# What is Suitable and Effective ESOL for Refugees?

**A literature review by:**



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# Executive summary

This review is a survey of the academic and grey literature on effective ESOL delivery and commissioning, with a focus on: initial assessment; outreach and referrals of refugees into suitable language classes; content and delivery models that focus on language both for social integration and for work; linking formal and informal learning activities; and overcoming barriers to learning and ensuring refugees have the right wider support. The emphasis is on identifying examples of effective practice both in terms of commissioning and delivery, and includes evidence relating to informal language tuition, particularly in the UK.

## Methodology:

To find relevant literature, university search engines were used – Leeds Beckett University and Institute of Education, University College London in a two-stage process. The initial search terms used were ‘Refugee\* *AND* ESOL *AND* UK’ in the titles, keywords and abstracts of peer-reviewed scholarly articles only. The searches were limited to scholarly peer-reviewed sources and papers published in the last ten years. Exceptions were made for papers deemed important due to the source of publication e.g. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences and type of study e.g. large-scale quantitative studies. Micro searches were carried out for each of the five areas in the bid document to cross-check for missing sources, this also showed search saturation - we stopped when the same papers showed up in micro searches for different areas.

During the second stage, the full papers were read and a selection retained for relevance. This systematic approach was complemented by the authors’ years of research experience and extensive contacts within both refugee support organisations and language teachers.

## Key findings:

In terms of what works well the review indicates:

* Regional **referral and mapping coordination** e.g. [Learning English in Yorkshire and the Humber](https://www.learningenglish.org.uk/).
* Trained IAG staff for **Initial Assessment** (Doyle and O’Toole 2013), again a regional centralised system which stores IA information for individual learners is recommended.
* In terms of **delivery models and content** short, intensive, independent learning, fast track, themed courses on topics such as health, housing, employability (DfES 2003). Also longer courses to develop language and pragmatic understanding.
* Participatory pedagogy to promote **confidence/positive identity** positions (Bryers et al, 2013). New arrivals’ immediate needs may be affected by their immigration status, so traditional ESOL curriculum/syllabus with language for shopping etc. may not be as useful for some as legal language, for example (Simpson, 2019).
* There is much potential for **informal learning** and **non-formal**, however, this needs to be scaffolded by **formal learning** (Colley et al 2003) and also the five ‘conditions for learning’ identified by the VIME project (2018). These are Comprehensible Input (Krashen 1985), Interaction (Long, 1983), Output (Swain, 1985) Automatisation (DeKeyser 2001) and Scaffolding (Lam & Wong 2000).

In terms of what is needed:

* There is a shortage of provision at lower (E1 and below) and higher end (Level 2) and of local provision at Level 2. The shortage of Level 2 provision impacts on employability and entry to professional courses.
* For all areas, interagency communication is needed e.g. housing, health etc.
* Barriers to learning and employment were access to formal ESOL at the right level locally, access to funding to pursue higher courses and professional training, lack of documents.

## What was missing:

While there was much grey literature related to outreach and referral systems, peer reviewed literature in the last 10 years does not say much about these in the context of refugees in the UK. In comparison several hundred papers have been published related to referrals and initial assessment of refugees for health issues.

We could not locate grey or peer reviewed literature which described and gave models for initial assessment of UK refugees’ language and learning skills. The Council of Europe Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants toolkit does provide a self-assessment tool; this needs to be tested in different contexts such as low-literate learners: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/instruments>

## Limitations of the review:

Due to time constraints, it was not possible to look for patterns in terms of research methodology, location of study, size of sample and country of origin of the refugee participants.

## Recommendations:

* accurate and timely IAG and referral by trained staff (for example Doyle and O’Toole 2013; Chick 2019)
* not be moved often or at all; being moved disrupts language socialisation and support networks (Gladwell 2019)
* financial support with fees, transport and childcare (Akua-Sakyiwah, 2016; Phillimore et al 2007)
* a co-ordinated multiagency response to needs (Dimitriadou 2004; Chick 2019)
* programme design and delivery by trained staff (Cooke and Simpson, 2019; Cowie and Delaney 2019; Ćatibušić et al, 2019). Access to networking and CPD with staff in other regions would support staff skills and knowledge
* learners need to be taught by teachers with a good understanding of language learning to effectively satisfy the five ‘conditions for learning’ identified by the VIME project (2018) - Comprehensible input (Krashen 1985), Interaction (Long, 1983), Output (Swain, 1985) Automatisation (DeKeyser 2001), Scaffolding (Lam & Wong 2000)
* progression with language learning and to appropriate vocational or professional courses/ employment (Clayton, 2005; McBride, 2018)
* formal and non-formal ESOL needs to be brought together to increase gains by learners (Colley et al, 2003; Hann 2017; Collyer et al, 2018) e.g. providers of formal ESOL can be funded to provide non-formal activities
* alternative ways of exhibiting prior qualifications and experience to be accepted by employers and training organisations including recognition of alternate documents (Doyle and O’Toole, 2013)
* a multiagency, co-ordinated and flexible response is needed for unaccompanied minors with follow up after they complete their educational programme (Mackey, 2019; Idle and Ma, 2019)
* a national ESOL strategy to clarify the purpose of ESOL to include integration alongside language skills (Morrice et al 2019; Mishan 2019).

A more thorough and detailed literature review, taking in peer-reviewed literature from countries other than UK is needed as are large, quantitative as well as longitudinal studies. Particularly useful would be longitudinal data from resettled refugees to understand what successful resettlement and integration looks like and what fosters these. A nuanced multi-disciplinary study which examines the dynamics and nuances of context and individuals is likely to yield useful understandings of pathways to integration and settlement.

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# List of abbreviations

**APPG** All Party Parliamentary Group

**CIC** Commission for Integration and Cohesion

**CV** Curriculum Vitae

**DCLG** Department for Communities and Local Government

**DFE** Department for Education

**DWP** Department for Work and Pensions

**EAL** English as an Additional Language

**ESFA**  Education and Skills Funding Agency

**ESOL** English for Speakers of Other Languages

**EU** European Union

**GLA** Greater London Authority

**GP** General Practitioner

**IAG** Information, Advice and Guidance

**MESH** Learning English in Yorkshire & Humber

**MHCLG** Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

**NATECLA** National Association of Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults

**OECD** Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

**ONS**  Office for National Statistics

**PTSD** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

**RCO** Refugee Community Organisations

**SCT** Socio-Cultural Theory

**SLA** Second Language Acquisition

**SLS** Second Language Socialisation

**VLE** Virtual Learning Environment

**VPRS** Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

# Introduction and ESOL for Refugees

## Background to ESOL

English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) classes cater for ‘adults from settled communities of immigrants from the new Commonwealth and from fluctuating populations of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers’ (Pitt 2005, p.1). Provision in the UK was largely geared towards Commonwealth citizens who had knowledge of English, but it was after the arrival of 20,000 Vietnamese boat people in 1979 that there was a recognition that this was a group with distinctive needs, such as the need for survival English (Rosenberg, 2007). This led to the publication of ‘Lessons from the Vietnamese’ (1980, cited in Rosenberg, 2007) and the development of other materials to suit this cohort.

Government funding for ESOL began under the banner of integration, rather than of acquisition of English *per se* (Aspinall & Hashem 2011). Section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 has a provision for learning ESOL (Paget and Stevenson, 2014). Concurrently, based on need in communities in London, community-based English classes were formed (Khanna et al 1998). The increase in migration to the UK in the 1970s and the diversity of migrants necessitated an expansion in ESOL teaching (Simpson, 2015). NATESLA (National Association for Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults), now NATECLA, was founded in 1978 to support the organisation of ESOL as was the London Literacy Unit which was in operation from 1980-2010. In 1975, the ‘RSA (Royal Society of Arts) Certificate in the Teaching of English to Adult Immigrants’ was established and, in 1979, the BBC ran a series of language learning programmes ‘Parosi’, targeting Asian families (Nicholls and Naish, 1980). This was followed, in 1980, by another series, ‘Speak for yourself’, with an accompanying handbook for teachers. In the early 1980s, after a period of reduced funding, ESOL was repositioned as a basic skill, under the remit of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) (Simpson, 2015). ESOL was subsequently funded through the Further Education Funding Council (Simpson, 2015) and became linked to vocational and employability skills. Funding for ESOL has fluctuated since the 1970s with a surge in resources in the early part of this century. For an overview of funding for ESOL classes, see Graham-Brown (2018), Foster and Bolton (2018) and Fernandez-Reino (2019).

Under the current skills funding system ESOL is funded based on qualifications and employment, and does not explicitly relate ESOL to integration, cohesion and progression (ESFA, 2018). Since NATECLA’s campaign for a national ESOL strategy (2016), the government has assigned other departments (Home Office and MHCLG) to focus on English language provision with integration and cohesion outcomes. However, this has meant that there are different departments working on ESOL support for refugees and migrants through separate and un-coordinated funding streams (Graham-Brown, 2018). The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper Response (2019) and Action Plan (2019) proposed a cross-government approach to integration including planning for English language support for refugees and migrants as part of a national English Language Strategy. Indeed, the Green Paper gave rise to a cross-government approach to reflect how ESOL planning currently takes place within government.

## Integration

Successful integration of migrants and refugees is usually the aim of governments although this is a developing and contested concept (see e.g. Ager and Strang 2004; 2008; Strang and Ager 2010). Ager and Strang (2004; 2008) describe it as a multi-dimensional long-term process of change, whereby there are conditions to enable refugees to participate in society, participation by refugees in society and a perception of acceptance by the host community. Others develop similar themes, so Court (2017) defines it as a process that requires involvement from migrants, host institutions and communities and includes multi-dimensional and complex processes, and Graham-Brown (2018:3) describes it as ‘a process where migrants become part of UK society; a process in which there are multiple responsible parties, including host communities and the government’.

Developing a set of indicators of integration for the Home Office, Ndofor-Tah *et al* (2019: 11) define integration as a ‘multi-directional process involving multiple changes from both incoming and diverse host communities.’ They conceptualise integration as taking place in domains within four headings: Markers and means; Social Connections; Facilitators; and Foundation. A study by Harder et al (2018) in the US reports on six aspects of integration: psychological, economic, political, social, linguistic and navigational. Whichever conceptualization or set of indicators is used, language is presented as the key competency facilitating integration. Language proficiency is significantly associated with refugees’ health and participation in social networks in the UK (Bakker, Cheung and Phillimore 2016), and social networks are key to employment (Cheung and Phillimore 2014). The same authors note that there is a strongly gendered dimension to integration, with analysis of a survey with over 5,700 responses showing that women were consistently disadvantaged relative to men (Cheung and Phillimore 2017). They suggest a number of policies to improve these outcomes, including reintroducing the ESOL fee remission for asylum seekers so they begin developing language skills earlier and more quickly; community-based classes for women only and with childcare provision; and mentors to support women through the complex cultures and institutions they face. The *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper: Building stronger, more united communities* (HMG, 2018) recognises English language as essential to integration. The report links low levels of English, lack of employment and other language related costs such as translators etc. and acknowledges a range of barriers to learning English (p.37).

While the language needs of refugees in the UK are focused on the principles and practice of ESOL, this is a subset of the more universal principles of Second Language Acquisition, so at this point it would be useful to consider broader theories in second language learning in terms of what contributes to second language learning. These principles can be applied during the evaluation of the effectiveness of ESOL provision.

