

# National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign

Phase four: September 2019

## Summary and evaluation report



**SOLAS**  
learning works



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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## About this report

This report is a summary and an evaluation of **phase four** of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign which happened in September 2019. The report should be read in conjunction with the summary and evaluation of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign phase one (September 2016<sup>1</sup>), phase two (September 2017<sup>2</sup>) and phase three (September 2018<sup>3</sup>).

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.

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

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

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

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Campaign ambassadors launch 'Take the first step', the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign ahead of International Literacy Day, 6 September 2019. Pictured L to R: Brian O'Donnell, Carlow ETB learner, Galina Moraru, Wicklow ETB learner, Lisa Banks, Kilkenny ETB learner, Michael Duffy, Cavan ETB learner and award winning Irish author Emilie Pine.

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

In **September 2019**, SOLAS funded a **fourth phase** of the national adult literacy and numeracy awareness campaign which incorporated the recommendations identified as part of phase 3 (2018). This report is a **summary and an evaluation** of the fourth phase of the campaign. It is divided into three chapters as follows:

1. **Chapter one** provides a summary of the fourth 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 four of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign was launched on Friday 6 September 2019, ahead of International Literacy Day.
- The awareness campaign was similar to phase one, two and three (September 2016-2018) of the campaign. It was called 'Take the first step' and included national and regional radio advertising, video, digital and outdoor advertising as well as print and public relations (PR) activity. 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 fourth phase such as the promotion of local ETB services and the promotion of a range of people and scenarios so as to appeal to a greater cohort of the public.
- 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 **300 individuals** who phoned and wanted information about improving their literacy and numeracy skills. This is similar to calls recorded in the first phases but a decrease in calls from 2018.
- The split of callers was about 53% female and 47% male callers, and each person was given details of their local ETB adult literacy service.
- When callers were asked 'Where did you hear about us?' **Radio** was the primary source of awareness, followed by online and word of mouth.
- The campaign website [takethefirststep.ie](http://takethefirststep.ie) recorded 10,500 sessions, 13,400 page views and about 10,000 users during the campaign.
- Five out of nine ETBs recorded they had received new enquiries on foot of the national awareness campaign.

## **Campaign evaluation**

- The reach of the 'Take the First Step' campaign remains high and has increased again in September 2019. Amongst the adult population, 39% recall some element of the campaign (radio, online or outdoor). This is up from 34% in 2016, 37% in 2017 and 38% in 2018.
- Across the media channels, the campaign registers the highest recall on Radio (26%). This is followed by Online (19%) and Outdoor (16%). All channels experienced a small increase since 2016 and a slight decrease in comparison to September 2018.
- The campaign continues to be regarded as effective at encouraging people to seek help. Amongst those who have been exposed to the campaign, 84% believe it is effective at encouraging people to consider seeking help for literacy, numeracy and basic technology problems. Amongst those who have difficulties with literacy or numeracy, 57% recall the campaign – decrease of 18% from September 2018. However, there has been an increase in recall amongst those who say their friends or family have literacy or numeracy difficulties.
- Almost half of the total population (49%) are aware that courses are available locally and free of charge, rising to over 2 in 3 (68%) amongst those who had been exposed to the 'Take the First Step' campaign – this is similar to 2018.

## **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; and creating pathways for individuals to take up a learning opportunity. We recommend to:
  - Identify, agree and research new ways of using existing assets and resources to reach key target audiences.
  - Work with ETBI to pilot localised awareness campaigns, working with a small number of individual ETBs, at specific times of the year to raise awareness among key target audiences; and
  - Recruit learners to work with NALA and ETBI on the campaign to actively engage with hard to reach target audiences, and promote suitable pathways for potential new learners.



Emilie Pine, author and literacy ambassador, Inez Bailey, CEO, NALA and Jason Vit, Head of local areas, National Literacy Trust UK at the launch of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign, 6 September 2019.

## **Chapter one**

### **Overview of phase four of the awareness campaign**

## **1. Overview of phase four of the awareness campaign**

This chapter summarises the fourth phase of the national adult literacy and numeracy awareness campaign that happened in September 2019.

### **1.1 National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign**

Phase four of the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign was launched on Friday 6 September 2019, two days ahead of International Literacy Day. It was launched at a photocall and conference in Dublin called 'Literacy changes lives'.

The creative approach and implementation of the fourth phase of the campaign was similar to the previous phases that happened in September 2016, 2017 and 2018 as the evaluations had shown that they performed strongly in terms of recall, reach, awareness and attitudes and no changes were recommended<sup>4</sup>.

The campaign used advertising and public relations activity to promote four 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 ran for three weeks and included national and regional radio, video, digital, print and outdoor advertising as well as a public relations (PR) activity.

All national advertising and PR activity encouraged those interested in improving their basic skills to 'Take the first step' by calling Freephone 1800 20 20 65, Text LEARN to 50050 or log onto [takethefirststep.ie](http://takethefirststep.ie). Once they called or texted, NALA put them in contact with their local ETB Adult Education Centre or told them about other free services that would help them meet their needs. Regional advertising and PR encouraged people to contact local ETB adult education services for information.

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<sup>4</sup> SOLAS and NALA (2016, 2017, 2018), National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign: Summary and Evaluation, Dublin.

## **1.2 Incorporation of recommendations from previous campaigns**

There were a number of recommendations from the evaluation of the previous campaigns that were incorporated into the fourth phase in 2019, such as:

- the promotion of local ETB services, and
- the promotion of a range of people and different scenarios so as to appeal to a greater cohort of the public.

There were two recommendations\* that could not be implemented as there was no additional funding to pay for them. These recommendations were to:

- repeat the campaign with a higher media spend, and
- include TV advertising to increase awareness.

### **\*RTE partnership**

In 2019, NALA secured a media partnership with the national broadcaster RTÉ. The advertising assets from the Take the First Step campaign were reworked with voiceovers of well-known RTE personalities, and were broadcast for free on all RTE platforms (Radio, TV and Digital) for three weeks in March. There is a plan to broadcast new assets from the 2019 campaign in January 2020. The findings from this partnership will be available in 2020 after the RTÉ partnership finishes.

### **EU branding**

NALA included ESF and ESIF logos on all new campaign assets, similar to the 2018 campaign.

### **1.2.1 Promotion of local ETB services, learners and scenarios**

One of the recommendations from the evaluation of the previous phases of the campaign was to emphasise the availability of local ETB adult education services and the promotion of a range of people and different scenarios so as to appeal to a greater cohort of the public. In 2019, NALA produced and broadcast four new regional videos featuring a range of learners, as well as using regional radio, posters and PR.

## 1.2.2 Regional video campaign promoting local learners and ETBs **\*New\***

NALA produced four new videos promoting local learners from Limerick and Clare ETB, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB, Waterford and Wexford ETB and Kildare Wicklow ETB. Each video featured learners in their home town talking about how going back to education has benefited them. The videos showed them going about their daily routines in their local communities – working, relaxing with family, doing hobbies and attending their local ETB adult education centre. The videos showed how these individuals had gained more confidence and were able to do more with their life since improving their literacy and numeracy skills. It also provided an opportunity to use local voices, accents and locations so that viewers would be able to identify the local ETB service.

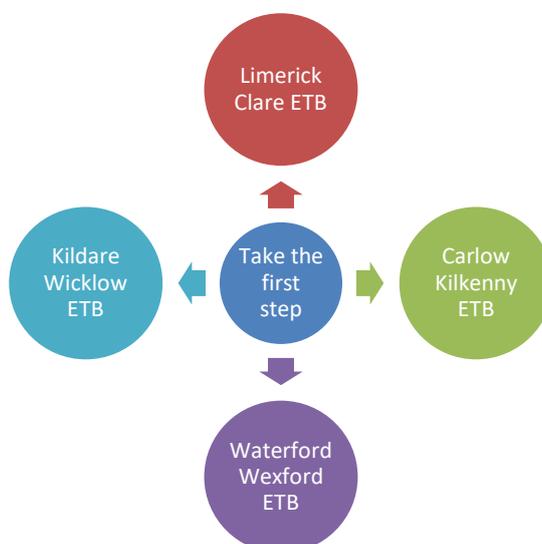
NALA produced two versions of each video:

- 1½ minute version that ETBs could promote and use at local events, and
- 1 minute versions that could be promoted across social media platforms.

NALA also produced two end-frames with different call-to-actions for each video:

- local ETB name and phone number for use by the ETB and digital marketing geo-targeted at specific locations, and
- national Freephone number for use in national digital marketing to maximise engagement and views.

The regions and ETBs that were promoted were:



## Learners who took part in the videos

### Margaret Donovan, Limerick and Clare ETB

Watch Margaret's story here <https://youtu.be/sz41fW7ycU>



Margaret is an adult learner in Ennis. She is in her 50s and is a member of the travelling community. There were 12 children in her family and her parents couldn't read or write. Margaret herself only went to primary school off and on. She got back into education through family learning classes because she wanted her daughter to have more than she ever had herself. She did family learning classes at night for three years and it completely changed her life. She discovered that she had a hunger to learn and she did classes in everything that was available including computers, cooking, art, maths, English and the Driver Theory test. Margaret says that going back to education gave her independence and freedom. Before that she felt very isolated and didn't feel part of the wider community. She couldn't even write a letter to someone, she would have to ask a settled person or a cousin that could read and write to do it for her. She has completed Level 5 and 6 courses in childcare and has been working in a crèche for 10 years.

## Lisa Banks, Kilkenny and Carlow ETB

Watch Lisa's story here <https://youtu.be/-XZ8ZjwPweM>



Lisa is in her late 40s. She is originally from Dublin but moved to Kilkenny with her husband and children a few years ago. For years Lisa managed to get by without being able to read or write very well. She worked with children with special needs and pre-school children and she really loved it. It didn't matter that her spelling or reading wasn't great because when she read stories to the kids she would just skip the words that she didn't know. At home, her husband did most of their children's homework with them. He would also look after filling in any forms so not many people knew how bad her education was.

Going back to adult education was difficult for her at the start but it wasn't long before she grew to love going to classes. She has since completed courses in nutrition and personal and interpersonal skills and computers.

Lisa said that she is a much more confident person since returning to education. Last year she joined NALA's student subcommittee and loves representing the views of adult learners.

## Mary Devereux, Waterford and Wexford ETB

Watch Mary's story here <https://youtu.be/iFh0oD8sG4E>



Mary is 54 and is from Enniscorthy, Wexford. She left school in her junior cert year. She was mocked by teachers for being left handed and never really took to school after that. She started working in Kelly's Hotel in Rosslare and she was there for 26 years. She loved it there and really enjoyed meeting people and interacting with the guests. She gave it up when her son was born because he has autism and Fragile X so she became his full time carer. This is one of the main reasons Mary went back to education four years ago. She wanted to improve her reading, writing and spelling to help her to fill out all of the forms that was needed in relation to her son's healthcare. She's also really gotten into reading novels since going back to education. She really likes reading the Catch the Criminal section of Ireland's Own. One of the things she likes most about the classes is that they have enabled her to finally get things from her head onto paper. She also really enjoys the social side of the classes.

