

National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign

Phase five: September 2020

Summary and evaluation report



SOLAS
learning works


NALA
National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh



EUROPEAN UNION

Investing in your future
European Social Fund



**Ireland's European Structural and
Investment Funds Programmes
2014-2020**

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and the European Union

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and

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About this report

This report is a summary and an evaluation of **phase five** of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign which happened in Autumn 2020. The report should be read in conjunction with the summary and evaluation of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign phase one (September 2016¹), phase two (September 2017²), phase three (September 2018³) and phase four (September 2019⁴).

The National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign was funded by SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority of Ireland, and it was managed by the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).

Adult Literacy is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020.

The research in this report was completed by Coyne Research, an independent market research agency.

¹ SOLAS and NALA (2016), National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign: September 2016 Summary and Evaluation, Dublin.

² SOLAS and NALA (2017), National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign: September 2017 Summary and Evaluation, Dublin.

³ SOLAS and NALA (2018), National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign: September 2018 Summary and Evaluation, Dublin.

⁴ SOLAS and NALA (2019), National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign: September 2019 Summary and Evaluation, Dublin.

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Campaign ambassadors launch 'Take the first step', the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign. Pictured L to R: Sinead Moriarty, Olive Phelan and Catherine Dunne.

Introduction and background information to this report

In September 2016, **SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority** in Ireland, funded a **national adult literacy and numeracy awareness campaign** to encourage those with literacy and numeracy difficulties to improve their skills.

The campaign was a key action in Ireland's **Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy 2014 – 2019** which sets out to meet the training needs of Ireland's labour market and society.

The campaign was managed by the **National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)** and it was supported by a range of stakeholders via a national steering committee.

The campaign included national and regional radio advertising, video and digital advertising, outdoor advertising, posters, leaflets and public relations activity.

An independent evaluation showed that the campaign performed strongly across a range of awareness raising metrics and made a number of **recommendations**.

In **September 2017, 2018 and 2019** SOLAS funded a **second, third and fourth phase** of the national adult literacy and numeracy awareness campaign which incorporated the recommendations. An independent evaluation showed that these campaigns also performed strongly across a range of metrics and set out some further **recommendations**.

In **Autumn 2020**, SOLAS funded a **fifth phase** of the national adult literacy and numeracy awareness campaign which incorporated the recommendations identified as part of phase 4 (2019) and the changing environment surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. This report is **a summary and an evaluation** of the fifth phase of the campaign. It is divided into three chapters as follows:

1. **Chapter one** provides a summary of the fifth phase of the campaign.
2. **Chapter two** provides the findings from an evaluation of the campaign.
3. **Chapter three** provides key insights and recommendations for future campaigns.

Executive summary

Overview of phase four of the awareness campaign

- Phase five of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign was launched on Monday 12 October 2020 by the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD.
- The awareness campaign was similar to previous phases of the campaign. It was called 'Take the first step' and included national and regional radio advertising, video and digital advertising as well as public relations (PR) activity. Due to pandemic restrictions it did not include print or outdoor advertising. The awareness campaign promoted individuals who had addressed their literacy difficulty with the objective of encouraging others to reap the rewards by doing the same.
- There were a number of recommendations from the evaluations of the previous phases of the campaign that were incorporated into the fifth phase such as the greater promotion of local ETB services.
- All national advertising and PR activity encouraged those interested in improving their basic skills to contact a national Freephone and website. All regional activity encouraged people to contact local ETB adult literacy services and promoted local contact phone numbers.

Initial response to the campaign

- NALA provided information to about 550 individuals who phoned and wanted information about improving their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The split of callers was about 64% female and 36% male callers, and each person was given details of their local ETB adult literacy service and NALA's Distance Learning Service.
- When callers were asked 'Where did you hear about us?' Online was the primary source of awareness (48%), followed by radio (31%) and word of mouth (19%).
- The campaign website [takethefirststep.ie](https://www.takethefirststep.ie) recorded 25,000 sessions, 28,000 page views and about 21,000 users during the campaign.

Campaign evaluation (independent research)

- The reach of the 'Take the First Step' campaign remains high. Amongst all Irish adults, 38% recall some element of the campaign (TV, Radio or Online).
- Radio registers the highest proportion of recall in October 2020. 25% of Irish adults claim to recall advertising from the campaign on radio – positively, highest amongst those with difficulties (58%) and those who know someone with difficulties (38%).
- Recall of the online execution (20%) has increased whilst TV recall (24%) is in line with previous waves.
- Recall of the campaign is highest amongst the key target cohort and those aged 35-44.
- Amongst those who have difficulties with literacy/numeracy, 68% recall the campaign. 41% of 35-44 year olds also claim to recall the campaign. There has been a decrease in awareness amongst 18-24 year olds.
- The campaign continues to be regarded as highly effective at encouraging people to seek help. Amongst those who have been exposed to the campaign, circa 9 in 10 believe it is effective at encouraging people to consider seeking help for literacy, numeracy and basic technology problems.
- Those who recall some aspect of the 'Take the First Step' campaign are far more likely to be aware of where to go for help – 3 in 4 of this cohort are aware of where to get help with either literacy/numeracy or technology skills. Amongst those who are aware of where to get help, there has been a slight decrease in those mentioning NALA as a provider of these services.
- There has been a significant increase in awareness of local free classes via ETB adult education centres amongst those who have difficulties themselves. 78% of those with difficulties claim to be aware of the availability of these classes, a +18% increase from January 2020.

Recommendations

Evaluations of the campaign show that it has had a positive impact in terms of awareness of services and effectiveness by those who are exposed to it. The challenge in the future lies in reaching the population who have not been exposed to it, specifically those whose needs are greatest; creating pathways for individuals to take up a learning opportunity; and working with ETBs and their learners to promote local services. Recommendations from this report include:

- Recruit learners to work with NALA and ETBI on the campaign to actively engage with hard to reach target audiences.
- Audit and review current data collection and referral channels to establish what works well, what could be improved and pilot recommendations to improve pathways for potential learners.
- Work with ETBI to identify awareness campaigns with ETBs that promote specific themes at different times of the year.
- Identify, agree and research new ways of using existing assets and resources to reach key target audiences.

Equally, in 2021 a new 10-year strategy for adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy will be launched. Therefore any new awareness work should address its strategic objectives.

Chapter one

Overview of phase five of the awareness campaign

1. Overview of phase five of the awareness campaign

This chapter summarises the fifth phase of the national adult literacy and numeracy awareness campaign that happened in Autumn 2020.

1.1 National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign

Take the First Step is a public information campaign that helps people who have difficulty with reading, writing, maths or technology.

The campaign uses real-life stories of people who returned to education to improve their skills, and encourages others to contact the National Adult Literacy Agency for information on free services nationwide. This includes tuition in 120 local Education and Training Boards' Adult Education centres or NALA's distance learning service.

The campaign includes national and regional radio advertising, video and digital and outdoor advertising, as well as public relations and independent media coverage.

The campaign has been broadcast annually from 2016-2019, usually for four weeks in September each year, to coincide with education centres opening.

Evaluations of the campaign show that it has had a positive impact in terms of awareness of services and it is considered very effective by those who see or hear it.

1.2 Plans for 2020 and the impact Covid-19

Planning for the 2020 Take the First Step campaign started in January 2020.

Drawing on recommendations from the 2019 evaluation, the plan was twofold:

1. Develop new ways of using existing assets to reach key target audiences.
2. Pilot small campaigns with ETBs that promote specific services during the year.

Planning for the campaign stalled in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic as education centres had to close suddenly nationwide and there was a more pressing need to support individuals with literacy, numeracy and digital skills' needs.

In April 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, NALA worked with both SOLAS and RTÉ to reach and support those who may find understanding

information related to Covid-19 or keeping in touch electronically, the most challenging.

RTÉ developed a new TV and Radio promotion that promoted NALA's free help during Covid-19. The promotion used some footage from the Take the First Step campaign so it had the same look and feel. The messaging was clear, focusing on helping anyone who was having difficulty understanding vital health information, filling-in important forms such as for social welfare, using technology to keep in touch with loved ones; and help for parents with easy learning activities to do with kids.

SOLAS also supported this work by allocating Take the First Step budget to promote NALA's distance learning service and ETB services through a digital campaign. The initial results show that over 300 people contacted NALA as a result of these promotions and there was a significant increase in website hits with about 22,000 users and 60,000 page views which is an 88% increase on the same period last year.

1.3 Refining campaign plans in light of the pandemic

We revisited our planning for the 2020 campaign during the summer as restrictions were being gradually lifted. Key considerations included:

- Increased demand for courses and waiting lists for new learners
- Reluctance by people to sign-up to face-to-face courses
- More demand for courses to improve digital skills
- More demand for courses from people made unemployed in the sectors worst affected by the restrictions
- Restrictions could be re-imposed and adult education centres temporarily closed

NALA, SOLAS and the Education and Training Board's National Advisory Committee (NAC) agreed to run the campaign slightly later in the year, at the beginning of October, to allow for a 'settling-in' period for education centres, and also to extend the campaign by six weeks so that centres could manage expectations.

1.4 Agreed and revised plans for 2020

National launch and conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to restrictions we were unable to hold a conference and held a week of online webinars around International Literacy Day in September. We also held a soft launch for the campaign at the beginning of October with a photocall with the Minister and press release.
National radio campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National radio has always been effective in raising awareness of the benefits of ETB services. We therefore broadcast the ads with slightly less media spend so that there was not a glut of calls and so that we were able to manage expectations.
Regional radio campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional advertising has been welcomed by ETB centres in the past so we contacted and offered every ETB regional advertising depending on the needs of the ETBs.
Digital campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital advertising has been very effective in raising awareness about services. We augmented digital advertising and spread it across a longer period (2 months) so that we could promote more services and manage expectations. We also organised bespoke campaigns for ETBs.
Outdoor campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We decided not to do any outdoor advertising in shopping centres as there was less footfall in these areas as a result of Covid-19.
Local posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to the above we did not do posters this year and they were not requested by education centres.
PR activity with well-known ambassadors and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PR activity has worked well each year, securing independent media coverage and raising awareness. We continued PR activity and spread it across a longer period of 2 months.
Pilot pocket awareness campaigns with local ETBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 2019 evaluation recommended to pilot smaller awareness campaigns. We identified several ETBs who wanted to promote their local service and developed mainly digital campaigns to promote their services.

1.5 Theme:

Take the First Step – Learn for life

We built on the Take the First Step campaign messaging to date whilst also introducing more messages around the benefits of learning, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, these messages included, learning to:

- Understand public information
- Read for pleasure
- Fill in forms
- Use technology to keep in touch or do online courses
- Support children's learning

1.6 Main activity and dates:

a) Launch and PR campaign: October - November

On the 12 October 2020 the 'Take the first step' campaign was officially launched by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education at a photo-call. He was joined at the photo-call by the campaign's ambassadors – well known authors Sinead Moriarty and Catherine Dunne, as well as former adult literacy student and advocate Olive Phelan.

Following the launch, the campaign ambassadors and literacy students did significant media interviews to raise awareness of the benefits of adult education and ETB services nationwide.

Total media mentions and metrics include:

44 Broadcast, Online & Print pieces	DAV (Euro) €76,268
PR Value (DAV x3) €228,803	Reach/ Circulation 4,727,205

Highlights include:



Today with Claire Byrne – Interview with Student Chris Carthy and Sinead Moriarty -8 minutes and 37 seconds in length.

RTÉ RADIO 1

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer/html5/#/radio1/21849355>

12th October 2020



The Last Word With Matt Cooper– Interview with Student Chris Carthy and Sinead Moriarty -13 minutes and 46 seconds in length.

