

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Minutes of the NALA Board

Meeting details:

Date:	25 June 2025
Time:	2.00pm
Venue:	NALA Boardroom and Teams

Attendee details:

Chairperson:	Margaret Kelly (MK)
Present (Charity Trustees)	In person: Eleanor Neff (EN), Geraldine Mernagh (GM), Sarah Shaughnessy (SS), Online: Aoife Foley (AF), Catherine Devlin (CD), Ciaran Casey (CC), Elma Teahan (ET), Margaret Hanrahan (MH), Maria O’Gorman (MOG), Paula Tiller (PT), Trish Nolan (TN)
Quorum:	☒ Yes ☐ No
In attendance (Others):	In person: Colleen Dube – CEO (CEO), Jonah Mudehwe – Finance and Corporate Services Manager (JM), Michelle Reade - Governance and Compliance Officer (MR) Online: Elaine Cohalan – Innovation Manager (EC)
Apologies:	Tom O’Mara (TOM)

Please see Glossary of Terms at the end of this document for guidance.

Items discussed:

1. Welcome
• MK opened the meeting and welcomed NALA's two new Board Members Sarah Shaughnessy and Geraldine Mernagh. • All attendees introduced themselves. • MK noted there was a quorum. • MK summarised the agenda for the day.
2. Conflicts of Interest
• There were no conflicts of interest identified
3. Minutes of the 14 May 2025 Meeting
Agreed: • The minutes of the 14 May 2025 Meeting were approved
4. CEO report including 2025 work plan
Noted: • CEO referred to the update provided. She noted that the majority of items that have started are on track and highlighted the following updates: ○ Approval in principle has been received from the ALL Office for the Financial Literacy Guide ○ Approval in principle has also been received to hold a joint meeting of 2 communities of practice that we are supporting for the Plain English (UK and Canada) project – there may be additional funding to support that initiative • CEO and YMK Director of Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) presented at the EBSN conference on the ALL Strategy: Development, Achievements and Challenges on 19 June 2025. ○ CEO and NALA's Research and Policy Officer met 2 Members of European Parliament (MEPs) who were very supportive of NALA's work in particular its

relevance to the European initiatives; Union of Skills and Democracy Shield. An invitation was extended to come to Brussels to present on the PIAAC results.

- The OECD are publishing further reports on 8 July. NALA have been presenting information to the Skills Council which are being included in a report to cabinet.
- There is a working proposal to hold a join event with Aontas towards the end of September, the working title of which is “The Basic Skills Symposium” to try get some public awareness and traction in government. A panel is being pulled together with representatives from Central Statistics Office (CSO), Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), Electoral Commission, National Skills Council and National Competitiveness Council being approached.
- There is no update on the tenders for Editing and Training.

5. Learn with NALA Strategic Review – Draft Report

Noted:

- EC gave a presentation on the LWN Strategic Review covering a background to LWN, the process undertaken and the emerging strategic options.
- The Board asked some questions and discussed the presentation.
- MK noted that any reduction in service would have a significant impact on NALA's reputation but asked the Board if there was agreement on the 3 strategic options of:
 - Option 1 - Maintain current model
 - Option 2 - Phase out ETBs, and cap Community and Voluntary centres, and direct learners
 - Option 3 – Direct Learners only.

There was no disagreement that these were the options available.

MK invited comments or recommendations on the format of the report. Some recommendations were made for inclusion in the final draft of the report. There was a discussion on the ultimate audience of this report, whether it would be available to the general public or geared to relevant stakeholders. EC recommended the report is brought to SOLAS as our primary funder in the first instance with a view to agreeing a strategic approach and funding model. If that should fail, then further consideration must be given

to further publication or circulation and perhaps the content should be tailored further at that point. MK's opinion was that even with that approach some changes should be made. There was discussion in this regard.

Agreed:

EC and CEO to work on updating the Executive Summary and Conclusion and circulate the report back to Board.

6. Governance

6.1 Board Skills Survey – Results and Next Steps

- MR gave an overview of the results of the Board Skills Survey. The main finding was that there were no critical skills gaps at the Board level. The findings showed that there were individual knowledge gaps at individual level.
- MR outlined the next steps are to:
 - Complete Board Induction for new Board Members which was complete before the Board meeting
 - Arrange for the New Board Members to complete the survey
 - Communicate individual recommendations to each Board Member by 11 July
- The Board noted the update.

6.2 Reflection on AGM

- MR referred to the paper which gave an overview of the AGM.
- The Board reflected on the comments received from some attendees, previous AGMs and how to ensure we achieve a quorum going forward and keep our members engaged. Options and considerations were discussed.
- Consideration will be given to holding it alongside an event next year. NALA will conduct a member survey to help inform next year's arrangements.

7. Management Accounts to 31 May 2025

- JM gave an overview of the Management Accounts
- CEO noted that the mid-year report is currently being prepared for SOLAS and all expenditure is currently being reviewed and updated.

- MK enquired about the depreciation of the IT equipment and if there is an urgent requirement to update the equipment. JM advised it is all still working. CEO added it is all out of warranty but that there are discussions with the Office Manager and budget to replace approximately 5 laptops this year. MK further enquired if there is any issue with the current Microsoft (MS) software versions. CEO advised there is not, we've recently moved to a new version of MS Windows.