## Galina Moraru, Kildare Wicklow ETB

Watch Galina's story here [https://youtu.be/Fx\\_3FE0qYxM](https://youtu.be/Fx_3FE0qYxM)



Galina is in her early 50s and is originally from Moldova. She moved to Ireland just over two years ago to be with her husband who moved here 10 years ago. Galina could not speak English at all when she arrived here so she relied a lot on her husband for help. She started beginners English in Bray Adult Learning Centre and went on to get a Level 2 QQI award. She will start Level 3 next year. Galina wanted to learn English to help her integrate into Irish society and to help her get a job. The English classes helped her to get her taxi licence and she now works as a taxi driver.

### **1.2.3 Regional radio advertisements**

Similar to our approach in 2018, NALA re-broadcast six local radio advertisements produced in 2017 that promoted local ETB services and phone numbers.

The **six 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 provides 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.

### **1.2.4 Posters with local ETB contact details**

Similar to the first phase of the campaign, NALA offered all ETBs and Adult Literacy Centres or Services bespoke posters with local contact phone numbers, websites and corresponding ETB logos.

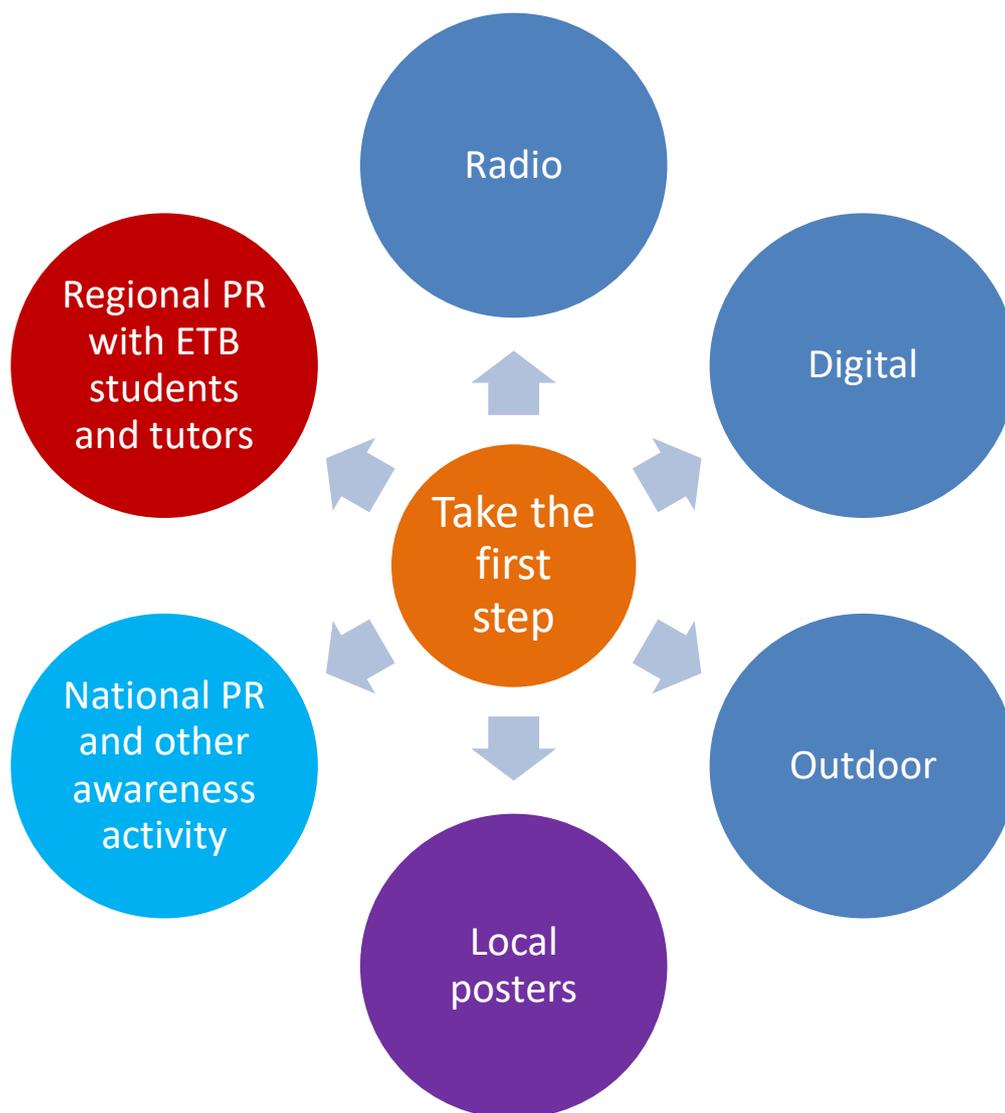
- Seventy five centres ordered bespoke posters (with local contact details).
- Seventy centres ordered generic posters (with national contact details).

### **1.2.5 PR for centres**

In addition to the posters, NALA also provided PR services, in the form of press releases and social media activity, to 45 centres who requested it.

### 1.3 Integrated campaign approach

Similar to the other phases of the campaign, an integrated campaign approach was chosen that included radio, digital and outdoor advertising aimed specifically at reaching the target audience, that is, individuals with literacy and or numeracy difficulties. This was supplemented with printed materials disseminated locally, PR and other awareness activity to augment the campaign and increase awareness.

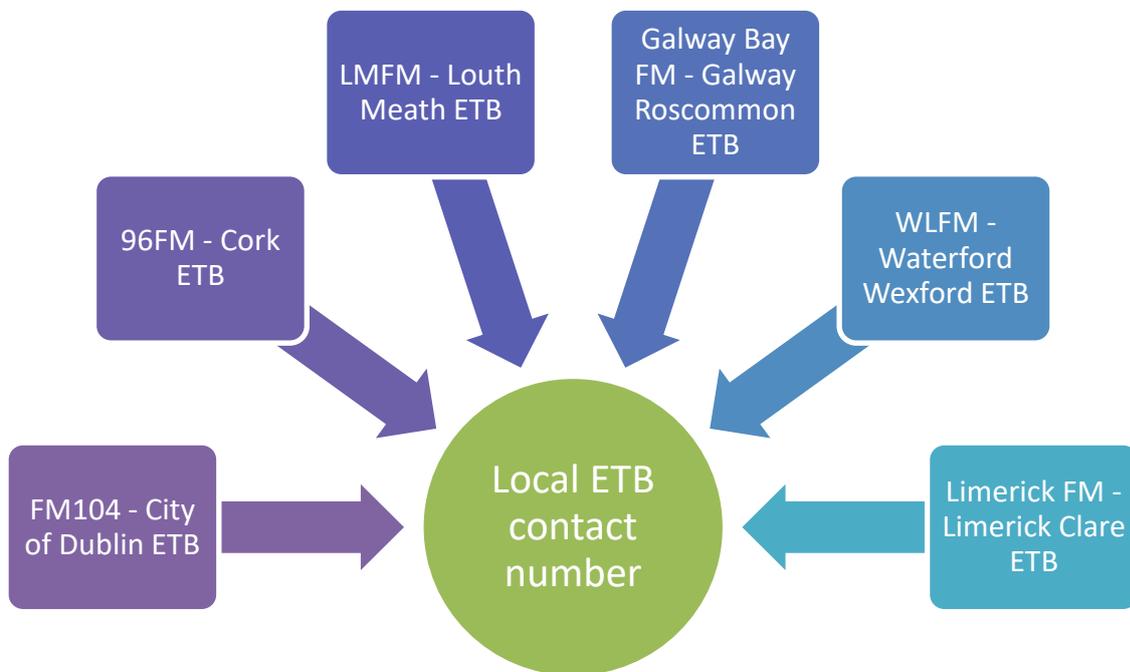


	NALA and Mindshare – media buying agency
	NALA and The Reputations Agency – PR agency
	NALA and ETB Adult Literacy Organisers
	NALA and ETB Adult Literacy Organisers

**1.3.1 National radio advertising promoting Freephone and freetext (3 weeks)**

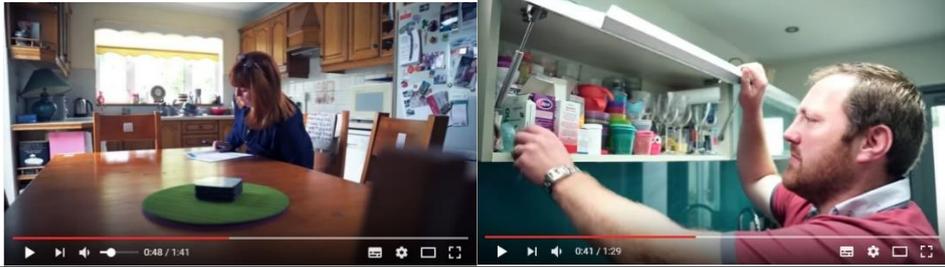


**1.3.2 Regional radio advertising promoting ETB adult literacy service (3 weeks)**



### 1.3.3 Digital advertising (4 weeks)

Video on Demand – 4 testimonial videos from 2016 campaign



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.

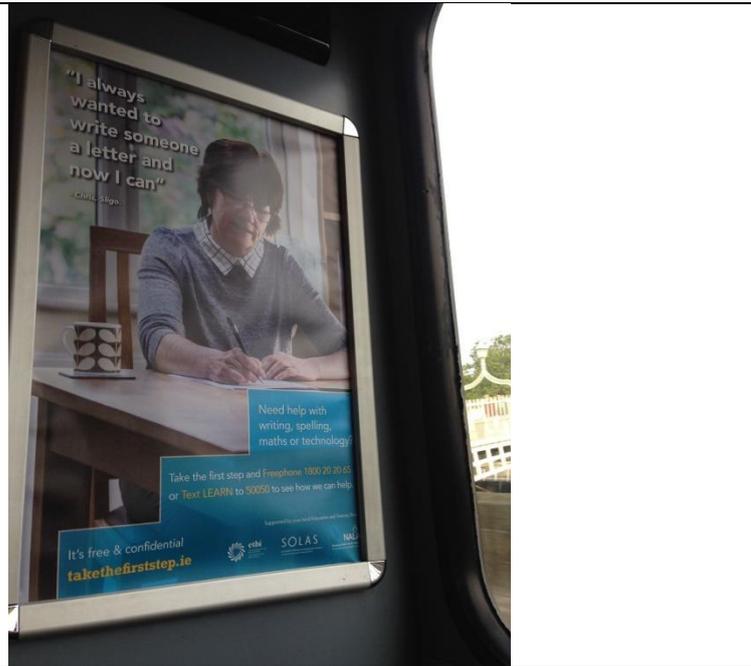
No matter how long we've spent there, it can often hold some difficult memories.

