



National Numeracy  
for everyone, for life

[nationalnumeracy.org.uk](https://nationalnumeracy.org.uk)

# National Numeracy 2019 impact report

# Building confidence with numbers



Since National Numeracy was established in 2012 we have sought relentlessly to bring the importance of numeracy to the

attention of the business leaders, politicians, and general public. National Numeracy Day, our largest annual campaign and now entering its third year, has so far inspired over 48,000 people to take steps to improve their numeracy skills.

The growth in awareness and participation which we have seen in recent years has been encouraging. In 2019 we wanted to focus on helping those people who may have been persuaded to 'dip their toe in' to continue their journey to progress. We wanted to help them to learn, to improve, and to replace any anxiety with numbers with a new level of confidence.

The results have been very positive, exceeding our own internal targets. In 2019 we saw over 1,000 people each week signing up to National Numeracy Challenge, and an increase of over 80 per cent in those accessing learning resources with more than 26,000 people doing so. We shared new stories every month from people who have transformed their confidence and skills, some of which are brought to you in the following pages of this report.

Although we have made excellent progress, there is still much to do.

A lack of confidence with numbers can cause people to feel anxious and stressed with maths. It can prevent us from accessing the information needed to make fundamental decisions about our finances, financial situation, or from entering certain careers. Our report, *Building a numerate nation: confidence, belief and skills*, published last November, revealed that one in four people say their feelings about numeracy has put them off from applying for jobs and promotions. This hinders social mobility and acts as a drain on our economy.

We believe that numeracy should be at the forefront of the national thinking about how we develop skilled workforce for the future. Not only is it vital for our national productivity, but also to economic participation, to a society where all individuals, regardless of their background are able to access information and choices to be able to thrive.

Belinda Vernon  
Chair

# Numeracy in the UK... What's the issue?

Millions of people struggle with numbers in the UK. Those with poor numeracy skills are more than twice as likely to be unemployed and the average cost to individuals with poor numeracy is £460 a year.

Nearly half (49%) of working age UK adults currently have the numeracy levels of a primary school age child, which has a significant negative impact on them, on employers and on society overall. This costs the UK economy an estimated £388 million per week.

In 2019, National Numeracy published new evidence highlighting the crippling effect of low confidence with numbers, and how this acts as a limiting factor

to the different areas of our lives, such as career progression and training.

With one in four people in the UK saying they would be put off from applying for a job which lists numbers and data, this is an area where we have been working hard to reach adults, and provide the support they need to transform their confidence and skills with numbers.

Public attitudes towards maths and numbers may be overwhelmingly negative, but this can be turned around. In this report you will read how the work of National Numeracy during 2019 has helped thousands of people to feel more comfortable about using numbers and recognise their value in everyday life.

## 49%

Almost half of working-age adults in the UK have the numeracy level expected of a primary school child.

## £388m

How much poor numeracy is estimate to the UK economy per week.



1 in 4 people would be deterred from applying for a job if it listed using numbers and data as a requirement.

## “With practice and determination anything is possible”

Angie, Wales



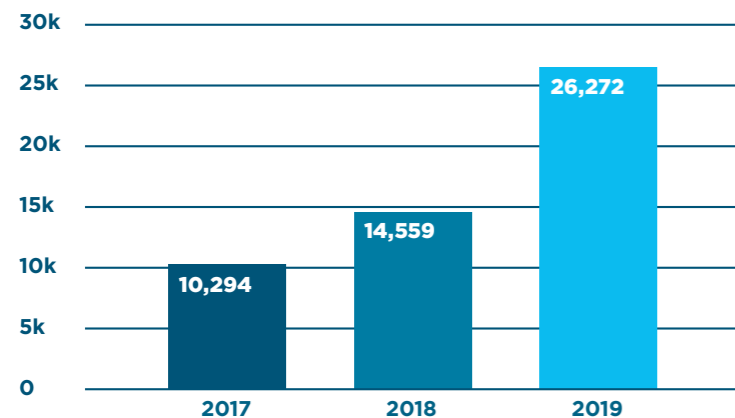
# Helping more people than ever to learn in 2019

Over 1,300 people a week signed up to use the National Numeracy Challenge in 2019. The service, which helps people to improve their everyday maths skills, has reached over a quarter of million users since launched in 2014.

This year our goal was to help more of them to learn and improve their numeracy skills than ever before.

Having drastically increased our reach in previous years, in 2019 we wanted to focus on making it as straightforward as possible to learn and improve with our help. We saw an 80% increase in those undertaking some learning with us compared with 2018, and over 600 people improved their numeracy skills each month.

Number of Individuals accessing learning resources



## Renovating the National Numeracy Challenge

We relaunched the learner dashboard area within the National Numeracy Challenge, introducing a personalised learning plan and new 'Building Confidence' resources. We wanted to simplify the experience and make it easier for anyone to log in and pick up their learning where they left off, even if pushed for time.

As a result, the learning resources have been visited by over 25,000 people, and three quarters of those who rechecked their numeracy skills improved.