## Second language acquisition

Since the 1970s, there has been a growing body of published research and exploration of theories for second language acquisition (SLA). This ranges from learner reports of SLA in relation to theories of second language acquisition, applying these theories to teaching practice, to evaluating and generating language learning materials with reference to these theories.

Over time, there has been a shift from a focus on learner variables to a sociocultural approach to investigating second language acquisition (Hymes 1972; Bremer et al. 1996; Breen 2001; Barton and Pitt 2003; Cooke and Simpson 2008; Kramsch 2008; Burns and Roberts 2010), where variables in the contexts learners interact in are foregrounded (Bremer et al. 1996; Norton 2000; Baynham 2006; Flowerdew and Miller 2008; Dörnyei 2009; Norton 2010) rather than the emphasis being on the learner. For example, researchers have looked at variables related to opportunities to interact rather than just language aptitude. This sociocultural view of second language acquisition is particularly appropriate for learners in ESOL contexts which is that adult immigrants learn the dominant language of the society around them in order to live and work in that country (Roberts and Baynham 2006; Block 2010).

Here it would be important to remember the constructs of motivation, self-regulation and learner strategies. Drawing on Dörnyei’s work from 2001, Kormos et al (2011, p.2) describe motivation as a construct which ‘explains why people select a particular activity, how long they are willing to persist in it and what effort they invest in it’. The researchers then expand on this and say that ‘these three components of motivation correspond to goals and the initiation and maintenance of learning effort’ (ibid). The ‘maintenance of learning effort’ is to do with what Dörnyei calls self-regulation and has also been reported by Oxford (1996) and more recently, Griffiths (2008) under the umbrella of learner strategies – what learners do to begin, maintain and succeed in second language learning.

In terms of ‘Conditions that need to be created to support language acquisition’, the VIME Framework (2018) includes:

* **Comprehensible input:** language input that can be understood even though learners may not understand all of the words (Krashen 1985).
* **Interaction** has to have a clear communicative purpose and negotiation of meaning; requires functions such as asking for clarification, rephrasing and confirmation of understanding (Long, 1983).
* **Output**: this is ‘noticing’ new language, which is regarded as an important part of learning a new language and usually part of the teacher’s role is to create conditions where learners can notice the aspects of the language (Swain, 1995, 2003).
* **Automatisation** (DeKeyser 2001) which is through, conscious and deliberate effort, usually achieved through careful, intensive practice; this often takes the form of controlled practice of particular linguistic patterns in a classroom session.
* **Scaffolding**: this describes a process by which a learner is directly or indirectly supported to complete a task, which is just beyond their current independent development level (Lam and Wong 2000). This can be anyone in physical or digital proximity with greater or different knowledge, that can help bridge the gap.

While these SLA principles apply, refugees face additional issues as forced migrants. They may well be traumatized by the conflict they are fleeing, issues of separation and loss, and the process of gaining asylum. Even when in the country of refuge, they may be moved frequently, meaning learning and support from social services is disrupted. Recognising these characteristics, this literature review addresses what could be suitable and effective ESOL for refugees in the UK. The review is arranged around five key areas perceived to be part of effective ESOL provision:

1. Initial assessment and tailored learning plans for refugees
2. Outreach and referrals of refugees into suitable language classes
3. Content and delivery models that focus on language both for social integration and for work
4. The role of formal and informal learning activities in providing supportive and effective ESOL learning opportunities
5. Barriers to learning and ensuring refugees have the right wider support in terms of overcoming these.

# Methodology

There has been a huge growth in publications related to refugees and language. At the time of writing, a search using Google Scholar for ‘Refugee *AND* ESOL’, or ‘Refugee *AND* ESOL *AND* UK’ yielded over 4000 and 3000 hits respectively. In order to manage the task within the time and resource constraints of the project, the team adopted a two-stage approach. Firstly, using the academic library databases of Leeds Beckett University (LBU) and University College London (UCL), a search was performed using the terms ‘Refugee\* *AND* ESOL *AND* UK’ in the titles, keywords and abstracts of peer-reviewed scholarly articles only. While acknowledging this might exclude articles from other English-speaking countries, it did make the process manageable. Tests were made exchanging terms (e.g. ‘forced migrant’ or ‘irregular migrant’ as well as ‘refugee’) but this did not materially affect results. This yielded 432 initial articles, 340 once duplicates were removed, and 34 once the full papers were read and retained for relevance. Key literature in the bibliographies of these articles was identified and added to the review.

In addition, micro searches were carried out for each of the five areas suggested by Migration Yorkshire in the bid document to cross-check we were not missing any sources. The micro-searches confirmed search saturation - we stopped when the same papers showed up in micro searches for different areas.

Complementing this systematic approach, the authors used their years of research experience and extensive contacts within both refugee support organisations and language teachers – particularly the National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA). NATECLA has long-recognised the specific needs of refugees – the Spring 1993 newsletter called for ‘policies on refugees at all levels’. In 2003, the Skills for Life Strategy brought government funding for ESOL England, and ‘Working with Asylum Seekers and Refugees’, a toolkit for ESOL practitioners, was produced by the Basic Skills Agency in collaboration with the Language and Literacy Unit, NATECLA, the Refugee Council and the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service (RETAS). Much of the content is still relevant today. The 'grey' literature reports were reports from several ESOL Coordinators which included information about the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) (7 of the 12 ESOL Coordinator reports were considered), analysis of Community Based English Language evaluation reports (reports on 4 out of the 6 projects were considered; see Appendix 4) and two ESOL and Integration project reports (APPG, 2017, and Collyer et al, 2018). These report findings were critically evaluated using the various frameworks and principles for good practice in SLA, ESOL and integration outlined above.

# Results and key themes

## Outreach and referrals of refugees into suitable classes

Outreach work is a vital part of the language learning process. McGivney (2000) defines outreach as ‘…a process that involves going out from a specific organisation or centre to work in other locations with sets of people who typically do not or cannot avail themselves of (make use of) the services of that centre’.

Outreach can include: staff physically leaving the organisation to engage refugees; marketing strategies that are specifically targeting a group that is different from the mainstream; provision that is non-formal or informal in community locations, networking with organisations that cater to specific sets of people or activities (VIME Framework report, 2018). In their paper Higton et al (2019) found that 47% of the providers surveyed delivered English language via outreach activity with hard-to-engage communities.

Dimitriadou (2004) reports that students experienced issues accessing ESOL courses due to over-subscription- some were placed in college outreach centres (in community provision) before being able to enter mainstream provision. Here outreach is used as a placeholder and is only active in one domain as VIME suggests above. In a report written for the cross party think-tank DEMOS, Paget and Stevenson (2014) suggest that community outreach and partnerships with third sector were found to be the best way to find those who needed to learn English but had not been able to access learning yet.

Effective outreach should be coordinated to meet the various pathways that migrants might take. However, competition between providers and duplication of acceptable screening and assessment cause lack of coherence in the system. Also lack of knowledge and expertise of outreach and referral staff means that some migrants are not referred or signposted to the most appropriate programmes (VIME Framework report, 2018). The Learning & Work Institute (Stevenson et al, 2017) in their report Mapping ESOL Provision in Greater London, note a lack of information re signpostingand highlightedtheimportance of other settings and organisations in providing support with orientation (p23)*.* The reports raisestheneed for awareness of wider issues to be considered e.g. mental health (p24), see section on barriers later in this report.

Further evidence of lack of good coordination between RCO (refugee community organisations) and providers comes from Dimitriadou (2004).The studysuggests that co-ordination and dialogue between ESOL providers and RCOs is crucial for sharing information and expertise, and for contacting some of the more ‘hard-to-reach’ communities. Whilst there is evidence of active co-ordination of ESOL, particularly in London, through networks and professional organisations such as GLEN and NATECLA, stakeholders felt that this required further funding and support. Chick (2019), in his case study of the refugee resettlement programme in Wales, also highlights the need for a response to wider and English Language needs of refugees. He notes the importance of investment of appropriate resources in identifying and responding to needs.

Other reasons for lack of coordination between various organisations refugee learners could benefit from can be due to competition between providers catering to different domains of learning. The VIME project (2018) conceptualises domains of learning (see formal/informal/non-formal learning below) and recommends that providers in each domain carry out outreach. However, providers are usually interested in their own domain and not creating pathways across domains, which will yield the most enriching learning experience for migrants and refugees. The lack of coordination and cross pathways means that many learners are only active in one domain which suggests a lack of joined-up pathways.

Earlier suggestions for suitable outreach and referral stress the importance of collaboration with other agencies, such as social services and health (DfES, 2003). This report recommends using translation and interpretation services when necessary. Creating networks with other institutions and agencies outside college and upskilling frontline staff on the needs of refugees is recommended and for more than one member of staff to have the role of referral person. They suggest using a pro-forma for building up a list of contacts in the local area, with type of contact. Case studies bring out the benefit of having refugees’ involvement in provision. The report gives an example of a forum, chaired by the local authority with representatives from social services, health, environmental health, housing, police, voluntary agencies and education providers. Examples of communication given are: a newsletter, plus induction days for newly arrived refugees about local facilities and services. These provide opportunities for refugees to meet one another and to speak privately to service representatives attending the induction day.

Further insights into procedures and practices for outreach and referral come from project reports and reports from regional ESOL co-ordinators. For instance, Doyle and O’Toole (2013), in their in-depth study of 16 providers, recommend better training for IAG staff with, ideally, an officer in each college who is aware of the issues facing refugees accessing education (see section below on Barriers) and who can provide clear information about options available.

In Leeds, Learning English in Leeds developed a website for ESOL providers, updated by the providers, facilitating access to all ESOL learners. This is now being extended to the whole Yorkshire and Humber Region ([Learning English Yorkshire and Humber](https://www.learningenglish.org.uk/)). Manchester Adult Education Service (2019) cites liaison with SAVTE (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English) to provide home tutors for some refugees who can’t get to class. The ESOL co-ordinator for Syrian refugees, Mackey (2019) uses a Google map, regularly updated, to refer to provision. The map also serves as a distribution network for information and advertising CPD events. There are four multi-agency forums each year where support for the Syrian families is discussed.

ESOL Northern Ireland (NI) have developed a website in partnership with the Belfast Met ICT Development Team as a one-stop shop resource. This is available to formal and informal ESOL providers in Northern Ireland to list their profile details and courses and access sector relevant information via a ‘members only’ page. The resource offers an online portal where learners and support organisations can access information on ESOL provision anywhere in Northern Ireland. The ESOL NI online portal is linked to an automatic translation mechanism making the full website information available in different languages (Parizzi, 2019).

The OECD report Engaging with Employers (2018) highlights difficulties with identifying refugees’ previous education and their level of English at arrival. Key barriers to accessing education are waiting times, complex admission procedures, not having proof of qualifications from country of origin(Gateley, 2015:38). A key issue in referrals to education is that most refugees are ‘directed towards statutory agencies’ (ibid: 42). Advice is limited and funding cuts make it hard to provide holistic, long-term services which ‘enable the agency of vulnerable groups’ (ibid: 43).

In summary, there are four key requirements for effective outreach and referrals of refugees into suitable classes:

* Co-ordination between refugee organisations, ESOL providers and services such as health and housing (Dimitriadou, 2004).
* Knowledge and expertise of outreach and referral staff is key to refugees being placed in suitable provision (DfES, 2003; Doyle and O’Toole, 2013).
* For this to work, emerging practice from Leeds and Northern Ireland suggests a regularly updated central database of contacts would be useful.
* Refugees should be involved in discussions about their provision, for example at multi-agency forums (DfES, 2003).