TODAY fm

https://www.todayfm.com/podcasts/the-last-word-with-matt-cooper/learning-to-read-at-46?utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=article&utm_medium=web

15th October 2020



Newstalk Breakfast Bulletin – Interview with Clare McNally on NALA Take the First Step Campaign – 30 seconds.

<https://www.newstalk.com/listen-back>

newstalk
12th October 2020

Back To School: 49-year-old Ann is on a quest to sit her Junior Cert Maths exam

By Dana Burrell 05/11/2020



Every Monday morning Ann Cordial and her nine-year-old son Fabian wake up excited about a new week of learning. For Fabian, it's school as normal; for Ann, it's Maths and English classes at the Dundalk Adult Learning Service.

'Now Mummy, I'm off to school and you're off to school,' the young boy will proudly profess to 49-year-old Anne who decided last year to invest in her future and return to education.

The Mullingar native has always found numbers tricky but it's when she noticed she could no longer help her son with his homework that she decided to make a change.

Taking that first step was the hardest, Ann tells EVOKE, her confidence and self-belief wavering at the prospect of feeling vulnerable in a room of new people.



Ann Cordial is a National Adult Literacy Agency Student (NALA), part of the 2020 Take the First Step campaign. Pic: supplied

EVOKE

5/11/20

<https://evoke.ie/2020/11/05/inspire-women-in-business/ann-adult-learning-experience>

Help out there for those struggling with reading and writing

< All FM104 News

Friday, October 30th, 2020 2:31pm

By Dan Pitcher [@DanPitcher](#)



A new campaign has been launched by NALA – the National Adult Literacy Agency.

It aims to encourage people struggling to read and write to ask for help.

A recent OECD survey shows that about 18 percent of Irish adults aged 16 to 65 battle literacy on daily basis, while 25 percent struggle with numeracy.

Take the first step – is a new campaign being rolled out by NALA – and its key message to people is, don't let embarrassment hold you back.

NALA spokesperson is Clare McNally says strong literacy, numeracy and digital skills are essential.

"Don't let it hold you back if there is something niggling at you - Maybe it is that you want to help your kid with homework or you want to be able to fill in a form without asking for help."

"What we would say is give us a call and we can go through the courses that are available."

People can find out more at takefirststep.ie or Free phone 1800 2020 65.

[Visit our Covid-19 info hub for the latest news and information on the Covid-19 pandemic.](#)

<https://www.fm104.ie/news/fm104-news/help-out-there-for-those-struggling-with-reading-and-writing/>

FM104

October 30th 2020

Twitter Highlights:

Sinead Moriarty @sinead_moriarty · Oct 12
Thanks to @todaywithClare for highlighting Take The First Step literacy campaign. It's NEVER too late. 🙌🙌🙌

Sinead Moriarty @sinead_moriarty · Oct 12
Literacy is a basic human right. It's never too late to learn. There is no shame in asking for help. Pick up the phone today. It will change your life. @DunneCatherine @monaharistd @ETBireland @NALAireland @DeploFHed @SOLASFET @LoveLearning



CatherineDunneAuthor @DunneCatherine · Oct 12
I'm delighted to be part of this campaign. NALA understands the ways literacy and numeracy can open doors to a new life. Dedicated tutors, superb teaching. Courses are free and available now to anyone who needs help. takefirststep.ie

CatherineDunneAuthor @DunneCatherine · Oct 13
Look at this lovely clip from last year and see how literacy skills transformed Veronica Poole's life.

[#TakeTheFirstStep](#)

[#LoveLearning](#)

[#LoveLiteracy](#)

[#LoveLearning](#)

[#LoveLiteracy](#)

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Watch One woman's moving adult literacy journey
Meet the show-steller at this year's Dublin Book Awards, Dubliner Veronica Poole, whose moving story is told in a splendid short film ...
[@rtv.ie](#)

NALA celebrating 40 years @NALAireland · Oct 12
Today we are launching our Take the First Step campaign to encourage people to get the help they need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. bit.ly/3djwCQt

@ETBireland
@SOLASFET
@DeploFHed
@SimonHaristD
@andrewbrownlee7
@sinead_moriarty
@DunneCatherine



Sinead Moriarty @sinead_moriarty · Oct 12
Literacy is a basic human right - It's never too late to learn. There is no shame in asking for help. Pick up the phone today - it will change your life.

NALA celebrating 40 years @NALAireland · Oct 12
Today we are launching our Take the First Step campaign to encourage people to get the help they need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. bit.ly/3djwCQt

@ETBireland
@SOLASFET



b) Advertising campaign: October – November

We ran advertising during October and November on platforms that had a proven track record for delivering on the campaign objectives. This included national radio, regional radio, video on demand and digital, as well as targeted pocket awareness campaigns promoting local ETBs.

Activity summary:

- 2 x videos across video on demand (vod) channels
- 2 x national radio ads, across national and local stations
- 2 x national ads across digital audio channels
- Programmatic display and video
- Urban media partnership incorporating:
 - 6 x 40" vox pops on radio airtime
 - 30" Digital audio spots on Premier League coverage on Talk sport
 - Mobile and desktop Display
 - 2 x 90" subtitled video content on stations' social channels
 - 2 x advertorials seeded on stations' sites
 - 1 x podcast promoted on social and podcast host channels

Key highlights from the campaign:



Radio Spot

Radio performed well in this campaign, with all spots delivered.

Recommend same station mix for future campaigns



VoD

Performed well for this campaign despite late booking. Recommend earlier booking for future campaigns to better secure inventory



Partnership

Worked very well and benefited the overall campaign. Engagement through Podcasts highly successful once again.



Digital

Worked well alongside our traditional media.

Strong engagement, particularly with Prog Audio with a CTR of 0.15% and completion rate of 94%

Video on Demand

Video on demand promoted individuals who had addressed their literacy difficulties with the objective of encouraging others to reap the rewards by doing the same. The content and message of each individual's story focused on the benefits of returning to education, as well as demonstrating that the service was free.



The campaign was delivered in full, with a good split across broadcasters.

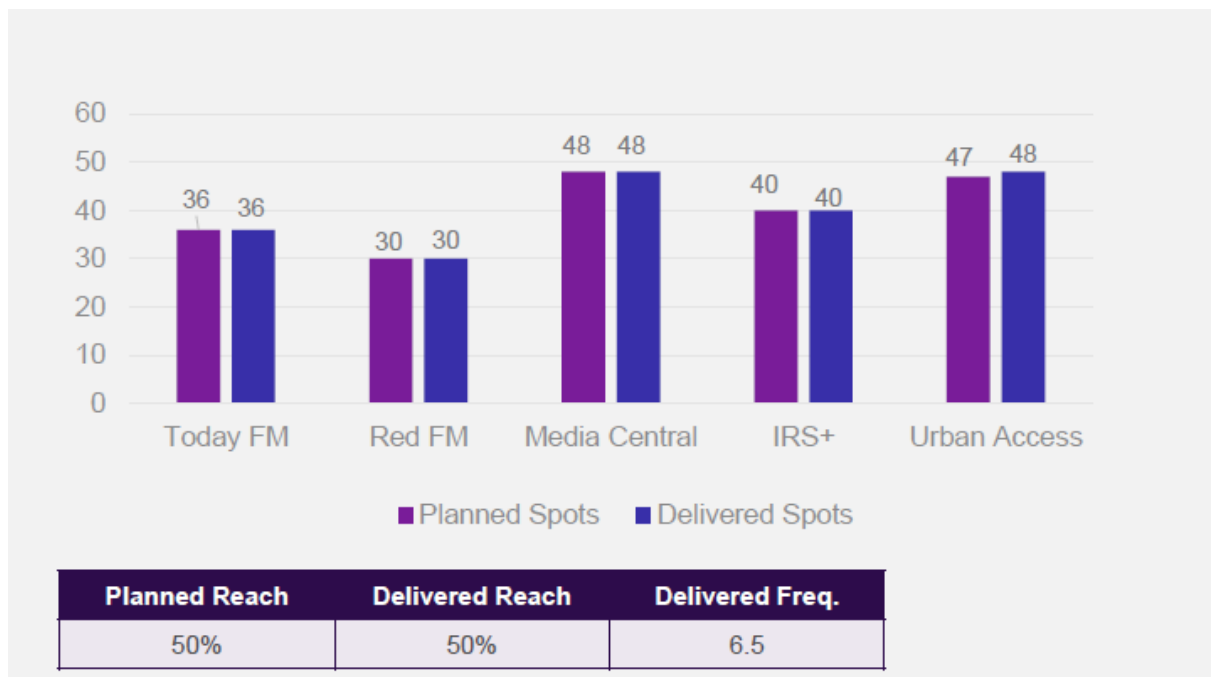
RTÉ player struggled through October and November with delivery of campaigns, as more people were at home and watching live TV over the player, but the campaign was delivered at higher than expected levels across other players.

VOD Delivery (*All adults*)



Radio

The Take the First Step radio advertisements focused on the benefits of adult literacy learning and contacting www.takethefirststep.ie or Freephone 1800 20 20 65 for information on free courses. Similar to previous years, the advertisements featured real students sharing their story of returning to education and encouraging others to 'take the first step'. The advertisements were broadcast on the following stations with all planned spots running as expected:



Frequency

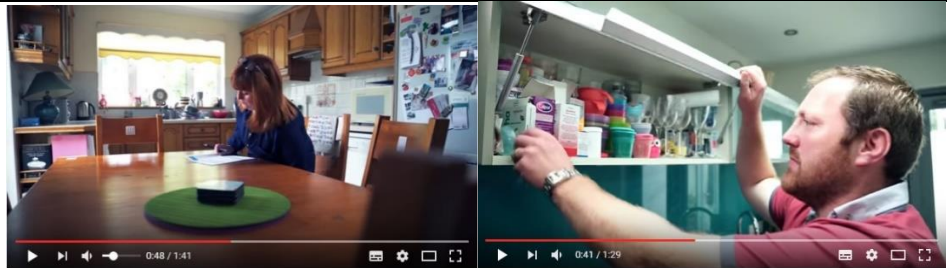
- Media Central: 48 spots x 7 stations = 336
- IRS: 40 spots x 15 stations = 600
- Urban Access: 48 spots x 7 stations = 336

Regional radio and digital advertising with Urban media

Similar to previous years, we worked with Urban Media and local radio stations to promote local services. We linked with local ETBs before booking any advertising to ensure messaging was aligned with services on offer.

Urban media partnership

Video across
station
websites



Video content
created and
seeded
through
Facebook



Students from City of Dublin ETB talk about the benefits of returning to education

12,409 views

10 1 SHARE ...

Online
advertorials
seeded
through radio
websites and
mobile and
digital display
advertising to
support the
campaign



"CONFIDENCE IS THE BIGGEST THING"- TUTOR TALKS RETURNING TO EDUCATION

By Ellen Smith | @ellensmith95 | ellen@urbanmedia.ie
15 August 2018



For many of us, the thought of school sends shivers down our spines.

No matter how long we've spent there, it can often hold some difficult memories.

This would explain why so many people are hesitant to return to education.

