

Submission to Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy mid-term review

Submitted to Three Sixty Insights

18 September 2026



National Adult Literacy Agency

Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	5
Consultation process	7
Response to survey questions.....	9
Actions, targets and measures	19
Recommendations	23
Conclusion	27
Contact.....	28
Appendices	29
List of acronyms.....	31
References	32
About NALA	34

Summary

We believe that the **Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy** (Government of Ireland 2021) has the potential to transform the lives of adults with literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs in Ireland.

We welcome the many positive steps that have been taken under the ALL Strategy since its publication in 2021, and we commend all the people and organisations across the country who are working together to bring the strategy to life.

However, we have serious concerns about

- the slow pace of implementation
- the lack of oversight and reporting
- insufficient investment in long-term solutions

In the context of stagnating or declining literacy and numeracy levels among adults and young people in Ireland (**Central Statistics Office (CSO) 2024** and **Educational Research Centre (ERC) 2026**), we are calling for adult literacy to be a higher priority across Government – starting with a renewal of commitment to the ALL Strategy.

In this submission we make ten recommendations for immediate and medium-term actions (see p23 for details) which can help the ALL Strategy reach its potential.

Immediate actions

1. Publish a progress update on actions to date
2. Agree a National Literacy Action Plan for 2027
3. Appoint a new dedicated Director of the ALL National Programme Office (NPO)
4. Implement the recommendations of the Expert Group on Literacy Provision
5. Commission the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) mid-cycle survey, or alternative measure

Medium-term actions

6. Agree a monitoring and evaluation framework, and reporting schedule
7. Provide adequate funding for the ALL Strategy, ringfencing funding for provision
8. Review the ALL Strategy's oversight and implementation structures
9. Consider adding to the list of priority target groups
10. Consider a new digital literacy measure and/or target

Introduction

We are the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA), a registered charity and membership-based organisation. We receive annual funding from SOLAS, Ireland's Further Education and Training Authority to support the **Further Education and Training Strategy** (Government of Ireland 2026a) and the Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy.

We believe that 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. Our mission is to:

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

NALA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the mid-term review of the ALL Strategy.

Our comments are based on the information available to us at the time of writing.

Our submission is based on engagement with **our membership and learner community**. This includes:

- A specific consultation for this review – details provided in the next section
- Ongoing consultation with our members, for example a 26 May 2026 members' workshop, "**Adult literacy: what is working and what could work better**" (NALA 2026a)
- Ongoing consultation with learners, for example a "Talk to NALA" workshop at our Adult Literacy Learner Day on 23 April 2026 (see Appendix 1)
- Insights from our subcommittees and Board (see Appendix 2 for a summary of issues raised by our Student Subcommittee 2022-2025)

Our submission is also based on **our own experience** as a partner in the development and implementation of the ALL strategy.

- We lobbied for the introduction of a national strategy for adult literacy (**NALA 2020a**)
- We advised on what the strategy should look like (**NALA 2020b**)
- We have been centrally involved in delivering many initiatives under the strategy
- We have written and spoken about the strategy internationally (for example, in **Nottingham Institute of Education's working paper series** (Crawford 2024) and at the **European Basic Skills Network Conference 2025** with the Director of the ALL National Programme Office (NPO))
- We have consistently advocated for greater investment in the strategy (for example, **Our general election asks for adult literacy**, NALA 2024)

We look forward to continuing to support the ALL Strategy as a critical friend and partner in delivery.

Consultation process

We are making this submission to Three Sixty Insights, the independent consultants who have been hired by SOLAS to do the mid-term review of the ALL Strategy.

To inform this submission, we have consulted with NALA members and staff.

