

Developing a Three Year Strategic Action Plan for Skills for Life in London

Summary of evidence and recommendations for ESOL

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Introduction

The delivery of high quality, appropriate provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is pivotal to the success of London's economy and communities. In recognising the importance of ESOL, London Skills Commission partners are drawing up a 3 year London regional ESOL Action Plan to provide the strategic framework with which to plan and fund this vital part of the Capital's skills strategy.

The development and implementation of this ESOL Action Plan is set against a wide and complex backdrop. The Plan responds to the Strategy Unit's London Project Report that highlights a lack of job-focused ESOL, and recommends the establishment of a coherent 'cross body' ESOL strategy that enables all people to have sufficient English language skills to work. The strategic actions contained in the Plan are shaped by a number of other highly significant factors including the review of the Further Education (FE) sector (the Foster Review), the enlargement of the European Union and the English language requirements for Citizenship, plus the work of London's Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA) flagships for basic skills and refugees/asylum seekers.

Key influences also include the work of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to continue to drive up the quality and effectiveness of all provision through the Agenda for Change, and for ESOL in particular through the recently introduced suite of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) approved ESOL qualifications and Skills for Life Quality Initiative.

These developments involve a number of Government departments. The Plan maximises collaboration and 'joining up', not only between those bodies that share a direct interest in implementing the skills strategy such as the LSC, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and London Development Agency (LDA), but also with others including the Home Office, whose work has a significant impact on ESOL provision in London.

This document summarises the evidence base that has informed the development of the plan, drawing together information from the key stakeholders in ESOL to create a meaningful picture of ESOL supply, demand and issues. The document begins with an executive summary of evidence and recommendations for strategic action, and continues with further detail under the themes of:

- ◆ Demographics and characteristics of people with English language needs;
- ◆ Overview of ESOL provision in London;
- ◆ Employment focused ESOL provision;
- ◆ Advice, guidance and referral services;
- ◆ Quality and success, and
- ◆ The ESOL workforce.

The three year Strategic Action Plan for ESOL in London is presented in an accompanying document and is intended to provide the priorities for action from which more detailed operational plans can be drawn up and implemented by partners. In this way, the Plan will be able to guide the development of ESOL provision with a clear set of principles, whilst maintaining the flexibility to respond to this particularly changeable element of learning and skills acquisition.

The evidence gathering phase for this report took place in summer 2005. Work is now underway to research and provide recommendations for the further development of literacy, numeracy and key skills. This will result in an additional, linked evidence report. It should be noted that these summaries of evidence are focused on **the headline issues**, designed to inform strategic planning, rather than in-depth and exhaustive analyses. Numerical data is correct at the time of writing, but clearly subject to updating and change. However, this does not affect the overall conclusions and trends presented in the reports. The evidence collected, together with the goals outlined in the Strategic Action Plan for ESOL will be brought together to form a single Strategic Action Plan for all Skills for Life in London, to be published early in 2006.

Executive summary

The key issues emerging from the evidence base and the resulting recommendations for action that have shaped the three year strategy include:

Improving the response to a varied market

- The total body of people with ESOL needs is very large and varied. Conservative estimates indicate 600,000 people of working age with a **range** of ESOL needs, probably around two-thirds of these people are economically inactive or unemployed. In addition, there are 35,000 EU economic migrants, many from the Accession States. LEAs also estimate that 300,000 school age pupils have ESOL needs.
- The characteristics of people with ESOL needs are diverse. Age, level of education, cultural diversity, economic status and other factors influence the type of provision that will be most effective. There is a range of key drivers for ESOL learning, including improving economic independence and access to education, as well as for citizenship. Supporting social cohesion and inclusion is a particularly critical priority for London and is closely linked to economic independence. The variation of starting points, needs and aspirations indicates the wide range of 'segments' of the ESOL market. Existing ESOL provision is not sufficiently tailored to, or contextualised for these different segments.
- For some groups, including people from some ethnic groups and those in prisons, the proportional take up of ESOL is lower than for others. This is a crucial social inclusion issue. Significant barriers include lack of cultural sensitivity, linked childcare, and of provision delivered in accessible locations and modes. A key factor in enabling learner progression is ensuring that the curriculum and qualifications structures are flexible enough to facilitate easy movement from one level to the next. Not all provision is, or should be accredited, for example, 'first steps' ESOL, but other measures of success are needed to ensure high quality and progression.
- The London Project Report highlights that *'the provision of job-focused English language teaching in London is insufficient, given the city's large foreign-born community'*. There is good quality job-focused provision, but it is relatively small scale and not coordinated regionally. Providers have begun to embed ESOL into vocational training, and this needs to continue. In addition, IAG and learning provision must take into account the wide variation of skills levels and needs amongst those people who want to get jobs. Effective skills assessment is vital.
- Most people who are unemployed when they start ESOL courses do not have the support to continue learning once they get a job. The complex and inflexible funding and target requirements of the LSC and JCP hinder the development of this essential continuum of support. Much of the ESOL delivered to employees is limited to enabling compliance with health and safety legislation. The business case for ESOL over and above these requirements is not clear for many employers, and larger companies expect regional solutions that cannot be delivered effectively through the current infrastructure and processes.

Recommendations for action:

- *Improve the responsiveness of ESOL provision by 'segmenting' the ESOL market and developing, with all relevant key bodies, specifications that tailor provision so that people can achieve their economic, social and personal aspirations. Specifications should identify how qualifications or other agreed success criteria can accredit the wide range of language skills delivered in different settings and for different purposes.*
- *Prioritise job-focused specifications so that people can acquire the English language skills that they need for work, responding to the needs of those entering work, as well as employees and employers/sector needs. London's key sectors should be prioritised, especially those with significant numbers of second language speakers. The skills required for major regional developments such as the 2012 Olympics should also influence specification design.*
- *Establish a 'fast response mechanism' as an integral part of a regional body for ESOL, acting as a regional focus for the employer brokerage services and business support being developed by the LSC and other partners.*

More effective use of public investment

- Of the **estimated total** £180m annual public investment in ESOL, the LSC accounts for at least 80%, followed by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) at approximately 8%. LSC ESOL supply has risen by 40% between 2001 and 2004, and expenditure by over 50% in the same period, although it is now levelling out. Consideration is being given to transferring responsibility for JCP Skills for Life provision and financing to the LSC from April 2006. Existing levels of public investment are insufficient to meet demand and there are concerns that the budgets allocated to the JCP transfer may not reflect the scale and nature of JCP customers' needs.
- First steps, non-accredited ESOL and Entry Levels 1 and 2 appear to be particularly vulnerable in terms of budget 'squeeze'. However, for many people they are vital steps towards target bearing qualifications, and are particularly crucial elements in enabling social inclusion and cohesion. For all funders, current organisational drivers (funding and targets) influence the planning and funding of provision in ways that do not always serve the best interests of those with ESOL needs.
- Given the scale of unmet demand and pressure on finite resources, public investment must be prioritised on provision for those most in need. Joint financing arrangements that include appropriate employer contributions are in need of further development. The National Employer Training Programme (NETP) is likely to feature greater employer contributions, but the current eligibility rules will need to be changed if this is to be achieved.
- ESOL provision is free (through fee remission) to all who have been resident in the EU for at least three years, as well as to all refugees and asylum seekers. Following EU enlargement, 35,000 people joined the Worker Registration Scheme, and there is a reported sharp increase in demand for ESOL from this group. Those with more acute ESOL needs may be less able to access provision because of this new demand. The significant private EFL provider base has suffered adverse business impact from EU enlargement. There may be potential for greater public-private partnership with the EFL 'sector' to solve London's 'ESOL equation'.

Recommendations for action:

- *Cost all specifications and identify those for critical ESOL market segments (economic and social) that should be prioritised for public investment. Identify the source of public investment for these eg: LSC, LDA, Home Office etc. Tripartite finance arrangements of employer, employee and public contributions in varying proportions according to agreed criteria on the purpose and type of provision required should be encouraged where appropriate.*
- *Require larger providers to tender for a range of differently financed specifications, to maximise the use of public investment, by encouraging providers to offset the costs of 'free' provision against that which attracts private investment.*
- *Explore the EFL provider base and any opportunities for collaborative work.*

Improving quality and developing the ESOL workforce

- The overall quality of ESOL provision appears to be improving. The Skills for Life Quality Initiative (QI) has already made significant progress in helping providers to embed ESOL through the 'whole organisation' approach. That said, the QI needs to be continued and areas of provision that are still below acceptable quality standards improved. Areas of provision that are in the process of transferring to LSC control, notably offender learning, require continued support to address quality and capacity issues.
- The London region continues to make the greatest progress towards achieving the Government's Skills for Life ESOL targets, but still only around one third of learners gain qualifications. Progress towards the target of 80% of LSC funded provision leading to the new qualifications should help to improve further quality, but will be challenging for many providers and there are indications that further support will be required. The transfer to the new qualifications may affect success rates during this transition year.

- There is an urgent need to professionalise the ESOL workforce as a key part of improving quality. Many teachers do not hold the required skills sets, particularly for flexible, community and employer-based provision. Some teachers have had less opportunity to access Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Evidence suggests that some applicants for teaching posts may also lack appropriate qualifications and skills.
- The LSC and LDA have made significant financial investments in CPD and initial teacher training, but these vital areas of quality development have traditionally suffered from a lack of long term financing strategy. The large demand for ESOL, the transition to new teaching qualifications and the lack of teachers with the skills sets for flexible delivery, particularly in the community and workplace, all contribute to the mismatch in supply and demand. The lack of suitably skilled and qualified teachers, many of whom are in part-time employment appears to be the major factor affecting capacity, rather than there not being enough teachers. Over two thirds of ESOL teachers are employed on sessional hour or part-time contracts, with little job security and limited access to professional development opportunities: both of which have a detrimental effect on quality.

