

Re-imagining English language learning for migrant communities

Insights from a policy review in the West Midlands region of England

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West Midlands Context

- **Devolution of adult education funding** in England from national to regional government since 2019, in the context of £1 bn cuts to adult education since 2010.
- West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) spends **c. 16% of adult education funding on English language provision**, but only 4.2% of the population has an English language need.
- Devolution provides **an opportunity to focus on place**, including social outcomes of learning, as well as economic outcomes.



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Project Background

Aims

- 1 To assess the extent to which investment in ESOL provision is **meeting need** in the region
- 2 To evaluate how approaches to language learning, curriculum design and stakeholder partnerships can contribute to **improved and accelerated outcomes**

Methodology

1. Rapid evidence review and analysis of ILR data
2. Provider interviews
3. Focus groups with learners, non-learners, and stakeholders



Key findings

- Demand for English language provision is outstripping supply, and demand is increasing each year.
- Refugees, people seeking asylum, parents, older people and employed learners are among those whose needs are not being met.
- For those accessing provision, the benefits and outcomes of learning include skills for everyday life, progression into work or learning, and improved wellbeing and social capital.
- Reporting of learner outcomes is limited and inconsistent.
- More personalised, tailored, and flexible approaches to language acquisition provision are key to improving learner outcomes.

Differentiated provision

Differentiated provision

- 1 WMCA should work with English language providers to develop **English Language Acquisition (ELA) pathways** to form the basis for future delivery and commissioning of provision.

Pathways could include:

- First Steps English
- English Conversation Clubs
- Everyday English
- Everyday English (Literacy)
- Vocational English
- English for Work
- English at Work



Learner cohort



The specific learner cohort (in terms of needs and motivations and future aspirations) to be recruited

Outcomes



The outcomes which the pathway supports, alongside increased English language proficiency

Funding



Possible source(s) of funding to support delivery

Provider types



Types of provider involved in delivery of provision

Levels available



The levels of provision that the pathway covers

Accreditation



The balance of accredited and non-accredited delivery

Mode of delivery



E.g., community-based, classroom-based, online

Curriculum design



Features of curriculum design, teaching or learning methods to be used (e.g. CLIL, methods to support with literacy needs)

Specialist partners



Support offered and specialist partners to support outcomes, e.g., through referrals and progression, or delivery

Progression routes



Progression routes into further English language learning pathways and other learning provision

Differentiated provision

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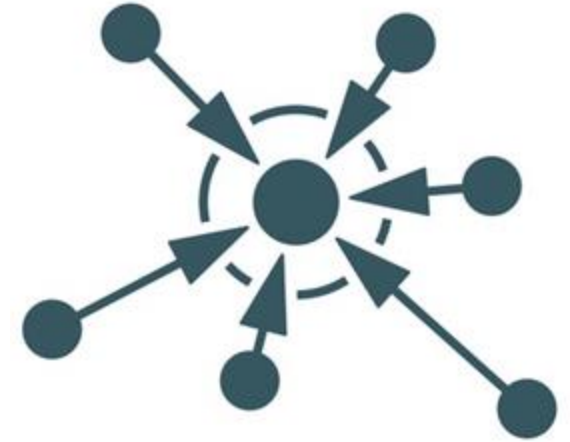
WMCA should work with central government to route all government funding for ESOL in the WMCA region through the **Integrated Settlement**

3

WMCA should establish the feasibility of appointing a single or reduced number of **awarding organisations** for ESOL qualifications in the region

4

WMCA should develop its approach to **outcomes measurement** to reflect the range of social and economic outcomes supported by ELA



Collaboration and partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships

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WMCA should work with local authorities and ELA providers to identify and initiate an appropriate **ESOL hub model** in the local authority where there is high demand for provision



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Building on existing work in the region, providers should develop and roll out a **common initial assessment** of English language proficiency



Collaboration and partnerships

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WMCA should work with providers to develop and deliver a programme of **employer engagement** with English language learning

An employer engagement programme could:

- Help more employers (and representative associations) **understand the business benefits** of supporting ELA provision
- **Target employers** in sectors likely to have high numbers of employees with English language needs or those which often rely on migrant workers
- **Engage trade unions**, including Union Learning Representatives
- Be **broadened** and delivered as part of a wider drive on essential skills in the workplace



Collaboration and partnerships

Steps WMCA, employers and ELA providers could take to bring about greater employer involvement in work-related pathways include:

Improving the quality of careers information, advice and guidance

Employers including the ESOL qualifications they accept in job adverts

Offering practical support for providers to develop ESOL at Work courses

Helping to identify skills shortage areas and job roles to which ELA programmes could respond

Helping employers understand the skills within migrant communities

Providing input into the content of work-related ELA programmes

Identifying ways in which ESOL learners can be supported to access/ progress to apprenticeships

Building capacity

Building capacity

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WMCA should establish a **regional programme** to support the development of the ELA workforce and capacity in the voluntary and community sector





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