## Initial assessment

In ESOL, initial assessment activities assess the language needs of learners before they are placed on a (suitable) programme of study. Larger providers with classes at more than one level tend to carry out an initial assessment to place the learner in a class at an appropriate level. Lack of initial assessment or ineffective initial assessment procedures can lead to learners not being placed in classes right for them. From interviews with 30 women in Glasgow and London, Clayton (2005: 235) found “one of the biggest problems is the frequent failure to place women on a course at a level which is appropriate to their stage of learning and to ensure their progression. This is partly due to a shortage of resources. There is also a propensity to treat women migrants as blank slates and set them to begin again at the beginning”.

It was difficult to locate peer reviewed literature about initial assessment of refugee learners of English in a UK context. However, we felt it was important to include relevant evidence from a study commissioned by the Refugee Council. Conducted by Doyle and O’Toole (2013), the study drew on interviews with refugees and providers. The study recommends specialist Initial Assessment and Guidance (IAG) staff, trained to provide suitable assessment and guidance to new arrivals (also see the section on Barriers, below). Eight of the ten providers interviewed for this study reported that they had ‘no specific policy or process in place to support refugees and asylum seekers during the admissions process’ (p.29).This reflects the recommendation in the DfES (2003) report which also stresses that initial assessments should be as in-depth as possible while being sensitive and being aware of the need for confidentiality.

The authors for this literature review could not locate peer reviewed literature published in the last ten years which addresses initial assessment and placement *tools and* *procedures* for refugee learners of English in the UK.English as a Foreign Language (EFL) literature is clearer about principles and procedures for initial assessment for a language course e.g. Nation & Macalister (2010, 2011). They suggest carrying out a needs analysis to gauge learners’ language and learning needs, followed by a diagnostic of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The needs analysis is in-depth and gathers data on learners’ needs (necessities), lacks and wants (Nation & Macalister, 2010:25). The diagnostic shows the distance between current language skills and language needed for the target situation e.g. accessing services in the UK, joining a course or employment. Nation and Macalister (2010) recommend that findings from both tools are used to plan a course which meets the learners’ needs. Appendix 3 shows a framework for conducting a language and learning needs analysis.

While literacy levels could be a limitation (Gladwell, 2019), EFL literature around the use of technology in assessment (see Jordan et al 2011) suggests possibilities for gathering needs and wants of refugee learners online. Language skills and needs can change (Cooke and Simpson, 2008) and an online record of these needs and skills can be easier to update and access.

In summary, we suggest three key requirements for a suitable and effective initial assessment/needs analysis:

* The initial assessment needs to gather information on current and future communication needs in a range of contexts (Nation and Macalister, 2010). These would include communication with the Home Office, legal professionals (Simpson, 2019), interactions in their community and to access services such as health and housing.
* Refugees with functional literacy in English could complete an assessment online. This could create a central record which the learner could update herself, confidentiality is a consideration here.
* Initial assessment and diagnostic data needs to be updated at regular intervals to ensure that learners have access to effective ESOL suited to their needs (Cooke and Simpson, 2008).

## Content and delivery models that focus on language for social integration and for work

This section describes examples of good practice in ESOL course content and delivery and the effects on learners. Drawing on these examples and theories of language socialisation, we suggest key requirements for suitable and effective content and delivery for ESOL for refugees.

A qualitative study which explored adult ESOL learners’ views and experiences of learning English and integration with 14 ESOL and refugee learners reports ESOL classes as spaces to build ‘feelings of integration, self-confidence and to gain language skills’ (Court, 2017:413). The paper highlights the importance of fostering ‘identities of competence’ – in and outside the classroom. One way to do this is through drawing on their expert/other languages, confirmed by Ćatibušić et al (2019). Also see Idle and Ma’s chapter on motivating unaccompanied minors in ESOL classrooms (Idle and Ma, 2019) for insights on developing an ideal L2 self which ties in with Court’s identities of competence. Court (2017) draws on Bryers et al (2013) to recommend participatory pedagogy to promote confidence/positive identity positions and also in conceiving integration as a ‘dynamic and multidimensional process’ (p.412). Similarly, Asadullah (2014) highlights the role of ESOL classes in reducing anxiety about speaking English and boosting confidence in wider situations - increasing self-reliance and potentially feelings of integration. Askins (2016) develops these ideas to explore ideas of emotional citizenry which produces a deeper sense of citizenship.

A randomised controlled trial by Hoya et al (2018) investigated the effect of English language provision on language proficiency and social integration of learners with lower levels of English (527 participants). This was a community-based English language (CBEL) intervention over 11 weeks with 66 guided learning hours and support over 22 classes/11 language club sessions. The control group received the intervention later, measures were taken before participants received the intervention.

The actual intervention format is important to consider:

* 3 sessions/week - 2x Talk English Together classes - taught by qualified ESOL teacher + volunteer support - approximately 2 hours
* 1xTalk English Together club - supported by volunteers and ‘supervised’ by ESOL teacher - included visits and talks from local service providers
* range of topics covered in modules but no flexibility in time spent
* class size was intended to be 12 learners maximum, actual class size was 8-15 learners.

This CBEL intervention trial contrasts with other Community-Based ESOL provision, which is sometimes less structured and standardised, of lower intensity (e.g. one session per week), not as specifically targeted to particular learner groups, and can have a greater reliance on volunteer teachers (p.16). It is of significance that this other CBEL (Hoya et al, 2018) was much more like 'formal'/college type provision. Findings from this study showed that:

* While both groups increased English language proficiency, the increases for the control group were significantly more. Having school aged children ‘was a significant predictor of improvement in proficiency’ (p.58) as was higher educational attainment.
* The difference between treatment and control groups was strong across a number of measures - e.g. ‘improvements in social interactions and everyday activity, increased confidence in interacting with health services, and higher levels of trust in the local community and among people from a different background’ (p.59).
* Flexibility of hours and content was found to be a positive factor in improving proficiency, also reported by Stevenson et al, (2017**:**22).

Stevenson et al (2017) describe outreach (CBEL) provision in Greater London as ESOL delivery in several modes - mixed-level classes, workshop-style drop-in delivery, informal activities and conversational classes. Providers felt that single level or maximum 2 level provision was best for effective learning and learner progress. A larger proportion of community and outreach provision was seen to be mixed-level. Stevenson et al (2017:43-46) recommend improved planning/commissioning/co-ordination, and increased capacity for pre-entry learners/those with literacy needs. Refugees may be more relaxed at outreach classes and find it easier to access them. This includes hostels and temporary accommodation. Refugees in temporary accommodation will need shorter courses because of frequent moves. The report highlights the importance of recruiting staff with experience of teaching refugees, who are aware of the difference between refugees and other ESOL cohorts (DfES, 2003). Refugees on the resettlement programme (VPRS) are entitled to 8 hours per week, plus informal provision in addition to these 8 hours (Mackey 2019).

Findings from Mackey’s 2019 report as an ESOL co-ordinator in the North West of England show increase in use of English for refugees attending ESOL classes. On average there was an increase from 2.4 to 3.5 in the number of people the respondent spoke to in English during the previous week. There was also a small increase in the number of friends they had, and an increase in confidence was shown by the number of times they went to the shops and the number of trips taken by train/bus (from 1.75 to 2.5).

Mackey’s (2018) report as an ESOL co-ordinator in the North West of England contains examples of case studies of language for integration/work in the broader context of ESOL learners, including refugees. In a class in the Wirral, students were volunteering at a charity clothes shop and the local church. One student volunteered as a gardener in a park as he wanted to continue with his previous work of working in agriculture in Syria. Further to these examples of formal volunteering, the learners participate in their community. One woman in the group has visited classes in local primary schools, explaining her journey to the UK and life experience. Two learners participated in a Family Learning Storytelling event at a local primary school. Four learners (one was a chef in Syria) cooked a meal for a group of DIY volunteers at the community centre. In terms of outcomes, those four learners achieved the Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene qualification (Mackey, 2018).

These examples of volunteering illuminate the concept of language socialization, one of the ‘approaches to SLA that deem social contexts and factors in learning to be integral to processes involved in the construction and performance of language’ (Duff, 2019:8). Language socialization plays a key role in language learning and integration (Roberts, 2010), particularly in the workplace. ‘Language socialization refers to the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge and practices that enable them to participate effectively in a language community’ (Longman, 2008: 489). Newcomers are expected to become part of the working practices as well as linguistic practices of the workplace (Roberts, 2010) although the support to do so may not be there, especially for linguistic practices. Roberts’ work (2006) also suggests that migrants face a double linguistic penalty when entering the workforce in that the language of the job interview can be more complex than the language needed to do the job. Courses need to prepare refugees for job interviews but also provide opportunities for language socialisation in work contexts. One way to do this is through placements and apprenticeships.

Further evidence of the importance of language socialisation comes from Strang and Ager, (2010) who suggest that informal networks are more effective in creating social bonds which makes it difficult for dispersed refugees. Simple forms of friendliness (smiling, saying hello) can have a significant impact on a refugee’s sense of safety and security. To build bridges, there is a need for opportunities for people to meet and exchange resources. Involving members of the established communities is the hardest. Those who already get involved in conversation clubs etc. are already committed to refugee integration, those that aren’t don’t participate. They give the example of an informal set-up from the Netherlands to overcome this, a Local Exchange and Trading Systems (LETS). This allows asylum seekers who can’t work or refugees who are training for work to offer services. Local residents get services and through this meet and interact with refugees. Interactions are not based on them helping refugees but getting a service (Strang and Ager, 2010).

In terms of what happens in ESOL classes, an extensive study by Higton et al (2019) found that teachers use role-play, games and group work to encourage independent learning. The study gathered data from 162 English language learning providers, including interviews with 40 senior leaders, 136 interviews with teachers and interviews or focus groups with 336 learners; ten focus groups with 38 non-learners. Higton et al also found that classes provided opportunities for learners to listen to others speaking English and practice their own English. The study found use of digital resources with 75% of teachers using mobile phones and 53% using online virtual learning environments. In terms of content, Simpson (2019), suggests that refugees may not find a traditional ESOL curriculum/syllabus with language for shopping etc. useful as their immediate needs are for legal language.

An example of course content and delivery for young refugees comes from Glasgow Clyde College (Mackey, 2019; Idle and Ma, 2019). The college offered a course for 14-19-year olds to meet their needs for personal and social development, maths and ‘opportunities to be creative.’ The ESOL course was designed to include personal and social development, sport, creative arts, outdoor learning and maths. Science could not be included due to lack of funding. The syllabus was topic based and this course was rewarded by the John Muir award for engagement with nature.

Resources used were not ESOL specific but were of interest to the young students e.g. football heroes and books such as ‘Stories for Boys who dare to be different.’ The college took a multi-agency approach and worked in partnership with The British Red Cross, social services and other agencies to deal with trauma. Staff were able to access trauma training and joined a ‘[Seasons for Growth](http://www.seasonsforgrowth.org.uk/)’ education programme. This programme helps to develop strategies to deal with grief and loss. The course team plan to have ‘ambassadors’ from previous cohorts to deliver talks to current students. A 50% increase in referrals to the course has been reported.Refugee students from the course have progressed to undergrad courses and employment (Mackey, 2019).

