

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee - 6 December 2017

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

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

Summary

Following the report to Economy Scrutiny Committee in January 2017 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.

Recommendations

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

Wards Affected:

All

Contact Officers:

Name: Angela Harrington
Position: Head of Work & Skills
Telephone: 0161 234 3171 / 1501
Email: a.harrington@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Julie Rushton
Position: MAES Head of Service
Telephone: 0161 234 5679
E-mail: j.rushton@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Michaela Salmon
Position: Adult Education Manager
Telephone: 0161 234 5676
Email: m.salmon1@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Manchester ESOL Strategy - Economy Scrutiny Committee – 4 January 2017

1. 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 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 (see separate document) 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 some 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.
- 1.4 The Adult ESOL strategy sets out the challenges we face around ESOL, specifically that we have around 17,000 residents in our city who don't speak English well or at all, with only 3,900 places in classes for learners and over 1,000 people on waiting lists.
- 1.5 Our vision is that, by 2020 there will be sufficient, well-coordinated ESOL provision so that Manchester residents with their vast array of first languages and cultures will be enabled to secure employment, progress in employment and feel fully integrated into life in Manchester and the UK, contributing to greater community cohesion in our city.

2. Challenges, priorities and updates on progress

To increase the overall amount of ESOL provision

- 2.1 The challenge we face is that there are approximately 3,900 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. The majority of funding for ESOL places is to improve language skills for work, and there is limited funding for those at pre entry level. The response has been to identify additional funding streams for ESOL where possible, to influence national and Greater Manchester policy and to look at

developing more cost effective ways of meeting the demand with the funding we have.

- 2.2 We have been involved in the consultation with the Louise Casey team to influence national policy and inform the Casey Review. Representatives from MAES also contributed to the review of the NATECLA 'Towards a national ESOL Strategy' meeting at Westminster Palace in October 2017.

Update on national ESOL policy

Dame Louise Casey's review into opportunity and integration was published in December 2016. The review supported the view that language is necessary for integration and recommended that there should be an increase in ESOL provision.

The review was closely followed by the interim report of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Integration in January 2017, which echoed the Casey review with regard to the need for English for integration.

The final APPG report, published in August 2017 recommended that the government: 'devise a comprehensive strategy to promote English language learning, which would complement the broader government strategy for the integration of immigrants'.

Nationally, funding for ESOL has been systematically cut year on year from £203 million in 2009-10 to £90 million in 2015-16.

In October 2016, NATECLA (National Association of Teachers of English and Community Languages to Adults) published its report: 'Towards an ESOL Strategy for England' based on a consultation carried out amongst ESOL teachers, managers, students and other key stakeholders, lobbying for a national ESOL strategy for England. Scotland and Wales already have ESOL strategies but there is no overall strategy for ESOL in England. Progress against objectives identified in the NATECLA draft strategy were reviewed in a meeting with MPs, led by Heidi Alexander MP at Westminster Palace in October 2017.

- 2.3 MAES leads a consortium to deliver the Talk English project across Greater Manchester, Yorkshire and Humber and beyond. The Talk English model was developed in response to the need to find more cost effective ways of meeting the need for ESOL. Talk English utilises volunteers to increase cost effectiveness and increase its reach. It has been successful in attracting additional funding in the current phase. See separate information box for more details and update on Talk English.

Talk English project

MAES leads a consortium of local authorities and colleges to deliver the Talk English project. Starting in 2014, Talk English was one of six national winners of the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) 'English Language Competition'. This was a national competition to find innovative and cost effective

ways of delivering ESOL for social integration to specific target groups, principally isolated women who had lived in the UK for a number of years without learning English.

The Talk English project recruits, trains, places and supports volunteers from the local community to teach people with very low levels of English (Pre Entry and Entry 1 levels). There is a strong emphasis on using English in the community for real communicative purposes and encouraging learners to use local facilities such as community centre, museums, libraries and galleries to improve their English and reduce isolation.

Involving volunteers brings many benefits to both the learners and the volunteers themselves. The volunteers gain a range of benefits including employability skills and experience, more social interaction with neighbours, increased confidence and a sense of belonging.

