



How to Guide – Commissioning ESOL for Refugees in the South East of England

A guide for local authorities and others
supporting Resettled Refugees from Syria

September 2017

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*In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion
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Learning and Work Institute is a new independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

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ABOUT

This annotated checklist and background information is designed to help local authorities and other agencies supporting the resettlement of refugees think through the issues of ensuring that refugees who need to learn English gain access to appropriate provision. A summary checklist is provided first, with more detail later in the document. A glossary is provided at the end, and there are also suggestions for further reading/resources.

Both English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and the resettlement of refugees are fluid in policy terms, in which the picture can change rapidly. However, both fields have the benefit of being able to draw on a positive history of good practice. Some of the documents linked to this resource were produced some time ago - but are still very relevant today. Others are brand new. Both are equally useful, though the former may need slight adaptations to meet today's regulations and the new names of agencies.

QUICK CHECKLIST

The quick checklist should be used in conjunction with the more detailed information in the sections below (page 11 onwards). The first section is the short guide based on questions to ask learning providers and the second section explains the concepts in more detail.

A glossary is provided at the end in case terms used are unfamiliar.

STEP ONE

Learner needs – do you understand what ESOL needs / other learning needs the refugees you are supporting have?

Who can carry out some initial assessments?

STEP TWO

What is available in your area? Who are the learning providers and what do they offer (see the [South East Map](#))?

Does the offer match your learners' needs?

Can your learners access the provision?

Will the costs of the learning and the support / access be met through mainstream funding? If not, how can the funding be found?

STEP THREE

Where are the gaps in ESOL provision – what can you do about them?

STEP FOUR

If you need to commission ESOL provision from scratch what do you need to think about?

STEP FIVE

Supporting learners through their learning of English and making sure they can progress into more learning and employment.

Key Questions

The main section below gives explanations and details but the key questions to ask potential learning providers are listed here:

1. ESOL learners

Which types of learner does the provider target?

Do these match the profile of your group?

Is the provider able to be flexible or provide bespoke classes?

2. Learner needs

When can the learners start?

Are there roll-on/roll-off courses?

Are there informal learning opportunities which could start sooner - e.g. run by volunteers?

Will courses be long enough/enough hours per week?

How is support offered to select the appropriate course? (And for those who do not yet speak any English?)

How are refugees supported to understand the UK education system?

Other needs include access issues, transport and childcare.

3. What does/could ESOL provision include to meet the varying needs of ESOL learners?

What is offered? A good quality provider should be meeting all or most learner needs or have routes to them through partnership working.

Do you have a clear idea of the learning needs of your group? If not, can providers help you by carrying out initial assessments?

What additional support and learning opportunities can the provider offer?

Can the learning needs of all your refugee group/s be met? And if not, can the provider offer signposting to somewhere they can be met easily?

Is there support for learners - childcare? transport? location? timings?

4. ESOL providers

What sort of provision will suit your groups best?

Can you develop partnerships with a suitable range of providers?

Do they already collaborate with each other to be able to offer a more comprehensive service or can they be persuaded to do so?

5. When and for how long to learn English?

How frequently do classes start - twice a year or more often?

How much face to face learning per week does the provider offer?

Are they willing to adapt their usual practice to meet the needs of refugees?

Can they support / work in partnership to provide additional learning opportunities beyond the usual class time?

Can voluntary sector or other alternate provision cover summer or other holiday periods or the time before a formal class starts?

Can the provider go to the learner?

6. Entitlements and Funding for ESOL (and other adult / post school education provision)

Does the provider have an accurate understanding of the entitlement of your learners to free provision?

Make sure you have checked the ESFA [funding rules](#) and ask the provider to double-check.

7. Access

Are classes located nearby?

Is the venue appropriate and does it feel safe for the learners?

Do the timings of classes fit with children's and other family needs?

Is there childcare for younger children or can they be accommodated within the class?

Would home tuition be better for some?

What support is there for people who have little prior experience of education?

What help is there to learn outside the classroom? Is there some extra mentoring, maybe through volunteers?

Is transport provided/paid for?

How is provision in rural areas managed?

Have refugees' health needs been considered?

8. Initial assessment

Does one provider offer initial ESOL assessments or could one be organised to do this?

9. Levels

Is ESOL provided at all the appropriate levels?

10. Curriculum content and methods

Is the curriculum sufficiently flexible to allow for the range of learner interest and needs?

Are any embedded ESOL courses where ESOL is part of a vocational programme available?

Are other basic subjects such as maths offered?

11. Quality

What sorts of qualifications do the ESOL teachers hold (where appropriate)?

What sort of understanding of refugees' needs and learning backgrounds do the staff have?

And beyond what teachers have covered in their qualification, do they have good intercultural awareness and skills?

12. Inclusion and diversity

Are the sometimes differing needs of women and men taken into account?

How adequately does the provider address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion?

How are issues of equality and diversity met by the learning provider? Here you need to go beyond the existence of relevant policies and ask about practice.

13. Learner motivation and reactions as part of quality provision

Does the provider have experience of, and positive responses to, the issues particularly faced by refugees?

What kind of learner feedback is enabled?

14. Qualifications - general

The offer of appropriate qualifications may be used as one measure of quality.

Does the provider do more than 'teach to the test' and provide a rounded curriculum?

15. Qualifications - ESOL

A range qualifications and tests are available.

What qualifications are offered and at what levels?

Are exam fees charged on top of the course fee?

16. Employability

What support is offered to help learners access careers advice, skills auditing etc.?

Is there good access to careers services / JCP advisors to support employment outcomes?

Is there access to NARIC? Is there opportunity for proper skills auditing with a trained advisor or tutor?

Do you/does the learning provider have good relationships with local employers?

17. Refugees supporting their own communities

Are you enabling integration and self-help/self-sufficiency among the Syrian community?

Do the learning providers and especially the community-based learning providers offer support for networking?

18. Progression

Have you formed and does the learning provider have good relationships with other learning providers which can offer further courses including vocational training?

Have you formed/does the learning provider have good access to careers services / JCP advisors to support employment outcomes?

Do you/does the learning provider have good relationships with local employers?

19. Qualifications for progression / Recognition of previous qualifications

Which providers locally to you are experienced in using skills auditing and NARIC?

Do any of them act as a centre for all providers to support the recognition process alongside initial assessments or initial advice and guidance?

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

What could you commission and how?

If local ESOL provision cannot be found which meets the needs of the refugees you are supporting, you might have to directly commission the ESOL provision. You should note that the current extra money for the resettlement programme is available for adults (19+) and may only be spent on the development of English language.

Your first port of call will be the main providers funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in your area. See the [South East Map](#). Check what ESOL provision is available locally and its suitability.

- What are the gaps in terms of the refugees you are supporting?
- If there is no suitable provision locally, where can it be commissioned?
- Check on the specific needs of the learners in your area - NB get the help of one of the local learning providers to help you assess the learning needs, assess level of existing English and of prior educational experience.
- Decide on what would best match the needs of the learners (NB not what is on offer, what is easy, but what would really suit the learners.)
- Approach a range of providers - or build a partnership of providers to meet those needs.
- In theory, any of the providers listed above should also be able to set up bespoke, paid for programmes outside of publicly funded work, but this is subject to capacity. Some FE Colleges, for example, have income generating departments which can include ESOL, provided on a full cost basis. If you have budget for this, it can be a way of matching the needs of learners. Be prepared however that some providers will need time to develop a new offer and some will just not have the capacity to be this flexible. Third sector providers may have this flexibility, but may still struggle to find sufficient premises and staff/volunteers. This is where a partnership approach can be helpful - perhaps you can provide the premises?
- Agree costs for any additional work that is needed which cannot be funded through existing ESOL funding streams.
- It is also possible to set up ESOL provision from scratch. A helpful brochure from Newham provides relevant guidance and is also helpful in describing what to look for in a provider.