In her review of literature on refugee children’s education, McBride (2018) notes thatexpectations of school and other support providers are key to progression of this group*.* McBride also notes the lack of suitable advice available on progression to FE/HE (also Gateley, 2015) and conflicting advice given on progression.She refers to Pinson and Arnot (2010: 257 in McBride, 2018: 10) on key features of effective provision: ‘Firstly, valuing cultural diversity and the active promotion of cultural diversity as an educational goal; secondly, constructing new indicators of integration; and lastly, adopting a caring/compassionate ethos and a maximal approach to the role proscribed for the school or local authority’.This literature review established three important gaps in literature (McBride (2018:15-16):

* As much of the evidence comes from research conducted with teachers and other stakeholders, the voices/perspectives of refugee children and their parents appear to be marginalised.
* There is a lack of research on Scotland-specific (and beyond that, local authority-specific) issues relating to refugee children’s education.
* More ‘technical’ detail is required in terms of ‘what works’. For example, there is a need to drill down beyond characteristics such as ‘inclusive ethos’ to establish exactly what that means and how it is put into practice (and monitored).

To meet the needs of those who want to get to work, Stevenson et al (2017:24) in their report on ESOL provision in Greater London note the importance of ‘fast track’ provision for employability but also note that provision needs to be tailored to the individual more in terms of prior skills rather than assume that any job will do. The UK Government’s 2018 Green Paper which addresses integrated communitiesrefers to fully funded costs for those who are unemployed and looking for work (p38).

There are practical examples in Mackey’s (2019) report about ESOL in the North West.Ideas for getting refugees into work include: volunteering; enrolling on vocational courses; links with employers to provide mock interviews and work placements; buddying a volunteer from the workplace with a similar work background to that of the refugee.Needs assessment showed that refugees would benefit from training in setting up a business, for instance an ‘Enterprise and Leadership’ course. Mackey (2019) gives an example of a successful outcome of a refugee with tailoring skills supported to set up his own business. Other examples are refugees volunteering in an Oxfam shop in Cumbria. Others were supported to qualify as a Teaching Assistant and to do an apprenticeship.

Family learning classes in Leicester take place in school for parents or in an accessible venue such as a community hall. A family learning/ESOL orientation course is delivered in partnership with a tenant support organisation ‘Star Amal’ to newly arrived refugees, there are 16 sessions twice per week. ESOL lessons are supported by an Arabic speaking Resettlement Worker. Prior to starting the course everyone attends a welcome briefing in Arabic (Searl, 2019). The Regional Coordination Annual Report for East England notescollaboration between a social housing organisation, a private ESOL provider and the local authority (Searl, 2019:10). Refugees’ progress is supported by experienced tutors who respond to the needs of the refugees. Some one-to-one support and childcare is available.

Progression with English language skills is key to the success of a course (Nation and Macalister, 2010) as is progression to mainstream courses and employment (Cooke and Simspon, 2008). In terms of progression, Gateley (2015:38)focuses on intervention by voluntary sector organisations in supporting autonomous decision making of young refugees regarding educational choices. This type of support had been provided by the [Refugee Integration & Employment Service](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/refugee-integration-employment-service-ries) (RIES, now closed due to funding cuts) and was key in providing opportunity to be listened to (p.38). RIES also had specialist understanding of advice relevant to refugees and provided time and space to make decisions - better provided by the expert provision. Two participants reported previous advice from FE colleges where guidance was seen as ‘lowering’ their aspirations.

The Integrated Communities Green Paper (HMG, 2018) acknowledges that progression routes are not aligned to the needs of those new to the UK and that more provision is needed at lower levels (pre-Entry and Entry levels). The Green Paper recommends a range of learning opportunities to cater to diverse needs and reports that funding to support provision under VPRS is intended to build capacity and to consider issues like provision of childcare. Regional co-ordinators are mapping provision and needs, identifying gaps. Community based programmes are needed in places with higher levels of people with little or no English. There is a need to develop an ESOL strategy at national and local levels (HMG, 2018).

Mackey’s (2018) regional ESOL Co-ordinator’s report describes an intensive ESOL for Work pilot which included ESOL, ICT, Employability and mock interviews with local employers. The pilot offered 6 hours per week contact time over two weeks and participants were able to progress to work. However, it is not clear if the situation has moved on from Dumper’s (2002) skills audit of refugee women in London from the teaching, nursing and medical professions, which showed fewer than 1 in five employed in the professions they worked in before coming to the UK.

The need for training for those teaching English to refugees and migrants has been raised before (Rosenberg, 2007; Cooke and Simpson, 2008). More recently Cowie and Delaney (2019) report that teachers may be poorly resourced and have varying views on the purpose and benefits of ESOL classes. While noting the need for teacher training (Ćatibušić et al, 2019), the literature we came across did not say much about specifics of training needed for ESOL teachers of refugees. Though training has been provided for volunteers working with Syrian refugees in the North West, using the Council of Europe toolkit and discrete workshops such as the Language Experience Approach, Basic Literacy for ESOL learners, Basic Grammar, Lesson Planning (Mackey 2019).

We conclude this section with eight key requirements for effective and suitable ESOL course design and delivery for refugees:

* A needs analysis/initial assessment is key to designing an effective course, see section on initial assessment above.
* Alongside a focus on language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and language systems (lexis, grammar, syntax, pronunciation), content needs to be related to learners’ daily lives and future needs (Simpson, 2019).
* Volunteering and work placement are opportunities for learners to ‘activate’ and personalise language encountered in class (Mackey, 2019).
* Course delivery needs to address barriers to attendance e.g. childcare and travel costs (see section on barriers below).
* An effective course addresses progression as part of the content and delivery (Nation and Macalister, 2010).
* Refugees’ expert/other languages are a resource in the ESOL classroom (Court, 2017; Ćatibušić et al, 2019).
* Invest in the training/CPD for ESOL teachers of refugees for initial assessment, diagnostic principles and practices; course design; teaching strategies and fostering progression (Cooke and Simpson, 2019; Cowie and Delaney 2019; Ćatibušić et al, 2019).
* Regional teach-meet sessions for teachers and IAG staff to meet and share ideas and practices.

## Linking formal and informal learning activities

Eraut (2000) conceptualises three domains of learning. Formal learning is defined as intentional and deliberate learning with time set aside for the activity, and informal learning as the opposite of this- where learning is not intentional and there is no awareness to learn. Non-formal learning is conceptualised as a space in between, where learning is ‘near-spontaneous and unplanned’ (by the learner) - there is an awareness of learning taking place but the ‘level of intentionality will vary’ (Eraut, 2000: 115).

OECD (n.d.) describe three domains:

* Formal learning as ‘organised and structured ’with learning aims state and intentional on the part of the learner.
* Informal learning is not organised, has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes and is never intentional from the learner’s standpoint. Often it is referred to as learning by experience or just as experience.
* Non-formal learning is organised and can have learning objectives. The advantage of the intermediate concept lies in the fact that such learning may occur at the initiative of the individual but also happens as a by-product of more organised activities, whether or not the activities themselves have learning objectives.

As ESOL formalised as a curriculum area and part of national adult education in the 1990s (Rosenberg, 2007), it evolved from EFL teaching and has traditionally been set up as courses of set weeks, over a term or semester, using a defined curriculum towards an assessment, within classroom settings. Delivery in colleges, adult community learning providers and training providers will largely look like this ‘formal learning’ method and environment. Foster and Bolton (2017) report community learning provided by local authorities and further education colleges, provided a wide-range of ‘non-formal courses’. These included non-formal ESOL courses that were run as family learning within children’s centres and taster sessions, which did not require completion of qualifications or a set syllabus.

In the largest, multi institutional study of effective practice in ESOL, Roberts et al (2004) concluded that in ESOL classrooms, formal and informal distinctions break down because the ESOL classroom is a communicative setting over and above instructional settings. For instance, there is pre-lesson informal chatting, which teachers use as part of the learning process.

Further explanations of formal, non-formal and informal learning come from Morrice (2011) who refers to the European Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000, cited in Morrice, 2011). The memorandum notes that the concept of lifelong learning draws attention to the temporal nature of learning: learning occurs through- out the life course, continuously or periodically. It draws attention to the spread of learning across various contexts and activities. This ‘life-wide’ dimension of learning brings the non-formal and informal learning into sharper focus and the distinction between informal and formal learning has become less significant (2000:9). Learning becomes part of our whole life experience and no aspect of life is left untouched by learning. The Memorandum goes on to identify three basic categories of purposeful learning:

* Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications.
* Non-formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalised certificates. Non-formal learning may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organisations and groups.
* Informal learning is a natural accompaniment to everyday life. Unlike formal and non-formal learning, informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be re- cognised even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills (2000:8).

Ivanic et al*.* (2006) suggest it is not possible to conceptualise informal/non-formal learning as being fundamentally separate from formal learning. Instead it is more sensible to see attributes of informality and formality as being present in all learning situations. The APPG report (2017: 74) says that ‘non-formal schemes do not feature explicit language learning goals but are designed so as to provide social support to learners and facilitate cultural integration’. In terms of designing ESOL delivery, the terms ‘instructed second language acquisition’ (Ellis, 2005) and ‘out of class learning’ may be more direct descriptions of the mode of learning.

Examples of out of class learning come from a longitudinal study in Yorkshire which drew on interviews (28 respondents), a brainstorm and ranking activity (33 respondents) and questionnaires (33 respondents) to explore what supported progress in English proficiency. A significant factor reported was family members supporting learners to practice and improve their English in real life contexts (Hann, 2017a). However, refugees may not have this support. The same study found that learners who reported accessing interlocutors made greater progress with English (Hann 2013). Data from this study also highlighted a link between in-class and out of class learning, respondents reported using language from the ESOL classrooms in (successful) job interviews and when communicating with customers.

Out of class interactions can also take place in the classroom; for example, talking during breaks or before and after classes start, however the term is used here to mean activities that are not teacher-led and not language-learning-led. This can also be understood as a form of informal learning, where learning is non-directed and often unconscious (Livingstone 2001; Marsick & Watkins 2001; Solomon et al. 2006). In their report on ESOL provision in Greater London (Stevenson et al, 2017: 43-46) suggest increasing intensity/relevance of provision available by ‘harnessing complementary role of informal learning and non-formal ESOL provision’. The VIME Framework developed from the VIME Project gave examples of formal/informal/non-formal learning including social interactions/socialising with people of different backgrounds (VIME, 2018).

### Formal/Non-formal and Informal Learning and Integration:

ESOL classes have potential as sites for social capital formation and provide refugees and asylum seekers with resources that are hard to access or not available to them for their personal lives. A mixed methods study, which collected data from 78 students in two FE colleges, reported that students found teachers supported them in more than teaching and they were able to talk to their teacher about their problems (Dimitriadou, 2004). It was found that ESOL classes can support refugees and asylum seekers during stressful periods of settlement to interact with other students and opportunity to build friendships. However, learners were reluctant to interact with other learners not from their class and practice English outside the classroom (ibid). Participants (refugee ESOL learners) said it was difficult to make friends with other students in the college unless the students were from the same ethnic or cultural groups. Teachers’ opinion was that this was related to lack of trust in people outside their classroom peers (Dimitriadou, 2004).