Recommendations for action:

- *Continue to roll out the Skills for Life Quality Initiative (QI), incrementally involving all providers (including non-LSC) so that a consistently high quality of ESOL can be assured across all segment specifications. This should involve prioritising support for areas of provision where quality is still below acceptable standards.*
- *Professionalise the ESOL workforce of teachers and managers so that there is the capacity and skills sets to deliver accredited ESOL provision for a range of purposes and levels, and in different settings. This should include supporting providers to reduce the number of teachers on low volume sessional hour contracts and ensuring that teachers are encouraged to engage in CPD, particularly those in sectors that have had less access to these opportunities.*

A need for a regional purchasing strategy and coordinating body

- The London Project Report recommends “a coherent ESOL strategy amongst all Government departments and London bodies”. Joint work to address ESOL needs in London has and is being taken forward through a variety of agencies, but there is a need to step up the implementation of coherent strategic planning through a sustainable regional body.
- LSC London region has a newly formed Skills for Life team, providing a starting point for the development of a joint regional body. The LSC funds the vast majority of ESOL provision and has the largest procurement, contract management and quality infrastructure. The National Employment Panel recommendation that the LSC be given “lead responsibility for purchasing and managing the provision of all (JCP) basic skills and ESOL” is now being actioned.
- The wide variance in data capture systems across partners hinders effective regional review and planning functions. The LSC has the most comprehensive data pool for learning activities, but there is room for refining and strengthening data capture to improve regional coordination. Learner progression, a particularly vital feature of skills development and quality assurance, cannot be adequately tracked through current data capture. The work to establish a unique learner number is continuing, but a regional protocol is urgently required to monitor essential data in the interim.

Recommendations for action:

- *Establish a RSP body to coordinate London’s ESOL provision through the development and implementation of a coherent regional purchasing strategy. The body should be led by the LSC, under the auspices of the RSP, with the integral involvement of the LDA, JCP and other key partners.*
- *Prioritise the development of a joint data capture system as a key function of the regional body. The system should enable simple, yet effective data co-ordination, including capturing essential information on learner tracking and progression, the type and distribution of provision, qualification and job outcomes, and financing sources.*

Demographics and characteristics of people with English language needs

Estimating the need

Estimates vary for the numbers of people living in London whose first language is not English, and within that group only a proportion will require ESOL support, and the level of support will vary. A table on page 28 shows the range of source data used to derive estimates of people with ESOL needs. 2001 Census figures reveal 1.9 million people of all ages, including 1.6 million 16-64 year olds born outside of the UK living in London. These figures are likely to include some of the estimated 350,000 refugees and asylum seekers in London at that time. An estimated 1 million (30%) of employees do not have English as their first language. There are around 400,000 people living in London who were born in countries with poorly developed economies and that are non-English speaking, with 250,000 of these also having low or no qualifications. It is within these groups that the highest level of ESOL need is likely to be found.

There are currently reported to be around 20,000 individuals and families awaiting asylum decisions, and Haringey, Newham, Barking & Dagenham and Lambeth host the highest number of asylum seekers. There is a declining trend in asylum applications and many applicants are now dispersed outside of London. Nonetheless London remains a key centre for refugees and asylum seekers. About 25% of asylum seekers eventually receive some sort of positive decision, but it is likely that many of those that are denied refugee status remain in the UK, many in London. Currently, many asylum seekers come from Iran, Iraq, Somalia, China, Congo, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Sudan and Eritrea.

LEAs report that over 300,000 school age children have ESOL needs, with the highest numbers in Newham, Ealing, Brent and Redbridge. Given that the 2001 census records less than half this figure of under 16 year olds not born in the UK, it may be that a significant proportion of the 300,000 are UK born into families where English is not spoken at home. If this is the case, it highlights the importance of ESOL for parents – which will require local, flexible provision with linked childcare.

In 2004-05, a total of 34,255 people were registered on the Worker Registration Scheme in London. The table below shows 45% employed in the hospitality and catering sector, and a further 20% in administration, business and management. Since their peak in summer 2004, applications within London have fallen steadily and were around 6,500 in the first quarter of 2005. Over half of applications are from Polish people. Almost all registered workers are in full time but low-waged jobs. A significant proportion of these workers are likely to have ESOL needs.

Administrative, business and management	6,640	Retail	2,615
Hospitality and Catering	15,380	Construction	1,415
Agriculture	460	Transport	600
Manufacturing	1,520	Entertainment and leisure	830
Food processing	790	Others/unknown	2,565
Health and medical	1,450	Total registered	34,255

Many providers report significant increases in ESOL demand from EU Accession State nationals, especially those from Poland. LSC learner data for 2004-05 shows that the largest group of learners (30%) were classified 'White – any other' which is likely to be the group containing white migrants.

There are other migrant worker groups that enter the country on sector-based Government schemes. For example, the largest group entering on the scheme for the hospitality and catering sector is Bangladeshis.

Boroughs with the highest number of recently arrived migrants (defined as all people born outside of the UK) from ethnic groups other than White are Brent, Westminster, Ealing, Barnet, Newham, Camden and Hounslow. An important point in planning provision is that whilst the outer London boroughs proportionally have fewer recent migrants from outside the UK relative to their population, in terms of actual numbers there are more from non-White ethnic minorities.

Within London's migrant population there is enormous diversity. Some migrant groups fare very well, such as those coming to take up relatively high earning professional and managerial jobs and it is unlikely that this group would be a high priority for ESOL provision. Other migrant groups have fairly poor labour market outcomes. They are typically migrants from developing countries and once in work tend to be concentrated in lower paid occupations. Those who have exceptionally poor outcomes are from Somalia, Congo, Eritrea and Afghanistan, who are likely to face a high degree of exclusion from the labour market. These groups will include a high proportion of refugees and asylum seekers. Other groups with low employment rates are those born in Turkey (36%) and Bangladesh (37%), two of London's larger migrant communities.

Within the migrant population, employment rates are far lower for women (56%) than men (75%) and whilst there are other factors such as childcare and cultural reasons behind this, the need for women to have access to ESOL that meets their needs is likely to be a high priority. This may include not only having a crèche available but also having classes in the evening or weekends, or during school hours and terms, and possibly in the school building itself.

42% of London's migrants are UK nationals and 42% are foreign nationals. Migrants from London's long established groups (e.g. Kenya, Jamaica) are the most likely to be UK nationals, while recent arrivals are generally younger and more likely to be foreign nationals. The number of applications received for British citizenship in 2004 was 135,085, a fall of 8 per cent compared to the previous year when 147,345 applications were received. The fall in applications was a significant change from the 28 per cent increase in applications in 2003 and increases in both 2001 and 2002. According to the Home Office bulletin the fall in 2004 was primarily due to the introduction of the requirement for English language testing. Since failure to achieve English language standards is not a criteria recorded amongst those refused citizenship, it is not possible to provide any further evidence, however, it may be that a factor is a lack of provision of ESOL for citizenship.

National figures for the prison population in March 2005 indicate that around 12% (9,000) of all offenders are foreign nationals. It is likely that a significant proportion of these offenders are held in London prisons. Of the foreign national cohort, 24% are of African nationality, 29% European and 13% Asian. Within these main groups (and others including South American and Oceania), there is likely to be a considerable proportion that has ESOL needs. There may also be UK nationals (those who have been granted citizenship prior to the ESOL requirement) who may have ESOL needs.

Gender, age and ethnicity

LSC enrolment figures provide a baseline for profiling some of the characteristics of those with ESOL needs who are in learning. Although it should be acknowledged that there may well be differences for the 'non-learner' group, in respect of age, gender and ethnicity. Figures for 2004/05 LSC ESOL enrolments show the following age and gender breakdown:

LSC	16-18		16-18 Total	19+		19+ Total	Under 16		Under 16 Total	Grand Total
	Female	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male		
London Central	1368	1225	2593	39808	21003	60811	100	75	175	63579
London East	1969	1970	3939	38099	14676	52775	309	141	450	57164
London North	1524	1495	3019	20293	8771	29064	100	82	182	32265
London South	654	663	1317	12878	6031	18909	55	55	110	20336
London West	1729	1723	3452	29581	13286	42867	251	163	414	46733
Grand Total	7244	7076	14320	140659	63767	204426	815	516	1331	220077

Of a total of 220,077 enrolments 93% are from adults aged 19+, and the majority of the remainder from the 16-18 age group. 67% of all enrolments are from women, in line with the trend for other types of adult learning.

The ethnicity data for these enrolments reveals that the largest proportion, 30%, falls in the 'White Other' category. As mentioned earlier, this group is likely to contain a significant number of people from EU Accession States, as well as those from other EU Member States and South America. Some of these may also be represented in the 'any other' category. Overall, Asian or Asian British groups constitute 22% of all enrolments, and Black or Black British 19%. The Black or Black

British African category has the highest number of enrolments other than the more broad 'White Other' group. 70% of all the enrolments for the Black or Black British African category are for Entry Level provision, and these enrolments represent 12% of all those at Entry Level – the highest apart from the 'White Other' group. This may indicate particular need at this level for this group, or a good take up rate in comparison with other groups.

Ethnic background	Nominal Level			Other	Total
	Entry Levels 1-3	Level 1	Level 2		
Any other	23096	3465	1407	7781	35749
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	14580	1043	644	4402	20669
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	7940	622	96	2819	11477
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6398	598	259	1642	8897
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	5924	456	172	1478	8030
Black or Black British - African	25848	2642	1070	7940	37500
Black or Black British - any other Black background	1811	305	89	625	2830
Black or Black British - Caribbean	453	124	62	212	851
Chinese	3881	530	236	1157	5804
Mixed - any other Mixed background	1151	215	134	398	1898
Mixed - White and Asian	1013	118	70	356	1557
Mixed - White and Black African	2495	310	87	784	3676
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	229	59	30	82	400
Not known/not provided	7374	827	349	2898	11448
White - any other White background	34244	9790	5155	16193	65382
White - British	2206	494	243	835	3778
White - Irish	61	27	9	34	131
Grand Total	138704	21625	10112	49636	220077

Pinning down the location and size of groups with ESOL needs in London is challenging because of the mobile nature of this section of the Capital's population. That said, some useful information can be drawn from enrolment statistics and other research that has been carried out. Local LSCs and other funding partners may also have more detailed information for use in planning services and many staff involved in skills planning and funding have a wealth of local knowledge.

The following table gives an indication of the distribution of ethnic groups by LSC enrolments for 2004/05.

