



The Voice of  
Adult Learning



# Communications Toolkit

AONTAS

Adult Learners' Festival

1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021

#BetterTogether



# Communications Toolkit 2021

## Be part of the 2021 AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival will take place from 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021. While we usually encourage adult learning providers throughout Ireland to open their centre doors for free open days, events and workshops, this year will look a little different as we adapt to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions in place. This year, we will run our first ever virtual Adult Learners' Festival online.

By building partnerships and working together at local and national levels, we will send a strong message of hope to Ireland's Adult Learning sector and promote the importance of Educational Equality and Mitigating Educational Disadvantage in a time of COVID-19.

The theme of this year's festival is "Building Back Better Together - #BetterTogether". While we can't come together for our usual in-person events, we are excited to collaborate with our members and organisations in the sector to deliver an exciting calendar of virtual events and opportunities to engage online.

Join us and get involved – this is your week to highlight the incredible work that your organisation does, so let us join together to raise the profile of adult learning across Ireland.



We encourage you to host your own event for the festival. This toolkit is designed to be a practical resource to help you promote your virtual festival events.

## Why You Should Get Involved

The Festival is a wonderful opportunity to get involved in a national celebration of adult learning and to promote your organisation. By holding an event as part of the Adult Learners' Festival and submitting it on the [One Step Up](#) website you:

- Highlight your organisation's work and commitment to adult learning
- Raise awareness about adult learning opportunities in your local area and encourage adults to take the first step back to learning
- Put your organisation on the map and gain national exposure. As part of the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival we will share and promote your events across our communications channels which had a reach of over 5.2 million in 2020.

## AONTAS Programme of Events

We encourage you to regularly check the [One Step Up calendar](#) and AONTAS social media channels for updates on Festival activities. AONTAS is organising a series of online events from Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> – Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> March. These events are organised in line with a theme per day:

- Monday – Sustainable Development through Education
- Tuesday – Learner Voice
- Wednesday – Health & Wellbeing
- Thursday – Social Inclusion
- Friday – Third-level Access and Engagement

Key National Events taking place include:

- The **AONTAS STAR Awards 2021 Celebration** (For more information about the 21 adult learning projects shortlisted for the STAR Awards 2021, please click [here](#).)
- The **AONTAS Policy Day - A Shared Vision for Educational Equality** - which will bring together the members of the **Network for Adult Learning Across Borders (NALAB)**. The Policy Day event will take place on **Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021** on Zoom from 11.00am to 1.00pm and will be the closing event of the Festival. To register your attendance, please click [here](#).

# Organising Your Event

The challenges we face to organise a successful event have changed as we have moved to work and learn remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding these challenges, AONTAS has provided a Step-by-Step guide to organising a virtual event and some ideas for themes around which your event could focus.

## Organising Your Event - A Step-by-Step Guide

### 1. Decide on the theme

The theme of the Festival is "Better Together". However, you may choose any theme you wish for your event. We encourage participants to build on their existing partnerships and work together at local and national levels to send a strong message of hope to Ireland's Adult Learning sector.

### 2. Develop a timeline for the event

Generally, AONTAS events last between 30 minutes and 1 hour 30 minutes. It's important to consider making time for tea breaks or breaking up the time with discussion "breakout rooms". This leaves space for feedback and comments.

### 3. Presenters and Resources

Who will lead the event - someone on your team or somebody external? Consider what resources, if any, should be shared with attendees before, during or after the event. Also consider which platform you will use to host your event eg Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams.

### 4. Registration

How will learners register their attendance - by email, phone or using a website like Eventbrite? Be sure to include this information in your promotion.

### 5. Promotion

To make your event part of the Festival, please add it to the One Step Up Calendar: [www.onestepup.ie/calendar/submit](http://www.onestepup.ie/calendar/submit).



## Some Virtual Festival Event Ideas include:

- Open Days/Information sessions
- Demonstration/"taster" sessions of courses
- Open coffee/tea mornings
- Talent shows
- "Steps" challenges
- Stress reduction workshops
- Quizzes
- Facebook live events

If you're involved in an organisation that coordinates learning activities or courses, why not hold an event as part of the festival to showcase your work? You can organise a broad variety of events and activities and make sure your activity is tailored to the needs of your organisation. Below are some resources and ideas to support your Festival event organisation.

