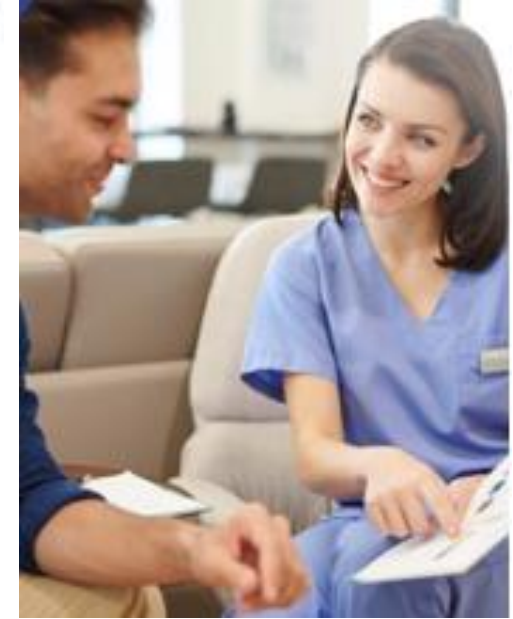




**Adult
Literacy
for Life**



Let's talk about health literacy

during Health Literacy Month

October 2024



In this briefing, you will find information on:

1	Why health literacy is important	1 slide
2	Recent research on health literacy	2 slides
3	October is health literacy month	1 slide
4	New health literacy courses	4 slides
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1. Why health literacy is important

Health literacy is about finding, understanding and using information to promote and maintain good health.

We need **strong health literacy** skills to:

Understand health condition/s, treatment and decisions

Ask questions and get the best from our health and social care services

Navigate your way around the health and social care services

Stay healthy, make informed choices and live longer

2. Recent research on health literacy

Omnibus survey, November 2023



17% of adults in Ireland **understand little information** from their GP (doctor), nurse or pharmacist.

Embarrassment was the main reason for not asking for explanation (42%).



33% of people would **only sometimes ask** GP (doctor), nurse or pharmacist to explain when they do not understand.

38% of people have taken the **wrong dose** of medication at least once.



Source: SOLAS Adult Literacy for Life (2023). [Omnibus survey](#) results from Coyne Research



**Adult
Literacy
for Life**

Comparing data with similar survey in 2015

Results in 2023 from Omnibus survey	Results in 2015 from NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) survey
17% of adults in Ireland understand little information from their GP (family doctor), nurse or pharmacist.	5% of Irish people understand little information from their healthcare person.
33% of people would only sometimes ask GP (family doctor), nurse or pharmacist to explain when they do not understand.	17% of people would only sometimes ask GP (family doctor), nurse or pharmacist to explain when they do not understand.
Embarrassment was the main reason for not asking for explanation (42%).	Embarrassment was the main reason for not asking for explanation (24%).
38% of people have taken the wrong dose of medication at least once.	17% of people have taken the wrong dose of medication at least once.

3. October is health literacy month

This is an annual event worldwide when organisations and individuals raise awareness about health literacy and the importance of understandable health information.

You can read more about health literacy month from the Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) in the United States

<https://healthliteracymonth.org/hlm/hlm-home>



*Clear communication for better health understanding.
Happy Health Literacy Month!*



Let's Talk about Health Literacy

Select the Start button to begin.

Start >



Let's Talk About a Literacy Friendly Approach in Healthcare

Select the Start button to begin.

Start >



4. New health literacy courses

About the courses

	Course 1 Let's talk about health literacy	Course 2 Let's talk about using a literacy friendly approach in healthcare
Audience	Everyone who uses health and social care services	Health and social care professionals.
Link	https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware/lets-talk-about-health-literacy-course	https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware/lets-talk-about-literacy-friendly-approach-course
Length	25 minutes	40 minutes
Aim	To introduce health literacy and the needs and experiences of people using health services with health literacy needs.	To become literacy aware and respond sensitively to unmet literacy needs in the health care setting.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is health literacy?• What is a literacy friendly health service?• Tips when using health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is a literacy friendly approach in healthcare• Tips for using a literacy friendly approach

Content includes:

- **Interview with a literacy ambassador** who shares first-hand experience of the challenges you face when using health services.
- **Interviews with health staff** working in the hospital, community and general practice. They share guidance on how staff can use a literacy friendly approach to support people with unmet literacy needs.
- A **range of interactive exercises and scenarios** to help you become more literacy aware in health and social care.
- **Tips and tools** looking at responding sensitively, using plain language and using teach back.

