Appointment of Trustees



National Numeracy
Getting on with numbers

Introduction

Letter from Perdy and Sam

The UK is in the grip of a numeracy crisis. Around half of working-age people have the numeracy skills of a primary school child. Poor numeracy costs our economy up to £25 billion annually and holds back individuals, families, and communities. This needs to change.

Low numeracy impacts lives in profound ways, limiting job prospects, creating financial stress, and reducing social mobility. It's a barrier that perpetuates inequality, affecting everything from employment to health. At National Numeracy, we are driven by a bold vision: to empower people with the confidence and skills to unlock brighter futures, especially in the communities that need it most.

Since the charity was founded in 2012, we've made significant strides in raising awareness of this hidden issue, challenging negative attitudes, and supporting both adults and children to become more confident with numbers. Our work is focused on practical, lasting impact – helping people progress in their careers, take control of their finances, and foster a positive approach to maths in the next generation.

The issue is vast, but we know what works. Low numeracy has a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities. By targeting those with the lowest numeracy skills, we're addressing a crucial piece of the social mobility puzzle. Our partnerships with employers, schools, and communities demonstrate that change is possible – and scalable. Together, we're enabling individuals to thrive with numbers, leading to stronger financial resilience and greater opportunities, and also to support the children in their care to feel positive about maths.

This is an exciting time to join National Numeracy. We are midway through our ambitious 2025–28 strategy and making strong progress towards the three Big Changes we want to see: Numeracy for Equality, Numeracy for Success and Numeracy for Community. Our programmes, campaigns, partnerships and influencing work are reaching more people and building momentum across the UK. As we work towards empowering half a million people to thrive using numeracy by 2028, we are looking for trustees who can help us build on that progress and increase our impact.

As a trustee, you will play a pivotal role in driving our impact at scale. You will join a dynamic, passionate team committed to improving lives through numeracy. If you're inspired by the opportunity to make a real difference and have the strategic insight to help shape our future, we would love to have you on board.

Thank you for your interest in National Numeracy.

Perdita Fraser, Chair of Trustees & Sam Sims, CEO



Above: Perdita Fraser, Chair of Trustees at National Numeracy's 10th Anniversary event.



Above: Sam Sims – National Numeracy CEO at National Numeracy's 10th Anniversary event.

The problem

Poor numeracy skills hold individuals and the country back, and change is urgently needed. A lack of number confidence and numeracy skills negatively affects lives and livelihoods, contributing to serious societal issues such as unemployment, poor health, and rising debt levels. Low numeracy acts as a persistent barrier to social mobility, with a person's socio-economic background being the strongest predictor of their numeracy level, and there is a pronounced gap in number confidence between men and women. We need to break this cycle and address the issue of low numeracy now.

Improving people's skills, confidence, and attitudes toward numbers and maths can make a tangible difference, opening up educational, employment and financial opportunities that lead to brighter futures. As the UK's only charity dedicated to everyday mathematics, National Numeracy plays a critical role in addressing this issue. By focusing on communities in greatest need, the charity aims to enhance social mobility and promote inclusion through improved numeracy skills.

Since 2012, National Numeracy's work has demonstrated that improving numeracy can help individuals overcome socioeconomic barriers, offering them the chance to thrive both personally and professionally. This not only benefits individuals but also strengthens communities and the wider economy.

Our vision

There are three Big Changes we want to see.

1. Numeracy for equality
Improving numeracy to help address systemic inequalities, level the playing field and create a wealth of opportunities.

2. Numeracy for success
Working towards a generational shift to a maths-positive culture, from cradle to career.

3. Numeracy for community
An inclusive, whole-community approach targeted towards areas of greatest need to help create communities empowered by number confidence.

Our mission

To empower people in disadvantaged communities to thrive by using numeracy to open up opportunities and access brighter futures.

Who we serve

Everyone can access our resources, but our priority is supporting people with low number confidence or skills in disadvantaged communities.