Fionnuala Carter is the Adult Literacy Organiser with the Coolock Darndale branch of the City of Dublin ETB adult literacy service and she revealed that this idea couldn't be further from

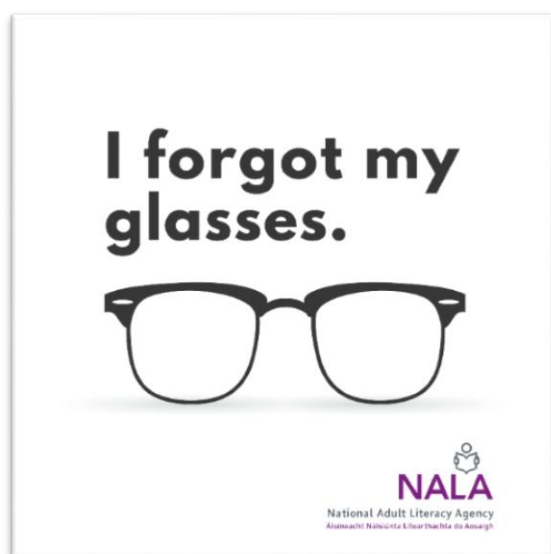
‘Take the first step’ Advertorials – reach and engagement

Station	Reach from Facebook and Twitter Posts	Engagement
FM104	18,884	85
Q102	6,860	41
LMFM	11,011	92
Live 95	3,950	23
96FM	14,720	86
C103	5,113	41
GBFM	7,666	62
WLRFM	14,541	386
Total:	82,745	816

Facebook and Twitter – combined reach and engagement

Station	Combined Reach	Engagement
FM104	53,673	89
Q102	20,054	35
LMFM	33,859	71
Live 95	15,866	23
96FM	33,881	36
C103	15,951	28
GBFM	25,974	58
WLRFM	27,672	77
Total:	226,930	420

NALA Podcast – Reach and Engagement



We re-broadcast a new podcast we developed in 2019 called 'I forgot my glasses'. It features learners from Cavan Monaghan ETB, Mayo Sligo and Leitrim ETB, Kildare and Wicklow ETB and also an Adult Literacy Organiser from City of Dublin ETB.

Station	Podcast Reach	Engagement
FM104	20,183	301
Q102	11,857	393
LMFM	12,004	453
Live 95	8,827	314
96FM	12,360	363
C103	8,326	222
GBFM	17,161	419
WLRFM	16,604	571
Total:	107,322	2,465

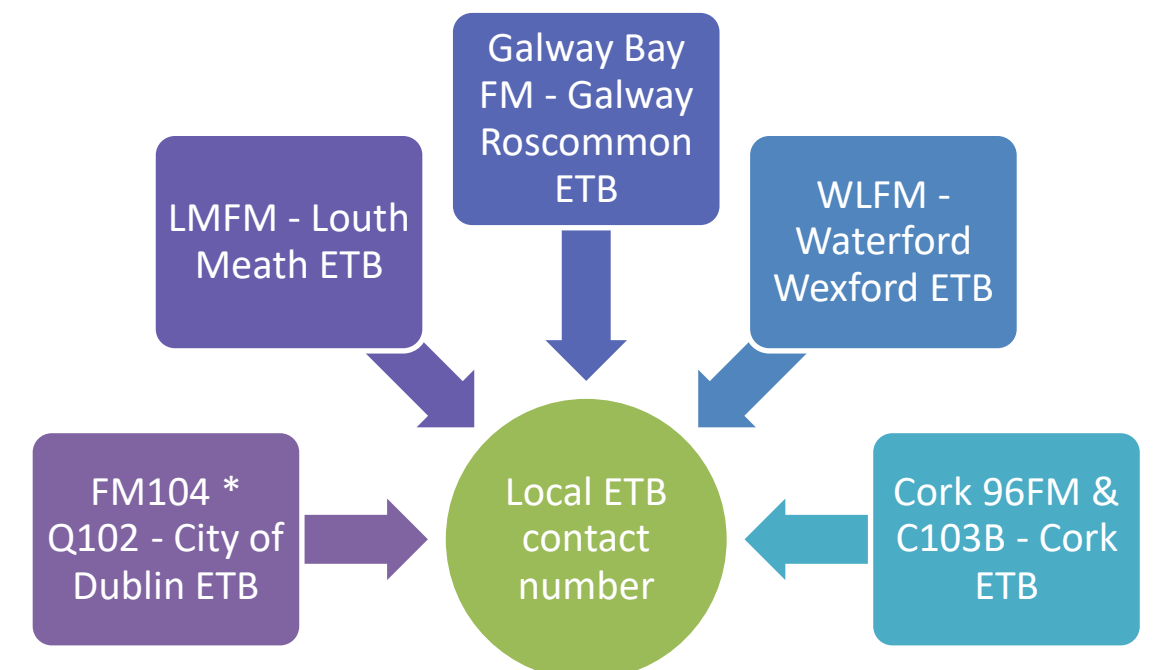
Digital Display & Audio

- Digital Display ads ran desktop/mobile across all Urbanmedia stations
- Ad impressions: 276,493; Ad server clicks: 425; Click through rate: 0.02%
- Premier League/ talkSPORT package –1 month
- Delivery –302,151 impressions / LTR 98-99%

Regional radio advertisements

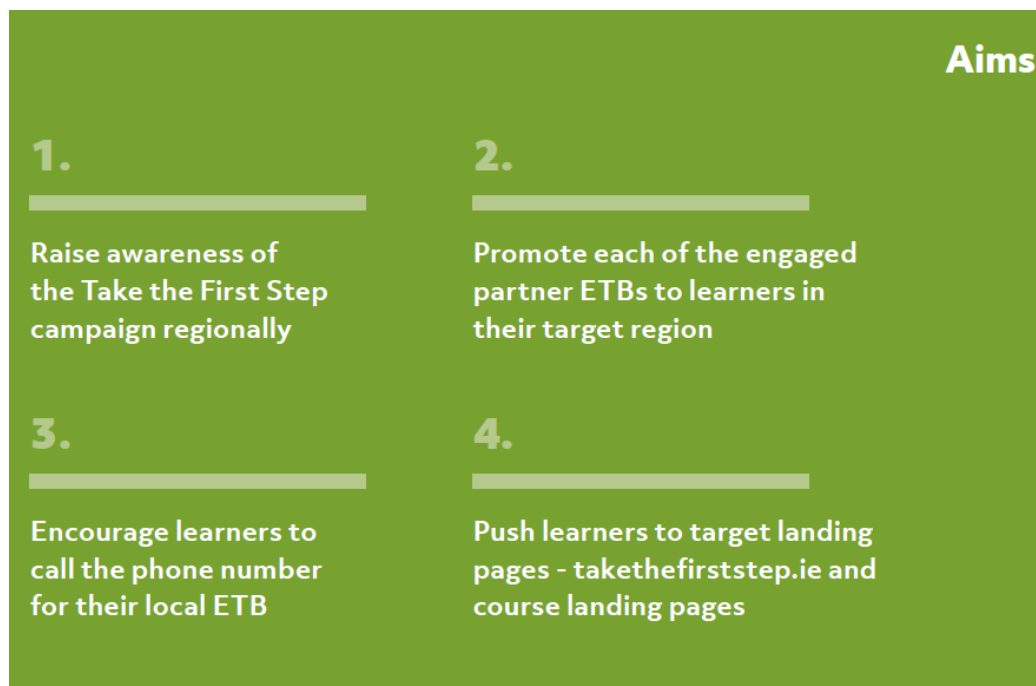
Similar to our approach in 2018 and 2019, NALA re-broadcast local radio advertisements that promoted local ETB services and phone numbers.

The **local radio advertisements** were 40 second interview style vox-pop with about three students from each ETB talking about how going back to education had benefited them. This provided an opportunity to use local voices and accents to promote local ETB services. Each radio advert ended with details of the local ETB phone number to contact for further information on courses.



c) Local awareness campaign: October – November

The 2019 evaluation recommended to pilot smaller awareness campaigns promoting local ETB services. Following a call-out earlier in the year, several ETBs got in touch to work with us to promote their local service. We developed bespoke campaigns with regional specific social and digital content creation to raise awareness of their services.



A cross channel social and digital strategy was developed, outlining the regional campaign approach and content to be provided. This was then applied to a day by day social and digital campaign schedule, including social and digital advertising, and native content on social. We planned all social content, created advertising and native copy, subsequently placing, managing and monitoring both native and advertising content throughout the campaign. The strategy and schedule ensured effective coverage of each of the engaged ETBs.

Key Messages

- Do you find reading, writing, maths or technology difficult?
- Find a free adult education course in your area
- Take the first step by making that first phone call
- Know someone who struggles with reading, writing, maths or technology?
- Call To Action: Call your local ETB

Promoted ETBs

- City of Dublin
- Cork
- Laois/Offaly
- Louth/Meath
- Galway/Roscommon
- Tipperary
- Waterford/Wexford
- Cavan/Monaghan

Audience

The target audiences for this campaign were adults aged 20-65, targeting regional locations around Ireland. Granular location targeting was used for social advertising to reach specific locations and regions with customised messages. Audience targeting was split into a general adult learner audience in these regions, and audiences specific to course offerings from ETBs.

Social Creative

“

I had **never**
read a book...

“

I can **read**
better than I
could before

Need help with writing, spelling,
maths or technology?

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Call Galway
Roscommon
ETB on
093 26609

VISIT WEBSITE



Social Advertising


Social advertising was placed across Facebook and Instagram, with objectives focussing on awareness and video views. We utilised location targeting measures to reach audiences in target regions for each ETB, combined with interest targeting to reach people interested in adult education. Advertising successfully reached audiences in target locations and generated high levels of positive engagement.

Social Advertising Facebook

Take the first step
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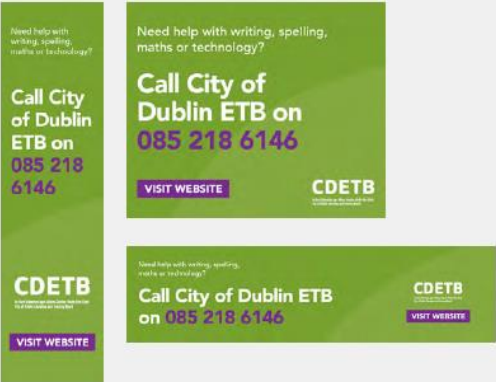
👍👍 Jackie Gallig... 6 comments 12 shares

Digital Advertising

Alongside the social media campaign, we managed regional display advertising on Google Ads. We created static display ads with bespoke messages for each ETB, and used location targeting combined with a custom intent audiences to reach people interested in education. Display ads saw a very low cost per click, with an even spread of results across the featured ETBs

Digital Advertising CITY OF DUBLIN

ASSETS CREATED:
Video Advert, Display Ads in 4 sizes, Audiogram.



Total Impressions:
228,923

Total Clicks:
1,170

Total ThruPlays:
122,788

Digital Advertising CORK

ASSETS CREATED:

Video Advert, Display Ads in 4 sizes, Audiogram.



Total Impressions:

211,966

Total Clicks:

1,110

Total ThruPlays:

89,027

Digital Advertising LAOIS OFFALY

ASSETS CREATED:

Video Advert, Course Promotion Ad.



Total Impressions:

156,979

Total Clicks:

897

Total ThruPlays:

5,801

Digital Advertising LOUTH MEATH

ASSETS CREATED:

Video Advert, Audiogram, Display Ads in 4 sizes.



