speaking skills and in particular, understanding local accents. With this in mind, we have taken a conscientious approach to make learners aware and observe specific differences in the way Irish people speak and use English.

We continue to welcome all learners and aim to meet everyone's individual needs as best as possible across all our services. We look forward to providing a safe learning environment and helping people establish a new life at this difficult time in their lives.

Kevin Kelly, Adult Literacy Organiser, Tuam Adult Learning Centre, Galway and Roscommon ETB



Authentic materials for the ESOL classroom

Authentic materials greatly benefit English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners, writes Catriona Warren, Course Leader and Lecturer, Literacy Development Centre at South East Technological University.

The what and the why!

As motivation, interest and relevance underpin both language teaching and adult education, authentic materials are useful in our ESOL classrooms. My interest in authentic materials has stemmed from my experiences as an ESOL tutor and as a language learner. The autonomy and confidence developed through my interaction with authentic materials as a language learner has positively impacted my teaching practice.

These experiences at different levels on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) have shown me that I am most motivated when engaged with real world content. Whether it's understanding the nuacht headlines or practising Arabic numbers on number plates while stuck in traffic, success is more rewarding than correct answers on a worksheet in the classroom. It is also when I feel a greater sense of achievement. In essence, authentic material is content that has been prepared for use in the real world, and not specifically for the language classroom.



"Authentic material is content that has been prepared for use in the real world, and not specifically for the language classroom."

Caitriona Warren



The benefits and the challenges!

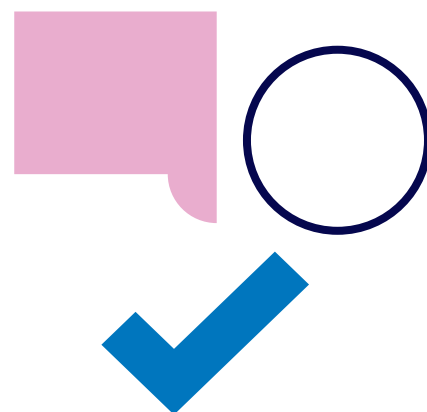
Authentic materials are a rich source of language in its natural form with variety and complexity of structure and form, colloquialisms and culture all included with consideration of a local native speaking audience. This is really important (and also a challenge) as sometimes in the safe environment of a language classroom, with adapted materials and graded target language, a learner can develop skills in isolation which are then challenged by real world interactions. From experience, the very reason anyone learns a language is to be able to engage with it in its natural form. Challenges do arise due to this complexity, especially for lower levels as the range of vocabulary, grammatical structures or bias can be frustrating. It can also be challenging for tutors to create lessons with these materials.

The how!

Once the skill or language system has been identified, some or all of the stages of a typical language lesson (receptive, productive or systems) can be used to scaffold the activities and engagement with the material. Most importantly, 'grade the task'.

This means choosing relevant and interesting resources for your learners and rather than adapting the content, the task created is easier or more difficult depending on the level of your learners. For example, an activity around the weather forecast may ask lower-level learners to identify whether it is sunny or wet but more advanced learners may be asked to pack for a hiking trip on that day. Differentiation and personalisation can also be considered as part of any lesson using authentic materials.

Free resources from NALA



NALA has lots of free resources and workbooks for tutors to use with your literacy, numeracy or digital literacy students.

ESOL lesson plans

If you're an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor looking for some materials to use with your students take a look at The Big Picture, a collection of themed lesson plans and exercises.

Each lesson provides the opportunity for practising listening, speaking, reading, writing and building vocabulary. Topics covered include going to the doctor and chemist, education in Ireland, daily routines and shopping.

The lessons range from beginner ESOL learners, through to exercises for higher-level learners, so that tutors may teach the same theme in a mixed-level class.



The Big Picture
Materials and Resources for ESOL Tutors



Find out more

Each ESOL lesson plan is available for download at:
nala.ie/materials-for-esol-tutors/





Literacy, numeracy and digital literacy workbooks

We have free literacy workbooks covering a range of levels for students to practise reading, writing and spelling. These include our Write On Learner Support Book, Brushing Up and Better Handwriting for Adults. More recently we published Voices Matter as a companion workbook to the VOICES book of short stories. We also published That's Interesting, a collection of reading, writing and numeracy exercises. For maths we have Brushing Up 1, focusing on numbers and shapes and Brushing Up 2, covering quantity and number, shape and space, handling data and pattern and relationship. Last year we also published Digital Matters, a guide to technology.



Order free resources

Scan the QR code to order free resources or you can also download them on our website: nala.ie/tutors



Register your centre on Learn with NALA

Would you like to teach your students online? You can create your own education centre on the Learn with NALA eLearning website and help your students learn more.

On our eLearning website **learnwithnala.ie** you can use our online courses to support your students. Learn with NALA offers courses in subjects such as English, maths, computers and personal development. By registering your centre, you will get access to thousands of teaching resources, and we can help your students work towards Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) certification. We do the paperwork, so you have more time for teaching.



“Last year, 20 of my students got Level 2 Certificates in General Learning using this website but I didn’t have to do the paperwork.”