Context

The Home Office states:

‘English language skills are vital to help resettled people communicate with people in their new communities. It helps them to find work, gain independence and give back to the communities who have welcomed them.’

At present the Statement of Requirements states that language tuition should be provided to ensure that each resettled person is able to carry out basic transactions within the communities in which they have been placed and should continue for up to 12 months. In response to feedback Government has allocated £10 million specifically for ESOL funding, funding to provide childcare to support ESOL access and have funded Regional Coordinators to map ESOL provision. The year 2-5 tariff can also be used to fund ESOL, at the discretion of Local Authorities.

In the light of these changes and additional funding we wish to revise the current Statement of Requirements to include a minimum number of hours of ESOL per week to reach a minimum ESOL level, for the longer term integration and self-sufficiency needs of our cohort.’

In the LGA’s guidance to resettlement providers it is suggested authorities should already have links with ESOL providers. They note that new arrivals will have different levels of English so provision should match the differing needs. Each individual will need an assessment to establish their level of English, the support needs they have and good practice suggests that English learning should start within one month of arrival. They remind authorities that many ESOL classes offered as standard are at the lowest level of ESOL Entry Level 1 whereas Syrian new arrivals may need something below that level (frequently referred to as Pre-entry.) It is also worth bearing in mind that some Syrian refugees may not know the Latin alphabet and may not have received any basic education and may therefore also not be literate in Arabic.

For more information on ESOL in relation to the Syrian VPRS, please consult the Home Office Guidance (17-18). As a reminder, on the use of the additional funding, the 17-18 Q and A supplement states:

English language tuition is funded through the tariff provided for year one and local authorities are expected to provide eight hours per week of ESOL provision for individuals within one month of arrival as set out in the year one statement of outcomes. This funding is all about putting the basic ESOL provision in place to allow someone to begin their integration into the community. The additional ESOL funding of £850pp is to supplement this existing provision and increase the amount of training available to help refugees on their ESOL journey, which might include working towards employability. In years two to

five a proportion of the tariff funding can be spent on ESOL, at the discretion of the local authority. Please refer to the relevant ESOL sections in the Funding Instruction and ESOL guidance for further information on the ESOL funding streams.

ESOL provision in the SE region

Findings from the mapping exercise conducted so far suggest that there is an established ESOL provider base in the region. ESOL is offered across the range of levels, but greater volumes are reported at lower levels, including pre-Entry level. Most provision is offered as a single level programme and as longer courses over 13 weeks in duration. There are a range of delivery models, intensity of learning and class times. Around 50% of the providers surveyed offer anytime starts.

Courses offer an average (median) of just 4.25 hours ESOL class per week. (This does not necessarily mean that each individual learner is only receiving 4.25 hours of learning.)

Around one third of providers reported oversubscription and waiting lists.

The key issues which were raised in terms of accessing ESOL in general (ie for all learner types) in the South East were:

- Bridging the gap between Functional Skills and GCSE for ESOL learners.”
- High concentration of learners in specific wards
- Mix of those with no qualifications from their country of origin and those who are highly educated
- High concentration of learners who are au pairs, carers or in hospitality
- Childcare and travel – especially in rural areas

ESOL learners

Although we are considering the needs of refugees, the context of ESOL learners needs to be understood more widely.

Sometimes referred to as second language learners, bilingual learners or multilingual learners, individuals with ESOL needs may come from one of four broad groups: people from settled communities living in Britain; spouses, partners and dependents of British or EU citizens; migrant workers; and, refugees and asylum seekers.

These include people who are highly educated, have had professional careers and are highly skilled. Many people who take lower skilled and lower paid work in the UK have been in more skilled jobs previously. ESOL learners also include people who still need to develop their English skills and some people, depending on country of origin, who have

not had a basic education or whose education has been disrupted due to civil war or unrest.

ESOL provision - Providing a rounded approach to language needs

ESOL provision makes use of both formal and non-formal education, but attending a class won't provide everything a learner needs to become proficient in English and integrate positively. At its best ESOL provision would combine both formal and non-formal learning so that as well as attending formal classes, non-formal learning can support the formal learning and help to consolidate both the language acquisition and provide additional orientation, integrational and social aspects of learning English.

ESOL provision could or in some cases should include:

- initial assessment
- support for learners to explore their learning aims and develop learning plans
- discrete ESOL programmes specifically for refugees or people from one background at different levels and in different contexts
- sufficient learning hours
- flexibility of hours, times and course content
- mainstream ESOL provision open to all who need it
- classes which cater for learners with little prior experience of education and/or low levels of literacy
- vocational training and work experience with ESOL / language support
- fast track options linked to employability or further vocational learning
- progression to mainstream educational programmes - within the same organisation or elsewhere
- information, advice and guidance to support access to appropriate provision and employment or educational progression / Careers Advice
- student services including counselling and personal advice
- recognition of prior education/qualifications and skills
- tutorial support
- bilingual support

- location of provision / opportunities for Home Tuition if appropriate / can the provider go to the learners?
- childcare provided / costs met / issues about creches and childcare provision
- travel costs or transport
- opportunities for practising English beyond the class, informal opportunities and non-accredited pathways

ESOL providers

When commissioning ESOL you will need to identify appropriate providers of adult learning from an array of different provider types.

FE Colleges are the general providers of further education. Each area is served by at least one college, providing a range of vocational and basic education. Some colleges are focused mainly on 14+, 16 - 19 education, vocational training and apprenticeships, but others offer a wide range of courses for adults on a free or fee-paying basis depending on individual circumstances and entitlements and the subject being studied.

Adult and Community Learning / Adult Education. Using the Adult Education Budget from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) (Department for Education), plus other local funds if available, this adult education is provided through local authorities - sometimes directly, sometimes commissioned or more usually through a combination of the two. This can include provision at specific 'adult colleges' where these exist. Some of this provision is commissioned nationally rather than locally, and then provided locally, through organisations such as the WEA (Workers' Educational Association). Community learning is a specific type of adult learning usually provided away from formal learning venues and can include, for example, inclusive learning, first steps learning and community action learning for adults or families.

Voluntary and community sector provision is wide ranging in scope, can range from formal to non-formal and is provided through charities and community organisations and social enterprises. Some of this provision may be commissioned directly from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (e.g. WEA), or sub-contracted via a local authority or college. Although there was always some activity through social enterprises, since the more recent cuts, there have been more community initiatives taking this course of action. A recent example is the Heart and Parcel Supper club in Manchester. Some of these receive some (sub-contracted) adult education budget (see glossary).

Some *housing associations* are now offering learning opportunities for their tenants. An example of this can be found at [Ashley Community Housing](#), based in the West Midlands and Bristol, which offers a refugee resettlement service. Learning provided can take the

form of them commissioning providers to provide bespoke classes for residents or in some cases having their own education teams at local or regional levels.

