

# News story: Ways improving your numeracy skills has become easier

Today is [National Numeracy Day](#) a great opportunity to highlight the value of numeracy and encourage people to [take action](#) to improve their skills. From cooking, to working out your weekly shop or organising your mortgage or rent payments, numbers are hugely important in everyday life.

It is never too late to improve your numeracy skills, especially when being better with numbers can change your life. To help this, the Government has introduced several new changes which includes reforming the maths GCSE, Functional Skills Qualifications, and has set up a network of new maths hubs across the country.

These changes have helped make sure more people are leaving education with a good grasp of maths. In 2018, more than 75% of 19 year olds held a GCSE or equivalent qualification in maths. Maths is also now the most popular A Level chosen by students in England. Since 2010, entries have risen by quarter (up 25.4% to 87,531 in 2018).

To find out whether your numeracy skills are up to scratch, get involved by taking the National Numeracy Day challenge [here](#):

Here are just some of the things the Government is doing to help boost the nation's maths skills:

## **There are lots of opportunities to improve your maths skills**

- We know students who leave education with a strong grasp of English and maths increase their chances of getting a job, a career or going on to higher levels of education.
- If you're over 16 and left school without gaining a GCSE grade 4 in maths, then you'll continue to study maths as part of your 16-18 education or training. As a result of this, tens of thousands of young people aged 17 and over in England are successful in their GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.
- If you are aged 19 or over and haven't achieved a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in maths already, but want to improve your maths, the Government fully funds a range of maths courses up to Level 2 (GCSE or equivalent).

## **Our network of specialist maths hubs are supporting schools to deliver improved and innovative teaching methods across the county.**

- In 2014, we launched the maths hubs programme – a national network of 35 hubs across England to support to teachers and schools to improve the quality of maths education from the Early Years through to age 18. All the support is available free of charge to maths teachers in any state funded schools and colleges in England.
- Maths hubs also deliver the Teaching for Mastery programme, which adapts maths education from top-performing East Asian schools for teaching in English schools. The programme which is backed by £76 million aims to reach 11,000 primary and secondary schools by 2023.

## **New Centres of Excellence in Maths established around the country to boost maths post-16**

- 21 Centres for Excellence in Maths have been launched and will work with networks of Further Education providers across the length and breadth of England. The Centres are designed to improve understanding of what works in teaching and support best practice to improve maths for students over the age of 16 who previously had low attainment grades.

## **More support for Further Education providers to help boost maths outcomes for their students**

- Finally, we've launched the [Basic Maths Premium Pilot](#). It offers up to £500 per eligible student aged 16 and over to Further Education providers to improve the outcomes of low attaining students.

To find out whether your numeracy skills are up to scratch, get involved by taking the National Numeracy Day challenge [here](#)

---

## **[News story: Government awards £25 million to fund zero-emission transport innovations](#)**

- 22 projects in total will benefit from government investment to

decarbonise UK transport

- innovations to be funded include a quick-charging fully-electric motorbike prototype and agricultural vehicles with reduced emission capability
- investment a key Industrial Strategy milestone, and part of wider measures towards a net zero carbon economy

Projects across the country are set to benefit from £25million investment to develop ground-breaking zero emission technologies for new vehicles.

A boost for green transport, the investment is a key part of the government's Industrial Strategy, and part of wider efforts towards developing a net zero carbon economy.

One project aims to develop innovative, new electric motorcycle technology lowering vehicle emissions and noise, with faster battery charge times and making electric motorbikes attractive to the market.

Led by Triumph Motorcycles, the project adds award-winning motorsport and electrification experience from Williams Advanced Engineering, propulsion innovation from Integral Powertrain and Warwick Manufacturing Group's success integrating academic research with public and private sector projects.