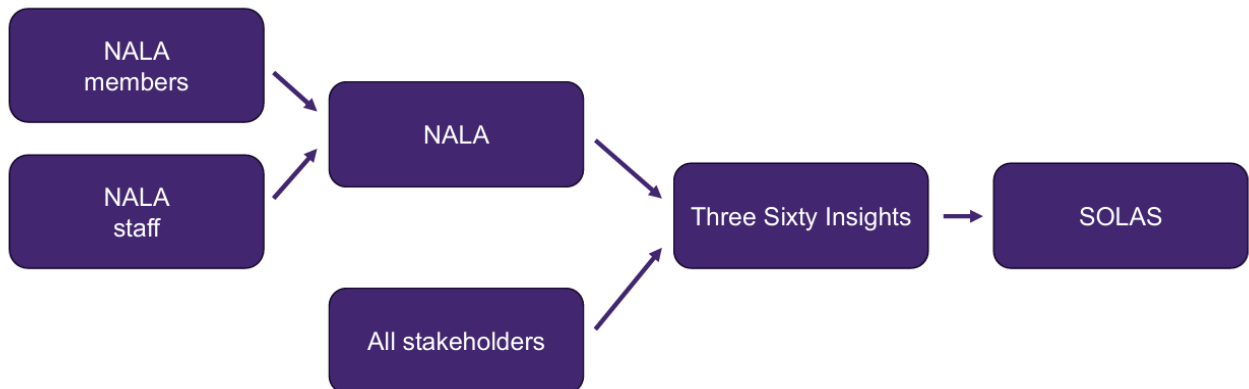


Figure 1: Diagram of consultation process for the ALL strategy mid-term review

NALA's own consultation

We ran an anonymous survey which was based closely on the public consultation survey run by Three Sixty Insights. We asked about the same topics and added some background information to help members complete the survey. We also asked a multiple-choice question on each topic to get some quantitative data. **You can see the full survey on our website.**

We offered a phone line where members could ask questions or share thoughts verbally.

We also held a drop-in session for members and staff on 2 September 2026.

	Online survey	Drop-in session	Phone call
Members	17	4	3
Staff	12	6	0

Table 1: Engagement in NALA's consultation

A broad range of members responded:

- 7 adult literacy learners
- 4 adult literacy educators/teachers/tutors
- 3 people who work in adult or further education more generally
- 3 people who work in a public or private service
- 2 people who work in adult literacy, in a non-teaching role
- 1 former member of NALA's board

We do not claim that respondents' views are representative of all our members or staff.

NALA's engagement with the public consultation

NALA's Chief Executive Officer, Learning and Education Strategy Manager, and Research and Policy Officer met with Three Sixty Insights on 6 August 2026.

Our Student Subcommittee met with Three Sixty Insights on 27 August 2026.

NALA also promoted the public consultation

- on our social media channels
- in emails to contact lists including tutors and community and voluntary organisations
- in our newsletter.

We made clear to our members and staff that they were welcome to take part in the public consultation directly, as well as or instead of our own consultation. There may be some overlap in participants between the NALA consultation and the Three Sixty Insights consultation.

Response to survey questions

In this section we will directly address the topics raised in the public consultation survey.

These are:

1. Oversight and implementation structures
2. Progress on actions
3. Actions, targets and measures

Under each topic we will outline our views on achievements and challenges, informed by our recent consultation for this review and our experience of advocating for and collaborating on the strategy’s development and implementation. Given our national remit, our comments tend to focus on implementation at the national level.

Quotes are from our online survey of NALA members and staff, unless otherwise specified. There are more quotes here from staff than members because staff tended to write longer responses.

Oversight and implementation structures

In our survey of members and staff, we asked, “Have the ALL Strategy oversight and implementation structures worked well?”

	Members	Staff
Yes	9	0
No	2	7
I don’t know	6	4
No answer	0	1

Table 2: NALA members and staff responses on oversight and implementation structures

Members were more positive about the structures than staff.

Both groups had a high rate of “I don’t know” responses.

Achievements

✓ **Passionate people**

People working within the structures, such as the National Programme Office (NPO), the Regional Literacy Co-ordinators (RLCs) and members of the Regional Literacy Coalitions (Regional Coalitions), are doing great work.

“They [the RLCs] are very experienced and proactive champions for adult literacy” – staff

✓ **Collaboration**

The collaborative approach of the ALL Strategy is bringing people together as intended, particularly at the regional level.

“The more involved, the bigger the well of ideas.” – member

✓ **Regional structures**

All 16 Regional Coalitions are up and running. We understand there are over 200 members of Regional Coalitions across Ireland. Each Regional Coalition has produced a Regional Literacy Action Plan.

✓ **Appropriate design**

The structures were well designed to meet the cross-cutting challenge of adult literacy needs at that time. We have had no negative feedback about the design of the structures as set out within the ALL strategy.

“The concept of a structure that involves regional co-ordination and response with national and cross government oversight is a good structure to implement a strategy that impacts so many aspects of society” - staff

Challenges

! **National structures not meeting**

The Cross-Government Oversight Group¹ (“Oversight Group”) and National Literacy Coalition (“National Coalition”) have not met often enough, and not at all since summer 2024. The strategy does not say how often the Oversight Group should meet.

