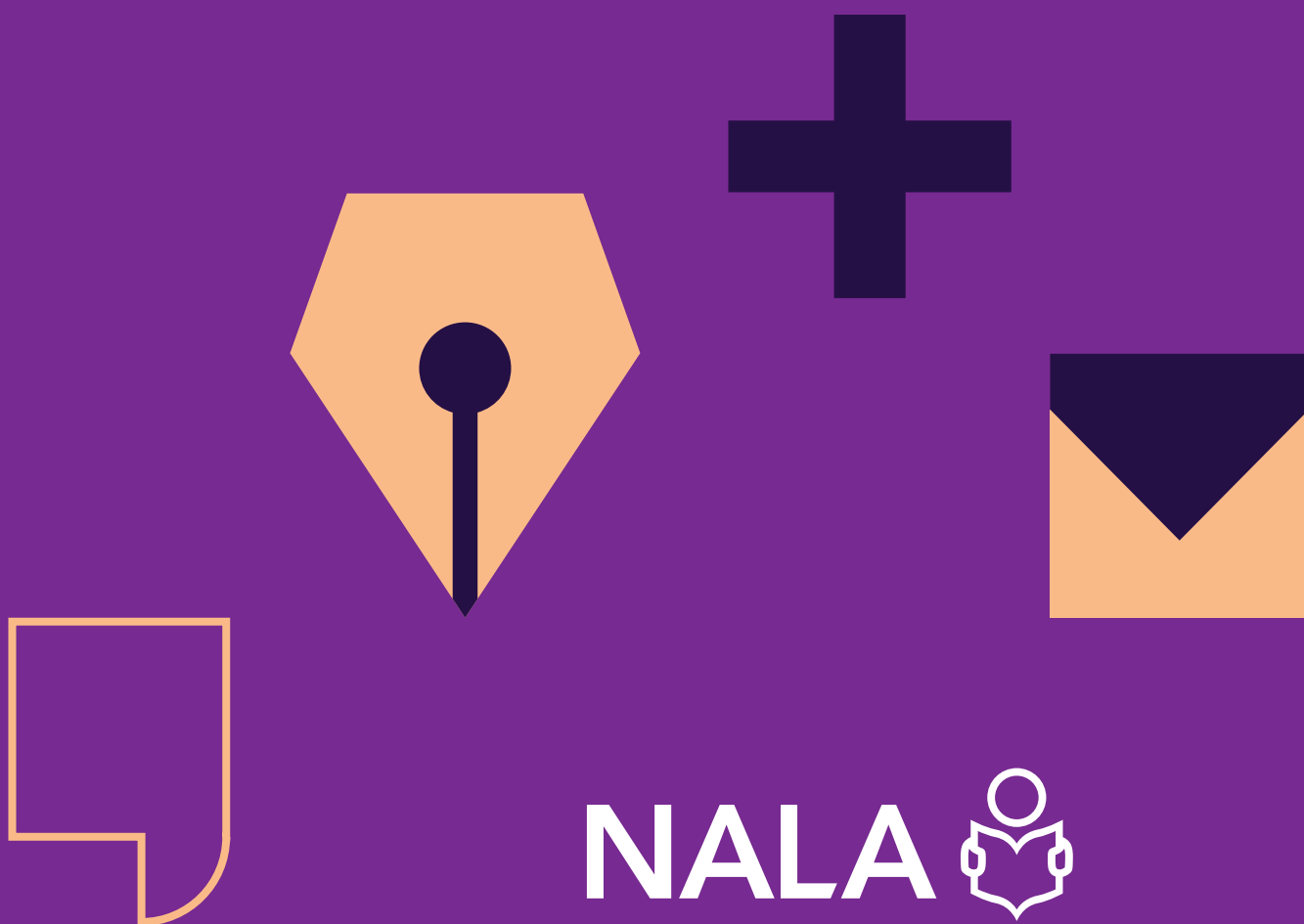


National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

A snapshot of our work

Annual Impact Report 2025



NALA



National Adult Literacy Agency

Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

About this report

This report gives you a snapshot of the work of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in 2025.