Private training and education providers - as the name suggests, generally a for-profit model of provision but it may also be not-for-profit, and again may be directly funded through ESFA or other government funding, including for the provision of apprenticeships.

In the South East particularly, private education providers include the private language schools. Though generally perceived as targeted at a very different kind of learner and also as expensive, there may be some useful access to provision through these. It should be noted that these may work outside the usual public sector regulatory framework, are not necessarily subject to OFSTED, and may not be familiar with, for example, the Public Sector Equalities Duty.

Family learning and intergenerational learning. Family learning refers to any learning activity that involves both children and adult family members, where learning outcomes are intended for both, and that contributes to a culture of learning in the family. Sometimes this learning could take place in schools and nurseries or children's centres such as Sure Start. Otherwise this might be found in community or faith centres, and other non-formal settings. While there is no ring-fenced funding for family learning, many Adult Education providers do include it in their programmes.

In the context of families which include younger and older children and groups of non-related refugees of different ages, the concept of intergenerational learning might be useful for informal or non-formal learning of ESOL in community settings. NIACE suggested this definition: *'Intergenerational learning arises from activities which purposely involve two or more generations with the aim of generating additional or different benefits to those arising from single generation activities. It generates learning outcomes, but these may or may not be the primary focus of the activity. It involves different generations learning from each other and/or learning together with a tutor or facilitator. Depending on the aims of the activity, it may or may not involve members of the same family.'*

Home based; one to one or group tuition. This has been a method used by all types of provider based on learner need and availability of other classes. This can be useful in addressing issues of poor rural transport links, and healthcare or childcare needs. This approach may also be useful to include disabled people but should not be used as a means to further isolate them. Home tuition might also serve to help people take the first steps in learning, especially where there are cultural barriers, such as unfamiliarity with the concept of adult learning or any stigma associated with returning to learn as an adult.

Outreach

In addition to the formal, non-formal and informal learning and its providers detailed in the glossary above, we should also consider the notion of outreach.

The [Volunteers in Migrant Education \(VIME\)](#) project makes a distinction between outreach, social engagement (another way of describing informal learning), non-formal and formal education.

Outreach is an important concept in adult and community education and can be defined in three ways:

- delivery of programmes in community settings, including village halls, pubs, faith-related buildings, community centres, and so on, rather than in learning establishments / classrooms;
- working with a range of people/groups in communities to bring them into community learning / outreach sessions as above or to course in colleges / learning centres;
- engaging with people / groups in communities to plan and design their own learning - for all kinds of purposes but also or even particularly around improving communities.

ESOL in rural areas

Make use of what you have, particularly for people less able to travel to learning centres.

Non-formal learning in community settings can be an excellent start point. Much of this could be provided by volunteers / faith groups etc. at fairly low cost.

Informal mentoring opportunities can be helpful.

Transport links - a good partnership with any community transport provision would be helpful.

Think about using the budget more carefully - e.g. you could pay for a tutor to travel to your learners, which might be more effective than paying for lots of learners to travel to the college or other provision.

Outreach and informal provision, home tuition and one-to-one methods might be more flexible but you do need then to add in some opportunities for learners to meet both other learners, other refugees and to meet other people locally both for getting to know people and the area and to offer opportunities to practise English.

Try to find opportunities where rural life in England might be explained; it is quite different from rural life in many other countries.

How long does it take to learn English?

It can take some learners quite a long time to achieve a good standard of English. And it may take more time than funders are prepared to pay for. But equally it may not take as long as many propose, depending on a whole set of important factors about the individual and their learning aims. It can be amazing how little English people need to do some basic 'getting by', but if people are to gain work, communicate effectively and reasonably fluently and 'integrate' then levels needs to be higher.

Motivation and opportunity to practise outside the class-time are important but equally so are previous educational experience and the prior learning of languages. Evidence suggests that better progress is made for people who can access ESOL immediately on arrival and with plenty of informal opportunities to practise outside the 'classroom'.

Associated with the length of time for learning English is the speed of language acquisition and the amount of class time needed each week. Again this depends on both what providers can do and what time learners have to devote to learning English alongside all the other requirements made of them. Since there is an aim to support refugees into paid work as soon as they can, it is suggested that as an absolute minimum, 8 hours of class time per week be provided.

Since people don't arrive and need to start learning at times which suit the usual semester or term-based course delivery, other options may need to be considered. For example, to cover the summer holidays and other gaps - ideas include:

- find providers who offer CELTA training or other qualifications for potential ESOL teachers; they need to run practice classes for trainee teachers or to provide teaching practice opportunities;
- find a voluntary organisation or faith group which is offering some non-formal learning or even offering other activities to support refugees in the medium of basic English;
- use short programmes to create a start point and bridge to the time when the formal courses next start;
- use private language schools to provide short or longer term courses;
- use home tuition for a short or longer time;
- use mentoring or other support programmes for making a start on learning English.

Entitlements and Funding for ESOL (and other adult / post school education provision)

The refugee learners in your area might be able to access existing provision in both the formal and non-formal sectors. Much of this provision should be free to access.

[The Changing Context and Arrangements for 2016 to 2017](#) Adult Education Budget document clearly sets out the opportunity to offer more non-accredited options to meet local demand e.g. in this case for Pre-Entry. Pre-Entry is fundable under ESFA for eligible learners. Many providers accredit their ESOL via Functional Skills English qualifications, making it free to the learner subject to the general eligibility criteria, which would match the status of most refugees. However, see the section below on qualifications for further guidance on the suitability of Functional Skills English qualifications.

ESOL has been subject to variations both in terms of funding and the context of its delivery, affecting provision throughout the sector. ESOL providers and practitioners have been faced with changes to funding, policy and practice, often at short notice. Reductions in funding to the Adult Education Budget have seen participation in ESOL learning fall between 2010 and 2016, though many providers report high levels of demand. Some new initiatives have been introduced, although the level of funding offered does not replace that which has been removed. These new initiatives include investment in Community Based Language Learning by the Department for Communities and Local Government, and additional funding for ESOL for resettled Syrian refugees by the Home Office.

The Home Office announced in March 2017 that Syrian refugees who are being resettled here were to be granted refugee status, which enables Syrians to, for example, access university and to travel more easily to visit relatives in other European countries. ESOL providers and Careers/other advice and guidance services may not be aware of this change; this is where a partnership between the local authority/other agencies and the ESOL providers is crucial. This is the kind of information which you can bring to the relationship.

Integration of employability training into ESOL provision has been identified as helpful in supporting some learners into work. Some providers integrate this into their curricula. Taking into consideration the diversity of the refugee population overall and in relation to their education experience prior to arriving in the UK and their level of English language skills, a number of recent reports have been concerned with the lack of appropriate, accessible and timely opportunities for all refugees to learn English. Refugee Action produced [a report](#) in 2016 based on the investigation of refugees' experiences of learning English through ESOL and their experience of accessing courses in relation to their backgrounds and aspirations. The report argues that current arrangements are inadequate

and more needs to be done to ensure access to ESOL provision that meets refugees' needs and do so in a timely manner. The Refugee Action findings echo those of other earlier studies. The authors also draw attention to refugees' drive to learn English and their high regard for education. DWP mandated provision can sometimes be used helpfully to support preparation for work.

