

Maths Champions Toolkit

Maths Champions are Workplace Learning Advocates (WLAs) or others who promote maths learning for adults both at work and beyond the workplace. This toolkit will give you some background and tips to enable you to do this.

Who is this toolkit for?

- For people who want to understand the role and get some ideas of how to carry it out. It is designed for people in all different types and sizes of workplaces – you can be part of a large or small company/organisation or be a business advisor who supports business start-ups and developing businesses.
- For people who want to help themselves and others get involved in improving their maths skills
- You don't need to be a maths expert or teacher
- You do need to have an interest in inspiring and motivating others to improve their maths skills

This toolkit has five sections:

Section 1 The Maths Champion role

Understand the role of a Maths Champion

Section 2: Getting started

How to get started at your workplace and explain your role
Funding options

Section 3: What other Maths Champions are doing

See how other Maths Champions inspire all types of learning

Section 4: Keeping going

Keep your role as a Maths Champion going

Section 5: Support

Find out what support you can get
Find the range of maths tools, resources and learning opportunities that are available in your area

Section 1: The Maths Champion role

- Understand the role of a Maths Champion

What is a Maths Champion?

A Maths Champion:

- is committed to the importance of adult maths
- understands the benefits of maths learning for adults
- motivates others to have a go at maths
- attends network meetings or completes training activity to improve their own knowledge of maths learning opportunities

Maths Champions are not experts in maths and do not have to be able to teach maths. They are people who are interested in inspiring and motivating others to improving their maths skills. It is a voluntary role and takes as much time as you have, sometimes only 10-15 minutes a week.

Training to become a Maths Champion is very flexible and can be adapted to suit your experience/time constraints. Training is available through specific network meetings, by registering on the closed section of the WLA website and completing the WLA online course or by attending the two-day WLA course which is now inclusive of maths champion training.

What are the benefits for employers?

- costly mistakes being made could be eradicated with better Maths skills?
- problems with health and safety issues because employees can't understand the regulations could be addressed?
- maths problems that impact on the bottom line could be addressed?
- employees who have improved their skills are more likely to be confident, motivated and receptive to further training.

What are some of the benefits for you and your colleagues?

- a chance to develop maths skills for work and home use e.g.
- understanding payslips, bills and forms
- using Excel (spreadsheets) for invoicing, cash flow, schedules and rotas
- working out how to compare petrol prices; gas/electricity deals; mobile phone tariffs and how to use comparison sites etc
- helping children with their maths homework
- finding maths tasks at work easier

Your thoughts and ideas relating to your workplace:

Section 2: Getting started

- How to get started at your workplace and explain your role
- Funding options

What can you do to get started?

Talk to management

A good way to start is to talk to **company management, HR or the Learning and Development team**. Tell them about Maths Champions and show them the information about benefits for employers and get their okay for starter activities. Explore their suggestions and identify how they will back you. In small organisations you can discuss these ideas with a few people who work together.

If you are in a business centre or business park think of doing some maths related activities together. You'd be surprised how much help other businesses can provide. Want to know more about how to use excel spreadsheets or how to do your accounts more effectively? Try talking to the accountant down the corridor about putting-on a 30 minute intro one lunchtime for all the tenants. After all, he's a maths expert and next month you could share one of your skills with others.

There are many different ways you can get started and in an order that suits you and your organisation

Do some research

Find out how colleagues feel about maths and whether they would like to improve their skills. You can do this in a range of ways ...

We have developed a maths questionnaire that could be used by people to help them think about the maths skills they might like to develop. Here is the link - <http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/content/maths-work-and-home-questionnaire>

You can also print off a paper-based version of this questionnaire and distribute it around the workplace to give you an idea of maths areas of interest to colleagues – <http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/download-maths-work-and-home-questionnaire>

You could also use the questionnaire to start informal discussions with individuals or in team meetings to find out maths interests e.g. "Are there any areas of your home or working life that would be easier if you improved your maths skills? For example would life be easier if you could use excel more effectively?"

You might put some of the topics from the questionnaire up on display on the staff noticeboard and ask people to choose areas of interest e.g.

