

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee – 19 July 2018

Subject: Manchester Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy - update

Report of: Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) Head of Service

Summary

Following the report to Communities Scrutiny Committee in February 2016 setting out the proposed approach to developing an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy for the city, this is an update of the current position with regard to the Strategy and the position of ESOL in the city.

Recommendations

Members are requested to consider and comment on the information in the report.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	ESOL provision assists residents who are outside the labour market because of language and skills barriers, and supports them into sustained and healthy work with opportunities for in work progression. It also plays a fundamental part in improving integration and developing greater community cohesion. ESOL provision enables residents to contribute to and benefit from a good quality of life as active citizens and ensures that Manchester's businesses have the skills and talents they need to prosper.

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None

1.0 Background

1.1 The ability to speak English is one of the functional skills required to secure employment and is also a fundamental part of improving integration and developing greater community cohesion. The Adult ESOL Strategy, put together with stakeholders in late 2016, supports delivery of Our Manchester and the Manchester Work and Skills Strategy, enabling residents to contribute to and benefit from sustained prosperity and a good quality of life and ensuring that Manchester's businesses have the skills and talents they need to prosper. The Manchester Work and Skills Strategy 2016-2021 is structured into three main themes, one of which is addressing inequality. The Manchester Adult ESOL strategy will help to ensure that residents who are outside the labour market because of language and skills barriers, are supported into sustained and healthy work with opportunities for in work progression.

1.2 The Adult ESOL strategy for Manchester has been developed in consultation with stakeholders and the main providers of ESOL and builds on existing good practice such as Manchester Talk English.

1.3 The Adult ESOL strategy sets out information about ESOL and why it is important to our city. It analyses the need for ESOL in Manchester and the different situations and motivations of the residents in Manchester who want to improve their English. It includes an overview of the current picture of provision of ESOL in Manchester for adults, actions and progress and impact to date. There is a richly diverse population in Manchester (with over 153 languages spoken in the city), which brings many benefits but also some challenges. The Adult ESOL strategy sets out the challenges we face around ESOL, specifically that we have approximately 17,000 residents in our city who don't speak English well or at all, with only 4,250 places in classes for learners and over 1,000 people on waiting lists.

1.4 Of Greater Manchester local authority areas, the 2011 census showed that Manchester had the highest number of residents who cannot speak English at all (around a third of people in Greater Manchester who cannot speak English at all or well, live in Manchester). The only other core city with a higher percentage and overall number of people who didn't speak English well or at all was Birmingham.

1.5 There are around 4,250 places for adults to learn ESOL across all types of provision in Manchester. The majority of ESOL courses are delivered by The Manchester College and Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) and are funded by the ESFA.

The table below gives details of the provision in Manchester available for adult residents to learn English.

Provider	Funding	No of courses for adults	No of places for adults	No of venues
MAES – ESOL	Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)	72	1,440	10

MAES – Talk English	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG): Community Based English Language & Controlling Migration Fund	47	875	38
MAES – Family Lang	ESFA	24	360	20
Manchester College	ESFA	58	1,350	4
WEA	ESFA	7	84	5
Wai Yin	Varies	10	150	3
Rest of VCS*	Varies	Not available	Not available	Not available
TOTAL		218	4,259	

*It is very difficult to get a full picture of VCS provision as it is a constantly changing picture due to changing funding and different opportunities – courses tend to be shorter term and the amount of provision fluctuates often.

1.6 ESOL provision is funded by a variety of funding sources, each of which have different eligibility criteria. The majority of ESOL provision in Manchester is funded by the Department for Education's Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) but a significant proportion is also funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). See table below for details about eligibility criteria for each funding stream.

National Fund	Details	Eligibility
DfE ESFA: Adult Education Budget	The AEB was introduced in 2016-17 and combines what were previously three separate funding streams: Adult Skills Budget, community learning and discretionary learner support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK and EU citizens • People who have lived in the UK/EU for three years or more • People with refugee status and their families • Asylum seekers who

		<p>have been in UK for 6 months+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifying family connection
MHCLG: Community Based English Language programme	<p>There were five providers commissioned nationally following a competition in 2013. MAES as one of the five, leads the Talk English project across Greater Manchester, Yorkshire & Humber, Midlands and London. The target group is isolated women from settled communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have lived in the UK for 12 months or more • People who are not in work and are not seeking employment
MHCLG Controlling Migration Fund	<p>Launched November 2016 – local authorities could bid for funding for English Language provision amongst other measures to mitigate impact of migration on communities. MAES led a successful GM bid to extend Talk English to recent arrivals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All people legally resident in the UK are eligible

2.0 Update on progress on the strategy

2.1 The stakeholders have developed an action plan to address the challenges. The following table presents the progress against each identified challenge to date.

