

National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)
12/10/2022

Question: What progress do you feel has been made in reducing poverty and social exclusion since publication of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 in January 2020?

As detailed in pages 11–12 in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 Progress Report (September 2022), progress is mixed against the stated targets.

Adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs can be most marginalised from many areas of the economy and society. In September 2021, the government launched a 10-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy: Adult Literacy for Life with 11 agreed target groups. Over a year later, we are waiting to see an implementation plan, additional targeted resources and staff to be appointed in the programme office. Progress is slow and we are anxious to see this moving quicker from the end of 2022.

In the Roadmap (on page 35) there was a commitment to “improve financial management and literacy, particularly among low income families” by “exploring the options for a programme of financial education for people on low incomes with a view to launching such a programme”. This has not progressed.

Question: In your experience, what has worked well in reducing the number of people in Ireland experiencing poverty and social exclusion?

In adult literacy, three areas have worked well over the last number of years:

1. Promoting adult literacy services through national and local awareness campaigns and breaking down the stigma and fear about returning to literacy learning.
2. Providing relevant and accessible learning opportunities to adults with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs – before COVID-19 there were 65,000 people attending adult literacy services in Ireland. In 2021, 40,000 adults are getting literacy support locally.
3. Ensuring that services are delivered in a literacy-friendly way by using Plain Language, Universal Design and multi-channel offerings not digital first.

Question: And in your experience, what has not worked so well or is challenging in reducing the number of people in Ireland experiencing poverty and social exclusion?

1. Lack of and delay in an implementation plan, effective awareness campaign, ringfenced funding and recruitment of staff for the 10-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy.
2. Need for greater collaboration and innovation nationally and locally to support adults to return to literacy learning.
3. Lack of tailored, intensive and holistic literacy supports to meet the person’s literacy development needs where they are at.
4. Lack of other supports such as income support (if unemployed) and paid learning leave (if in work), transport, child and elder care, technology and work placement.
5. Lack of basic skills literacy, numeracy and digital skills curricula and frameworks that would allow adults to pursue formal and informal learning leading to accreditation and recognition of prior learning.
6. Lack of targeted, integrated supports based on existing socio-economic and geographic data held by various government and state agencies.

Question: What would you like to see prioritised in terms of moving people out of poverty and social exclusion, up to the end of the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 in 2025.

1. Develop implementation plan for the 10-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy.
2. All adults with literacy, numeracy and digital needs and or less than a QQI Level 4 qualification have access to a high quality, relevant, intensive and flexible learning programme that meets the

person's literacy development needs. Offer tailored and holistic supports for adults who are long-term unemployed including where appropriate, career guidance, counselling and mentoring.

3. Adults in literacy courses should be able to access supports such as income support (if unemployed) and paid learning leave (if in work), transport, child and elder care, technology, work placement where appropriate and progression opportunities.

4. State-funded targeted paid learning leave to employees with unmet literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs working in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and community and voluntary sector organisations where the employer does not have the capacity to pay for this.

Question: If there are any specific aims, ambitions, commitments or targets in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 that you would like to comment on, please provide details. This can include identifying gaps in what is included in the Roadmap, or any other comments you may have.

The Roadmap does not have an adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy target.

The 10-year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy: Adult Literacy for Life has targets and the Roadmap should include these:

Literacy: Decrease the share of adults in Ireland with unmet literacy needs, that is PIAAC Level 1 or below, from 18% to 7%.

Numeracy: Decrease the share of adults in Ireland with unmet numeracy needs, that is PIAAC Level 1 or below, from 25% to 12%.

Digital literacy: Decrease the share of adults in Ireland without basic digital skills from 47% to 20% (as measured by DESI).

Question: The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025 includes 7 high-level goals. Please indicate below which of these goals are most relevant to your participation in the Mid-Term Review.

Build inclusive communities – encourage active citizenship;

Ensure that all people have access to quality services

Question: Which county are you located in?

Dublin

Question: Are you responding on a personal basis or on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

Question: Which organisation are you responding on behalf of?

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