

1 in 5 in the North West find holiday sums confusing What's the real cost of a summer holiday?

Date of issue 24 July 2008

Publication number NWR-340

1 in 5 people in the North West struggle with converting currencies when abroad and admit it is one of their top maths worries. With school summer holidays now getting underway, the Get On campaign is urging sun seekers to brush up on their maths skills to avoid bringing home debt, as well as a tan.

Of the 24 million Britons heading overseas for their holiday this summer, women (26%) find currency conversions more frustrating than men (14%), while 25% of 16 – 29 year olds struggle with conversions compared to only 18% of 30-44 year olds.

Craig Doyle, ITV Sports Presenter and former presenter on BBC's 'Holiday' programme and a supporter of the Get On campaign said, "For the majority of us, returning from an exciting holiday abroad can sometimes be deflating, but for those that struggle with their maths, the confusion with currency calculations can add to this feeling, when many people start to realise just how much they have actually spent on their trip.

"Whilst many of us take for granted being able to work out currency conversions and the varying rates, there are still too many people who struggle with these everyday activities. The message to everyone who experiences difficulties is – **call 0800 66 0800** to brush up on your maths skills."

David Marshall, Head of Communication at ABTA, the travel association, said: "With a changeable summer climate in England, we have seen a rapid increase of people heading

abroad for their summer holidays. If 22% of those travellers struggle with converting currencies, that means more and more people will also be struggling with holiday debts. Remembering your passport and sun-cream are crucial, but people shouldn't forget to brush up on their maths skills too.”

The Get On campaign says it's not just holidays that can be affected if you have problems with maths and English. People with good basic skills can earn significantly more money over their working lives than those with poor skills.

For the millions of people affected, help is at hand with free courses on offer for adults wanting to brush up on their reading and maths skills. The courses, which offer an entirely different experience from people's school days, focus on helping adults improve their skills so they can deal with practical, everyday situations in life and work. As an added incentive the courses can also lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

The Get On campaign is part of the Government's Skills for Life strategy and was launched in 2001 to specifically target the millions of people with literacy, numeracy and language needs.

Top tips for holiday budgeting

- Before heading off on holiday make sure you shop around for the best insurance deal - there are so many available from banks and high street shops that you can't fail to bag a bargain, but make sure you're covered for the essentials.
- During the summer holiday season sun creams and travel toiletries are almost always on offer in shops so make the most of these to save money!
- Before you travel, why not jot down a basic currency conversion list to keep in your wallet. By listing the conversion for £1, £10 and £25 you can make a quick guesstimate at your bill if you're in a rush.

- Language barriers can often add to the feeling of panic when you are asked to pay a bill. If you are unsure, don't be afraid to ask for the total bill to be written down for you - you could even carry a pad and pen with you to make this easier.
- It's easy to get flustered and simply hand over a wad of cash but just take your time to convert the total bill into pounds before paying up.

- Ends -

*The research was conducted between 20-29 February 2008 by The Survey Shop and polled 1004 adults across England.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

For more information contact

LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk

All media enquiries please contact:

LSC

Debbie Newell on 0161 261 0434, deborah.newell@lsc.gov.uk

The Write Angle on 01772 250505

Stephanie Lord: stephanie@writeanglepr.co.uk

Hollie Roberts: hollie@writeanglepr.co.uk

Notes to editors

Skills for Life

1. The 2010 Skills for Life Public Service Agreement (PSA) target was for 2.25 million people to have improved their skills by one level by achieving their a first qualification in Adult Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL at Entry Level 3, Level 1 or Level 2, from April 2001 to July 2010. The target measures first achievements only - there is no double counting. So if a learner moves their skills up by two levels, only one achievement is counted towards the target. There have now been 2,276,000 million achievements meaning the target for 2.25m achievements by July 2010 has been met two years early.

2. The Skills for Life Strategy was launched in 2001 to tackle the legacy of adults with poor literacy, language and numeracy skills within England. The strategy aims to help create a society where adults have the basic skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society, through:

- * Boosting demand for learning
- * Ensuring capacity of the learning provider delivery system
- * Improving standards of teaching and learning
- * Increasing learner achievement

3. The Skills for Life National Needs and Impact Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and IT skills, published in October 2003, estimated that in England, 5.2 million adults aged 16-65 have literacy levels below Level 1 (broadly equivalent in difficulty to an English GCSE at grades D-G), and 6.8 million have numeracy skills below Entry Level 3 (the level expected of 11 year olds). The full survey is available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research>.

4. In November 2004 the Government met and exceeded the target to ensure that 750,000 adults improved their skills and gained a qualification by 2004. In February 2007 the Government met and exceeded the target to ensure that 1,500,000 adults improved their skills and gained a qualification by 2007.

5. It is estimated that an individual with good literacy and numeracy could earn £50,000 more over a working life than someone with poorer skills. And although achieving the most basic levels in numeracy and literacy does not always increase earnings or job prospects in the short term, the increased self-confidence and motivation learners gain from completing a course is of huge personal value and helps them start the process of transforming their lives.

6. The then Department for Education and Skills commissioned a study, Benchmarking the Skills for Life Strategy, Tribal Education and Technology (October 2006), benchmarking the key components of the Skills for Life strategy against approaches to improving the literacy and numeracy skills of young people and adults within the United Kingdom and internationally. The study found, that compared with approaches in other

countries, the Skills for Life strategy was highly developed and distinctive in the breadth of its scope and the application of its systems. It presented a national end-to-end adult teaching and learning infrastructure comprising: standards, courses, teaching requirements, learning support, assessment and qualifications that were not matched anywhere in the world.

7. The LSC's "Get On" campaign, which was first launched by the then Department for Education and Skills in 2001, is part of the Government's Skills for Life strategy. The campaign encourages the millions of people in England who experience difficulties with literacy, language and numeracy skills, or would benefit from 'brushing up' on these skills, to enrol on a free course by calling 0800 66 0800.

8. The Government's consultation over a new legal right for workers to request time to train was launched on Wednesday 18 June and can be found at:

<http://www.dius.gsi.gov.uk>