Total Impressions:

206,940

Total Clicks:

1,070

Total ThruPlays:

70,984

Digital Advertising GALWAY ROSCOMMON

ASSETS CREATED:

Video Advert, Display Ads In 4 Sizes, Audiogram, Course Promotion Ad



Total Impressions:

377,588

Total Clicks:

1,748

Total ThruPlays:

46,283

Digital Advertising TIPPERARY

ASSETS CREATED:

Video Advert, Audiogram, Course Promotion Ad



Total Impressions:

255,642

Total Clicks:

1,694

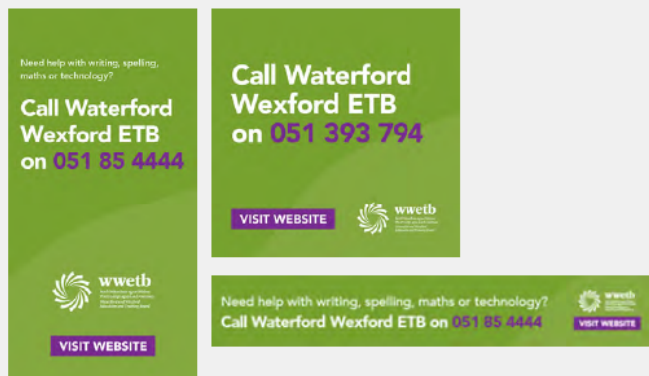
Total ThruPlays:

7,499

Digital Advertising WATERFORD WEXFORD

ASSETS CREATED:

Video Advert, Audiogram, Course Promotion Ad, Display Ads in 4 sizes



Total Impressions:

295,878

Total Clicks:

1,615

Total ThruPlays:

52,145

Digital Advertising

CAVAN MONAGHAN

ASSETS CREATED:
Video Advert



Total Impressions:

235,784

Total Clicks:

1,294

Total ThruPlays:

31,770

Summary

The Take the First Step campaign successfully achieved its key aims by reaching targeted audiences in all identified regions and generated high levels of engagement. The campaign achieved wide awareness and positive responses. The social campaign successfully utilised a variety of content to engage with target ETBs. Meanwhile the digital campaign successfully reached target audiences through in specific locations and high levels of clicks at a low cost per result.

d) **NEW* Launch of VOICES in October**



We integrated the launch of a new Anthology of short stories called **VOICES** developed by NALA, with the Take the First Step campaign in October.

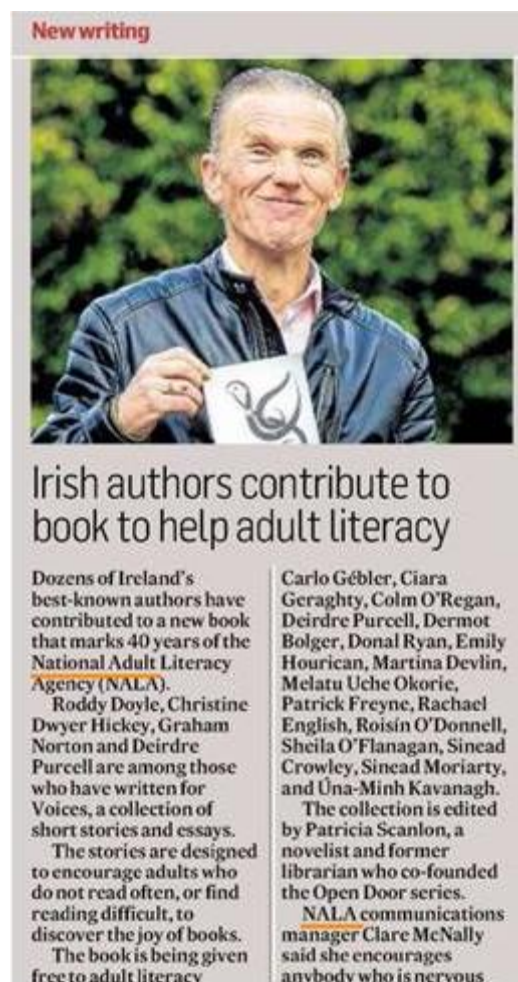
The Anthology was edited by Patricia Scanlan and written in plain English and was designed to encourage adults who do not read often, or find reading difficult, to discover the joy of books. It featured stories from 27 authors including Graham Norton, Roddy Doyle, Blindboy Boatclub, Deirdre Purcell, Sheila O'Flanagan and Sinead Moriarty to name but a few.

The **VOICES** anthology was a collaboration between the Department of Further and Higher Education, Department of Rural and Community Development, the National Adult Literacy Agency and New Island publishers.

The Department of Rural and Community Development funded copies of books so they are available to loan in every library in Ireland. SOLAS funded copies of books for adult literacy students in 120 ETB adult literacy centres.

Due to Government restrictions we were unable to have a launch event. Instead, we arranged for a virtual launch across all our online platforms – leading with a video message by Minister Heather Humphreys, Authors doing ‘Books Selfies’. In addition, An Post recorded authors reading their stories from **VOICES** and promoted these online.

We also arranged a photo and press release which was covered by the Irish Times and other media.

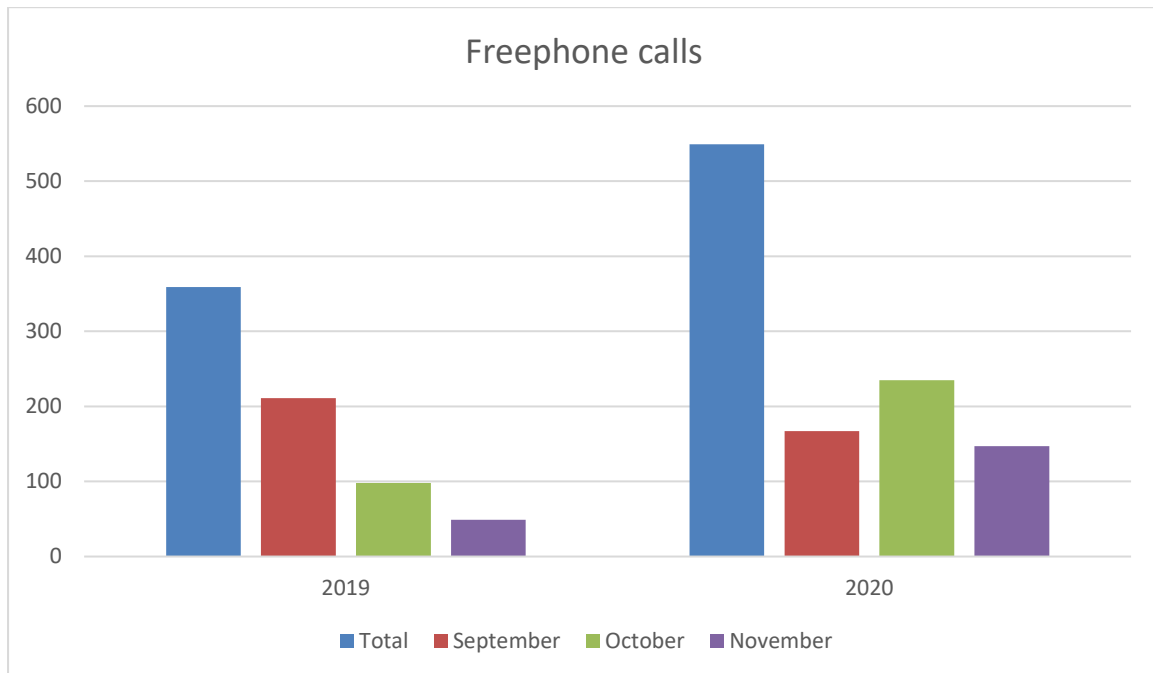


Irish Times

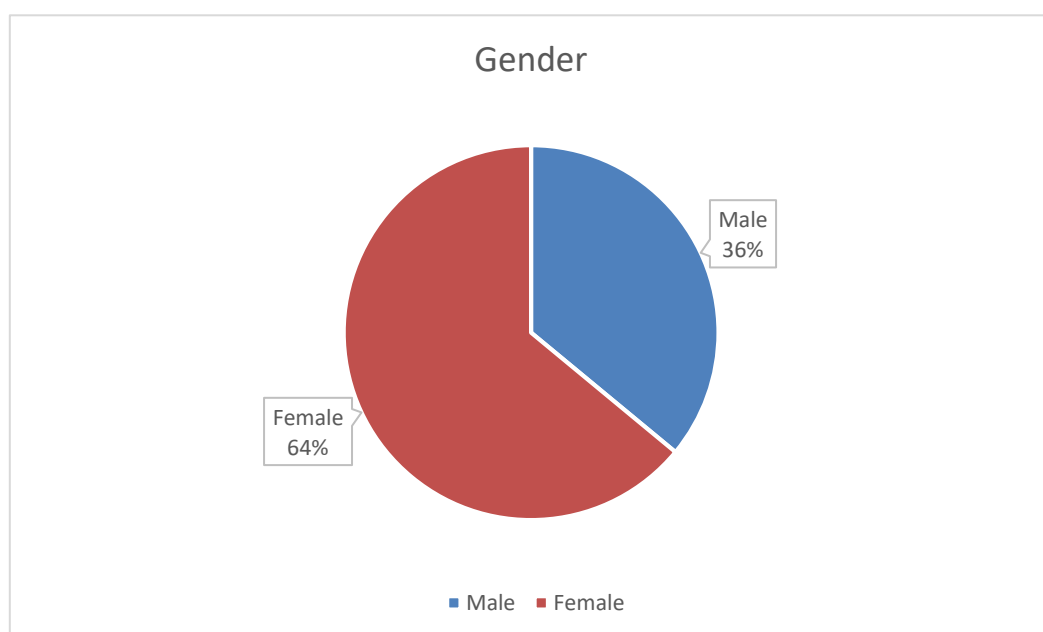
1.7 Initial response to the campaign

1.7.1 Freephone calls

From September to the end of November, NALA provided information to **550 individuals** who wanted information about improving their literacy and numeracy skills. This is a significant increase on 2019 calls for the same period.

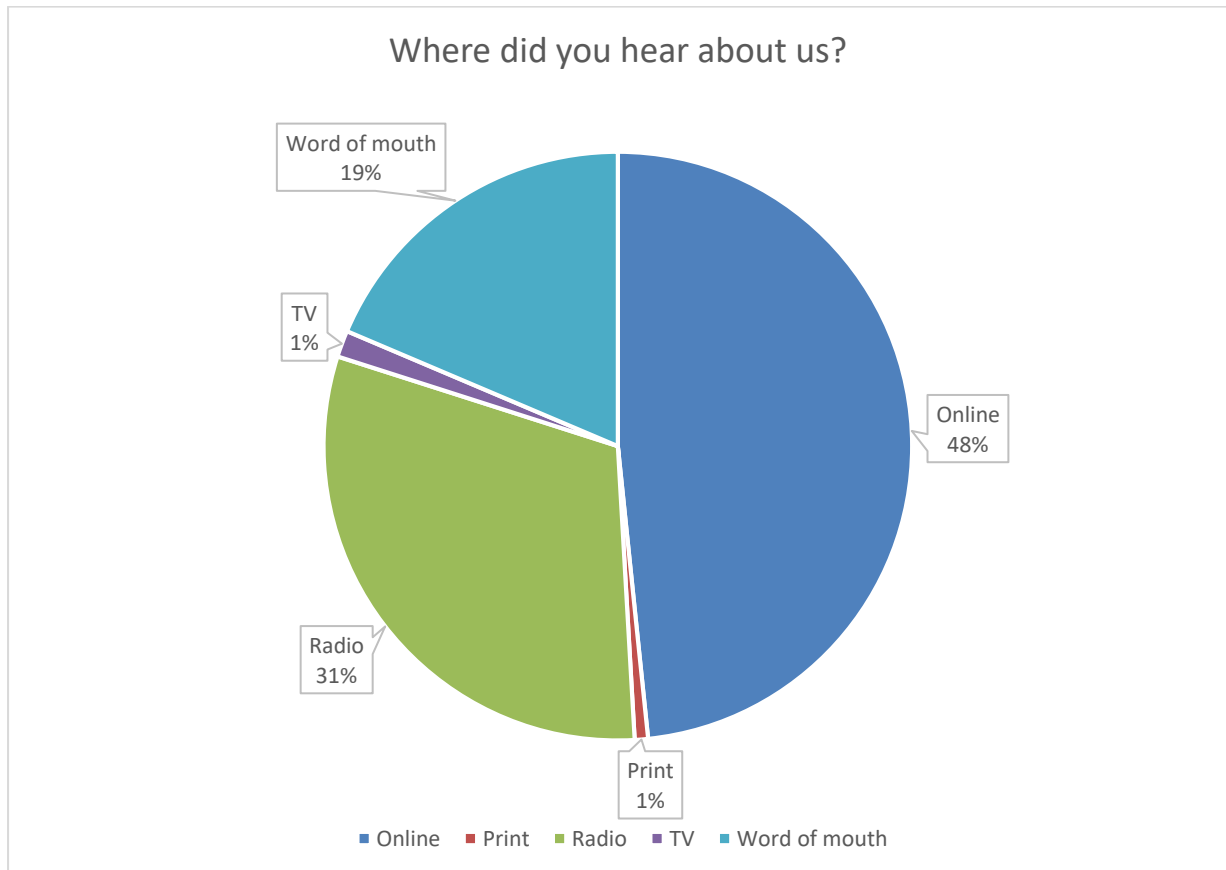


The 2020 calls were 64% female and 36% male.