Please help us to promote the new courses.



Course 1: For the public

<https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware/lets-talk-about-health-literacy-course>



Course 2: For health and social care staff

<https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware/lets-talk-about-literacy-friendly-approach-course>

5. Sample social posts you can use

“When you do not understand health information, it can really impact a person’s wellbeing.”



Michael

Literacy Ambassador



“We cannot assume people understand everything we tell them.”



Catriona

HSE Mid-West



Sample social posts to raise awareness

1 Let's talk about health literacy this October.

We deal with a lot of health information such as hospital letters, medical forms and working out medication. Health literacy skills are essential in life.

Be literacy aware:

https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/f/120607/x/f3563b2697/162434_all_factsheet_health.pdf

#AdultLiteracyForLife

#HealthLiteracyMatters

"When you do not understand health information, it can really impact a person's wellbeing."

Michael
Literacy Ambassador



2 Did you know that 38% of people have taken the wrong dose of medication at least once. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist on how to take your medication.

See more on research here:

<https://www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/f/120607/x/fddcdabaaa/health-literacy-research-pdf.pdf>

#AdultLiteracyForLife

#HealthLiteracyMatters

"We cannot assume people understand everything we tell them."

Catriona
HSE Mid-West



Sample social posts to promote courses

1 Would you like to brush up on your health literacy skills?

We have a new 25-minute online course [#LetsTalkAboutHealthLiteracy](#) here:
www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware/lets-talk-about-health-literacy-course/
[#HealthLiteracyMatters](#) for good healthcare.

[#AdultLiteracyForLife](#)



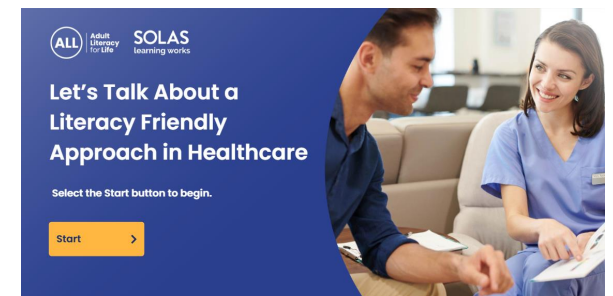
2 For health and social care staff, we have a new short online course on using a [#LiteracyFriendly](#) approach in healthcare.

You can directly access this online 40-minute course here:

www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware/lets-talk-about-literacy-friendly-approach-course/

[#AdultLiteracyForLife](#)

[#HealthLiteracyMatters](#)



Please use these creative assets to promote the health literacy courses.

“When you do not understand health information, it can really impact a person’s wellbeing.”

Michael
Literacy Ambassador



“When health services use a literacy friendly approach, it is better for everyone.”

Catherine
Healthy Communities Project Coordinator



“We cannot assume people understand everything we tell them.”

Catriona
HSE Mid-West



“Health literacy is about using simple language.”

Austin
Family doctor



We attach these 4 files in high resolution.



Help to share our “Let’s talk about health literacy” message

far and wide and encourage people to do the courses at

www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware



Share your message with your network and tag us on social media.



SOLAS X (Twitter) handle: @SOLASFET

SOLAS LinkedIn handle: @SOLAS(AntSeirbhís
OideachaisLeanúnaighagusScileanna)



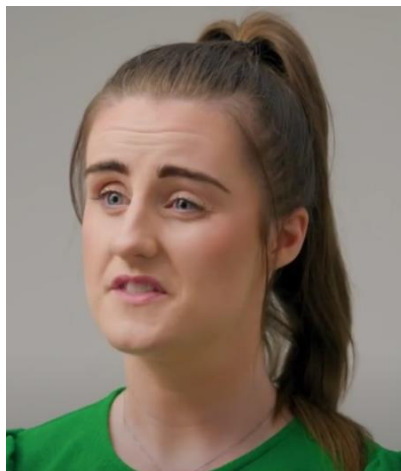
Please use our hashtag in your posts.

