

# Work focused ESOL for parents



## Report on the lessons learnt from the London City Strategy Pathfinder Work Focused ESOL Pilot

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## Acknowledgements

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We would also like to thank the other key stakeholders, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), West London Working and the City Strategy Pathfinder East and Southeast London for their support throughout the project.

LLU+ takes responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report.

**Front page image: Mohan Sunwar from the College of Northwest London delivery partnership**



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## Introduction

***“I now feel confident to apply for jobs. I also know how to complete and send online job application forms. .... Now I’m confident of getting a job where I can use my skills”***

Sadia Kayani  
Metropole Learning



Sadia Kayani from Metropole Learning

This report is a summary of the lessons learnt from the Work Focused English for Parents who are Speakers of Other Languages pilot (WFEP) that was run between 2008 and 2011. These lessons have been jointly identified by the delivery partnerships (DPs) and LLU+ who provided the support programme for the project.

The aim of the report is to benefit future providers of work focused ESOL by enabling them to draw on these lessons. They should, therefore, be able to launch their programmes from a different starting point.

The pilot was delivered by 12 delivery partnerships working in the boroughs of the 2 London City Strategy Pathfinders (CSP): Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow in the west London CSP (West London Working) and Greenwich, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and

Waltham Forest in the East & South East London CSP. The CSPs were launched by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in April 2007 “to tackle worklessness in our most disadvantaged communities across the UK – many of which are in major cities and other urban areas.”

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/city-strategy/>

The key objectives of this pilot were:

- to support parents who are in the process of learning English to improve their employability and obtain, or move towards, sustainable employment
- to use the results of the pilot to help shape future work focused ESOL provision

To be eligible to enrol on the programme, which was voluntary, participants had to be parents and learners of ESOL. It was a requirement that 85% of learners recruited were at Entry levels 1 and 2.

The pilot process involved:

- designing and testing work-focused ESOL for parents programmes
- providing opportunities to 5000 learners
- meeting targets for recruitment onto the programme and into sustainable jobs
- establishing a support programme that ran alongside the contracts (2009-2011). This was provided by LLU+ at London South Bank University
- using the support programme process to draw out lessons learnt. These are reported on in this document
- an evaluation commissioned by the DWP

The work of the DPs involved managing the processes of designing and testing the work-focused ESOL programmes and working towards targets for recruitment and sustainable jobs.

Designing and testing work focused ESOL programmes during an economic downturn meant that the programme had to grapple with significant challenges. These included designing programmes that could respond flexibly and creatively to the impact of the economic situation on employment opportunities for ESOL learners. Different DPs offered programmes with some significant differences, however, key principles

## The Vision

The aim of the pilot has been to trial activity which encourages and then enables bilingual and multilingual parents, who are in the process of working on their English, to move towards or into employment.

Delivery partnerships have been provided with freedom and responsibility to develop short, flexible and innovative work-focused approaches to ESOL which support an effective, inclusive and work-focused learner journey.

The contracted provider has been expected to work with others in a delivery partnership, where all providers work in their specialist areas, to provide a seamless pathway to employment for the learner within the agreed individual employability plan. This pathway should address a learner's individual's barriers to accessing employment, including support to develop effective work-focused English language skills.

The effectiveness of the different ESOL models developed by the delivery partnerships are providing valuable lessons which can help to shape future ESOL and employability provision.

emerged. We report on these in this document. It is evident that the differences in the programmes offered were more to do with the application of the principles than in the principles themselves.

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In order to present a holistic picture of principles relevant to work focused ESOL, we have addressed all the aspects of the programme. We recognise that colleagues who are experienced in the fields of education, ESOL and employability may find much in this document that they are familiar with, and already apply. In section 1, we set out the principles which are the cornerstones of work focused ESOL designed to support learner journeys towards work. In section 2, we present in summary form what needs to be considered when setting up such a project and its overall structure. In the subsequent sections, we make a detailed presentation of the lessons learnt. Case studies are used throughout to illustrate key lessons and experiences.

This pilot emphasised the learner journey towards and into work. Learners on the programme had different issues to deal with and different starting points. Inevitably, on a short term programme, in an economic downturn, some learners moved into work, while others moved forward in their learner journey, though did not obtain jobs during the lifetime of the programme. It is anticipated that they will be able to use their learning from the programme to obtain work in the future.

In terms of the learner experience, what is to be regretted is that many multilingual learners, with a range of skills and experience, who have made a significant investment in progressing towards employment, still do not have the jobs they want. This is despite strenuous

efforts by the DPs who have been supporting them.

There were many examples of valuable practice in this pilot. The case studies highlight some of these. For example, they show how the pilot provided support for learners to deal with significant issues in their lives, which were blocking their attempts to realise work aspirations. In addition, and this is very significant in the light of the proposed changes to ESOL funding, the pilot drew in learners who had not attended ESOL classes before, and who reported significant benefits from engaging with the programme.

***“The support programme allowed A4e to share best practice, and discussions of the challenges arising from the contract.”***

A4E Delivery Partnership

Providers themselves reported that through their work on the pilot, and engagement with the support programme, they have adjusted their processes and approaches to outreach, the integrated ESOL and employability curriculum, work experience and job search, and have extended and deepened links with other organisations, agencies and employers. They report that they have already used lessons learnt from the pilot to inform

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their work on other programmes and will continue to do so.

It is not necessary to read this report from cover to cover, but rather it can be used as a reference for support in establishing work focused ESOL programmes.

This document is work in progress and will be finalised in June 2011. You will be sent a copy. In the meantime, if you wish to comment on any aspect of this report, you are welcome to email us. Contact: Pauline Moon, LLU+ at London South Bank University [p.moon@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:p.moon@lsbu.ac.uk)

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## Section 1:

# Principles: corner stones

*The pilot identified the following principles as corner stones for the development of work focused ESOL*

***“A ‘joined-up’, holistic approach to work focused ESOL is needed for it to be successful”***

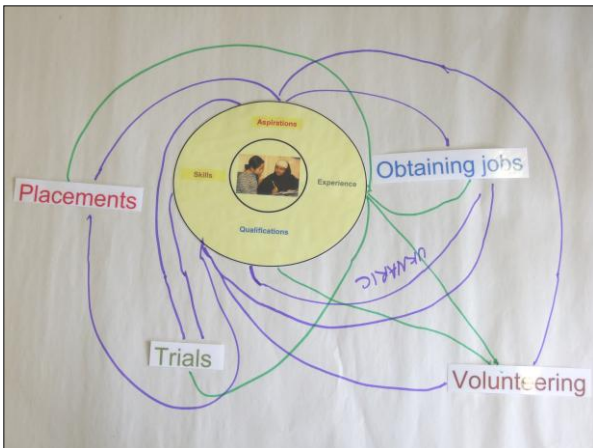
- A ‘joined-up’, holistic approach to work focused ESOL is needed, i.e. for it to be successful it has to involve much more than opportunities to develop language skills in a work-focused ESOL class and it has to involve people in specialised roles, for example, recruitment officers, job brokers, routeway brokers, employability specialists and job coaches.
- In this holistic programme, the elements need to happen in tandem rather than sequentially. They should be led by specialists. Don’t expect a staff member who has no experience of employer engagement to be able to produce the results that the programme needs.
- Look at the programme activity from the learner’s perspective and keep the process joined up. A programme may

present as several different, but connected elements, to the programme staff, but to the learner it is one process, one learning journey. (Recall how frustrating it is when you are using a service and have to explain the same issue several times over – avoid creating this situation for learners).