8. Subcommittees – minutes, documentation and items for decision

8.1 Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee (ARF)

8.1.1 Draft Minutes of 27 May 2025 meeting

- ET invited any questions on the minutes. There were none.
- The Board noted the minutes of the ARF

8.2 ARF Decision Items

8.2.1 Health and Safety Statement

AGREED:

- The Board approved the Health and Safety Statement

8.2.2 Reserves Policy

AGREED:

- The Board approved the Reserves Policy and the revised reserve amount.

7.1 Plain English and third-party daily rates

- CEO informed the Board that this item did not go to ARF due to the timing.
- CEO provided some background to the Plain English service and editors.
- CEO highlighted to the Board that the service is running at a loss as indirect costs are not taken into account. She further noted that there is an action in the strategic plan to review the service. Having editors on contract is becoming more challenging to manage so they will be offered contract only until the end of the year and will look at the feasibility of hiring an additional member of staff rather than contracting editors. Therefore, this proposal is a holding proposal until it can be looked at more strategically.

CC referenced the latest Consumer Protection Code for the banking sector and noted it is likely NALA may see an uptick in plain English requests from that sector.

AGREED:

- The Board approved the updated Plain English daily rates for editors and charge out fees and third-party input rates to take effect from 1 July 2025
 - Plain English Editing agreed rate of €700 per day
 - Plain English mark agreed rate of €750 per day
 - Plain English Training agreed rate of €1,600 per day
 - Plain English editor agreed rate of €360
 - NALA event contributors such as literacy, students, tutors and facilitators €320

8.3 Education, Training and Assessment Subcommittee (ETA) – Draft Minutes of 22 May 2025 Meeting

- MK noted the positive commentary from QQI on the level 1 requirements and asked if the new requirements were achievable. CEO advised they are relatively straightforward and that work is in progress.
- The Board noted the minutes of the ETA

8.4 Student Subcommittee (SSC) – Draft Minutes of 22 May 2025 Meeting

- It was recommended that the order of the subcommittees should be alternated to prevent the SSC being last each meeting.
- CD noted there has been some new members appointed to the SSC.
- CD also noted the SSC is currently making plans for the Ploughing Championship.
- The Board discussed an issue raised in the minutes from one particular member of the SSC getting appropriate provision from his ETB.
- The Board noted the minutes of the SSC.

9. AOB

- MK mentioned ET's upcoming leave from work. ET confirmed her intention is to continue as normal on the board while on leave and will let the Board know if there is any change to that plan.

- CEO gave a brief update on the pension provider review and advised we are on track to provide a meaningful update at the next ARF.
- MK encouraged GM to consider joining a subcommittee.
- CEO mentioned International Literacy Day and the events being held. She noted it would be useful to have a learner voice and will be in touch with the SSC.

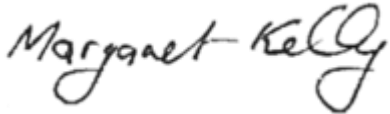
Next meeting details:

Date:	29 October 2025
Time:	2.00pm
Venue:	Online

Actions arising from this meeting:

Item	Action	Person Applicable	Timeframe
5	Update the Executive Summary and Conclusion and circulate the report back to Board.	CEO / EC	3-4 weeks
6.1	Circulate training plans to Board Members	MR	11 July

Approval of minutes:

Chairperson's signature:	Secretary's signature:
	
Date: 29 October 2025	Date: 29 October 2025
Margaret Kelly	Aoife Foley

Glossary of terms

Acronym	Full description
ALL	Adult Literacy for Life
ABEDiLi	Adult Basic Education Digital Literacy project
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AEO	Adult Education Officer
AEOA	Adult Education Officers' Association
ALO	Adult Literacy Organiser
ALOA	Adult Literacy Organisers' Association
ARF	Audit, Risk and Finance Subcommittee
BAU	Business as Usual
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CITO	Check In, Take Off
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRA	Charities Regulatory Authority
CRO	Companies Registration Office
DLS	Distance Learning Service
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
ERS	ERS IT solutions
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ETA	Education, Training & Assessment Subcommittee
ETB	Education and Training Board
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FBF	Furthest Behind First

FET	Further Education and Training
IBCB	Irish Banking Culture Board
ICT	Information Communications Technology
LAT	Literacy Awareness Training
LSPG	Literacy and Staff Policies and Governance Subcommittee
LWN	Learn with NALA
PMDS	Performance Management Development System
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Q1, 2, 3, 4	Financial Quarter 1 (January – March), 2 (April - June) 3 (July – September) 4 (October – December)
RLC	Regional Literacy Coordinator
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SIPTU	Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union
SOFA	Statement of Financial Affairs
SORP	Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) on Accounting and Reporting for Charities
TUI	Teacher's Union of Ireland

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a charity and membership based organisation. We work to support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy 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. We also provide online learning courses and a tutoring service to adults. We lobby for further investment to improve adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills.

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Sandford Lodge

Sandford Close

Ranelagh, Dublin 6

D06 YF65

Websites:

nala.ie

learnwithnala.ie

Freephone: 1 800 20 20 65

Email: info@nala.ie

Company Registration Number: 342807

Registered Charity Number: 20020965

CHY (Charity) Number: 8506



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

SOLAS
learning works

