

Evolving Health Literacy Policy in Ireland & The Challenge of Implementation

Inez Bailey, NALA



NALA

N National Adult Literacy Agency
Ái: Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Outline



Health Literacy in Ireland

- Definition of health literacy
- Why is it important
- Government Commitment: Healthy Ireland



NALA's role

- Promoting health literacy
- Health Literacy Advisory Panel
- Health Literacy Action Plan



Implementation and challenges

- Literacy Audit for Healthcare Settings
- Literacy-aware guidelines
- Strategies to promote health literacy



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

What is Health Literacy and Numeracy?

Health literacy is the ability to read, understand and act on health information.

It is about mutual understanding



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Why is health literacy important?

One in five Irish people are not fully confident that they understand the information they receive from their healthcare professional (HCP).

43% of people would only sometimes ask their HCP to clarify the information if they did not understand something they had said.

One in 10 people have taken the wrong dose of medication because they didn't understand the instructions.

66% of people have difficulty understanding signs and directions in Irish hospitals.



Adult Skills Survey 2013



18% of Irish adults are at or below level 1 of literacy – 521,550 people

15 out of 24 countries

25% of Irish adults are at or below level 1 of numeracy – 754,000 people



18 out of 24 countries

Health Promotion Conference 2015

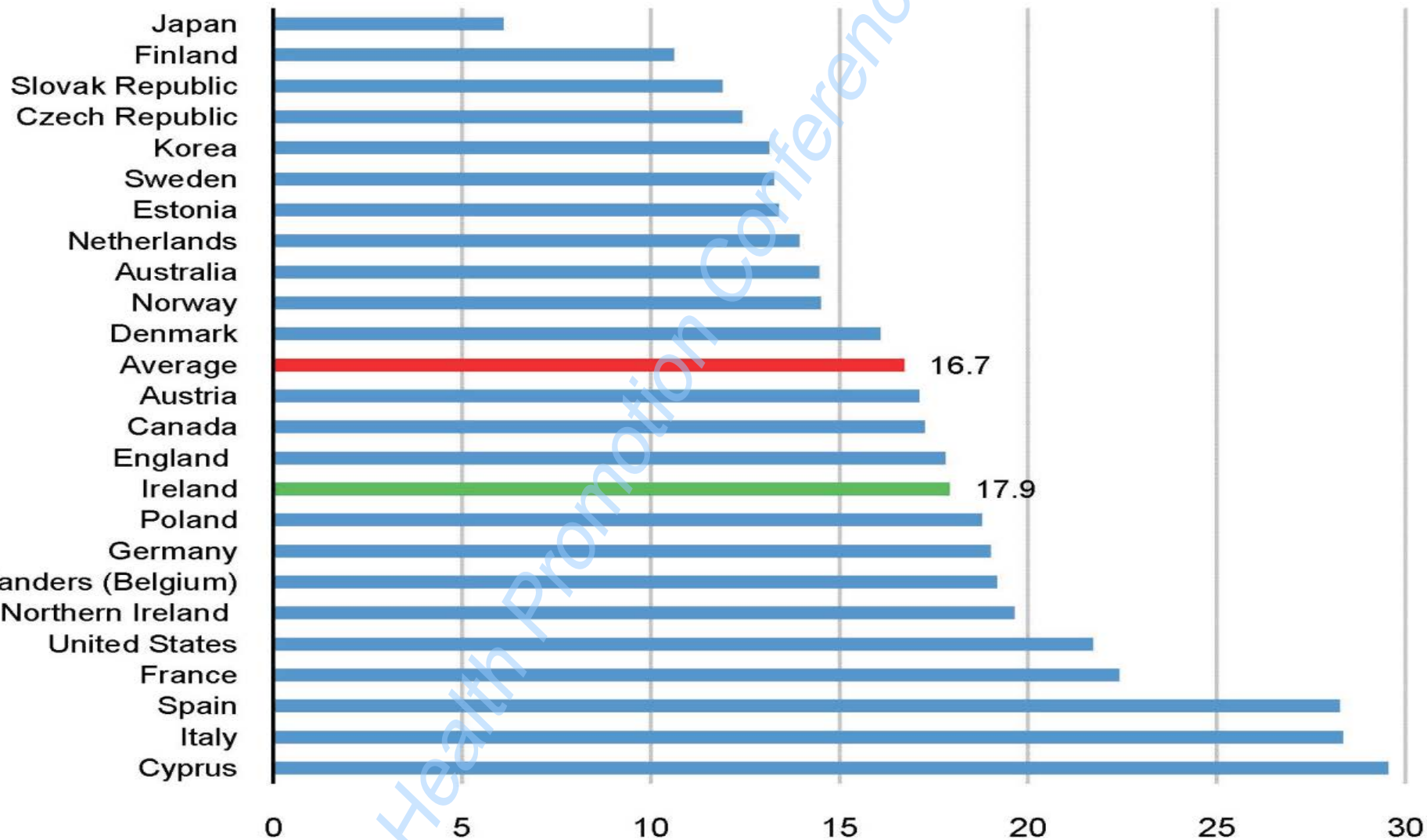


NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Results for literacy

Figure 2.1
Percentage of adults (16-65) at or below Level 1 of literacy proficiency



Example

How much
sugar is in
this pot of
yogurt?

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 30 g
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 15 **Calories from Fat** 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 35mg **1%**

Potassium 0mg **0%**

Total Carbohydrate 2g **1%**

Dietary Fiber 0g **0%**

Soluble Fiber 0g

Insoluble Fiber 0g

Sugars 1g

Protein 2g

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 0% • Iron 0%

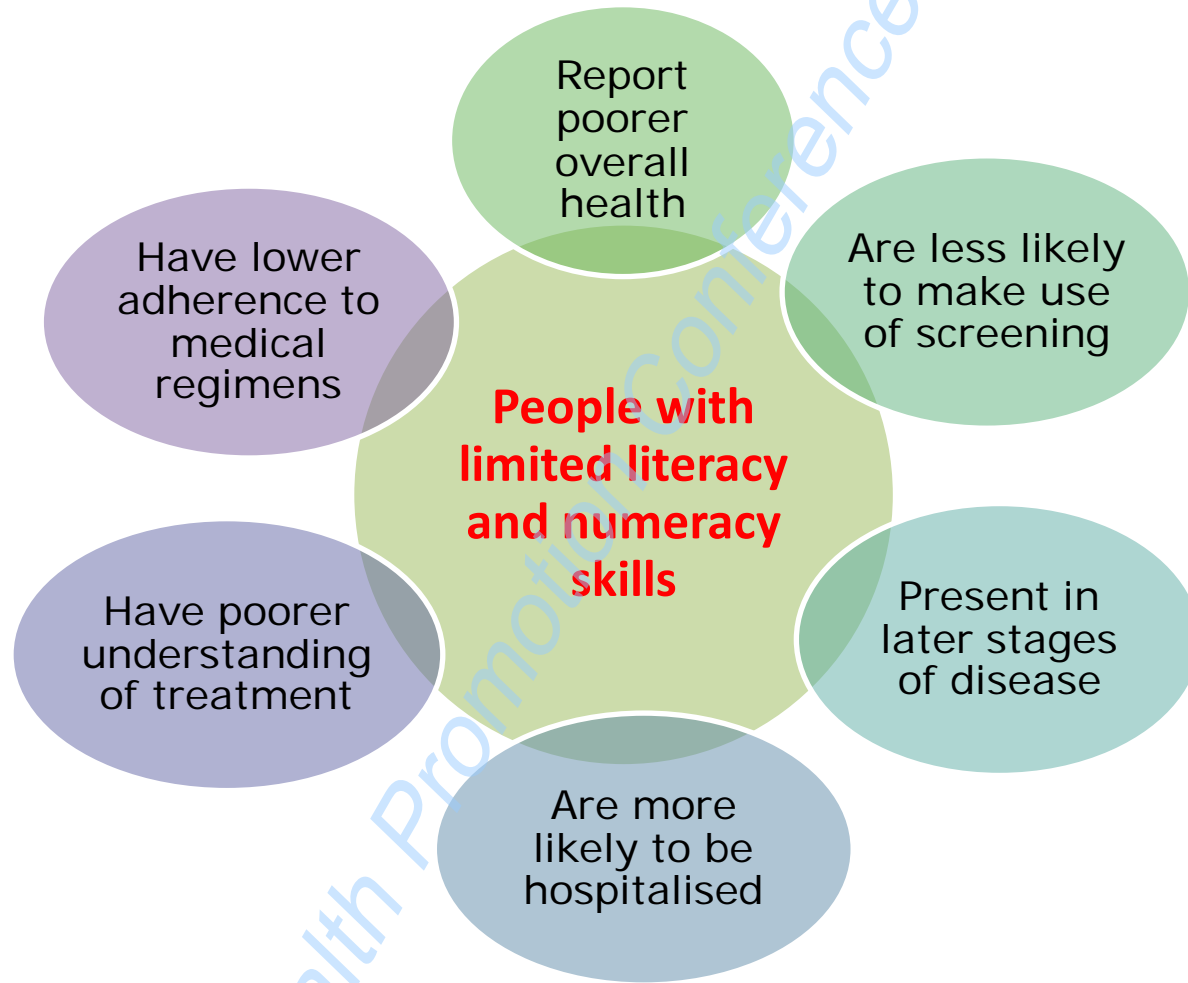
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000
calorie diet.