Please indicate with a tick if you'd like to know more about any of the following topics. We will look at setting up a lunch-time info sessions/sending out links to useful websites for the most popular choices

Keeping track of my spending.
Using the calculator on my Smartphone
Knowing the calculator is right!
Helping children with their maths homework.
Making sense of the figures, graphs and charts, e.g. in holiday brochures.
Time-keeping, planning/timing/scheduling tasks, appointments, etc.
Comparing petrol prices; gas/electricity deals; mobile phone tariffs, comparison sites, etc.
Filling in timesheets and calculating overtime.
Checking my wage slips and deductions.
Calculating the numbers of items in a box or boxes on a pallet.
Understanding sales graphs and budget figures.
Using Excel (spreadsheets) for invoicing, cash flow, schedules and rotas.
Using money e.g. handling cash, sales, invoices, receipts, budgets, pay slips etc
YOUR IDEAS <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••

Use a noticeboard to display information about maths

You could download some posters from the Maths4Us website –
http://maths4us.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/posters_maths4us_final.pdf

You could set up a Graffiti wall to collect information/ideas about maths

MATHS GRAFFITI WALL !



Tell us your thoughts about maths ... Positives/Negatives ... What training you think is needed Any other ideas

Promoting your new Maths Champion role

One of your early activities should be to tell people what a Maths Champion is and how you can help. There are different ways of doing this so choose what suits you and your workplace. Here are some ideas :

Flyers/leaflets

Put leaflets in reception/staff room explaining your role. You could download a leaflet template – <http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/wla-maths-champion-leaflet>

Send an introductory email launching your role e.g.

DRAFT EMAIL

Hi all

I've recently become the company Maths Champion. My role is to help people in the company get motivated about maths.

I've found out about lots of free tools and courses that are available to our company. Why not start by having a look at this questionnaire to find out what maths skills you might like to develop -

<http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/content/maths-work-and-home-questionnaire>

If you would like to find out more about my role and about maths learning opportunities for yourself then please get in touch.

Other options

Chat with your colleagues about maths informally. Ask them if they are aware of all the useful websites/resources/apps relating to maths
<http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/resources-support-maths-champions>

Find out who already has maths skills in your workplace and encourage them to share these skills with others. They might be willing to do this one-to-one or be happy to share their skills at team meetings or at specially organised Maths Sessions in the workplace either in work time or over lunch.

Launch your role at Team Meetings

Hold a Maths Champion launch drop-in – Lunch-time 30 minute drop-in - Chance for people to come and find out what it's all about.

Write a short article in the organisations newsletter or the intranet site

Offer practice maths tests - The Move On website (**No longer updated but still has useful resources**) - <http://www.move-on.org.uk/practicetests.asp>

Use 'Guess the number or weight' fun activities – Put a quantity of items (e.g. sweets) in a jar, and ask people to guess how many there are, or how heavy the jar is. The winner gets a prize or the contents of the jar.

Offer Test the company –Materials may be useful to take a whole company approach to 'having a go' at maths. Go to - <http://www.move-on.org.uk/testthe.asp> You will need to register on the site to be able to use the materials.

Offer prizes and gift vouchers for enrolment, attendance or taking a maths test.

Send out fliers with salary slips to draw attention to the benefits of learning maths.

Use Maths takeaways – As series of leaflets in a form of a takeaway menu with ideas and quiz questions to try maths in a fun way. You can find them on the Move On website – www.move-on.org.uk under Numeracy resources.

Use Health & Wellbeing as a way of getting people to engage with maths. See the WLA newsletter informED Issue 2 to see the ‘Know your Numbers’ event held by WLAs at Mortons of Horncastle Ltd - <http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/news/informed-newsletter-issue-2>

Use existing learning campaigns that will be linking with Maths4Us. They will be able to link you with useful resources to support your role as a Maths Champion. Here are 3 of the campaigns

Adult Learners Week

This is the UK’s largest and longest running learning campaign. Held each May it encourages thousands of adults to give learning a go. Go to <http://www.alw.org.uk> for more info.

National Learning At Work Day

Learning at Work Day is held every year in May. Go to www.learningatworkday.com for more info.

Quick Reads

Quick Reads encourages people to start reading. On World Book Day in March each year new quick-read books become available. Go to www.quickreads.org.uk for more information. Have a look at the downloadable resource to go alongside the books to help build confidence/functional skills - <http://lists.niace.org.uk/lz/lz.aspx?p1=05826901S7411&w=6006>

Funding options

There are many ways of running free learning opportunities (informal and formal).