To find out more about our activity visit nala.ie/news-and-events

Patron in 2025: Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

Chairperson: Margaret Kelly

Chief Executive Officer: Colleen Dube

Published by:

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)

Sandford Lodge

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Ranelagh

Dublin 6

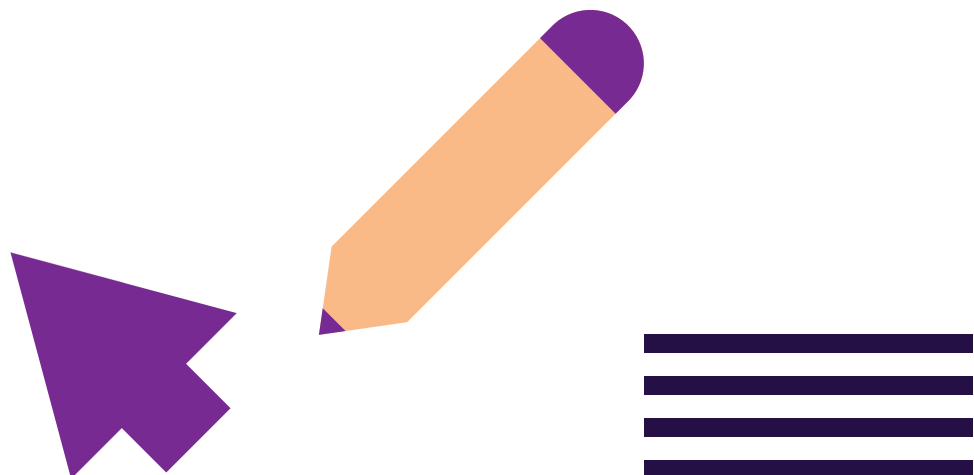
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ISBN 978-1-907171-75-8

Contents

Message from our Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer	4
Our vision, mission and values	8
Our strategic themes and goals	10
Strategic theme 1: Advocate	12
Strategic theme 2: Empower – Learners	14
Strategic theme 2: Empower – Practitioners	16
Strategic theme 3: Enable	18
Strategic theme 4: Evolve	20
Future plans	24
References	26
Some acronyms explained	27



Message from our Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer



Many thanks for taking the time to read our Annual Impact Report 2025. It provides a snapshot of the year in which we:

- received international and national recognition for our work;
- provided services to adult learners, practitioners and organisations; and
- advocated for people with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs.

The recognition we received in 2025 included:

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Confucius International Literacy Prize for Learn with NALA on International Literacy Day.
- The Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award for NALA and our plain English work at the Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) Conference in Brussels.
- Our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Colleen Dube being nominated to the Central Bank of Ireland's Consumer Advisory Group, recognising her and NALA's financial literacy and plain English work.
- NALA being shortlisted for a Carmichael Good Governance Award.

In the same year, however, we had to pause registration of new centres wanting to use our Learn with NALA eLearning service due to limited funding. Apart from some special projects funded by the **Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy**¹, our main funding from SOLAS has not increased since 2022 except for a contribution to increased staff pay costs in 2025. This makes it very difficult to maintain or expand our services to meet the demand and requests we receive.

This is disappointing given the evidence of need to expand literacy and skills provision and qualifications in several international and national surveys and Government strategies. For example, the **ALL Strategy** states that "There is a need to ramp-up literacy support capacity to fully address current and evolving needs"².

¹ Government of Ireland (2021)

² Government of Ireland (2021), p. 56

Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033 says "It is vital to maintain investment and ambition in this area"³.

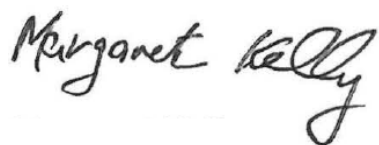
The ALL Strategy includes targets⁴ to reduce the proportion of adults with literacy needs to 7% (currently 21%⁵), numeracy needs to 12% (currently 25%⁶) and digital literacy to 20% (currently 17%⁷). We need more investment now if we are going to help reach the targets for literacy and numeracy.

As you will read in the following pages, despite another challenging funding year, we completed an ambitious programme of work in 2025. This work aims to advance the following four themes of our **Strategic Plan 2024-2030**⁸: Advocate, Empower, Enable and Evolve.

We continued to:

- ask Government to address and respond to unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs;
- operate our Learn with NALA literacy Tutoring Service and eLearning website;
- organise events for adult literacy learners and tutors;
- provide literacy related research, publications and resources;
- promote and offer literacy awareness and plain English services;
- focus our work on supporting specific target groups⁹; and
- ensure that NALA complies with all relevant legislation and regulations by strengthening our policies and people.