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

### 1.3.4 Outdoor advertising (2 weeks)

150 Bus  
interior  
posters

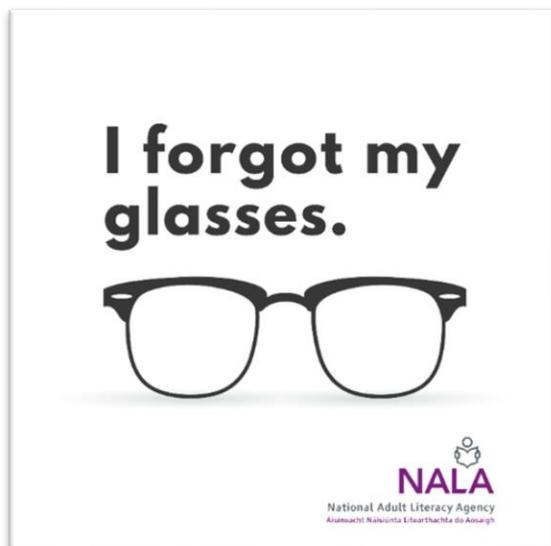


### 1.3.5 Posters

New poster (personalised featuring local ETB numbers and generic featuring NALA freephone) were produced and distributed to **145 adult education centres**.



### 1.3.6 NEW Podcast – ‘I forgot my glasses’



We produced a new podcast as part of this year’s Take the first step campaign. The podcast, which is called ‘I forgot my glasses’, 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. The podcast is available on Spotify, iTunes and NALA’s YouTube channel. So far it has been listened to over **350 times** with further promotion work currently being carried out.

### 1.3.6 National PR and media coverage – some highlights

Date	Activity
<p>Friday 6 September</p>	 <p>The banner features the text 'Literacy changes lives' in large white letters, with 'International Literacy Day 2019' below it. The background is blue with stylized houses and people. Logos for the European Union, SOLAS, and NALA are at the bottom.</p> <p>NALA organised a conference to mark the start of National Adult Literacy Awareness Week and the launch of the SOLAS funded 'Take the first step' campaign.</p> <p>The conference was called 'Literacy changes lives' and highlighted why we need to work together to close the nation's literacy gap.</p> <p><b>Speakers and topics:</b></p> <p><b>Introduction and MC</b> Joe Little, Religious and Social Affairs Correspondent, RTÉ News and Current Affairs</p> <p><b>Low literacy costs, high literacy pays - Why good literacy skills are fundamental to the life chances of each citizen and to the development of an equal society</b> Dr Inez Bailey, Chief Executive, National Adult Literacy Agency</p> <p><b>The personal consequences</b> Brian O'Donnell, Adult Literacy Student, Kilkenny and Carlow</p>

	<p>Education and Training Board (ETB) and Galina Moraru, Adult Literacy Student, Kildare and Wicklow ETB</p> <p><b>Literacy in the workplace - Why we need to support low skilled workers in the workplace</b></p> <p>Andrew Brownlee, Chief Executive, SOLAS and Sylvia Caldwell, Learning and Development Manager, Keelings</p> <p><b>Health literacy and health inequality in Ireland</b></p> <p>Professor Donal O'Shea, Consultant Endocrinologist</p> <p><b>A whole community response to low literacy</b></p> <p>Jason Vit, Head of Literacy Hubs at the National Literacy Trust in the UK</p> <p><b>What's next? - Developing a 10 year whole-of-government and whole-of-society framework for literacy in Ireland</b></p> <p>Dr Shana Cohen, Director, Think-tank for Action on Social Change (TASC)</p>
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<b>September</b>	<b>Media interviews and coverage</b>
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	<b>Ireland AM – 8-minute interview with Clare McNally, NALA</b>
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**WeekendAM**  
@WeekendAMVMTV

With today being International Literacy day, we're joined by adult learner, Margaret Donovan and Clare McNally from @nalaireland The National Adult Literacy Agency - which has just launched a new campaign entitled "Take The First Step". #WeekendAM



9:48 AM · Sep 8, 2019 · Twitter Web App

4 Retweets · 10 Likes

**5,875 followers**



**Today FM** - Interview with NALA Ambassador Emilie Pine on Take the First Step Adult Literacy Campaign –9 minutes, 8 seconds in length.



**Newstalk News** - Interview with NALA CEO Inez Bailey on the Take the First Step Adult Literacy Campaign

		
	<p><b>Today FM News</b> –Interview with Jason Vit of The National Literacy Agency and NALA students on Take the First Step Adult Literacy Campaign</p>	

### 1.3.7 Regional media coverage – highlights

			
	<p>Dublin's Q102 News –Interview with Inez Bailey, CEO of NALA and NALA students on the Take the First Step Adult Literacy Campaign</p>		
			
	<p><b>Clare FM</b> - Interview with Tutor Margaret Donovan and NALA student Mary Flanagan -14 minutes and 10 seconds in length.</p>		

## Morning Focus – Monday 09/09/19

9th September 2019



Monday's Morning Focus heard from an inspirational lady, in the person of Ennistymon's Margaret Donovan.

Margaret joined Gavin, alongside Mary Flanagan from the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board to discuss how literacy support and training changed her life.

Margaret was able to of with support from the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA). There's more information available through the following contacts:

**16,000 followers**



Interview with NALA Student Lisa Banks and Tutor Helen Walshe on NALA's Take the First Step Campaign –Length –7 minutes and 54 seconds



Coming up on #KCLRLive we have Lisa Banks & Helen Walsh from the National Adult Literacy Agency in studio, they will be chatting about the Take the First Step Literacy Campaign..



11:07 AM · Sep 9, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 3 Likes



Interview on Limerick Today with Mary Dunne from Limerick ETB –5 Minutes in length.

WEEKDAYS 9AM-12PM | CALL: 1850 715 996

# THE OPINION LINE

WITH PJ COOGAN



Cork's 96FM The Opinion Line -Interview with Tony Moloney on NALA's Take the First Step Campaign. 15 minutes in length.



Interview with NALA Communications Officer Patrick Gleeson discussing the NALA Take the First Step Campaign –7 minutes in length.



Cry 104FM Interview with Tony Moloney on NALA's Take the First Step Campaign. 8 minutes in length.

# Re-entering the world of education as an adult

Jessica Quinn

AN ENNISTYMON mother who spent years hiding the fact she could not read or write is hoping her inspiring journey back to education will encourage others to take the plunge.

Back in 2002, Margaret Donovan could barely write her own name, having only attended primary school sporadically as a young child. Moving to County Clare from her native Gort, her inability to read and write left her isolated and insecure. This was further compounded when her daughter started primary school, prompting Margaret to finally do something about it and go back to school herself.

The now 53-year-old recalls, "There were 12 of us in my family and I had no education, just a few weeks of school before I made my confirmation and holy communion. Before I was married, we stayed on the side of the road in camps and we didn't have a permanent address, so we didn't have the opportunity to stay too long in one place for education."

Over the years, she became adept at hiding her inability to read and write. "When I would get a letter and needed a reply, I'd have to go out to someone and ask them for help with a reply. I would have to know the person before I'd open up to them because I was insecure. It was embarrassing. If I was asked to write something, or fill something in, I'd have the excuse 'I can't see it properly, the writing is too small, will you fill it in and I'll sign my name to it'. Being disadvantaged as I was, I was really cute because I'd always find a way out of it, until it came to the stage when my daughter went to school and I could find no way out of it."

"When my daughter started primary school and I moved to Clare, I didn't know anybody in the community. When she was getting homework, I found it very difficult because I couldn't read or write and it was hurting me to see that I couldn't help her. It was a battle, to be honest with you, being in a new community, isolated. I felt insecure and with no self-esteem. I wanted more for my daughter than I ever had for myself," she continued.



Adult education advocate, Margaret Donovan.

She found out about a Parent Plus Programme, aimed at helping parents support their children with their homework and decided to give it a try. "I took the plunge to go in through the door and the first thing I found was I wasn't the only one in the country that had the same problem. I felt very at home and I didn't feel I was pressured. It was very down to earth, very low key and I felt I was with family really. It was a great experience from day one, and once I got in there, there was no stopping me."

From that day, Margaret has gone on to study maths, English, computers, cooking, art and for her driver theory test. She has also completed Levels 5 and 6 childcare courses and has been working in a creche for the past 10 years.

She credits going back to education for giving her independence and a new lease of life. She is a passionate advocate for adult education. "No matter what age you are, nationality or gender, you are never too old to learn. Everybody needs an education, whether it is at third level or foundation. My father used to say your health is your wealth, but I think education is even more important, because you can do nothing about your health if you don't have education."

She hopes that others might be inspired by her story to begin their own educational journey. "If my promoting education gets the next person through the door, to get them out of isolation and give them self-esteem, well I have a good job done."

"It would never have been possible without Clare Adult Education, the support I got from the

community of Ennistymon and the 12 wonderful women I work with who still support me. The North Clare Family Resource Centre and adult education has me where I am and I just want to express appreciation for everyone who has been on this journey with me. It was tough in the beginning, coming from a totally illiterate family and coming to a different county where I was lonely. But now there is no limit to me."

Margaret spoke about her experience in the wake of International Literacy Day, which took

place on Sunday. The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) launched 'Take the First Step', a national public information campaign to encourage those who have difficulties with numeracy and literacy to contact NALA or their local ETB to get the help they need to improve their skills.

The campaign is a joint initiative between the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), SOLAS (the Further Education and Training Authority) and NALA. The opportunity is free and open to all, with participants able to choose what, where and

when they want to learn. Research shows that one in six (550,000) Irish adults find reading and understanding everyday texts difficult, with many organisations unaware of how widespread low literacy levels are.

The 'Take the First Step' campaign encourages adults who have difficulty with reading, writing, maths or technology to contact the freephone number 1800 20 20 66 or free text LEARN to 50050. Currently there are about 63,000 adults attending literacy courses in education centres nationwide.

The Clare



Champion

# Literacy campaign launched to help adults with reading and maths

One in six Irish adults find it difficult to read leaflets, timetables and medicine instructions

© Sat, Sep 7, 2019, 01:00

Lynn Rusk



Galina Moraru, a student at Kildare and Wicklow ETB, and author Emilie Pine at the launch of the National Adult Literacy Agency's Take the First Step campaign. Photograph: Conor Healy/Picture It Photography

 A campaign aimed at Irish adults who have difficulty with reading or maths will be launched by the [National Adult Literacy Agency \(Nala\)](#) at the weekend to mark [Unesco International Literacy Day](#).

  One in six, or 550,000 Irish adults, find reading and understanding everyday texts difficult. They may struggle to read a leaflet, bus timetable or medicine instructions, and this affects how they communicate or fail to communicate with the people they need to reach.

Speaking about the campaign, Emilie Pine, author and associate professor of modern drama at University College Dublin, said she was passionate about adult literacy.

“I think it is a fundamental right and everyone should have the right to read and write. It is essential for life,” she said.



“And I think it’s really brave of adults to go back and take the first step into their local adult education centre.”



Nala has linked up with the Education and Training Boards Ireland and Solas, the Further Education and Training Authority, to help adult learners improve their skills in reading, writing, maths and technology.



### **Fundamental**

[Andrew Brownlee](#), chief executive of Solas, said literacy, numeracy and digital skills are fundamental to employability.

“The campaign is designed to raise awareness about Ireland’s skills needs and to ensure that our population are equipped to progress at pace with our changing environment,” he said.

