



# Building confidence with numbers

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National Numeracy  
2018 impact report

# Building confidence with numbers

National Numeracy is the only charity in the UK focused exclusively on improving numeracy skills among adults and children. The charity was set up in 2012 in response to research which showed that almost half the working age population in the UK has the numeracy skills no better than we would expect of a child leaving primary school. This limits the life chances of individuals and is estimated to cost the UK economy a staggering £20bn per annum.



The challenge for us is huge and will not be conquered overnight, but I believe we have started to make tangible inroads and I am very encouraged by the level

of interest and support in the issue across government, employers and individuals.

We believe that if we are to make a sustainable improvement to numeracy skills, the first thing we must do is to foster a much more positive 'can do' public attitude towards maths and numeracy.

We want to end the notion that there is a 'maths gene' and replace it with the belief that everyone can improve their numeracy skills. We are communicating this message through the media, via ambassadors and with stories of individuals who have overcome their fear of maths. In 2018 over 600,000 came to National Numeracy for online information and support. A particular highlight was our first National Numeracy Day which hit the headlines and inspired over 25,000 individuals to start to improve their numeracy. We hope to do even better in 2019.

Whilst creating a more positive environment towards numeracy is essential, our key focus is helping individuals to improve.

Over the last few years we have developed and progressively improved our online numeracy check-up (the National Numeracy Challenge). This helps individuals build their confidence, and then check and improve their numeracy skills in a way that is flexible and supportive.

And as awareness about our work has spread, participation has been growing. To date over 210,000 individuals have signed up to improve their numeracy with us (over 77,000 in 2018 alone – enough to fill the London Olympic stadium!).

But the key question is what difference are we making to peoples' lives? In this first impact report you will read about Adrian who came off Universal Credit and into work, Stuart who now feels confident about his Functional Skills exam, and Dunia who is no longer overwhelmed at work. I hope you find the report both interesting and encouraging, but most importantly I hope it inspires you to think about how you might play your part in helping to make the UK a more numerate nation.

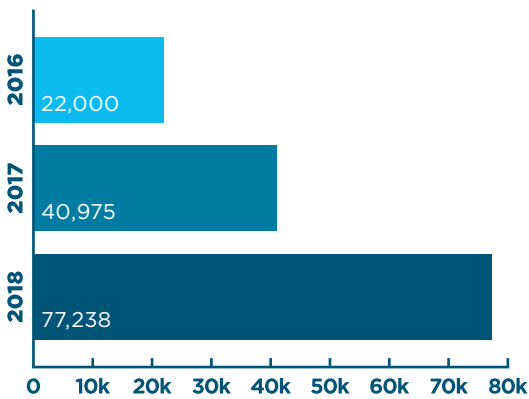


Belinda Vernon  
Chair

# Improving numeracy skills in the UK

National Numeracy is working hard to change how everyone thinks and talks about numeracy. It believes building positive attitudes is the prerequisite for developing practical skills. The number of people we reach each year has been steadily rising since 2016. Over 77,000 people registered with the National Numeracy Challenge in 2018, taking the first steps to better numeracy.

**Increase in National Numeracy Challenge participants between 2016-2018**



# Engagement and reach in 2018:

**73**

National Numeracy Day champion organisations

**85**

Mentions in the news

**128**

Schools using our resources

**6000**

People attended our training workshops

**4,158**

People who used the National Numeracy Challenge twice and improved

**77,238**

People signed up to improve their numeracy skills

**627,067**

Visits to our websites and social media

**3,455,883**

Numeracy questions answered



# 2018 highlights

In 2018 we introduced the first National Numeracy Day, gained new celebrity ambassadors and reached over 200 workplaces and schools. We received more support than we've ever had before, and almost double the number of people have signed up to check and improve their everyday maths skills, using the National Numeracy Challenge, compared to any other year.

Over 620,000 people came to us for information and online help with numeracy. More than 77,000 of those signed up to improve, and hundreds of them are doing so every single month.