Ethnic background	Central	East	North	South	West	Total
Any other	12228	8233	3653	3104	8531	35749
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	2331	4104	4203	2886	7145	20669
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1737	8106	693	365	576	11477
Asian or Asian British - Indian	336	3079	1041	590	3851	8897
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	606	3913	1123	733	1655	8030
Black or Black British - African	9584	9789	5879	3907	8341	37500
Black or Black British - any other Black background	952	814	311	188	565	2830
Black or Black British - Caribbean	287	305	72	73	114	851
Chinese	1635	2011	1026	504	628	5804
Mixed - any other Mixed background	937	327	309	144	181	1898
Mixed - White and Asian	422	269	415	172	279	1557
Mixed - White and Black African	1205	1088	656	145	582	3676
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	211	77	26	44	42	400
Not known/not provided	2780	2118	2978	1180	2392	11448
White - any other White background	27323	12063	9287	5923	10786	65382
White - British	964	840	576	370	1028	3778
White - Irish	41	28	17	8	37	131
Grand Total	63579	57164	32265	20336	46733	220077

55% of all enrolments are in London East and Central, indicating that these two sub-regions have the highest concentrations of 'ESOL communities'. 42% of all 'White Other' enrolments are in London Central. Providers from this sub-region, along with those in other areas of London, report significant increased demand from EU Accession economic migrants which may in part account for this figure.

27% of Asian or Asian British Other enrolments are in London West. London East has 71% of all Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi enrolments, reflecting the significant community in this sub-region, and also has the highest number of Chinese enrolments. Black or Black British African enrolments are concentrated mainly in London East (27%), Central (26%) and West (22%).

The LSC ethnicity breakdown by London sub-region clearly demonstrates the variance between regions in terms of ethnic composition. The World in One City study also provides some very helpful information on the distribution of ethnic communities across London. Although it is not intended as an exhaustive and 'scientific' piece of research, it does provide a helpful overview and highlights how ethnic communities are often located in more than one pocket across the Capital. The full study includes a greater number of ethnic groups, however, those most likely to have ESOL needs are presented here.

African/Middle Eastern origin

Algerian	Finsbury Park
Congolese	West Green Road
Ethiopian/Sudanese/Eritrean/Djiboutian	North Kensington
Iranian	Queensway, Hanger Hill/Ealing
Lebanese/Arab	Edgware Road
Moroccan	Ladbroke Grove/Goldborne Road
Nigerian	Northumberland Park
Somali	Crystal Palace, Dormer's Wells, Kentish Town Road, Stratford, Wapping, Wembley Central Square, Streatham High Road, Stonebridge
West African	Canning Town/Beckton/Royal Docks, Rye Lane & Peckham, Stroud Green Road, Dalston, Clapton, Tottenham, New Cross, Old Kent Road & North Peckham estates, Woolwich/Plumstead/Abbey Wood

Asian/Far Eastern origin

Bangladeshi	Brick Lane/Spitalfields, Church Street estates, King's Cross, Ponder's End, South Uxbridge, World's End estate
Chinese	Lisle Street/Gerrard Street
Chinese & Indonesian/Malaysian	Colindale
Chinese/Vietnamese	Poplar, Thamesmead
Vietnamese	Mare Street & Kingsland Road
Filipino/Thai	Kenway Road/Hogarth Road, World's End estate
Indian	Drummond Street, Neasden, Seven Kings, West Hendon
Indian (especially east-African Gujarati)	Harrow & Kenton, Wembley
Indian (especially Hindu)	Thornton Heath, Green Street
Indian (especially Sikh)	Southall, South Hayes, Heston, Mitchell Close
Indian	Hounslow, Barking, Tooting
Japanese	Totteridge, Hanger Hill/Ealing
Korean	New Maldon
Pakistani	Iford/Loxford, Queen's Road, Leyton, Barking, Green Street, Southall, Heston, Hounslow Tooting
Sri Lankan	Alperton, Broad Green, Tooting, East Ham High Street, Southall
Tamil	Chessington, East Ham High Street

European & South American origin

Baltic/Eastern European	Chichele Road, Kilburn High Road
Colombian/Ecuadorian	Elephant and Castle
Greek/Greek Cypriot	Moscow Road, Camberwell, Green Lanes (north)/Palmer's Green, Brunswick Park/Southgate/Winchmore Hill
Italian	Old Compton Street, Clerkenwell, Streatham High Road
Polish	Acton, Balham High Street, King Street, Lilli Road/Dawes Road
Portuguese	South Lambeth Road/Stockwell Road
Roma	St Paul's Cray/St Mary Cray
Spanish/Portuguese	Portobello Road, Ladbroke Grove/Goldborne Road
Turkish	Walthamstow High Street, Edmonton, Dalston, Tottenham
Turkish/Kurdish	Green Lanes (south) Newington

Whilst some of these communities are well-established, for example, Greek/Greek Cypriot, Turkish and Polish groups, ESOL needs will still be apparent, either where mother tongue is still predominantly or solely used in the home, or where new migrants come to join established communities.

A variety of other mapping work, particularly focused on refugees and refugee services, appears to be currently ongoing. This includes LORECA's project to map the current provision of advice, training, and employment services aimed at refugees and asylum seekers in London. The Resource Information Service (RIS) has been commissioned to research both a Directory and website to capture this information, and they will be researching potential entries for the directory over the next few weeks.

In addition, the Home Office has recently commissioned a mapping exercise of refugee organisations and the London Asylum Seeker Consortium is producing a directory of refugee organisations. There does appear to be overlap between this work, although it may be that each project is taking a different perspective. That said, there is clearly a need to join up these pieces of work, and to ensure that they are linked closely with the ESOL Action Plan.

ESOL needs

As discussed in other sections of this report, ESOL needs vary widely and it is important that the Action Plan is able to reflect the very varied segments of the ESOL market. ESOL needs can range from those who are not literate in their mother tongue, and therefore have literacy as well as language needs, to those who are highly qualified and require high level, specialist English to take up professional jobs in London.

It is not just educational factors that segment the ESOL market. The social background and experiences of ESOL learners determines what other support they require to access and sustain learning, and what modes and locations they need to be able to access learning. The needs of refugees and asylum seekers will vary hugely from those of migrant workers. The former groups often arrive with few or no possessions, in poor health and traumatized. Although economic migrants with ESOL needs will also require some other support, it is likely to be far less. This has been brought into sharp focus with the recent increase in demand from EU Accession state nationals, many of whom are keen to access short, intensive learning that is more akin to EFL delivery than ESOL.

The aspirations and goals of ESOL learners will also play a large role in determining what the specification for their ESOL provision should be. These might range from being able to read a child's homework or health leaflet, to getting a job or getting promotion.

Specifications for ESOL provision should be drawn up to reflect the different segments of the ESOL market. The first step would be to identify the segments. A list of the key design factors that should shape specifications should then be drawn up to act as a checklist.

It is recommended that a range of agencies be involved in shaping specifications that are fully informed and fit for purpose. These should include funders and strategic bodies as well as:

- Sector Skills Councils
- voluntary sector representatives
- provider associations and representatives

This work should be undertaken swiftly to avoid losing momentum and to ensure that specifications can be introduced within the next six months.

Overview of ESOL provision in London

Identifying the total public investment and the number of ESOL learners it supports is challenging. The table below summarises the actual and estimated figures for 2004 to 2005.

Funder/type	Expenditure (£)	Learners	Data source and comments
LSC	142,457,968	108,274	04/05 figures for FE. Within the timescale, no reliable figures could be gained for ESOL delivered through other funding streams eg: ACL, WBL
JCP	14,906,962	7,000	04-05 figures for Basic Employability Training. Learner numbers are estimated from a total of 11,000 BET customers.
LDA	5,000,000	2,000	Expenditure derived from estimates of the proportion of ESOL delivered through a range of LDA programmes, and learner numbers estimated from this. A one year average was used. Work is currently underway to provide a more accurate assessment.
ESF (all funders)	16,250,000	5,000	Expenditure derived from estimates of the proportion of ESOL delivered through a range of ESF programmes, and learner numbers estimated from this. A one year average was used. Further work is underway to confirm these estimates.
Learndirect	1,654,718	4,036	Figures for Aug 04-June 05 from London Regional Ufl.
Offender learning (prison & probation)	12,000,000 for all Skills for Life	1,000 in custody	Estimated learners from 1,320 ESOL achievements for people in custody. There will be additional numbers on probation/non-custodial sentences.
Neighbourhood Renewal/New Deal for Communities	Currently unavailable	Currently unavailable	Work is currently underway to estimate expenditure and learner numbers for all Skills for Life.

LSC data capture for learning provision is, as would be expected, the most detailed. For other funders it is difficult to disaggregate ESOL provision from the other activities delivered and varying degrees of detail are possible. To date, it has not been possible to gain details of ESOL funded through NDC or NRF, although it appears that some provision is supported through these streams. Further work is now taking place to identify this provision, and to provide greater detail and clarity on the ESOL delivery that the LDA supports.

The table confirms that the largest funder of ESOL is the LSC, accounting for an estimated minimum of 80% of total public investment in London and supporting around 100,000 learners. JCP is the next biggest funder, with approximately 10% of the expenditure supporting around 7,000 learners. The LDA also funds ESOL delivery, and there are other smaller sources of public investment, for example, through New Deal for Communities (NDC), Neighbourhood Renewal (NRF) and Local Authorities.

Taking into consideration ESOL funded through all sources, a varied mix of provision is on offer, including non-accredited and accredited learning, ranging from 'first steps' learning through to higher level ESOL for learners who have professional

and higher level vocational qualifications. The majority of provision is delivered through colleges, however, significant amounts are also delivered in community settings and a smaller amount on employers' premises.

In brief, the key issues for provision are:

- There is evidence of significant unmet demand across London. The estimated need for ESOL is very large in comparison to the supply, but could be offset in part by prioritising access to free provision.
- 'First steps' and higher level ESOL are potential 'vulnerable' because they are not 'target bearing' for the LSC. There is evidence of a particular lack of both these types of provision.
- Entry Levels 1 and 2 are also potentially vulnerable because they are not target bearing, but there are high levels of demand which causes further pressure on budgets.
- Much ESOL provision is not focused enough on the varying needs of the different segments of the ESOL market.
- There is a significant amount of college franchising that may not represent the most effective use of limited funds.
- EU enlargement has placed significant additional pressure on already stretched resources since Accession State citizens are taking up their entitlement to free English language provision.
- Qualifications and jobs targets, combined with lack of flexibility in funding streams and qualification structures has created provision that is focused on funders and providers rather than learners and employers.