- The programme should be integrated into organisational infrastructure, particularly for employability. Don’t let it sit hidden away in an organisational corner. Staff dedication is not a substitute for the programme being embedded within the organisation’s infrastructure and enjoying senior management commitment.
- Integrate strong structured links with other relevant agencies and organisations into programme activity, in order to provide maximum support for the learner journey. Build a referral process so learners can use these organisations for specialist support and guidance. As staff gain the trust of the learners, more barriers and issues emerge that need to be dealt with, so do not expect your programme to be self-sufficient; you will be unable to support all emerging needs.

***“The programme should be integrated into organisational infrastructure”***

- Get employers involved in shaping the programme and raise their awareness of what ESOL learners can offer the workplace. ESOL learners are multilingual and whereas only a percentage of the UK population speak more than one language all ESOL learners do.
- Build a learner responsive process in which learners can explore their aspirations through dialogue, as these are fundamental to the learner journey.
- Work experience can be transformative for learners who have not previously worked in the UK as it provides experience of a UK workplace. It provides concrete experience of the world of work that can inform the learner journey.



***The learner must sit at the centre of the programme***

- Integrate language and employability and ensure it is interesting and engages learners. The curriculum for work focused ESOL is infinite and

ever expanding because when you are working or looking for work it affects every part of your life. So, potentially, the ESOL and employability curriculum draws in a huge range of issues. Make space to explore how people feel about the learner journey into/towards work, including their hopes, concerns, fears, expectations, responses to rejection and the positive impact that personal success can have on them.

- Put in place a process for supporting learners to make childcare arrangements which is not hugely time consuming and is integrated into the programme activity and curriculum as far as possible.
- Recognise the significant cultural issues in employability processes in the UK which may vary from those in other countries. Take a discourse approach to interviewing which tackles this issue and draw on resources that have been developed for this purpose (see page 27).
- Use learners' expert languages as a resource to support the process and to promote them to employers.
- Become known in the local community by using a range of outreach strategies. Find out where prospective learners are and make contact with them, or use word of mouth in a structured way to promote the programme.

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- Do not allow the programme to waste time! Work focused ESOL is not a generic ESOL programme and, as such, needs a sturdy recruitment, screening and selection process which ensures that prospective learners for whom it is unsuitable are signposted to more suitable programmes early in the recruitment process. Learners should not be enrolling on the programme imagining that it can serve a 'generic ESOL purpose' because they are likely to leave as soon as they realise that there is a considerable amount of employability work.
  - Network with others involved in similar work to enable programmes to learn from each other, act as critical friends, tackle challenges and find solutions together. This will facilitate greater programme success than working alone. This can be provided by a support process which runs alongside the contract.
  - The vision and fundable targets should reinforce each other. This means that fundable targets should be attached to the most fundamental elements of the programme that the learners experience: recruitment onto programme, work experience, job outcomes.

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## Section 2:

# Whole project structure and set up:

*The work-focused ESOL for parents programme has furnished a number of lessons on how such programmes can be established and developed in the future. A summary of the key lessons learnt on the structure and set up of such programmes is presented in this section.*

### Programme elements

*The following elements are needed for such a programme*

- Programme vision
- A process for keeping the programme embedded within the organisational infrastructure for employability
- Employer engagement
- Outreach, recruitment and selection process
- Assessment process
- Information, advice and guidance process
- A process for referring learners to other agencies and organisations for specialist support and guidance, for example, welfare rights, legal, financial
- Courses: ESOL, literacy, employability, plus numeracy and ICT, as appropriate. Courses may be sector/job specific
- Employability support (through courses and 1:1/small group work)
- Work experience
- Job search
- Support for people in work
- A learner friendly way of recording the learner journey

- A straightforward process for evidencing sustainable work

### Programme vision

- Build a vision that is shared by the stakeholders, i.e. learners, provider, funders etc. Time is needed at the beginning to establish a vision which can be further developed and reviewed, through ongoing dialogue, in relation to programme activity and outcomes. A shared vision is fundamental to collaborative working.
- The vision and fundable targets should reinforce each other. This means that fundable targets should be attached to the most fundamental elements of the programme that the learners experience: recruitment onto programme, work experience, job outcomes.

### Infrastructure

- From the outset, the programme should be integrated into the organisational infrastructures, particularly those relating to employability and should be part of a whole organisation approach to employability work.
- The programme requires senior management commitment that the organisation will seek to provide work experience opportunities, because there is usually a high demand for these across an organisation's provision, and not enough to go round.

- Where programmes involve a partnership between organisations, build effective working patterns with clear responsibilities and channels for communication, collaboration, support, quality assurance and data collection that facilitate the programme activity and the learners' journeys towards work. New partnerships take time to build.
- Where the programme sits inside a portfolio of past and present employability programmes, draw on relevant lessons learnt. However, bear in mind that not all the strategies used on other non-ESOL projects can be used with ESOL learners without significantly tailoring them to their needs.

### **Staffing**

- Establish a multi-disciplinary team of specialists (ESOL, job brokers, IAG, employer engagement, etc) and put arrangements in place for them to work closely together.
- Ensure that the different elements of the process are led by qualified and experienced staff, and the staff team is structured to enable all the different elements of the programme to work in tandem and to move forward on several fronts simultaneously, e.g. recruitment, on-programme activity, employer engagement and obtaining work experience opportunities.

- Build in staff development opportunities.
- Ensure that changes to the staff team are as smooth as possible and that negative impact on learners is kept to a minimum. This can be facilitated by ensuring that all records are kept in a way that is accessible to all staff..

### **Programme structure**

- Offer a programme which integrates 1:1/small group employability work with courses which provide ESOL, literacy and employability using an embedded model.
- Build numeracy and ICT into the course design as appropriate.
- Negotiate with employers how they can contribute to programme design and delivery.
- Ensure that the curriculum addresses all aspects of the learner's experience on their journey towards work. This should include all the elements related to obtaining work and the world of work. Offer sector/job specific courses, where possible/appropriate, or focused workshops, for example, childcare, retail etc.

### **Progression routes onto and from the programme**

- Where possible and appropriate, integrate this programme with internal and external feeder programmes, so that learners who would benefit from a prior ESOL programme can do so

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before progressing onto it, and learners who would benefit from a follow up programme can be referred onwards

### **Quality assurance**

- Implement quality assurance processes for monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of the different elements of the learner journey, and its progress against targets. Devise and implement action plans for improvements as necessary.

### **External links**

- Integrate into programme activity strong structured links with other relevant agencies and organisations in order to provide maximum support for the learner journey. For example, build real links with welfare rights organisations, employment agencies, schools, community centres, children's centres, and services providing health advice, life coaching, and legal services. Do not expect the programme to be self-sufficient as this will spread programme resources too thinly.
- Network with other organisations doing similar work in order to share valuable practice
- Funders need to negotiate a requirement that any publicly funded body which is designated to work with the programme, should do so collaboratively, investigate any barriers which may prevent this, and fulfil any targets set

### **Childcare**

- Take account of the complexities of arranging childcare, for both parents and programme staff. Some courses can be sited in locations which can provide childcare, for example, children's centres etc. However, this is not always possible. If easily accessible funding for childcare cannot be provided for the full duration of the programme, it is recommended that childcare funding is provided to support a transition period while learners sort out permanent childcare with the assistance of the programme. This approach would enable learners to enrol, and use childcare provided by the programme, on the proviso that they will use the support provided to sort out more permanent childcare arrangements. In this way, learners would be supported and prepared for the move into work. It is also recommended that support funding is available for childcare for learners experiencing particular hardship.
- If, this type of 'bridging' approach is not used, childcare has to be dealt with prior to the point of enrolment and this uses up large amounts of staff time in a way which is not cost effective. Providers in this pilot have found this to be the case because:
  - many ESOL learners will be dealing with systems and

### **Case Study of Client A**

K is a 22 year old Somali mother of one, who attended an ESOL recruitment session in April. Her English language was assessed as Entry 1 (Lower) on the day and she was advised (via an interpreter) that she would need to find childcare so that she could attend an ESOL course. All clients are asked to look for childcare in the first instance as they may already use a childminder /nursery that they are happy with, or have family or friends who can provide care. This process is supported by the project adviser.