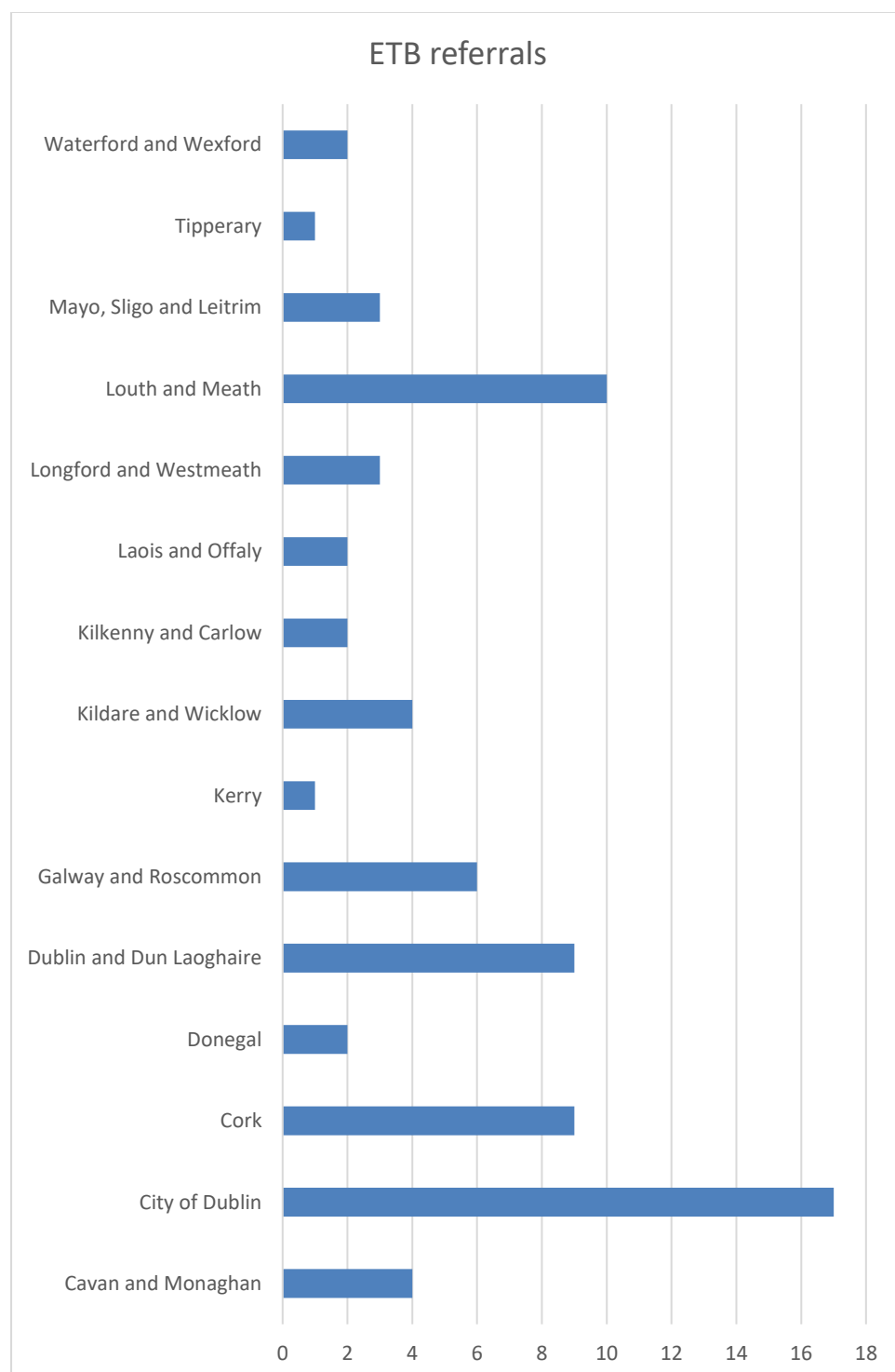
1.7.2 Freephone calls and claimed source of awareness

When asked 'Where did you hear about us?' Online was the primary claimed source of awareness amongst those given information, followed by radio and word of mouth.



1.7.3 Freephone campaign referrals

The chart below shows the number of responses where callers were given details for centres by ETB. Activity is predominant in the Dublin area. Other significant areas of call referral are Louth Meath, Cork and Galway Roscommon.



1.7.4 Website traffic

Following the fifth phase of the campaign the main campaign website takethefirststep.ie received the following hits during September – November 2020:

- 25,000 sessions on takethefirststep.ie
- 28,000 page views on takethefirststep.ie
- 21,000 users on takethefirststep.ie

1.7.5 Data recorded by ETBI for the Take the First Step Campaign 2020

ETBI asked all ETBs to provide information on the Take the First Step campaign.

The following 9 ETBs responded to the request:

- Cavan Monaghan ETB
- Cork ETB
- Dublin Dún Laoghaire ETB
- Galway Roscommon ETB
- Tipperary ETB
- Longford Westmeath ETB
- Kilkenny Carlow ETB
- Mayo Sligo ETB (2 X responses)

- All 9 respondents indicated that they were aware of the Take the First Step Campaign.
- 3 respondents indicated that they had one designated contact number or person for enquiries during the campaign. 3 indicated No and 3 indicated that they were Unsure.
- 4 respondents indicated that they received new enquiries because of the campaign. 3 indicated No and 2 indicated that they were unsure.
- For those 4 respondents that indicated they did receive new enquiries because of the campaign, 2 indicated that they received approximately 5-10 additional

enquiries and 2 indicated that they received approximately 0-5 additional enquiries.

- 1 respondent indicated that they received approximately 0-5 referrals from NALA because of the National Literacy Awareness Campaign.
- 8 respondents indicated that they were aware of free advertising and promotion of their ETB adult literacy service as part of this campaign.
- 3 respondents indicated that they availed of free advertising or promotion in 2020. The advertising availed of included: radio and digital; books; public relations, advert in local newspapers and a follow up article; posters for display; digital advertising, Zoom and general information.
- Additional comments:
 - 'NALA were very easy to work with and collaborative advertising is excellent to achieve national branding and uniformity but with regional identity having local learners involved'.
 - 'Continue with national campaign but avail more of social media, e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, Instagram. Subscribe to Facebook to boost views'.
 - 'It would be good if those learners doing this programme could be captured on PLSS for the relevant ETB'.
 - 'A family learning support campaign'

Chapter two

Campaign evaluation

2. Campaign evaluation

This section provides details on quantitative research that was done to provide an evaluation of the 2020 National Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign.

2.1 Quantitative research – post campaign national survey

The quantitative research was designed to provide an evaluation of the fifth phase of the campaign (Autumn 2020) compared to the previous phases of the campaign below. The research evaluated awareness levels related to the campaign objectives and how the campaign rated on a number of key advertising metrics by a nationally representative sample.

Previous waves of research to evaluate the impact of the campaign include:

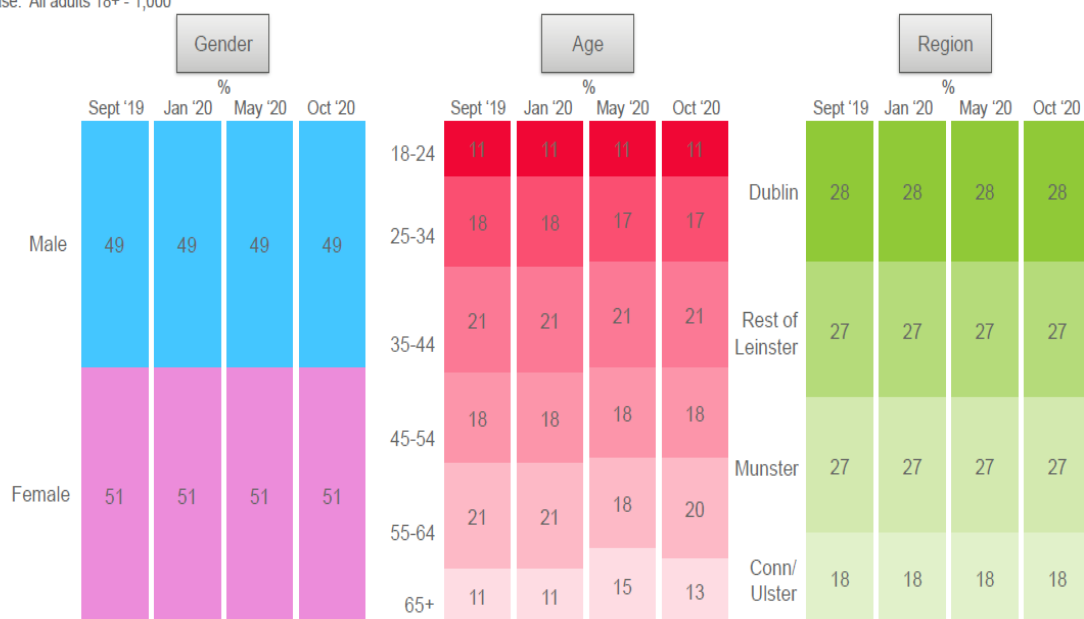
- August 2016 (prior to the launch of the campaign).
- October 2016 (following the launch of the campaign).
- September 2017 (following the launch of the 2017 campaign activity).
- September 2018 (following the launch of the 2018 campaign activity).
- March 2019 (following the launch of 2019 RTE campaign activity).
- September 2019 (following the launch of the 2019 campaign activity).
- January 2020 (following the launch of 2020 RTE campaign activity).
- May 2020 (following the launch of 2020 RTE campaign activity).

2.2 Methodology - Nationally Representative Sample of Irish adults aged 18+.

- Questions were included on the **Coyne Research Omnibus survey** consisting of 1000 online interviews with adults aged 18+.
- The margin of error for the sample is +/-3.2%.
- Quotas were set in terms of age, gender, region and social class in order to ensure that a nationally representative online sample was achieved.
- About 3 in 10 people either have or know someone with literacy or numeracy difficulties. Incidence of having or knowing someone with difficulties is highest amongst younger age cohorts and those living in Dublin.
- The research was done in November 2020.

Profile of Sample - Demographics

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000



Quotas were set on age, gender and region to ensure the sample was representative of the national population.