Despite the government's recognition of the importance of English language for successful integration and participation in the UK economy and communities, the cumulative impact of the reductions and the changes to ESOL funding over the last 10 years, has been a sharp reduction to both the entitlement to learning and the number of places available. Refugee Action identify this to be at the core of the current inadequacies to support refugee learners: 'the funding cuts have resulted in shortages of provision, waiting lists, and other barriers to participation, particularly for women.' As well as impacting on the overall reduction in the provision, the changes introduced in 2011 included the withdrawal of the discretionary Learner Support Fund which had allowed providers to help with childcare and transport costs and to help support those most in need to access learning.

Check the [Adult Education Budget funding rules](#) and ask the provider to double-check so that all have a full understanding of entitlements to free learning and to know where some support with payments may be needed.

Learner needs

Providers need to consult, think carefully and have as flexible approach as possible to the following issues.

Initial assessment - also see below

Assessment is needed and also needs to be explained carefully to the learners. Some new arrivals may have good levels of English already while others have none at all. Depending on their prior educational experience, there is a need to assess the current level of English and allocate the learner to the right learning group for them. New arrivals who do speak English might be able to demonstrate proficiency in some of the skills areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing, but not necessarily all. These 'spiky profiles' are typical of adult learners in any subject, and it makes demands on the teachers and the assessors of their learning to provide appropriate learning opportunities. It can often be difficult to provide 'spiky' attainment of levels to match and learners may become demotivated if they are required to do lots of work at a lower level in order to progress.

Other prior educational and work experience should also be assessed, and attempts made to gain recognition for any achievements and qualifications gained. This could be part of the same initial assessment as for the English class but more typically could be conducted as part of a wider advice and guidance/careers session. This process supports the

development of individual learning plans which in turn contribute to the individual learner record, kept by each learning provider.

Early in the process it is helpful to explain the UK education system and how their learning fits into it. This helps learners to manage their expectations, but also how to ensure that they meet the expectations of the teachers, which may be very different to their prior educational experiences. This kind of activity is valuable, too, for supporting wider orientation and enabling refugees' ability to support others in their family/community in understanding the education system and 'how the UK works'.

It is important to note that providers and teachers are under pressure to make sure that students achieve outcomes and qualifications as specified in the terms of their funding. Initial assessment helps them to ensure that this is done, as students will be allocated to learning groups in which they can achieve.

When to start learning English

Many new arrivals express the wish to get on with learning English as soon as possible and to learn as much as possible so that they can quickly progress, find work and integrate. Full time courses however are rare and the opportunity to combine vocational and English learning can also be difficult to find.

It is best if people can start learning English as soon as possible after arrival and immediate issues being sorted - but some providers work to school terms or only have two enrolment dates per year. Some providers run so called 'roll-on, roll-off' - programmes which have advantages in that learners do not have to wait for twice yearly enrolment, but has the disadvantage that learners may end up not establishing good relationships in a wider learning group and that some work is inevitably repeated. roll-on, roll-off programmes can sometimes be usefully used to tide learners over until a more appropriate course starts.

Advice and guidance - course selection

Refugees will need some **advice and guidance** to support their course selection and to understand learning aims and outcomes, opportunities for progression and in the longer term employment or further education. Consideration needs to be given as to how this will be provided if people do not yet speak English?

How is support offered to select the appropriate course? (And for those who do not yet speak any English?)

How are refugees supported to understand the UK education system?

Access issues of all kinds should be addressed.

Classes need to be located nearby if possible and at appropriate **venues** which learners can access easily and in which they feel safe.

Access includes the timings of courses, especially where there are children who need picking up from school or where parents have a lot of regular appointments, which refugees do. For younger children childcare either needs to be co-located with the course or provided in some other way. Parents may be unfamiliar with leaving their children and may be anxious about it; they may need support in becoming comfortable with childcare or, a more gradual approach may be needed, whereby babies and very young children participate in the classes, especially in the early weeks/months. (See Family Learning and Home Tuition as well.)

Numbers of learning hours per week is both a consideration for enabling progression and also for meeting access needs. These may be contradictory; for speedy learning, a sufficient time investment is needed but to enable refugees to meet their other commitments and needs, fewer hours might be more practical. This tension can lead to some learners becoming frustrated by the process.

It should also be remembered that learners who do not have a great deal of educational experience, and for those who may have a lot of other concerns, sustaining a long period of learning each week may be difficult. This can partly be addressed by ensuring that other opportunities for learning and practising English are available outside the hours of formal learning.

Transport to get to the learning centre needs to be enabled. This can be done either through paying for bus passes, or by collecting participants, but it will be important to make sure that the new arrivals are confident to use transport and can understand how it works. Ticketing systems are very complicated to understand and vary from place to place. Transport and other access issues will particularly affect refugees living in rural areas as ESOL is unlikely to be available close at hand. Local schools may be able to work in partnership with ESOL providers to help with this.

As refugees may have considerable health needs, consideration will need to be given as to how consistency of learning can be achieved if learners also need to attend a range of health (and other) appointments.

Opportunities to learn outside the classroom should be offered, perhaps in partnership with others such as the voluntary sector, to enable the consolidation of learning - and improved integration. Some voluntary organisations run mentor schemes to support refugees and asylum seekers. A large scale example was run by Time Together/Time Bank in the West Midlands, but smaller schemes currently run through Cities or Towns of Sanctuary and

other voluntary organisations. In Brighton and Hove, an organisation called Voices in Exile has a Volunteer Mentoring Scheme. (For younger (14 - 25) asylum seekers/refugees similar help is also available through Kent Refugee Action and in Oxford. See <http://www.refugeesupportnetwork.org/mentoring>

The basic model is that volunteer mentors and mentees are paired and meet regularly over a period of time to work to an agreed 'programme' which the refugee sets out and can be very informal. The volunteers are supported by the host agency.

Initial assessment

Learning providers can carry this out - in some places one service might offer this for all the refugees who are in the resettlement programme. You could negotiate with one provider to do this, although initial assessment is not funded as a discrete activity by ESFA. Providers can assess both which would be an appropriate level of English programme and if the learner has wider learning needs and what sort of needs those might be.

Access to IAG and vocational learning at the appropriate level is needed alongside this. Consideration must be given as to how best to provide both initial assessment and advice/guidance to someone without English language skills. Interpreters and other support people may be needed to assist this process.

The provider of this assessment and any related advice must act as an 'honest broker' and refer to the most suitable provider, not just into the programmes and classes which they have available. A partnership or hub approach across providers works most effectively. One of the outcomes of the initial assessment and any guidance offered around learning should be the development of Learner Agreements or Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). For new arrivals these may need to be developed over the course of more than one session. These also serve to ensure that the learner understands the process but they may be very unfamiliar to anyone from another country.

Levels

ESOL is frequently discussed in terms of Levels (which relate to both skills and the qualifications achieved). While this is meaningful to practitioners it is less helpful for everyone else - and especially anyone unfamiliar with European / UK educational systems. The Home Office Guidance for local authorities gives a fuller description, but, in brief they are:

Entry Level (sub-divided into Entry 1, 2 and 3).

Level 1 and Level 2 (the highest level of proficiency in ESOL).

'Pre-Entry' Level is usually delivered as non-regulated, non-accredited learning, and is often used as a description for very basic English provision 'below' Entry Level 1, although the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum recognises these learning needs within Entry Level 1.

Levels are based on the National Standards for Adult Literacy, with Level 2 roughly equating to a GCSE pass at Grade C.

Although not publicly funded, international English qualifications are available at levels equating to higher than Level 2. For example, these include IELTS (International English Language Testing System) qualifications required for most academic and professional purposes.

