

Browne Jacobson solicitor becomes first in private practice to be awarded Plain Numbers accreditation

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Browne Jacobson's commercial insurance partner Tim Johnson, who leads the firm's insurance policy drafting and distribution practice, has become the first solicitor in private practice to become accredited as a Plain Numbers practitioner.

Plain Numbers is a social purpose company that works with brands across a wide range of sectors, in particular financial services and insurance, to improve understanding of numerical information by customers.

Tim's work with the team at Plain Numbers will further enhance the firm's policy drafting and distribution offering, which to date has drafted thousands of policies and other customer communications for insurers and intermediaries, and tens of thousands of bespoke policy clauses.

According to research by the Association of British Insurers, 71% of adults said better explanations of numbers in insurance documents helped to improve their interaction with the sector. The focus on numerical clarity is particularly significant in the context of the new FCA Consumer Duty which places consumers at the heart of the financial services sector. The Duty outlines the importance of firms ensuring consumer understanding, and the guidance specifically draws attention to the fact poor numeracy must be considered.

The partnership with Plain Numbers also complements the ground-breaking work on insurance policy readability undertaken by Browne Jacobson in conjunction with the University of Nottingham. After working with the University of Nottingham to devise tools that can improve the readability of policy wordings by as much as 10 years, adding numerical comprehension was a natural next step, which provides further benefit to the firm's clients in the insurance sector.

Tim Johnson, Insurance Partner, said: "After our ground breaking academic research into the readability of insurance policies, I am excited about the opportunity to add clarity of numerical communications to our services to clients. With the increased regulatory focus on customer understanding and fair value brought about by the Consumer Duty, this is the perfect time for us to further enhance our offering by 'adding words to numbers' through this innovative and exciting partnership."

The Plain Numbers Approach builds on over a decade of work supporting people who struggle with numbers. By making seemingly small changes to the way that numbers and data are presented organisations can generate a substantial improvement in comprehension, leading to greater confidence that customers are making positive choices and achieving positive outcomes. This is an evidenced approach. Research trials across a variety of industries and forms of communication saw that when the Plain Numbers Approach was adopted the number of people who understood customer information doubled.

Mike Ellicock, Chief Executive of Plain Numbers, said: "It's been a pleasure to get to know Tim during his Plain Numbers Practitioner training and I'm excited at the potential to transform customer understanding of insurance policies for Browne Jacobson clients. We are looking forward to supporting Tim and his team in this important work throughout the partnership."

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