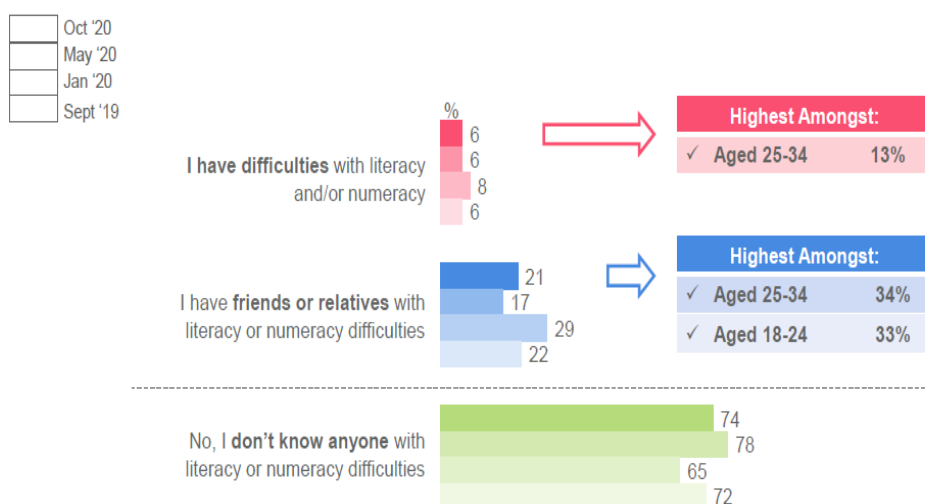
Q.A/B/C

coyne
RESEARCH

11

Incidence of Having/Knowing Someone With Literacy/Numeracy Difficulties

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000



Those claiming to be most likely to have difficulties with literacy and or/numeracy aged 25-24 years (13%). Increase in those who claim to have a friend or relative with literacy or numeracy difficulties to 21% – highest amongst those aged 25-34 and 18-24 with 1 in 3 of these cohorts claiming to know someone with difficulties.

Q.A

coyne
RESEARCH

2.3 Summary findings

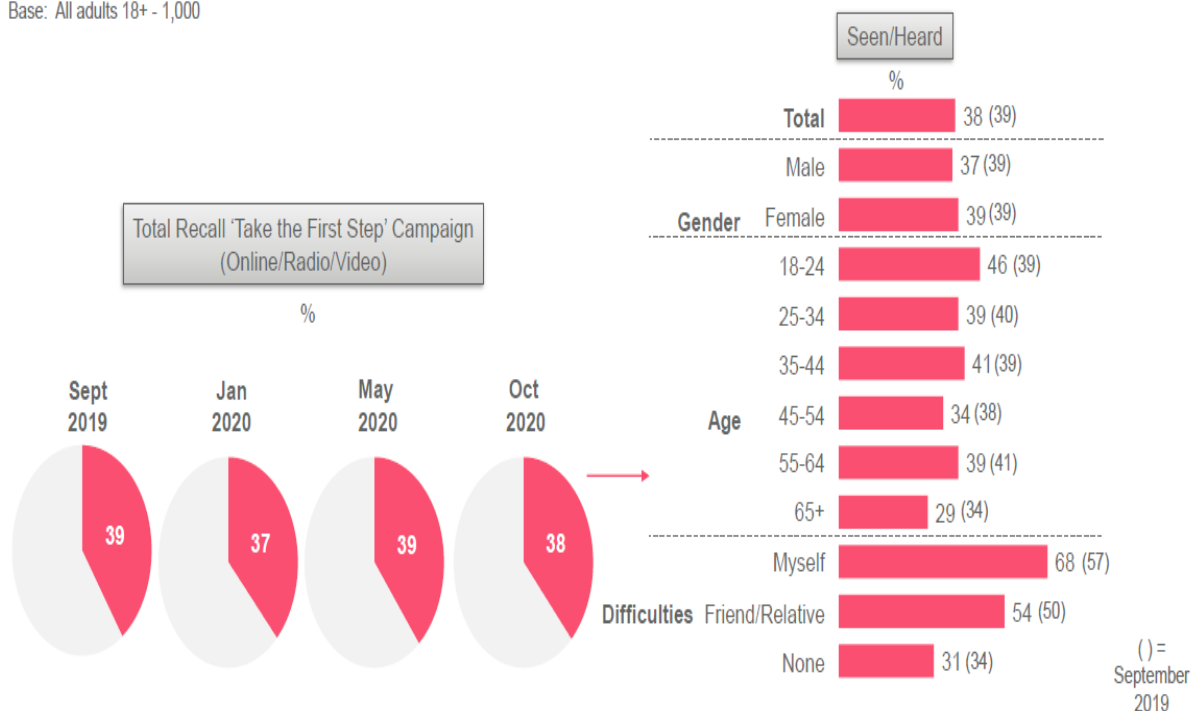
- The reach of the 'Take the First Step' campaign remains high and in line with May 2020. Amongst all Irish adults, 38% recall some element of the campaign (TV, Radio or Online).
- Radio registers the highest proportion of recall in October 2020. 25% of Irish adults claim to recall advertising from the campaign on radio. This is highest amongst those with difficulties (58%) and those who know someone with difficulties (38%).
- Recall of the online execution (20%) has increased since May 2020 whilst TV recall (24%) is in line with the previous waves. Recall of the campaign is highest amongst the key target cohort and those aged 35-44. Amongst those who have difficulties with literacy/numeracy, 68% recall the campaign – this represents a positive increase of +10% since May 2020. 41% of 35-44 year olds also claim to recall the campaign – increase of +8% from May 2020.
- The campaign continues to be regarded as highly effective at encouraging people to seek help. Amongst those who have been exposed to the campaign, circa 9 in 10 believe it is effective at encouraging people to consider seeking help for literacy, numeracy and basic technology problems.
- Awareness amongst the total population of where to get help with literacy/numeracy and technology skills is in line with May 2020. Over 1 in 2 claim to be aware of where to get help for either. Positively however, those who recall some aspect of the 'Take the First Step' campaign are far more likely to be aware of where to go for help. 3 in 4 of this cohort aware of where to get help with either literacy/numeracy or technology skills.
- Amongst those who are aware of where to get help, there has been a slight decrease in October 2020 in those mentioning NALA as a provider of these services.
- Significant increase in awareness of local free classes via ETB adult education centres amongst those who have difficulties themselves. 78% of those with difficulties claim to be aware of the availability of these classes, a +18% increase from January 2020.

2.4 Recall of the 'Take the first step' campaign

Prompted recall of the 'Take the First Step' campaign is in line with previous waves (38%). Positively, the highest level of recall is amongst those who have difficulties themselves with a significant increase in October 2020 to 68%. There is also an increase also amongst those aged 18-24 (+7%) with a slight a decrease amongst those aged 65+ (-5%).

'Take the First Step' – Prompted Recall of Campaign

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000



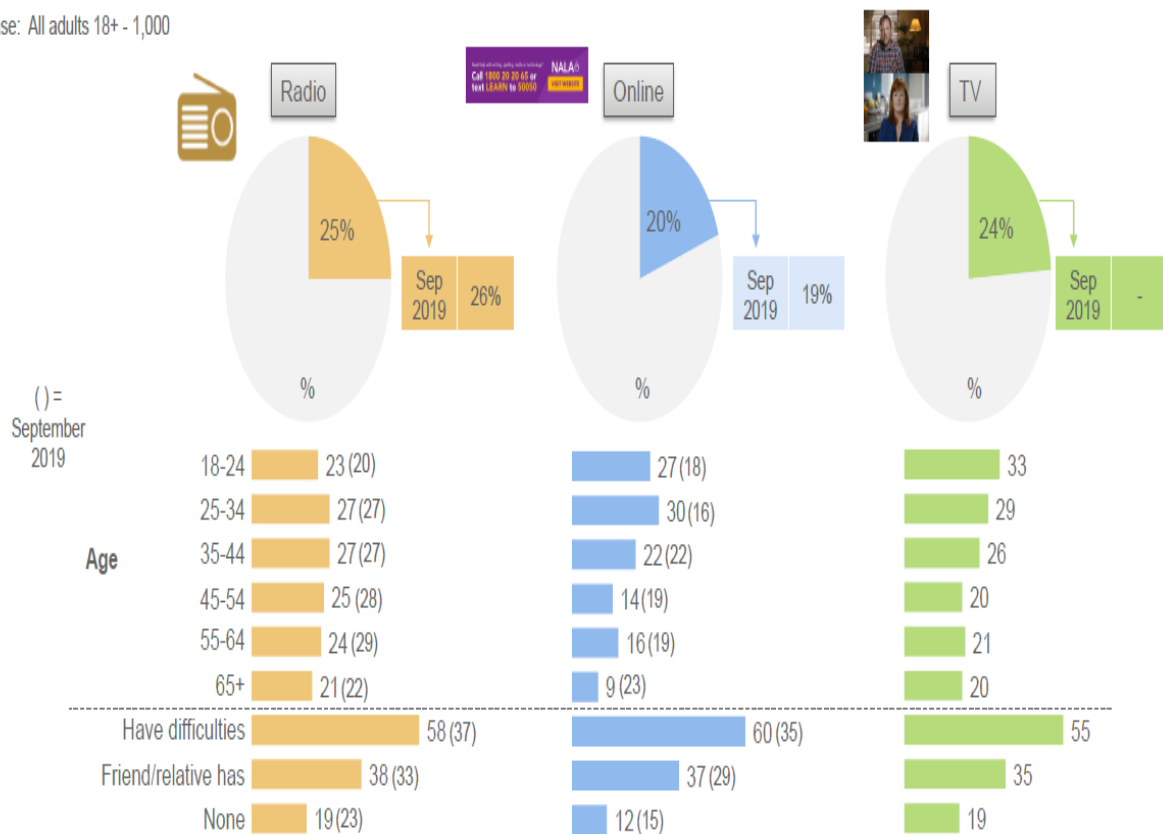
2.5 Recall of the campaign by channel (radio, outdoor and online)

Radio (25%), despite a slight decrease since September 2019, once again registered the highest level of recall for the 'Take the First Step' campaign across channels. Online recall has increased slightly to 20%. Positively, those with difficulties themselves are far more likely to recall the campaign on radio or online in October 2020 than in September 2019.

14

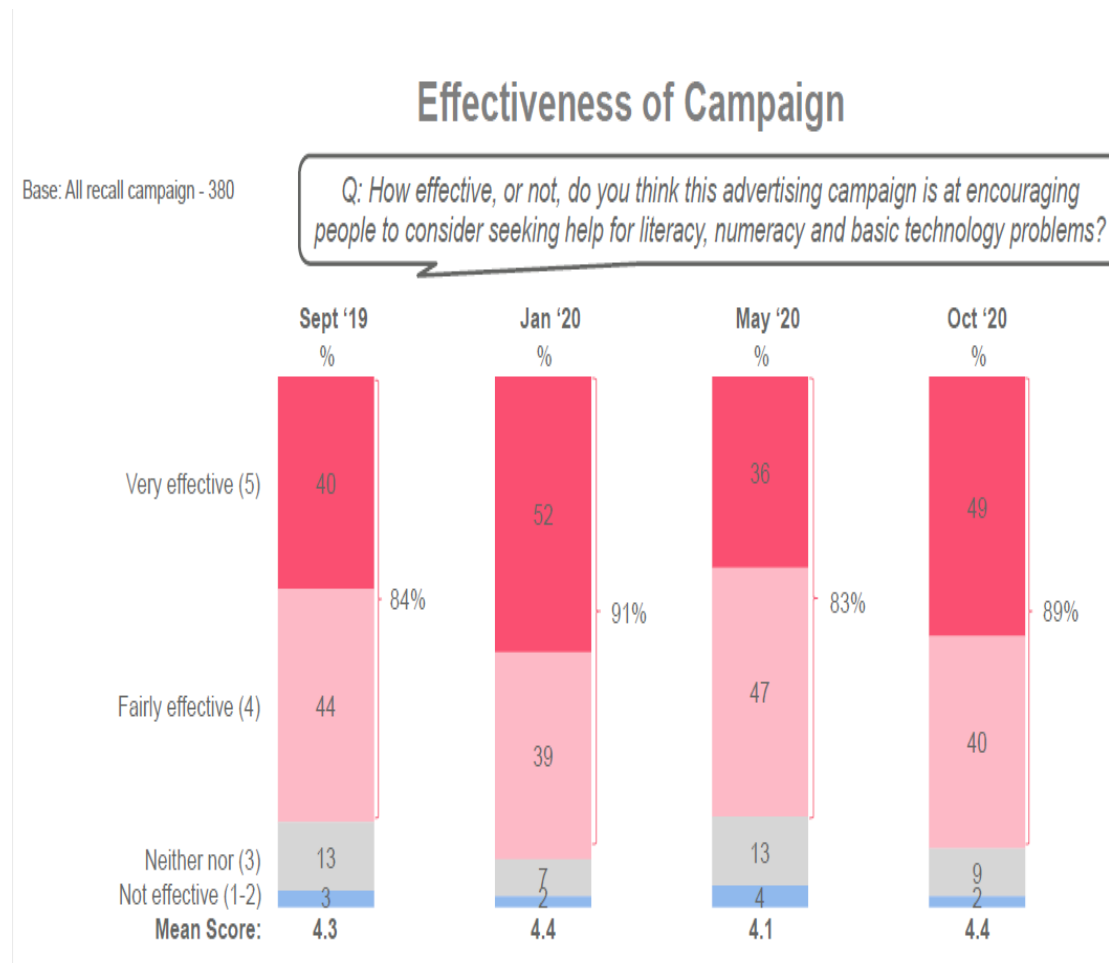
'Take the First Step' – Prompted Recall x Channel

