
Building Skills for All: A Review of England

Policy insights from the survey of adult skills (OECD)

24 February 2016

Jan Eldred
Senior Research Fellow
Learning and Work Institute



Forum for Adult Learning

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Scotland's Learning Partnership



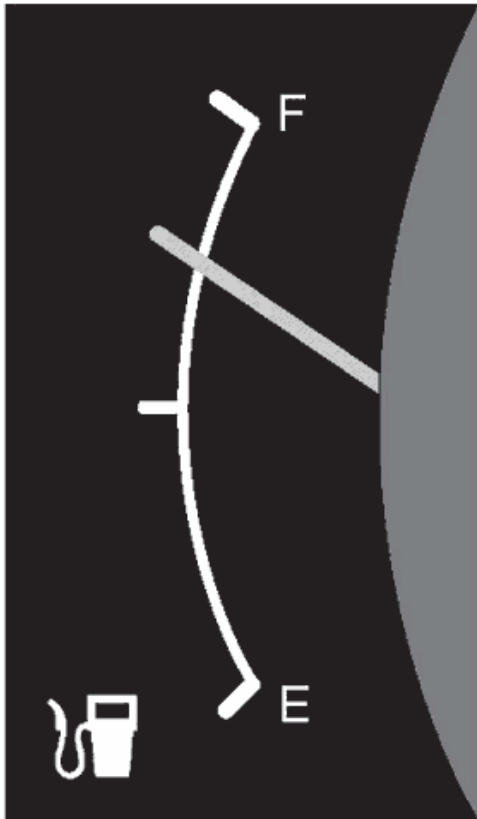
Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

PIAAC – Survey of Adult Skills (2012) England ([OECD slides included](#))

- Methodology: assessment of literacy, (not writing), numeracy, problem solving in technology-rich environments
- Interviews with adults aged 16 to 65 in their homes: 5,000 individuals in each participating country
- Questions via computer, or using pencil-and-paper

What does it mean to have low numeracy?

The petrol tank in this car holds 120 litres



Roughly how many litres remain in the tank?

People with low numeracy skills often find this question difficult

What does it mean to have low literacy?

MEDCO ASPIRIN

500

INDICATIONS: Headaches, muscle pains, rheumatic pains, toothaches, earaches. RELIEVES COMMON COLD SYMPTOMS.

DOSAGE: ORAL. 1 or 2 tablets every 6 hours, preferably accompanied by food, for not longer than 7 days. Store in a cool, dry place.

CAUTION: Do not use for gastritis or peptic ulcer. Do not use if taking anticoagulant drugs. Do not use for serious liver illness or bronchial asthma. If taken in large doses and for an extended period, may cause harm to kidneys. Before using this medication for chicken pox or influenza in children, consult with a doctor about Reyes Syndrome, a rare but serious illness. During lactation and pregnancy, consult with a doctor before using this product, especially in the last trimester of pregnancy. If symptoms persist, or in case of an accidental overdose, consult a doctor. Keep out of reach of children.

INGREDIENTS: Each tablet contains
500 mg acetylsalicylic acid.
Excipient c.b.p. 1 tablet.
Reg. No. 88246



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What is the maximum number of days you should take this medicine?