## Festival Event Ideas

### Coffee/Tea Catch Up

Organising a simple coffee/tea catch up with learners is a great way to connect during the Festival. AONTAS member organisation Mental Health Ireland provide a useful resource to host a virtual "Connect Café". The goal of the café is to open up conversations about how we connect, strengthening the connection with ourselves, with others and with our community. You can access the resource by clicking [here](#) or visiting [www.mentalhealthireland.ie](http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie).



### Practising Critical Thinking Skills

Adult learning programmes often provide opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, empowering learners to engage in critical thinking. The "Bad News" game is a fun and creative teaching tool which helps to encourage critical thinking skills. The game puts players in the position of people who create disinformation so they gain insight to the various tactics and methods used by "real" fake news-mongers to spread their message, building up resistance against disinformation. Visit [www.getbadnews.com/#intro](http://www.getbadnews.com/#intro) to learn more and to access the game.



## Communicating Europe Initiative: "Adult Learning and Global Citizenship: Sustaining European Cohesion and Challenging the Politics of Fear"

You may also consider sharing AONTAS' resources produced as part of the Communicating Europe Initiative including a short animation. To access the animation and other helpful resources, click [here](#).



## Building Learners' Digital Capacities

Age Actions' "Getting Started KIT" supports older people to keep in touch with their loved ones during the COVID-19 pandemic, combatting the effects of social distancing, particularly for those impacted by cocooning. Click [here](#) to learn more.



## Understanding the Sustainable Development Goals

Development Perspectives, with whom AONTAS partners on the Saolta Project, offer a fantastic library of resources on development education topics. This includes a workbook for Further Education institutions on "Understanding the Sustainable Development Goals". This workbook has been developed specifically by Further Education tutors and contains a number of tasks, quizzes and group exercises aiming to build awareness of the SDGs in an Irish context. Visit [www.developmentperspectives.ie/saolta-resources](http://www.developmentperspectives.ie/saolta-resources) to access this free resource and more.



# Join the Conversation Online

## Social Media Photo Challenge

Help us to spread a little positivity and the value of adult learning online. Tell us what or how you are learning during the current restrictions. Follow the steps below to join the conversation.

**STEP 1: Snap a picture of something that shows what or how you are learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



**STEP 2: Post the picture on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn, tag AONTAS and use the festival hashtag - #BetterTogether**

**STEP 3: Look out for others sharing their pictures and support their learning with a "like", a "share" or a "retweet"!**



### Want to take over AONTAS' Social Media?

We are inviting AONTAS members to take part in a social media "takeover"! In 2020, AONTAS' social media content reached over 3 million Facebook and Twitter users. By being part of this member "takeover", you have the opportunity to share the fantastic work of your organisation and raise the voice of your learners to AONTAS' followers.

If you are interested to learn more or to take part, please email Emma O'Kane, AONTAS Social Media Officer: [eokane@aontas.com](mailto:eokane@aontas.com) for more information.

# Use our FREE Promotional Materials to Support Your Event

AONTAS has designed a range of FREE promotional material that can be used to support your adult learning event.

- Click [here](#) to download a free Promotional poster
- Click [here](#) to download a Festival styled PowerPoint Template file which may be used during virtual events.
- You might like to use the images below to promote your event and festival participation. Please click on the images to download a copy for your own use.

## Email footer



## Social Media Cover Photo



## Twitter Graphic



## Facebook graphic



## Contact Us:

Keep in touch with all the latest Adult Learners' Festival news and find out more here: [www.aontas.com/community/adult-learners-festival/](http://www.aontas.com/community/adult-learners-festival/).

For more information on how you can get involved in the Festival please contact Katie O'Rourke, AONTAS Head of Communications:

- Email: [korourke@aontas.com](mailto:korourke@aontas.com)
- Phone: 01 406 8220

## About AONTAS

AONTAS is the National Adult Learning Organisation. Its mission is to advocate for the right of all adults in Ireland to quality learning throughout their lives, and to promote the value and benefits of lifelong learning. AONTAS has nearly 400 members including Education and Training Boards, community education centres, further education institutions and individual members. Visit [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com) for more information.