The sections that follow outline the ESOL funding and provision information for the LSC, JCP, LDA and ALG.

LSC provision

The figures for LSC provision provided in this section are for FE funded LSC provision, based on FO4 enrolment data for 2004/05 unless otherwise stated. Additional provision is delivered through other LSC funding streams including Adult and Community Learning (ACL) which incorporates Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC), Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) and Family Learning. Work-based Learning (WBL) and Workforce Development (WfD) also support job-focused and employer-focused ESOL.

The LSC is also the funder of learndirect which includes some ESOL delivery and is in the process of taking responsibility for all offender learning (probation and prisons). There are other smaller LSC 'pots', for example, the Widening Adult Participation Action Fund (WAPAF) and the Local Intervention and Development fund (LID). Disaggregating ESOL focused funding through these streams is challenging and work is continuing to access this information.

Nationally, London region accounts for over 50% of LSC ESOL expenditure and ESOL forms over 60% of total Skills for Life provision in the Capital, indicating its high significance. Expenditure has rapidly increased over the last 3 years, from just short of £88 million in 2001/02 to £125 million in 2002-03 and £134 million in 2003-04.

The figures for 2004/05 show £142.5 expenditure supporting 109, 042 learners, indicating that the increase has slowed, but this still represents around 63% of the total Skills for Life expenditure.

LSC	Learner Numbers	Enrolments	Total Funding £	Average Funding £	Target bearing provision £	Non-target bearing provision £
London Central	34,428	63,579	42,573,585	670	7,850,352	34,723,232
London East	25,909	58,467	34,158,054	584	5,628,976	28,529,077
London North	15016	31,555	22,497,324	713	4,014,859	18,482,464
London South	10,121	20,282	13,031,128	643	3,115,343	9,915,785
London West	23,568	46,730	30,260,662	648	8,589,643	21,671,019
Total Region	109,042	220,613	142,457,968		29,199,175	113,321,579

NB: Enrolment numbers are slightly higher on this table than others because this is a more recent data set.

London Central continues to deliver the highest proportion of ESOL at around one-third of all provision, however, London East is now the second highest, delivering 26% and overtaking London West that has traditionally occupied this position. Target bearing provision (Entry 3 to Level 2) accounts for around 20% of the total expenditure.

For the LSC, only qualifications from Entry Level 3 and above are 'target bearing'. Whilst current national and regional LSC guidance does not exclude target-bearing provision from being funded, the pressure to achieve targets and squeeze on funding **could** result in a move away from supporting provision below this level. It should be stressed that there remains a very significant need for ESOL learning opportunities at pre-entry and Entry Levels 1 and 2. In addition, the importance of 'social ESOL' that may fulfil social cohesion and integration functions, but that may not necessarily lead to a qualification should also be borne in mind.

The following table shows the distribution of LSC funded ESOL enrolments onto provision for 2004/05 by local LSC area and 'nominal' level of provision. Nominal level refers to the level at which the provision is judged to be by the provider and does not necessarily indicate that the provision leads to the DfES approved qualifications.

	Entry		L1		L2		Other		Total
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	
London Central	35355	56%	9357	15%	4937	8%	13930	22%	63579
London East	38127	67%	5570	10%	1463	3%	12004	21%	57164
London North	20720	64%	811	3%	762	2%	9972	31%	32265
London South	13072	64%	2416	12%	1274	6%	3574	18%	20336
London West	31430	67%	3471	7%	1676	4%	10156	22%	46733
Grand Total	138704	63%	21625	10%	10112	5%	49636	22%	220077

Overall, enrolments at Entry Level represent 63% of the total, with proportions decreasing as Levels get higher. Overall, 22% of all enrolments fall in the 'other' category which means that the provision cannot be assigned any of the levels (this could indicate pre-entry or higher level provision).

DfES approved ESOL qualifications were fully introduced in January 2005 and all providers are now tasked with moving towards the target of 80% of provision leading to these qualifications. In 2004/05, around 30% of enrolments were onto provision leading to the approved qualifications, indicating the need for significant further progress to be made in reaching this target. Other funders are beginning the process of 'harmonising' the qualifications offered by its providers in line with DfES requirements to facilitate greater partnership working and improve consistency.

Franchising

In 2004/05, around 12% of FE ESOL provision worth a total of £16.5m was franchised by colleges to other providers, with London West, Central and East having the highest proportions. Around 70% was franchised to voluntary sector organisations and most of the remainder to private sector providers.

Franchising can be a very helpful method of ensuring outreach provision for ESOL learners who prefer to learn in non-college settings and the level of franchising serves to underline the importance of the voluntary and community sector in delivering accessible ESOL. That said, colleges 'top-slice' the funding to cover management and administration costs, sometimes taking 40% of the funding. This would not seem to represent the best use of resources and means that the learner does not benefit from the full impact of the enhanced rate at which ESOL is funded.

Whilst it is understandable that the LSC has limited resources with which to manage contracts, it may be worth considering direct funding for providers that deliver significant or niche provision, perhaps through a hub model similar to that of learndirect to reduce potential contract management burdens. This could be explored as part of the LSC's 'Working Together' strategy for voluntary and community sector organisations, and through WBL provider networks as appropriate.

Increased and unmet demand

There is evidence of significant unmet demand for ESOL provision. The majority of colleges report waiting lists – ranging from 50 to as many as 900 people. A significant number of providers, mainly in London Central and West, report high numbers of migrants from EU Accession States on waiting lists and in provision. Whilst it is very likely that people put their names on more than one list, thereby inflating figures, it is clear that demand outstrips supply.

Feedback from providers suggests that pre-entry and entry level provision is particularly in demand, and this is likely to be the case given that many learners need to start at this entry point. That said, to facilitate progression, it is highly likely that provision at Levels 1 and 2 will also need to increase. As well as unmet demand from individual learners, there are examples where providers have been unable to respond to employer requests for ESOL because of a lack of capacity. In addition, the withdrawal of LSC funding for IELTS (professional level ESOL for doctors) is also raising concerns. Many providers also report an increase in demand for ESOL to meet citizenship requirements at Entry Level 3.

The increased demand from migrant workers from the EU Accession States and from those wishing to apply for Citizenship highlights the importance of greater joining up across Government Departments. The DfES and Home Office should liaise more closely so that the impact on learning provision from planned changes in immigration and nationality, or UK responses to refugee crises, can be predicted and managed more effectively.

There has been much discussion about the differences and similarities of ESOL and EFL (English as a Foreign Language), particularly since the suite of approved DfES qualifications does not include those for EFL. What appears to be emerging is that there is more that unites than divides these two branches of learning, and that the key difference is in the way in which learning is delivered and the types of materials that are used.

It is strongly suggested that, in drawing up specifications for the ESOL market segments, this issue is borne in mind. Re-introducing EFL qualifications as part of LSC funded provision may only serve to increase the pressure on limited resources. Instead, it may be helpful, as part of an overall review of the DfES approved qualifications, to see how the qualifications fit with the range of different ESOL specifications and what modifications may need to be made to facilitate a 'pick and mix' modular approach that meets the spectrum of learner needs and aspirations.

Costing each specification and identifying appropriate sources of funding and finance (public and private) should also help in clarifying the relative positions of EFL and ESOL. There is a significant private EFL market in London. To maximise the use of public funding and promote more effective public-private partnership, it would be worth carrying out a survey of this market to identify how public and private bodies could co-operate in providing a comprehensive supply of learning that meets as many needs as possible.

Further development of the qualifications

The new suite of DfES approved ESOL qualifications has provoked much constructive discussion with providers. Their knowledge of ESOL learners and their needs highlights the importance of learning that can be delivered flexibly and in 'chunks' that are manageable for some of the most 'mobile' of learner populations. The approved ESOL qualifications may indeed be capable of delivering this flexibility and it will be important to monitor this aspect of the framework over the coming year.

In addition, it appears that providers may require further support to understand how best to implement the new qualifications so that they can meet the needs of learners. There appears to be a trend towards whole qualifications to be 'taken in one go', in order to reach targets and for providers to draw down funding and/or achieve required success rates. This does not fit with typical ESOL learner profiles – the majority of LSC funding is concentrated on courses of an average

70 or 460 guided learner hours, both of which are short courses – and ESOL learners will tend to have ‘interruptions’ to learning that make a modular approach vital.

If more flexibility can be achieved within the current target and funding regimes, this should be clearly communicated to providers. However, if changes are required so that funding structures and processes can maximise the flexibility of the qualifications framework, this should also be addressed.

Learndirect

Learndirect centres are also providers of ESOL learning. For the 11 month period up to June 2005, there were over 6,000 enrolments and 4,000 learners on learndirect ESOL provision in London, supported by over £1.5m of funding. These are not complete figures as they only include enrolments for which funding has been drawn down.

Although there is clearly a significant amount of ESOL support delivered, it represents only around 7% of all Skills for Life delivered by learndirect – a much lower proportion than would be expected given that ESOL generally accounts for 60% of LSC funded Skills for Life provision. Anecdotal reports indicate that dedicated ESOL provision appears to be declining and there is a concern that the true number of ESOL learners may be being masked by the fact that a significant number are taking up literacy rather than ESOL.

Learndirect has a significant role to play in the provision of flexible learning packages delivered in accessible settings and at times that are convenient to learners. However, there are some key issues that prevent its full potential role being realised:

- There is a disincentive for learndirect centres to deliver ESOL provision below Entry Level 3 because of the LSC’s need for Skills for Life test targets to be met. Limited budgets and a push for test completions, combined with the relative high expense of ESOL provision has led to ESOL learning being ‘capped’. This is likely to be a key reason why ESOL forms a relatively small proportion of all learndirect Skills for Life provision, particularly since anecdotal evidence suggests high demand for provision at Entry Levels 1 and 2 that cannot be met.
- ELLIS, the main package used by learndirect centres, has high learner satisfaction rates and has achieved some high inspection grades. However, it is not mapped to the new DfES qualifications and therefore does not support the LSC’s target to ensure that 80% of provision leads to these qualifications. In addition, it is recognised that it needs to be made more flexible and bite-sized. Ufl is currently engaged in addressing these issues.
- There is a need for better ESOL diagnostics. Many centres use Wordskills Check, which is actually a literacy tool and does not give teachers enough information on what ESOL learners need.
- There are continuing staff development needs, including awareness training for all learndirect staff if full use is to be made of learndirect’s ‘outreach’ potential.