Curriculum content and methods

What do the learners want to learn and what are they going to use their English for?

If the programme on offer is working towards qualifications the curriculum is fairly well defined though skilled 'teachers' are able to introduce additional materials and topics which meet the standards and in which the learners are particularly interested, so there is some flexibility.

ESOL curricula address four skills within language learning: speaking, listening, reading and writing. These skills tend to be assessed separately within any formal qualifications, although speaking and listening are often combined.

Mixed programmes of formal and non-formal learning could possibly offer the best outcomes but are often only deliverable via partnerships which include some volunteer-supported activity such as reading groups or conversation groups. Cooking and sharing food or walking have also been offered in some areas as non-formal/informal English speaking opportunities which both support integration with local communities and language development.

There is great interest in learning digitally which can be popular with learners and with commissioners. However, there are some major disadvantages so it may be more effective to offer blended learning packages which include some digital learning both in the classroom and as part of the 'homework' / follow-up. The disadvantages include: refugees' access to wifi and good internet connections; cost of equipment; not speaking with others unless using an on-line learning chat facility; the importance of ESOL for wider integration. Literacy levels and little prior educational experience may be a barrier to digital learning but people are often able to use smartphones even if they are not very literate.

There are a range of apps available but like all learning materials need scrutinising for quality before use.

Embedded ESOL

ESOL can be offered embedded into another course - a vocational programme for example. This is appealing on one level as it can appear that the progression is both linguistic and moving more quickly towards the possibility of work. With some learners who appeared reluctant to attend ESOL classes, this type of programme has worked well as can be seen at Peterborough College's work with unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees as they get closer to 18 years old. This vocational approach is unlikely to work to best effect with complete beginners and in order to be meaningful should be embedded in a vocational area in which the learner has a genuine interest and/or hope of employment. Motivation might be increased by the opportunity of work experience or placements as the programme progresses. Some materials were developed for ESOL learners who were migrant workers in seven different occupation sectors. These can be accessed via the Excellence Gateway (see below).

ESOL can also be embedded within core subjects such as maths. Again there has been some success in this, and it can appear to help people who have missed out on some basic education.

There are debates amongst language teachers about the use of first language/bilingual working in the ESOL 'classroom'. The pragmatic approach is to look at what works for each group of learners. Bilingual working, where suitable tutors are available, can support some learners to progress more quickly and can support entry into the workplace.

Quality

Qualifications and qualified teachers may be important but are not necessarily proxies for quality. A very good understanding of the needs of refugees is just as important. Most important is to check that the specific needs of your learners can be met. For example, some FE colleges do not offer pre-entry learning programmes, which may be the starting point your learners need.

If a formal provider is being used, you can look OFSTED reports to assess the overall quality of the provider, but remember that ESOL is not always included in inspection and the report may not be at all recent. Again, all the information in an OFSTED report should be treated with caution, as the current learner base may be different from your group.

Qualified teachers

This may be used as one measure of quality. More information can be found on the NATECLA website (www.natecla.org.uk)

These are some of the things to look for:

a) Initial ESOL teaching qualifications can include:

Cambridge CELTA and Trinity Cert.TESOL are initial qualifications that provide a practical introduction to ESOL teaching. (NB many providers like/require staff to have these but they are not part of the English national framework of teaching qualifications.)

b) Full ESOL teaching qualifications:

Here the teacher has an integrated, specialist ESOL qualification such as a Diploma or Certificate in Education or a Post-graduate certificate in education. These are widely accepted general teaching qualifications. (NB increasingly Literacy and ESOL is combined, rather than offered as two separate subjects.)

c) Some teachers are already qualified teachers and may then take an additional specialist course in either ESOL or ESOL/Literacy.

(Note that there are differences in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.)

As a quick guide, good practice might include, for example:

PGCE / Cert Ed + ESOL Subject Specialism at L4

TEFL qualifications e.g. CELTA / Cert TESOL

Advanced TEFL quals e.g. DELTA / Dip TESOL

And beyond what teachers have covered in their qualifications - intercultural awareness and skills are important. The teacher training should include intercultural competences and effective working with people from other countries.

Qualifications

The offer of appropriate qualifications may be used as one measure of quality. An important issue in this case is to check that the provider does more than 'teach to the test' and provides a rounded curriculum. See elsewhere in this document for the details of qualifications. (See section below.)

Does the provider do more than 'teach to the test' and provide a rounded curriculum?

Equality and diversity considerations in the provision of ESOL.

a) Women learning ESOL

There is a long history of women learning ESOL (and other community-based education) in women-only groups. While no longer generally seen as a long term end in itself, it is

very useful to enable women to gain confidence in their learning and for some will provide the stepping stone to learning in mainstream programmes/classes.

Women may want to learn with other women for a range of reasons which can include religious or cultural factors, but also those women who have shared experience or reasons not to learn alongside men based on recent abusive or violent experiences. In regard to childcare some parents may not want to be separated from particularly young children for a host of reasons including their safety in the light of recent experience or unfamiliarity with the concept of childcare from a stranger and outside of the family. It is sometimes possible to include babies and very young children in learning groups or by providing some home tuition.

As well as the more obvious issues such as childcare and maternity, some women may not be receiving welfare benefits directly if their spouse is the main recipient. In this way they may be excluded from eligibility for some free provision, including the mandated DWP/JCP route although they might be able to access free SFA provision in their own right.

Some women may find more in common with women from a range of UK backgrounds than with other new arrivals from their own background.

More on this topic can be found in *Empowerment through Education: women breaking the English barrier* (2016)

b) Men learning ESOL

Some providers have found that it can be helpful to provide men-only classes, especially where there is some reluctance due to stigma of 'going back to school'. There is some (sometimes anecdotal, but not entirely) evidence from other adult learning that some women also make quite speedy progress in learning the language and it can be difficult for some men if they are not moving on so rapidly. There is some evidence too from previous projects that men are happier to attend classes where ESOL is embedded within a vocational area or in digital learning/IT.

As with all adult learning, men can be underrepresented in ESOL classes, which can be underpinned availability at standard class times, particularly where the men are working.

It can sometimes happen that men are more likely to be offered or are more able to take up English classes on arrival.

c) Inclusion and diversity

If you are commissioning ESOL, it is vital to include the approaches taken to enable full inclusion by any of the providers you approach. This should include how expectations of equality, diversity and inclusion are communicated to the learners/students, in addition to the law and compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The WEA did a substantial piece of work on equality and diversity inclusion which can be found at: Report Achieving Excellence in Equality and Diversity Inclusion WEA/LSIS:

<https://www.wea.org.uk/about-us/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>

Learner motivation and reactions as part of quality provision

Learners will walk away from provision that they don't enjoy/find useful and should not be discouraged from doing so. Perhaps, initial IAG and/or inductions to courses and learning for new arrivals, need to include information on how and who with, to raise concerns.

Key questions to ask:

How are issues of equality and diversity met by the learning provider? Here you need to go beyond the existence of relevant policies and ask about practice.

Does the provider have experience of, and positive responses to, the issues particularly faced by refugees?

What kind of learner feedback is enabled?

Promoting ESOL to Learners

While it is unlikely that refugees will be reluctant to learn English, those least familiar with education, and adult education in particular, may need help to understand the benefits of learning and to understand more about what 'learning' will involve in a UK context. For example, the UK style of learning tends to be participative, with the teacher acting partly as facilitator and much classroom style is relatively informal with all expected to give their opinions and their 'own answers'. Many learners may expect something much more text-book based and grammar-focused.