Over the following weeks, the adviser kept in touch with A by telephone, providing her with details of childminders and nurseries in her area. However, no progress was made and the adviser diverted her attention to new recruits who needed support.

In June, A was referred to the project by Hayes Jobcentre Plus. The adviser contacted A again as she was interested in attending a course. This time when the adviser phoned, A confided that she was unable to communicate with childminders and nursery staff. She was also afraid of travelling to view childcare places on her own in case she got lost. It was clear from this conversation that A felt isolated.

The adviser mentioned A's situation to the co-ordinator of one off the outreach centres who telephoned A with directions to the centre. She arrived there within the hour, was given a warm welcome and put in touch with a local Somali childminder.

A was very pleased because she could now attend ESOL classes knowing that her child was being well cared for. She could also confidently travel to the centre where she could meet new people and feel like part of the community. She is happily attending her class and hopes to find a job in the long term.

Provided by Greater London Enterprise Partnership (September 2010)

- childcare arrangements that they are unfamiliar with
  - they have to do this with levels of English that make the process tricky and therefore they generally need a lot of support
  - the support for arranging childcare prior to joining the programme tends to be one to one and is hugely time consuming, in terms of staff and learner time. This should not be underestimated. Inevitably, this means that time is siphoned away from other important aspects of the programme
- If this type of 'bridging' approach is used, a process can be set up to support learners who are on-programme to arrange childcare. This could include:
    - activity in the ESOL classroom through which learners gain information and explore available and relevant options which take account of their personal preferences. In addition, support will be gained from hearing about other learners' experiences of dealing with new childcare arrangements and becoming comfortable with them
    - IAG and tutorials for learners to take this forward in a personal action plan

- support during the actual transition period when learners move their children to the more permanent childcare
- a childminder network with a broker to match parents and childminders. This could enable parents to be matched with a childminder who speaks their child's expert language

### **Recognising diverse types of work**

- Not everyone can or wishes to work full-time. Work and jobs take many forms, such as: part-time, self-employment, home-working, sessional work as part of a pool, casual work, and cover shifts. These should be recognised as progression into work and as achievements in relation to the learner journey. For many learners, these will not be the end- points of learner journeys but will enable them to gain valuable paid work experience.

### **Reporting**

- Use a reporting mechanism for the learner journey that captures the learner experience, as well as the provider experience. Provide a clear genre based induction for all users of the reporting systems.
- Use a reporting mechanism that captures and recognises all types of project outcomes, that is, those against targets, but also, other crucial outcomes relating to the learner experience that cannot be captured fully by the targets.

### **A support process for the programme**

- Provide a support process for the programme which facilitates successful working and finding solutions to challenges. Providers involved in this pilot recommended that it has the following features:
  - support time during the set up phase for providers to come together to share ideas for the setting up phase, predict and pre-empt challenges, work jointly on solutions and set up a process for dealing with these challenges
  - networking events for providers to come together, from the beginning, to share and develop good practice, discuss ideas, tackle challenges together and find solutions.
  - a consultancy service, with clear boundaries, which runs alongside the contract and can act as a critical friend
  - structured opportunities, such as shadowing, for providers to draw on each other's expertise in order to deal with challenges
  - trouble shooting opportunities with funders, which are structured into the contract, and provide additional ways of tackling structural barriers that may arise
- The central elements of the model developed by the support programme for this pilot included: events to explore common issues and facilitate

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networking, and consultancy support for individual organisations. Providers reported that this model was valuable

and should be considered for future support.

## Section 3:

# Outreach, recruitment and selection

### Outreach

- The ESOL outreach process for the programme should be led by staff with relevant experience and an awareness of issues relating to ESOL learners, in order to ensure that the strategies adopted from the outset are likely to be successful.
- Integrate ESOL outreach activity with the organisation's outreach infrastructure, in order to ensure that the work is effective.
- Use a wide range of outreach and recruitment strategies from the start of the programme, rather than relying on one or two. Strategies should make effective use of time, and be tailored to the target group of learners, the locality and the programme. They should draw in eligible learners, including those who have not engaged with ESOL before.
- Monitor the routes taken by learners into the programme. In this pilot, it appears that it was more difficult to meet recruitment targets when the referral pattern did not draw on a wide range of sources in a relatively even manner, relying instead on a more limited range of strategies.

### Case Study of Client B

Client B was unable to communicate with any of the Jobcentre Plus staff. He spoke Portuguese and was refused benefits in the office. Our referral officer spoke to his children who spoke English and referred him to the routeway broker. He attended an initial interview with the routeway broker and attended with his children who were able to explain that they had arrived from Portugal a year ago and had been staying on their father's friends' floor.

The whole family had survived on child benefit for the entire time and this had been stopped three weeks before. The children were not attending school and their father had not been able to find work as his English was too poor. The routeway broker contacted Jobcentre Plus and arranged for an interpreter. The learner was able to secure Job Seekers Allowance and therefore become eligible for the programme. He has since commenced ESOL classes and has also found work as a cleaner. His children have been referred to the Learning Trust to find a suitable school and they are now in temporary accommodation awaiting housing in Hackney.

By recognising the key issues in the situation and working to ensure the learner would be eligible for the course, the routeway broker has provided support to the entire family. The learner is incredibly keen to improve the life of his family but was unable to do so with the language barriers he faced. This client has now secured a part-time job as a cleaner and continues to attend appointments with his routeway broker. He has also attended and passed a training course organised by the routeway broker.

Provided by Working Links Delivery Partnership (September 2010)

- Outreach strategies:
  - systematically organise the use of word of mouth as a means of recruitment (i.e. encouraging learners to tell others, and to pass information around their social networks). Ensure that existing learners know the selection criteria for the programme
  - engage experienced outreach workers who speak languages other than English that are represented in the local community
  - visibly promote the provision to passers-by through banners etc.
  - engage with frontline local authority services who see large numbers of people and are able to publicise the programme to their clients
  - make links with children's centres, nurseries, schools, housing associations, faith groups, libraries, community organisations, community centres etc
  - leaflet in the street and through local colleges, schools, libraries etc, using English and translated leaflets
  - put information in local newsletters/newspapers. Some local council have free newspapers and will publicise recruitment events at no cost
  - engage with Jobcentre Plus, both through agreements for

- referrals and information sessions, or recruitment drives on their premises
- organise school bag drops
- provide courses in local venues, especially if these are already used on a regular basis by the client group, e.g. schools, children's centres etc

#### **Case Study of Client C**

Client C came to England as a refugee over 3 years ago and told us that he has had very bad experiences with other organisations that were supposed to be helping him register for benefits, look for work and assign him to courses to help him improve his English skills. Mr C said that no one had told him about Brentin2Work and if we had not been outreaching at Jobcentre Plus that he would have never known about us.

Mr C was delighted to finally be able to come to an English course and while he was originally assigned to a beginner's class, it soon became apparent that he should be in an Entry 1 class and so he was moved. Mr C is committed, determined and, according to his teachers, is doing fantastically well in class. In the last 2 weeks he has started to seriously look for work but only because his confidence is growing. He was too scared when we first met him. Mr C has set his own target of 6 months to find employment and is independently looking for additional courses such as food and hygiene courses to help teach him new skills.