#AdultLiteracyForLife

#HealthLiteracyMatters



6. Let's talk to...



Let's talk to Michael



The impact of health
literacy needs



SOLAS
learning works

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnFFO4mIV1I>



Let's talk to Catherine



Health literacy matters



SOLAS
learning works

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E4NtnNRSHs&t=6s>

Let's talk to Catriona about using a literacy friendly approach



Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eL2-8S4ASXc>

Let's talk to Sean about using a universal precautions approach



Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGr8gRsdolc>

Let's talk to Catriona about using plain language



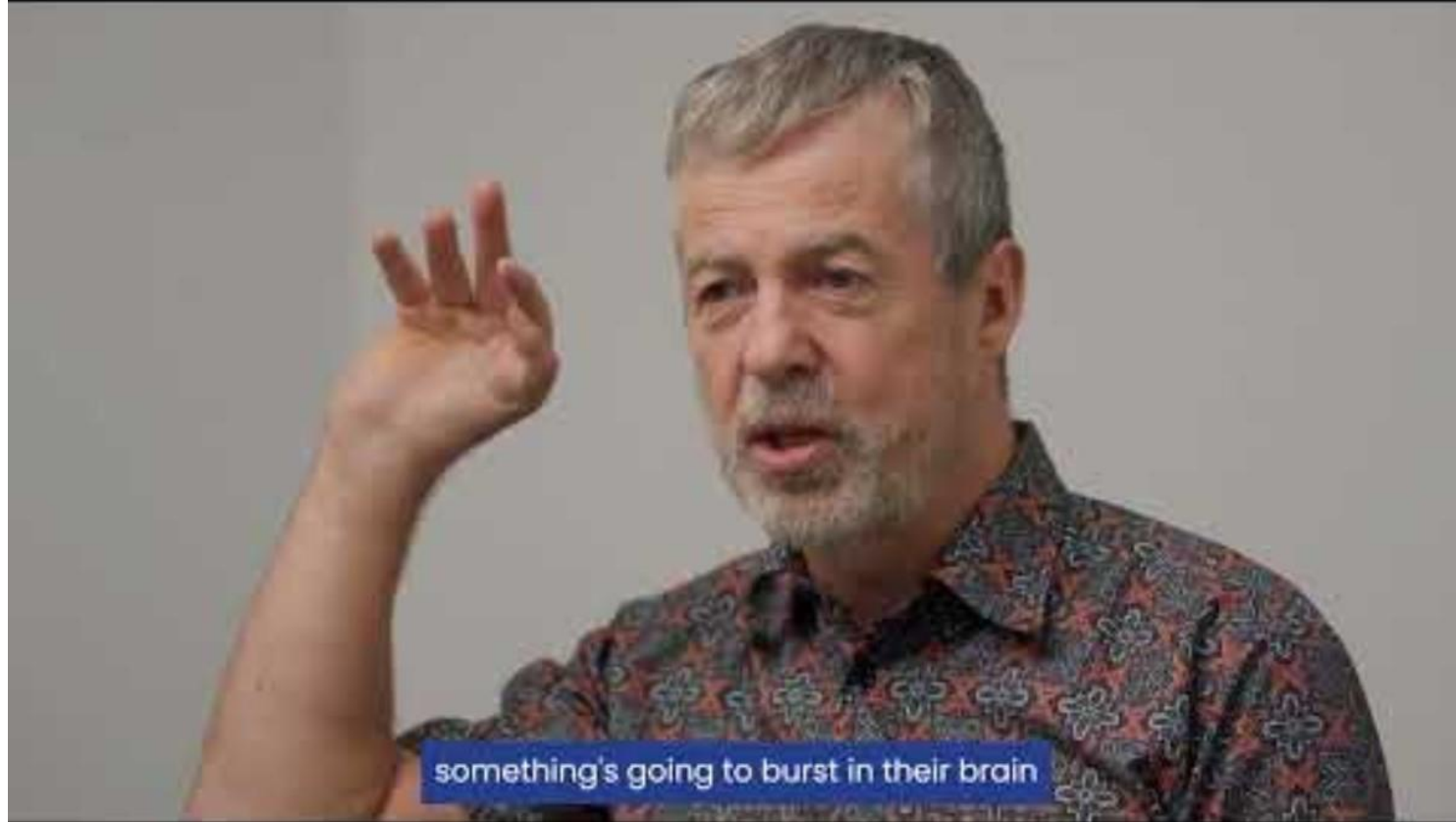
Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vEB8yAdRFU>

Let's talk to Austin about health literacy in general practice



Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdsM8FhHUBA&t=75s>

Let's talk to Austin about supporting a literacy friendly approach in practice



Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO9LHVILMPA>

Let's watch teach-back in practice



Link to video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFNfRz5_t3M&t=36s

Let's talk about health literacy with...

