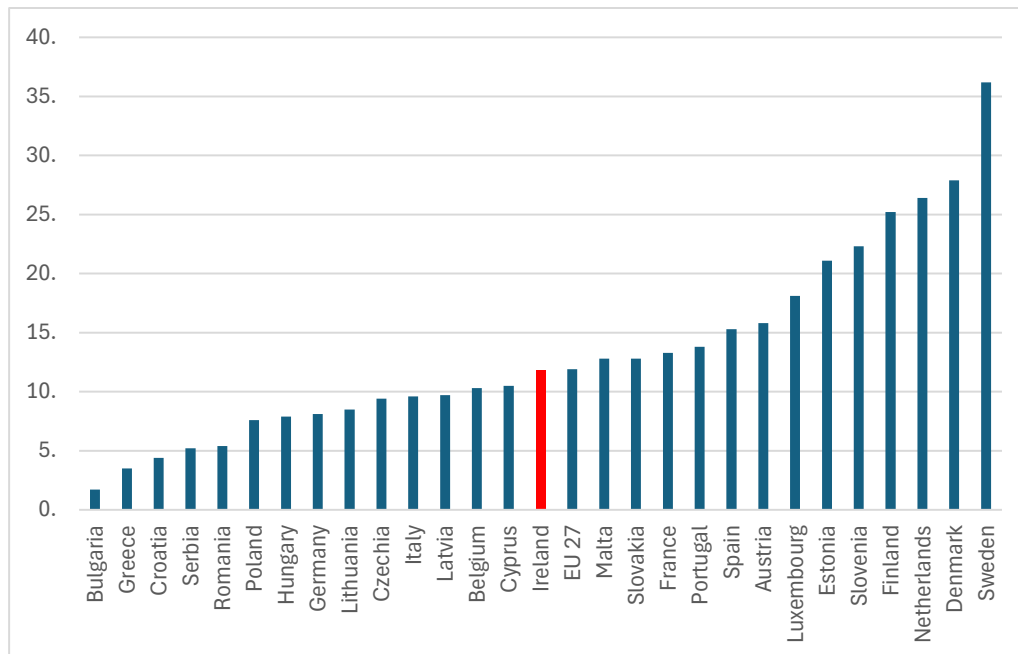


Education and Skills

Chart 3.1: EU-27 Lifelong Learning Participation Rates, 2022



Source: Eurostat (2023), Social Justice Ireland Socio-economic Review: a 2024 guide to a fairer Irish society.

Table 3.2: Financial literacy and attitudes score.

Member State	Financial Literacy Score (out of 100)	Financial Attitudes Score (out of 100)
Ireland	70	56.9
Croatia	62	35.6
Cyprus	56	16.1
Estonia	67	48.4
Finland	65	45.8
France	62	38.7
Germany	76	75.5
Greece	61	32.1
Hungary	58	22.5
Italy	53	16.6
Latvia	59	32.6
Lithuania	56	23.3
Luxembourg	68	53.1
Malta	68	45.5
Netherlands	64	47.3
Poland	62	34.7
Portugal	63	37.4
Romania	54	20.4
Spain	64	39.2
Sweden	66	50.9
Overall average	60	33.7
OECD Average	63	38.9

Source: Dept of Finance: Financial Literacy in Ireland Evidence Base for a National Strategy

Education and Skills

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning has an important contribution to make to people’s wellbeing, to creating a more inclusive society and to supporting a vibrant and sustainable economy.¹ The non-vocational element of lifelong learning and community education also brings major social and health benefits to participants outside the labour force.

Access to lifelong learning should be an integral part of the education system to address the income and labour market challenges that some members of society face. It also must be accessible and flexible to address the challenges which were identified in the Adult Skills Survey, those of unmet demand and being difficult to access.² Various agencies identify generic skills and key competences as a core element of the lifelong learning framework.³ These include basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, digital competence, language skills, people-related and conceptual skills, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, risk assessment and decision making.

Ireland’s lifelong learning participation rate is slowly improving, standing at 12.8 per cent in 2022 (see Chart 3.1). Our national target is to reach 15 per cent by 2025 as set out in the National Skills Strategy. Lifelong learning rates vary greatly by age and educational attainment, with 20 per cent of those aged 25-34 engaged in lifelong learning compared with

8 per cent of those aged 55-64.⁴ With more people working for longer, and in the context of current unprecedented labour and skill shortages, there is a pressing need to ensure that the talents and skills of a multigenerational workforce are resourced and developed, particularly those of older workers.⁵

Financial Literacy

The recent publication, ‘Financial Literacy in Ireland – Evidence Base for a National Strategy’⁶ found that whilst Ireland performed generally well overall (Table 3.2), those who scored lower on financial knowledge were those unemployed or out of the labour force, those living on low incomes, those with less than secondary education, women and younger people aged 18 – 29. Those who scored lower on financial attitudes were those out of the labour force, on low incomes, those with less than secondary education and aged 18 – 29.

Policy Priorities

- Update our lifelong learning target to reach 20 per cent by 2030, ensuring sufficient resources are made available.
- Introduce financial literacy education to the primary and secondary school curricula.

¹<https://assets.gov.ie/24960/93c455d4440246cf8a701b9e0b0a2d65.pdf>

²<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/aes/adulteducationsurvey2017/>

³<https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/publication-files/digital-transformation-assessing-impact-digitalisation-irelands-workforce.pdf>

⁴https://www.solas.ie/f/70398/x/72a1b9ffde/lifelonglearning2022_final.pdf

⁵<https://www.oecd.org/employment/retaining-talent-at-all-ages-00dbdd06-en.htm>

⁶<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/290810/16ca8875-42db-468e-9c80-efc4c45382e8.pdf#page=null>