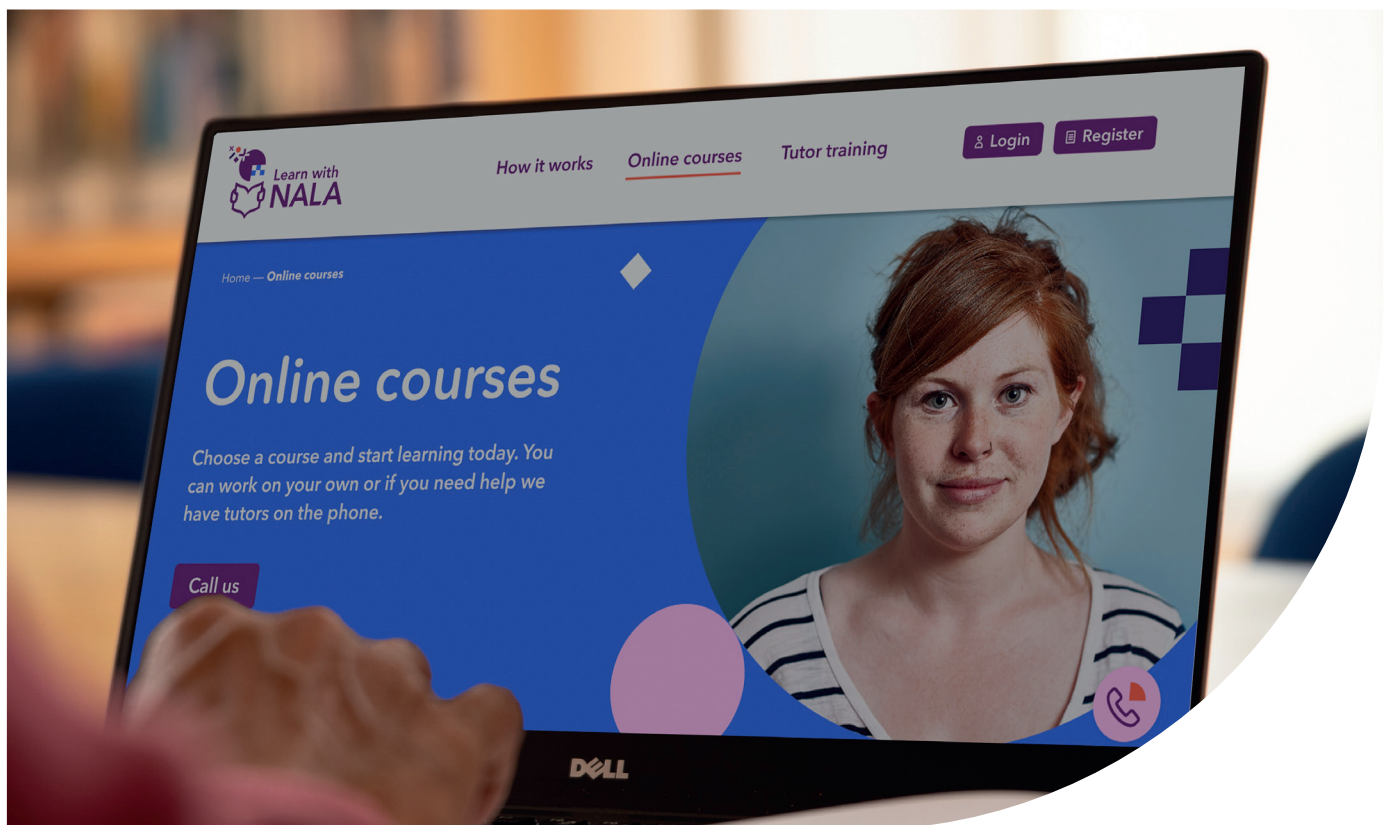
Paul Mulligan

How it works

Once you have registered on Learn with NALA, we set up your centre and add your branding to the dashboard. We give you a unique website address that you share with your students. You or your students choose a course and everyone starts learning from there.



So far in 2022, **788** QQI awards on Learn with NALA were achieved by learners in **63** centres across Ireland.



Why Learn with NALA?

There are lots of benefits to using **learnwithnala.ie** as a blended learning tool with your students.

- It saves time;
- You have access to free resources;
- Learn with NALA is QQI accredited; and
- NALA provides learner support over the phone.



Register your centre
Visit **learnwithnala.ie**, scan
the QR code or call us on
Freephone 1800 20 20 65



Numeracy-Meets

Numeracy-Meets was a series of online sessions to create a community of practice for adult numeracy practitioners. The meets were organised by Mark Prendergast and Annette Forster, University College Cork, Niamh O'Meara, University of Limerick, Kathy O'Sullivan, National University of Ireland Galway and Fiona Faulkner, Technological University Dublin. The series was also funded by the Irish Research Council.

Irish research has highlighted a demand for professional development in the area of numeracy with many numeracy tutors looking for opportunities to further develop their practice. Moreover, practitioners have expressed a desire for networking opportunities with colleagues to discuss and share their experiences.

With this in mind, a group of third level numeracy enthusiasts, in partnership with NALA, were awarded funding by the Irish Research Council to set up a series of Numeracy-Meets for adult numeracy practitioners. The overall aim of the Meets was to help practitioners around Ireland in developing their skills in the teaching of numeracy to adult learners and to support practitioners in fostering a positive and engaging environment for teaching numeracy.

Designing the Meets

The first step in the design of the Numeracy-Meets was a needs analysis survey to get a more in-depth understanding of the issues practitioners identify around the teaching and learning of adult numeracy in Ireland. The online survey was circulated to adult numeracy practitioners around the country and was completed by 33 participants. The results of this survey enabled the team to effectively design a series of six Numeracy-Meets, each with a focus on a key area:

1. Introduction to numeracy
2. Family numeracy
3. Financial numeracy
4. Numeracy for health
5. Numeracy in a digital world
6. Overcoming mathematics anxiety



Sharing ideas

The six Numeracy-Meets took place online between 1pm - 2pm over a three-month period from the 16 February to 11 May. Each Meet followed the same structure and involved the sharing of ideas on the particular topic by a guest speaker from the third level sector. This was then followed by input from 2-3 adult numeracy practitioners who volunteered to share their insights. On average, approximately 18 practitioners attended each of the Meets and it was great to see a network of expertise and a community of practice begin to emerge. The feedback from the participants was very positive and hopefully this initiative is something that might be continued into the future!



Find out more

The recordings and resources from each of the six Numeracy-Meets are available at: epistem.ie/numeracy-meets/





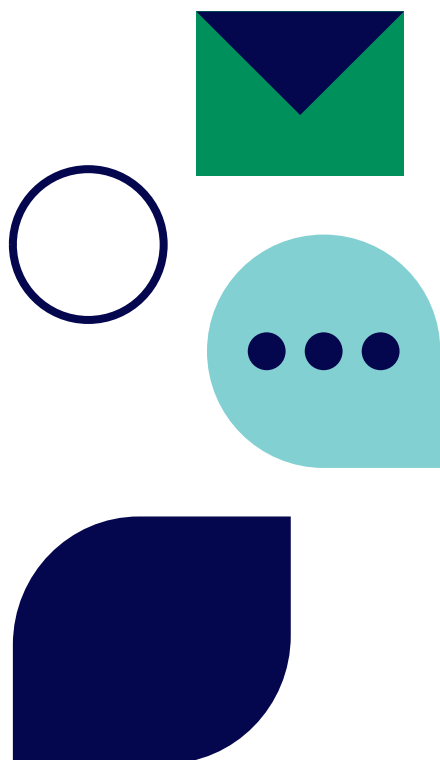
NALA CEO, Colleen Dube, with Catherine Devlin, Patrick Sutton, Maurice Sammon and Mark Daly.

Students inspire in Dublin

A huge thank you to the NALA Student Subcommittee and to all the students who spoke and took part in our Student Day in Dublin. As well as hearing from our fantastic student speakers, attendees got the chance to attend workshops on plain English, being wise online, creative writing and tips for living well.

Students share their stories

We were proud to have students from around the country join us for our first Student Day in two years at the Ashling Hotel in Dublin. These included Altrusa, Cork Education and Training Board (ETB), Klear, City of Dublin ETB, Cavan and Monaghan ETB, Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB, Donegal ETB, Tipperary ETB, Waterford and Wexford ETB and Laois and Offaly ETB.



