

ESSEX ADULTS ENCOURAGED TO IMPROVE SKILLS IN REGIONAL MATHS WEEK

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Regional Maths Week is taking place from 7th to 11th July to show adults in Essex how they can improve their maths skills by taking part in free training provided by the Learning and Skills Council.

The campaign is being coordinated by the East of England Regional Maths Centre which provides short course funding, specialist advice and support for those teaching numeracy. Regional Maths Week aims to raise awareness that improving your maths skills can be enjoyable, there are many opportunities to learn at a time and place convenient to you and that it's never too late for people to learn new skills.

Currently, 16% of Essex adults do not have the level of numeracy skills that Government says are needed to cope with the everyday requirements of work and home life. Many of the courses offered will enable participants to gain a nationally recognised qualification equivalent to a GCSE pass.

Keith Middleton, Training Advisor for the Regional Maths Centre, said: "Maths is used in many aspects of daily life, even in places most people don't realise. It's

important to make people in the county aware that they have access to free training and can improve their maths skills if they wish to.”

“It could lead to increased confidence and make a difference in everyday life situations such as helping a child with their maths homework or even getting a new job.”

The government has set a target of 95% of adults to achieve ‘functional numeracy skills’ by 2020. Currently, 84% of adults in the East of England have functional numeracy.

Regional Maths Week is supported by the Learning and Skills Council for the East of England (LSC) and is running in support of the government’s national scheme to improve adults’ numeracy: ‘Get On and Get Confident’.

Any adult interested in improving their maths skills can visit:

<http://geton.direct.gov.uk> to find their nearest course or call 0800 660 800 for more information

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Maths week case study – Essex

New career for Wendy after facing maths fears

Wendy Turbin, from Clacton in Essex, wanted a change in career after being made redundant from her job in a bank call centre. She had ambitions of working in adult education tutoring and, although her literacy skills were good, she was not confident with maths.

“I haven’t done any maths since my O-Level in 1976 and am not a confident maths person,” said Wendy.

“I was teaching adults with learning difficulties and disabilities initially, teaching low level maths. I wasn’t confident with teaching any further so decided to improve my own maths skills.”

Wendy enrolled on an adult numeracy Level 3 course at the Colchester Institute after being assured that she could handle the course, despite her reservations.

“I didn’t believe I would be able to do it but it was a great course, with lots of strategy for teaching others. It made me so much more confident about my own maths.”

After Wendy completed the course, a job came up at the Clacton site of the Colchester Institute near Wendy’s home, teaching adult literacy and numeracy up to Level 2. With her new found maths confidence, Wendy took the post and is now working with other adults who want to improve their skills.

“I’m teaching people who need these skills for work or to improve their confidence, or those who always had the maths fear that so many of us have. I can empathise with that. Although I will never claim to know it all and I still have to think about maths, I have found techniques that work for me.”

Wendy has also found that the course has helped her with day-to-day maths challenges. “Although I could add up my shopping and so on, because I had to, I now find it almost fun! I enjoy maths now, and so I like to challenge myself.”

For more information about Maths Week, the Regional Maths Centre or the Learning and Skills Council, please contact Lucy Clegg or Suzy Hill at Tribe on 01603 417722 or email lucy@tribepr.com or suzy@tribepr.com

Notes to editors

Regional Maths Week:

Maths Week will run from the 7th – 11th July, and is organised by the Regional Maths Centre, managed by the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER).

Competition

Please see 'Reader test' for sample questions

The Regional Maths Centre

EEDA research in 2005 recommended that the region needed to develop a robust infrastructure of providers and teachers/trainers able to deliver and support mathematics excellence across a range of contexts. This led to the formation in 2005 of The Regional Maths Centre, a virtual centre overseeing a county level network of clusters offering support to tutors providing numeracy/maths skills to learners. The centre aims to increase the capacity and quality of providers in the region to deliver high quality teaching and learning of maths/numeracy. The Regional Maths Centre is funded by the Learning and Skills Council for the East of England.

Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) aims to improve the skills of young people and adults to ensure that England has a workforce of world class standard by 2020.

The LSC:

- provides free training programmes to young people and adults employed in local businesses
- plans and funds education and training in schools, colleges and sixth forms
- provides advice and supports people wanting to continue in, or return to, education
- provides financial support to young people and adults to allow them to continue in education.