



An
Phríomh-Oifig
Staidrimh

Central
Statistics
Office

PIAAC Cycle 2

Kevin Healy PIAAC NPM Ireland

- OECD led - PIAAC
- Cycle 1 released in 2012, Second Cycle released 10th Dec 2024
- Tablet-based survey with background questionnaire and direct assessments : literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem solving



Data Collection in Ireland

- Started September 2022 , Finished June 2023
- Sample – 11,800 HH, Visits – 48K logged
- 5,055 completed screeners, 3,820 completed BQs
- 63 Interviewers and 5 Field Coordinators
- Stringent Quality control – 10%+ sample



Scoring/Proficiency levels

- Irish Adults aged 16-65 achieved an average literacy proficiency of 263 points compared with the OECD average of 260 points (on a scale of 0-500).
- In OECD 26% of the adult population scored at the Level 1 and below on literacy proficiency scales
- In Ireland, the proportion of adults aged 16-65 that scored in Level 1 and below of proficiency was 21% in literacy



What literacy levels mean in PIAAC:

- Level 1 - Individuals can understand short texts and organised lists when information is clearly indicated. They can find specific information and identify relevant links.
- Below Level 1 - Those scoring below Level 1 can, at most, understand short, simple sentences.



Literacy Skill Evolution Over the Past Decade (2011-12 to 2022-23)

- Average literacy results in Ireland remained similar between Cycle 1 (267 points) and Cycle 2 (263 points), with no statistically significant difference.
- Similarly, the proportions of adults at or below Level 1, for literacy (21%) are not statistically different from those recorded in 2012 in Ireland.



Literacy Skill Differences by Demographics

- Adults aged 55-65(245) scored 33 points lower in literacy than 16-24(278) year-olds in PIAAC Cycle 2
- 33% of adults aged 55-65 achieved a literacy proficiency score of Level 1 or below, compares to only 12% of people aged 16-24



Educational Attainment

- Adults aged 25-65 with a third-level qualification achieved a mean score 71 points higher in literacy versus those with less than upper secondary level attainment
- 61% of those whose highest level of education is below upper secondary score at or below Level 1 on the literacy scale, compared with only 9% of those with a third-level qualification.



How Literacy Skills Relate to Social Outcomes

- Political Efficacy - Adults with high self-perceived political efficacy had a mean literacy score of 270, compared to 255 among those with low self-perceived political efficacy.
- Social Trust: Adults who scored higher in literacy proficiency were significantly more likely to report being trusting of others.(271 high social trust V 246 low)



How Literacy Skills Relate to Social Outcomes

- Volunteering: Mean literacy scores increased from 257 among those not volunteering to 274 for those engaging weekly



Whose literacy needs are not being met?

National Skills Conversation

Aoife Crawford

Research and Policy Officer

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

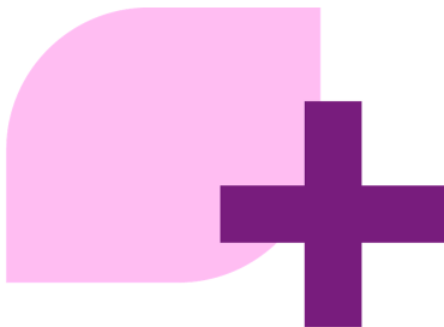
25 September 2025



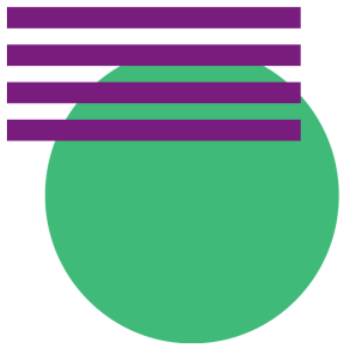
National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

NALA research project

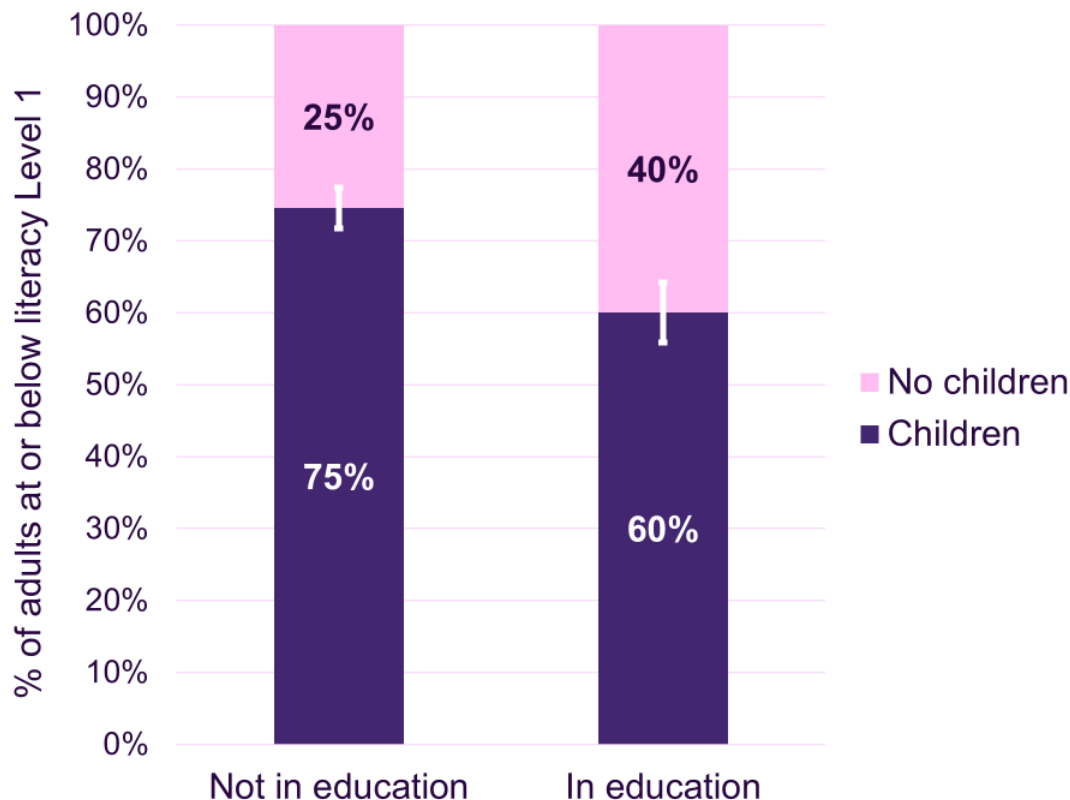
Understanding target group:
adults with unmet literacy needs



- “Literacy needs” = at or below Level 1 in PIAAC
- “Unmet literacy needs” = at or below Level 1, **and** not in adult education (formal or informal) over the past 12 months



Sample - family status



- Around $\frac{3}{4}$ people with unmet literacy needs have children
- Parents with literacy needs are less likely to be in education
 - age?
 - barriers?

The “average” person with unmet literacy needs

- Older
- Male
- Born in Ireland
- Employed
- Has children
- Not highly educated
- Parents don't have upper secondary education



Potential barriers to education for adults with literacy needs

- Childcare responsibilities
- Low educational attainment
- Low parental educational attainment
- Ageism / lack of lifelong learning culture



Thank you!

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