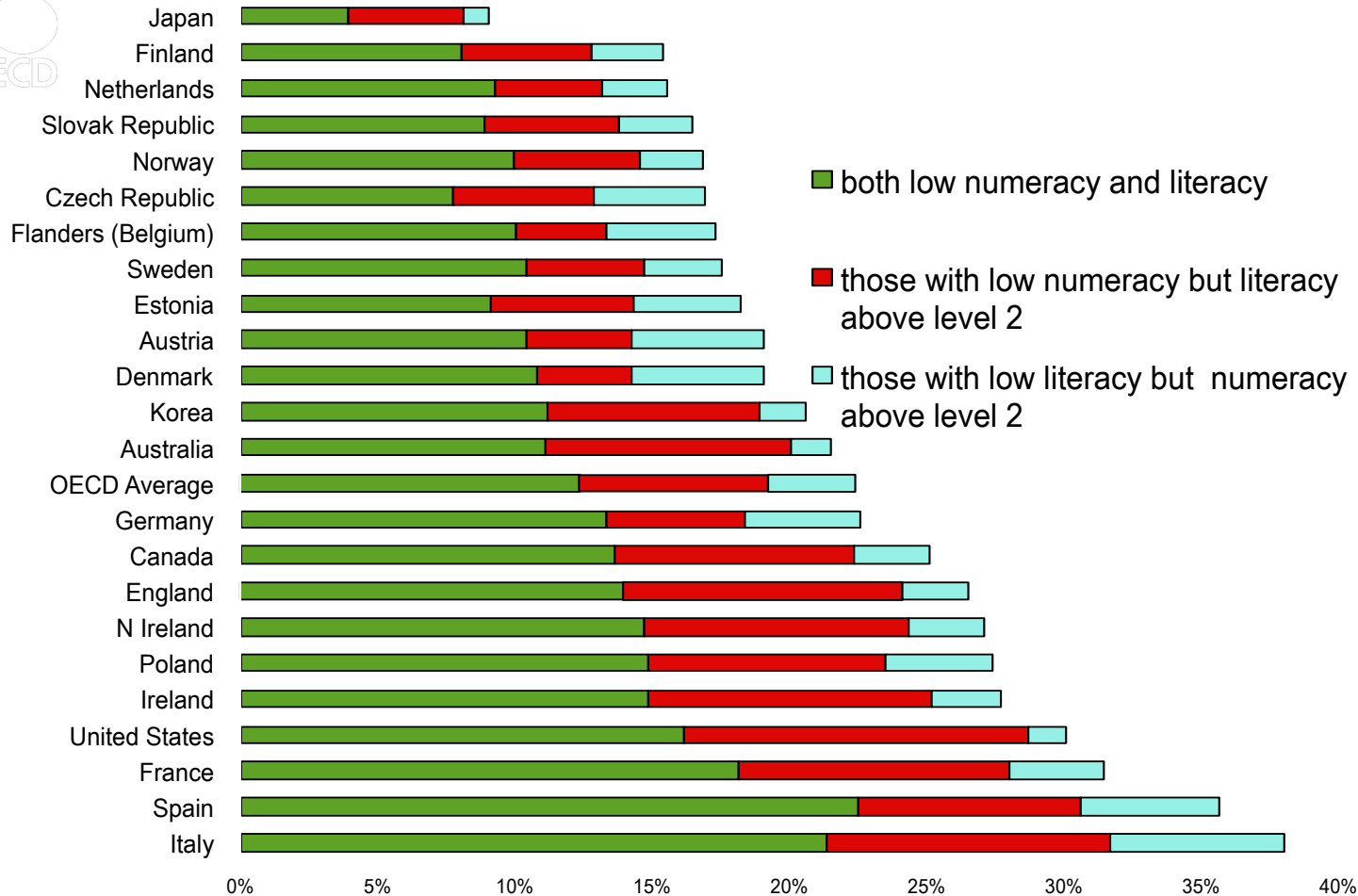
List three situations in which you should consult a doctor