The campaign encourages adults who have literacy or numeracy difficulties to contact a Freephone support line, 1800-202065, to free text LEARN to 50050 or to contact their local Education and Training Board to avail of the service.

Once they make contact, Nala will put them in touch with their local Education Training Board (ETB) adult education centre or tell them about other free services to meet their needs.

Currently in Ireland there are about 63,000 adults attending literacy courses in ETB adult education centres nationwide.

The Irish Times online

### 1.3.8 Attendance at events

#### Ploughing Championships



This year we implemented a new plan for our awareness work at the national ploughing championships. This year's approach focused less on giving out leaflets and workbooks and more on promoting NALA's Freephone number by giving out "get a qualification" business card and branded pens.

#### Awareness workshop with Concern

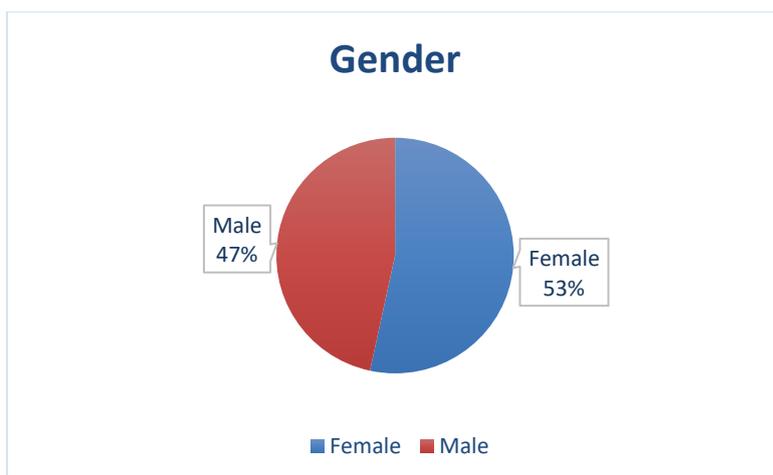
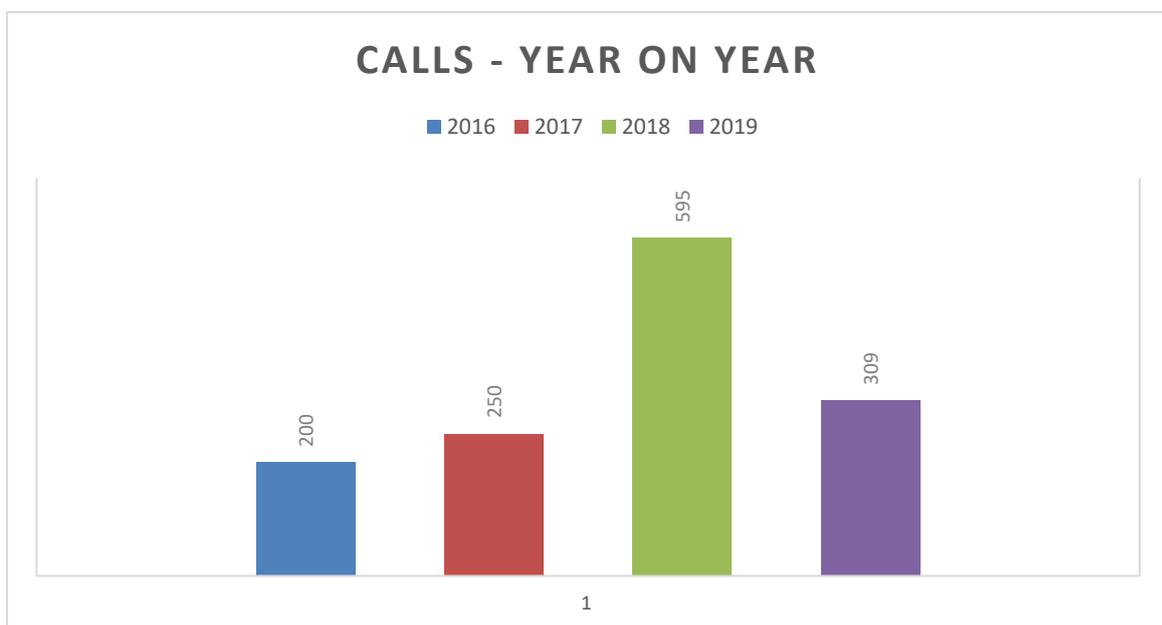


During Take the first step we co-facilitated a workshop with Concern Ireland in Dublin on Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education. The event was attended by **40 transition year students** from 4 schools; 10 Concern staff; 3 NALA staff and 2 students.

## 1.4 Initial response to the campaign

### 1.4.1 Freephone calls

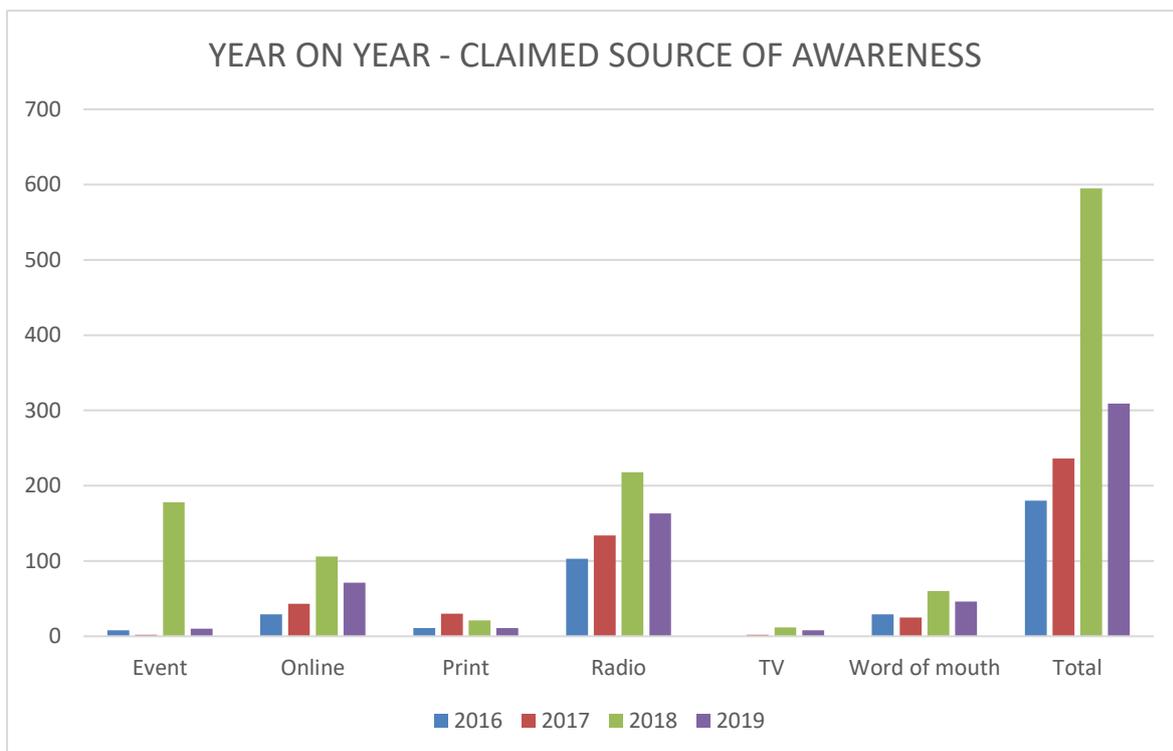
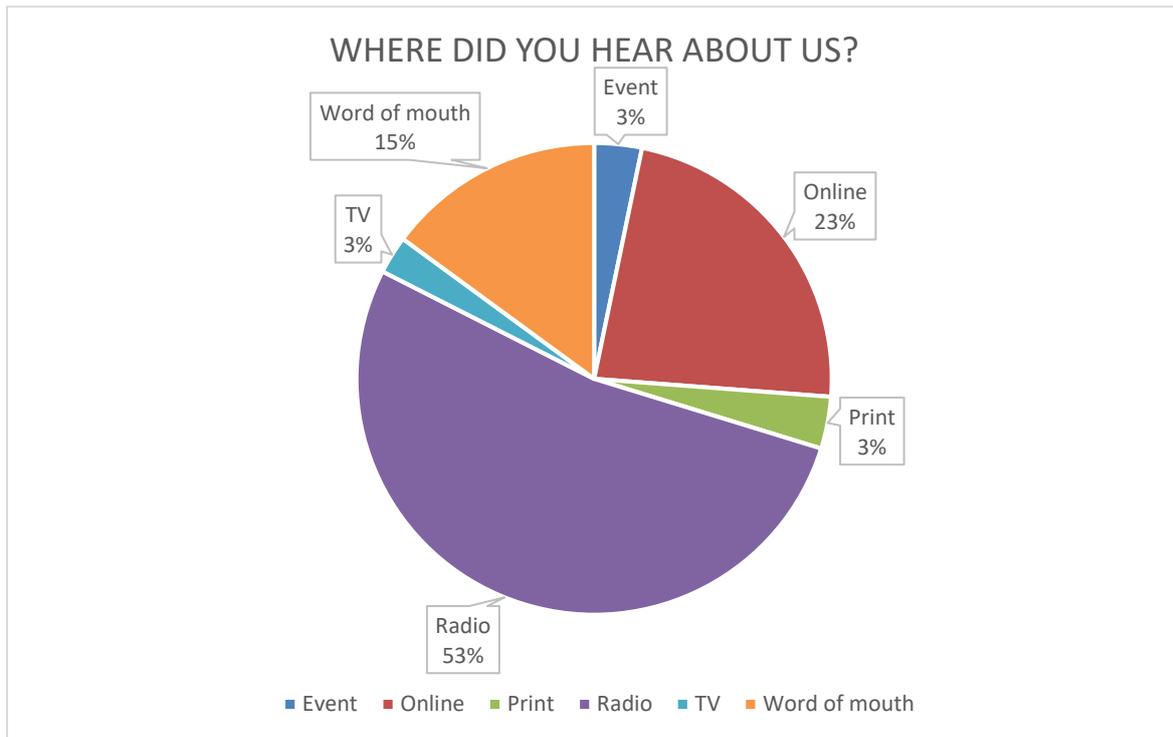
Following the third phase of the campaign NALA provided information to **309 individuals** who wanted information about improving their literacy and numeracy skills. This is an increase in calls from the first phase of the campaign in 2016 when there were 200 calls but a decrease in calls from 2018<sup>5</sup>. It can be divided 53% female and 47% male.



<sup>5</sup> The increase in calls in 2018 came as a result of capturing referrals given at large events, such as the National Ploughing Championships. We decided not to include this data in 2019, as following call-backs to individuals in 2018, we found that these enquires were not as effective as individuals who had chosen to make contact as a result of the campaign.