We believe literacy is a human right and that in a just society investment should be focused on those most in need. We will continue to advocate for increased investment in adult literacy. Thank you to everyone involved in our work including learners, practitioners, organisations, members and funders. We look forward to collaborating and communicating with you in the years ahead.



Margaret Kelly
NALA Chairperson



Colleen Dube
NALA Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

³ Government of Ireland (2024), p. 3

⁴ Government of Ireland (2021). p. 13

⁵ Adults aged 16 to 65, **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills 2023**. Central Statistics Office (2024)

⁶ Adults aged 16 to 65, **OECD Survey of Adult Skills 2023**. Central Statistics Office (2024)

⁷ Adults aged 16 to 74, **Digital Economy and Society Index 2025**. European Commission (2026)

⁸ NALA (2024)

⁹ Target groups as listed in the **ALL Strategy** (Government of Ireland 2021, p. 59). NALA's focus includes working with Members of the Traveller Community, Incarcerated Persons and Ex-Offenders and Persons Recovering from Addiction





"I can now work out area volume perimeter in measurement. I work as a carpenter and laying timber flooring so knowing how to work out area of a room and the perimeter of a room is life changing for me."

"I've joined a maths class in my local centre now. NALA's Tutoring Service has really helped me get on the right road."

Tutoring Service learner



Our vision, mission and values

Vision

Our vision is that adult literacy is a human right. Everyone in Ireland should have the chance to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital skills to take part fully in society.



Mission

NALA's mission is to:

- campaign for literacy as a human right;
- be leaders and champion best literacy practice; and
- support organisations in their efforts to be literacy friendly.



Values

The vision and mission are underpinned by the following five values:

1. **Potential:** We aim to make sure that everyone that we work with can achieve their learning and ambitions.
2. **Respect:** We listen carefully to everyone's views and treat everyone equally and fairly.
3. **Inclusion:** We involve different voices and views, perspectives and people in our work.
4. **Collaboration:** We work creatively and constructively with others to make things happen.
5. **Equity:** We make sure that everyone has the same opportunities.



These vision, mission and values informed four themes and goals in **NALA's Strategic Plan 2024-2030**, listed on page 10, and supporting work plan for 2025.



"I now understand the importance of implementing a Literacy Friendly environment, this is something I will instil in all my staff going forward."



"One of my main takeaways is to 'never assume', you may think you can identify someone who may have issues with health literacy but really it can be anyone."

Professional Development course participant



Our strategic themes and goals

Strategic theme 1: Advocate



Supporting goal

- Be the independent voice of adult literacy to inform the development of adult literacy policy and provision.

Strategic theme 2: Empower – Learners



Supporting goals

- Support learners' empowerment, participation and their access to the most suitable learning opportunities.
- Provide learning and development opportunities through Learn with NALA's Tutoring Service and eLearning website.

Strategic theme 2: Empower – Practitioners



Supporting goal

- Support adult literacy practitioners' professional development.

Strategic theme 3: Enable



Supporting goal

- Organisations serving the public must provide services that can be accessed by all. We will support organisations to provide services which can be accessed by all, particularly those with literacy needs.

Strategic theme 4: Evolve



Supporting goal

- Make sure NALA's structures, staff, systems and funding continue to meet the needs of adults with literacy needs.

Pages 12-21 highlight just some of the key facts and figures from our programme of work in 2025. Find further detail about our work in **NALA's Financial Statements 2025**¹⁰.

¹⁰ NALA (2026)



"I really enjoy learning and I'm very happy to complete a Level 3 course with Learn with NALA."



"I struggled with learning and doing the course has helped me to become more confident in my reading and writing skills."

"NALA and my tutor in Cumas have been very encouraging and a great support to me."

Shannon, Learn with NALA and Cumas New Ross learner (pictured top left with her tutor Colin)





Advocate

Policy

Our **policy submissions** covered topics related to adult literacy like social inclusion, micro-credentials, employment and elections. They include our pre-budget submission and a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. We responded to surveys on topics like how schools consult with parents, the European Union Pillar of Social Rights, and Ireland's strategies on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital, tertiary education and financial literacy.

In September, we hosted with AONTAS a **'National Skills Conversation' event** on challenges and opportunities for adult education and literacy in Ireland. There were speakers from the Economic and Social Research Institute, the Educational Research Centre, the Central Statistics Office, the Electoral Commission and the National Skills Council. Across the year we hosted study visits and took part in national and international conferences highlighting literacy in Ireland and our work.