The learning providers and the support agencies can work together to ensure that everyone understands the need to participate in learning (of English or other skills) to enable them to progress here. In turn this activity will help to reassure adults who are anxious about returning to learn / learning for the first time and to make sure that the provision will address all their needs. This process is best carried out fairly informally, so that learners build confidence in the process.

Qualifications - ESOL

The current Skills for Life ESOL qualifications were introduced in 2014 and are available from Entry Level 1 to Level 2. They are offered by a range of Awarding Organisations, such as OCR, Pearson, City and Guilds, Trinity College London, English Speaking Board and NOCN.

Other qualifications and tests are available. Some providers, for example, make use of Functional Skills English qualifications which are intended for learners who speak English as their first or expert language. They are available from Entry Level 1 to Level 2 and offered by around twenty Awarding Organisations. Research by NIACE (2014) highlighted that ESOL providers commonly use Functional Skills English for several reasons, including:

- To offer fully-funded learning to ESOL learners who would otherwise be co-funded and therefore have to make a fee contribution
- To facilitate smoother progression to further learning, by ensuring that ESOL learners enter further learning such as vocational courses with the same qualifications and on the same terms as other learners
- To facilitate progression into work, on the basis that Functional Skills English qualifications are better understood and more widely recognised by employers

However, there are concerns about the suitability of Functional Skills English qualifications for ESOL learners. This is particularly the case for learners with lower levels of English language proficiency and for learners needing more substantial learning hours to progress.

Some providers use other subject accreditation in ESOL provision, particularly maths, ICT, employability and vocational qualifications. This is intended to support ESOL learners to progress to further learning and employment.

Non-accredited learning

Learning providers offering non-accredited learning (that is learning which does not lead to a qualification) can include FE colleges, ACL services and third sector organisations.

There may be different purposes and rationales for the provision. These include:

- to offer provision at pre-Entry level though it should be noted that there are few options for accreditation at pre-Entry level, and no qualifications that are funded. ESFA provision at this level is delivered using non-regulated learning aims.
- to increase the number of hours available, to 'bridge' between levels where learners have completed an accredited course at one level but are identified as needing further consolidation of skills to progress to the next level

- to increase the number of hours available to support learners with basic literacy needs
- to cater for learners with little experience of formal education, who are not familiar with exams or sufficiently confident to attempt them, or for whom exams are simply not appropriate
- to offer more flexible, responsive provision to meet the needs of learners and engage those less confident to participate
- to offer additional activities such as conversation clubs and reading groups

Employability

It is well understood that ESOL is key to gaining paid work. While this is not always true, (e.g. mono-lingual groups of agricultural workers), it is likely that with the current system of dispersal, Arabic-speaking workplaces are unlikely to occur frequently.

Careers advice can be critical in achieving good outcomes and with the Careers Service now often co-located with Job Centre Plus, refugees claiming benefits will be able to access their services but will need good English or some language support to be able to make the best use of this. Although slightly dated, there are some good resources available, which can easily be adapted by careers professionals and other professionals. In particular outline skills audit and career action planning tools, focused on the needs of new arrivals have been developed already by organisations including NIACE.

ESOL curriculum content can be used to support the use of these services, and support offered to make the most of them:

Accessing Careers Advice (and other relevant information, advice and guidance)

Most refugees are unfamiliar with what language and other learning opportunities may be available to them; how to access courses and employment, or how to begin the process of re-establishing their professional careers. The importance of access to appropriate information, advice and guidance is further emphasised by recognising that refugees' social networks are also likely to be limited in the support that they can offer.

Research has found that the information and advice is either not available or that it is inadequate: refugees are offered learning that does not match their needs, they are directed towards jobs that are typically low skilled, and are not in any way a reflection of their skills or aspirations and their potential is undermined. Even when refugees are able to produce evidence of qualifications gained prior to arrival in the UK, they find that they are not valued or properly assessed. Refugees who were successful in accessing

employment were proactive and seeking courses in addition to those accessed via initial support that were provided specifically for refugees. Refugees can become disappointed and frustrated when there are limited opportunities to learning English and find access to routes to employment.

There is a low level of experience of providing IAG to refugees amongst advisors in the FE sector, that compounds the refugees own lack of understanding of the education systems and how to go on about accessing different opportunities. Clear guidance is needed for all, for learning providers and asylum seekers and refugees to explain their entitlements and offer appropriate progression routes. The refugee specific initiatives and projects, such as Refugee Council and Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit project for health professionals or Transitions London initiative, highlight both, the potential of the specialist support to progress refugees into employment and the complexity of the barriers that they face in the process.

Part of this process includes the comparison and if possible recognition of qualifications, skills and experience gained before coming to the UK. Initial assessments and further advice and guidance work should be used extensively in this regard. Useful links to NARIC and RARPA information are included in the glossary above.

A key factor in accreditation is the portability of achievements. The Europass CV concept could be useful along with other digital recording of experience, which have been trialled with refugees at the University of Birmingham. More on Europass can be found at <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>

ESOL for Employment and In Work

Refugees experience high levels of unemployment and underemployment despite their drive to become self-sufficient and the diverse range of experiences and skills which they have that may be of benefit to the UK. Refugees with higher level of English language skills are more likely to be employed and are more likely to progress in the development of English language skills. Whilst the process of learning English is not confined to ESOL classes, low level English is holding refugees back from engaging in other learning opportunities that volunteering and work can offer.

The Refugee Action (2016) report documents well the links between the employment status and ESOL funding, the eligibility criteria and ESOL qualifications on offer. The case studies included in the Refugee Action report illustrate how the current policy and ESOL offer are not adequate to support refugees' progression into employment. Refugee Action are promoting the view of ESOL for refugees as an investment rather than a cost and highlight the potential for the cost of two years of intensive ESOL (that they advocate

should be a guaranteed offer for all refugees) to be 'effectively reimbursed following an individual's first eight months of employment at the national average wage'.

A University of Sussex study with 'resettled' refugees recommends that: 'Fast track and higher level courses are needed (e.g., ESOL with vocational skills or ESOL for academic purposes) which would support those with higher level qualifications and professional backgrounds access the labour market more quickly, and access employment commensurate with their backgrounds.'

Concept Training have introduced a Language and Industrial Skills Training (LIST) programme. They provide a 'rolling pre-employment and community integration training course' to help all the 'participants become more employable' and to 'settle into local community life'. Generally, Concept Training offers a range of construction industry and related training via apprenticeships, or the Work Programme, for example.

However, the issue is not only one of language. The failure to recognise refugees' existing skills results in a loss of potential talent and creates a further barrier to integration. This lack of recognition of prior experience or skills can lead to underemployment of the individual, and sometimes this means that someone who could be employed in a skills shortage area in the UK is in fact not employed at all. Agencies do not always take into account sufficiently the prior work experience or make use of assessment and validation systems where they exist.

Community and integration

It is useful to develop partnerships which both support integration (in the sense of understanding life in the UK) and the learning of English. For example, the police and other uniformed services are very keen to ensure that people have a good understanding of how things operate in the UK. This can avoid many potential misunderstandings but also help to reassure people who have fled from states with a different relationship between the state and its people. This approach can be carefully integrated into ESOL classes in a way which can therefore be prepared for and the way paved in advance so that the session is appropriate; this means preparing both the guest 'speaker' and the learners.