Collyer et al (2019) acknowledge the position of refugees as a specific sub-group of ESOL learners with needs relating to vulnerabilities and point out that the current programme design and delivery does not meet these needs sufficiently. There is little evidence of support to attend classes and no evidence of informal social engagement opportunities to support language learning and integration. They refer to a case study of an Ethiopian refugee who had improved her English partly due to additional 1-2-1 support she was receiving (non-formal) and friendship with a non-Ethiopian learner she had met through the class, and regularly met up with outside the class (informal). This relates to the lack of trust reported in Dimitriadou’s (2004)study.

Bryers, Winstanley and Cooke (2013) suggest that participatory methods develop students’ motivation and ability to extend discussion beyond the class to friends and families. This meant that the class was not just ‘practice’ for real life but brought ‘the outside in’ (Baynham et al, 2007). ESOL classrooms became the site for discussion about issues that affected their lives (Bryers, Winstanley, Cooke, 2013).

To illustrate the principles discussed above, the rest of this section shares insights from recent and current projects which offer opportunities to acquire English in informal contexts. To do this we draw on project reports and in some cases, project evaluations by independent evaluators. Spencer and Sanders (2016) report support by local libraries to facilitate conversational English in Wales. Action Language are a charity based in Newcastle and Sunderland and provide free ESOL Skills for Life classes. A longitudinal evaluation of their project by Shashoua and Cole (2018) of ESOL and ESOL Outreach classes found some improvements in English language, confidence and self-esteem, access to services, integration, well-being and independence. The project had 2185 enrolled learners over three years where half the cohort were refugees, 42% of enrolled learners attended and completed the programme and 39% increased their ESOL level over their time on the programme. The effectiveness of non-formal learning initiatives such as the Community Based Language Competition projects are under-researched. See Appendix 4 for an analysis of the projects’ evaluation reports. Projects in which teachers are qualified and trained (such as the Talk English and Talking Together project) showed higher retention and completion rates.

The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (2015) reports the role of a Creative English curriculum and methods in supporting participants to progress to community volunteering and to take part in non-formal learning through social interactions with others. Targets for progression to formal learning classes were exceeded. Non-formal learning reduced anxiety and motivated learners to go on to attend formal learning in a ‘typical’ ESOL course, provided there was one available. However, the evaluation for the Creative English Programme acknowledges that there were inconsistencies in volunteer proficiency to deliver sessions. There were issues with grading language and activities not pitched at the correct level reported. Some learners reported they weren’t improving their language skills well. In sessions that were more structured and consistent, learners were able to use the language learnt by the end of each session. This suggests that both formal and structured classes are necessary at the same time as non-formal sessions (The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, 2015).

As part of the Creative English Programme, more proficient English speakers acted as volunteer informal interpreters to support new participants to build confidence and reduce anxiety. This suggests that informal support helps reduce barriers to participation. Recommendations from this evaluation include better support for volunteers and volunteer facilitators. Faith Action did not have enough finance to conduct systematic monitoring of quality for the sessions. Volunteers also reported lack of confidence and being overwhelmed. Better support was required to ensure a positive volunteer experience and to safeguard the quality of the service (The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, 2015). Mallows and Braddell in the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration (2017) criticise non-formal schemes for modelling their delivery on formal teaching and suggest this minimises the effectiveness of the non-formal model. For non-formal learning to be effective, volunteers need to understand their roles well and be supported.

Mackey (2018) reports a case study on informal learning, ‘ESOL Stepping Stones’ in which Nursery staff support mums informally with parenting and ESOL. The Stepping Stones project is an example of overcoming the barrier of childcare, the programme acts as a hook to start mothers on their learning journey. The model was developed by the University of Manchester. Leaders of ‘Stay and Play’ groups support the mothers, who are not just refugees, informally with their English. The project has produced resources available online and in hard copy for settings with no technology. The 12 week course combines functional English with parenting skills. Increases in language skills, confidence, activities to benefit children were reported. Staff receive free training, materials and support, this adds to the skills set of staff. At the end, mothers are signposted to other provision.

The APPG (2017) report suggests ‘authentic interactions with native speakers’ are the only way migrants can gain exposure to ‘correct’ language and proposes language learning beyond the classroom. Providers taking part in the English Language Competition (DCLG, 2013) promoted a blended approach which included elements of classroom learning and community-based learning.

Heart & Parcel in the North West of England, aims to support women through the four areas of Language, Learning, Empowerment & Community​. Commissioned by Refugee Action, integration was a key focus. Heart and Parcel (2018) offer a6 week Cooking & ESOL programme, the project was commissioned by Refugee Action and helps clients practise applying English language in a practical and informal environment. This was a 5-week project with 13 participants. The participants attend ESOL classes elsewhere. The project team say ‘We are aware of the reluctance to award funding to non-accredited ESOL and adult learning projects such as the one described here. We want to highlight just how much impact can be made from these smaller projects with a short amount of time but the right resources’ (p.2). There were 13 languages in one of the participating groups, one third were Arabic speaking. The group included all levels up to and including Entry 3. The project succeeded in its aims, 10 out of 12 felt included not isolated, the women went shopping, then cooked together. There was 100% success in introducing learners to new people (p.12) and feedback showed a greater sense of community and belonging. All participants reported feeling more confident in transferable skills in English. Participants developed leader ship and delegation skills during the cooking sessions.

Searl (2019) reports acase study from the organisation Upbeat Communities in Derbyshire, which has been helping refugees to network with each other and within the community since 2015. One of the first projects was to set up a community café, providing volunteering opportunities. Upbeat Communities has since developed projects with a number of multi-agency collaborators in the areas of befriending, orientation, community building activities, health and wellbeing sessions, employment and enterprise training as well as English language classes.

Collyer et al (2018) confirm that a long term commitment to refugee language learning and integration needs to include informal support in addition to standard ESOL classes. They recommend initiatives to bring refugees and other communities together in informal contexts, additional to [instructed ESOL] such as conversation clubs. They acknowledge the role of mentoring and befriending as informal ways of support and learning about life [and language] in the new communities. Recognising the need of refugees for communicative repertoires to participate in many contexts, including an awareness of power structures, Collyer et al (2018) recommend their inclusion in [formal] instructive communicative language teaching. For instance, through authentic materials and methods based on learners’ lives, identities and contexts of action.

One of the earliest reports into cohesion was by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007), the report linked ESOL and cohesion. The report recommended to the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and local authorities to secure funding for ESOL. The report noted that learning English was not just about formal classes and passing qualifications, but also about how community groups, places of worship, schools and families all support the process. The report makes a clear argument for bridging social capital and community cohesion and says that interactions between people of different groups are considered ‘bridging activities’ and meaningful contact between people of different groups challenges prejudices (ibid:111-112).

In the DEMOS Report, Paget and Stevenson (2014) recommended that providers look at ways of combining formal, informal and non-formal learning and stressed that there is a need to ensure access to high quality formal learning. Stevenson et al (2017) stress the importance of informal and community based ESOL for refugees in addition to formal ESOL or as a stepping stone to formal classes. Researchers continue to emphasize that non-formal approaches should not replace formal classes. ‘Greeting neighbours or engaging in small talk while shopping are as much part of the migrants’ learning process as the formal language classes’ (Mallows, 2014).

Digital resources have been reported to extend English learning outside the classroom in the context of university students, for instance Trinder’s (2017) study explored 175 Austrian university students’ use of digital resources for language learning. The section on technologies used for language learning (p.404) suggests that for ‘deliberate study’ usual sources such as teacher, coursebooks, e-dictionaries, native speakers were reported as being useful. Students voted on their perception the learning potential of three digital sources – voice chat, Facebook, film/TV in five areas of language:

* Vocabulary
* Pronunciation
* Listening
* Speaking
* Communicative competence

Findings showed that students found voice chat and Facebook to be most useful in helping with vocabulary and communicative competence. They also reported that film and TV helped the most with listening. Trinder (2017) suggests that use of digital/multimedia resources outside the classroom covers several goals for the learners – entertainment/leisure, information search and language learning. Trinder confirms the shift from teacher-led to learner-initiated learning though these respondents still wanted classroom ‘teaching’. The potential of this study for refugee learners needs to be explored.

Formal, non-formal and informal learning are intrinsically related to reasons for learning English, see reports cited above. The literature cited in this review suggests several reasons for learning English.

* Integration (VIME, 2018; APPG, 2017)
* Work (Morrice, 2013; Higton et al, 2019), work seen as a way of integrating through the interactions with colleagues
* Qualifications for other reasons e.g. citizenship, application to university, progression (Higton et al, 2019)
* To communicate with other members of their families (Hann, 2017a), however, the data for this study included non-refugee ESOL learners.
* Social action (Bryers, Winstanley and Cooke, 2013).

We have seven recommendations for exploiting formal, non-formal and informal learning for ESOL:

* informal learning works best when it supplements formal learning (Mallows, 2014; Collyer et al, 2018)
* proficient speakers of English, also refugees, can be used as volunteers to support new learners (Mackey, 2019 in earlier sections)
* informal learning draws on social capital of learners and also builds social capital in out of class situations (Dimitriadou, 2004)
* volunteers supporting informal learning need support and training (Mallows and Braddell, 2017)
* informal learning can be facilitated through mentoring and befriending
* the effect of informal learning programmes on learners and volunteers needs to be evaluated carefully. The effectiveness of this type of learning contexts is harder to measure due to its social nature (see Appendix 4)
* learners need to be aware of digital resources for out of class learning (Trinder, 2017).

## Barriers to learning and ensuring refugees have the right wider support to overcome them

Refugees face multiple barriers accessing learning as well as wider support. The titles of reports about access to ESOL for refugees, such as ‘Let Refugees Learn’, ‘Locked out of Learning’, bear testimony to the difficulties facing many refugees. These barriers and how they can be overcome, are discussed under the following four headings: political and legislative, institutional, social and economic, and cultural and psychological.

### Political and legislative barriers

Much of the literature mentions real term falls in funding for ESOL classes of 56% between 2010 and 2016 (data in Foster and Bolton, 2018).

The fact that asylum seekers are not able to work while their claim is being considered makes most dependent on the government allowance of ‘accommodation and support to meet their essential living needs if they would otherwise be destitute’ (Home Office 2019: 6). If, after six months, their claim to asylum is still being considered, they can access ESOL courses. A House of Commons debate pack, published in 2017, ‘English Language Teaching for Refugees,’ demonstrates well the political and legislative context for asylum seekers and refugees and the barriers they face. As well as summarising funding mechanisms for asylum seekers and eligibility for ESOL courses, there are eight pages recording key parliamentary questions asked about ESOL for refugees, with answers. Unsurprisingly, many of these are around funding. Others include: an ESOL strategy for England, social integration and plans for addressing low levels of literacy, all of which have implications for refugees.

DfES (2003) points out that, unlike other ESOL students, refugees studying ESOL are likely to have to spend time with solicitors and attending Home Office interviews. They may have school age children for whom they need to arrange education. Negotiating the ’system’ without family networks to support them can put them under strain.

Funding for ESOL learners on VPRS has been confirmed until the end of 2020; an announcement has yet to be made regarding future funding. Mackey (2019) reports that refugees on the VPRS are often dispersed to rural areas. Sometimes money is shared between local authorities to provide classes, a helpful collaboration where there aren’t enough ESOL learners at each level to warrant a class in a single local authority. Refugees are also signposted to mainstream and informal provision, partnering with Council for Voluntary Services.