There are some centres that mix e-learning with classroom-based learning to support the development of speaking and listening skills – these tend to be the centres with better qualified staff. Some Hubs may be better at supporting and developing this approach within their centres than others. The trade union sector and employers makes significant use of learndirect ESOL provision, for example, Careconnect, part of learndirect, is a wholly owned UNISON subsidiary i.e. e-learning arm of UNISON. This aspect of learndirect provision should be built on to develop further job-focused ESOL.

Learndirect is a valuable vehicle for ESOL delivery as it has the potential for greater flexibility than other modes of learning (for community and workplace focused delivery especially) and has the added benefit of learners acquiring ICT as well as English language skills. There is a need to explore how better use can be made of this existing resource, including reviewing how funding arrangements may be hindering developments. Ufl has a National ESOL Strategy Group and it will be important to link with this group in implementing the Action Plan.

Jobcentre Plus

In 2004-05, Jobcentre Plus expenditure on ESOL delivered through the Basic Employability Training (BET) and Short Intensive Basic Skills (SIBS) programme was £15 million. BET offers a range of support to the 18+ age group, including basic skills and ESOL, confidence building and help to find work and is delivered across London through a group of around 30 organisations, some of which will also deliver LSC funded ESOL provision.

Between April 2004 and March 2005, just under 11,000 people started on Work-based Learning for Adults BET provision, with around 8,500 leaving during that period, including approximately 2,400 moving into jobs (representing 22% of starters and 28% of leavers). Other leavers will have had a variety of other destinations including further learning.

As discussed earlier, the data capture systems for ESOL provision that is funded through JCP prevents more detailed information from being given at this point in time. However, working on the basis that around two thirds of LSC funded Skills for Life provision is focused on ESOL, it may be reasonable to conclude that approximately 7,000 of the 11,000 BET customers were provided with ESOL support.

JCP funds ESOL provision that is primarily focused on improving employability. That said, this does not preclude learning that may be regarded as 'first steps' provision, which is an area highlighted by JCP where there is a particular lack of provision currently. With the overall unemployment rate relatively low, JCP customers now tend to be those who are hardest to help, and often those who are least likely to take up learning.

Feedback highlights issues for assessing ESOL needs. JCP Advisors have limited amounts of time that they are able to spend with customers and the DfES assessment toolkit for ESOL takes too long to administer. Advisors do try to refer customers to IAG providers for more in depth assessment, but the availability of this option is variable and very often in areas of high ESOL need IAG capacity appears not to meet demand. Assessment aside, those customers with 'very apparent' ESOL needs are prioritised for early entry onto provision.

JCP has experienced significant budget reductions and there is anecdotal evidence across London of requests from JCP staff for learners to be accommodated on LSC provision (there is evidence of growing joint working at sub-regional level). This clearly places further strain on LSC resources and reports suggest that JCP customers are unable to access LSC provision in some areas because there are no places available. In addition, the targets and requirements of JCP limit the hours that some learners can take up (the 16 hour rule), which means that some learners are taken out of provision in order to undertake job preparation courses or move into work.

Of course, getting a job is a positive outcome and to be encouraged, but the lack of continuity of learning opportunity from welfare to work and difficulties associated with inflexible funding streams usually means that learning finishes at the point of job entry. This not only means that an individual may miss out on the opportunity of a qualification, but also may mean that they are not able to progress at work because they only have a rudimentary knowledge of the English language.

London Development Agency

The LDA supports a variety of ESOL provision, mainly delivered as elements of larger programmes, amounting to around £5 million over approximately 2-3 years, as well as provision supported through its ESF programme, outlined later. Of 28 'mainstream' projects identified as having varying degrees of ESOL provision in them, 12 have a very significant or sole emphasis on ESOL (including one to train ESOL teachers). The remaining projects include ESOL in a key supporting role.

Although all provision is funded through the single pot, projects have been developed and funded to support different priorities and the rationale and type of support may vary, for example, under LDA2 local development actions, priority area programmes, and the Regional Inclusion Fund etc.

There are a variety of projects ranging from those providing vocational, basic skills and key skills opportunities for people living in disadvantaged areas, or falling into target disadvantage groups to those that include ESOL as part of specific regeneration activities. Some projects are focused on particular priority sectors, such as construction, and there is activity that is delivered in the workplace. All activities have a target of 45% of participants being drawn from BME groups, and, whilst not all these participants will require ESOL, it will be an element of a significant amount of provision.

This diversity of activity makes it particularly difficult to identify the precise volume and nature of provision. In addition, in common with JCP, LDA targets do not include qualifications, although its remit is to support the delivery of Government priorities with respect to qualifications. Outputs include learning opportunities, access to jobs and employment opportunities. A further difficulty in accessing information is due to the fact that some of the projects are sub-contracted out from the contracted party, particularly in relation to the pathways to jobs provision

To make a fully informed assessment of ESOL provision and its resourcing, a more detailed investigation would need to be carried out and it is recommended that this be included in the Action Plan at an early stage.

Association of London Government

The ALG funds some ESOL provision as part of its ESF Co-financed Programme. This funding is specifically for voluntary sector organisations and will deliver services to 450 beneficiaries. Seven projects are being funded during 2005-07, of which:

- 2 are delivering IELTS, PLAB and IQE higher level ESOL for refugee doctors and dentists
- 2 are delivering Level 1 and 2 qualifications
- 2 are delivering Entry Level qualifications
- 1 is providing signposting to ESOL provision

All except the signposting project are designed to help improve the employment prospects of those with ESOL needs.

The ALG has conducted a survey to ascertain the type and level of non-LSC provision. Of 10 boroughs that have responded to date, 4 identified Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and 3 'other regeneration' funding as supporting ESOL provision. The majority highlighted key issues of:

- ◆ a lack of provision at all levels, especially higher levels;
- ◆ more information required on groups accessing ESOL and on employer needs, and
- ◆ a lack of flexibility in the funding and accreditation frameworks.

These findings support those from other agencies and provide further evidence to underpin recommendations and actions in the Action Plan. The survey also identified that 6 Boroughs have ESOL plans, or plans that specifically identify ESOL. These should be taken into account in the regional planning process.

Libraries

A data sampling exercise, undertaken within London library service during February and March 2004, revealed that library staff referred an average of 1,124 adults with basic or essential skills needs to learning providers each week. This gives an annual prediction of more than 56,000 referrals each year. Although there is no breakdown with respect to ESOL referrals, even if these represent only a proportion of the total, this provides further evidence of the demand for ESOL.

Libraries clearly offer a gateway into learning and have much to offer in terms of providing local and familiar environments that attract learners who may be less likely to take up or sustain learning. The role that libraries play in delivering provision in locations that may be more accessible than colleges is demonstrated through research carried out by Archives, Libraries & Museums (ALM) into the basic skills needs of 1000 Londoners enrolled on Entry Level 1, 2 & 3 provision in libraries. 39% of respondents currently learning in libraries had dropped out of college courses. The largest numbers of these were ESOL learners (38%).

Work is taking place to develop innovative partnerships between libraries and colleges, for example, in Barking and Dagenham, a new public library is being built which will also serve as a library for the college and the adult education service, and an ESF project in London Central is also working with libraries to develop provision, linking with the Londoners Need to Read initiative.

Most of the provision in London libraries is delivered by colleges and adult education institutes who therefore “own” the learners and keep the data. This is a key factor in developing ways of better co-ordinating provision. In addition, each Borough has developed provision in its own way and feedback indicates that libraries are keen for there to be a more strategic approach across London. These issues will need to be taken into account in ensuring that the ESOL Action Plan includes consideration of all the ways in which provision is being delivered.

Offender learning

The LSC is in the process of assuming full responsibility for funding all offender learning in prisons and in the community. For London, these new arrangements will come into effect in August 2006. Contracts for the delivery of the new offender learning and skills service will be awarded by the LSC through a major commissioning exercise to take place in autumn 2005. The London Strategic Board for Offender Learning has been established to oversee arrangements for introduction of the new integrated Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). A Planning and Management Group (operational level group) will support the Strategic Board. Key activities for next three months will include developing the model for the new service in London, identifying the curriculum for the offender client group and leading the tendering process.

ESOL provision in prisons has increased over the last 4 years and many establishments now offer classes at various levels in line with the adult ESOL core curriculum. However, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done. At the moment individual level data are not collected, which makes robust year-on-year comparison and tracking of individual progress impossible. Overall statistics for basic skills achievements in prisons for 2004-05, shown below, reveal the very low number of ESOL qualifications achieved. There may be several reasons for this, including a reluctance on the part of teachers to use the ‘old’ qualifications which were not fully mapped to the ESOL curriculum. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many foreign national offenders are learning English in literacy classes because of an acute lack of ESOL provision in prisons.

	Entry Level	% of total	Level 1	% of total	Level 2	% of total	Total	% of grand total
Literacy	7268	32.6%	13266	52.4%	9438	59.5%	29972	47.2%
Numeracy	13983	62.7%	11894	47.0%	6328	39.9%	32205	50.7%
ESOL	1050	4.7%	161	0.6%	109	0.7%	1320	2.1%
Total	22301	35%	25321	40%	15875	25%	63497	

Flexible, portable, ‘chunked’ provision that can move with the offender is a vital ingredient in the bid to improve the effectiveness of prison provision. The LSC/QCA-led *Framework for Achievement* initiative offers the opportunity to develop a national unitised credit framework which could bring this vision to life and also support more flexible delivery via e-learning and distance learning. The *Offender’s Learning Journey* document which underpins the new service delivery for offenders should help to secure the continuity of learning that is essential if offenders are to progress, achieve and not re-offend.

The *Offender's Learning Journey* sets out the requirement that learning should be relevant and appropriate to individual learners - prisoners for example need to be able to understand about prison life and about legal processes in this country. HMP Holloway and HMP Pentonville have developed a wide range of ESOL materials to help foreign nationals survive in prison, all mapped to the ESOL core curriculum. Embedded ESOL can make learning more relevant. The DfES Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit's response to the recent *House of Commons Education and Skills Committee Report on Prison Education* emphasised the role of embedded language, literacy and numeracy in helping to engage learners, for example through language activity in prison libraries, in recreation etc.