Provided by College of North West London Delivery partnership (March 2009)

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- Networking (building organisational relationships) in local communities is very important. Find ways of 'becoming known' in the area, through networking activities such as: stalls at school events, attending parents' evenings, attending local events, leafleting in shopping centres, article/advert in school newsletters etc.
  - Develop a process for building links with sources of referrals. These can be used to inform them about who is eligible for the programme, and for providing clarification where needed. In this pilot, the importance of this became very clear. If sources of referrals are not clear about the nature of the programme, and its selection criteria, valuable learner and staff time is spent dealing with unsuitable referrals.
  - Ensure that the links with sources of referrals are real links. The programme, its work and a staff member should be known to a referring organisation, otherwise, few referrals are likely to be made by busy staff who may not recall the programme when they are in touch with a client that might benefit from a referral.
  - Build mutually beneficial links with other providers covering the same catchment area, to facilitate cross-referrals. In this way, prospective learners can be informed of options and join the most appropriate programme, and those on waiting lists can be directed to programmes with vacancies.
- Recruitment: screening, selection, interviewing and assessment**
- Draw up clear criteria for selection onto the programme which take account of the possible starting points of learners, including, levels of English, speaking, listening, reading and writing; previous work and educational experience and the aims of the programme. Also include likely outcomes for learners in terms of the learner journey towards work.
  - Develop a screening and interviewing process that works for the learner and the programme, so that the employability and ESOL aims are relevant to the cohort of recruited learners. Provide prospective learners with sufficient information about the nature and aims of the programme during the screening and interview processes. Otherwise, people who do not want work focused ESOL, at this time, may enrol with the impression that it is mainly a generic ESOL programme, and then leave when they realise that this is not the case.
  - Establish a referral process that works in tandem with the screening and selection processes, to inform and refer to other programmes prospective learners for whom the programme is unsuitable.

- Design suitable initial and diagnostic assessment tasks. In this pilot, providers tended to use generic ESOL initial assessments because at the pre-enrolment stage, tasks that are too work focused in their contexts might be off putting for learners who are less familiar with and unconfident about the workplace. However, the workplace could be a valuable context for diagnostic assessments. This is a judgement that teachers can make when they have met the learners.
- Recognise the value of using prospective ESOL learners' expert languages during the screening and selection processes, where appropriate. When a prospective learner's English is not being assessed, English does not need to be the medium. Shared languages between the prospective learner and staff are a resource and can be used for complex information and issues.

### **Monitoring recruitment**

- Establish a process for monitoring recruitment in order to identify where any adjustments are needed. The following should be monitored:
  - the number of learners interviewed against targets to ascertain whether outreach strategies need to be extended (i.e. are the outreach strategies effective?)

### **Case Study of Client D**

In January this year Refugees Into Jobs (RIJ) recruited a mother of four who had never worked or gone to school in her home country of Afghanistan. The client's English language was assessed at Entry Level 2 and she was referred to a course at Woodend Park School, taught by Skills Training UK (STUK). The tutor remarked on how shy the client was at the beginning and had some concerns that she would not benefit fully from the course. However, as the course progressed she became more engaged and at the end of the course in March, the client's action review stated that her vocabulary had improved and that she was less shy and more receptive.

Following this, RIJ conducted another recruitment day for future classes. The manager there noticed that this client had come along to the day. She had come, not to enrol, but to help others who were interested in the course. She sat with people and acted as translator to those with very low English skills and explained what the course was like and shared her experience with them. The manager noticed that she was a completely different person from the one who had registered back in January. She talked easily with the other people and told them not to worry about making mistakes in English. When the manager asked how she was getting on, she said that she didn't care if she made mistakes anymore and that it was more important to try to speak and that she had gone to her GP for the first time without any help. She said was so pleased with the progress she had made and wanted to help others to achieve this too.

Provided by Greater London Enterprises Delivery Partnership (July 2009)

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- the number of learners accepted in relation to the number of learners interviewed

(i.e. is the referral and screening process effective?)

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## Section 4:

# Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and Tutorials

### Purpose and process

- Take a learner responsive approach to Information Advice and Guidance. IAG can play an important role in helping learners to improve their employability skills if it places the learner at the centre. Learners need to be seen as people with their own hopes, ideas and aspirations about how they want their lives to progress and not as target numbers that need to be met. Therefore, the IAG process should start by giving learners the opportunity to articulate what they want. This can be the starting point of a dialogue about how this might be achieved. It also gives an opportunity to consider possible alternatives which the learner might have been previously unaware of. Care should be taken to avoid dismissing learner aspirations as 'unrealistic' or of viewing these as constrained by the timeframe of the project. What is essential is to support learners to gain an accurate picture of the range of possibilities and the routes they might take, including short and long term goals.
- Design a learner responsive IAG process which takes full account of who the learners are and the challenges they face in relation to the

### Case Study of Client E

Mrs E came to Brentin2Work speaking a high level of English and with slight concerns about her reading and writing skills but most of all, she was becoming increasingly agitated and disheartened because she was applying for several jobs on a weekly basis but to no avail.

We assessed Mrs E and assigned her to our Entry 2/3 class. She was a strong student who her teachers said was progressing rapidly. After a couple of weeks of settling in we began to look at her work experience, devised her action plan and put steps into place to go about finding her a job. It transpired that she is a qualified pharmacist from her country and already had transferred her documents into English but was being told she had to find a job in a chemist whilst studying for a further required qualification before she could become a registered pharmacist in Britain. Mrs E had been applying to chemists on line but had had little or no response.

I worked with her explaining the benefits of marketing herself to companies and taught her the necessary tools to do this. After much persuasion and practice she went to speak to a manager of a pharmacist in Wembley who subsequently offered her a job to start the following week, giving her shifts that would allow her to study for her qualification!

Mrs E praised all aspects of Make English Work and has since been working as an ambassador for the programme selling it to friends, family and people at her study group who have since been in and registered with us.

Provided by College of North West London Delivery Partnership (March 2010)

journey towards work, including the personal challenges of everyday life. A learner who is grappling with a very significant challenge cannot easily move forward in their journey into work unless they can at least see movement in relation to the personal challenge. Learners on this pilot have valued this type of support and it is evident that there is a considerable need for it on this type of programme. It is important that the need is not underestimated, as it is very significant for facilitating the learner journey.

- A learner responsive process includes key elements, such as:
  - building personal rapport and trust
  - information gathering, both factual and the learner's stories. This enables the project to find out who the learner is, and about their experience, qualifications, skills, interests, aspirations, concerns etc
  - pastoral support
  - space and support for learners to explore aspirations and routes to achieving them
  - identifying and explaining barriers, challenges and feelings, and exploring strategies for dealing with these and finding solutions
  - careers advice
  - advice about education and training

### Case Study of Client F

F is originally from Sri Lanka but has lived in Italy since 1985 until moving to the UK in 2003. F has excellent qualifications from Sri Lanka as an accountant and extensive work experience gained in Italy. Since moving to the UK, F worked briefly for the NHS doing manual jobs but since her last child and because her English was insufficient to get a job in accounts she has not been able to find suitable employment.

F is a single parent and her youngest child has recently started school full-time. She has been looking for work that would support her family for some time.

F met our IAG worker in Harrow through the Whitefriars Children's Centre in 2009. She received IAG and Better-Off calculations and decided to wait until January 2010 to start her ESOL course due to school hours. F is looking for a local part-time job that would fit within school hours as she cannot afford childcare.

After careful consideration F decided that the salary gained working at entry level in bookkeeping / accounts is insufficient to pay for childcare for 3 of her children so the Parents Into Employment (PIE) team referred her to the councils Early Years team to become a registered childminder. This would enable her to work as well as not paying for childcare.