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000



2.6 Effectiveness of the campaign

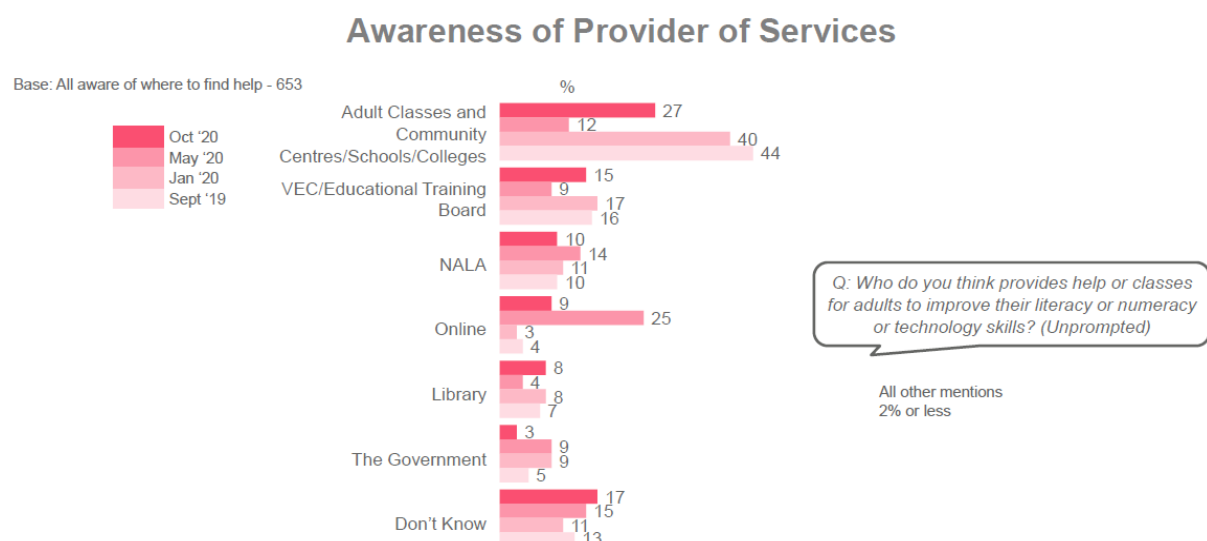
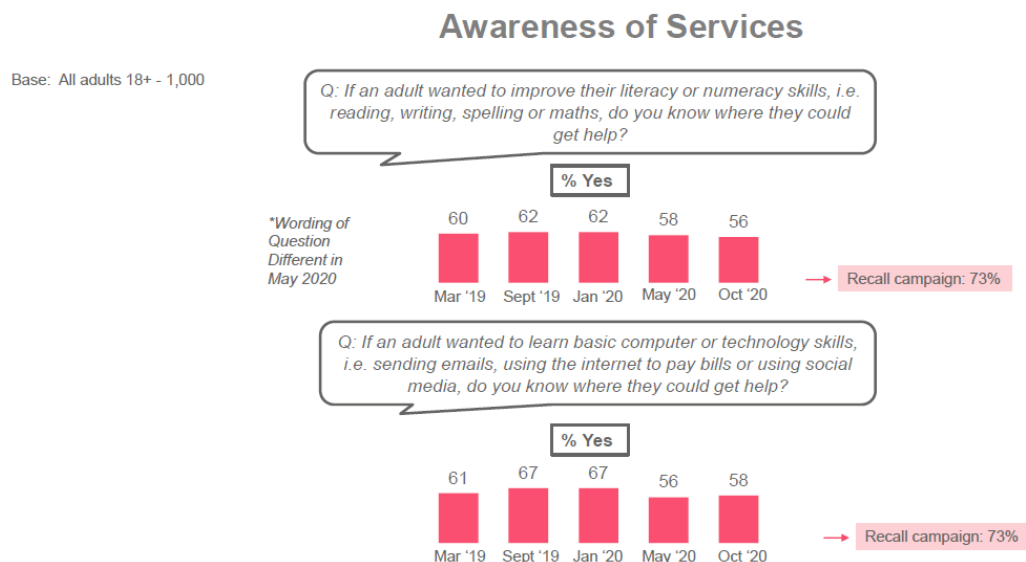
Of those who have been exposed to the campaign, circa 9 in 10 believe it is effective at encouraging people to consider seeking help for literacy, numeracy and basic technology problems. This represents a +6% increase and is close to January 2020 levels.



2.7 Awareness of services and where to get help

Awareness levels of where to get help with basic computer/technology skills or to improve literacy/numeracy skills are in line with May 2020. Positively, there is significantly higher awareness amongst those who recall the campaign with close to 3 in 4 claiming to know where an adult could go for help.

Amongst those who claim to be aware of who provides help for adults with literacy, numeracy or technology skills, significant increase in those citing adult classes & community centres/schools colleges (+15%). Decrease in those citing online as somewhere adults can go to improve skills. Meanwhile those naming NALA as a provider of these services has decreased slightly to 10%.



2.8 Awareness of availability of courses

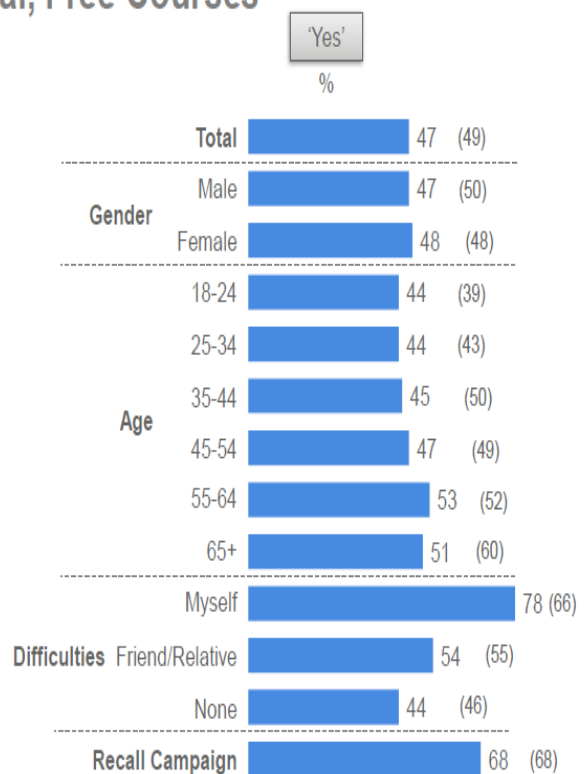
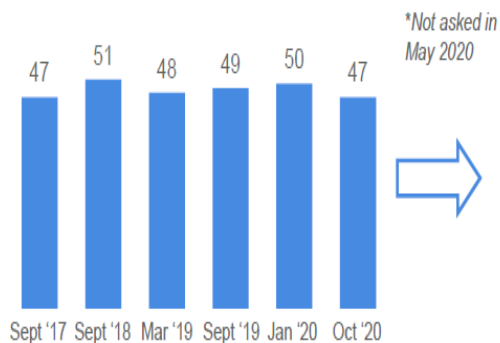
Circa 1 in 2 Irish adults claim to be aware that adult literacy and numeracy education courses are available through local ETB centres free of charge. The highest level of awareness is amongst those who have difficulties themselves – registering a +12% increase since September 2019 to 78%. Positively, circa 7 in 10 of those who recall some aspect of the campaign claim to be aware.

Awareness of Local, Free Courses

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000

Q: In fact, adult literacy and numeracy education courses are available through your local VEC/ETB Adult Education Centre free of charge. Were you aware of this?

% Yes

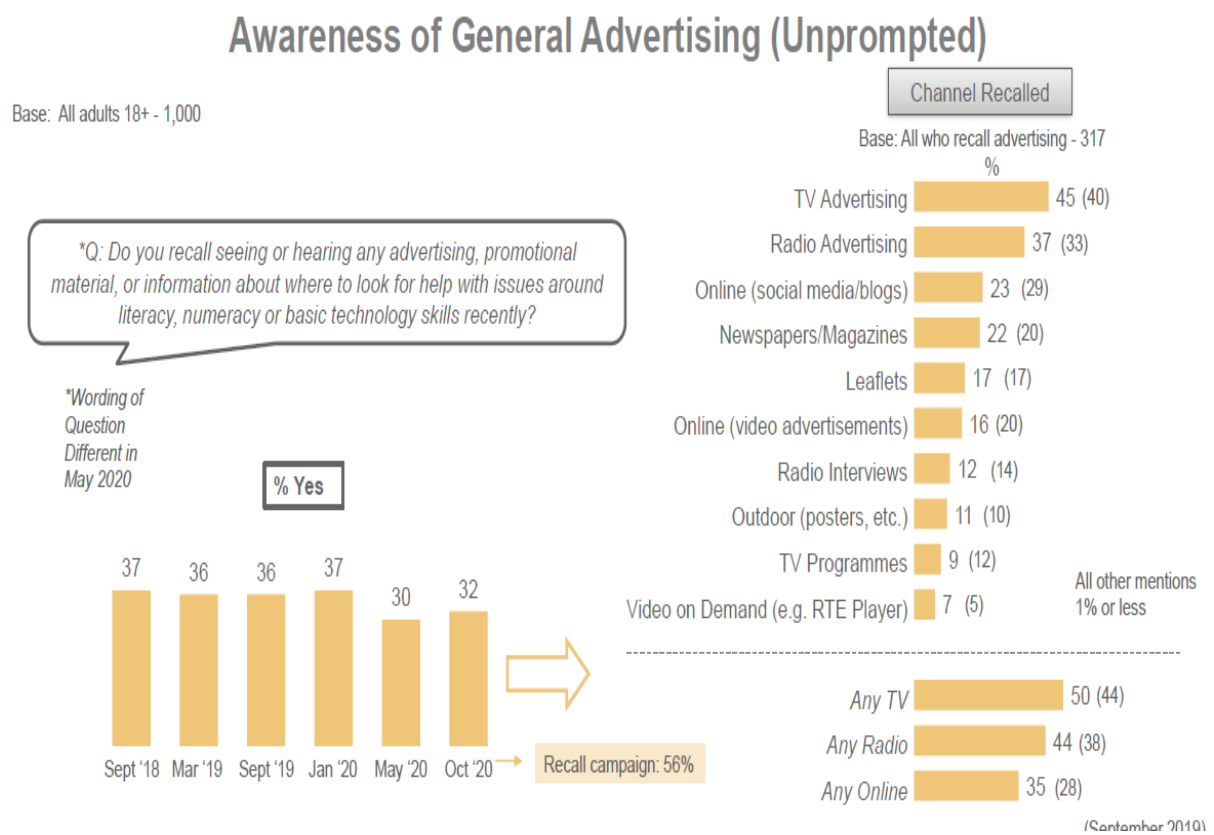


2.9 Awareness of general advertising (unprompted)

Overall recall amongst Irish adults of general advertising regarding where to get help with literacy, numeracy or basic skills has decreased since September 2019 (-4%).