Those with low literacy skills usually find these questions difficult

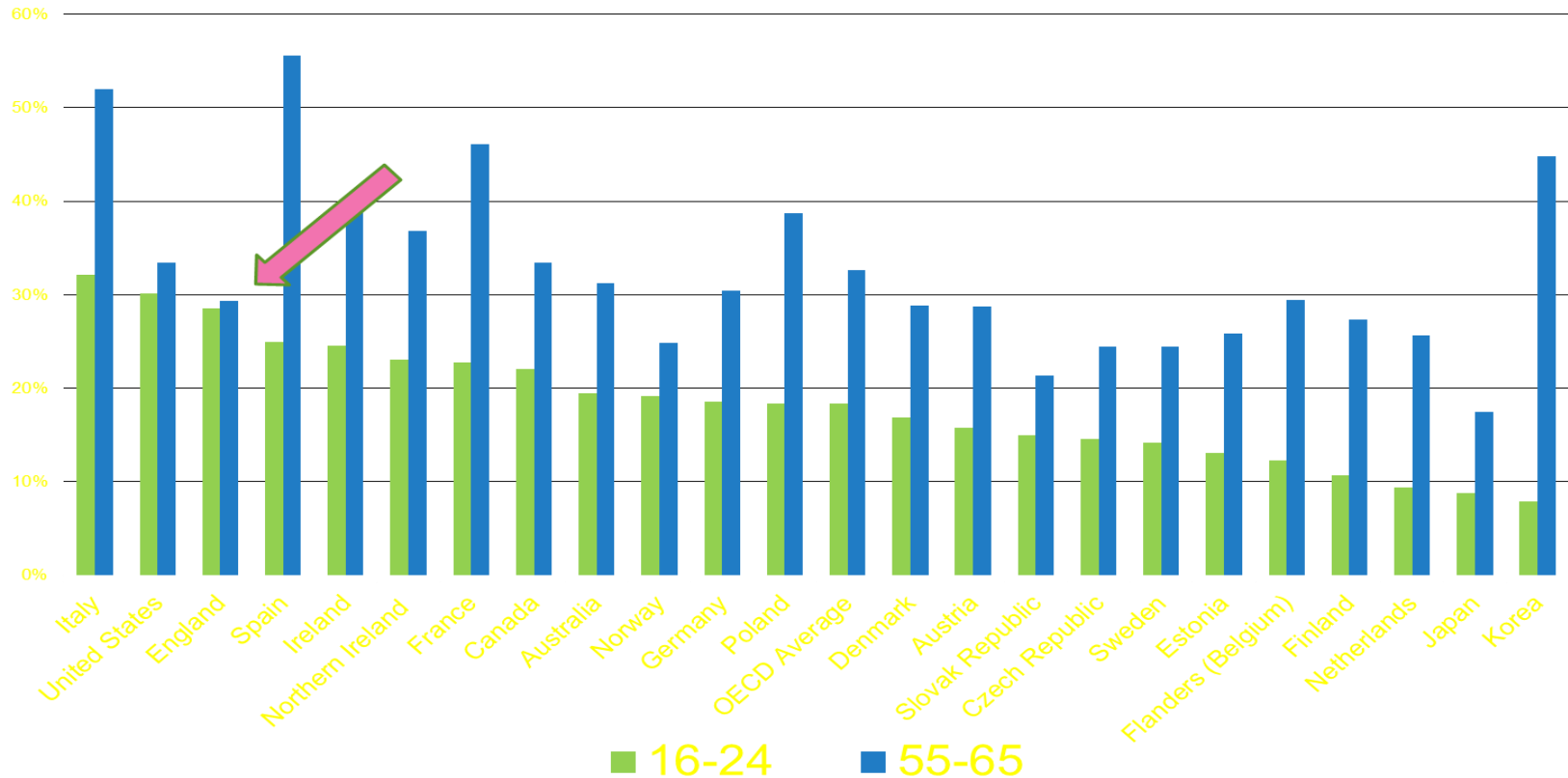
Headlines 1

- 9m adults have low basic skills, including many young people
- Weaker numeracy than literacy amongst 16-19 years
- 10% of university graduates have low skills
- 20% of graduates with professional qualifications have low skills