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Why is health literacy important?



Reference: Rima Rudd, NALA Health and Literacy Conference, 2002

NALA's HL role

Promoting health literacy in policy & practice 2000

Health Literacy Advisory Panel 2010

Health Literacy Action Plan

2013 - 2016



NALA

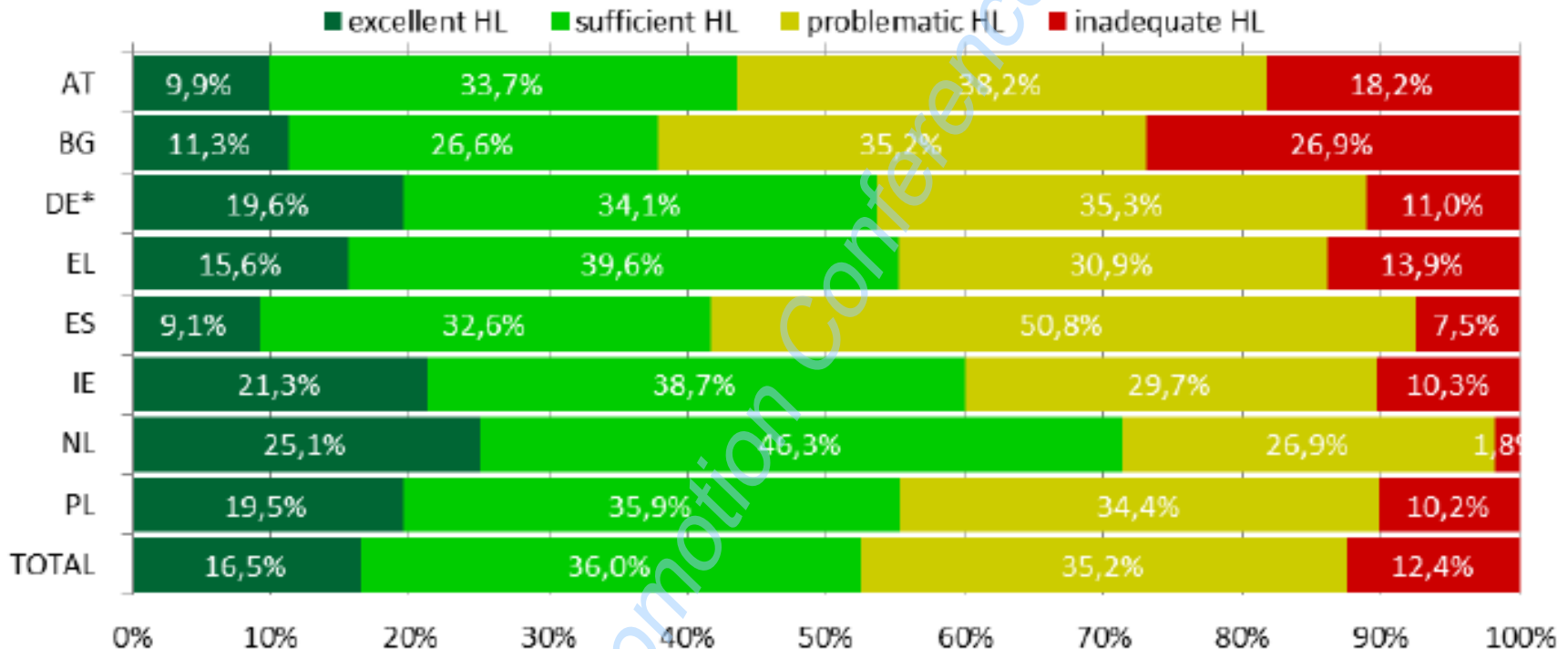
National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