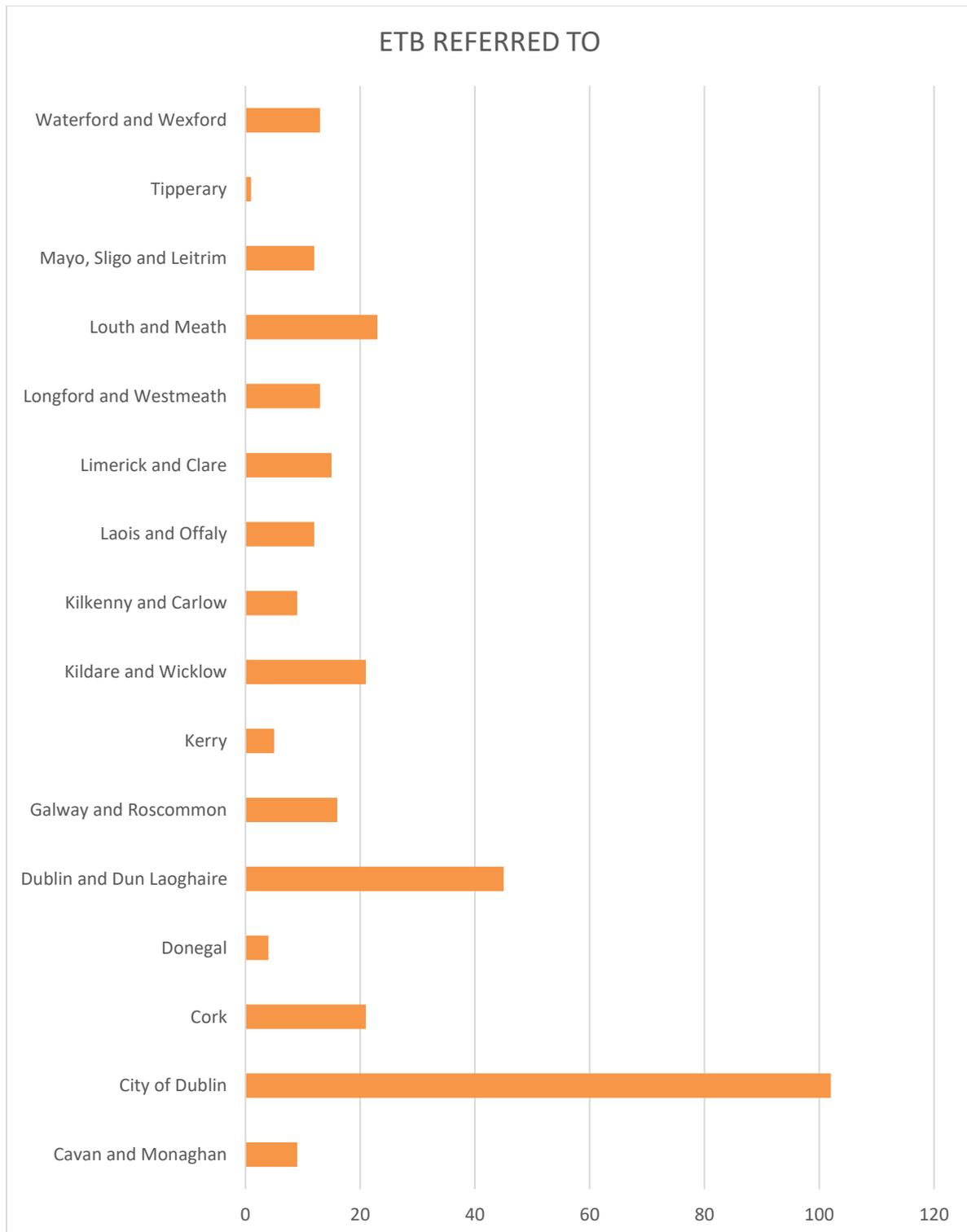
### 1.4.2 Freephone calls and claimed source of awareness

In the third phase of the campaign when callers were asked 'Where did you hear about us?' Radio remained the primary claimed source of awareness amongst those given information, followed by online and word of mouth.



### 1.4.3 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 origin are Louth Meath, Kildare Wicklow and Cork.



#### 1.4.4 Website traffic

Following the fourth phase of the campaign the main campaign website [takethefirststep.ie](http://takethefirststep.ie) received the following hits during September and October 2019:

- 10,500 sessions on [takethefirststep.ie](http://takethefirststep.ie)
- 13,400 page views on [takethefirststep.ie](http://takethefirststep.ie)
- 10,000 users on [takethefirststep.ie](http://takethefirststep.ie)

#### 1.4.5 Video performance on Facebook:

<b>Video</b>	<b>Engagements (likes, comments, interactions)</b>	<b>Video plays on Facebook</b>	<b>Number of people reached</b>
Margaret Donovan (LCETB)	8,000	120,000	256,000
Lisa Banks (KCETB)	3,000	90,000	160,000
Galina Moraru (KWETB)	3,000	100,000	130,000
Mary Devereux (WWETB)	1,500	80,000	170,000

#### 1.4.5 Data recorded by ETB adult literacy centres

- Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) did a survey with 16 ETBs to gather data on the national awareness campaign. ETBI received nine responses to this survey.
- Out of the nine responses received from ETBs, five had a designated contact number or person for recording new enquiries during the awareness campaign.
- Five out of nine ETBs recorded they had received new enquiries on foot of the national awareness campaign.



Campaign ambassadors launch 'Take the first step', the National Adult Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign ahead of International Literacy Day, 6 September 2019. Pictured L to R: Siobhan McEntee, ETBI; Emilie Pine, author; Andrew Browlee, SOLAS CEO; Michael Duffy, Cavan ETB learner; Inez Bailey, NALA CEO; Brian O'Donnell, Carlow ETB learner; Jason Vit, National Literacy Trust; Lisa Banks, Kilkenny ETB learner; and Mary Bambrick, NALA Chairperson.

## **Chapter two**

### **Campaign evaluation**

## 2. Campaign evaluation

This section provides details on quantitative research that was done to provide an evaluation of the 2019 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 fourth phase of the campaign (September 2019) compared to first, second and third phase of the campaign (September 2016, 2017, 2018). 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.

(Please note that in some of the following pages, reference is made to research findings from August 2016. This research was done before the campaign existed in order to provide baseline data to compare the September 2016 campaign research against.)

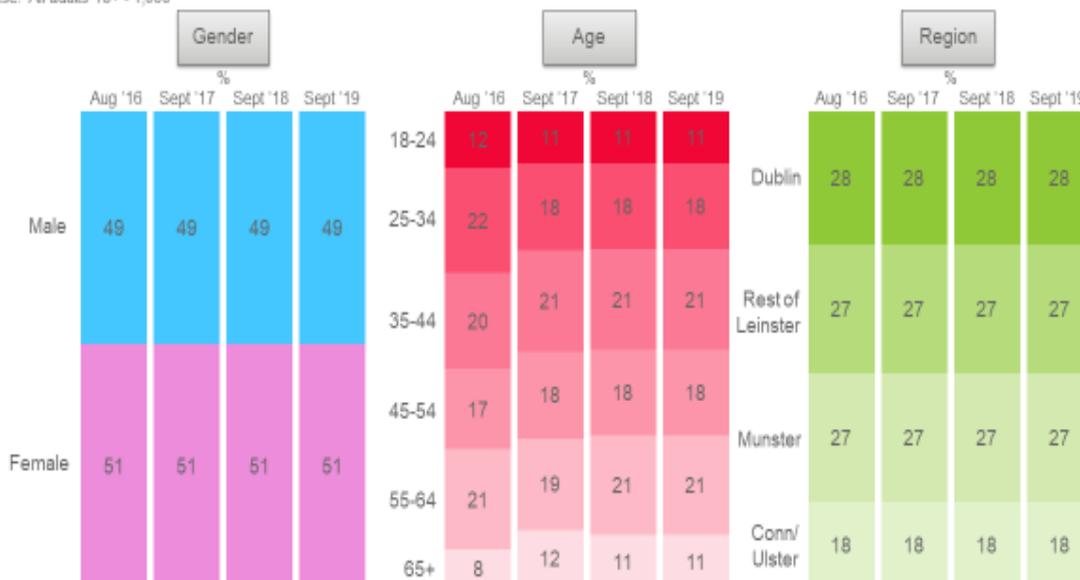
• Pre campaign research to establish baseline data – August 2016
• Phase 1 – post 2016 campaign quantitative research – October 2016
• Phase 2 – post 2017 campaign quantitative research – October 2017
• Phase 3 – post 2018 campaign quantitative research – October 2018
• Phase 4 – post 2019 campaign quantitative research – October 2019

### 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.
- One third of the total population 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 between the 30 September and 7 October 2019.

## 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.

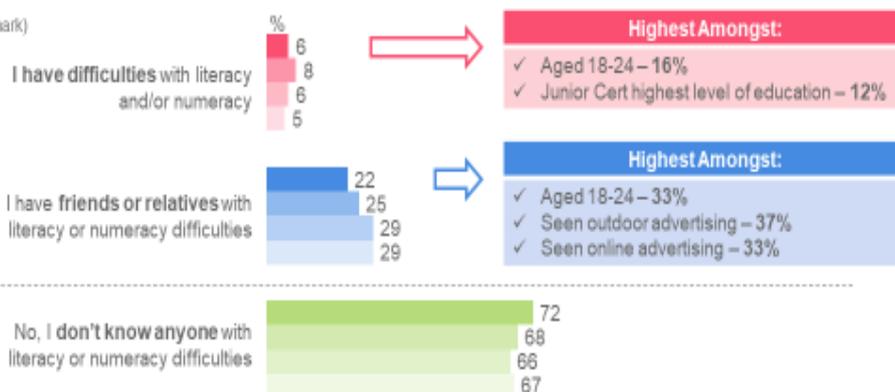
Q A/B/C



## Incidence of Having/Knowing Someone With Literacy/Numeracy Difficulties

Base: All adults 18+ - 1,000

- Sept '19
- Sept '18
- Sept '17
- Aug '16 (Benchmark)



Almost 3 in 10 of the total population either have literacy/numeracy problems or know someone who does. The incidence of having or knowing someone with difficulties is highest amongst the younger cohorts and also those who have seen some form of NALA advertising.