How we work

- We work directly with beneficiaries, supporting them in improving their number confidence and numeracy skills through face-to-face and online interventions.
- We work with those who support others, such as teachers, parents and carers who support children or employers who support their staff.
- We take a place-based approach and work hand-in-hand in the community with a rich and varied group of supporters and partners who are deeply connected to the people and needs of particular places.
- We drive positive change by working with and influencing those who can effect change



Above: National Numeracy Staff during the Lord Mayor's Show, 2023 in London.



The role

National Numeracy is looking to appoint two new trustees to join its charity Board to replace retiring trustees who have reached their maximum term limit.

These are key appointments to help steer the charity through its next phase of development. The new trustees will be inspiring, dynamic and ambitious individuals who are committed to making a significant and lasting improvement to numeracy levels across the UK.

While we welcome applications from candidates with a range of backgrounds and experience, for these appointments we are particularly interested in people who can bring expertise, perspective and networks that will help National Numeracy deepen its impact and extend its influence. We are especially keen to hear from candidates with experience in one or more of the following areas:

- **Maths, numeracy and educatio**n – Knowledge and experience of maths, numeracy and/or the education and skills landscape, with the insight and connections to help strengthen National Numeracy's credibility, influence and reach.
- **External influence and strategic partnerships** – Experience in one or more of campaigning and communications, policy and government engagement, fundraising, or strategic partnerships, with the ability to build relationships, open doors and help extend National Numeracy's profile and influence.

We do not expect candidates to bring experience across all of these areas; we are seeking complementary strengths across the appointments.

Trustees are encouraged to get to know National Numeracy well and to respond to opportunities to involve themselves in National Numeracy activities. Beyond board meetings this might include supporting key initiatives, such as National Numeracy Day, meeting with prospective strategic funders, or providing guidance on major projects to the Executive team as appropriate.

Whilst the charity is based in the South East of England, we are looking for the right candidates from across the UK and are willing to pay travel expenses for meeting attendance if required. We are also committed to broadening the diversity of the board and would like to hear from applicants who can contribute greater diversity of representation, experience and thinking, including Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, LGBTQ+ people and people with disabilities.









Key roles & responsibilities

- Participate in the role of the board in providing effective oversight of the charity.
- Help to develop and refine the strategy as necessary to ensure National Numeracy achieves its aims.
- Contribute to meetings of the Board of Trustees and be willing to participate in any sub-committees that might be suitable to your skill set.
- Participate in ensuring that the charity follows governance best practice and good management of resources, being aware of risk.
- Be willing to represent National Numeracy externally to build its profile, influence opinion-formers and raise funds. This may include appearances in the media, speaking platforms and more informal communication.
- Help to initiate and foster relationships with potential and existing strategic funders and partners, including business leaders and senior government personnel.
- In all activities, help establish and maintain National Numeracy as a highly respected organisation.

We welcome applications from people at all stages of their careers looking to extend their experience and would be happy to talk to candidates who have no previous trustee experience but who have an understanding of and commitment to the importance of our mission and a commitment to learning. We will provide trustee training as necessary.

The successful candidates will be joining a very strong and committed Board – see here for details of other board members (please note this includes the trustees that are shortly retiring from the board). They will be engaged, enthusiastic and creative individuals with a passion to help contribute to the next phase of development for the charity to scale-up and make a really important difference.

Below: National Numeracy Research Launch Event at Capital One HQ, London 2023.



Person specification

Person specification
Passionate and committed to improving social mobility
Inclusive approach to working with trustees and staff
A strong belief in the importance of National Numeracy's mission
Absolute integrity and honesty with a commitment to building and maintaining the charity's credibility and reputation
Someone who is comfortable and confident in expressing their opinion and providing constructive challenge
Creative thinker but with good judgement and risk awareness
Capacity to attend five meetings a year plus any relevant sub-committees, and the time to review trustee papers, with flexibility to accommodate busy periods and key campaigns such as around National Numeracy Day
Essential skills/experience
First-rate communication skills
Desirable skills/experience
Experience and understanding of governance issues
Good understanding of the not-for-profit sector
Understanding of social impact
Knowledge of education/skills/numeracy and related issues
Experience in leading/implementing a successful growth strategy for an organisation
Well-networked and willing to make introductions for the charity (for example to facilitate fundraising, advocacy and/or campaigning)