History

- Health Promotion Strategy 2000-2005 acknowledges impact of poor literacy skills on access to health information and services
- 300 HCP trained in literacy awareness & PE
- DoH funded NALA to produce Health Literacy Policy and Strategy (2002)
- Health literacy teaching packs (2004)
- Awards & research sponsored by MSD (2007)
- Health Literacy Audit with HSE (2009)



EU Health Literacy Survey



10.3% had inadequate health literacy

29.7% had problematic health literacy

Limited health literacy rate 40%



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Health Literacy Advisory Panel

The Panel consists of organisations working in healthcare who are interested in advancing actions and strategies to improve health literacy in their own organisation and influencing a national health literacy policy.

Members include:

- the HSE Health Promotion and Improvement and Social Inclusion Units
- Irish Cancer Society
- Irish Hospice Foundation
- Temple Street Children's University Hospital
- University College Cork and University College Dublin
- Merck Sharpe and Dohme (MSD)



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Government Commitment

Healthy Ireland is a new national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of our country over the coming generation (2013 – 2025).
Supported by HI Council.



It contains the first ever Government commitment to health literacy:

“Address and prioritise health literacy in developing future policy, educational and information interventions”

Framework is available here:
<http://bit.ly/1i1tFCv>

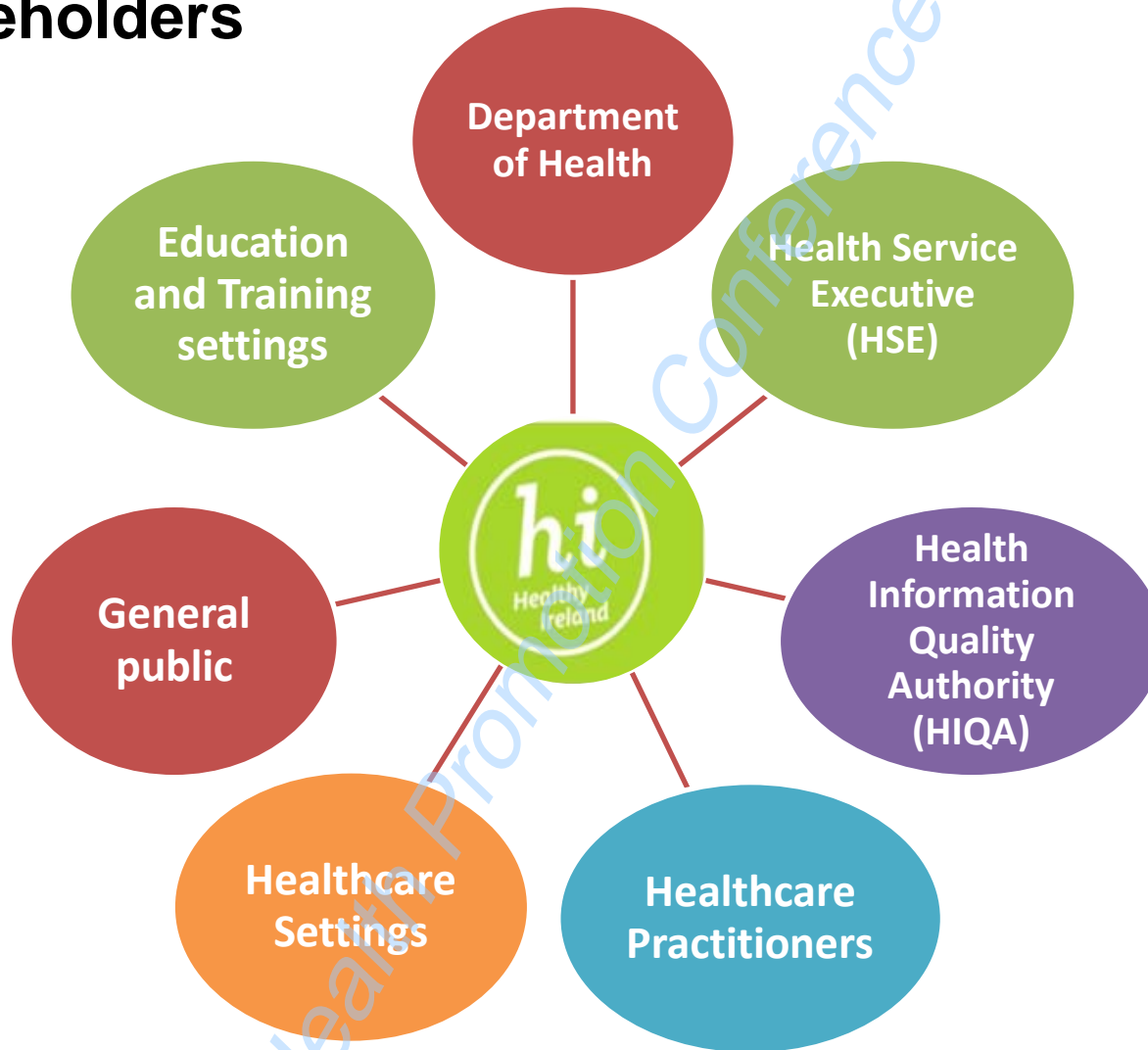


NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Health Literacy Action Plan

7 stakeholders



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Strategies to promote health literacy

Capacity building / awareness raising

- Train healthcare workers at all levels
- Use plain English, numbers and speaking
- Use the right medium to communicate
- Produce tailored, targeted programmes to promote health literacy

Knowledge development

- Develop the idea of health literacy
- Improve how we measure health literacy levels and promote that information
- Identify best practices in health literacy
- Conduct more cost benefit studies of health literacy

Building partnerships and cooperation

- Integrating health literacy into all national health campaigns and screening projects – cancer screening
- Development of strategic partnerships



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Becoming literacy-friendly



A **literacy audit** is a snapshot of your organisation and how it addresses literacy issues in policies and procedures, communications and staff training and development.