Challenge	Update
<p>There are approximately 4,250 adult ESOL places available, therefore a significant gap between supply and demand, further confirmed by data from the main providers on waiting lists, currently at over 1,000</p>	<p>The overall number of ESOL places available has increased from 3,700 in 16/17 to 4,250 in 17/18 and is due to increase further to 4,850 in 18/19, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAES leads a national project called Talk English, working across Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and Humberside, London and the Midlands, providing additional ESOL learning opportunities and utilising volunteers to increase its reach and cost effectiveness • MHCLG funding for Talk English has been increased and extended until March 2019, this has funded a total of 875 places in Manchester in 17/18 and 875 places in 18/19 • A successful Greater Manchester bid to the Controlling Migration Fund, led by MAES, has funded 375 additional places in 17/18 and will fund 375 additional places in 18/19 in Manchester • The Manchester College has recently increased its ESOL provision, with an additional 26 classes providing a further 600 ESOL places in 18/19 • MAES is piloting the use of a blended learning programme for Level 1 learners in 18/19 - this involves learners following course materials online and meeting with a tutor every two weeks and will increase the number of places available and cater for shift workers and others who cannot commit to a regular class • Packages have been put together for employers both at their request and proactively but none have committed funding yet • Talk English was in consultation with the Louise Casey team and has been involved in subsequent workshops to influence national ESOL and integration policy

<p>The patterns of ESOL provision, funding and attendance are complex and there is a lack of clear signposting to the different types of provision for residents who want to improve their English</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed discussions have taken place amongst the main providers about implementing a centralised waiting list system in Manchester • Research and discussion into pros and cons of the various possible options and related budget has taken place – three projects in different areas have been visited • Detailed proposal now being worked up for Manchester centralised waiting list by MAES and the Manchester College
<p>There is a lack of data collected on unmet demand in terms of specific gaps for different types of learner and in terms of overall demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis has identified a gap in provision for recent arrivals with higher level professional qualifications and people already in work who want to progress – some initial discussion has taken place in terms of offering tailored work experience for accountants and health professionals • Calderdale College ESF lead for Basic Skills in the Workplace have identified lack of take up of ESOL in the Workplace by employers • MAES, the Manchester College and VCS providers have developed programmes accessible and free of charge to those in low paid work who want to develop their skills to progress in work • Packages have been put together for employers both at their request and proactively (supported by the MCC Work and Skills team) but none have committed funding yet; • MAES is developing a pilot programme with PwC for ESOL learners with professional backgrounds, which will provide paid work experience and pathways to careers in the financial sector
<p>Progression pathways between providers and from ESOL onto vocational pathways are underdeveloped</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meeting cycle between MAES and the Manchester College ESOL managers in place • Pilot took place in Longsight with VCS providers to improve planning and progression

3.0 The national picture

3.1 In August 2017 the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration recommended that ministers should develop a new strategy for the promotion of English language learning reflecting the guiding principle that no one should be able to live in our country for a considerable length of time without speaking English. It included recommendations for learning English to be a requirement, investment in language classes, and availability of advanced learning loans for ESOL, financial incentives for employers for in work ESOL.

3.2 The Casey Review recommended, among other things, that the Government should support “further targeted English language provision”, and should review whether current provision is sufficiently coordinated and meeting those who need it most.

3.3 In response to the Casey Review the Government published its Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper in March 2018, proposing a number of measures to improve the offer for people to learn English, including developing a national ESOL strategy, a network of conversation clubs, a new English language fund and improving coordination at local level. The consultation has closed and the recommendations , which will influence future funding and priorities for providers,are due to be published in the autumn.

Conclusion

The City’s ESOL Strategy has provided a useful framework in particular for MAES and the Manchester College, the two largest providers to address ESOL need and streamline access to ESOL provision in the City. The Talk English and Controlling Migration Fund have increased provision at community level in ways that support cohesion objectives. The Manchester College has also expanded its provision. Both organisations continue to work closely with Jobcentre Plus to provide ESOL for work to improve opportunities for ESOL speakers to acquire the language skills needed for work. The Adult Education Budget will be devolved to Greater Manchester Combined Authority from 2019-20 and there will be the opportunity over time to flex that budget to meet labour market needs. It will be important for Manchester that there is continued and if possible increased investment in ESOL given our demographic and rapidly growing population.