Three out of four people improve their skills after using the National Numeracy Challenge

**“We’d never done anything like this before... the great advantage of the National Numeracy Challenge is that it shows you which areas you need to improve upon and provides you with the resources you need to build your skills”**

Cara Mitchell,  
Nurseries Business Manager



**Rose Bent got over 1,000 people started on their numeracy journey**

Rose is the Regional Learning & Development Organiser for UNISON Yorkshire & Humberside. In 2019 she signed up over 1000 colleagues to the National Numeracy Challenge through her email campaigns and learning workshops.

**“Numeracy is definitely a priority for confidence... Next year we’re looking to embed the National Numeracy Challenge into the longer courses and also run a big campaign for National Numeracy Day”**

Rose Bent, Regional Learning & Development Organiser for UNISON

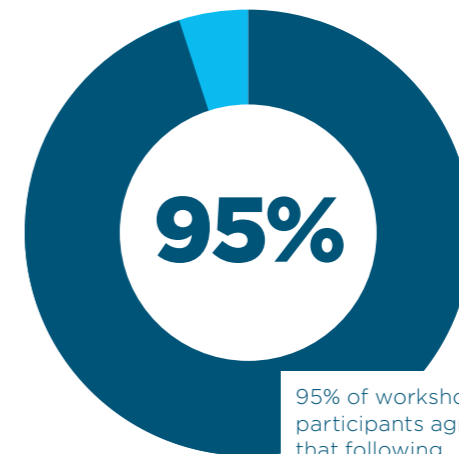
# Impactful partnerships and campaigns

In 2019 we partnered with over 100 different employers across the country and helped 9,000 people in workplaces (including via NHS Trusts and trade unions) to start their journey towards better numeracy at work.

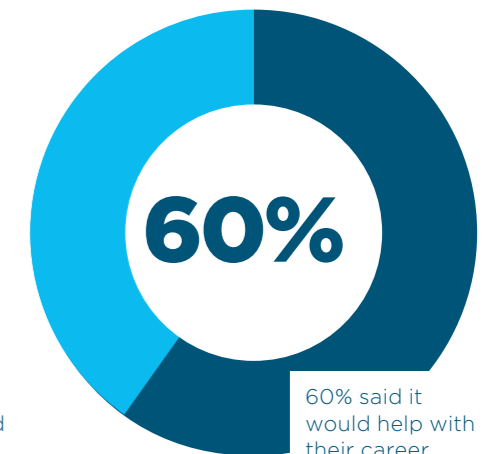
Our partnership USDAW union resulted in over 1,400 people signing up to improve their skills using the National Numeracy Challenge. Amy (pictured right), had struggled with classroom-style learning her whole life. Convinced by her colleague Sean, she persisted with the National Numeracy Challenge. Trying it in her own home she fared 20 points better than her original score. Boosted by this, Amy continued with the project and has since gained a level 2 qualification in maths.



The team of USDAW learning reps at DHL Castleford ran a National Numeracy pilot to help less confident learners.



95% of workshop participants agreed that following the session they would be more likely to have a go at improving their numeracy



60% said it would help with their career progression

# 600

Over 600 organisations got involved with the day

# 35.8m

#NationalNumeracyDay had a social media reach of over 35.8m

# 48k

48,000 have now started their journey to improved numeracy since the campaign began in 2018



## National Numeracy Day 2019:

# We are all numbers people

National Numeracy Day 2019 was a huge success. Along with our founding supporter KPMG, we secured the backing of 10 Lead Supporters, over 200 Champion organisations and over 400 educational institutions, as well as achieving significant national media coverage. To date the campaign has inspired over 48,000 people to start their journey towards improved numeracy.

football themed roadshow 'The Numbers Game' to Westfield, Shepherd's Bush in London. The Roadshow used numbers and data about football to raise awareness of the importance of numbers in everyday life. Throughout the entire season, over 10,000 people completed the onboard 'Numbers Game' roadshow experience.

To mark National Numeracy day, Santander, official sponsor of the UEFA Champions League, brought their numeracy/

National Numeracy Day is now an award-winning campaign, winning Best Partnership with a National Charity at The Better Society Awards 2019.



Bobby Seagull spoke about tackling maths anxiety at an event hosted by TP ICAP at Bloomberg L.P. offices.

Over 80% of MPs underestimated both the scale and cost of poor numeracy.



When faced with the true scale and cost of poor numeracy, over 90% of both business leaders and MPs agreed that there needs to be a renewed focus on adult numeracy.



## What next?

# Building a numerate nation in 2020

November 2019 saw the publication of our report, *Building a numerate nation: confidence, belief and skills* launched at a reception at the Bank of England.

The report, published in partnership with TP ICAP, the world's largest interdealer broker, set out the evidence and recommendations which employers, politicians and the wider public need to take to address low numeracy in the UK.

Despite a busy pre-election news period, the report was covered by national, regional and trade outlets and discussed on BBC Radio 2.

We believe that there is now a real opportunity for employers, government and communities to work together to address this hidden issue that is holding the UK back.

**“National Numeracy is making commendable steps to raise awareness of this crucial issue, but they can’t tackle this problem alone. Creating a truly number-confident nation will require much wider, collective support.**

**We call on everyone to join us in helping to change millions of lives for the better.”**

**Nicolas Breteau**  
Group Chief Executive  
TP ICAP plc

**“Working to improve my numeracy has helped me to fulfil my dream – I’m 28 and I’m going back to university to be a teacher”**

Shannon, Liverpool

**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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