Using a literacy friendly approach

"We cannot assume people understand everything we tell them."



Catriona

HSE Mid-West



Watch [Catriona's video online here.](#)

Health literacy matters

"When health services use a literacy friendly approach, it is better for everyone."



Catherine

Healthy Communities Project Coordinator



Watch [Catherine's video online here.](#)

The impact of health literacy needs

"When you do not understand health information, it can really impact a person's wellbeing."



Michael

Literacy Ambassador



Watch [Michael's video online here.](#)

Health literacy in general practice

"Health literacy is about using simple language."



Austin

Family doctor



Watch [Austin's video online here.](#)

7. Resources

Let's talk about health literacy factsheet



Let's talk about health literacy

Health literacy is about finding, understanding and using information to promote and maintain good health.



Clear communication supports health literacy and gives a better health and social care experience for everyone. This includes listening and speaking, reading and understanding, numbers and digital health literacy.

Health literacy needs in Ireland

Research shows that 28% of Irish adults have limited health literacy. This is over 1 million people.

Limited health literacy means that people

- Are not using health services.
- Have less knowledge about their health and treatment.
- Go to their doctor and emergency services more often.



The Adult Literacy for Life programme office presents two short eLearning courses on health literacy.

- Course 1 is for the public.
- Course 2 is for health and social care professionals.

www.adultliteracyforlife.ie/aware



Literacy friendly approach in healthcare means

1. **Being aware** of and **taking account** of unmet health literacy, numeracy and digital literacy needs.
2. **Removing** literacy related **barriers** where possible.
3. **Communicating** clearly using plain language and universal design.
4. **Promoting** literacy and lifelong learning opportunities if appropriate.



Tips for being literacy friendly

Tip 1	Tip 2	Tip 3
Be aware and respond sensitively	Use plain language	Check for understanding
<p>You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support people when they are filling in forms.• Use a highlighter pen to mark out important information.• Offer to go through a booklet or leaflet with them.• Use open-ended questions.• Allow for extra time with someone where needed.	<p>Plain language is a style of presenting information that helps someone understand it the first time they read or hear it.</p> <p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use active verbs.• Avoid jargon.• Be consistent.• Break up text with bullet lists.• Use sans serif font such as Arial.	<p>Teach back is a tool to check that people understand what you have said.</p> <p>Three steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Explain one point.2. Check the person's understanding by asking them to repeat back what you have said in their own words.3. If the person has understood, then explain the next point.

More information
<https://www.nhcprogramme.ie/>

More information
www.nala.ie/publications/writing-and-design-tips/

More information
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDQoApTFDMs>



Health literacy research information sheet

September 2024



Health literacy research

The Adult Literacy for Life Programme office commissioned health literacy research in 2023.

The findings found that:

- 17%** of adults in Ireland **understand little information** from their GP (family doctor), nurse or pharmacist.
- 33%** of people would **only sometimes ask GP (family doctor), nurse or pharmacist** to explain when they do not understand.
- Embarrassment** was the main reason for not asking for explanation (**42%**).
- 38%** of people have **taken the wrong dose of medication** at least once.

Reference for research: SOLAS Adult Literacy for Life (2023). Omnibus Survey results from Coyne Research











Comparing data with similar survey in 2015

Results in 2023 from Omnibus survey	Results in 2015 from NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) survey
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38% of people have taken the wrong dose of medication at least once.	17% of people have taken the wrong dose of medication at least once.

About this research

- Coyne Research carried out a nationally representative survey with a sample of 1,000 adults aged 18+.
- People took the survey online.
- Quotas were placed on the number of interviews achieved in each demographic grouping (age, gender, region and social class) to ensure it matched the Irish population.
- All fieldwork was conducted between the 10 – 21 November 2023.
- The survey questions were the same as asked in a similar survey in 2015. The results compares the 2015 data conducted by telephone surveys and online surveys conducted in 2023. As such, some questions are not comparable.

Find out more about Adult Literacy for Life here:
www.adultliteracyforlife.ie

Thanks for your time and support.



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