Provided by Harrow Council Delivery Partnership (June 2010)

- strategies for continuity in case of need to hand over
- action planning

- 
- record keeping, using an individual employability plan
  - clarification of boundaries between those involved in this work
  - making referrals to other agencies and organisations for specialist support and guidance, for example, welfare rights, legal, financial etc.
- Devise a process for supporting the learner during the referral process to an agency or organisation for specialist support and guidance, as some learners may indicate a reluctance to use the services of another organisation due to concerns about their level of English, and prefer to obtain all their support from the programme. Use quality checked organisations and build real links with them. Where appropriate, monitor the specialist support and guidance and its impact for the learner.
  - Take account of the financial concerns of learners on benefits and provide opportunities for them to (a) explore the issues and fears connected with the transition from benefits to work and (b) calculate the financial difference that work would make to them. Respond to learners' fear of losing money by moving into work
  - Provide a tutorial process which takes account of available resources, and offers tutorial support at designated points in the programme, for example,
    - at point of entry; on programme and on exit. In addition, tutorial support should also be offered as and when the need arises.
- Support learners to open skills accounts, where these are appropriate, and use these for identifying job profiles and requirements.
  - Use shared learner/staff languages as a resource. For example, it is easier for lower level ESOL learners to explain complex challenges in their expert language.
- Previous experience and qualifications**
- Provide information and support for learners who want to get back into the type of work that they were previously involved in. Refer them to relevant specialist organisations, agencies and websites which can advise on or offer tailored routes into employment for people with qualifications and experience from their country of origin (e.g. electricians, accountants, teachers, chefs). For these learners, IAG needs to take account of the particular complexities and barriers involved in their learner journey, including some employers' resistance to employing learners without UK qualifications and experience.
  - Support learners to get their previous qualifications recognised, e.g. through NARIC, and support the process of getting certificates translated.

## Section 5:

# Joined up working

- Design an integrated programme of courses, employability and IAG support for learners.
- Ensure that the programme design makes it easy for staff and learners to keep in touch and work together when course elements of the programme have finished. Otherwise, it is too easy for learners to lose touch with the programme and its opportunities. It is important that employability support for the learner journey towards work does not finish when courses finish because, as this pilot programme has demonstrated, the process of moving into work frequently takes longer than the course based element of the programme.
- Ensure collaborative working between teachers, employability and IAG staff to support the learner journey. All these elements should work in tandem, and provide continuity for the learner. In order to achieve this, set up a channel of communication between staff in different roles, as part of a process to create a reciprocal relationship between the course sessions, employability work and IAG and provide continuity for the learner. Continuity is important on a programme where learners regularly meet with different staff members, so that they do not need to repeatedly

### Case Study of Client G

Client G was registered and successfully completed the Language2Work programme with Brentin2Work. He wanted to continue improving his English and so was referred to Make English Work. Mr G was very eager to find a job and had been experiencing lots of stress due to the fact that he had been in England for 3 years, had a family to support and as yet had not been able to find employment. His Make English Work routeway broker made G aware of how they were going to work together to help him discover what his job possibilities were, create a CV with him, identify what barriers he was facing to finding work and put a plan together to help him try and overcome these barriers. The routeway broker regularly went to visit G at his class and made appointments to see him at least once a week for job searching appointments.

On many of these appointments G was getting very worried that he had not yet found a job so his advisor ensured that G's Make English Work advisor was aware of her client's circumstances and together they worked with him to increase his chances of finding work and tackling his barriers. G's routeway broker speaks his native language which he found very useful when he needed specific information translated or some information explained.

After some very intense job search sessions, G was sent to the warehouses and factories in Park Royal and has now found a job at Katsouris Fresh Foods Ltd. He is very happy at his place of work. His routeway broker speaks to him on a regular basis and continues to offer him support and guidance where necessary.

Provided by College of North West London Delivery Partnership (June 2010)

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explain the same points to different staff members

- Design a learner friendly Individual Employment Plan (IEP) document and process to support the learner journey and collaborative working among staff which:
  - is built around the learner voice
  - provides the learner with a useable record of learning and achievement.
  - is a relatively unobtrusive living document, and enables full recording of the learner journey

- is easy to update on a regular basis so that if learners do leave the programme early, the paperwork is up to date
- provides space for the learner, and all parties working with the learner, to record valuable elements of the IAG process
- acts as a useful reminder of stages and processes and includes an action plan which is regularly reviewed

## Section 6: Integrating employability into courses

### Staffing

- Establish a team of suitably qualified and experienced employability workers and specialist teachers who are able to offer the subjects in the programme and integrate them with employability.
- Provide opportunities for staff development and support for embedding ESOL and employability

### Quality assurance

- Seek feedback from learners on an ongoing basis and at formalised points
- Consider asking for programme representatives from the learner cohort to feed back to the staff team
- Provide opportunities for staff to review the programme on an ongoing basis, drawing on learner feedback

### Programme design: set up

- Design courses that integrate ESOL, literacy, numeracy, ICT and employability using an embedded model, which looks different to generic ESOL. It is recommended that providers avoid the model of generic ESOL with an employability add on module, as this limits the opportunities

### Case Study of Client H

Client H enrolled with Metropole Learning in April 2009. She was thoroughly assessed and was subsequently placed into an ESOL Entry 1 class.

H came from Somalia where she finished secondary school. When she first registered with us, her English was extremely limited but since attending classes she has improved her English skills to a great extent. Her confidence has also skyrocketed. Additionally, her reading and writing skills have improved dramatically and she is now able to write simple sentences that are grammatically correct.

She is a very fast and motivated learner and has shown a keen interest in IT. She has had hardly any exposure to computers in the past but has now become quite confident in surfing the internet, doing email, and using Microsoft Office Word®.

H has become an excellent motivator, particularly in group settings, and she is definitely an aspiration to other learners. She is very punctual and attends classes regularly. Most importantly, H has now become an active volunteer working at a children's centre in Newham.

Provided by Metropole Learning Delivery Partnership (July 2009)

for learners to explore employability issues throughout the programme.

- Provide additional 1:1/small group employability work alongside courses. The combination of both should provide an integrated programme for

learners. Providers on this pilot found that the programme was more effective when these operated at the same time, rather than offering the employability work when the course finished.

- Negotiate with employers how they can contribute to programme design and delivery, where the shape of the course would benefit from their input.
- Offer sector/job specific courses, where possible/appropriate, or focused workshops, for example, childcare, retail etc. Where appropriate, develop courses in tandem with an employer(s) and create progression routes from programme entry point to course completion and then to job interview. This will involve a language analysis of job requirements and the setting of a suitable programme entry. The programme provider and employers must ensure that the programme will enable learners to gain the necessary language, job and employability skills for successful course completion, and that successful course completion will enable learners to compete with others for the target jobs.
- When it is not possible to provide sector/job specific courses, consider offering focused workshops on particular areas of work e.g. childcare. Consider offering these types of workshops in conjunction with other local providers where there is some

### Case Study of Client J

J has lived in England for 10 years. In her home country she worked as a teacher, but in London, she saw her days go by while packing sausages for little money for a food production factory. J did not speak much English so the opportunities to move forward were much reduced for her, even more when, after 4 months, she was fired. Following that, she was only able to find low paid temporary jobs as kitchen porter, room attendant and pest controller. She was on and off work, which caused her to struggle greatly money-wise.

When she acquired refugee status, this opened a whole new perspective to her; this could mean the chance to bring over her son, a doctor, who could very likely provide a good living for the family. She applied for visas for her son several times but, unfortunately, they were all denied. J then fell into a deep depression; feeling incapable and unfit to cope with her daily routine. It was at this very stage that she heard about the English lessons being offered at Gunnery House in Greenwich and came for an initial interview.

J has now been attending the lessons for 3 months. She has found a permanent job making typical Nepalese food to distribute to restaurants, shops and the O2 arena. She also volunteers for Metropole. Her communication skills have improved so much since she started to attend her English classes that she was encouraged by her teacher to help with the development of lower level students who are learning foundation skills like reading and writing and the Roman alphabet. J can feel that she represents a valuable help for the college since she can provide translation, which is very useful for beginner levels.

