

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
www.niace.org.uk

Press Release

PR61/08

Embargo: 00.01 hrs Thursday 2nd October 2008

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO HELP ADULTS OVERCOME FEAR OF MATHS

Seventeen million adults in the UK – that’s almost one in three - have difficulty with numbers¹. To help counter this a national numeracy campaign - *Maths Takes You There* - is launched today, Thursday 2nd October 2008, by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)⁴ with funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)³.

Maths Takes You There will be launched at a conference in Sheffield today – Thursday, 2nd October 2008 – to encourage more maths learning in the community and the workplace. The conference will include interactive learning to reduce the fear often associated with maths. A series of workshops will help delegates develop an action plan, empowering them to engage their own reluctant audience.

The conference will also see the launch of a publication called *Maths Takes You There*, to complement the campaign and to help adults improve their maths skills. A website² will also be launched, offering further support and featuring a workplace challenge to encourage people outside of the conference to get involved with the campaign.

David Lammy MP, Minister for Skills, said, “Employers are absolutely fundamental if we want to improve the skills base of the UK and maintain our competitiveness and prosperity. Two thirds of the 2020 workforce have already left compulsory education so businesses, Union Learning Reps and advice & guidance staff have a crucial role to play in unlocking the talent of our people. Driving up numeracy skills is one of our biggest challenges and the partnership between Government, colleges and employers is absolutely key in this agenda.”

Richard Crabb, NIACE Numeracy Campaign Officer, said, “To a lot of adults, maths can seem boring, pointless or even scary. Many people are still haunted by the memories of struggling with it at school. It’s hard to deny that maths plays a huge part in everyday life – from figuring out your personal finances to going out for a meal with friends - and even though most people claim they can’t ‘do maths’, people use

maths every day, often without realising. By launching a national campaign, we hope to eliminate the fear that is so often associated with numbers, build people's confidence up and help them realise that maths can be as enjoyable as it is useful."

Ends

For further information please contact:

Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer, on 0116 204 4248 or 07795 358 870.

Marie Koupparis, NIACE Assistant Press Officer on 0116 204 4279 or 07824 481 499 or email: marie.koupparis@niace.org.uk

Notes to Editors

1. Findings of The Leitch Review of Skills, published in December 2006.
2. To get involved with the campaign or to download a PDF version on *Maths Takes You There* visit www.mathstakesyouthere.org.uk. For a paper copy of the publication email mathstakesyouthere@niace.org.uk or call the Campaigns Team on 0116 2047072
3. *Maths Takes You There* is funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) as part of their, 'Our Future. It's In Our Hands.' campaign. For more information visit www.lsc.gov.uk/whatwedo/ourfuture.htm
4. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the leading non-government organisation for lifelong learning in England, and exists to encourage more and different adults to engage in better-quality learning of all kinds. It campaigns for, and celebrates the achievements of, all adult learners.