“The Cross-Government Implementation Group has been completely inactive for a long period of time and shows a lack of commitment by [the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science] DFHERIS and the Government to the strategy.” - staff

! **Governance issues**

We are concerned about governance issues as there has been no meeting of the national structures for more than two years. For example, it is not clear to us if or how:

- Annual Regional Action Plans are being approved;
- learners are being represented in decision-making; or
- cross-government communication and collaboration is occurring.

! **Whole-of-government approach not evident**

Without an active Oversight Group, it is not clear how Government departments are implementing their involvement in the ALL Strategy. Leadership from the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (FHERIS) is needed to make sure this happens.

“I do not think this strategy has seriously been considered by all Government Departments” - staff

¹ This was previously called the Cross-Government Implementation Group. We sought but did not receive clarification from DFHERIS about the name change.

! Lack of clarity on National Literacy Action Plans

The strategy is not entirely clear on who is responsible for developing or approving the annual National Literacy Action Plans (referenced on p38 of the ALL Strategy).

! Inadequate monitoring and reporting

Reporting through the structures has been irregular and never made publicly available. We rely on informal updates on implementation from the NPO, which are appreciated but not a substitute for regular, transparent reporting with robust data. To our knowledge, the monitoring and evaluation framework referenced on p40 of the ALL Strategy has never been developed.

“Reporting on implementation has been limited and there is no visible monitoring and evaluation framework” - member

! Need for more national co-ordination

There have been instances of duplication between the work of NALA and the ALL NPO. We understand that there have also been instances of duplication between RLCs in different regions, and that resources produced are not always shared and promoted widely. Co-ordination of activity at the national level is essential.

“The level of duplication of work or us not knowing quite who is doing what is very worrying” - staff

“I think there needs to be more leadership and co-operation and pulling in the same direction between NALA and the ALL Office.” - staff

! Independence of ETBs

The 16 ETBs play an essential role in the provision of adult literacy services. While respecting ETB autonomy and the importance of responding to varying local needs, national co-ordination is also needed. For instance, we understand that there are different approaches to one-to-one and voluntary tuition, which is a fundamental part of adult literacy provision.

“It is a very difficult landscape, the 2013 Education Act enables ETBs to act super independently.” - staff

“The NPO seems to struggle to get data from the ETBs and it remains difficult to understand the level of provision and the breakdown of spending” - staff

! RLC role in context

Our members and staff speak very highly of RLCs and the work they do. Looking at the context of where the role sits, some members and staff have suggested that the RLC role may be

- too closely tied to Education and Training Boards (ETBs) to be independent co-ordinators as intended
- leading to Adult Literacy Organisers (ALOs) having less autonomy, or ALO posts being depleted

Also, that decision-making among RLCs can be difficult at the moment without a governance structure of their own. Greater clarity around the RLC role and where it sits within ETBs and the structure of the ALL Strategy could contribute to its future success.

! Lack of visibility of ALL on the ground

It seems that those who are implementing the strategy on the ground are not always aware of ALL or their role in it. We have been told that ALL Strategy actions and targets are not often talked about.

“I’m not sure that ALL strategies are well promoted within the day-to-day life of adult education for tutors or students. I’m sure this influences us indirectly through decisions made by management” – member

Progress on actions

In our survey of members and staff, we asked, “Has good progress been made on implementing the ALL Strategy’s actions?”

	Members	Staff
Yes	10	1
No	4	6
I don’t know	3	4
No answer	0	1

Table 3: NALA members and staff responses on progress on actions

Members gave a mixed but mostly positive response, and staff were mostly critical.

In this section, we will focus on achievements and challenges with implementation in general, rather than assessing progress on all 77 actions in the ALL Strategy individually.

Achievements

✓ Structures established and staffed

With the caveat that the Oversight Group and National Coalition are not currently meeting (as discussed in the previous section), the governance structures of ALL have been established, the NPO has been staffed, RLC roles filled and the Regional Coalitions established. These provide the necessary foundation for progress on other actions.

✓ Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF)

This key aspect of the ALL strategy has been established and continues to be funded on an annual basis. The CIF is supporting core aims of the strategy like outreach and relationship-building.