Other winning projects include:

- a project that will add an electric drive axle to a conventional diesel-powered truck, creating a hybrid engine which will store and reuse the electrical energy on the trailer
- a research and development project to replace metals with new materials using recycled carbon fibres from aviation waste
- a feasibility study into the potential of hydrogen fuel cell technology as a zero-emission solution for utility and off-road vehicles

The support for these projects is key to the delivery of the government's modern [Industrial Strategy's Future of Mobility Grand Challenge](#) and the [Road to Zero Strategy](#), both of which aim to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of zero emission vehicles. This transition is also a crucial part of the UK's move to a net zero emissions economy to end the country's contribution to global warming entirely.

The government's ambition is for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040. The numbers of ultra-low emission vehicles on UK roads is currently at record levels, with around 200,000 ultra-low emission vehicles registered in the UK.

Future of Mobility Minister Jesse Norman said:

The government continues to invest in technologies and innovation that help the UK to a zero emission future. This is a central part of our Future of Mobility Grand Challenge.

It is great to see such enthusiasm and imagination from industry, as we work together with them to realise the environmental, health and wellbeing benefits of greener transport.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

We are committed to ensuring the UK continues to develop its world-leading reputation for excellence in the design and manufacturing of greener transport.

These exciting new projects, from Liverpool to Slough, are powering the future of zero emission vehicles and through our modern Industrial Strategy. Investments like these will also enable us to realise our commitment for all new cars and vans to be effectively zero emission by 2040.

Since 2010, the government has designed and funded a series of collaborative, industry led competitions with Innovate UK, creating a diverse range of high-quality projects that have driven forward advanced technologies and strengthened UK industrial and supply chain capability. Government and private sector investment in these competitions has already provided over £600 million of funding.

The full list of winning projects can be found below.

PDF, 393KB, 4 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [webmasterdft@dft.gov.uk](mailto:webmasterdft@dft.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

---

## [News story: Funding available for professionals testing extended court hours](#)

- Participation fee for publicly funded legal professionals
- This will help fund additional financial burdens for legal firms
- Flexible Operating Hours pilots to commence by the summer

A small amount of funding will be made available by HM Courts and Tribunals

Service for publicly funded practitioners taking part in Flexible Operating Hours pilots, with a fee of £100 for attendance at a housing duty solicitor slot and £50 for attending a single hearing. This decision has been made to reflect the short term change in arrangements for participating legal professionals and the potential financial burden for firms involved. It will only apply to those who attend court outside the hours of 9am and 5.30pm.

HMCTS announced its plans to test early and late sittings in civil and family courts in November last year, to give people greater access to hearings that can fit around their busy lives.

Manchester Civil Justice Centre and Brentford County Court will run the pilots for six months, testing whether civil and family buildings can be used more effectively; the benefits of making it possible for people to attend court outside of the traditional 10am – 4pm sitting day; and what more flexibility means for staff and legal professionals.

For more information see the [Flexible Operating Hours pilots prospectus](#).

### Notes to editors

1. Participation fees will be funded by HMCTS and administered by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) and would be separate to any normal legal aid claims practitioners would make to the LAA.
2. Pilots are expected to begin by the summer.
3. Any future decision regarding the future of Flexible Operating Hours will be subject to a full and independent evaluation.

---

## [Press release: Mother Nature given helping hand by HS2's Green Corridor](#)

An overgrown eyesore in North Warwickshire has been transformed into a wildlife haven as part of environmental works by High Speed Two (HS2) Limited.

---

## [Press release: Mother Nature given helping hand by HS2's Green Corridor](#)

Situated on the banks of the River Tame adjacent to a sewage works in Hams Hall, the 1.65 hectare (16,500 square metre) site north of Coleshill contains

a mix of grassland and wetland habitat. The area is to be used for the translocation of 5 rare plant species, including marsh willowherb, yellow loosestrife, great burnet and bog stitchwort.

## **Native species**

The site was previously rife with non-native Himalayan balsam, which can reduce the pollination of native species. The invasive plants were cleared earlier this year before Five Rivers Environmental Contracting Ltd installed new shallow ponds, known as scrapes, which are also designed to attract amphibians, such as newts and frogs.