Michael Duffy speaking at the NALA Student Day

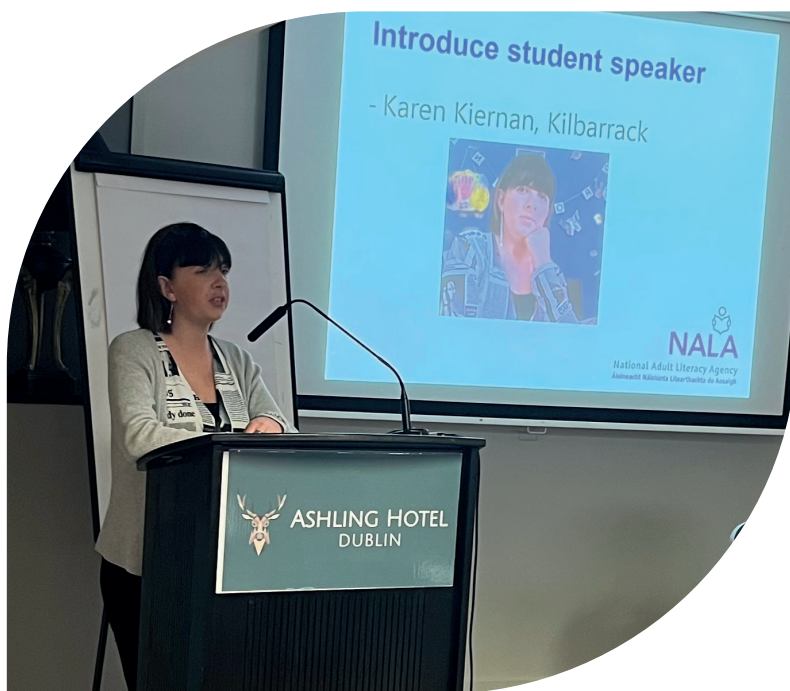
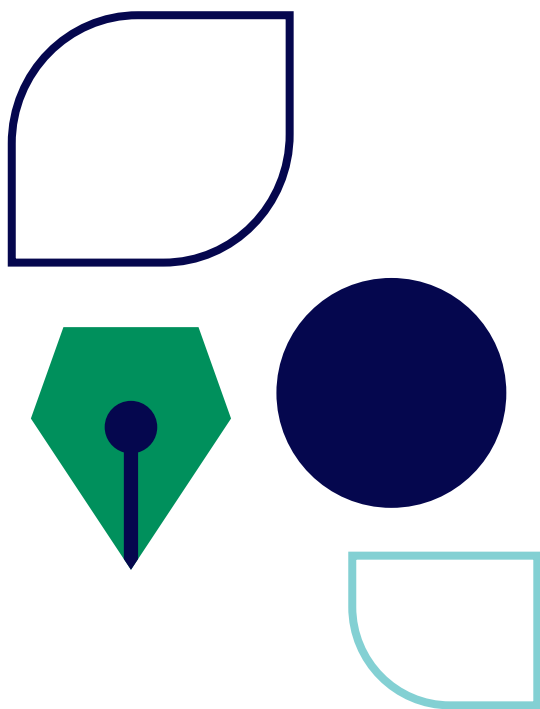


"I was one of those people that slipped through the net. When I went into class I was not the only one. That gave me strength to go on. If I can do it anyone can do it."

Michael Duffy

First up to speak was Michael Duffy, who returned to learning with Cavan and Monaghan ETB. Michael described what led to him returning to education:

"I was one of those people that slipped through the net. I left school when I was 14 with very little literacy skills. How I started back was a wee bit accidental. I used to hear people talking about technology and Facebook. I got a laptop and it sat in our sitting room for nearly two years. In our local village in Killashandra there was a computer class. I didn't realise for the QQI course you had to prepare a portfolio so the tutor arranged for our local education officer to come out and she set up a one to one for me. I kept working away at that for 6 to 9 months. I moved then into a class environment. The first step going across the threshold into a one to one, that was the big step. I thought I was the only one who had problems like that, but when I went into class, I was not the only one. That gave me strength to go on. If I can do it anyone can do it. Never say you can't do something, always say I can, I will, it's possible."



Karen Kiernan speaking at the NALA Student Day



"I'm so proud that I did go back. I never gave up, I just kept going."

Karen Kiernan

Next up was Karen Kiernan who returned to learning with Central Remedial Clinic (CRC) and City of Dublin ETB in Killbarrack. Karen shared some inspirational words with the audience:

"No matter what your struggle is, you can always go back and do things that you need to do. I'm so proud that I did go back. I never gave up, I just kept going all the way. I actually did do it and I'm proud of myself."

Finally we heard from Mark Daly, a student with Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB. Mark shared his experience of living with dyscalculia, a learning difference which makes understanding numbers and making calculations difficult. Mark also shared with the audience some of the tools and techniques he uses to manage maths in every day life.

"I came to the Student Day three years ago and I never thought in a million years that three years later I'd be standing here giving this talk about dyscalculia and numeracy. I never knew growing up there was a name for numeracy issues and maths anxiety was unheard of. There are 700,000 people in this country who struggle with numbers every day and you've been listening to one of them."



"I came to the Student Day three years ago and I never thought three years later I'd be standing here giving this talk about dyscalculia and numeracy."

Mark Daly



Mark Daly speaking at the NALA Student Day

Workshops

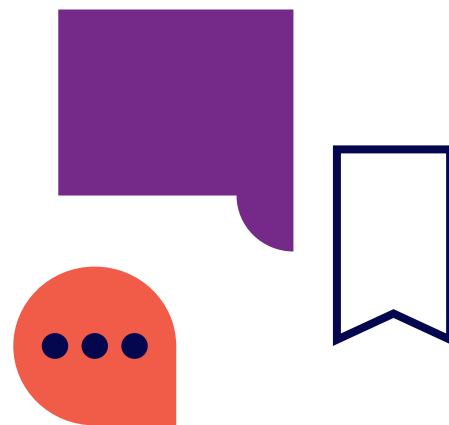
Following the talks, students were able to attend workshops for the remainder of the day. At the Being wise online workshop, Tony Daly, from 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, discussed with students how to explore their critical thinking skills. Tony looked at ways that we can all better handle online information, how to be responsible and wise online and avoid misinformation. Sean Driver, NALA's Plain English Editor, facilitated a workshop on Plain English and discussed with students information they struggled with during the pandemic. Colm Keegan, a poet and published author, held a workshop sharing tips for creative writing. Students were invited to share any poems or short stories they may have been working on. Maggie O'Sullivan, a Life Coach, shared tips on living and feeling well, how to look after your mind and become more aware of your inner critic.