There has been an increase in those citing TV and Radio however.

20



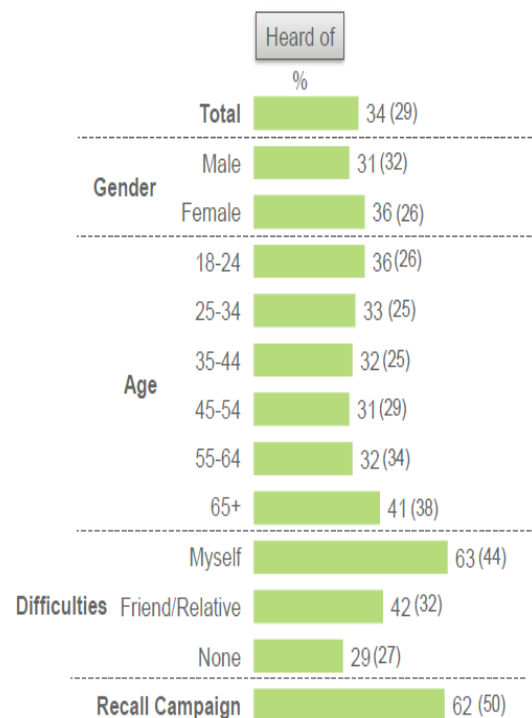
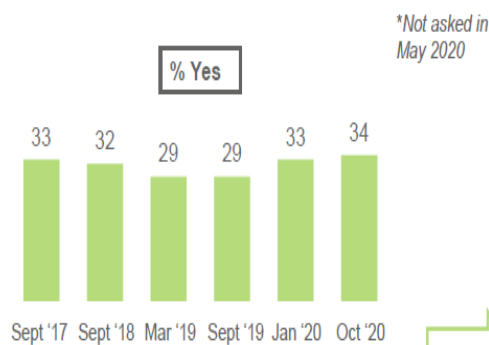
2.10 Awareness of the name 'Take the First Step'

Circa 1 in 3 Irish adults claim to have heard of the 'Take the First Step' campaign – increase of +5% since September 2019. Positively, there has been a significant increase in awareness amongst those who have difficulties themselves (+19%) and those who know someone with difficulties (+10%).

Awareness of 'Take the First Step'

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000

Q: Have you ever heard of 'Take the First Step', an initiative that aims to encourage adults with literacy, numeracy and basic technology difficulties to seek help?





On 12 October 2020 the 'Take the first step' campaign was officially launched by Simon Harris TD, Minister for Further and Higher Education at a photo-call. He was joined at a photo-call by the campaign's ambassadors – well known authors Sinead Moriarty and Catherine Dunne, as well as former adult literacy student and advocate Olive Phelan.

Chapter three

Key insights and recommendations

3. Key insights and recommendations

2020 was a very challenging year for everyone involved in education and the pandemic restrictions meant we had to adjust and pivot our awareness campaigns throughout the year. That said, we are pleased that the most recent evaluation of the campaign shows that it has had a positive impact in terms of awareness of services and is considered very effective by those who are exposed to it.

Given the Take the first step campaign has been broadcast now for five consecutive years (2016-2020), the key challenge in the future continues to lie in:

- reaching the population who have not been exposed to it, specifically those whose needs are greatest;
- creating pathways for individuals to take up a learning opportunity; and
- working with ETBs and their learners to promote local services.

Equally, in 2021 a new 10-year strategy for adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy will be launched. Therefore any new awareness work should address its strategic objectives.

Main recommendations

a) Reaching those whose needs are greatest

A key learning from the campaign is that we still have a way to go in reaching the population who have not been exposed to it, specifically those whose needs are greatest. Research conducted by NALA in 2016 showed that individuals are most influenced by their family, friends and peers. Sometimes people are not able to see the benefits to returning to learning. They had a negative experience of school in the past and associate returning to learning with that experience. There is also a stigma attached to low literacy and basic skills. Often people feel too embarrassed to return to learning and go to great extremes to hide their difficulties from their friends and family.

We know from our work in this area that learners are best placed to encourage others to return to education as they often faced the same challenges and fears themselves. They know the barriers that exist for people and can explain through first-hand experience the enormous gains that can be made to both their confidence and basic skills by returning to education.

We propose working with learners, specifically those most closely connected to our key target audiences to do outreach work and raise awareness with those hardest to reach.

Action: Recruit learners to work with NALA and ETBI on the campaign to actively engage with hard to reach target audiences.

b) Create supportive pathways for potential new learners

Another key learning from the campaign is that while NALA is recording calls to its Freephone as a result of the Take the first step campaign, there is no evidence to show that this is translating to new learners on the ground in ETBs. Data recorded by ETBI shows that many ETBs do not record data for the campaign. Therefore we need to address how data is recorded and shared, and create pathways for individuals to take up a learning opportunity.

Research shows that low skilled adults risk being trapped in a situation in which they rarely benefit from adult learning, and their skills remain weak or deteriorate over time. They also tend to be less aware of education and training opportunities, and may find the available information confusing. A combination of easy to access information and supportive guidance will help individuals identify and get placed on an appropriate learning programme.

We propose working with ETBs to improve how data is recorded and shared to create the most supportive pathway for potential new learners.

Action: Audit and review current data collection and referral channels to establish what works well, what could be improved and pilot recommendations with an ETB.

c) Link with local services

Overall the response to the campaign has been positive with many ETBs reporting it was a very good campaign. ETBs would like more localised awareness and promotion of literacy services and some have suggested a number of regional campaigns rather than an annual campaign as September is a particularly busy time of year.

Some ETBs get more involved than others, some not at all. As stated before, there is also an issue with reporting on calls received as a result of the campaign work as there is no centralised system for recorded calls.

With this in mind we propose doing more regional awareness campaigns, at different times of the year to raise awareness among key target audiences, and promote local services – or very specific themes like family learning, health and wellbeing, workplace basic education etc.

Action: Work with ETBI to identify awareness campaigns with ETBs that promote specific themes at different times of the year.

d) Advertising

National advertising has proven effective for raising awareness with the general population. If we want to reach the 61% of the population who have not been exposed to the campaign, a simple recommendation would be to repeat the campaign with higher media weight, given the evidence that it is effective for those exposed to it.

However, if we want to ensure we are reaching those whose needs are greatest we should investigate other means of raising awareness with different key audiences.

Over four years considerable resources have gone into producing radio, video, digital and print assets. We now have a bank of assets that represent different age groups, demographics and life stages as well as themes such as work, family, health and wellbeing. Therefore, we recommend not spending any budget on producing new assets but rather develop new, creative and focussed ways of using them.

Action: Identify, agree and research new ways of using existing assets and resources to reach key target audiences.

Note:

In order to develop bespoke regional campaigns and improve learner pathways (actions 1 to 3 above) we will require more hours and interaction / relationship building with ETBs. This would require a full time campaign manager to do this work such as promoting ETB services year round, and doing outreach work with learners and specific audiences.

Acknowledgements

SOLAS and the National Adult Literacy Agency would like to sincerely thank the following people and organisations for their support in the 2020 National Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign.

Adult literacy students who shared their story during the campaign, especially:

- Michael Duffy from Cavan ETB
- Chris Carthy from Sligo ETB

Thank you also to all the ETBs, ALOs and tutors who supported the campaign, including those who put us in touch with students.

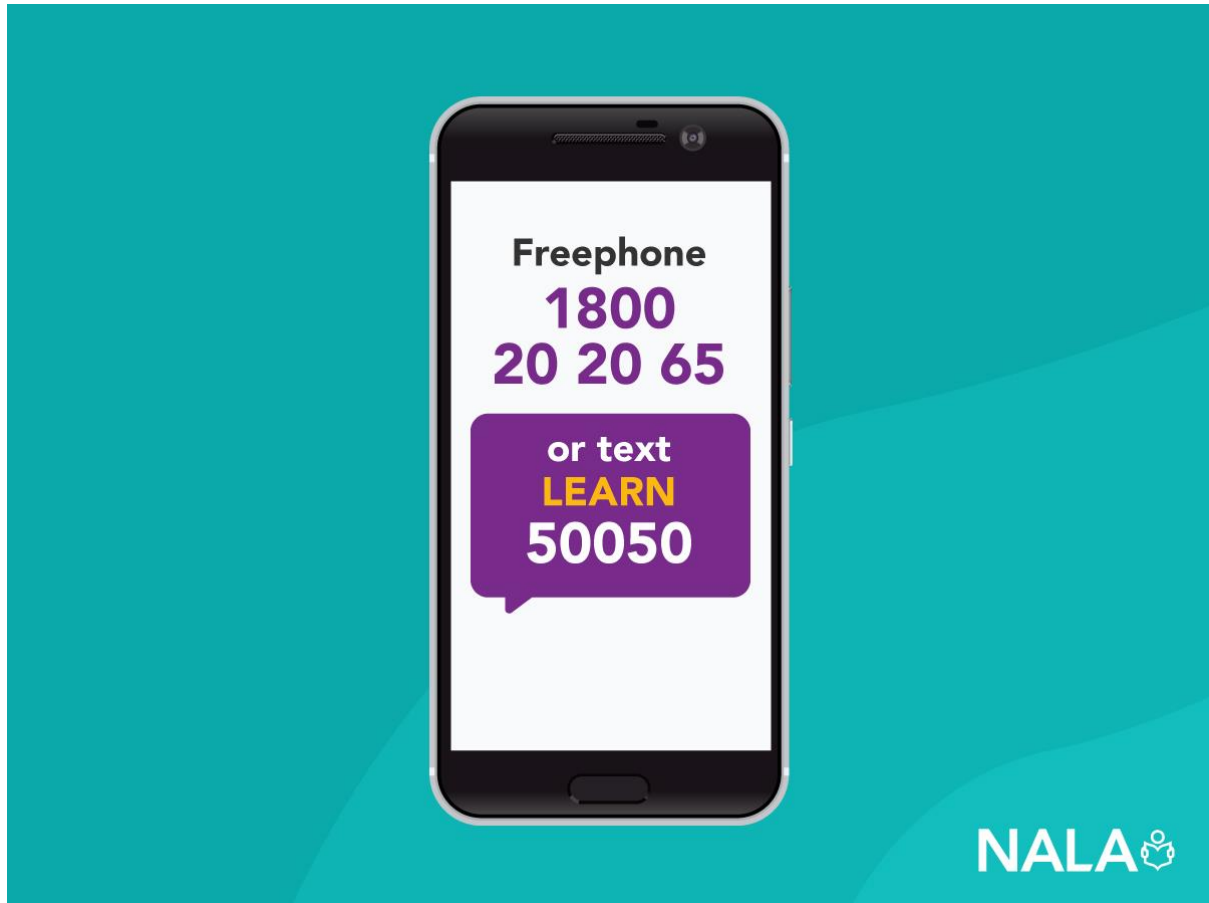
Campaign ambassadors, Sinead Moriarty and Catherine Dunne, as well as former adult literacy student and advocate Olive Phelan.

NALA Student Subcommittee and other ETB students and tutors for volunteering their time to promote the campaign locally.

Members of the National Advisory Committee.

The Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD.

Staff in SOLAS, ETBI and NALA.



The Take the first step campaign Freephone and Freetext number.

For further information contact:

The National Adult Literacy Agency

Sandford Lodge

Sandford Close

Ranelagh

Dublin 6

Telephone 01 412 7900

Email info@nala.ie

1 March 2021

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