Q 8



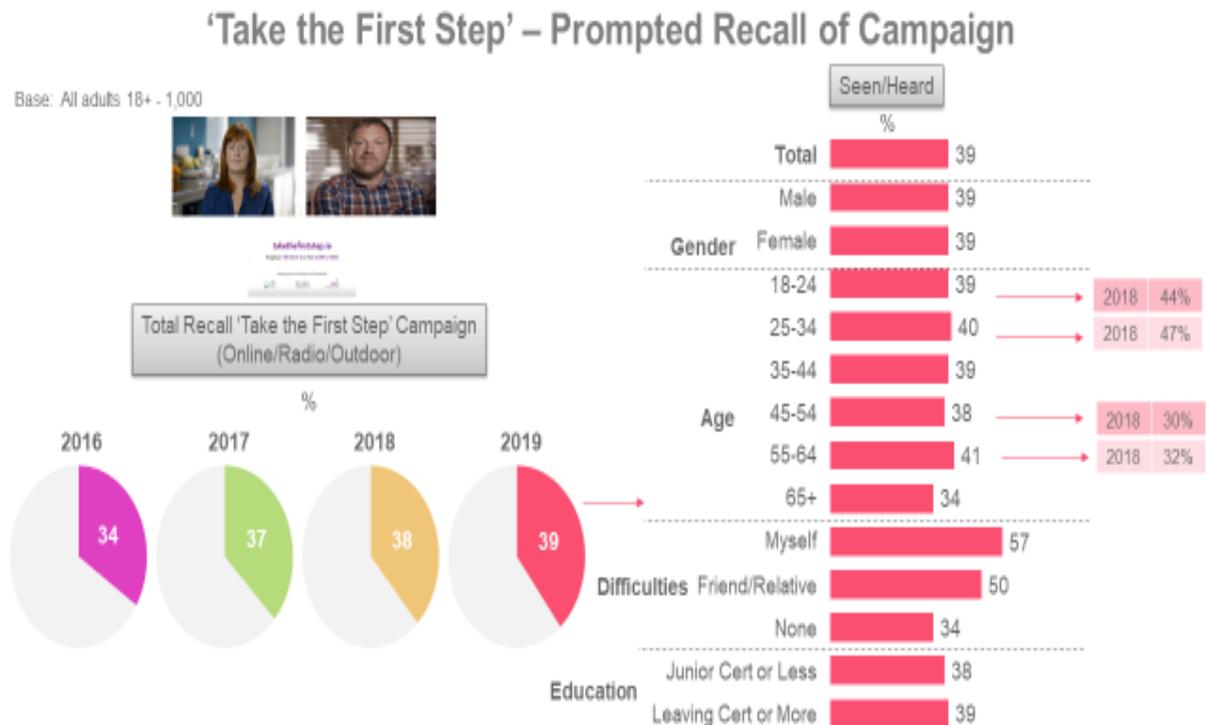
## 2.3 Summary findings

- The reach of the 'Take the First Step' campaign remains high and has increased again in September 2019. Amongst the adult population, 39% recall some element of the campaign (radio, online or outdoor). This is up from 34% in 2016, 37% in 2017 and 38% in 2018.
- Across the media channels, the campaign registers the highest recall on Radio (26%). This is followed by Online (19%) and Outdoor (16%). All channels experienced a small increase since 2016 and a slight decrease in comparison to September 2018.
- The campaign continues to be regarded as effective at encouraging people to seek help. Amongst those who have been exposed to the campaign, 84% believe it is effective at encouraging people to consider seeking help for literacy, numeracy and basic technology problems. Two in five of those exposed to the campaign consider it to be very effective.
- Amongst those who have difficulties with literacy or numeracy, 57% recall the campaign. There is 50% recall amongst those who say their friends or family have literacy or numeracy difficulties.
- Almost half of the total population (49%) are aware that courses are available locally and free of charge, rising to over 2 in 3 (68%) amongst those who had been exposed to the 'Take the First Step' campaign – this is similar to 2018.
- Amongst the total population, approximately 6 in 10 (62%) claim they would know where to get help with literacy/ numeracy whilst over 2 in 3 (67%) would know where for computer/ technology skills.

## 2.4 Recall of the 'Take the first step' campaign

- Prompted awareness of the 'Take the First Campaign' has increased slightly from 2018, with almost 2 in 5 (39%) of Irish adults recalling at least one element of the campaign – up from 34% in 2016.
- The biggest increases in awareness since last year are amongst the older cohorts (45-64 year olds) and the greatest decrease is amongst the younger cohorts (under 35 year olds).
- Amongst those experiencing literacy or numeracy difficulties, just over half (57%) recall the campaign.

13

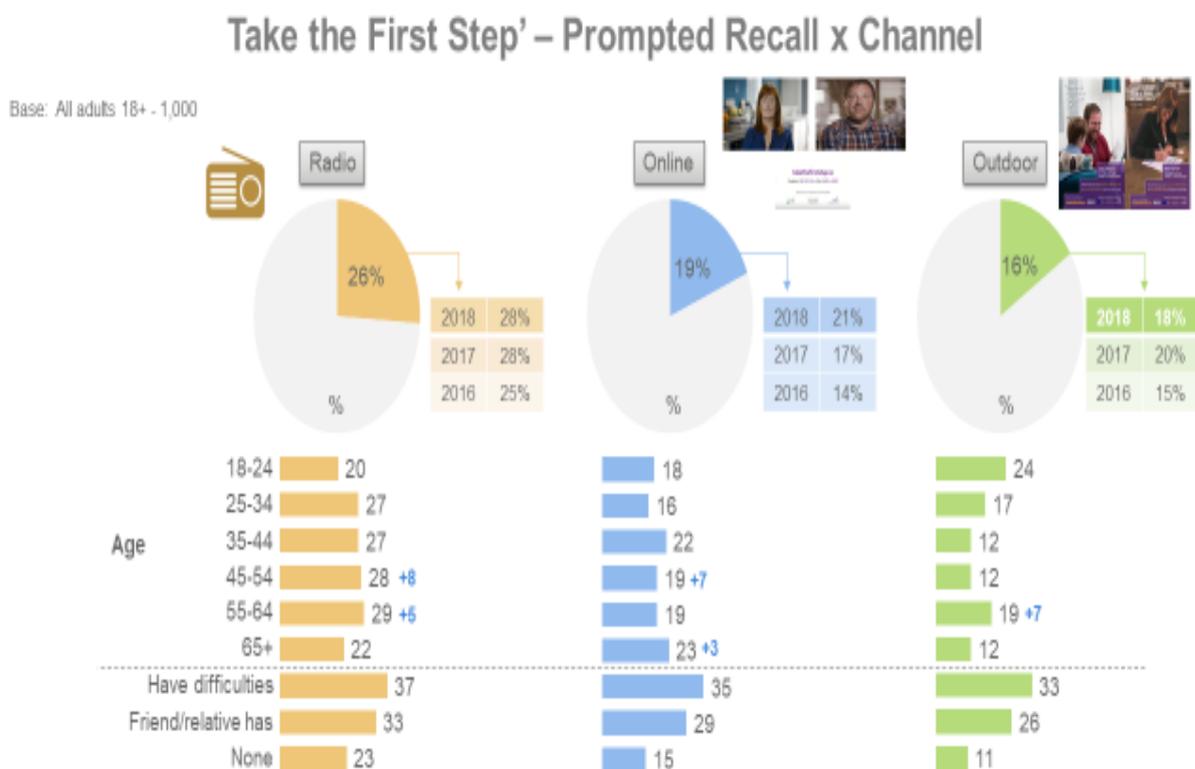


Q 9/10/11

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

- Across different media channels, the campaign registers the highest recall on radio (26%), followed by Online (19%) and Outdoor (16%).
- All channels experienced a slight decrease in comparison to September 2018.
- Recall across all channels shows an uplift amongst older cohorts (45-64 year olds) from 2018.

14



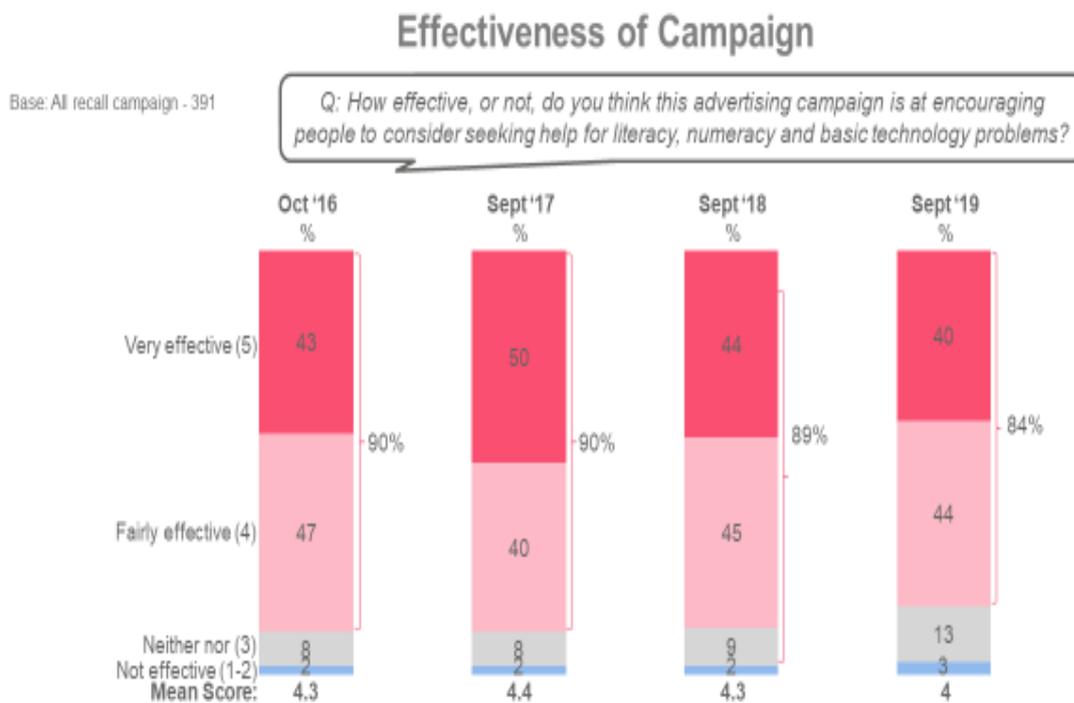
Q. 9/10/11

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## 2.6 Effectiveness of the campaign

- Of those who have been exposed to the campaign, 84% consider it effective in encouraging people to consider seeking help. Two in five of those exposed to the campaign consider it to be very effective. This is a slight decrease from 2016, 2017 and 2018 figures. (These 'effectiveness' figures are considered high compared to advertising industry norms (COYNE)).