Other community groups / people who are involved in every day experiences in the locality can of course be involved in the same way in learning experiences, as guest speakers and as opportunities for learning/living outside the classroom.

It is helpful to enable refugees to be involved in supporting each other as soon as they are able. They might also be interested in other community activity once their own needs are starting to be sorted out. In addition to the refugee support agencies, the first involvement for those with children is usually focused on school and health services, so these are the

first ports of call for engagement and around which language support / classes can be based.

Refugees supporting their own communities

Syrian refugees may be able to access good communication networks with other Syrians across the UK; these networks are important for enabling integration and sharing knowledge. In turn, this can be utilised to inform each other, raise awareness about and promote ESOL and wider adult learning. It may be worth looking at the possibility of creating community/learning champions from amongst the refugees. (More information at <http://www.communitylearningchampions.org.uk/>)

Progression

A key factor of any learning programme is the 'what next'? It is good for learners to know what they can hope for and where the learning could lead. In this case, many or most learners need to progress into work as soon as possible but many will also need and want to take part in more education, for reasons of future paid work, progressing a career and for further integration.

Those who have already experienced education, including perhaps starting Higher Education programmes in their country of origin, may wish to pick that up again and pursue their original career aims. Others, especially those who did not complete basic education, may wish to engage with it now. While paid work will be the main driver for many/most, the ability to support their children's education will also be a big motivator in taking up further learning.

Good relationships with local learning providers and careers / JCP advisors are crucial in progressing employment outcomes. Good relationships with local employers can also help smooth the pathway to local employment opportunities.

Any people needing support are likely to spend quite a lot of time being sent from pillar to post to make duplicating enquiries or to be asking the wrong thing in the wrong place.

The art of excellent signposting, no matter which referral agency is doing it, means that everyone is clear what happens where and multiple journeys are minimised - and if it does all go wrong which it will as it is confusing there is one clear port of call from which to start again. (See Advising third country nationals.)

Another aspect of progression is that refugees may well, once they become a little more established, want or need to move away from the area where they were first re-settled. This can be for a host of reasons these can include: moving to somewhere where there are more people who share a similar background and therefore where facilities and services are available; for more work or educational opportunities; and/or, to where there

are people they know. In terms of learning ESOL, this can disrupt learning or make joining a new class in a new location difficult. Providers will usually do their best to make sure records are updated and qualifications gained awarded.

Qualifications for progression / Recognition of previous qualifications

Refugees should be able to draw on their prior experience and education to help them progress in the UK labour market. If a refugee has qualifications from their home country they need to be compared to the qualification framework used in the UK. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) is key to this. These centres are co-ordinated by the overall NARIC Network. In the UK the statement of comparability which results from NARIC is officially recognised.

NARIC is not cost-free to use.

It is helpful to have already completed a skills audit or similar process with an advice/guidance professional or trained volunteer mentor in advance of starting this process, so that the refugee is well aware of all the information they need to find out about.

Collaboration as a way forward - Co-ordination of ESOL in your local area

Collaboration and partnership between all the support agencies, learning providers and other key organisations are vital to making progress. This is as true for the overall support of resettled refugees as it is for the learning of English, but these should work hand in hand; complementarity of effort is what is needed to make the most of scant resources and making sure that the objectives of both the learners and the supporters are met. Some local areas have formed ESOL hubs to make sure that everyone is involved.

Resettlement hubs could work alongside an ESOL hub, intersecting with it. For more information about hubs or other collaborative ventures, an example would be BEGIN - see a case study in the NATECLA ESOL strategy (p7)

<http://natecla.org.uk/uploads/media/208/16482.pdf>. Also see GLA case study of Hackney <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/communities/migrants-and-refugees/english-language-training-why-it-important>

Key partnerships in addition to learning providers are with DWP, local employers, faith groups and other voluntary sector bodies. Together the ESOL curriculum and provision can be made relevant to the needs of learners.

Strategic level contact and partnerships are worth making as well as at practice level, so that policy co-ordination at the local level can be fostered. Finding the enablers at the local and regional level is key.

Do you know all the local and sub-regional ESOL providers?

Is there a network or local hub of ESOL providers? If not, can one be brought together?

Have you looked just over the geographical boundaries to find appropriate provision?

Do you understand how you can all work together to present a joined up programme for learning English at all levels, with the necessary flexibility and aiming to meet all the objectives of the 'inclusion via learning English' approach.

Key sources of further information:

Asset UK Skills Audit for Asylum Seekers and Refugees: A practitioners's manual.

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/skills-audits-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees-a-practitioners-manual/>

Advising for Adaptation: A Guide To Personal Adviser Mediated, IAG, Careers, and Skills Adaptation Support for Migrants and Refugees (NIACE).

<http://www.eaea.org/media/advising-for-adaptation-dissemination-version.pdf>

Advising third-country nationals (IMPACT project/NIACE) is available as a free download from <http://shop.niace.org.uk/advising-third-country-nationals.html>

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2002. 'Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers - Support Materials for ESOL providers.' This resource pack can be accessed via the Excellence Gateway: scroll down the following page to find all 8 documents which make up the pack:

<http://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/vocabulary/EGresource/Effective%20practice%20example>

Empowerment through Education: women breaking the English barrier (2016)

<http://www.wonderfoundation.org.uk/resources/report-women-breaking-english-barrier>

English my way <https://www.englishmyway.co.uk>

Excellence Gateway: ESOL exhibition <http://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/>

Excellence Gateway - Sector specific ESOL materials

<http://toolkits.excellencegateway.org.uk/esol-starter-kit/section-5b-esol-teaching-and-learning-resources>

Home Office: 162012: Interim Guidance on Commissioning ESOL for those on the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) - England. 2016/17

NATECLA Towards an ESOL strategy for England

<http://natecla.org.uk/uploads/media/208/16482.pdf>

Newham ESOL Exchange, Setting up an ESOL Class.

www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/what-we-do/community-involvement-unit/esol/

NIACE (2013) ESOL for Employment

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk.gridhosted.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ESOL-for-Employment.pdf>

NIACE. 2013. Family Learning Works, The inquiry into family learning in England and Wales

http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/n/i/niace_family_learning_report_reprint_fin al.pdf

NIACE (2014) ESOL Learners' Progression to Functional Skills English and GCSE English Language Qualifications. Unpublished report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

NRDC (2007) ESOL effective practice project <http://www.nrdc.org.uk/?p=175>

Updated RARPA Guidance and Case Studies

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/updated-rarpa-guidance-and-case-studies/>

Refugee Action 2016 Let Refugees Learn: Challenges and opportunities to improve language provision to refugees in England http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/support_us/campaign/join_a_campaign/let_refugees_learn/our_report

Syrian Refugee Resettlement: a guide for local authorities

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/syrian-refugee-resettleme-229.pdf>

Volunteers in Migrant Education Project <https://www.elatt.org.uk/projects/the-vime-project>

OTHER RESOURCES

Equalities and mental health in further education toolkits:

toolkit <http://www.equalitiestoolkit.com/>

mhfe <http://mhfe.org.uk/>

Ashley Community Housing www.ashleyhousing.com

GLOSSARY

EDUCATION

Types of Learning

Formal/non-formal/informal education/learning

Three types of lifelong learning are defined by the OECD:

Formal learning refers to education which is delivered by trained teachers/tutors in an intentional way within a learning institution such as a school, college or university. In general this form of learning has an agreed, pre-set curriculum and usually leads to a recognised qualification. This type of learning would generally be funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and subject to inspection by OFSTED.