Find out more

To learn more about NALA's Student Subcommittee or Student Days contact Margaret Murray at mmurray@nala.ie or call 01 412 7928.

Learn over the phone



Learn for free over the phone with one of NALA's friendly tutors. You decide what, where and when you want to learn.

NALA Tutoring Service is useful if you want to learn from the comfort of your own home with the help of a tutor. We can help you improve your reading, writing, maths and computer skills for everyday life and work. We will design learning around you, your needs and your skills.

What you can learn

We have tutors over the phone who can help with things like:

- Reading, writing and spelling
- Filling in forms, for example for social welfare benefit
- Helping kids with homework
- Understanding health information
- Doing everyday maths
- Using phones and technology

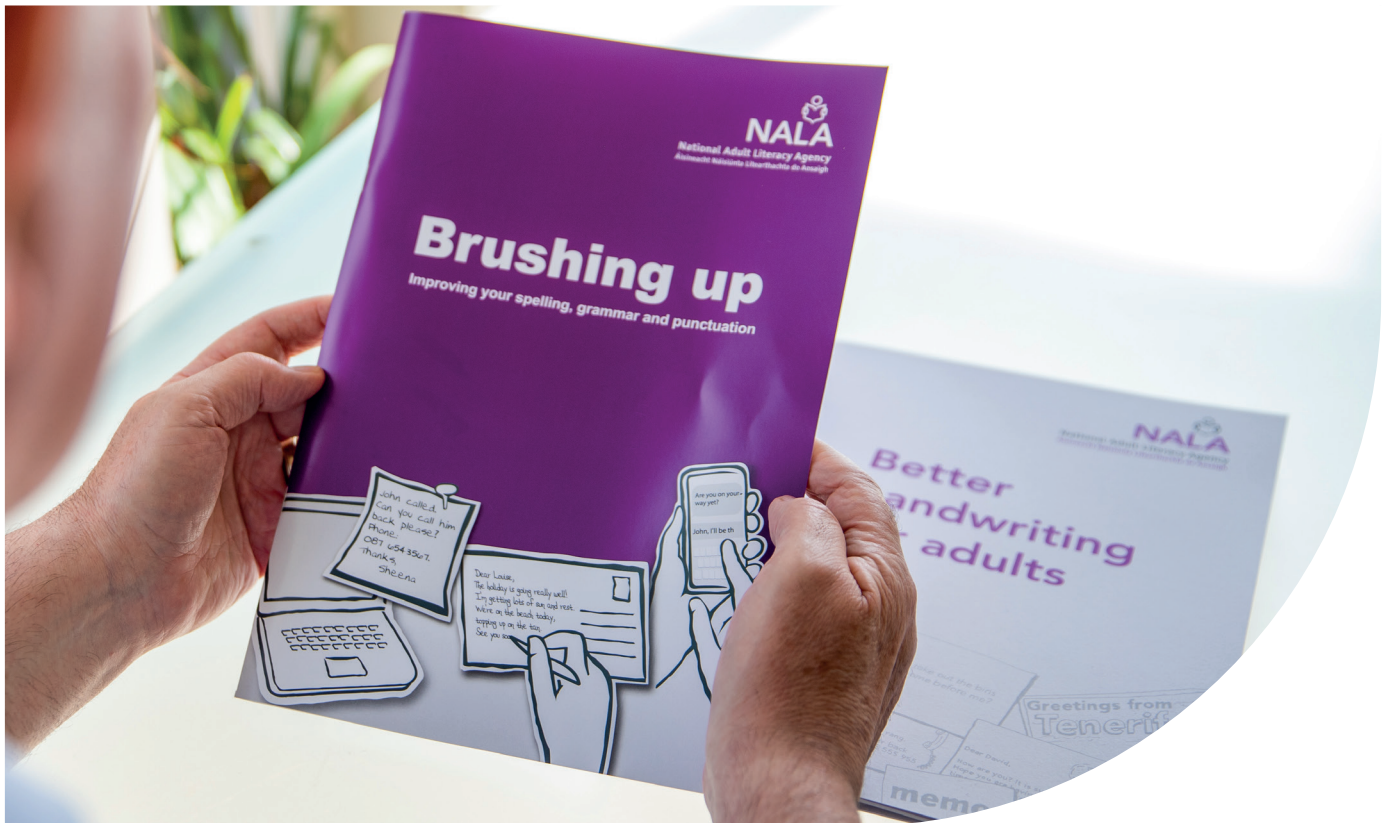


"I had never text since I had a phone...never. But now I'm texting on a phone, all because my tutor showed me how to do it. I can't stop texting now."

Jason, Wexford

How it works

You decide what you want to learn. There is no set course. We will call when it suits you. We normally make one call a week for up to 30 minutes and we keep working with you until you meet your goals.



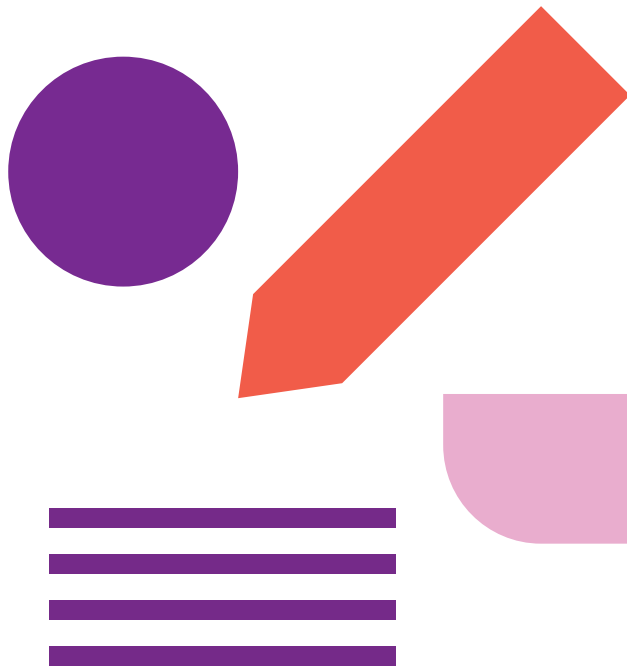
"Having no secondary school education, I felt a bit lost. So I said look it, the challenge there is to go back and see what it's like to do maths again, do reading and improve my writing. I was sent out a book called Brushing Up from NALA. I was working on my own and I got a phonecall one day would I like to have a tutor. We got on great. We started from scratch, right back at the first page of that book and we progressed through it. I found the more I did it the more I wanted to do it. Lift that phone and contact NALA."

Richard, Tipperary



Find out more

To work with one of our tutors, call NALA on Freephone 1800 20 20 65. We can also give you information on your local adult literacy service.