“The Collaboration and Innovation Fund is a key outreach tool for RLCs and a way to motivate local organisations to engage with adult literacy” – staff

✓ **Active Leads**

There is ample evidence of activity in areas which have a Lead employed in the ALL NPO. To give just a few examples, communities of practice have been established in family literacy and numeracy, and there is an online awareness-raising module on the ALL website focusing on health literacy.

“I have begun to include numeracy under our community outreach because of ALL” - member

✓ **Raising awareness about adult literacy**

At the ALL Showcase event on 16 June 2026, the NPO reported that 3,600 people have taken their four **eLearning courses**, 160 organisations have been trained in literacy awareness and over 100 literacy champions have been trained within organisations. They have also run campaigns around the title of “Let’s Talk About...” which are aimed at raising awareness of adult literacy needs among the general public and reducing stigma.

“I think the ALL strategy is making good progress in raising awareness of adult literacy and the support available.” - member

Challenges

Overall, **progress on implementing actions in the ALL strategy has been far too slow**. Here we identify some potential reasons why, with a view to accelerating progress over the next five years.

! **Actions without timelines**

There are 77 actions in the ALL Strategy (p73 – p77). They are split into 31 actions for the “initial implementation phase” (length unspecified) and 46 “longer-term commitments”. Very few have specific deadlines.

! **Actions without owners (not just the NPO)**

Most ALL Strategy actions don’t have stated owners or contributors. The implied owner, where unspecified, may be assumed to be the NPO, but the NPO role as described in the strategy is to support and co-ordinate implementation by others.

“The strategy was very ambitious and broad encompassing literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, health literacy, family literacy and workplace literacy. I think this has led to the NPO and RLCs trying to do everything and spreading themselves too thin.” - staff

! **Actions not being prioritised appropriately**

Some longer-term commitments have been progressed while other actions for the initial implementation phase, including **stated priorities** (ALL 2021), do not appear to be started. There are also actions being progressed which were not specified in the strategy. We need leadership at Ministerial level to decide on the priorities for the next five years of the strategy, in a transparent way.

! **Actions not being funded appropriately**

The strategy is ambiguous about its own funding implications. Realistically, significant investment is needed to make the ambitions of ALL a reality.

“The strategy has all the essential ingredients, but without extra delivery funds, cannot be implemented” - member

! **Limitations of Collaboration and Innovation Fund**

The Collaboration and Innovation Fund (CIF) has many strengths, but its short-term nature is a limitation, as well as the administrative burden it places on the NPO.

“Although the CIF has supported valuable local projects and partnerships, there is limited evidence that it has delivered the systemic change or long-term sustainable impact originally envisaged. Many projects remain short-term, with no clear pathway to mainstreaming or continuation once funding ends.” - member

“I think there has been a focus on the CIF funding with other aspects of the strategy being deprioritised due to the workload required to implement the CIF funding” - staff

! **Core services need funding**

Long-term, sustainable funding is needed to enable adult literacy services to expand and enhance provision as set out in the strategy. Yet:

- some ETB literacy services were effectively cut (with staff lost and classes cancelled) when temporary extra funding for English for Speakers of Other

Languages (ESOL) came to an end earlier in 2026 (this was discussed in the Dáil on 23 April 2026, **Dáil Éireann 2026**)

- community education providers often have very limited resources and funding uncertainty year-to-year (**AONTAS 2025**)
- funding for **Learn with NALA**, our own online and distance learning service has been flatlined in recent years (**Our Asks for Budget 2027**, NALA 2026b).

The report of the Expert Group on Literacy Provision that was submitted to SOLAS on 27 April 2026 has not been submitted to the DFHERIS. Its purpose was to inform the 2027 Budget.

“The Adult Literacy Services are so under resourced the NPO do not run national campaigns to reach new learners. The strategy cannot be implemented without an effective Adult Literacy Service and the foundational reading, writing and everyday maths skills being supported.” – staff

! Services need teaching staff

Issues around the working conditions and job security of adult literacy teaching staff must be resolved, as these staff are essential to achieving the ALL Strategy’s aims. Supports like resources and professional development opportunities can also help to make this an attractive career path. Learners have told us they are affected by churn in teaching staff.

“The adult literacy sector needs to provide an appealing and reliable employment option for literacy tutors, to keep existing and experienced staff and attract new people to the sector.” – staff

! **Adult literacy not seen as priority**

Implementation of the ALL Strategy may be being hampered by adult literacy's lack of political visibility compared with other areas (for example, apprenticeships or Artificial Intelligence (AI) skills). There have been three Ministers overseeing the ALL Strategy since its launch in 2021, each with their own priorities, which directly and indirectly affect how limited resources are allocated.

