

Payslips as tools of empowerment, not sources of confusion

Sheryl Steele ACIPP, head of payroll experience, PayCaptain, explains how payroll professionals can do their bit to help employees understand the payslips they receive, empowering staff and reducing queries into the department



In a world inundated with financial intricacies, where the language of payslips often feels like a cryptic code, there's need for change. The mission should be beyond the mechanical task of depositing hard-earned money into bank accounts; it's about empowering individuals through intelligible payslips which transcend the conventional norms.

“In the evolving landscape of employee well-being, payroll can set the stage and through this distinctive lens, can rewrite the script of financial understanding, one payslip at a time”

The traditional payslip has remained largely unchanged, laden with jargon and complex numerical codes, creating a barrier for many, which can leave employees feeling disengaged. Striking a chord with the reality that a significant

portion of the working population struggles with basic numeracy skills, payslips should be tools of empowerment rather than sources of confusion.

Startling statistics reveal that approximately 20 million adults and half of the UK population possess the mathematical skills of a primary school child, highlighting the potential barriers faced by a significant portion of working adults. A payslip shouldn't be an additional hurdle for these people.

Financial transparency is the cornerstone of a healthy employer-employee relationship and payslips are more than routine paperwork. They are, in essence, the narrative of an individual's hard work and dedication. Every employee deserves to understand this narrative, irrespective of their level of mathematical proficiency.

I've recently had the pleasure of working with Plain Numbers, an organisation which enables firms to take practical steps to better support their customers who struggle with numbers, by applying the Plain Numbers approach to their communications. I, myself, underwent a transformative journey through the comprehensive Plain Numbers training process. This wasn't just about learning to communicate about numbers in the best way possible but

about adopting a fresh perspective on how financial information can be better absorbed for those most vulnerable.

So as a new practitioner, armed with a new lens and toolkit, I was delighted to re-write the payslip rulebook and support the development of a Plain Numbers Certified payslip.

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Plain Numbers Certified payslips

Certification, in this context, signifies that the payslip has undergone a meticulous evaluation by Plain Numbers, ensuring it adheres to a superior standard of clarity in presenting numerical information.

The impact of this approach extends beyond mere comprehension. By streamlining payslip communication, payroll departments can bridge the gap between employees and their financial information. It's about instilling confidence and assurance that every penny earned is accounted for, fostering a sense of financial security.

In essence, this approach transforms



ACME

Name	Jason Smith
Company	ACME Trading Co.

Payslip Date	31 July 2023
Payroll Code	18
Tax Code	1257L
NI Number	XX123456A
PAYE Reference	

Payments	
Salary	£2,000.00
30 hours Overtime @ £11.54	£346.20
Statutory Sick Pay	£52.00
Total Payments	£2,398.20

Deductions	
Pension Contribution	£45.08
PAYE Tax	£269.80
National Insurance	£162.02
Total Deductions	£476.90
NET PAYMENT	£1,921.30

Benefits (included in tax calculation)	
Total Benefits	£0.00

Mailing Address	
72-74 Dean Street	
London	
W1D 3SG	
United Kingdom	

This Period Totals	
Gross Pay	£2,398.20
Taxable Pay	£2,398.20
Tax Paid	£269.80
Employee Pension Contribution	£45.08
Employer Pension Contribution	£93.91

Year To Date Totals	
Previous Employment Taxable Pay	£0.00
Previous Employment Tax Paid	£0.00
Gross Pay YTD	£2,398.20
Taxable Pay YTD	£2,398.20
Tax Paid	£269.80
Employee National Insurance YTD	£162.02
Benefits YTD	£0.00
Net Pay YTD	£1,921.30

Thank you for your hard work this month - we appreciate you!

ACME

Jason Smith
ACME Trading Co.

You will receive **£1,921.30** on 31 July 2023
This payment relates to the hours you worked in July 2023

If you would like some help with your payslip please [click here](#)

This is what your pay is made up of...		This has been paid out for you...	
Salary	£2,000.00	Pension Contribution	£45.08
30 hours Overtime @ £11.54	£346.20	PAYE Tax	£269.80
Statutory Sick Pay	£52.00	National Insurance	£162.02
Total	£2,398.20	Total	£476.90

This means your net pay is **£1,921.30**

Good news - your employer has also paid **£93.91** into your **Pension Fund** this period, making a total of **£138.99**

Thank you for your hard work this month - we appreciate you!

Plain Numbers
Certified
P07608023117

To see more detail version of your payslip please [click here](#)

An example of a standard payslip and an example of a Plain Numbers Certified payslip.

“It’s about instilling confidence and assurance that every penny earned is accounted for, fostering a sense of financial security”

the often-neglected payslip into a tool for financial literacy and employee engagement. It’s a reminder that behind every payroll entry is a story of dedication, effort and livelihood. As the newly launched Plain Numbers Certified payslip makes its debut, it carries the promise

of a more transparent, inclusive and empathetic payroll experience.

Beyond the altruistic motivation to empower individuals in understanding their finances, there are also pragmatic advantages. Traditional payslips tend to generate numerous queries, burdening

already busy payroll teams. By providing a more inclusive payslip, this can ease the strain and reduce queries due to ease of understanding.

In the evolving landscape of employee well-being, payroll can set the stage and through this distinctive lens, can rewrite the script of financial understanding, one payslip at a time.

Today, we’re closer to a world where every employee can effortlessly decipher their payslip. ■