### Institutional barriers

Department for Education ESOL funding, under the skills funding budget has reduced by 56% between 2009 and 2017 (Foster and Bolton, 2017). Although other funds have been made available from the Home Office and MHCLG, these have not replaced the lost funding (See Appendix 3). There has been a reduction in people participating in ESOL courses (ibid. 2017).

Refugees need to learn English quickly. The Home Office-funded scheme for Syrian refugees recommends a minimum of 8 hours per week (Mackey 2019). However, in common with other ESOL learners, they may not be able to find a class or, if there is one, a place. Refugee Action (2016, 2017a) cites long waiting lists and cases of learners being assigned to the wrong class because more suitable ones were full. Waiting can have an adverse effect on feelings of isolation (Refugee Action, 2017a). The Integrated Communities White Paper, HM Government (2018), acknowledges the importance of learning the language quickly. ‘Accessing support early can help people make greater and faster progress. Waiting to access support can damage confidence and make it more difficult to make the first steps’ (ibid, p. 37). DfES (2003) emphasises the importance of staff training to raise awareness of the needs of refugees, both in colleges and other agencies.

Refugee Action (2017a) reports limited childcare and cuts in the number of hours and that some providers have stopped taking new applicants. In 2017 City of Liverpool College saw ESOL provision drop to 50% of the level of three years previously, as well as a drop in availability of crèche places. The report quotes one provider responding to situation by increasing class sizes from an average of 12 to as many as 22 students. ESOL provision was seen as risky by providers because of the uncertainty surrounding the funding.

Doyle and O’Toole (2013), in a study which included structured interviews with 20 refugees and representatives from 10 learning providers, found that refugees face numerous barriers to accessing courses. Course publicity was often difficult for refugees to navigate since they often have little understanding of the UK education system. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) services did not provide the support needed. Refugees were often unable to prove their overseas qualifications. Prior qualifications were not accepted by some course providers or were not recognised or valued. Refugees were asked for passports, which they often did not have and there was a lack of knowledge amongst providers of which other documents provided by government departments were acceptable. Some refugees reported a lack of awareness amongst college staff of their particular needs and the report recommends training so that staff have an understanding of entitlements and needs of refugees, ‘appropriate to their role’. DfES (2003) also emphasises the importance of staff training to raise awareness of the needs of refugees, both in colleges and other agencies.

Some refugees found that, although they were exempt from course fees, they could not afford the registration or examination fees they were required to pay. ‘Learner support funds’ are not available to those with asylum seeker status. Some providers used their hardship funds to help address financial needs. Refugees reported that lack of money to cover their basic needs affected their ability to study (Doyle and O’Toole, 2013). For refugees who do not have access to a computer, on-line enrolment can prove a barrier and alternative methods of enrolling are recommended. Lack of access to computers in the home can also be a barrier for completing assignments, for those on courses.

A qualitative study of 44 voluntary organisations in Germany and Sweden by the Churchill and Linbury Trusts (Holland 2017) suggests that cross-agency partnerships and sustained funding for language classes create conditions for integration. Stevenson et al (2017) also argue for sustained, stable funding. Voluntary organisations avoid creating dependency and foster agency and autonomy among the newcomers (Holland 2017).

In Germany and Sweden the state invests heavily in language learning. In Germany, newcomers receive vouchers for twenty hours of language classes a week. Newcomers in Sweden also attend language classes for twenty hours a week. It is recognised that not everyone learns in the same way or at the same speed. This is especially the case in Sweden where a learner’s pathway to language proficiency depends on their previous education and qualifications. Someone who left school at the age of twelve is not expected to learn alongside someone with a university education (Holland, 2017).

Phillimore et al (2007) report that learning hours can be in conflict with jobcentre requirements for job searching. They also mention lack of appropriate documentation to prove eligibility. Manchester Adult Education Service (2019) reports several refugees from her Syrian cohort have moved into employment and how to support them with ESOL is a challenge. Manchester Adult Education Service (2019) also reports that women in Syrian cohort are still accessing fewer classes than men, even if there is childcare. In her mid-year report about the activities and outcomes of the South East Strategic Partnership Coker (2019) reports there are not enough pre-Entry level classes, evening and weekend classes for those employed and family learning, gender specific classes.

### Social and economic barriers

DfES (2003) has a useful section on the differences between refugees and other ESOL learners. They emphasise that refugees usually live in poor housing conditions such as hostels and temporary accommodation, with frequent relocations, which makes continuity of courses a problem. Unlike other ESOL learners, they would like to return to their countries of origin as soon as it is safe.

Travel costs and reaching a class are a problem (Phillimore et al, 2017), particularly for women (Refugee Action, 2016). Therefore outreach classes, i.e. classes in the community are an important part of provision for refugees. Pre-Entry and Entry level classes were more likely to be taken up by refugees (Higton et al, 2019: p.61). In the same report, 54% of provider respondents reported fees to be a barrier for ESOL learners (Higton et al, 2019: p.70).

In a survey of ESOL students and non-students with 162 responses, Higton et al (2019) found that for 71% of the respondents, childcare was a major or fairly important barrier, Phillimore et al (2007) confirm this. There is a lack of family support networks. Many women arrive as single parents, as their husbands are dead, imprisoned or fighting, therefore lack of childcare is a major barrier.

Akua-Sakyiwah (2016) and Phillimore et al (2007), report financial barriers and competing demands of working hours, job centre requirements and ESOL classes. This latter study also found emotional problems such as depression, PTSD and loneliness which teachers are unable to support adequately. As in Doyle and O’Toole (2013), this study also reports lack of appropriate documentation to prove eligibility for education.

Rates of unemployment amongst refugees are higher. Along with language needs, not knowing how to hunt for a job is a barrier (UNHCR, 2019; Morrice, 2007). Many are employed below their level of qualifications and aspirations (Willott & Stevenson 2013). There is a need for counselling on legal and social problems (UNHCR, 2019; Morrice, 2007). UNHCR (2019) notes that only 56% of refugees are in work; refugee unemployment is estimated at 18%, three times higher than UK-born jobseekers. Research by Refugee Employment Network (Tweed and Stacy, 2018) identify barriers as:

* English language
* employers’ recognition of skills and experience
* personal issues e.g. mental health, low confidence
* public and employer perception of refugees
* lack of support- e.g. lack of advice, guidance and training
* practical barriers e.g. childcare, transport, housing.

Morrice (2007) reports that despite high levels of qualifications of refugees’ unemployment remains high. As in other studies, they report:

* difficulty in getting overseas qualifications recognised
* English skills
* lack of information and guidance about the labour market
* negative perceptions and racism by employer
* lack of confidence, reducing confidence due to long period of unemployment
* reduced motivation from lack of purposeful activity during wait for asylum claim.

There are cultural aspects of job hunting that may cause barriers for refugees unfamiliar with UK conventions (Roberts, 2010).

In response to the barriers faced by refugees in accessing a place in society, education and employment, the VPRS recognises the need for an integrated approach. The scheme holds regular multi-agency forums. At these forums, empowerment of refugees by helping them to help themselves and not doing everything for them is emphasized. Sometimes agencies pool funding. There is funding for crèches as well via the VPRS (Mackey, 2019).

Morrice et al (2019) in their research on resettled refugees report that poor health and caring responsibilities were a barrier to learning for 22.3% men and 20.6% women surveyed. These respondents reported difficulties concentrating in class and stress with caring which led to them not attending. Coker (2019) conducted a survey of Local Authorities in her area who had responsibility for Syrian refugees. She found that the greatest barriers to accessing ESOL classes were health, which kept them housebound, and limited access to transport. Some found that classroom learning was not compatible with mental health issues. Childcare was also a barrier.

Ma and Richardson (2019) who have contributed to the development of a course for 16 - 19-year-old unaccompanied learners, report barriers such as:

* unsuitable course books- on topics such as ‘ gap years’, ‘holidays’, that they couldn’t relate to, a lack of study skills and large classes with different age groups
* loss and trauma. No family networks, uncertainty over future
* no family to help with homework.

Skills and experience mature refugees can offer the UK are often overlooked. They may have had a high status in country of origin and this could have been a reason they had to flee. Loss of status causes depression (Morrice, 2019).

### Cultural and psychological barriers

Many refugees have come from countries where conflict has disrupted education systems, and frequently long transit times of months or years means they will also not have been in formal education. The countries may also have had strongly patriarchal social and cultural norms whereby formal education is limited, or even non-existent, particularly for girls. Akua Sakyiwah (2016) in her study of 26 Somali women in the UK notes that none had experienced formal education and most were not literate in their mother tongue. Cultural norms restricting women to the home meant they struggled to access ESOL classes, and even then lacked the support at home and contact outside classes to develop their learning, meaning many dropped out. Classroom practices need to be modified for learners with low literacy, which can creatively include integration of their oral folktales and sayings (Bigelow and Vinogradov, 2011).

Refugees have other needs as well as languages problems in their daily lives (Council of Europe, 2017). In their use of personal resources (time, effort) learning the language of their host country may compete with other immediate issues such as isolation and shelter. Refugee Action (2017b) conducted a small-scale survey in England 41 refugees and asylum seekers in 6 focus groups to discuss challenges they faced**.** Most refugees in survey found loneliness their biggest challenge in daily life.

Not having social networks meant if refugees don’t speak English they have to rely on their children. Often children have to translate letters and documents for parents and this can be distressing for both. Also, some in the survey said they’re frustrated at not being able to help their children with homework. Children translating at medical appointments was not appropriate. Case studies are used to illustrate the point in a report by Refugee Action (2017b).

Mackey (2019) in the case study Learn Achieve Believe (LAB) addresses confidence issues and psychological barriers. The programme runs at several venues across north England and targets unemployed adults. The ‘Speak up’ programme at E3 and provides additional support, as the project is not only for ESOL. In this 2-week course, Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy is used by facilitators. Activities include modelling clay and talking about feelings. The course ends with a drama workshop at a local school. Mackey (2019) reports the participants showed a marked gain in confidence.

The trauma suffered by refugees can continue in their host countries due to lack of agency and feelings of isolation. Stress and trauma cause many problems such as memory impairment, short attention span, anxiety and limited concentration (DfES, 2003; Council of Europe, 2017). Their experience of trauma may be exacerbated by unemployment, separation, discrimination, exploitation and navigating system in a new society. Strang and Quinn (2019) suggest adding Trust (of resources and services) to the Indicators of Integration framework (Ndofor-Tah et al, 2019). Umer and Elliott (2019), in their study of refugees’ post-traumatic growth suggest fostering hope to promote refugee integration into society. There is a need for CPD about the effects of torture and trauma for staff dealing with refugees.

Refugees can feel a sense of shame in not knowing English and may need psychological support to learn English successfully (Salvo and Williams, 2017).There are deeper causes or feelings of shame.Often women don’t report rape because of shame. Men may react to loss of status by acting in an authoritarian way at home. Many are worried about family and friends back home. Mackey (2019) reports partnering with the regional ‘Social Prescribing Network’ to develop a protocol for GPs to prescribe ESOL to refugees who are isolated and depressed. She is working to develop a signposting tool for ESOL providers and learners to access mental health support.