Literacy and numeracy 1

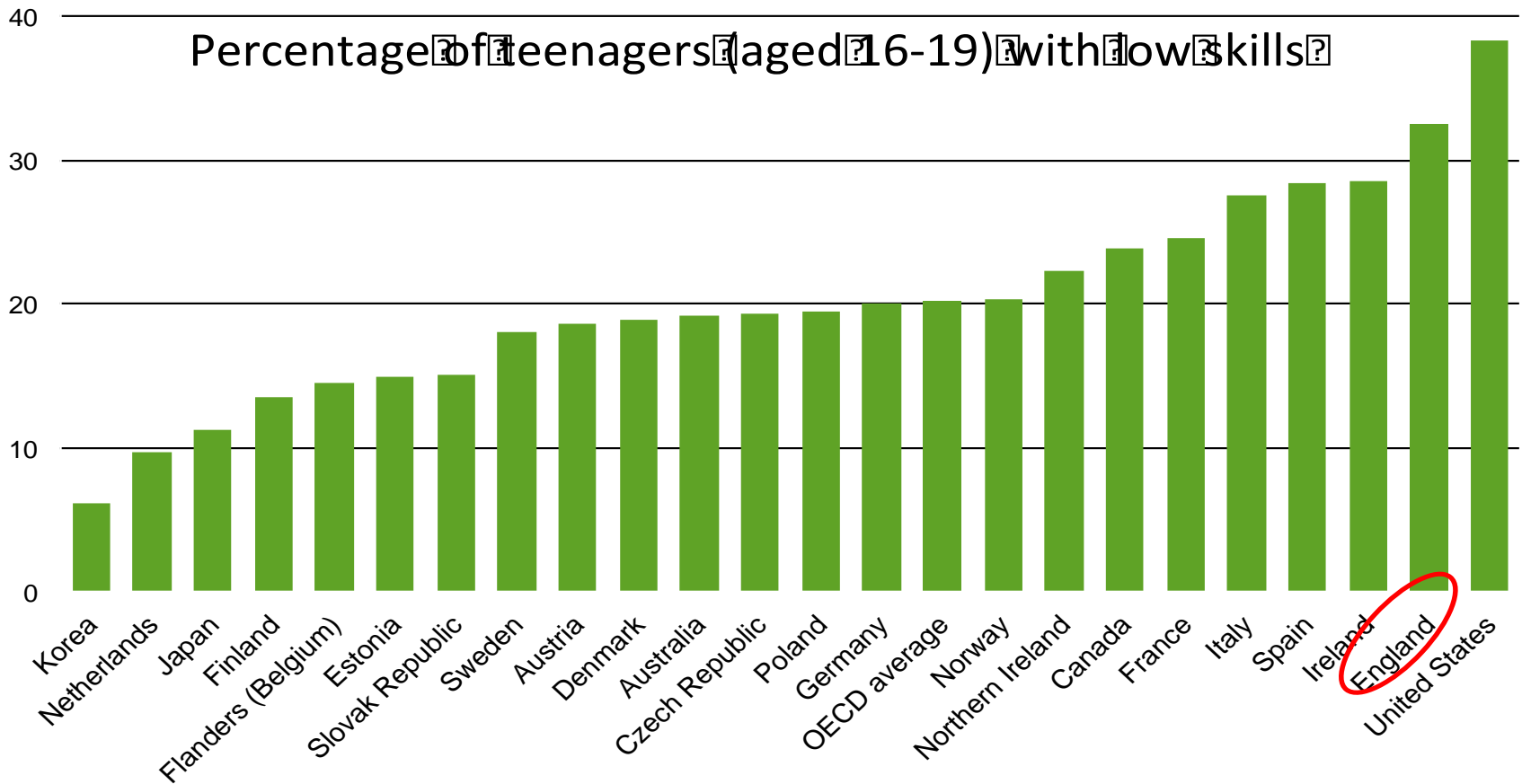


Literacy and numeracy 2



Percentage of low-skilled in different age groups.