For the first time after she moved to England in 2000, J feels rewarded and proud of herself.

Provided by Metropole Learning  
Delivery Partnership (June 2010)

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demand but not enough learners in one provider.

- Take a learner responsive approach to programme design which allows for fast turnaround tailoring, led by learners' needs to upskill in preparation for forthcoming job vacancies/work experience opportunities. For example, set up workshops/short courses on food hygiene, paediatric first aid and manual handling so that learners will be qualified to apply for opportunities.
- To enable progression, design courses of a suitable length which suit the profile of learners and take account of their levels and educational backgrounds. Avoid very mixed level groups. Target specific levels, e.g. all one level, or specified spiky profiles (such as speaking and listening at Entry 3 and reading and writing at Entry 1)
- Provide employability support for self-employment and referrals to relevant organisations
- Set up programmes designed to meet particular support needs, for example, a course for single or isolated parents which builds in the development of a peer network to support parents in their journey into work
- Where relevant, explore ways of designing programmes which reduce disruption to learner progress across

long school holidays, by taking account of childcare responsibilities, for example, by building family learning activity into the programme. One way of approaching this is to seek a partnership with a local play scheme which can engage learners' children while parents continue on the programme

### **Programme design: curriculum**

- Design a curriculum which:
  - is learner responsive
  - takes full account of who the learners are
  - integrates employability with ESOL and literacy, plus numeracy and ICT as appropriate
  - addresses all aspects of the learner's experience of their journey towards work and all the elements related to obtaining work and the world of work. For example, address childcare, transport, as well as CVs and interviews etc so that:
    - full information is available to learners
    - issues are unpacked
    - barriers are identified and tackled
    - space is available to discuss feelings/attitudes about work
    - aspirations are unpacked and explored
    - solutions are identified

- Involve employers in delivery where appropriate, for example, running practice interviews, organising short workshops to familiarise learners with particular types of workplaces, possibly prior to work experience.
- Ensure that programmes are relevant, interesting and stimulating, and explore issues to do with employability from a personal, social, cultural and political perspective. It is vital that the programme engages learners' interest and is not purely of a functional nature. Recent research makes the case that an interesting programme is more likely to meet its functional aims, and support learners' language development.
- Build into the curriculum:
  - discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of unemployment and working
  - the skills, knowledge and practices for getting work
  - space to deal with learners' responses to the process, e.g. job rejections. Use case studies, role plays, videos to support the process as appropriate.
  - ways of tackling the barriers to obtaining work. It may be appropriate to ask learners to keep a journal in English or their expert languages, in which they record reflections on dealing with the barriers to moving into work



Frequently Asked Questions and Quickly Found Answers. The Great British Job Interview  
Celia Roberts, Melanie Cooke, Sarah Campbell and Julian Stenhouse

- a discourse based approach that prepares learners to deal with cross-cultural issues that have an impact on learners' job opportunities, for example, the cultural expectations involved in interviewing. Draw on suitable resources for this purpose, for example, the DVD about the discourse of interviewing: *Roberts, C., J Stenhouse, S. Campbell and M. Cooke (2007) F.A.Q.s Frequently asked questions and quickly found answers (DVD). London: DWP*
- key elements of IT and numeracy both for learners own development, and those that are important for job search, applying for work and for the workplace itself
- awareness raising of the employer perspective, and what employers are looking for. It is recommended that as far as possible, this is done by

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employers and/or employability specialists. Consider inviting employed and self-employed people/ex-learners from the programme into courses to talk to the learners.

- Draw from a wide range of pedagogical approaches, including innovative ways of working with learners, such as Reflect, an approach used by ActionAid, which can support language development while, at the same time, facilitating work on tackling employability challenges
- Provide space for learners' expert and shared languages, and use shared learner/staff languages as a resource. For example, it is easier for lower level ESOL learners to explain complex challenges in their expert language.
- Where relevant, support learners to extend their opportunities to use English outside of the programme by, for example, setting up study groups with other learners on the programme

## Section 7: Employer engagement

### Infrastructure

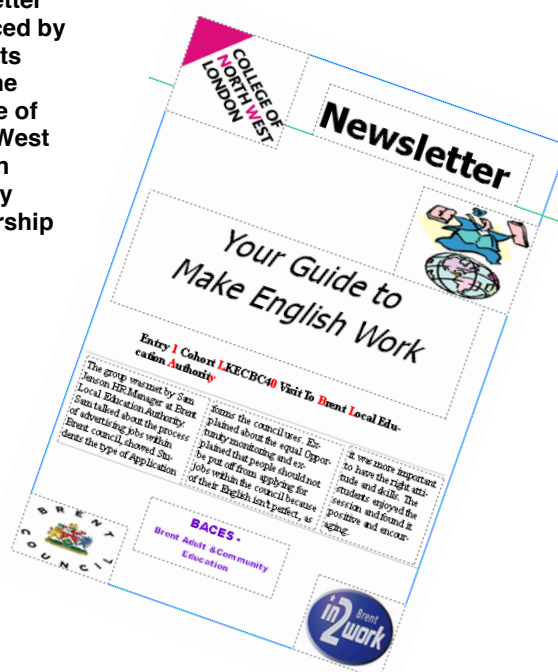
- Carry out employer engagement activity in conjunction with an existing employer engagement infrastructure within the organisation, and in particular, an infrastructure which is experienced in working with ESOL learners, so that it is more likely to produce results. Working within an existing infrastructure will enable the programme to obtain clear knowledge and understanding of current trends in the job market, local employment patterns, and new employment opportunities. This is especially important when working with parents whose childcare responsibilities require them to work locally.
- Ensure that employer engagement is led by staff who are qualified and experienced in this area

### Process

- Ensure that employer engagement activity builds a rapport with employers and is an ongoing dialogue.
- Use employer engagement activity to shape programme design. Find out what employers are looking for, and feed this back to learners. Use it to inform the design of your curriculum.

- Develop a database of employers who will offer work experience to ESOL learners. The database should be regularly updated.
- Make links with:
  - employer partnerships, for example, on industrial estates and seek work trials
  - black and minority employers' networks
  - local employment networks and local business forums, and access the job brokerages services provided locally, for example, by councils. Keep up to date with local and national initiatives, including local council and Department for Work and Pensions initiatives
  - employers that agree to inform the programme about vacancies. In this pilot, some providers reported that some employers agreed to prioritise learners from their programme for vacancies

Newsletter produced by students from the College of North West London delivery partnership



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- Find out about/set up local job fairs and open days for employers. Where possible, negotiate with employers about setting up screening sessions, and support sessions for the completion of application forms, after which learners can move to the next step in the recruitment process
  - Draw on research into employer engagement

### **Presenting the programme to employers**

- Providers in this pilot report that positive links with employers have depended on building a track-record of a successful activity, for example, work placements. Marketing the programme to employers as an

opportunity to “give back”, is reported as a valuable approach, and quite a few employers explicitly stated this as the reason for continuing involvement.

- It is important to raise employers' awareness of the value to them of providing opportunities to ESOL learners, for example, learners' language skills and resources. It is also important to support employers in their work with ESOL learners. Where appropriate, provide a handbook with key information. Explore how links between the employer and the provider can benefit the employer, for example, courses for the employers' staff.

## Section 8:

# Work experience (work placements, volunteering, work trials)

### Value of work experience

- In this pilot, learners and providers have reported on the transformative impact of work experience. Work placements, volunteering opportunities and work trials give a unique insight into specific jobs and the work culture and procedures in the UK. In addition, they are an excellent vehicle for language learning and development. It is vital therefore, that where targets are attached to key aspects of the programme, work experience is included. This will ensure its inclusion in the learner journey. It is also important that targets take account of low level ESOL learners who may not always find it easy to obtain suitable work experience opportunities.
- Promote the importance of work experience for the learner journey, particularly to learners who have not previously worked in the UK. Point out to learners that work experience enables them to test out their work plans, and their aspirations and ideas about a type of job/work sector. It may confirm their interest or it may lead to a decision to change aspirations.