Edition 87 | June 2022 | Freephone 1 800 20 20 65

That's Interesting!

Learn with NALA

A worksheet for adults to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers

Tom Crean, Irish explorer



Tom Crean: The quiet pub owner who lived in Annascaul in Kerry and who never spoke about his life as an explorer and the three expeditions he made to reach the South Pole.

Tom Crean from Annascaul in County Kerry is regarded as the greatest Irish explorer of all time. Born in 1877, he was one of a family of 11 children. His parents were farmers and young Tom helped out on the family farm. It is said that after an argument with his father, he ran away from home and soon after joined the British Royal Navy. He was only 16 years old at the time.

Image source: Frank Hurley, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In the British navy he trained as a seaman and sailed to many parts of the world on the huge navy ships.

At this time, many explorers from across the world were in a race to become the first to reach the South Pole. The South Pole is at the very southern tip of the earth in the continent of Antarctica and is a vast area of ice surrounded by freezing seas. It is the most dangerous journey for any human to attempt and very many people died while trying.

1

That's Interesting worksheet

Our monthly That's Interesting worksheet is a great way for adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy students to practise their skills.

About the worksheets

Each month NALA produces our That's Interesting worksheet for students and members of NALA. You may have seen these worksheets in our monthly email to members. The worksheets can be used to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers. Each worksheet has a piece of text, often on a news topic or a story from history, followed by exercises. You can read and do the exercises on your own, or use these worksheets with the help of a tutor. You can try out one of our writing exercises on the next page.

Words that have silent letters

Words that have a **silent L**

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|------|-------|
| walk | folk | would | half | calm |
| talk | yolk | could | calf | palm |
| chalk | salmon | should | | psalm |

Words that have a **silent b**

| | | | |
|---------|------|-------|-------|
| numb | comb | lamb | doubt |
| crumb | bomb | limb | debt |
| thumb | womb | climb | |
| plumber | tomb | | |

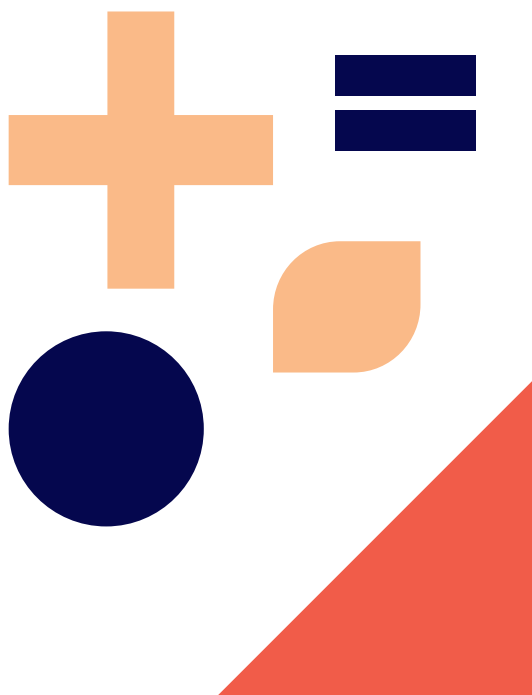
Fill in the blanks with **words from the lists above**:

1. I called the _____ to fix my broken tap.
2. It was so cold my hands went _____.
3. I go for a 5km _____ every morning with my friend.
4. I _____ really like go for a run but I feel lazy today.
5. I need to _____ my hair.



Download your free worksheet
Scan the QR code or visit
the NALA website:
nala.ie/thats-interesting-worksheet





Brush up on maths

NALA has just launched two new free maths courses on our eLearning website [learnwithnala.ie](https://www.learnwithnala.ie)

Basic everyday maths

Basic Everyday Maths will help you develop your skills in using maths in everyday life. Subjects covered are Shape and Space (level 1), Pattern and relationship (level 2), Measurement (preparing for level 3) and Functional maths (level 3).

Advanced everyday maths

In this course for each subject you complete you will receive a Level 3 Minor Award Certificate from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The subject areas are Application of number, Functional mathematics and Mathematics.



Visit our website to find out more about each course:
[nala.ie/free-basic-maths-courses/](https://www.nala.ie/free-basic-maths-courses/)



Tuam, Headford, Dunmore Literacy Services, part of Galway and Roscommon ETB visited the Aran Islands

NALA Student Development Fund

NALA awards €40,000 to over 82 local centres around the country.

The NALA Student Development Fund is a grant funded by SOLAS for centres to pay for a group activity for students outside the classroom. Centres who receive the fund also gather student feedback to inform our work. We were proud to fund some fantastic projects this year.

Students from Tuam, Headford, Dunmore Literacy Services, part of Galway and Roscommon ETB, visited the Aran Islands and the Cliffs of Moher. Love and Care for People, based in Cork, purchased computers for their youth club. Waterford and Wexford ETB created Monday Musings, a collection of stories and poetry by their creative writing group in Tramore Adult Literacy Service. National Learning Network Athy purchased C-pens to assist learners with dyslexia. We can't wait to share more on these projects in the next edition of Literacy Matters.

Recent research from NALA

Learn more about some recent research reports from NALA on the history of the WriteOn eLearning website and the Peer-to-Peer literacy project with Portlaoise Prison.

Leading the way in online learning

This report tells the story and impact of NALA's eLearning website **writeon.ie** from 2008 - 2019. Over its eleven-year existence, WriteOn was a unique, powerful and empowering teaching and learning resource. It not only reduced barriers to access and supported greater participation, it also provided learners with opportunities to recognise their prior learning and work towards learning new skills.