"The Government consistently prioritises Level 5 + education widening the inequality gap." - staff

Actions, targets and measures

In our survey of members and staff, we asked, “Are the ALL Strategy’s actions, targets and measures still relevant and appropriate?”

	Members	Staff
Yes	14	8
No	1	2
I don’t know	2	1
No answer	0	1

Table 4: NALA members and staff responses on actions, targets and measures

Almost all respondents said yes, the ALL Strategy’s actions, targets and measures are still relevant and appropriate.

For this section, we will discuss the actions, targets and measures in turn.

Actions

✓ **Actions are appropriate**

None of our members or staff raised concerns with the actions themselves.

“I am good with them all and hope these continue” - member

! **Actions may not be achievable within the timeframe**

It may not be realistic to achieve all the remaining actions within the next five years.

“The strategy may have been overly ambitious in the number and breadth of actions identified. The large volume of actions, combined with limited implementation and monitoring mechanisms, has made it difficult to maintain momentum and demonstrate measurable progress. A more focused set of priorities with clear ownership, timelines and performance indicators may have supported more effective delivery.” - member

Targets

✓ The strategy has the right goal

The high-level targets of the ALL Strategy are aimed at reducing the level of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs in the Irish population. We agree that this must be the ultimate goal of the strategy. Progress towards the goal is discussed below.

“The targets are still relevant because they focus on improving literacy, numeracy and digital literacy, which are important for everyday life, independence and participation in society.” - member

✓ Digital literacy target has been reached

The ALL Strategy target of reducing the level of digital literacy need to 20% or less has been reached (it is now 17% - **European Commission 2026**). The rate of progress towards this target has been very fast (from 47% (**European Commission 2020**) to 17% in 5 years). There are some issues with this measure, however, which are discussed below under “Measures”.

! Literacy and numeracy targets are not being reached

Figure 2 below shows where things stand in relation to the ALL Strategy targets for levels of literacy and numeracy needs. Both are measured by PIAAC (**CSO 2013** and **CSO 2024**). Neither is on track to be reached.

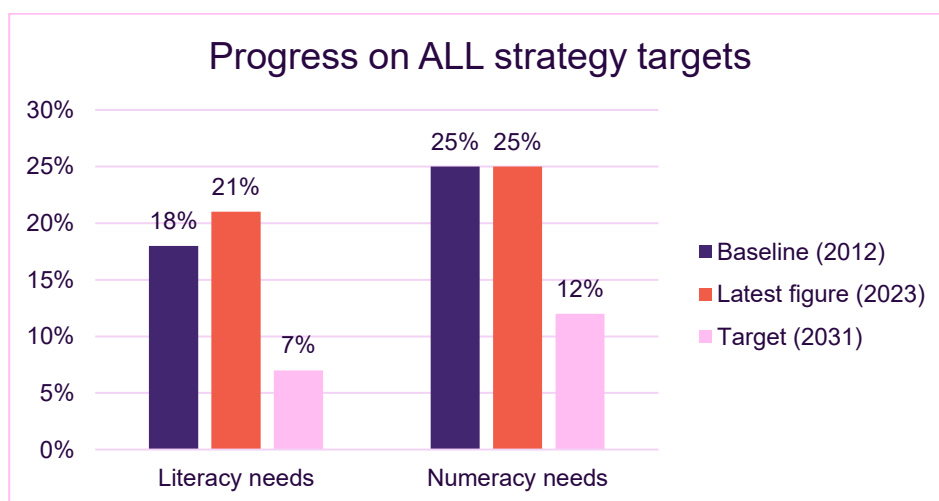


Figure 2: Progress on ALL strategy targets for literacy and numeracy

Ireland's rate of "low performing" 15-year-olds in reading and maths also rose in the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results. This means that adult literacy and numeracy needs are unlikely to reduce over the lifetime of the ALL Strategy, without increased intervention.

"The PIAAC stats and the recent PISA stats. show us things are getting worse, not better. It is extremely concerning to see lowering rates of functional reading and maths."
– staff

! Target groups need reconsidered

A key strength of the ALL Strategy is that it has identified a clear list of groups to be prioritised (p59). However, the context has changed since the strategy was published. There is new evidence of need that has to be considered and included in the ongoing implementation.

