



## **Supporting National Numeracy Day 2019**

On the second annual National Numeracy Day, TP ICAP's EMEA CEO, Frits Vogels, considers the importance of numeracy, the problem of maths anxiety and TP ICAP's work to improve social mobility.

Those of us who work in financial services are acutely aware of just how critical numeracy is to our economy and to productivity here in the UK. But many of us will take for granted just how much it can impact our daily lives.

Poor number skills can impact all aspects of life – with low levels of numeracy linked to unemployment, low wages and even poor health.

We chose to tackle this issue because we wanted to help remove the barriers that prevent talented people from succeeding, no matter what their background, gender or start in life.

Today marks the second year supporting National Numeracy Day, and I am proud of the progress we have made.

Last year we launched our Everybody Counts numeracy campaign, through which we have set ourselves an ambitious aim of reaching one million beneficiaries across our global markets, to help them improve their numeracy skills over the next three years.

We also became a strategic partner to UK charity National Numeracy and we are now working with them to scale-up their activities and empower 250,000 people across the UK to start improving their number skills.

Cross-industry collaboration will be key to making real change on this issue. In February, we held a dinner with many of our clients, to discuss the underlying causes of poor numeracy and to understand the important work companies across our industry are already taking on this agenda. Building on this, today we will be convening CSR leads from across the City to explore how we can now develop an industry wide approach to tackling low levels of numeracy in the UK.

We know that negative attitudes to maths are the main barrier to UK adults improving their skills, and 'maths anxiety' can cause people to feel stressed and anxious about using numbers.

New research from National Numeracy shows us that it is a particularly gendered problem. Their report published on 15 May 2019 shows that fewer women feel confident in dealing with numbers than men. Some 64% of women sampled said

they did not feel confident and three in ten women said that using maths and numbers makes them feel anxious.

It's a pervasive issue that even affects employability. The same research found that a quarter of people would be put off applying for a job if it listed "using numbers and data" as a requirement; a figure which rose to 30% for women.

This is particularly worrying for our financial services industry which has a well-documented challenge in attracting women. While there are many factors that contribute to this, a lack of confidence with numbers is causing many people, particularly women, to rule themselves out too early from careers in finance that offer some of the best potential for social mobility in this country.

It is clear this is a key barrier for both children and adults to improving their numeracy, which is why we will be focusing our future work on tackling maths anxiety.

Later this year, we will be launching a campaign alongside National Numeracy based on new research, which will aim to uncover the extent that 'maths anxiety' prevents people from improving their numeracy, and in particular, the impact this has on gender disparity in the workplace.

We know we can achieve so much more by working together. Our colleagues will be using their skills and expertise to support the ambitions of the campaign and we want to encourage companies from across the sector to champion this agenda however they can.

I look forward to finding out what we can achieve together as an industry.

**Frits Vogels,**  
**EMEA CEO, TP ICAP plc**