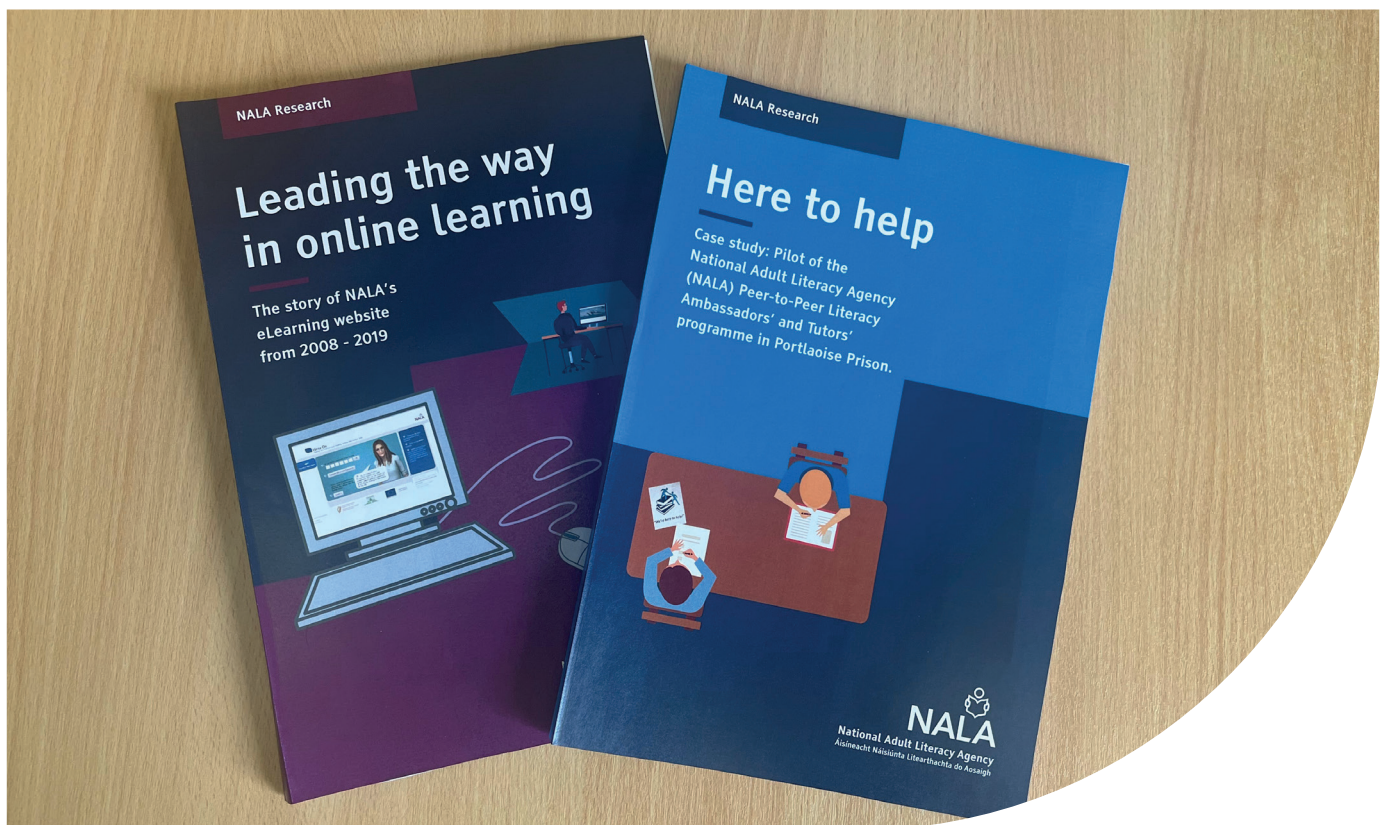
"I couldn't even switch the computer on but the tutor really helped me and encouraged me and now I'm flying it."

WriteOn learner

Learners using WriteOn studied either independently, as part of an Education and Training Board (ETB) or in centres from the community and voluntary sector such as special schools' blended learning programme or as part of NALA's distance learning service.



12,000 WriteOn learners achieved **42,000** national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) awards.



Here to help

This case study tells the story behind the Peer-to-Peer Literacy Ambassadors' and Tutors' Programme in Portlaoise Prison. A partnership between the Portlaoise Prison Education Unit, NALA, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and Laois Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) formed the foundation of the programme with support from Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC). Seven men were supported to graduate as literacy tutors and are now qualified to support others to improve their literacy.

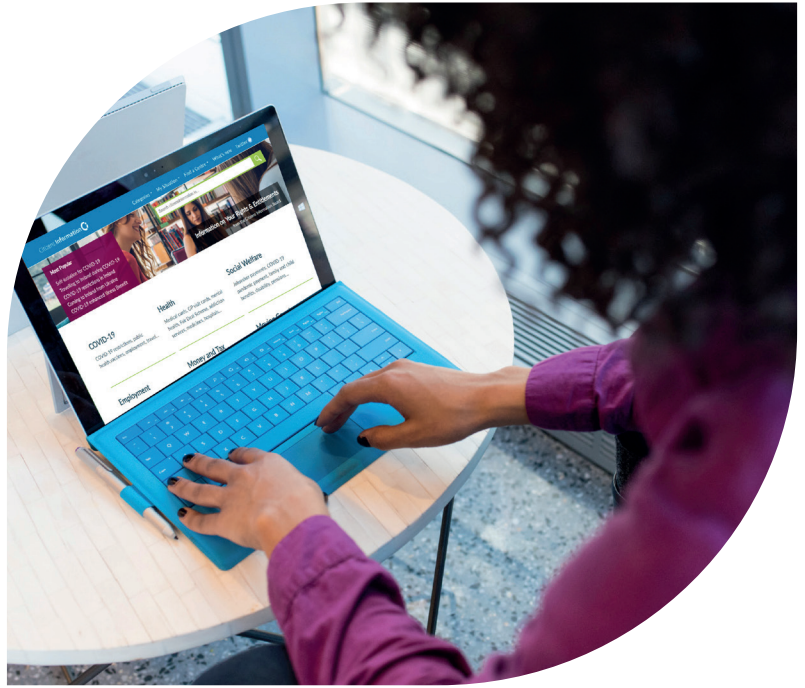


"The main challenge for me was in building my confidence to realise that I could teach someone."

Peer literacy tutor, Portlaoise prison



Keep up to date on recent NALA research on our website:
nala.ie/research



Communicating clearly

Regular training and mentoring with NALA's Plain English Service has led to greater clarity across the Citizens Information Board (CIB) website, writes Cathy Gerrard, CIB Digital Content Manager.

In late 2020, the Citizens Information Board's Digital Content Team began working closely with NALA on a training and mentoring project. The Digital Content Team are the people who make sure that the information on **citizensinformation.ie** is regularly updated, factually correct and in plain English. This is no small task as last year over 45 million pages were viewed on the website!

Twice a month, we met NALA for training sessions that included topics such as 'How to write effective hyperlinks', 'How to structure content' and 'How to reference legislation'. These sessions were always interactive, practical and rewarding.



“The ongoing mentoring led to both sides developing an understanding of each other’s work and definitely resulted in greater clarity across citizensinformation.ie.”

Cathy Gerrard

Content critiques

We also did ‘Content critiques’ where a member of the team volunteers to present a webpage they are writing and asks the team for structured feedback. While these can be a bit daunting, we all agreed that the ‘crits’ were a great learning experience for everyone involved. Importantly, team members could always consult with NALA on webpages that they were working on.