Governance overview

National Numeracy framework for leadership and governance

The framework for governance aims to ensure that the leadership and governance of National Numeracy is strategic and highly effective. The framework supports the following key principles:

- Trustees work as an effective team and understand their accountability and the part they play in the strategic leadership of National Numeracy to achieve a significant and sustainable impact.
- Trustees are appointed to the Board of Trustees and tasks are delegated so that all members contribute; feel that their individual skills, knowledge and experience are well used; and that the overall workload is shared.
- The Board of Trustees provides support, challenge and encouragement to the CEO and senior leadership team.
- Trustees ensure that statutory requirements and regulations are met, that National Numeracy provides value for money in its use of resources and that board business is conducted efficiently and effectively.

Method and meetings

The framework is aligned to the main objectives. The CEO provides regular progress reports to trustees as well as a comprehensive set of papers for the quarterly board meeting. This supplements the National Numeracy Scorecard which is updated quarterly as a reporting tool on progress against financial and social impact targets. Trustee meetings usually last three hours. There are also a small number of permanent, e.g. nominations, and temporary, e.g. strategy development, sub-committees. These committees also meet quarterly immediately prior/following the main board meeting.

Terms of appointment

This is a voluntary role requiring attendance at quarterly board meetings and the occasional meeting with the CEO and other members of the executive team. The office is based in Falmer, East Sussex, but the board meetings take place in London or virtually. National Numeracy will pay for travel and subsistence expenses.

The term of office for all trustees is three years. Subject to remaining eligibility to be a trustee, any trustee may be reappointed or re-elected.

How to apply

Interested candidates should apply for this role by sending a CV and cover letter to Kate Sumner: HR@nationalnumeracy.org.uk

If you would prefer to have an informal chat before applying then please contact Kate Sumner on the above email address to arrange.

National Numeracy is an equal opportunities employer and all applicants are treated equally and fairly throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Deadline for applications:
16th November 2026 by 10am

Timeline

We anticipate holding interviews on the following dates:

- **First-round interviews: Between 30th November and 11th December 2026**
- **Second-round interviews: Between 4th and 15th January 2027**

We kindly ask candidates to keep these dates in mind when applying and to flag any potential availability issues as early as possible.

Due to Trustee availability and the need to ensure the successful candidates are onboarded by April 2027, we will need to keep closely to these timescales. We will do our best to accommodate individual circumstances where possible, but flexibility may be limited.

GDPR

By sending an application you are giving consent for us to process any data received as part of your application. Please remember not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. Please do not include data of this sort in your application unless you wish to and understand that you are consenting to us processing this.

Further reading and resources

- Our strategy
- Our research and impact
- Beneficiary case studies and news

Jason's story

"As a parent I struggled when my kids asked for help with their homework. There's a sense of shame and feeling inadequate because your children are asking you for help and you can't provide it. You're meant to provide for your kids.

But now I've done the National Numeracy Challenge I've grown confident with numbers. I don't have to hide from my kids when they ask me for help, and I really enjoy doing it. I don't want them to be afraid of numbers like I was at school. We get a buzz out of doing the homework together, and I'm learning from them too. I'm six feet tall but it makes me feel seven feet being able to help them out. Improving my numeracy hasn't just helped me with my kids, it's helped me at work too. I've enhanced my CV and future job prospects."

These achievements led to Jason being named a National Numeracy Day Hero, appearing in the media and in videos alongside our celebrity ambassadors to promote the benefits of numeracy.

National Numeracy is an independent charity that empowers children and adults in the UK to get on with numbers so they can fulfil their potential at work, home and school. Our work combats low levels of numeracy, improving how people understand and work with numbers in everyday life and helping to spark better opportunities in life.

National Numeracy is a registered company (company no: 7886294) and charity (charity no: 1145669).

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