Research and advocacy

We produced **five factsheets** on the findings of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Survey of Adult Skills 2023. The factsheets covered key themes related to literacy like education, age, gender, country of birth, employment, health and social outcomes. In October, we presented our analysis **'Whose literacy needs are not being met?'** at the International PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) Research Conference in Mannheim, Germany.

Communications

We posted 4,584 organic social media posts across **LinkedIn**, X, **Facebook** and **Instagram** securing 7,511 reactions. These promoted learning options, events, webinars, policy submissions, presentations, literacy awareness and plain English. We scoped the development of a new membership page on our website and moving to a new payment system. We completed an accessibility study to be finalised in 2026. To promote our Learn with NALA Tutoring Service, we delivered a campaign with local radio adverts and sent out over 3,000 leaflets and posters to community organisations. We secured mentions across regional and national media. A highlight included an **interview with NALA CEO Colleen Dube on Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) Radio 1 Morning Ireland**. This discussed Ryanair's implementation of digital only boarding passes across Europe.

At a glance



5

Factsheets on the
Survey of Adult
Skills



27

Policy submissions



5

International study
visits hosted



1,276

New social media
followers



115,647

Website visitors



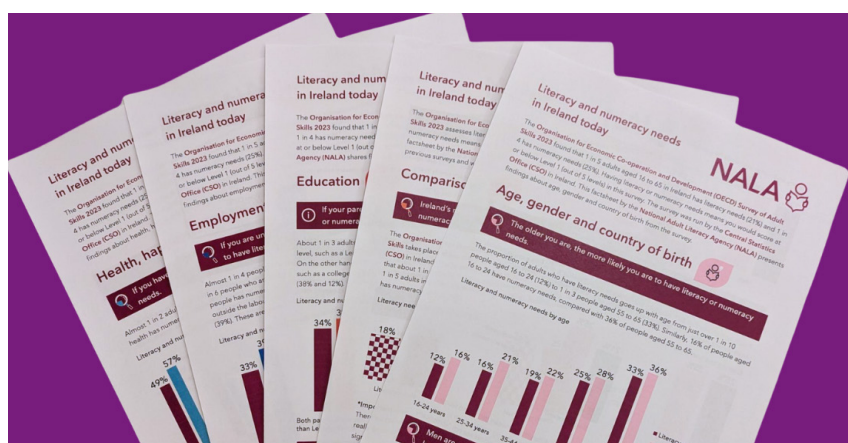
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Mentions in local
or national media



"We need to stop and consider the skills needs of our country, especially from an equality perspective."

Dearbháil Lawless, CEO, AONTAS,
speaking at the National Skills
Conversation



"We must target people who need help with basic literacy and digital skills so they can improve the quality of their own lives."

Sarah Carey, Broadcaster and
Columnist, speaking at the National
Skills Conversation





Empower – Learners

Information and advice

We supported people with literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs who contacted us through our **national Freephone service**. We listened and, depending on their needs, we referred them to their local Education and Training Board (ETB) adult literacy service, community education provider or our Learn with NALA services. We also sent out resources and information packs with learning options.

Learner events

We were delighted to meet learners at our **Adult Literacy Learner Days** in **Dublin in February** and in **Athlone in April**. The days included talks and workshops on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Well-being, Driver Theory and Managing Money. In September, we held a webinar for learners in partnership with Dublin Adult Learning Centre on the Presidential Election with a speaker from the Electoral Commission. Thank you to all the learners who attended these events, our Student Subcommittee, our speakers and facilitators and centre staff for encouraging learners to attend.

Learn with NALA

Our **Tutoring Service** provided 1,019 personalised one to one learning sessions to learners over the phone. The team developed new Level 1 **'Step into Learning' worksheets** for learners in addition to our Levels 2 to 3 **'That's Interesting' worksheets**. Learners continued using our range of courses on our **learnwithnala.ie** eLearning platform and we launched a new **'Health and Safety Awareness' course** at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 3. Online learners included learners learning independently and those supported by education centres using Learn with NALA. We adapted and improved the ways learners receive support with getting started sessions, outreach campaigns, welcome emails, phonecalls and a new learner journal. We made accessibility and usability improvements to the platform and reviewed and updated our courses and systems.

We celebrated our learners' achievements with their tutors, families and friends at award ceremonies in **Galway in March** and in **Dublin in October**. Learners received their QQI awards and NALA certificates. We were proud to see our Learn with NALA service awarded the **UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy** in Paris for its innovation and impact in distance and eLearning. We were also invited to **receive this award in Shandong, China**. We received approval for Level 1 validation of our Learn with NALA courses from QQI. In the future learners completing these courses can earn a QQI award.