## Changing the national conversation around numbers.

ITV's Good Morning Britain broadcast live from our opening of the London Stock Exchange on National Numeracy Day. Altogether our activities were featured by over 60 different media outlets, including BBC Breakfast, Sky News, Financial Times, The Telegraph, London Evening Standard, Daily Mirror, City AM and BBC Radio 4's Today Programme.

The day helped National Numeracy and its partners change the conversation around numbers. It was part of our ongoing work to reframe the way maths and numeracy are represented culturally – we received 25 other mentions in the news throughout the year.



## Thousands of distribution workers sign up for the National Numeracy Challenge during Maths workout week

UnionLearn annual Maths Work Out Week proved to be a great platform for several of our partners to launch numeracy campaigns. Almost 3,000 adults from workplaces across the country took the first step to improving their numeracy by signing up for the National Numeracy Challenge. Our typical support for a workplace campaign ranges from promotional leaflets and posters to myth busting workshops and topical quick quizzes.

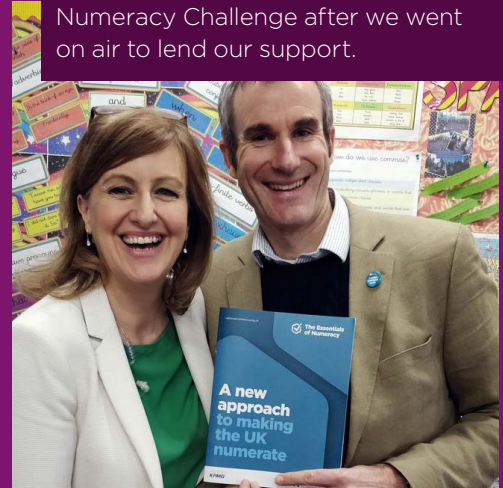
## Helping children to find their feet with maths

This year our Passport Maths programme helped hundreds of children who did not grasp the basics at primary school to reach the standards they need for secondary education. Every school we asked agreed that our training was useful and 69% of pupils surveyed said that doing Passport Maths increased their confidence. This, in combination with our family engagement work with primaries, means we provided resources to over 128 schools across the UK in 2018.



## Inspiring millions that it's never too late

TV presenter Jayne McCubbin became an everyday maths hero this summer when she showed millions of BBC Breakfast viewers that it's never too late to become confident with numbers. In spite of a lifelong fear of the subject, she retook her GCSE maths exam as part of the #mathschallenge, along with two other presenters. Thousands of people logged on and started improving their everyday maths using the National Numeracy Challenge after we went on air to lend our support.



## The nation's first National Numeracy Day, bringing numbers to life

On Wednesday 16th May 2018 thousands of adults and children joined with us to mark National Numeracy Day – our inaugural celebration of the fact that we are all 'numbers people', that numeracy is a part of everyone's life.

The campaign hit headlines, trended all day on social media and encouraged people across the country to get busy with numbers. National Numeracy Day resources were used by over 3,000 school children and in over 100 workplaces, and we inspired 25,000 people to take the first step towards improving their numeracy.



## Helping thousands of consumers save money with everyday maths

Our ambassador Martin Lewis showed the importance of everyday maths to millions of people looking for help with their finances. His support on National Numeracy Day and media appearances throughout the year offered practical advice to millions of TV viewers and we saw thousands of new people signing up to the National Numeracy Challenge with every mention.



# Getting ahead with numbers

Millions of people feel anxious about maths. A lack of confidence with numbers and data means too many people just get by, rather than get ahead. It means that, as a nation, we aren't as productive as the economy needs us to be.

In 2018 National Numeracy helped 10,000 people in workplaces, including via NHS Trusts and trade unions, to start their journey towards better numeracy at work. We ran bespoke campaigns for over 40 different employers across the country and one of our champions even picked up a national award.