The transfer of records is a key issue in ensuring continuity and a key challenge for the new National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The new NOMIS management information system is in the process of development. It will be important to ensure that tracking and data capture relating to learning and skills in prisons is capable of being incorporated into any joint regional data capture arrangements for ESOL and other areas of the curriculum.

In April 2004, the LSC assumed responsibility for SfL provision delivered through the Probation Service. Transitional arrangements are currently in place for funding this provision pending the introduction of the new integrated offender learning and skills service (OLASS) in August 2006. The allocation of funding in the London region is supported by a partnership plan agreed jointly between London Probation and the LSC and managed by a Partnership Board. Probation Service activity will be subsumed under the overall NOMS structure as soon as is practical.

The London Probation Service (LPS) exceeded its 2004-05 SfL qualifications target by 18% - a tremendous achievement which reflects the success of the partnership between LSC and LPS over 2004-05. Funds in 2004-05 represented just under £3 million and will remain broadly the same in the current year. However, targets have been increased. Currently, ESOL take-up amongst offenders served by the LPS is similar to that for the prison cohort, accounting for 6.31 % of all starts and 4.14 % of all awards. This may, as in prisons, reflect a lack of access to appropriate ESOL provision.

Although there has been progress, the LSC/LPS plan for London identifies a large number of clients with unmet ESOL needs and recent figures support this. In April and May 2005, 428 offenders in the London region were identified through screening as having ESOL needs. 249 of these offenders were sentenced to probation provision but fewer than half were referred for ESOL support. Referral rates across the capital vary significantly from 100% in one London sub-region, to just 14% in another.

These figures underline the fact that ESOL learners need access to appropriate provision in the right locations. In April 2005, changes to sentencing options available to magistrates and Crown courts came into effect as a result of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. They can now include mandatory **specified activities**, which could include Skills for Life courses. It will be important to ensure that sufficient high quality ESOL provision is available to meet this new requirement.

Initial screening and assessment is a particularly important issue. The National Probation Service has requested that language needs are assessed as part of the screening process for offenders in probation. Development and piloting work is currently taking place, including the piloting of the new ESOL screening and initial assessment tools funded by the DfES Skills for Life Strategy Unit.

ESF Objective 3

Whilst indicative figures can be provided for ESOL funded through ESF Objective 3 Co-financed projects, this is a further area where it is not possible to disaggregate fully ESOL from other types of learning and support. Estimates for ESF support include:

Co-financing Organisation	Approximate expenditure
Pan-London projects (LSC/LDA combined)	1million (2 years)
Local LSC	10 million (2 years)
JCP	10 million (over 1 year)
LDA	1.5 million (2 years)

The above figures include around £3 million of LSC/LDA funding for training additional ESOL teachers and training of other staff to deliver ESOL opportunities. It must be stressed that these figures are **cautious estimates**, and figures for individual Co-financing Organisations are for different years. That said, when the amount of additional ‘hidden’ ESOL support that is provided through many ESF projects is taken into account, the total figure will be higher.

Further analysis is now taking place to gain more information about ESOL that is supported through current ESF programmes and that which is likely to be supported through the current ESF tendering rounds.

Conclusion

This brief overview of the main areas of ESOL provision serves to indicate the complexity of the current picture – and with it the danger of duplication and lack of coordination. The need to establish a clear strategic regional direction is expressed by all partners. The advantages to be gained in terms of planning provision and maximising the use of limited public resources by creating a regional team for ESOL (which should also encompass literacy and numeracy) are evident.

The LSC, with its large provider base and significant quality infrastructure would appear to be the logical choice of ‘locus’ for a regional team, and for taking on the planning and management responsibility for ESOL across London. For this approach to be successful, partners would need to make available the budgets for ESOL and work closely with the LSC to develop ESOL market specifications that meet the needs of their target groups. In addition, the establishment of common data capture systems will be essential.

Employment focused ESOL provision

Triggers for demand and barriers to delivery

ESOL needs identified through the majority of Sector Skills Councils are Health and Safety driven, to ensure compliance for a range of legislation including the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) e.g. use of pesticides, Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS), and food hygiene.

ESOL can also be used as a way of motivating the workforce, by giving employees the opportunity to explain their previous work history. Workers have often been supervisors or managers in their home countries. Tracing this personal history can unlock their potential and build their confidence.

There are a number of **barriers to delivery** of employment-focused ESOL that have been identified, including:

- Current ESOL qualifications are not workplace friendly. They do not take into account either the application in the workplace or what employers want and/or need.
- There is not enough teaching in the workplace. It requires different and particular skills to those required in the classroom and ESOL teaching requires even more specialist skills and challenges, often posed by the nature of the work and the workplace i.e. low paid, shift workers working in poor conditions, with employers reluctant to give paid time off.

- Off-the-shelf ESOL provision does not lend itself easily to delivery in the workplace. Work environments often lack appropriate resources, such as tape recorders. Materials need to be customised to be relevant to the sector and meet learners' and employers' needs. Each industry has its own industry-specific language.
- Unison reports that the 3-year residency rule is the main barrier for many workers in the sectors it represents having access to State-funded language training. However, it could be argued that employers and employees should contribute to this provision.
- The criteria for LSC funding often does not match the type of language skills training employee/employers want.

ESOL issues for key industry sectors in London

The following sectors are both important to London's economy and include significant numbers of second language speakers in their workforces. The majority of workers who have recently travelled to this country to work do so either through the Sector Based scheme which allows for 12 month permits for 18 – 30 year olds or are Registered Workers from the EU Accession countries.

HOSPITALITY, LEISURE, TRAVEL AND TOURISM People 1st information shows that 6.4% of companies in London, who reported a skills gap, said that the gap was a language barrier or English not being a first language, compared to 2% in England. Key issues for the sector include:

- Communication between workers from diverse backgrounds. For example, at Heathrow Airport staff briefings are given in English and, although informal interpreting by colleagues does take place, there is usually no check of understanding of the issues raised.
- Lack of employment progression or mobility because of poor language skills.
- Lack of understanding about health and safety and disciplinary procedures.

Relevant reports and action being taken include:

- Heathrow Survey, CILT
- The Transport & General Workers Union (T&G) is represented at Heathrow Airport (it represents catering, transport and construction workers). The T&G acts as signpost to colleges for ESOL provision, but would like to act as brokers in bringing groups of workers together for ESOL training, especially in construction, catering and transport. However the union is keen to ensure that partnership means action rather than talking shops.

CONSTRUCTION it is estimated that 20% of the workforce in London and the South East are second language speakers. There is a lack of data collected on the number of second language speakers working in the building industry, the languages they speak and where they are deployed. Key issues for the sector include:

- Lack of understanding about health and safety procedures
- Transient workforce, often self-employed, engaged in short-term contracts

Relevant reports and action being taken include:

- Language in the construction industry: Communication with second language speakers" report jointly commissioned by CITB-Construction Skills, DTI, LSC and SSDA:
- London Central leads on the Construction Flagship initiative that was a result of the FRESA report. Through local colleges Modern Apprentices are funded. Work with local employers, for example Kier Caxton Construction and St

Georges. Significant involvement in the development of Terminal 5 at Heathrow, the Kings Cross Project and the development at the Paddington Basin.

- Wembley has a portacabin kitted out as a learning centre.

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE A very high proportion of the workforce work in both the public and private sector are second language speakers. Within the NHS the main ESOL groups are sub-continent Asians, Somalian and Eastern bloc. It is estimated that there are 500 doctors in London who are not in employment due to English language needs, and that there are between 60,000 – 80,000 working in health and social care for private sector contractors with language training needs. There is a reported need to increase diversity in the childcare workforce, which may have implications for an increased need for ESOL. Basic and language skills needs are a barrier to people acquiring appropriate qualifications in the sector. Key issues for the sector include:

- Access to qualified and experienced work-based teachers and relevant training materials.
- Paid time off and other employer issues, such as removal of large pockets of workers can mean problems in delivering the service
- Social care legislation that requires workers to have achieved a level 2 qualification. Without language skills many workers will be unable to meet this requirement.

Relevant reports and action being taken includes:

- The State of the Social Care Workforce in England – first Annual Report of Topss England Workforce Intelligence Unit.
- The NHS has dedicated funding streams with an ‘entitlement’ for each employee and positive policies in place regarding lifelong learning.
- NHSU EQUAL Project established to design, develop and test an innovative suite of vocationally based, ESOL e-learning and m-learning (use of mobile phones, text messaging, palm tops and blackberries) in the language of health and social care, including social and cultural orientation, healthy living and citizenship. The approach will provide a tailored package to give groups the language and generic skills needed to gain employment in the health and social care sector.
- Unison deliver ESOL provision in public sector health and social care and private sub-contractors providing services for the NHS, such as Medirest (catering, cleaning, portering, reception, transport and grounds maintenance) at Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospitals, where an estimated 400-600 employees do not have English as a first language, Medirest and Interserve at University College Hospital. In the past, Unison has also delivered ESOL courses at Chase, Hillingdon and St.Anne’s Hospitals.
- Unison has a special ESOL course (possibly the only one in the country), accredited through the Open College Network, delivering 10x 3 hour sessions in the workplace and contextualised by the workplace. However, there are not enough ESOL teachers, and of those there are, many do not have the skills to deliver in the workplace. Additional UNISON projects include:
 - Northwick Park Hospital with Sodexo, with recent male entrants and female learners who had been resident longer, but due to social structures and communities had been excluded from learning English. (These women are particularly important in influencing their children/next generation). Project funded by Union Learning Fund (ULF), at a time when monies could be used for both groups, however rules on funding have now changed & ULF can be used for course development but not provision.
 - £500,000 pan-London ESF project to develop learning for unqualified staff in Care homes. This project covers all Skills for Life but its main focus is ESOL.

Assetskills is in the early stages of its work to develop an integrated, cross sectoral strategy for Skills for Life. It will be important for this work to link with the ESOL Action Plan activities to maximise the input and involvement of Sector Skills Councils.