Utilising volunteers also means that the provision is cost effective and more learners can be reached with limited funding, although it is important in order to be sustainable and good quality that volunteers are well supported and full and ongoing training is given to them.

There are two roles for volunteers – Talk English teachers, who work in pairs in community settings to run a class and Talk English Friends, who run and support more informal Talk English Activities, such as Talk English Cafes and sessions as diverse as Stay and Play and Talk English, Walk and Talk English, Discover and Talk English (with a range of museums in Manchester) and Create and Talk English (at Manchester Art Gallery).

The model has worked very well and MAES has been successful in attracting additional ongoing funding for the Talk English project. DCLG funding for Talk English has been extended until March 2018, with an increase of 50% - this will fund 875 places in Manchester April 17-March 18.

Talk English is also working with a number of other areas, in London and the Midlands, at the request of the DCLG, to extend the model to new areas in the current phase.

Talk English has won a number of national and local awards, including:
British Council ELTons Award in Local Innovation in 2015
Manchester 'Be Proud' Awards in Volunteer (Group) of the Year 2015
TES FE Awards in Contribution to the Local Community February 2017
National Festival of Learning President's Award September 2017

Find out more: www.talk-english.co.uk

Twitter: @TalkEnglishReg @TalkEnglishMcr

Facebook: @TalkEnglishReg

Festival of Learning Award Winner short film:

<https://www.festivaloflearning.org.uk/award-winners/talk-english-project/>

Talk English case study – Nasreen’s story

Nasreen has been improving her English and building her skills and confidence through Talk English. She attends a weekly Talk English Course, as well as the Talk English Cafe at the centre, where she receives regular support from Julie, a volunteer Talk English Friend. Nasreen has also joined in with several Talk English Activities and has recently started volunteering in the community centre café where her class takes place.

Nasreen came to live in the UK in 1976, at the age of 16. Although she attended primary school in Pakistan, at the time her father did not want her to continue with her education, either in Pakistan or in the UK.

Now a mother of four grown-up children, Nasreen has had to rely on her children to help her to communicate with the doctor, the neighbours and at various appointments. As her children grew up, she felt that they had other commitments with their own work, studies and families and far less time to be around to help her with such matters, so Nasreen started learning English in order to be more independent in her everyday life.

On the first day of the course, Nasreen felt very shy and she cried as she was really worried. Her teacher put her at ease and said: I can understand everything you say, don't worry. She also kept telling her that her English was getting better every week, which built her confidence and motivated her to keep attending.

Through her involvement in Talk English, Nasreen feels a lot more confident to do things for herself and she often talks to her elderly neighbour in English. As well as improving her spoken English, Nasreen has also been learning how to read and write in English. Although she is finding it really hard, she is now more able to read and understand bank statements and letters.

Nasreen has also taken part in several Talk English Activities, including a 'Walk and Talk' activity through which she explored the local area with other learners, supported by Talk English volunteers. She said that she could now name different places and types of buildings and she will not forget these words. Nasreen has also registered with her local library and has borrowed some recipe books. Nasreen has also thoroughly enjoyed a 'Talk English and Crochet' session during which the group chatted in English while crocheting.

Nasreen wants to continue learning as she says that learning "keeps my mind fresh". She hopes that one day she'll be able to start her own catering business as she is a good cook, so she needs to continue improving her reading and writing so that she can do further studies.

Nasreen's father, who is now 95 years old, feels really proud of his daughter and is also encouraging Nasreen to learn how to drive.