At a glance



828

Freephone referrals



400

Attendees at learner events



161

Tutoring Service learners



3,881

Online learners



83%

Online learners felt more confident after their course



7,616

Certificates of completion



3,216

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) awards



"I really appreciate what you're doing. It's informative and encouraging. Thank you."

Learner Day attendee



"After Christmas, for the first time ever, I was able to calculate the percentage reduction on sale items in shops by myself."

Learn with NALA learner





Empower – Practitioners

Events for literacy practitioners

We held several **Professional Development events** including conferences, webinars and online sessions with participants from Education and Training Boards and other local education providers. These included our **National Tutors Forum, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** and **Family Learning** conferences. We also held an **online digital literacy conference** on technology and creativity for the adult literacy classroom. We continued our series of webinars on topics like empowerment, memory techniques, AI and family learning. From feedback received, 69% reported that they would make changes to their work as a result of the event or webinar.

Professional Development courses

We continued our **Professional Development courses** on literacy awareness, becoming literacy friendly, integrating literacy and preparing learning materials. The majority of participants were professionals in the education and training sector followed by healthcare and social care. We launched a new course '**Guide to NALA numeracy resources**' to show tutors how to use NALA's resources including workbooks, worksheets, videos and eLearning courses. The course shared input from experienced tutors about how they use these resources with learners.

Centres using Learn with NALA

Staff in registered **Learn with NALA centres** were supported with ezines, training, over the phone and by email. They also benefitted from an updated tutor manual and a new tutor help section. Three registered centres working with identified Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy priority groups, Travellers of North Cork, Tosú and the National Learning Network, took part in pilot projects to receive customised support.

Learning resources

Following recommendations received through a pilot with Dublin Adult Learning Centre in 2024, we improved and finalised **four new workbooks** for literacy learners and ESOL learners at Levels 1 to 2. These workbooks covered 'Health and well-being', 'Places in the town', 'Clothes and the weather' and 'Free time activities'. We also continued to send out a range of learning resources including books and workbooks for free to adult education centres and not-for-profit organisations around the country.

At a glance



519

Attendees at
practitioner events



437

Participants of
online Professional
Development courses



90%

Online course
participants would
recommend to a
colleague



162

Learn with NALA
registered centres



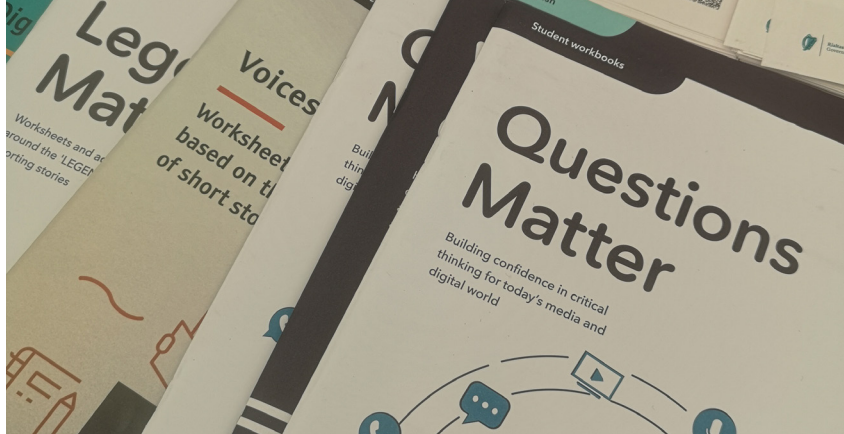
1,371

Learners in
Learn with NALA
registered centres



29,838

Learning resources
sent out to centres



"It's great to finish a workshop
armed with more insight and
with concrete ideas of how
to apply the learning in the
classroom."

Digital literacy event attendee



"I learnt about the approach
to planning and laying out a
worksheet. Particularly about
using white space and not
overcrowding the sheet."