Morrice et al (2019) found a positive association between health and language skills. Those with better English skills, had better health. Other correlations were in the employed vs unemployed due to ill health or caring issues. Those with health problems had more difficulties with English than those who were employed. Those who looked after children had worse language proficiency than those who were employed, looking for work and those who were studying. However Morrice et al’s (2019) research suggests that getting work does not guarantee language development and integration. Entry to employment, when in low income jobs with no interaction with others, usually at an earlier stage of language proficiency, can be at the expense of higher-level language development and cause lack of progression in work and community integration.

Cultural perceptions of jobs differ, for example, ‘serving other people’ is low status, so many are reluctant to take this kind of job. Also, many think that jobs are for long term, unaware that, in the UK, employees are used to making career changes. In addition to examples and recommendations in earlier sections, we recommend 8 strategies to ensure refugees have the right wider support to overcome barriers:

* creating safe spaces for women on women- only courses (BTP and Wonder Foundation, 2017)
* support with travel and childcare costs (Phillimore et al, 2017: Higton et al, 2019)
* signposting mental health support (Tweed and Stacy, 2018)
* pathways to get into employment commensurate with their educational capital (Willott & Stevenson 2013)
* training for IAG and admissions staff to recognise alternate documentation (Doyle and O’Toole, 2013)
* course design and delivery to foster confidence and self-efficacy (see section on course content and delivery, above)
* training teachers to develop courses and delivery as above
* a co-ordinated multiagency response to their needs.

This document has shared a number of examples of current practices to provide suitable and effective ESOL for refugees. However, professionals dealing with refugees need to be able to articulate principles for IAG, course design and delivery as well as progression to create transferable models.

# Further themes

While the previous sections review the literature relating to the key themes considering all refugees, there are two groups in particular whose needs are not met.

## Unaccompanied minors

The needs of young learners had been identified in 2003 by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Young learners may have come to the UK without their parents and may have had a disrupted education. This results in gaps in their general knowledge, educational concepts and study skills. The report (DfES, 2003) suggested that any educational programmes need to keep this in mind and build on existing skills.

However, these issues seem to continue. Gladwell (2019) outlines the barriers faced by refugee children in accessing education, especially secondary and further education. Once in school, the education programme does not meet the children’s needs, mainly due to insufficient support for English language (EAL). At school, the children are placed on programmes of study leading to national qualification e.g. GCSEs when they need longer to acquire the content and language to succeed in these qualifications.

Gateley’s (2015) qualitative study was carried out with 42 refugees (between 18-29 years old), including data from experts and staff working with these young people.The study highlighted a lack of research on refugee young people (18-29) ‘especially in relation to their experiences of accessing further and higher education’ (p28). Interestingly, the study takes an ‘autonomy-oriented approach’ - moving away from discourse of vulnerability. This approach also arises in Morrice (2013) where respondents drew on their educational capital (educational experience in their country of origin) to access professions in the UK.

Humphris and Sigona (2019) report concerns expressed by frontline staff working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children. They report that out-sourcing services to private organisations for this group of refugees is not in the ‘best interests’ of these young people. These private organisations prioritise financial considerations which leads to young refugees being moved around the UK and losing access to support. The outsourcing of services for refugees also leads to expertise being lost (Humphris and Sigona, 2019).

The rest of this section describes highlights from project reports. Spencer and Sanders (2016) discuss issues of younger migrants, not specifically refugees, in Wales and suggest that expected migration will help some areas as schools are under-subscribed and additional pupils will make schools more sustainable. Some migrant children and young people will face more difficulties to succeed in school and a tailored approach will be required including EAL support. Parental engagement has been shown to play a significant role in achievement and they suggest that the challenge increases for unaccompanied minors as there are no parents to engage in schooling. This group needs specific and targeted intervention as ‘lasting and successful integration is best achieved when started at a younger age, so that children and young adults can feel they are an integral part of society as they transition into adulthood’ (ibid, p.25).

Collyer et al (2018) recommend the provision of adapted approaches to language and literacy support and bridging programmes for refugee children into compulsory schooling. They suggest tailored language and literacy support alongside mainstream education, support to catch up, additional time in exams, financial support to organisations to provide homework clubs, informal learning spaces and family initiatives. They also recommend mentors and coaches to support refugee young people in navigating a complicated and unfamiliar educational system.

Holland (2017) describes a project based in Berlin, Elisabethstift. This project trains volunteers to work with unaccompanied minors to develop their social contacts. Another project aims to promote social integration by making it possible for children and young people to meet local people, to learn outside school, and find out more about life in Germany through sports mentoring (Holland (2017).

Lucas et al’s (2019) project assessed the needs of 16-18year old unaccompanied minors, evaluated the effectiveness of the existing ESOL programme and compared their findings to international practice in this area. They concluded that educational and well-being needs cannot be separated for this group of learners and that positive educational experiences give children hope and a sense of efficacy for the future. They recommend flexible systems, multi-agency partnering and along with language, a provision for STEM subjects.

## Highly qualified refugees

Many refugees have high-level skills and qualifications, are (initially at least) highly motivated to work, and strongly identify with their profession (Willott and Stevenson 2013). Under-employment, low self-esteem and feelings of not achieving their potential are common among highly-qualified refugees (Bariso 2008; Willott and Stevenson 2013). It is therefore important to create fast track programmes which are linked to vocational aspirations. Work experience, work-shadowing and mentors in the workplace are key for highly qualified refugees as is language support for vocational courses. Morris (2013), presents four case studies of refugees and recommends that they need support similar to that on offer for international students to overcome barriers to higher education (p.666; and see Stevenson and Willott 2010). The generic support of statutory employment services or the voluntary sector is inappropriate and there is a role for professional bodies to be more active in their engagement with these groups of people.

In terms of meeting the needs of highly qualified refugee groups at outreach and referral stages, Stevenson et al (2017) report very little provision offered at L2 and above in Greater London and note that most higher-level provision is delivered in the private sector. Highly qualified refugees are not always referred to or signposted to suitable English or mainstream courses and professional organisations. They tend to draw on their educational and social capital to (re)enter a profession. For example, one of the respondents in Morris (2013) reports how setting up a discussion group gave her ‘symbolic power’ (p.658) and how doing a higher qualification gave her a sense of belonging through her sense of entitlement. She was a qualified teacher in Zimbabwe. Court (2017:410) also notes that one student who did have a job and who had to navigate most issues on her own appeared to show greater self-confidence/self-belief than some others. This is reflected in Morrice (2013:685), where one of the respondents (a refugee) talks about drawing on her educational capital from going to a predominantly white boarding school in Zimbabwe. This helped her study to qualify as a mental health nurse and move out of care work. Her schooling in Zimbabwe meant she was familiar with educational expectations in the UK.

Morrice et al (2019) comment on resettled refugees being caught between policy emphasis of quick entry to employment and learning English. Work is considered a route to integration and a positive economic outcome but entry to job market at lower end is detrimental to refugees’ language learning and risks being counter-productive for longer-term outcomes. Morrice et al recommend a longer-term strategy that invests in English language as a priority to improve all other aspects such as integration and employment. Research from Nordic countries shows that education and labour market needs are linked up. Access to formal education is deemed essential to ensure that there is not a mismatch in the perceptions of migrants’ competence in the workplace and to prevent a situation where refugees supplied low-skilled labour only (Webb et al, 2016). The Editorial by Webb et al (2016) notes that in Germany, participation in the labour market is a pre-requisite to active participation in society. The government’s key focus is the inclusion of migrants in the labour market, including access to technical vocational training and higher education. In contrast, in the UK and Australia, the labour market and education and training are not linked so well and funding is limited.

## Access to employment:

In terms of role of outreach to meet the needs of those who want to get work, the OECD and UNHCR report *Engaging with employers* (2018) promotes more inclusive practices by employers e.g. being flexible about accepting non-UK qualifications, giving refugees opportunities to show their skills through assessments, giving options of using testimonials and character references in absence of work references and to be aware of information that refugees might not be able to give in interview/selection process.

OECD and UNHCR (2018) found that employers often underestimated refugees’ skills and qualifications due to refugees’ lack of language skills, inability of refugees to produce certificates (due to their situation) and employers not knowing the qualifications and systems that are not UK. The report recommended employers be involved in producing a skills assessment tool and online self-assessment so that refugees’ current skills could be assessed and gaps identified for up-skilling and training.

For refugees, OECD and UNHCR (2018) also promotes getting translations of documents/qualifications and to learn the language and skills required for getting work, participate in mentoring programmes, internships of volunteering and learning norms and practices in local employment market. The report recommends that public authorities provide targeted language training- by skills, backgrounds and specific needs.

# Conclusions

The literature reviewed highlighted the key role of language in the integration of newcomers. This becomes more urgent in the case of those who arrive after, at times prolonged, experiences of trauma. Learning the language of the host country to a standard which allows people to take part in and contribute to society takes time and professional teaching.Long-term provision of suitable and effective ESOL is needed, supported by stability and sustainability of where refugees live.

The key needs of refugees to access ESOL, employment and integration are summed up in the executive summary at the beginning of this report. While it may be practical to list needs in order of priority, all are equally important and almost simultaneous needs. In terms of what works, longitudinal, in depth studies of resettled refugees would be useful. The working life of this project did not allow sufficient time to look at literature around resettlement of refugees, this is an important area to explore.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1. English language levels and terminology

Table 1. Explanations of the levels of ESOL (Taken from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2018 and Adult ESOL Core Curriculum, 2001:22)

| **Level of English** | **Explanation**  |
| --- | --- |
| Pre-entry level ESOL | Pre-entry level denotes a very low level of English proficiency. An individual with pre-entry English may be able to answer questions on basic personal information and follow basic instructions but would have very limited (if any) letter and word recognition. |
| Entry level 1 ESOL | Entry level 1 denotes a very basic level of English proficiency. An individual at this level may be able to ask and respond to personal information questions (in more than one word answers); give short accounts of activities; and make simple statements of fact. This level equates to standards of literacy and language expected of native speakers aged 5 to 7. |
| Entry level 2 ESOL | Entry level 2 denotes a basic level of English proficiency. An individual at this level may be able to answer questions about their daily routine; give short accounts of previous experiences; and ask similar questions with the correct verbs and tense. This level equates to standards of literacy and language expected of native speakers aged 7 to 9. |
| Entry Level 3 ESOL | Entry level 3 denotes a basic level of English proficiency. An individual at this level can answer questions, give accounts of previous experiences accurately and take part in a discussion about a familiar topic, making relevant points. Our sources did not give a comparison for this level with native speakers.  |
| Level 1 ESOL | Level 1 denotes a high level of English proficiency. An individual at this level may be able listen and respond to spoken language, including information and narratives, and follow explanations and instructions of varying length, adapting response to speaker, medium and context; speak to communicate information, ideas and opinions, adapting speech and content to take account of the listener(s) and medium; engage in discussion with one or more people in familiar and unfamiliar situations, making clear and relevant contributions that respond to what others say and produce a shared understanding about different topics.This level equates to standards of literacy and language expected of English speakers achieving GCSE grades 3, 2, 1 or grades D, E, F, G |
| Level 2 ESOL | Level 2 denotes a high level of English proficiency. An individual at this level may be able to listen and respond to spoken language, including extended information and narratives, and follow detailed explanations and multi-step instructions of varying length, adapting response to speaker, medium and context; speak to communicatestraightforward and detailed information, ideas and opinions clearly, adapting speech and content to take account of the listener(s), medium, purpose and situation; engage in discussion with one or more people in a variety of different situations, making clear and effective contributions that produce outcomes appropriate to purpose and topicThis level equates to standards of literacy and language expected of English speakers achieving GCSE grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 or grades A\*, A, B, C |

The table on English language levels needs to be considered in the context of levels of English and education refugees arrive with. More than 30% of refugees have qualifications above A level (DFES, 2003). The 2017 Labour Force Survey data shows that about 31% of refugees have higher level qualifications (UNHCR 2019) which they have interpreted as leaving school after the age of 20.