Other bespoke employer-focused provision

There are a number of other examples of successful bespoke training that have been reported by partners including:

- ◆ South Thames College: on-site ESOL/cultural awareness provision at St George's Hospital – for recently arrived pre-qualified nurses; and at the Royal Hospital for Neurodisability – for care workers, cleaners and other staff.
- ◆ Westminster Kingsway College: ESOL for domestic services, portering and security staff at the Royal Free Hospital, as well as nurses. Professional English for clerical staff at the Royal Courts of Justice. ESOL for those working in care homes in North London – in preparation for the Care NVQ. Tailor made course for NHS Hospital Trusts – delivered in hospitals with input from hospital staff. Childcare with ESOL in community settings for those wishing to work in childcare.
- ◆ City & Islington College: ESOL for the Churchill Hotel and Royal Mail.
- ◆ Waltham Forest College: ESOL for IKEA staff that is delivered before the night shift starts; basic skills, including ESOL for Initial Services staff at Whipps Cross Hospital.
- ◆ Barnet College: Bespoke ESOL training for refugee doctors. This training has gained NHS Beacon status and the College is now doing the same with nurses and teachers.
- ◆ Croydon Continuing Education and Training Service (CETS): The Bridge to Work is designed for learners with advanced English and professional backgrounds.
- ◆ Orpington College: training East European nationals to be bus drivers, including ESOL delivery, with the employer sharing costs.
- ◆ Lambeth College: ESOL with health and safety training for SME employees in the construction industry.
- ◆ Acton Training Centre: ESOL delivered in the workplace for Royal Mail, Gillette, Entertainment UK and Impact Group through a Skills for Life Work-based Learning Pilot for around 200 employees.

This is in no sense intended to be a comprehensive list of all such provision, but is provided as illustrative detail of the range of work being carried out across London. It is recommended that further information on **all** employer-focused ESOL opportunities, funded through the LSC, LDA and others, be gathered and entered on the Employer Guide to Training website. This will not only help to promote ESOL to employers through examples of successful work, but also serve to publicise the employer-facing activity that is being delivered to a wider audience.

A key issue, particularly in view of the extreme pressure on public sources for ESOL provision, is who should pay for employer focused provision. Where provision is being specifically 'laid on' for an employer – in the public or private sector – it is clear that an employer contribution is appropriate. It may also be that where learners are employed (as opposed to those unemployed who are attending a bespoke course with a 'job guarantee'), they should also contribute. Considering a 'tri-partite' system of funding should form part of the further development of this area of ESOL provision.

A reported key success factor in developing bespoke provision that is geared to employer and employee needs is to have an experienced course team who are able to **contextualise** ESOL eg: alongside clinical attachments etc. This would include staff being able to contextualise ESOL materials. Some DfES materials for 'embedded learning' are now available for trowel occupations, social care, horticulture, nursing, retail, warehousing, catering, hospitality, Entry to Employment (E2E) and sports leadership (see www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/embeddedlearning). It may be helpful for practitioners to review these materials as a starting point for contextualised learning, in addition to sharing provider generated materials.

Embedding ESOL into vocational learning

Whilst **bespoke** ESOL provision that is developed in conjunction with employers accounts for a relatively small proportion of total ESOL delivery, there is evidence of more widespread activity to embed ESOL into vocational provision to:

- improve the contextualisation of ESOL provision;
- equip learners with a broader skills set so that they are more job ready, and
- stimulate progression of learners by requiring them to study for vocational qualifications alongside ESOL.

These developments are continuing and will help to sharpen the focus on ESOL that is designed to prepare people for entry into the labour market, as well as to give them the opportunity to gain qualifications. Some of the vocational areas reported to have embedded ESOL include hair & beauty, IT, Office Skills and Childcare. There may be others and it would be helpful to carry out a more detailed study so that providers are able to learn from each other. This should include examining the work of the London East ESOL Pathfinder consortium that has been clustering embedded ESOL provision into 4 main areas: Care subjects, IT, the arts & design and skills for everyday life.

The consortium has also started to map the current embedded provision across the Partners in Learning area – Tower Hamlets, Hackney and the City of London (more information from: kdudley@tower.ac.uk). Other Pathfinder areas have also carried out specific work on embedding ESOL. Details of employer-focused embedded ESOL provision should be made available on the Employer Guide to Training website that is currently under development.

Two further points to consider in relation to embedded ESOL and the development of job-focused ESOL as a whole is the role of the LSC's Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), and how to ensure that ESOL is embedded as a key feature of the National Employer Training Programme (NETP). CoVEs should be supported to ensure that they can deliver the job-focused ESOL specifications drawn up as part of the Action Plan and the successful examples of employer-focused ESOL developed to date should be used to inform the implementations of the NETP.

Creating better support from welfare to work

A priority for improving employment focused provision is addressing the current lack of continuity of learning from welfare to work. Whilst quantitative evidence of a lack of continuity cannot be provided, it is a widely reported problem. The key issues are:

- the absence of destination data for learners leaving and/or completing courses;
- funding systems that are inflexible and that do not follow the learner;
- lack of ESOL staff that are skilled and/or prepared to deliver to employed learners, particularly in the workplace,
- and lack of joining up between agencies, particularly the LSC and JCP.

Research also points out the gap between teacher and employer expectations of adequacy in communication levels, and argues that ESOL learners are not supported enough to move into appropriate employment by schemes such as work placements, job search skills and workplace training. Most employers who were consulted expected fluent spoken communication - a minimum level of language competence for the workplace.

Advice, guidance and referral services

Feedback from the adult IAG service, Next Steps and that for young people, Connexions both indicate limitations in the services that can currently be offered to those with ESOL needs, as well as significant unmet demand for ESOL provision.

Young people

Anecdotal evidence from the Connexions services indicates that some young people with ESOL needs are not accessing services. They are 'not known' to mainstream Connexions and further outreach work is required to access them eg: South London Connexions works with organisations that provide outreach services in Kingston and Croydon, including working with refugees and asylum seekers living in hostel accommodation.

A shortage of ESOL support in schools was also highlighted. This could be addressed through additional ESOL teachers and/or by training school teachers so that they have the skills to adapt lessons to meet the needs of students with ESOL needs. Furthermore, it was reported that students starting part way through year 10 or 11 after GCSE courses have begun have difficulties in fitting in to KS4 as they will have started late. Their written English may lag far behind their spoken abilities and they require intensive language support if they are to have any hope of accessing the academic subjects in the curriculum. Few if any schools seem able to provide this. This is particularly frustrating for highly motivated academic young people. More than basic English is required if many of these young people are to achieve their potential.

Feedback also highlighted that, outside of schools, there is very limited provision for pre 16s. Young mothers with ESOL needs can find it difficult to attend classes as without language skills it is difficult to make child care arrangements.

It is important to note that language teaching alone is often not enough for young people who originate from cultures very different to English. They need support to understand the new customs, practices, social rules etc which can seem very alien. As young people however they are likely to grasp and adopt the new rules quicker than their parents which can lead to family tensions particularly in the more traditional communities.

Adults

Feedback from Next Steps indicates that provision of IAG and ESOL is insufficient and not delivered in the right locations for some groups. IAG partnerships report difficulty in meeting increased demand from Eastern European countries. Other communities specifically highlighted were Turkish, Vietnamese and African. There is also a reported shortage of interpreters and translators (also mentioned by Connexions services), for example, in Haringey where 50 languages are spoken it is very difficult to provide a service for everyone.

Comments were also made about the difficulty of identifying 'job-focused' ESOL that clients can be referred to. A particular concern was raised that the lack of appropriate provision available is leading to higher skilled clients with ESOL needs moving into jobs for which they are over qualified. There is anecdotal evidence that provision is not sufficiently flexible in terms of timing and modes of delivery. Learndirect provision was cited as flexible, but not always suitable in terms of content.

Quality and success

All ESOL provision is subject to quality controls which vary according to the funding body. The LSC, as the largest funder of ESOL and as an organisation whose primary focus is learning has the most comprehensive quality framework. Therefore, evidence gathering for this document has focused on LSC provision. The introduction of the new Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) in April 2006 heralds coherent commissioning of quality improvement activities across the post-16 sector. This should support a more coordinated approach to delivering the quality elements outlined in the ESOL Action Plan.

The quality picture for ESOL is continuing to improve. Of 23 recent ALI/OfSTED inspections involving colleges, LEAs and other providers, the majority were graded satisfactory or above for provision that included ESOL. Provision in 13 establishment was graded 'satisfactory', 6 'good' and 1 'excellent'. Three providers were judged to have unsatisfactory provision. Key issues for some providers included weaknesses in individual learning plans, poor attendance and achievement, weak referral routes and inadequate strategies for addressing mixed ability groups.

There are areas of provision where quality is still not of an acceptable standard. This includes individual providers, as well as areas of learning that have suffered from poor quality, but where improvements are now being seen. One such area is offender learning. The ALI Chief Inspector's Report 2003-4 noted that in prisons "*there was little or no ESOL provision*", partly due to an "*overzealous*" approach to reaching other targets which left little room for learning such as ESOL. But there is some progress on strategic quality issues, including a substantial increase in funding for prison education and the introduction of ALI and OfSTED inspections of prison learning and skills in 2002. This has resulted in the first prison ever to be recognised by the ALI as a top post-16 provider in 2003/04 and judged 'good' in every area in its recent inspection.

Other initiatives are also helping to drive up quality, including provider support and a number of other pilots and projects. In addition, the coherent quality arrangements for the new offender learning and skills service under the LSC, combined with regional plans for offender learning, as described earlier, which include support for quality improvement as a key priority are expected to continue to raise quality throughout offender learning.

It is often asserted that community-based provision is also particular area of concern for quality. However, it is not clear if this is because it is less easy to measure the success of the non-accredited provision that tends to be more common in these settings, or whether there are real issues about poor quality. There is likely to be a range of quality from poor to excellent, as is the case for college-based provision, and it may be the case that effective ways of measuring the success of non-accredited provision should be explored further. The franchising of provision by colleges to voluntary sector providers also raises quality issues because of longer contracting chains from the LSC to the end delivery organisation, and because of the reduced funding available to providers (and therefore learners) after college top slicing.

A key measure for all types of provision should be learner progression and destinations on completing or leaving courses. Currently, the LSC Individual Learner Record does not include fields to capture progression and destination data. This is a significant weakness and not only prevents the measurement of what is recognised as a vital feature of successful learning, but also means that learners may be 'lost' from the system. In addition, because providers, including colleges do not capture information on the source of referral or previous learning provider of a learner, it is difficult to assess referral and progression patterns. The inclusion of this type of data is essential for effective quality control and planning.