A **literacy audit** looks at:

- What you already do to support people who have literacy and numeracy difficulties; and
- What you could do better to support them.



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Current work

Training for healthcare professionals (HCPs)

Since 2014, we have facilitated health literacy workshops for:

- HSE nursing staff
- Irish Pharmacy Union – four sessions in Dublin, Cork and Limerick
- South Dublin County Council Health and Wellbeing Week
- Royal College of Physicians of Ireland – May and October
- HIQA – guidance documents and video

Literacy Audits – now online and simplified

- Tolco Clinic (HSE Addiction Services Treatment Clinic)
- Irish Cancer Society – research project
- Crystal Clear Pharmacy and GP programme sponsored by MSD



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Conclusion

- New (ish) concept in Ireland
- Most activity to date at practice level
- New policy context – action plan exists
- Challenge remains how this will be realised within the HSE roll out
- Lobbying for policy and its implementation is a trajectory and needs to be critically followed



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Further information

Sandford Lodge

Sandford Close

Ranelagh

Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 412 7900

Email: ibailey@nala.ie

Website: www.nala.ie

Crystal Clear Audit Tool: www.nala.ie/crystalclear

Plain English: www.simplyput.ie

Family: www.helpmykidlearn.ie



<http://facebook.com/nalairland>



<http://twitter.com/nalairland>



<http://www.youtube.com/user/nationaladulterac>



HelpMyKidLearn.ie



NALA

National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Please – no more jargon, small print or gobbledygook!

Sign our petition
at www.nala.ie



National Adult Literacy Agency
Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

Dear Taoiseach,

Both citizens and governments benefit from clear information, written in plain English. Citizens are more likely to understand their rights and governments are more likely to make better use of their resources.

That's why we recommend that all public information produced by Government and its agencies is written in plain English.

Our petition calls for public information such as letters, forms and documents to be written in plain English. This means:

- using **everyday words** where possible;
- explaining specialised words if they can't be avoided;
- keeping sentences to about **15 to 20 words**; and
- using a readable font type and size.



Inez Bailey

Director

National Adult Literacy Agency