Higton et al (2019) report that Pre-Entry and Entry level classes were more likely to be taken up by refugees. However, VPRSPR reports indicate that the Syrian cohort that entered Britain on the scheme need low level literacy and pre- entry level classes (Coker 2019; Mackey 2019). Stevenson et al (2017) in their report on ESOL provision in Greater London also highlighted recent arrivals (refugees) having lower literacy skills in first language and low English language skills on arrival (p.21). At the same time they report a lack of provision at pre-entry/E1 + with literacy support.

In response to the role of English in integration, the government plans to create materials to support teachers teaching English to those with no literacy skills and low/no formal education. The government is working with volunteer organisations, academics and English language practitioners to support needs of learners and volunteers in conversation clubs (Integrated Communities Action Plan, HM Government, 2019a).

Morrice et al (2019) found pre-migration education factors to be strong determinants of ability to acquire English language skills e.g. those with no/low pre-migration education are limited in their ability and those with high levels of pre-migration education do not have pathways and opportunities suitable to them.

The Common European Framework of Reference is used worldwide to measure progression in language skills. Awarding bodies for language (level) certificates tend to use the Common European Framework (CEFR) to state language levels of learners as the CEFR has currency beyond the UK.

Figure 1. Comparison of ESOL and CEFR Levels (Taken from Mallows 2013)

Some terms used when referring to English Language provision are:

English as a Foreign Language **(EFL)** is a broad term, used to refer to English language provision for various purposes and for a range of age groups. The provision can be in countries other than English speaking ones i.e. Britain, Australia and North America.

English as a Second or Other Language **(ESOL)** is used to refer to English language provision for adult learners of English who are in the UK to work or to settle. ESOL generally refers to English language provision in the country of work or settlement. This provision tends to be different to English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which refers to English language provision for those who want to study at British universities.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language **(TEFL)** refers to the practice, profession, continuing professional development and certificated training for teaching English.

English as an Additional Language **(EAL)** is generally used to refer to English language provision for young learners up to the age of 18 and can be award bearing.

It is worth noting that these are descriptions rather than definitions and there is much debate (and varied use) of these terms in the English language professions.

## Appendix 2. Focusing on needs

Table 2. Questions on focusing on needs (from Nation and Macalister 2010: 27)

| **Goals** | **Questions** | **Types of information in the answers** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Language  | What will the course be used for?How proficient does the user have to be?What communicative activities will the learner take part in?Where will the language be used?  | soundsvocabularygrammatical structurefunctionsset phrases and set sentences |
| Ideas  | What content matter will the learner be working with? | topics themestexts  |
| Skills | How will the learner use the language? Under what conditions will the language be used?Who will the learners use the language with? | listeningspeakingreadingwritingdegree of accuracydegree of fluency  |
| Text | What will the language be used to do? What language uses is the learner already familiar with? | genres and discourse typessociolinguistic skills  |

## Appendix 3. Analysis of loss of ESOL funding

There have been alternative funds for English language made available, which are distinct from adult education ESOL:

* The MHCLG has been funding English language support through regional and national projects that use volunteers to deliver language sessions (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013). Between 2013 and 2016, the programme is estimated to have awarded around £18million funding to support target migrants’ groups, mainly women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds to develop English language skills, at an average of £7 million annually (Foster and Bolton, 2017).
* The Home Office has been funding local authority projects under the Controlling Migration Fund, estimated at £25 million annually for four years, some of which is being spent on English language and ESOL projects (Foster and Bolton, 2018). It is not clear from the reporting what proportion has been spent on English language and there have been calls for the figures to be reported to the Home Affairs Select Committee (Parliament UK, 2018).
* The Syrian resettlement scheme (SVPR) for refugees resettling in the UK has £10million committed to English language lessons over the remaining four years of the programme (Home Office, 2017).
* Since 2018, the Home Office has also been funding refugee-specific support programme under the Asylum, migration and integration fund (AMIF) funding stream estimated at EU14m per year (Home Office, 2014).

To make a crude calculation, the alternative funding listed above adds to an estimated £40 million annually, whereas the reduction of ESOL funding in FE has been estimated at £132 million annually as of 2016 (Foster & Bolton, 2017). Therefore, contrary to the recommendations of the earlier reports, and the announcements made about specific funds for learning English, these project figures show there has been an overall reduction in available funding for ESOL for migrants settling in the UK.

## Appendix 4. Analysis of available evaluation reports of Community-Based English Language Competition projects

In 2013 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, later renamed Ministry for Housing and Local Government, MHCLG) announced an ‘English language competition’ to find new and innovative ideas for how to engage people who were not learning English (especially mothers and women from a number of South-Asian and African ethnic minority backgrounds) and to provide English for those who had no or low levels of English (DCLG, 2013). The fund was based on the report about creating conditions for integration (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012). Although not specifically focused on newly-arrived migrant women, the fund created an alternative funding stream to support women in this situation.

The successful projects all involved volunteer-led language support. The people leading language sessions are not fully-trained as ESOL teachers however in some projects they are advised by qualified tutors (see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-community-integration/2010-to-2015-government-policy-community-integration#appendix-1-community-based-english-language-learning). Many of the programmes have informal language learning sessions with the aim to build participants’ confidence to use language to speak in everyday life. The focus is on basic level English for (Adult ESOL Curriculum) pre-entry ESOL students and those not eligible for government funded provision (Foster and Bolton, 2017). The projects also targeted women from certain ethnic groups as identified as in need of support in the reports discussed earlier. The six projects were:

* English My Way by Good Things Foundation
* Speaking English with Confidence (SPEC) by LEAFEA
* Talk English by Manchester Adult Learning
* Creative English by Faith Action
* English through Social, Economic and Community Action by E3 Partnership
* Talking Together by Timebank.

Of the six projects, evaluation reports were obtained from three projects (English My Way, Creative English and Talking Together) with Talk English evaluation data taken from the Randomised Controlled Trial in 2017 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2018).

All projects participants showed increase in confidence using English, and the three projects with evaluation reports showed they exceeded the targets set (Barnard and Patel, 2015; Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, 2015; Good Things Foundation, 2017). However, the project evaluation reports showed low levels of retention and progression of participants compared to national averages for ESOL courses. Two of the three projects supported the greatest number of people but only had a completion rate of 63%-65%, which is much lower than national rates for ESOL programme completion. In the 2017-18 Adult Education Budget funded ESOL completion rates were 94.4% for all non-regulated ESOL learning (Department for Education, 2019). Talk English, which has supported 16,500 people since starting the programmes (Learning and Work Institute, 2017), showed a 56% average attendance rate during the randomised controlled trial in 2017 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2018). Timebank’s Talking Together showed a higher completion rate of 91% but supported a lower number of learners (Barnard and Patel, 2015). Progression to Entry Level ESOL courses for the Creative English, Talking Together and English My Way projects were between 45-47%, indicating low progression rates following on from the completion rates (Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, 2015; Good Things Foundation, 2017).

It was to be expected that retention, completion and progression rates be much lower than that of funded ESOL classes, with project targets being set rather low considering the difficulties with engaging and supporting this client group. Furthermore, as mentioned in the prospectus, the projects were not supposed to be projects explicitly teaching English, rather they were described as projects to complement mainstream learning (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013). However, based on the evaluation reports, programmes have created volunteer teacher roles (Barnard and Patel, 2015; Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, 2015; Good Things Foundation, 2017; Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2018). Materials created and programme set-up mirrors classroom teaching models.

Evidence from evaluation reports suggest volunteer tutors are given basic training which ranges from in-house preparation (Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, 2015) to Level 3 Award in Training (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2018) and the Cambridge English Language Teaching to Adults Certificate (CELTA) (Barnard and Patel, 2015 and Good Things Foundation, 2017). This raises questions about the quality of the service being provided. Qualified teachers are fully trained for at least a year in teaching and learning ESOL and English, and complete a year supported as a newly qualified tutor before passing their professional formation (to Qualified Teacher Lifelong Learning Sector or QTLS).

There is a likely correlation between quality of teaching and learning, and attrition of participants of the programmes and the quality of development of English language knowledge and skills. OECD research and recent research in the US shows that teacher subject-knowledge and pedagogical expertise is an important determining factor in student achievement and progressions even after taking into consideration other variables such as prior learning (see Guerriero, 2013; Lee, 2018; Ofsted, 2019). It is universally agreed that language learning is a complex process requiring skilled teachers. Creative English’s facilitator role uses Communicative Language Teaching to develop language skills. However the evaluation report states that facilitators do not have to ‘worry about a lack of expertise to explain aspects of grammar’ as ‘at lower levels most learners are often content just to know what they can say in a given situation without worrying too much about analysing grammar.’ (Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations, 2015:20). CLT is part of a range of ESOL teaching approaches that would still require a teacher to have adequate knowledge of ESOL teaching and learning pedagogy (see Savignon, 2007; Cooke, Bryers and Winstanley, 2018). Therefore teachers using this approach will need to have adequate knowledge to effectively use the approach. Recommendations from evaluations include better training and development of teachers. Risk management of the Talking Together programme’s evaluation lists potential lack of willing volunteers as a risk to the continuation of the programme (Barnard and Patel, 2015).

The projects have also been praised by MHCLG and evaluators for value-for-money as the unit rates per head are much lower compared to mainstream ESOL and past community-based programmes, which had averaged at £2,000 per person (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2013). All the successful projects returned lower unit rates through using volunteer delivery, with one project Return on Investment (RoI) estimated at £9.31 per £1 spent (Barnard and Patel, 2015).

Whereas the English Language Competition programmes are highly commendable for creating provision that includes formal, non-formal and informal learning domains, thus giving great opportunity for participants to access and participate in learning, in our expert opinion, the quality of provision within the formal domain should still be sufficiently good to support a higher proportion of learners to complete and progress. It would be interesting to carry out evaluations of both funded ESOL and CBEL provision to establish effectiveness of the programmes. Furthermore, both programmes should complement each other rather than re-creating a formal classroom learning when non-formal and informal learning as a complement to funded ESOL programme is of great value (Mallows and Braddell in their submission to All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, 2017).

See Reference list above for sources.

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Enterprise House

[12 St Paul](https://maps.google.com/?q=12+St+Paul+s+Street%0D%0A+%7C%0D%0A+Leeds%0D%0A+%7C%0D%0A+LS1+2LE&entry=gmail&source=g)’[s Street](https://maps.google.com/?q=12+St+Paul+s+Street%0D%0A+%7C%0D%0A+Leeds%0D%0A+%7C%0D%0A+LS1+2LE&entry=gmail&source=g)

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Migration Yorkshire provides strategic leadership and local support across the Yorkshire and Humber region, and is hosted by Leeds City Council. Migration Yorkshire works with national, regional and local partners to ensure that the region can deal with, and benefit from, migration.

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