Non-formal learning can take place in any location, may or may not have a pre-set curriculum, will usually be provided in a structured or semi-structured way and may be delivered by a range of people including volunteers. Usually it does not lead to a qualification, though confusingly some kinds of learning of this kind can be recognised using processes such as RARPA. Non-formal learning can include confidence building, active citizenship, sports instruction and whole host of leisure or community activities. The learning outcomes can however be equally as useful or vocational as formal learning and can be particularly helpful for integration and resettlement. Non-formal ESOL provision can be wide-ranging in form and is often organised by charities or faith groups.

Informal learning refers to learning which occurs incidentally or even naturally throughout life. However, in common speech, particularly in the UK, informal and non-formal are often used interchangeably. In ESOL, this could include learners participating in a community event such as a cooking and eating together group in a community centre, or, as an example, Plymouth STAR's walks project.

ESFA - Education and Skills Funding Agency sits within the Department for Education and manages the budgets for education, including Adult Skills and the Adult Education Budget. This agency was formed from the merger of the former EFA which funds education/schools up to the age of 19 and the SFA which funded learning after 19.

TEACHERS AND THEIR QUALIFICATIONS

Teacher/tutor/practitioner/facilitator

Terms used to describe a person who is guiding the learning of a learning group across a range of contexts.

Following recent government changes, 'teachers' working in the adult education environment, and specifically in ESOL, may or may not be 'qualified' (i.e. in possession of a professional teaching qualification). If they are qualified they may or may not be specifically trained to teach ESOL. However, it is seen as good practice, and is required by some learning providers to be qualified. Good quality learning providers will ensure that their staff have access to suitable professional qualifications and Continuous Professional Development opportunities.

The National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA) recommends that 'all staff teaching English to speakers of other languages, whether in ESOL, Literacy or Functional English classes, should be trained as a specialist teacher of ESOL'.

Volunteer teachers may or may not be qualified teachers, but the volunteer organisation should ensure that they are well prepared to carry out the role and have gone through induction, awareness training and comply with any safeguarding measures and policies which the organisation should have in place.

Safeguarding of paid and unpaid people and the learners.

If learning is taking place within a provider's premises, they will generally take care of all the necessary legal and policy measures required to comply with any relevant laws. However, you should check that this is the case, especially where a provider is working outside their usual remit.

Remember that, especially if you ask a member of staff or a volunteer to go to people's homes, you need to have in place sufficient policies to cover both the learner and the tutor/mentor.

Volunteer organisations who already provide these kinds of services should have this covered but may need a reminder, especially if they are new to this.

There is no need to be too heavy-handed but all relevant duties of care should be considered and appropriate checks carried out.

QUALIFICATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

Initial assessment (ESOL and/or general education)

A systematic approach to assessing what level a learner has already achieved and therefore what the appropriate level for further study would be. This should include formal and informal assessment and should be carried out by a trained practitioner/teacher, typically employed by a learning provider.

NARIC - UK NARIC is the designated UK national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. www.naric.org.uk

Qualification/Accreditation/Assessment/Recognition

A qualification is the hard outcome of a process of learning / study which might be achieved by examination or other assessment method.

Assessment is the process by which a judgement of achievement is made.

Accreditation is used to describe programmes through which qualifications can be gained but is also used to refer to a recognised learning provider.

Recognition in this context is used to signify formal recognition of qualifications gained in other countries, but could also refer to less formal comparison of previous qualifications and work experience.

APEL - Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning is a process by which applicants or learners can have their previous achievements or work experience assessed either to enable access to a learning programme with other than the mainstream agreed qualifications required (e.g. A level equivalents which are not formally recognised from another country being used as valid access to Higher Education.)

RARPA - (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) is the process to measure the progress and achievement of learners on non-accredited learning programmes.

<http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/resource/updated-rarpa-guidance-and-case-studies/>

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Careers Advice / Information/advice/guidance

The National Careers Service is available but bear in mind that new arrivals may need interpretation to help them access the services which are available online, by phone and face to face. Some careers services are co-located with JobCentre Plus.

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/contact-us/home>

More generally there are some skilled advisors working in learning providers and in the voluntary and community sector.

Advisors of all kinds working with refugees should be familiar with skills auditing processes tailored for refugees and also with NARIC. Advisors should also be fully aware of the requirements for regulated professional re-orientation such as for doctors, other medical

professionals, the law, teachers and so on. Some of these professions have specific procedures to follow, and also have a standard of English which must be achieved (IELTS).

Generally advisors working with refugees should be careful to manage expectations; it is not always or even frequently possible to enable a re-orientation within someone's existing profession.

LEARNERS AND ENTITLEMENT

Entitlements to free or fully funded and co-funded learning are described in the Adult Education Budget (AEB) documents from the Department for Education/ESFA. LINK Adult education budget funding rules 2017 - 2018 v1 June 2017, which can be accessed at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623231/2017_to_2018_AEB_funding_rules_version_1.pdf

ENGLISH

EAL - English as an Additional Language. EAL is English support offered in schools - and this is what will be offered to refugee children who are part of the resettlement programme. The British Council states that there are over 1 million learners of EAL in UK schools.

More information from:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/eal>

EFL - English as a Foreign Language. The difference between ESOL and EFL is broadly that ESOL is learned by people in the UK who have come to the UK to live or for a considerable period of time. EFL is for people from other countries, learning in the UK or elsewhere, who do not intend to settle in the UK. EFL can include younger and older learners, learning for work, leisure and as preparation for higher level study.

Increasingly the boundaries between EFL and ESOL are perhaps less distinct than they once were. Some practitioners operate in both fields.

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages. ESOL is the term used in the UK for English language provision for people who speak a language other than English as their first language, and who are learning English as a second or additional language. It is intended for people living and working in the UK, rather than short-term visitors. The term ESOL has been used in adult/lifelong education for many years to describe all English language provision, whether or not it leads to ESOL qualifications. Provision is offered at a range of levels.

IELTS - International English Language Testing System. A system of testing for people with English Language Skills. The nearest provider to you can be found through provider websites or the British Council.

TESOL - Teaching English for Speakers of other languages. This is also the title of many of the courses offered to qualify people to teach. Mostly nowadays these courses cover both EFL and ESOL if they offered within a University, though FE College provision is perhaps more likely to focus on ESOL. There are no hard and fast rules.

Functional Skills qualifications are currently the subject of a national reform programme led by the Education and Training Foundation. The programme will revise the national standards and subject content underpinning Functional Skills, develop new a revised core curriculum and see new Functional Skills qualifications ready for first teaching in 2019.

Mandated ESOL for claimants

DWP/JCP mandated provision for some JSA claimants. In the recent past JCP could mandate claimants on 'active benefits' if language needs are identified as a barrier to employment. For the last few years there was also extra funding, but this has now ceased. However, mandated JCP clients still have priority access to ESFA provision, though providers must use their normal Adult Education Budget allocation to fund the provision. This has been helpful in some areas to attract learners into courses. However, the arrangements are made at a local JCP level and they vary from area to area. In some cases there is funding from JCP, in some there are arrangements with local providers to mandate and/or fast-track, in some areas there is no mandating.