15



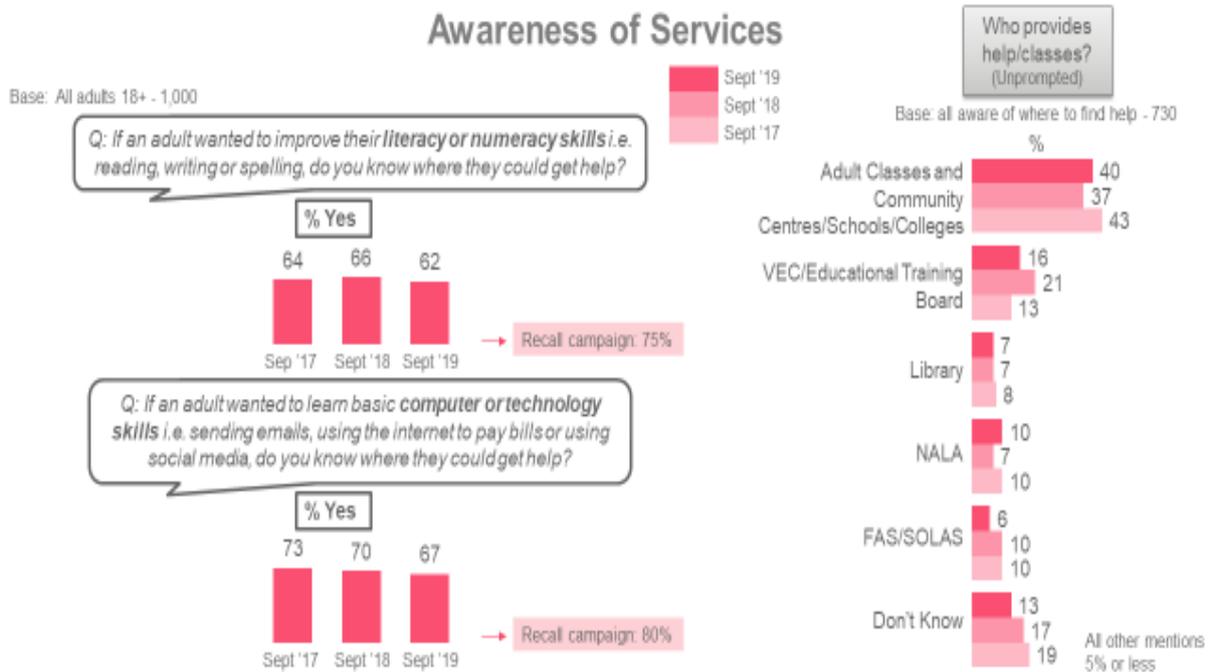
Q.12



## 2.7 Awareness of services and where to get help

- Amongst the total population, when asked ‘if an adult wanted to improve their literacy or numeracy skills, do you know where they could get help’, over 6 in 10 (62%) said ‘Yes, they would know where to go to get help with adult literacy and numeracy skills’. This is a small decrease on the previous year. Amongst those recalling the campaign those saying ‘Yes’ rise to 75%.
- Amongst the total population, on the issue of learning computer or technology skills, about 2 in 3 (67%) say they know where help can be got. This is a small decrease on the previous year. Amongst those who recalled the campaign the level of positive agreement rises to 80%.
- When asked who provides such literary, numeracy, technology classes, the proportion giving a generic answer of “classes/community” centres has slightly increased, while specific mentions of VECs/Educational Training Boards has slightly decreased.

17

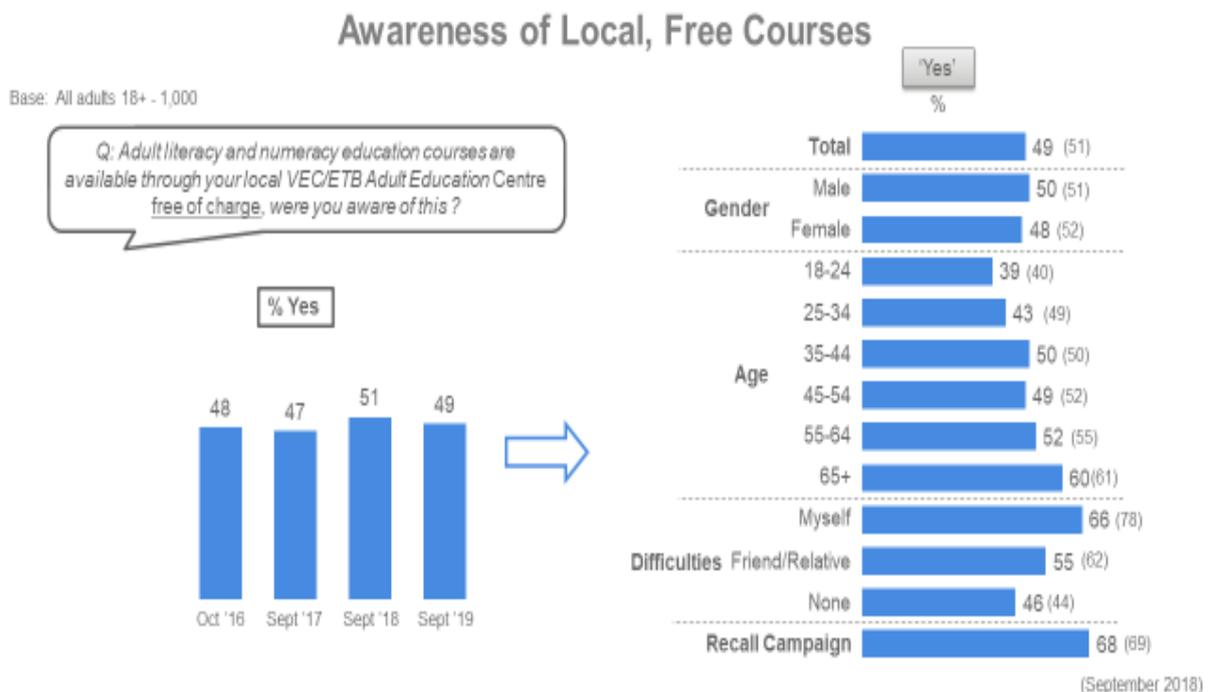


Q.1/2/3

## 2.8 Awareness of availability of courses

- About half of the total population (49%) are aware that courses are available locally and free of charge, rising to over 2 in 3 (68%) amongst those who had been exposed to the 'Take the First Step' campaign. This is similar to previous years.
- Similar to the previous year's research, awareness in general increases with age from 39% of 18-24 year olds to 60% of 65+ year olds, highlighting the campaign's greater salience and impact with older age cohorts.
- Whilst there has been a decrease in awareness amongst those who have/know someone with difficulties, awareness amongst those who have been exposed to the 'Take the First Step' campaign remains high at 68%.

18

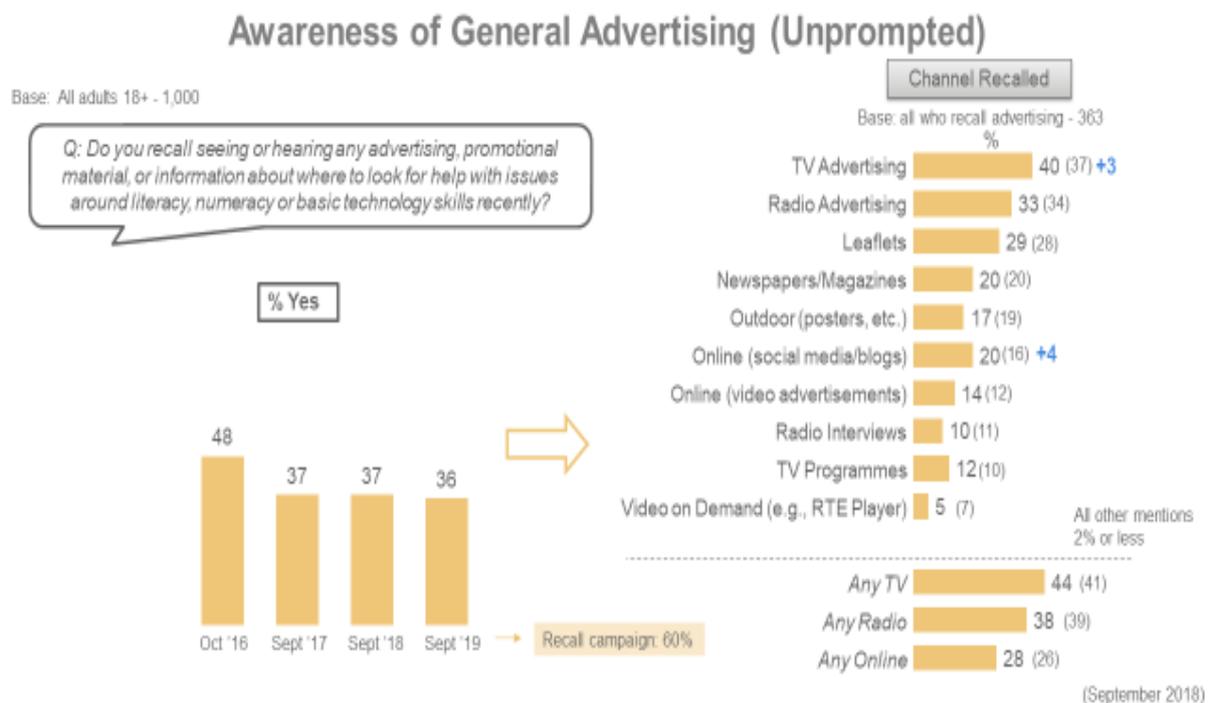


Q4

## 2.9 Awareness of general advertising (unprompted)

- Just over 1 in 3 (36%) of Irish adults claim to recall some sort of advertising recently; which is similar to last year when there was no TV advertising. This rises to 60% for those who recall the campaign.
- There is minimal difference across channels versus September 2018 in terms of recall. However, there is a 3% uplift in recall of TV from 2018 which could be as a result of the RTE partnership in March 2019.
- Approximately 33% of those recalling advertising opt for radio as the channel recalled, which is similar to last year.
- There is an increase in recall of online activity (social media and blogs) from 16% in 2018 to 20% in 2019, and a 2% increase in recalling any online activity in 2019.

19



Q.5/6

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## 2.10 Awareness of the name 'Take the First Step'

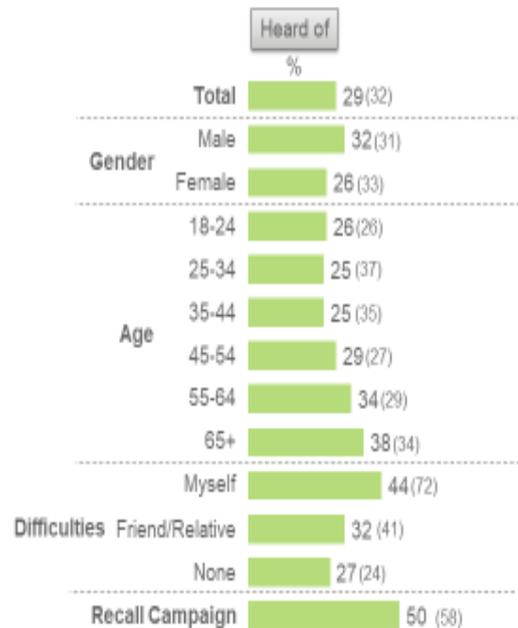
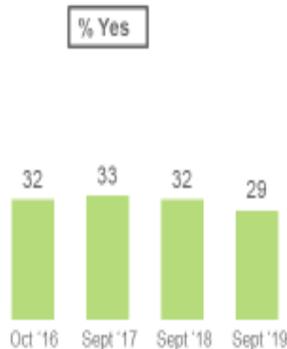
- 29% of Irish adults claim to have heard of “Take the First Step” when prompted with the name with very little change registering between all the waves of research.
- The biggest decrease from 2018 is amongst those who have difficulties themselves whilst the biggest increase was amongst the 55-65+ cohort.

20

### 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?



(September 2018)

Q.7

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Michael Duffy and Michelle Johnston, students at Cavan Monaghan ETB both took part in the promotional video for Take the first step in Cavan.

## **Chapter three**

### **Key insights and recommendations**

### 3. Key insights and recommendations

The Take the first step campaign has been broadcast for four consecutive years (2016-2019). Evaluations of the campaign show 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.

The key challenge in the future lies in reaching the population who have not been exposed to it, specifically those whose needs are greatest; and creating pathways for individuals to take up a learning opportunity.