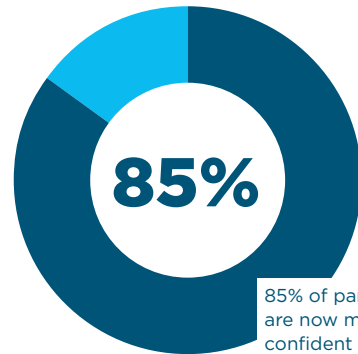
## Jane's award winning workplace campaign

Jane Eyre, Lead Union Learning Rep at Unison and one-time maths phobic, won a national UnionLearn award in July 2018 for her numeracy campaigns across Blackpool Teaching Hospital NHS Trusts. Using National Numeracy's help and resources, she has supported hundreds of colleagues to get the confidence they need to work towards the next step in their career. This is the second year in a row she has won the award. She said: "We are really pleased that we've won it again, it's brilliant. The recognition helps us spread the word more widely".

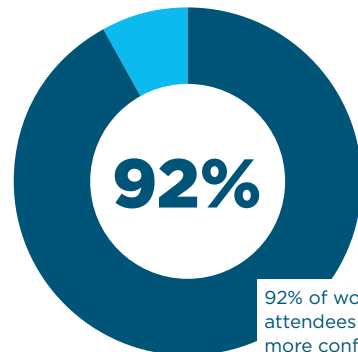
## Helping employers to keep improving

In 2018 National Numeracy's 'train the trainer' courses have helped 130 people in all kinds of different roles to deliver numeracy training, support and mentoring to colleagues in their own workplace, just as Jane has done.

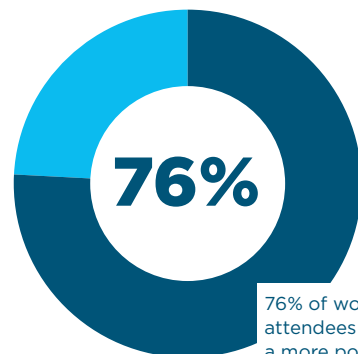
We're building on this in 2019, by developing our course materials and creating a new champions' network to help us reach even more people and employers.



85% of participants are now more confident to promote numeracy within their organisation



92% of workshop attendees are now more confident to help someone with maths anxiety



76% of workshop attendees now have a more positive perception of numeracy

# Putting good numeracy within everyone's grasp

National Numeracy wants to make a difference to the lives of everyone we work with. We want to help everyone find the confidence to have a go, to banish the maths anxiety that can blight financial choices at home and at work, and to seize the opportunity to live more informed and less stressful lives.

We're on a mission to help everyone in the UK realise that we're all numbers people. More than 77,000 people signed up to improve their numeracy level with us in 2018, and hundreds are improving every single month.



**Stuart**  
Cardiovascular Rota  
Coordinator, Sussex

If I can turn my numeracy skills around with the assistance of this website, anyone can. This time going in to the Functional Skills exam I know I will feel better than I did last time; I'm not going to convince myself that I'm going to fail.



**Dunia**  
Care Manager,  
London

When it came to working out the hours for my rotas, I'd always get really overwhelmed and made it a lot more difficult than it needed to be. But now thanks to the course and the bitesize information, it has made it a lot easier, and I don't overwhelm myself as much.



**Jayne**  
Reporter for BBC  
Breakfast, Wirral

Maths doesn't hold the same kind of fear it used to. I would urge anyone who has had the same kind of relationship with maths to give it another go. I've stopped giving off all those negative vibes about being useless at maths. I'm not.



**Adrian**  
Construction Site  
Supervisor, Liverpool

I was unemployed and on Universal Credit, and we all know how demoralising that can be. The National Numeracy Challenge gave me the confidence to get out there in the jobs market. I don't feel the number blindness of old.

**“The National Numeracy Challenge gave me the confidence to get out there in the jobs market. I don't feel the number blindness of old.”**

Adrian, Challenge participant

**“It’s no exaggeration  
when I say that  
it has been,  
potentially,  
life-changing.”**

Rachel, Challenge participant

**National Numeracy is an independent charity established in 2012 to help raise low levels of numeracy among adults and children and promote the importance of everyday maths skills.** It aims to challenge prevailing attitudes, influence public policy and research, and identify and promote effective approaches to improving numeracy. Where possible, it works in partnership with other organisations to achieve these aims.

**For more information please get in touch**

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