"The assumptions that informed the Strategy in 2021 should be reassessed to ensure that the remaining years of implementation are focused on the areas of greatest need." - member

Measures

✓ **Strategy covers available indicators and gaps**

The ALL Strategy contains a detailed list of available indicators (p68). It also discusses measures that need to be developed or refined, for example it identifies the need to develop a more regular tool than PIAAC.

! **Issues with digital literacy measure**

The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) has many strengths and may be the best available option for measuring Ireland's level of digital literacy. However, it also has significant weaknesses. For example, it relies on self-reporting of behaviours, not an actual assessment of skills (unlike PIAAC). Crucially for the ALL Strategy, a methodological change in 2021 means that the results are not comparable over time for the first half of the strategy (**Eurostat 2026**).

! **Reporting needs to focus on impact**

The reporting we have seen focusses more on activity to date (which is not insignificant) and less on impact. Where possible, impact reporting should include quantitative and qualitative impact such as the wider benefits of learning.

Recommendations

Immediate actions

To improve ALL strategy implementation as a matter of urgency, we recommend the following actions to be taken immediately.

1. Progress update on actions to date

By year end, the NPO to publish a detailed progress report on implementation activity with details on each of the 77 strategy actions, other actions, and actions taken at regional level.

2. National Literacy Action Plan for 2027

- a. NPO to convene the National Literacy Coalition before year end to advise the NPO on priority actions for 2027.
- b. NPO to draft the National Literacy Action Plan 2027 with each action having a timeline, one lead owner, any other contributors, any cost implications (with proposed source(s) of funding), and success measure.
- c. Minister for FHERIS to convene the Cross-Government Oversight Group in early 2027 to review and approve the plan.
- d. NPO to publish the plan by March 2027 and co-ordinate implementation and reporting.
- e. National Literacy Action Plans to be produced on an agreed regular schedule from 2027 on.

Good practice example – Traveller and Roma Education Strategy

Under the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy 2024-2030 (Government of Ireland 2024a), it was agreed that there would be three two-year implementation plans. The first two have been published on [the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy page on gov.ie](#). Against every action there is a lead, other stakeholders, and timeline.

Our top priority action from each Pillar

Pillar One: Understand

Action 3.1.1 **National campaign**

To be regular, and aimed at getting potential learners into services

Pillar Two: Access

Action 3.2.1 Plain and accessible content

Public sector bodies to agree their **plain language plans**

Pillar Three: Expand

Action 3.3.4 Innovate and enhance **provision**

As recommended by the Expert Group on Literacy Provision, with ringfenced funding to support delivery

Pillar Four: Empower

Action 3.4.2 **Furthest behind first**

Marginalised groups to be prioritised throughout strategy implementation

3. Director of the NPO

SOLAS to appoint a new dedicated Director of the NPO as soon as possible.

4. Expert Group on Literacy Provision

Recommendations of the Expert Group on Literacy Provision to be implemented as soon as possible.

5. PIAAC mid-cycle survey

DFHERIS to confirm as soon as possible whether Ireland will take part in the next mid-cycle round of PIAAC. If not, an alternative way to measure adult literacy and numeracy levels in Ireland before the next main cycle of PIAAC (2032/33) to be identified in the medium term.

Medium-term actions

To support the ALL strategy to achieve its goals by 2031, we recommend the following actions to be taken over the next year.

1. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Oversight Group to approve a monitoring and evaluation framework, and reporting schedule, with input from the NPO. Reports should be published on the ALL website.

Good practice example – Roadmap for Social Inclusion

Under the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 (Government of Ireland 2020), another cross-Government strategy, a Progress Report and a Report Card were published every year. They are all available on the [Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 page on gov.ie](#). They include information on key statistical indicators, commitments delivered and commitments still in progress.

2. Funding

Oversight Group to consider and agree how it can ensure that “the strategy is adequately resourced” (ALL Strategy, p38) to achieve its aims by 2031. Securing long-term, sustainable, ringfenced funding for adult literacy provision must be a top priority. Sustained provision and outreach to target groups must also be adequately resourced.