Mentoring

The ongoing mentoring led to both sides developing an understanding of each other’s work and definitely resulted in greater clarity across **citizensinformation.ie**. As a member of the public recently told us:

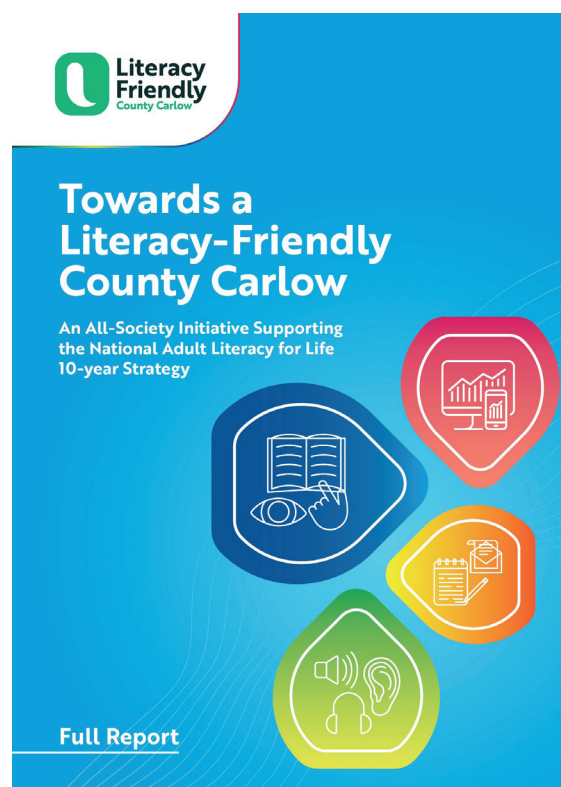
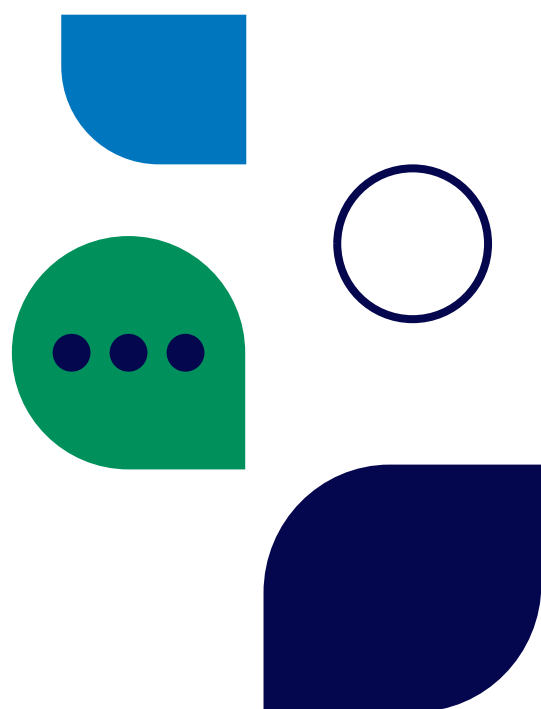
“I just want to compliment you on the simplicity and clarity of your website ... I wanted to find out some information on renting a property and the explanation was in clear English and, given the complexity of the subject, was easy to understand.”

I think every single team member mentioned the NALA training sessions as something that worked really well last year, so that’s a testament to its success.



Visit NALA’s website for more information on NALA’s Plain English Service and useful writing and design tips:
nala.ie/plain-english





Literacy-Friendly Carlow

Carlow County Council Library Service recently published *Towards a Literacy-Friendly County Carlow*, an all-society initiative supporting the Government's 10-year Adult Literacy for Life Strategy.

In County Carlow, 17% of people have not completed second-level education and have not taken the Leaving Certificate. This means these people are likely to have some unmet literacy and numeracy needs and this can lead to greater challenges in life. This is why, in late 2020, Carlow County Council Public Library Service commissioned research to examine the issue of unmet adult literacy needs in County Carlow. Through a literature review, e-surveys, profiles and interviews the research asked about the barriers to supporting literacy needs in County Carlow, what supports are available, how could awareness be raised and what steps will help develop a Literacy-Friendly County Carlow.

Main findings

The research found that:

- Barriers to adult literacy learning in County Carlow are the same as national barriers
- Agencies with an interest in literacy improvement need to be involved. Three priority groups were also identified:

Priority Group 1

- Women in the home, including young mothers
- Men over 50 years old, including men experiencing rural isolation
- Members of the Traveller Community

Priority Group 2

- Early school leavers
- Migrants

Priority Group 3

- Families
- People with learning differences due to intellectual and or health challenges

The research also found that:

- More research is needed on the impact of adult literacy services
- Community-based development and advocacy agencies could support literacy
- Existing organisations and services can provide literacy services
- Public services have some awareness of unmet literacy needs
- Society's awareness of unmet literacy needs improving

Recommendations

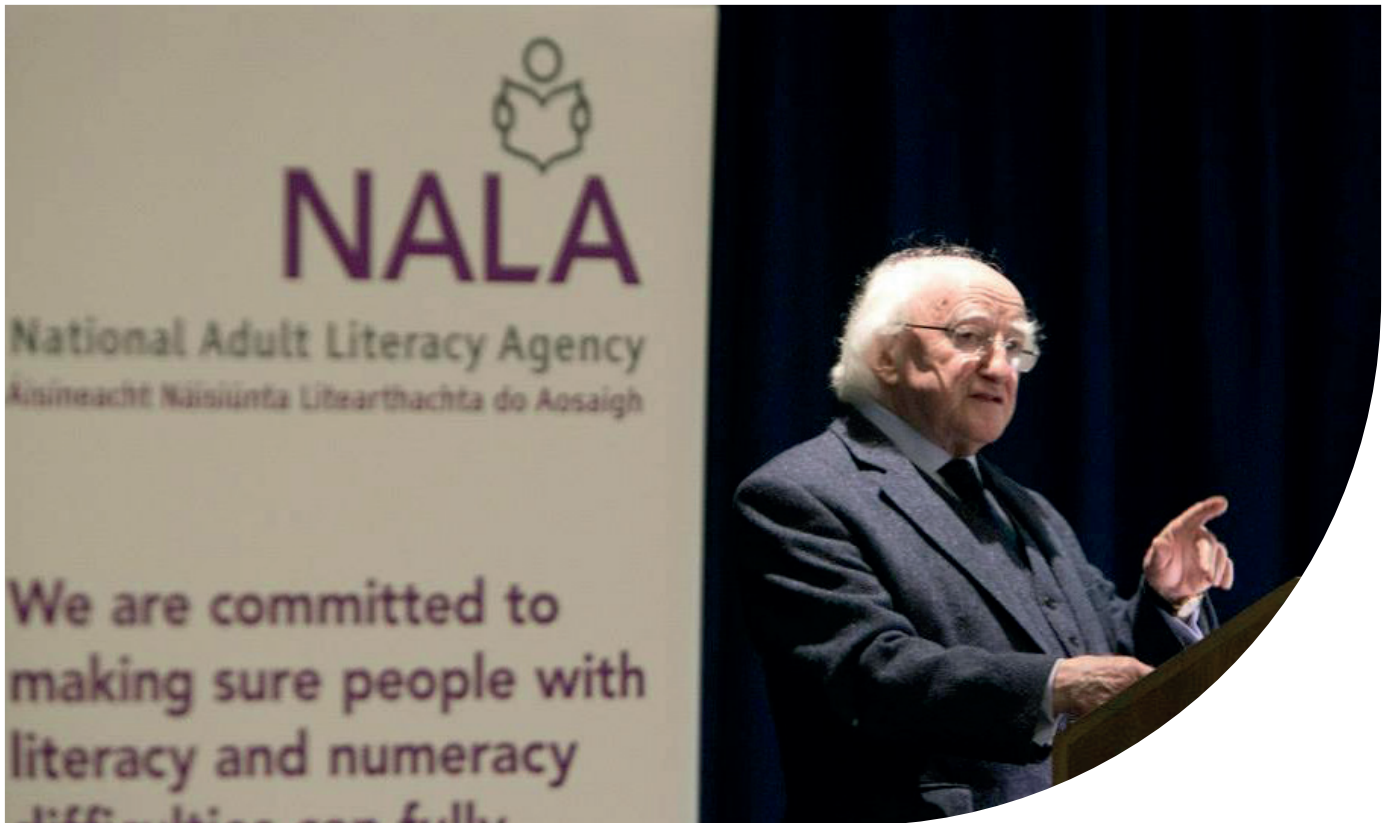
The report outlined six core recommendations:

1. Take a broad and specific approach
2. Ensure public services and civic engagement are person-centred
3. Further develop adult literacy services
4. Conduct and use research for greater insights
5. Run effective literacy-awareness raising campaigns
6. Implement the Literacy Friendly County Carlow Initiative



Scan the QR
code to view the
report or visit
carlowlibraries.ie





President Michael D. Higgins

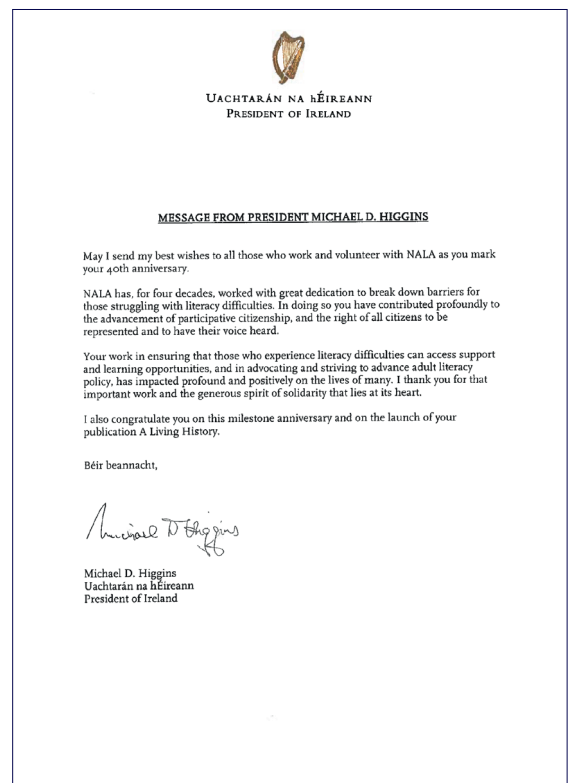
A message from our Patron

We are proud to share with our members a letter received from our Patron, President Michael D. Higgins marking NALA's 40th anniversary.

Message from President Michael D. Higgins

May I send my best wishes to all those who work and volunteer with NALA as you mark your 40th anniversary.

NALA has, for four decades, worked with great dedication to break down barriers for those struggling with literacy difficulties. In doing so you have contributed profoundly to the advancement of participative citizenship, and the right of all citizens to be represented and to have their voice heard.



"NALA has, for four decades, worked with great dedication to break down barriers for those struggling with literacy difficulties."

President Michael D. Higgins

Your work in ensuring that those who experience literacy difficulties can access support and learning opportunities, and in advocating and striving to advance adult literacy policy, has impacted profound and positively on the lives of many. I thank you for that important work and the generous spirit of solidarity that lies at its heart.

I also congratulate you on this milestone anniversary and on the launch of your publication A Living History.

Béir beannacht,

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland

Watch our recent webinars

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

Learn with NALA launch

Find out all you need to know about our new and improved eLearning website **learnwithnala.ie**. Our online launch shared learner and tutor experiences of using the platform and a demonstration of what to expect.

Student Empowerment Programme

Watch back online workshops from our Student Empowerment Programme on managing money and tips for living and feeling well.

Literacy, technology and financial literacy series

In this series for adult education tutors we shared tips on using tools like Microsoft Office 365, blending learning, designing a storyboard for virtual delivery, using phone apps and resources for money management.

Family Learning series

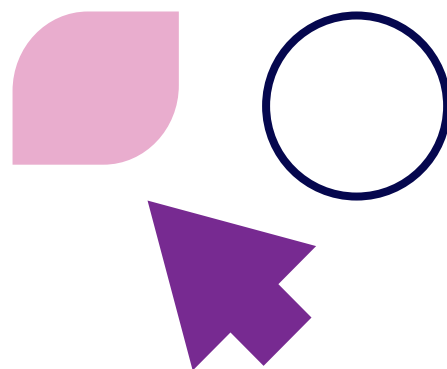
This series for tutors covered outdoor projects, intercultural learning, learning online, growing family learning and arts projects.



All webinars are available to watch back on the NALA YouTube channel: youtube.com/nalaireland



Dates for your diary



Upcoming NALA events and online training



LEGENDS - A book of sporting stories

Coming in September to mark International Literacy Day

Some of Ireland's sporting greats will feature in our new book of short stories. Keep an eye on **nala.ie** for more on what we have planned.



Events for adult literacy students

September and October 2022

Would you like to attend our Creative Writing Workshop or our next Student Day? Contact Margaret at **mmurray@nala.ie** for more.



Online Plain English Training

14 September and 9 November 2022

Do you want to ensure you are communicating as clearly and effectively as possible? Join our next open plain English training.

Find out more on our website: **nala.ie/news-and-events**

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 us at info@nala.ie or call us on **01 412 7900**.

Registered Charity Number: 20020965

Charity Number: 8506

Company Number: 342807

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Websites:

nala.ie
learnwithnala.ie
helpmykidlearn.ie

Email: info@nala.ie

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

 [@nalairland](https://twitter.com/nalairland)



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh



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