### Case Study of Client K

K is an Egyptian national who has lived in the UK for four years and has had Indefinite Leave to remain for 3 years. She is very well educated with a first degree in science from the University of Cairo. She had never worked in the UK. She is married and has a child of 2 years of age.

K wanted to work within the field of science but needed to improve her English which was assessed at Entry 1 when she joined. She joined Parents Into Employment (PIE) in February 2009 and received IAG, Childcare and Employment Advice and Work readiness workshops in the following four months. Due to poor health she was unable to attend the ESOL class at this stage but did attend vocational training in First Aid and Food Hygiene. She did join and complete an ESOL course in October 2009.

She progressed onto an Entry 2 course with Harrow College and during this time we facilitated a NARIC assessment of her overseas qualifications. We secured her a work placement with a local secondary school in December 2009 for her to support lab-work and science teachers. She was offered a permanent job in January 2010, 4 days per week to be a lab technician. She has retained this position and has since been offered a more senior position. She contacted us again in June 2010 for further advice on personal development. We were able to support her application for a place at a London university to complete a Masters in Waste Management. This included providing evidence of her level of English, a reference to support her application and helping her with paperwork to prove her status as a home student and for student finance.

K continues to support her family while she is studying and despite significant health issues remains an active project participant.

Provided by Harrow Council Delivery Partnership (September 2010)

Both results are valuable as they enable the learner to move forward in a more informed way.

### Support for learners for the process

- Provide learners with support before, during, and after going into the work place.
- Support during the preparation stage could include:
  - discussion of the purpose and benefits
  - negotiation about support during the work experience. If there is no-one in the workplace to support the learner, the work experience may be of limited value. Negotiation should also include how the learner will be contacted by the provider during the work experience
  - a focus on relevant language that may be useful during the work experience
  - providing learners with space and an opportunity to voice and discuss concerns. What might appear to be small concerns to a staff member can feel quite significant to the learner
  - opportunities to talk to learners who have already been on work experience as they are often the best ambassadors. Hearing about their experiences can frequently allay learners' concerns

### Case Study of Client L

L did the Passenger Assistance ESOL for Parents Course with the Limehouse Project.

When she first joined this course, she was unable to contribute and talk openly to others within the group. She did not feel comfortable as these groups were mixed. However, she gradually began to show improvements in both her social aspects and her learning.

Her first experience of voluntary work was with the Tower Hamlets Transport Services as a two day work placement to observe senior passenger assistants in order to gain an understanding of how Tower Hamlets Transport operates, for instance, how they pick up clients, the uses of the wheelchairs and being able to take care of the clients while under their care.

Before doing the two days observations, she was very nervous and was not sure whether she wanted to go ahead with it or not, but after attending she was happy with the way it went and the feedback she gave was very positive. Her opinion about the care sector had completely changed.

These courses and work placements helped her by expanding her previous knowledge and opening up future work prospects within both the care sector and working within the transport services.

Provided by Skills for Health Delivery Partnership (June 2010)

- support for learners to obtain CRB checks where these are necessary

### Case Study of Client M

One of our clients, M, was referred to us after finishing the Language2Work programme. It was reported to us that she had very little confidence as she felt that her communication and writing skills would deter her from ever finding employment. After being assessed, it was decided that she was an Entry 2 student and as such would be participating on a 2 week work placement.

At first she was very nervous and apprehensive to the point where she almost left the course in fear of being rejected at work, but after meeting with her three times, we convinced her to stick with the course and to, more importantly, go on her work placement to increase her confidence and give her some experience in a working environment. She decided to choose a placement at a large local retailer which has now given her a huge confidence boost to the point where she is contacting us to arrange appointments. She brings details of vacancies she has identified and wants to apply for and has asked us to start doing mock interview practice with her!

Provided by College of North West London Delivery Partnership (March 2009)

- a staged approach to work experience where appropriate, e.g. visit to a workplace, followed by discussion, prior to the work experience
- support, where necessary, for interviews for work experience. There is competition for some opportunities, and some

organisations put prospective candidates through interview. When this is the case, learners need careful preparation which can be integrated with preparation for job interviews.

- Support during the work experience itself could include:
  - keeping in touch with learners by phone or a visit, so that any difficulties can be sorted out
  - maintaining contact with the employer to trouble shoot as necessary
  - for longer work placements/ work trials, hold a review at an early stage to deal with any issues arising
  - support for learners to reflect on the experience, for example, through oral or written learner diaries. It is important that work experience is a positive experience and diaries can assist learners with voicing the experience
  - a contribution to expenses incurred during work experience (e.g. travel)
- Support after the work experience could include:
  - opportunities to feed back and reflect on the experience, using diaries produced during work experience, where appropriate
  - space to establish how it has supported the learner journey towards work, and how it has

***“After finishing my work experience I felt more confident on myself when I speak and communicate with the people. The work experience was very helpful to me to know what I want to do in the future”***

Zeinab Atwi  
College of North West London

informed aspirations, future plans and action plans, changing these where necessary.

- support to make use of the work experience on application forms and on CVs. Most employers will provide a reference following a work placement
- writing an account of the experience and its value

#### **Liaison with work experience provider**

- Liaise with employers in advance about how the learners will be supported in the workplace during the work experience
- Liaise with organisations providing the work experience while it is ongoing, to ensure its success and feed back to the organisation afterwards. Learners can be encouraged to write short reflective statements about the work experience and, with their agreement,

these can be used for feedback to the organisation afterwards

#### **Obtaining work experience opportunities**

- It is very important that the programme has a senior management commitment to provide work experience opportunities, because there is usually a high demand for these opportunities across an organisation’s provision and not enough to go round. Typically, many learners on other programmes will have a higher level of English and may sometimes be viewed as better ambassadors for the organisation (without evidence for this view). It is therefore important that programme staff emphasise the resources, including languages, that ESOL learners bring to work experience. On this pilot, providers who could draw on the employer engagement

#### **Case Study of Client N**

Our client N accessed the programme with an identified pathway to employment as a teacher. She is French and has no teaching experience in this country. For two days a week she is working with our ESOL teachers in lesson preparation, core curriculum and ESOL learning plans and acting as a classroom assistant supporting learners with particular needs. She will progress to facilitating some sessions under the close supervision of our teachers.

Provided by Burleigh College Delivery Partnership (March 2010)

infrastructure of the organisation were much more successful in obtaining work experience opportunities.

Programmes working in isolation, with a small number of staff tasked to obtain work experience opportunities, starting from scratch, will have great difficulties obtaining the number of work experience opportunities that they need.

- Where possible, search for work experience opportunities which may lead to jobs and ask for work trials.
- Find out about the range of volunteering opportunities in local schools for learners who want to work with children and need jobs that fit around school hours, for example, lunch supervisor, breakfast club assistant or teaching assistant. Ensure that schools have information about learners' multilingual skills
- Consider work experience with organisations where learners will be able to use their expert languages, especially for lower level ESOL learners
- Build links with local volunteer bureaus and volunteering networks
- Consider reciprocal arrangements/exchanges with other organisations to provide work experience opportunities

***“During my work experience I developed my listening and communication skills, and I learnt how to communicate with other customers, buying the medicines from companies”***

Mohamed Zaher Abdul Ahad  
College of North West London

- Explore a range of opportunities for learners to gain understanding and experience of workplaces, including:
  - visits to work places
  - in-house opportunities, for example, in-house visits, which can give a different perspective to the learner's usual experience of the organisation, volunteering, opportunities to talk to staff about their working day, etc.
  - work shadowing, possibly of someone who shares the learners' expert language.
- These may provide an alternative to work experience for some learners, for example, some low level ESOL learners.