Informal

People in the workplace or community may have maths skills and might be happy to give their time free. They might have a skill or expertise that they are happy to share with friends and colleagues e.g. Excel expertise or expert of finding money comparison websites.

Local colleges/training providers might run a taster course in maths

Your employer might contribute part of the cost to running a taster session or maths event.

Use the free resources that are listed at the end of this toolkit and the resources on the WLA website.

Formal

If colleagues are interested in gaining some formal qualifications in maths then there are various options. If they want to study on an individual basis you could direct them to suitable advice or courses. Useful contacts

- The National Careers Service for advice on maths courses - <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk>
- Maths qualifications are offered by a range of awarding bodies. See this link for the offer from one of them - <http://cdn.cityandguilds.com/ProductDocuments/Skills for Work and Life/English Mathematics and ICT Skills/3748/Additional documents/3748 Faq v2-3.pdf>

Think of some ideas and make a few notes or reminders of things you may do in your workplace

Section 3: What other Maths Champions are doing

- See how other Maths Champions inspire all types of learning

What are other Maths Champions doing?/What other useful work has taken place in the past?

Learning from other WLA Maths Champions

Becky is a WLA at Alex Smiles Ltd in Sunderland (North East region). She has recently signed up as a Maths Champion and is hosting a Maths Champion Workshop for Alex Smiles staff and WLAs from other local companies. Becky has been working to improve maths skills in the workplace for a while. She says "In Adult Learners Week 2012 we held drop in sessions for all members of staff who could come and find out more about the literacy, numeracy, ICT, NVQ and apprenticeship training available to them. We have had 4 people complete level 1 or 2 functional skills in maths as well as 12 members of staff who have done level 2 functional skills in maths as part of their apprenticeship. This means that over 16% of our staff have done a maths qualification in the last year." She now wants to use the skills she gains as a Maths Champion to go on and do more and her next plan is to set up workshops on Financial Capability and Budgeting for staff. The workshops are being promoted on noticeboards around the workplace as "Making Ends Meet - A series of 4 workshops helping you to manage your money" and aim to help staff to have the confidence to manage money better and make informed choices about their financial circumstances. Here is the poster Becky is using to promote the Making Ends Meet Workshops ...

Making Ends Meet

A series of 4 workshops helping you to manage your money

Am I getting all the money I am entitled to?

How can I produce a realistic budget for my household that will help me?

What am I getting the best with ever increasing energy bills deal from my supplier?

If you are unsure about any of your answers then these workshops are for you. By the end of the 4 workshops you will have the confidence to manage your money better and make informed choices in the future about your financial circumstances. Let your manager know if you would be interested in taking part in the four workshops.

Case studies

Some of our WLA case studies show you what some of our WLAs have been doing related to improving maths skills

<http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/case-study-%E2%80%93-benefits-apprenticeships> and

<http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/case-study-alex-smiles-ltd>

Learning Campaigns

The various learning campaigns celebrate the achievements of many different learners. Have a look at the story from an Adult Learners Week winner who included

improving their maths skills in their learning journey - <http://www.alw.org.uk/winners-stories/winner-story/2012/aysha-bentley>

Section 4: Keeping going

- Keep your role as a Maths Champion going

How do you keep your role as a Maths Champion going?

Engaging management and HR. Try and get support from HR and management and provide regular feedback. Keep giving feedback and involving senior levels in the organisation. Invite senior management to learning activities

Celebrate success with learners, colleagues and invite management and HR as well. Hold a small celebration meeting, article or photograph on intranet, company newsletter or email.

Share success stories. Let people know what others are doing and how they are getting on. Learning is infectious and people like to share their experience with others

Section 5: Support

- Find out what support you can get
- Find the range of maths tools, resources and learning opportunities that are available in your area

What support is available?

Remember Workbase and The Johnston Partnership are available to help you, no matter how big or how small the question or problem may be. This includes Telephone and email support. Contact:

Frances Graham - Frances@workbase.org.uk Tel. 020 8343 1334 (Midlands/Southern regions) or

Liz Johnston - liz@learningadvocates.co.uk Tel 07791 639 146 (Northern regions)

ALSO - Live Tweets, Facebook, LinkedIn and website - <http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/>

Where can you find out about the maths tools, resources and learning opportunities?

We have developed a list of resources for Maths Champions that includes information about all of the key resources and maths learning opportunities.

<http://www.workplacelearningadvocates.org.uk/resources-support-maths-champions>