Professional Development course
participant





Enable

Literacy awareness and ambassador programmes

We delivered training for organisations working with members of the public, including literacy awareness and health literacy training. We delivered customised literacy awareness training with staff from Tosú. The training gave a chance to discuss literacy, learn about literacy services and think about their role in encouraging others to consider going back to education. We worked with Allied Irish Banks (AIB), the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), Cork ETB, Ludgate Hub and the ALL programme office on financial literacy events in Cork. In October and November, we held our **'Literacy Opens Doors' webinar series** with a brilliant range of speakers from community and voluntary sector organisations. These included Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Laois Traveller Action Group, Ballyfermot Star, City of Dublin Education and Training Board, Deonach, Portlaoise Boxing Club, Soilse and The SAOL Project.

Continuing our work with priority groups, we worked with Ballyfermot Traveller Action Project and Pavee Point and delivered a pilot Literacy Ambassador programme for members of the Traveller community. Our Literacy Ambassador programme was also delivered in six prisons with learners and teaching staff. The Literacy Ambassadors encouraged their peers to return to education by raising awareness of education centres. They reduced the barriers around returning to education by sharing their experiences.

Plain English editing and training

We provided plain English editing and training services. Our editing work focused on a range of documents from leaflets to safety statements to national policies. Organisations we worked with included the Department of Social Protection, the Health Service Executive (HSE), regulatory bodies and county councils. We trained staff from many organisations including the Courts Service and Citizens Information and continued our training with Regional Literacy Coordinators around the country.

We also offered free **plain English webinars** for people working with members of the public. These popular webinars covered top tips for writing for the web, leaflets and publications and writing effective letters and emails. We continued our plain English **community of practice sessions** for 38 public sector staff and the **NALA plain English LinkedIn Network which now has over 700 members**. In November, we were awarded the **Plain Language Association International (PLAIN) Cheryl Stephens Innovation Award** in Brussels. This was primarily due to our work in plain English.

At a glance



922

Participants of literacy awareness and health literacy training



229

Attendees at Literacy Opens Doors webinars



33

Participants of Literacy Ambassador Programme in Traveller organisations



86

Literacy Ambassadors trained in prisons



2,223

Attendees at plain English training



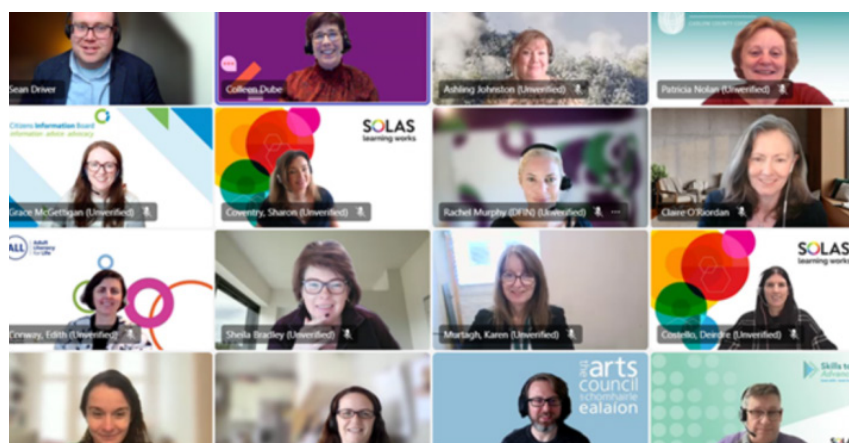
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Documents edited in plain English



"Very informative. It opened your eyes. One of the things that stands out was the percentage of people with reading difficulties."

Literacy Ambassador



"How I present information will be improved. I will be adding headings, bullet points and using simpler language."

Plain English training participant





Evolve

Membership

NALA's membership plays a vital role in advocating for the importance of literacy and our work. Our **Members** are made up of individuals and organisations interested and involved in adult literacy. We increased our total member base in 2025 by 57% to 343. Our individual members included adult learners and tutors. Our organisation members included adult education centres, probation services, Traveller organisations, disability support organisations, libraries and corporate organisations.

Staff development and training

We continued to invest in the training and development of our staff to meet the changing needs of learners, maintain up to date professional skills and meet the organisation's statutory compliance requirements.

Learn with NALA strategic review

We completed a strategic review of the organisational structure and staffing of our Learn with NALA service. This was submitted to our funder SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, for consideration.

Public sector duty

NALA is committed to meeting its obligations to SOLAS regarding the advancement of human rights and to meeting the obligations of the Public Sector Duty, subject to available resources. In pursuit of this we continue to monitor our human resource management practices accordingly. In 2025, NALA also prepared a policy on ethical procurement and fundraising.