For this reason we recommend the following approach to any new phase of awareness work.

#### 3.1 Advertising

##### **Media spend:**

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.

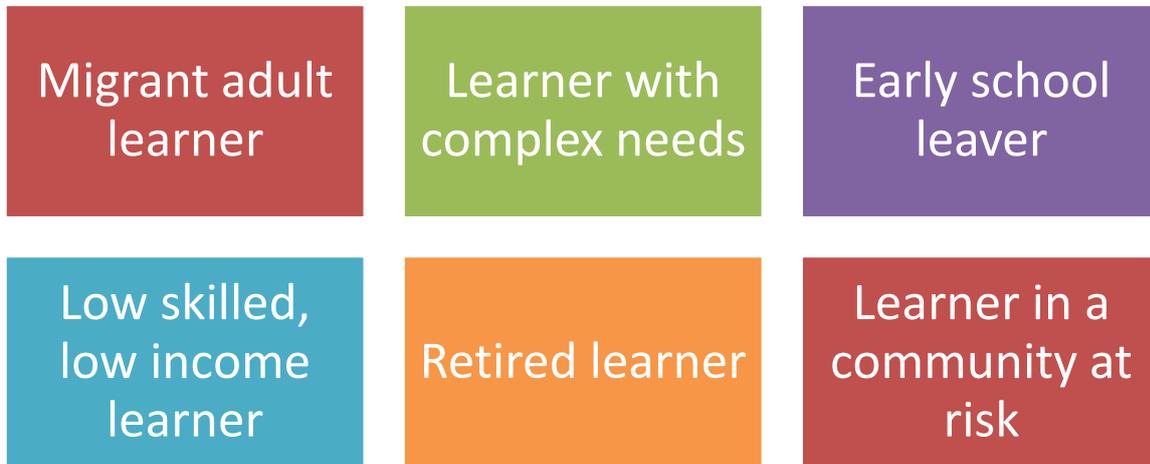
However, if we want to ensure we are reaching those whose needs are greatest we should investigate other means of raising awareness with different key audiences.

##### **Creative assets:**

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.

**By way of an example, key target audiences could include, for example:**



### **3.2 Link with local services**

Overall the response to the campaign has been positive with the majority of 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. 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 a pilot awareness campaign, working with a small number of individual ETBs, at specific 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 pilot awareness campaigns with ETBs that promote specific themes at different times of the year.

### **3.3 Outreach**

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 of the agreed target audiences to do outreach work and raise awareness with those hardest to reach.

**Action:** Recruit learner to work with NALA and ETBI on the campaign to actively engage with hard to reach target audiences, and promote suitable pathways for potential new learners.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Media schedule

Appendix B – PR impact data

# Appendix A – Media schedule

MINDSHARE		NALA - Awareness / Literacy Day campaign 2019															
Client	NALA	Plan No.	4	Planned		Calendar Month:	August	September	October	November	December						
Brand/Campaign	National Literacy Day			Approved - Waiting PO		Week:	05   12   19   26	02   09   16   23   30	07   14   21   28	04   11   18   25	02   09   16   23   30						
Product Code	N26			Booked with PO		6 Week AB Deadline	13th Jun	15th July	13th Aug	13th Sept	14th Oct						
PO Number	N/A					Outdoor Cycle:	CY17	CY18	CY19	CY20	CY21	CY22	CY23	CY24	CY25	CY26	CY27
MEDIA	Details	Number of Units	Gross Media Cost	Cost To Client inc VAT - €	Media Channel - Budget Investment %												
VoD - TV Extend	Campaign Message																
Planning Audience	Campaign Gross Cost																
	Adserving Costs																
	Copy Length																
	Completed Views																
	PO Number																
Radio - Spot	Campaign Message																
Primetime	Campaign Gross Cost																
Notes on Day or Dayparts	Copy Length																
SPOT AIRTIME		No. Spots															
National advert - freephone number																	
Radio 1	Liveline - Joe Duffy 13.15-15.00	9															
98FM	Adrian Kennedy/Jeremy Dixon - 98fm 10.00-12.00	20															
Today FM	Today FM - TAP package	24															
	Red FM TAP	36															
	Red FM TAP Bonus	9															
	Media Central - PT	42															
	Media Central - TAP Bonus	12															
	(Spin 1038, Spin SW, 98fm, Beat, iRadio, Classic hits 4FM)	0															
	IRS+ (15 stations) - TAP	42															
	IRS+ (15 stations) - TAP Bonus	4															
	(KCLR, KFM, Midlands 103, MWR, Shannonside/Northern Sound, Ocean FM, Radio Kerry, Southeast radio, Tipp fm, Clore Fm, Eastcoast radio, Highland radio, Nova, Sunshine)																
40" vox pops	Urban Access - TAP	80															
	(FM104, Q102, Cork 95/103, LMFM, WLR, Galway Bay, Limerick Live 95)																
URBAN MEDIA PARTNERSHIP																	
	Mobile & Digital display	0															
	NALA to create and supply displayed on all stations' websites - desktop & mobile																
Outdoor	Campaign Message	Quantity															
	Campaign Gross Cost																
	Production																
	Bus interior	150															

## Appendix B – PR impact data

### **Total Metrics:**

**20 Broadcast,  
Online & Print  
pieces**

**DAV (Euro)  
€54,474**

**PR Value  
(DAV x3)  
€172,423**

**Reach/  
Circulation  
2,118,912**

## **Acknowledgements**

SOLAS and the National Adult Literacy Agency would like to sincerely thank the following people and organisations for their support in the 2019 National Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Campaign.

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

- Margaret Donovan, Joe McDonagh, Angela Gleeson, Pam Noonan and Terence Conway from Limerick and Clare ETB
- Galina Moraru, Lee Mitchell from Wicklow ETB
- Lisa Banks, Brian O'Donnell from Kilkenny and Carlow ETB
- Mary Devereux, Maurice Sammon, Rosaleen O'Neill, Ann Johnston and Bernie Sherlock from Waterford and Wexford ETB
- Michael Duffy from Cavan ETB
- Gerard Maher and Eamon Delaney from Tipperary ETB
- Robert Shannon, Brian Flannery, Thomas Murphy from City of Dublin ETB
- Liz Carey, Tony Moloney and Margaret Scully from Cork ETB
- Rosaleen Rice, John Williams, Kenneth Kenellan and Marion Higgins from Galway ETB
- Chris Carthy from Sligo ETB
- Gerardine Dunphy from Meath.

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

- Mary Flanagan, Margot Walsh, Lorraine Markham and Mary Dunne from Limerick and Clare ETB
- Niamh Maguire from Wicklow ETB
- Carmel Bryan and Tara Kelly from Kilkenny and Carlow ETB
- Anna O'Dwyer, Sharon Cowman, Margaret O'Connor, Emma Tobin Coles and Joann Power from Waterford and Wexford ETB
- Mary Roche Cleary from Tipperary ETB
- Siobhan McEntee from ETBI
- Fionnuala Carter and Gwen Redmond from City of Dublin ETB.
- Kevin Kelly and Alison Jones in Galway ETB

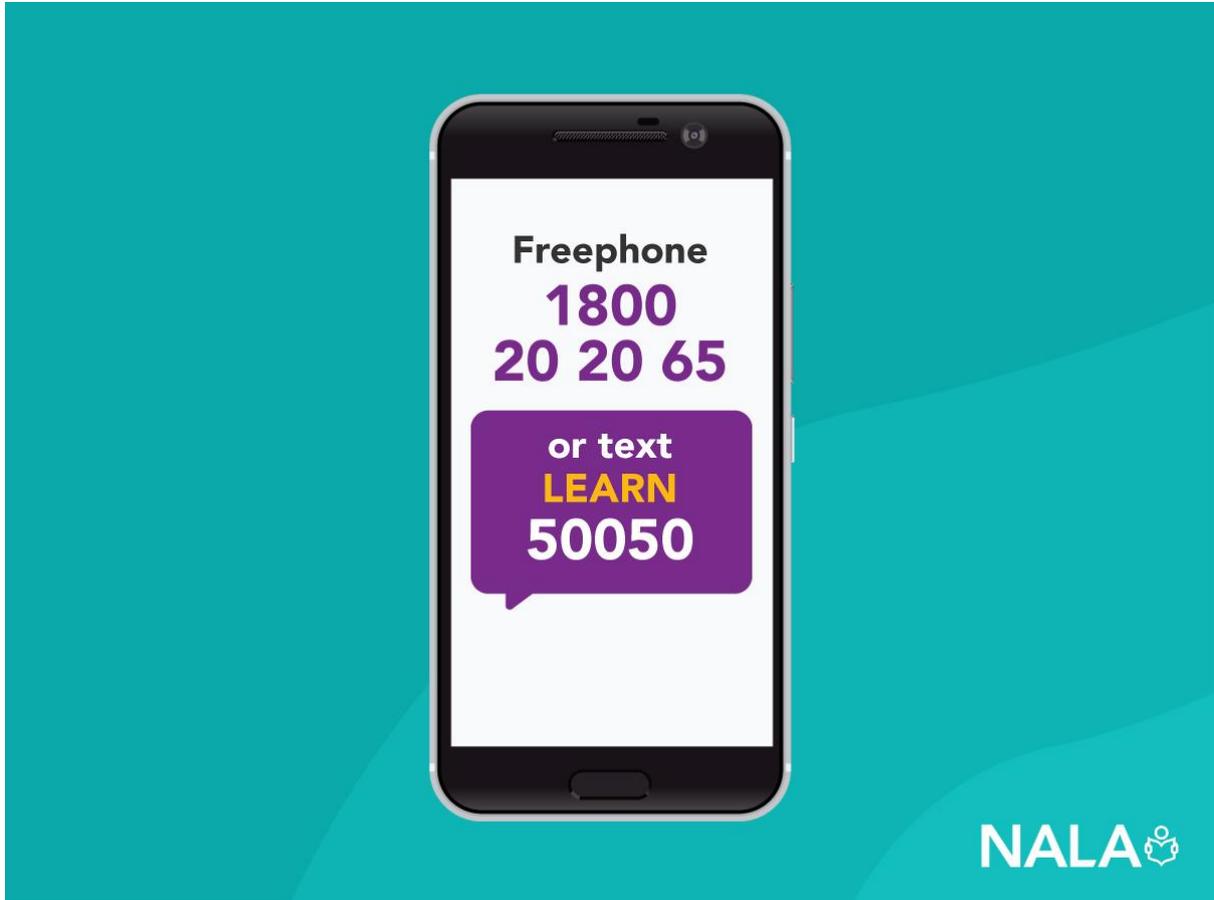
Author Emilie Pine for supporting the campaign.

The Learner Ambassadors, NALA Student Subcommittee and other ETB students and tutors for volunteering their time to promote the campaign locally and at the National Ploughing Championships and other events.

Members of the Literacy and Numeracy Awareness Raising Campaign Steering Committee.

The National Advisory Committee and Adult Literacy Forum.

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](mailto:info@nala.ie)

**1 December 2019**

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