A popular public pathway skirts the boundary of the new habitat, ensuring it is visible to locals and commuters walking to and from the Hams Hall Distribution Park.

As well as transforming the UK's transport system, boosting the economy and unlocking new jobs and opportunities, HS2 aims to be one of the most environmentally responsible infrastructure projects ever delivered in the UK.

A new grassland and wetland habitat created by HS2 in Coleshill, North Warwickshire.

The Hams Hall site is one of more than 100 new wildlife habitats being created in the West Midlands and Warwickshire by HS2 Ltd, alongside landscape architects and ecologists, DJV (a joint venture of WSP and Ramboll) and the early works contractor, Birmingham-based LM JV (a joint venture of Laing O'Rourke and J Murphy & Sons Ltd).

## **Green Corridor**

These sites form part of HS2's Green Corridor, consisting of new wildlife habitats, native woodlands and community spaces. They will help integrate the new railway into its surrounding landscape and environment, and leave a lasting legacy of high quality green spaces all along the route. With the tree planting season now at an end, more than 350,000 trees have already been planted along the Phase One route (Birmingham to London).

Peter Miller, Environment and Town Planning Director, HS2 Ltd, said:

Managing our impact on the environment during construction is a high priority, and we are committed to building a railway that supports new wildlife habitats, woodlands and community spaces which future generations can enjoy.

Our Green Corridor programme, along with various funds available for affected communities along Phase One of the route have seen our work on the ground accelerate over the last 12 months as we prepare for the main works.

As work progresses on building the railway, this will continue and

people will see new sites developed as we create a network of environmental and community projects along the route.

Covering 33 square kilometres, the Green Corridor will see HS2 plant 7 million new trees and shrubs on Phase One, with more than 40 different species of tree being grown in its nursery, including those native to each area the railway passes through.

Site in Coleshill, North Warwickshire before environmental mitigation works by HS2 took place

Other completed sites in the region include land near Stoneleigh Park where a training pond for otters has been created. The false riverbank includes an artificial holt and ensures that pups can safely adopt anti-predator behaviour and learn foraging and hunting skills, before they take to the waters of the nearby River Avon. Artificial burrows and perches are also provided for kingfishers for a similar purpose.

## Roosting sites

The Stoneleigh Park habitat is also home to a bat house, which boasts a mix of roosting sites to attract different species. Ecologists predicted it would be 2 years before the building was occupied, but within weeks of it being installed, bats had already moved in.

Elsewhere, a new habitat near Burton Green in Warwick, will enable the relocation of a badger clan following the construction of a large artificial sett.

Andrew McPherson, Principal Landscape Architect, DJV, said:

Up and down the line of route we are creating new ecosystems that will allow native species to thrive. It may be Europe's largest mega-project, but HS2 is also giving Mother Nature a helping hand and proving that biodiversity is at the heart of the new railway.

It's not just plants and animals that we are focusing on, as much importance is being placed on preserving soil communities. Wherever possible, we are moving soil from the line of route to the new habitats to uphold the land's unique nutrients and biodiversity value.

LM JV's Ecology Manager, Dr Pamela Cramb, said:

Coleshill is an excellent example of the way new habitats have been established as we prepare the route for HS2. Across the West Midlands, we're working with specialists to construct these sites and whether they're in country areas or more urban locations, these initiatives are having a valuable and positive impact to the

environment.

## **Community and business projects**

In addition to the mitigation works, HS2 has a number of different funds and projects to support the environment and communities.

Community and Environment Funds and Business and Local Economy Funds have already contributed £2.5 million across 47 projects in 14 constituencies along the Phase One route.

A further £1 million has been allocated under the Woodland Fund, which will see 18 projects deliver 85 hectares of new woodland and 50 hectares of ancient woodland restoration.