Governance and finances

We were delighted to be shortlisted in the Carmichael Good Governance Awards for our **Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024**¹¹. Congratulations to all organisations shortlisted and to the winners. Further information on our governance and finances is available in our Financial Statements 2025 at nala.ie/financial-statements-2025

¹¹ NALA (2025)

At a glance



343

Members of
NALA by the end
of 2025



1

Strategic review of
Learn with NALA
completed and
shared with funders



3

Recruitment
campaigns
completed



€2,781,559

Income



€2,840,350

Expenditure



"I appreciate being a member
of NALA as I find the resources
wonderful for students."

Rosemary, NALA member



"We are using the resources
NALA sent and they're really
good. Students are really
engaging with them."

Ciarán, NALA member







"Each of the presentations and workshops attended were interesting and worthwhile. It's also very beneficial to meet others in this area of work. Enthusiasm and commitment to improving their service provision is infectious."

"Overall it was a very welcoming event in a lovely space. Thanks to the organisers."

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) conference attendee

Future plans

In 2026, NALA will continue to implement our **Strategic Plan 2024-2030**.

Strategic theme 1: Advocate

We will:

- advocate for and raise awareness of literacy as a human right, literacy needs in Ireland and the need for more investment in literacy provision;
- collaborate on the implementation of the **Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy, Creating Futures: Further Education and Training Strategy 2026-30**¹² and other relevant government strategies such as **Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033** and the **National Financial Literacy Strategy 2025-2029**¹³; and
- generate and share research and best practice.

Strategic theme 2: Empower

We will:

- provide information and learning opportunities to literacy learners; and
- offer professional development events and resources to literacy practitioners.

Strategic theme 3: Enable

We will:

- advocate for and raise awareness of the creation of literacy friendly policies and services and the use of plain English; and
- deliver literacy awareness, Plain English editing and training services.

Strategic theme 4: Evolve

We will:

- communicate and collaborate with our members and stakeholders;
- continuously improve and enhance our operations;
- continue to monitor and implement regulatory and compliance changes; and
- evolve our membership offering and diversify our funding plan to enable us to sustainably deliver on our vision.

¹² Government of Ireland (2026)

¹³ Government of Ireland (2025)



"I think the course has been really helpful in setting clear goals and creating a plan to achieve them."

"It made me think about what I want to do and how to organise my time and resources better. I'm excited to start working on my goals!"

Learn with NALA online learner



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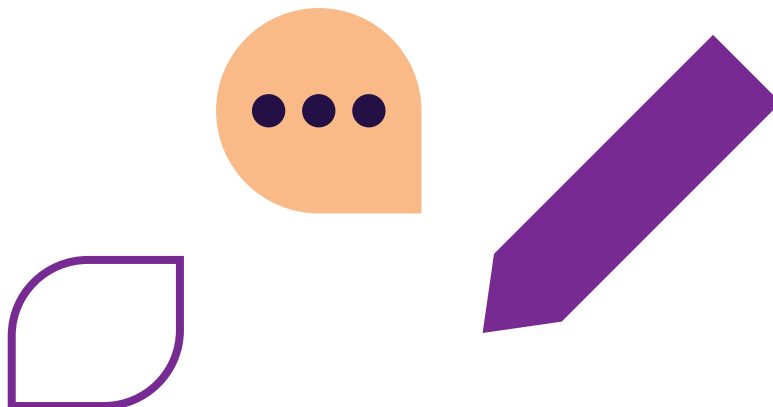
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Some acronyms explained

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AIB: Allied Irish Banks

ALL: Adult Literacy for Life

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

CHY: Charitable tax exemption number

CSO: Central Statistics Office

DESI: Digital Economy and Society Index

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages

ETB: Education and Training Board

HSE: Health Service Executive

MABS: Money Advice and Budgeting Service

NALA: National Adult Literacy Agency

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PIAAC: Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

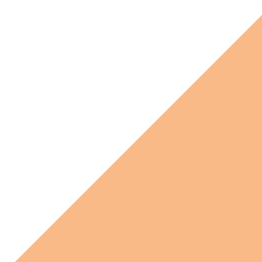
PLAIN: Plain Language Association International

QQI: Quality and Qualifications Ireland

RTÉ: Raidió Teilifís Éireann

SOLAS: An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna - The authority for further education and training

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



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.

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Freephone: 1 800 20 20 65

Company Registration Number: 342807

CHY (Charity) Number: 8506

Registered Charity Number: 20020965



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



SOLAS
learning works



**Adult
Literacy
for Life**