## Section 9: Real job search

### Approaches

- Bear in mind that with the economic downturn, many workers are being driven into low paid jobs at a lower skill level than they were aiming for, and this has reduced the job opportunities for people who would generally have gone for those lower skilled jobs. This will affect job opportunities for some ESOL learners.

### Infrastructure and staffing

- Carry out real job search in conjunction with an existing organisational infrastructure for job search, and in particular, an infrastructure which is experienced in working with ESOL learners, so that it is more likely to produce results.
- Ensure that this is led by staff who are qualified/experienced in real job search

### Building links with external agencies and services

- Access the job brokerage services provided locally, e.g. by councils.
- Build strong links with a range of employment agencies relevant to learners' job aspirations, which between them:
  - demonstrate awareness of the needs of ESOL learners and will support learners to use their services

### Case Study of Client O

O started the ESOL programme on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010. She came from Lithuania and had been in the UK for two months. She had been assessed as pre-entry level and she wanted to improve all of her skills in ESOL but especially her speaking. She had been an engineer in her own country for 17 years and she wanted to become more confident in applying for jobs in London.

Her targets in her reviews were set to reflect her immediate needs. She practised filling in simple forms, learning verbs to describe her current situation and familiarised herself with the common questions asked in an interview. Her language started to improve dramatically, she made dramatic progress in developing her reading and writing and with encouragement her speaking became significantly better as well.

With this new found confidence, she was able to fill in an application form for a job as a housekeeper working for KMS (UK) Ltd. They employed her straight away and she started working in a hotel in Kensington. She has also gained a City and Guilds qualification and she has become more self-assured in practising her English skills whenever she is given the opportunity.

Provided by Metropole Learning Delivery Partnership (September 2010)

- provide part-time work (requested by many learners)
- provide work that requires a level of English suitable for learners' levels
- have staff that share learners' other languages

- provide jobs that would use learners' other languages.
- Seek out employment agencies for support work in schools as many learners seek work which fits around school hours

### Approaches

- Adopt a job search approach which balances learner-led and job-led activity. Within a learner centred programme, a learner-led job search approach is the most tailored, and involves looking for job vacancies which suit learners' current situations and skills. A job-led approach looks for vacancies and seeks suitable learners to apply. This can be valuable for providing learners with information about vacancy trends in the locality and increasing learners' options, for example, for learners who want to look for interim work while moving towards their main work goal. Where learners need to look for 'interim' work, possibly for financial reasons, it is valuable to provide support for thinking through how this can be harnessed as valuable work experience.
- Explore a range of ways of obtaining work, including the 'hidden job market' (jobs which have not been advertised)
- Match jobs to learners' aspirations, qualifications, skills, experience and knowledge.

## The Hidden Job Market

The 'hidden job market' is those jobs that have not been advertised, so that the ESOL learner is the only candidate for the vacancy. This involves direct contact with employers to offer a work-trial / self-recommendation or recommendation by staff on behalf of the learner. It requires staff with very specific employer engagement experience and skills. This requires supporting learners to introduce themselves in person to employers or alternatively, someone else contacts the employer to recommend them. The aim is "to show what I can do for free, and how much I can be useful to you" i.e. request a work trial. They are considered to have more chance of success than simply asking if a job is available. One advantage of this approach for the employer is that the provider acts in the capacity of an agency and replaces the need for the employer to advertise, short-list, and interview.

- Acknowledge the need for ESOL before moving into some jobs and types of work. Discuss this with learners and refer them to other suitable intensive ESOL courses where appropriate.
- Encourage learners to explore job opportunities that use their other expert languages

- Set up longer term voluntary placements for learners whose current situations do not allow them to apply for work. In this way learners continue to build their skills in preparation for when they will be applying for work.

### Case Study of Client P

P arrived in the UK four years ago from Romania. He gained very useful skills in his country as he worked as a construction labourer, sales assistant, flower designer and technical specialist. P started with Metropole as an ESOL Entry 3 learner in April 2010. He was a regular comer and a very diligent student. With his sense of humour he always contributed to create a good atmosphere in the class. He was very popular among learners as he always had a positive attitude.

P regularly attended IT classes and showed a positive attitude towards finding employment. He developed his CV with the assistance of the IT tutor who also helped him to improve his telephone and interview technique and skills.

P was very keen to find a job so he was actively seeking employment. He applied for a position in building construction and finally was invited for an interview. P was very happy as he got his desired job. He thanked all tutors for the help and assistance.

Provided by Metropole Learning Delivery Partnership (September 2010)

### Process: support for learners

- Include preparation for real job search throughout the programme and this should include:

- knowledge of the work sector that they are interested in and the specific types of jobs available
- awareness of the ways people find out about particular types of jobs in the UK/the locality, including agencies
- awareness of the different ways in which job applications can be made
- knowledge of different types of work:
  - full-time / part time
  - self-employment
  - home working
  - sessional work
  - permanent / short term contracts / maternity cover
  - temporary seasonal work, for example, around Christmas
  - shifts
  - job shares
  - pool
  - cover
- awareness of key aspects of terms and conditions to ask about, for example, holidays and flexible working
- Support learners with job search and gaining the strategies to work on job search independently, as appropriate. Acknowledge that some learners' literacy skills may not allow them to search for a particular type of job independently, but may not be a barrier to them doing the job

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- Build in support for learners for the job search experience, including dealing with rejection.
  - Provide space for learners to explore the range of job opportunities including those that need proficiency in English and those that do not.
  - Build in opportunities to explore financial issues, as some learners will be concerned that taking up jobs will leave them financially worse off, so accurate advice on this is essential.
  - Build in support for learners to obtain CRB checks and short qualifications/certificates where employment sectors will need these, e.g. NVQs in Food Hygiene for catering jobs.
  - Encourage learners to log job search activity and use reflections on their strategies to inform future job search.

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## Section 10: Supporting people who are in work

### Purpose

- Develop a process for maintaining contact with people in work, in order to provide support, troubleshoot, track and obtain evidence of sustainable work

### Process

- Establish a process for supporting people who are in work which is fully integrated into the programme and has staffing and time allocated to it
- Negotiate with learners who obtain work the best way of keeping in touch, for example, texting, mail shots, phone calls or emails
- Negotiate with learners who obtain work, the best way of providing support, for example:
  - weekly appointments
  - drop in for job search
  - open days e.g. to meet employers
  - 1:1 meetings with learners
  - referrals onto other organisations
  - visits to the employers after the learners have started their job

### Evidence of sustainable work

- Establish a straightforward process for evidencing sustainable work (e.g.

employed for more than 13 weeks or as the contract defines). Evidence needs to be easy to obtain. The conclusion in this pilot is that pay slips and a learner self-declaration is the best option, and that requiring learners to provide a form signed by their employer to evidence sustainable work is not an effective method. This conclusion has been drawn because it emerged that some learners were concerned about asking their employer for evidence of sustainable employment, and some employers were reluctant to provide signed evidence due to concern about its purpose and what it might be used for, e.g. to trigger an invoice for an agency fee. If evidence is sought from the employer, an officially endorsed leaflet explaining what evidence is needed and what it will be used for could allay concern.

- It may be useful to consider providing learners with incentives to provide evidence, where appropriate.
- Take account of the different types of jobs that learners may obtain when setting job outcome targets. Otherwise, valuable work opportunities for learners may not be captured in the job outcomes (for example, temporary work; self-employment; work from a pool where people may be called on from time to time, but not for a regular number of hours per week).



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