Of the English regions, London shows the greatest progress in achieving its SfL PSA targets, and ESOL generally has better achievement rates than for Literacy and Numeracy. Final out turn data for 2003/04 shows that 70% of ESOL 'DfES approved' learning aims resulted in a qualification. Whilst achievement rates for **learning aims** are good, overall, only around one third of **learners** (across all SfL) in 2003/04 gained a qualification. Although it would not necessarily be appropriate for all learners to gain qualifications, this indicates that there is still significant work to be done to increase the current success rate.

The new DfES approved ESOL qualifications were introduced in 2004, and it is expected that there may be a temporary downturn in achievement rates during the transition year, although final figures will not be available until 2006. To minimise the effects of the transition, a priority is to ensure that professional development programmes are implemented to help teachers understand and, most importantly, implement the new ESOL qualifications.

Feedback indicates that assessing LSC success currently involves a number of different measures and a complex system. Whilst it is important to ensure that success is not measured simply through the achievement of qualifications, there appears to be a need to rationalise the system so that it is easier to ascertain success. This should include exploring how the quality and success of 'first steps' provision should be measured. In drawing up specifications for the different segments of the ESOL market, success measures could be allocated to each specification which would help to create a set of meaningful quality standards.

The ESOL workforce

There are a number of key issues for the ESOL workforce in London:

- despite significant investment, largely by the LSC and LDA, the evidence of unmet demand for ESOL indicates a skills shortage, yet many existing teachers are on low volume sessional hour contracts – nationally, half of all ESOL teachers are in hourly paid employment, against the average of 36% for basic skills staff and in London it appears that 75% of the total SfL workforce is employed part-time;
- teachers in some areas of the workforce, specifically those on sessional contracts, those working for smaller providers, including in learndirect centres and in offender learning environments have traditionally had less access to training and professional development;
- removing menu items from the Skills for Life Quality Initiative that have been accessed by most ‘mainstream’ teachers will deny access to vital basic training for those who have not had full access to CPD;
- there is a need for ESOL awareness/assessment training amongst vocational staff, prison/probation staff and those working in valuable outreach environments such as libraries (who would also like advice on materials) and learndirect;
- although ESOL teachers tend to have higher level qualifications than their literacy and numeracy counterparts, many do not have an ESOL subject specialism, and over 10% of ESOL teachers either have no qualifications or some qualifications, and do not meet FENTO standards;
- over two thirds of ESOL teachers are white, indicating a need for greater diversity, and
- there are not enough teachers with the requisite skills sets to teach in ‘non-college’ settings and to respond to particular segments of the ESOL market – priorities include: workplace delivery, employment related needs, prisons, e-learning, 14-19 year olds and excluded children.

Over the last three years, the London LSCs have focused ESF funding on the establishment of Professional Development Centres (PDCs) to coordinate SfL teacher training at local level and to capacity build the SfL workforce across all sectors. The London Strategic Unit for the Learning and Skills Workforce (LSU) has now been established through a joint LSC/LDA initiative to provide regional strategic direction for SfL workforce development. A strategy has been produced to drive its work and it will be vital for this to be joined up with the Action Plan and with the work of the LSC London Regional SfL team.

In addition, the NRDC has a major longitudinal study of SfL teachers underway. The data emerging from this study will give a far more detailed picture of the characteristics of teachers, and how the cohort changes over time. NIACE has also just concluded the RETRO project (March 2005), focusing on the recruitment, training and progression into employment of new teachers of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

From the evidence currently available, there appear to be capacity issues for the ESOL workforce in London, but since the most often reported difficulty is in recruiting **suitably skilled and qualified** ESOL teachers it is possible that these could be at least in part alleviated by further developing the existing workforce.

Estimating the number of ESOL teachers in London is difficult given the lack of consistent source information. CTAD in estimating the SfL workforce as a whole indicate that the number of all ESOL teachers (full and part-time, qualified and unqualified) could be between 4,500 and 6,000. In a modelling exercise, CTAD estimated that there would need to be 1,766 full-time equivalent posts to deliver the level of provision funded by the LSC in 2002-03. It is likely that this number will now be higher since the volume of enrolments has increased in 2003-04 in line with the trend over the last 4 years.

Whilst it would seem that there are more than enough teachers in the existing ‘pool’, Talent London research identified, that, of those ESOL teachers for whom there is employment status information, 46% are employed as sessional, hourly paid teachers and a further 19% are in part-time fractional posts. If some of these teachers are delivering only a very few hours, it may be the case that there is a lack of capacity. This type of employment tends to be precarious (with the danger of loss of employment constantly present) and these teachers are less likely and/or able to access the continuing professional development (CPD) that is vital to achieving and maintaining quality standards.

A possible solution to address the capacity and quality issues together would be to support providers to increase the number of full-time teachers by sharing ESOL staff through collaborative arrangements (a peripatetic workforce). This could be a very effective way of maintaining flexibility whilst improving the terms and conditions of these teachers. Standards and quality are likely to improve through the greater take up of CPD opportunities within the full-time teacher cohort, thereby creating a professionalized workforce.

Some employers will only take on qualified teachers, but the skills shortage means that many will employ those who may not have the requisite qualifications and skills. In addition, there appears to be no standard agreement with employers on what qualifications ESOL teachers should have. It is more difficult for smaller and voluntary sector providers to take on qualified staff because they cannot offer the same terms and conditions as colleges and staff cover costs appears to be a significant barrier preventing some smaller providers from accessing free staff training. There is anecdotal evidence that these providers employ the least qualified staff. This may be a factor in the variable quality amongst non-college sector providers, which, if addressed, could significantly raise standards for first steps provision.

There appears to be a need for better information, advice and guidance on CPD. Anecdotal evidence points to 'initiative overload'. The large number of initiatives and the short response time means that there is sometimes insufficient time to plan provision effectively. This can mean that courses are not always full and that teachers sometimes end up on the wrong course. There is a lot of training on offer, ranging from one-day to 2 year courses, but very few people are clear about the specific benefits each offers and what is appropriate for different stages of development as an ESOL teacher.

Even if the skills shortage can be alleviated by further development of the existing workforce, as with any workforce, and particularly since ESOL teachers tend to be older age groups, there is a continuing need to train new teachers. PDCs generally have waiting lists for ESOL teacher training courses. As with many subjects, prospective teachers often enter post-16 ESOL teaching by doing a few hours a week to access the free training. Most providers of teacher training offer placements but funding these placements is a problem. The additional mentoring and support required through project funding is often financed through 'temporary' funding because the LSC budget is not sufficient to cover full costs of placements. The provision of good teaching placements and mentors has been raised by OfSTED as a key factor in delivering good teacher training.

A further priority, both for CPD and initial teacher training is the need to ensure that training includes helping teachers to develop the skills sets required for teaching in different settings. For example, a specific initial teacher training module for teachers who want to work with offenders has now been developed. It is vital that this work continues, with the priority to ensure that teachers are able to deliver effective provision in their chosen settings, particularly in the workplace and community.

Endnote

This summary of the evidence to inform the development of a strategic Action Plan for ESOL in London has highlighted some of the key issues that will need to be addressed to enable ESOL provision to meet the needs of identified priority groups across the Capital.

It is a starting point. The successful implementation of the Action Plan rests upon continued review and incisive analysis of the demand for, and supply of ESOL provision in London. Partners are committed to a regional approach, and to maximise the effectiveness of this commitment, timely and accurate information sharing will be paramount, as will agreement on how the most urgent priorities will be acted upon.

Source figures used to estimate ESOL need

Description	Figure	Source
16 – 64 year olds born outside the UK:	1,574,078	GLA Figures (taken from the Country of Birth and Labour Market Outcomes report) – using Labour Market Survey and 2001 Census figures as original sources.
Who have low or no qualifications	977,686	
Who are non-UK born who have no qualifications	444,365	
Who are unemployed	106,000	
Of the total number, those economically inactive who are:		
<i>Sick or disabled</i>	109,000	
<i>Looking after home/family</i>	203,000	
<i>Student</i>	126,000	
<i>Other reason</i>	90,000	
Total economically inactive	528,000	
Total unemployed and economically inactive	634,000	
From countries that are predominantly non English speaking and/or are not 'developed'	406,513	Our derivation from the GLA figures
16 – 64 year olds in London born outside the UK, who are:	1,574,067	2001 Census figures
<i>unemployed</i>	102,314	
<i>Caring for family (more likely to be female)</i>	158,980	
<i>'other' category</i>	107,036	
<i>Total economically inactive (excluding unemployed)</i>	266,016	
<i>Total economically inactive and unemployed</i>	368,330	
Employed in a lower level job	286,203	
Employees who speak a language other than English at home	1 million	
People based in London on Workers Registration Scheme (2004 – 5) – these people will not be included in the Census or GLA figures	34,255	Home Office
Refugees estimated to be based in London in 2001 (will be included in general statistics)	Around 350,000	Richard Stanton
Total estimated London population of refugees and asylum seekers by end 2000 This includes people whose applications are rejected and who remain illegally	352,000-422,000	Refugees and Asylum Seekers in London: A GLA Perspective 2001
Asylum seekers currently in London	19,196	Home Office
People in the UK granted citizenship in 2004	140,795	Home Office
Nearly 30% of children are assumed by LEA to require EAL They will often have siblings but also parents and other family members.	309,597	LEA
Estimated total number of people whose first language is not English	1,222,130	Skills for Life Survey 2003
Estimated number of people whose first language is not English and who have Entry Level Literacy	500,975	
Estimated number of JCP Customers with ESOL needs (annually)	220,000	
		NEP 2005

List of contributors and acknowledgements

For London LSCs, the main contacts that have coordinated information gathering or contributed on specific areas of ESOL are shown. However, we would like to thank the many staff from across local LSC teams (ACL, WBL, WfD, Research etc.) who have all contributed vital information as well as their time in discussing a wide variety of issues. In addition, the skills and input of Santosh Sandacca-Appalsawmy, Oznur Kiamil and Stephen Horwood have been invaluable in interrogating LSC databases and presenting meaningful analyses of regional information that underpin this evidence base document.

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