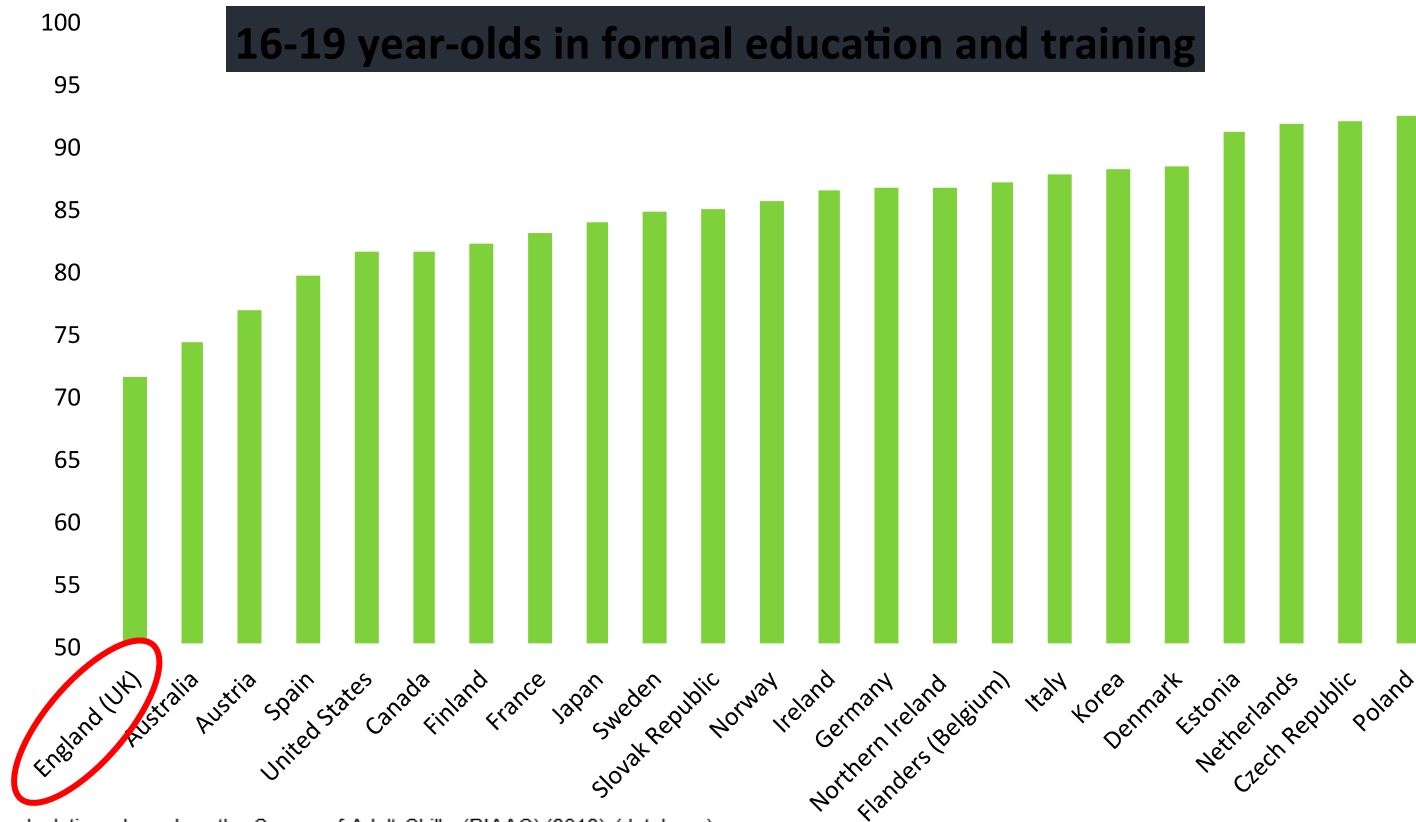
Literacy and numeracy 3



Source: OECD calculations based on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (2012) (database).