3. Review of oversight and implementation structures

Minister for FHERIS and Oversight Group to ensure that a review of all the strategy structures, including its own role is completed and implemented. A key aim of the review will be to align the ALL Strategy with related strategies and structures which have arisen since 2021, including but certainly not limited to

- National Skills Council and proposed Skills Observatory
- Ireland’s first strategies on
 - **Financial Literacy** (Government of Ireland 2025a)
 - **Counter Disinformation** (Government of Ireland 2025b)
 - **Tertiary Education** (Government of Ireland 2026b)

- New strategies on
 - **Further Education and Training**
 - **Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy** (Government of Ireland 2024b)
 - **Digital Ireland** (Government of Ireland 2026c)

4. Priority target groups

The National Coalition to review recent research evidence and make recommendations to the Oversight Group for potential additions to the list of priority target groups.

5. Digital literacy measure

Oversight Group to consider, with advice from the NPO, whether to continue using DESI as the strategy's measure of digital literacy. If continuing, agree a revised target for digital literacy needs as measured by DESI, given the original target has now been met.

Conclusion

In this submission NALA has covered the key topics in the mid-term review of the ALL strategy:

1. Oversight and implementation structures
2. Progress on actions
3. Actions, targets and measures

Informed by NALA's members, learners and staff, we have identified achievements and challenges in all three areas.

We have also developed ten recommendations which should help the ALL strategy to achieve:

- Faster implementation
- Better oversight and reporting
- More investment in long-term solutions

This mid-term review is an opportunity for all partners in ALL to recommit to the strategy's vision – “an Ireland where every adult has the necessary literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to fully engage in society and realise their potential” (ALL Strategy, p33). The strategy has huge potential, so long as it is implemented effectively.

As Minister Harris, now Tánaiste, said in his Foreword, “The Strategy clearly has the potential to be transformative – in its implementation and we must achieve the transformation the Strategy promises” (ALL Strategy, p5).

Contact

We are happy to discuss our comments and recommendations further.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Talk to NALA workshop

Key themes raised by learners at Talk to NALA workshop – NALA Adult Literacy Learner Day, 23 April 2026

1. Provision

Many learners want to have more hours, not just once a week

Most learners prefer groups, but a few started off one-to-one (one learner said one-to-one is great *when you have the right tutor*).

2. Progression

Learners were clearly keen to progress and learn more. They sometimes come across barriers, for example:

- having to move to a different centre to do higher level courses; or
- having to wait until a certain time of year to do the right level of course

On the other hand, one learner said he *wasn't allowed* to repeat a course he had passed (he wanted to refresh and reinforce his learning).

3. Relationships

- a. Tutors: Learners are overwhelmingly positive about their teachers
- b. Peers: People make friends in their classes and like to stick with them

4. Facilities

One learner had moved venue four times – disruptive, accessibility issues

Some centres need development, maybe don't have enough classrooms

Learners would like to have computers/laptops available to use

5. Disability supports

Staff are not always aware of the full range of supports and entitlements for people with disabilities, so learners have to self-advocate

Appendix 2 – Student Subcommittee

Summary of issues raised under the standing agenda item, “student issues from around the country”, from start 2022 to end 2025.

1. We want clear and up-to-date **information** about our learning options (for example, on the FETCH [Further Education and Training Course Hub] website)
2. We want staff in literacy services to have better **pay and contracts**
3. We want good supports for learners with **disabilities or learning difficulties**
4. We want to learn practical **digital skills** (for example, online banking)
5. We want tutors to focus on what each learner needs to learn, **not a curriculum**
6. We want more information about **supports** we could use in everyday life (for example, reading supports with the driver theory test)
7. We want staff in literacy services to always be **respectful and approachable**
8. We want **all kinds of people** to be brought into literacy services (for example, older people)
9. We want **more time** with our tutors (longer classes or one-to-one learning)

List of acronyms

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used to draft this list of acronyms.

- **AI** – Artificial Intelligence
- **ALL** – Adult Literacy for Life
- **ALO** – Adult Literacy Organiser
- **CIF** – Collaboration and Innovation Fund
- **CSO** – Central Statistics Office
- **DESI** – Digital Economy and Society Index
- **DFHERIS** – Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- **ERC** – Educational Research Centre
- **ESOL** – English for Speakers of Other Languages
- **ETB** – Education and Training Board
- **FETCH** – Further Education and Training Course Hub
- **FHERIS** – Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- **NALA** – National Adult Literacy Agency
- **NPO** – National Programme Office
- **PIAAC** – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
- **PISA** – Programme for International Student Assessment
- **RLC** – Regional Literacy Co-ordinator
- **SOLAS** – An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna (Ireland's Further Education and Training Authority)

References

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About NALA

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

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