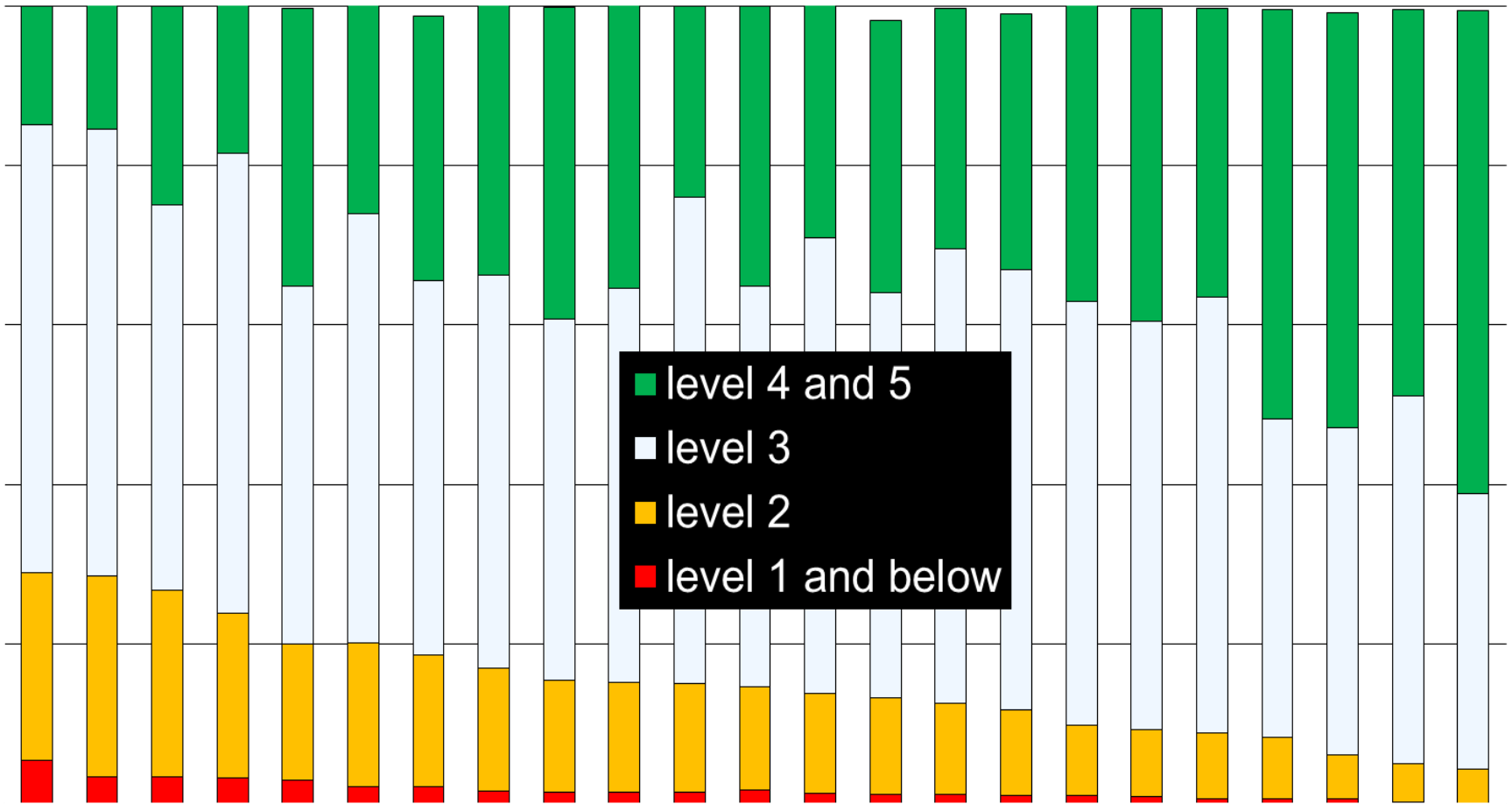
Why do young people in England perform poorly on basic skills?

In England young people leave education earlier than in many other countries



Source: OECD calculations based on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) (2012) (database).

Literacy skills of young tertiary A ('university') graduates



Headlines 2

- 5m+ people (60% of low-skilled) with low skills are in work
- Poor outcomes depend upon parental background
- Low-skilled adults are a diverse group
- Tackling adult literacy and numeracy is challenging

Recommendations

1. Give priority to early intervention - schools must do better
2. Build on initiatives; set more demanding standards for all, by age 19 years
3. Divert unprepared university students into more suitable provision and divert resources from universities to FE; universities do more to support English and maths
4. Improve transitions to work for young adults and offer learning at work, through apprenticeships and traineeships
5. Use research evidence to support adult learning – teaching methods, motivation for learners, high quality teachers, occupational and family contexts.

What's our response?

1. What do we think about the headline findings?
2. Are the recommendations surprising? New?
3. What are we already doing in response to these recommendations?
4. What would OUR priorities be?
5. What evidence can we draw upon to support our priorities?

Over to you

- In small groups discuss the findings and recommendations of the OECD report
- Using the numbered questions, record your responses on a flip chart
- Post the flip chart on the wall for others to see