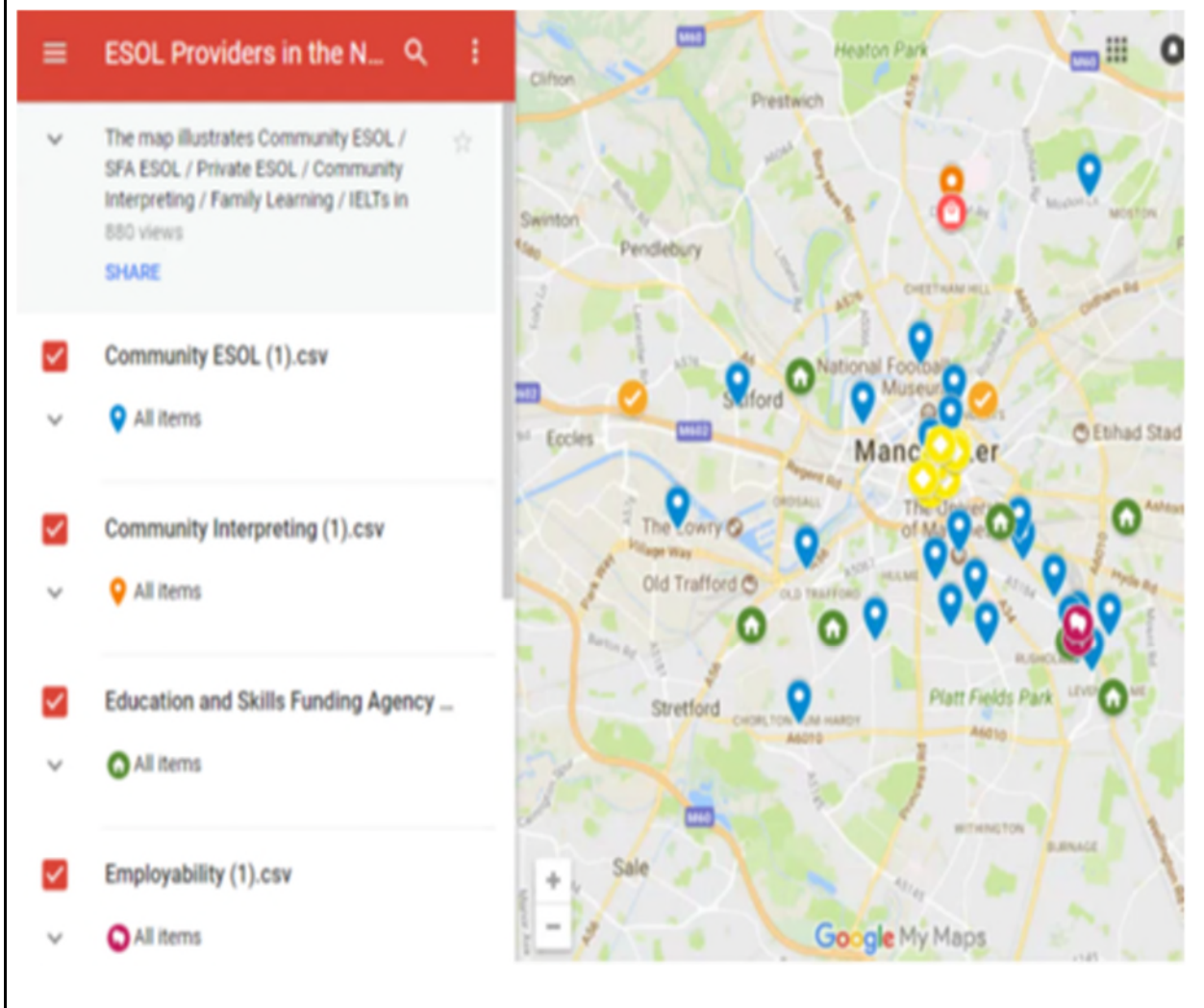
- 2.4 There has been a successful bid to the DCLG Controlling Migration Fund. This was made by a consortium of Greater Manchester adult education services and colleges, led by Manchester. £449,650 has been secured over two years, until the end of August 2018, to fund an extension of Talk English to new target groups. This will fund 375 additional ESOL places in both 17/18 and in 18/19. The provision will be based on the successful and cost effective Talk English model but will broaden the target group to include men, recent arrivals and EU nationals.
- 2.5 Both MAES and the Manchester College have been piloting the use of blended learning to increase the cost effectiveness of ESOL courses. Blended learning refers to the use of a mixture of face to face and online or distance learning rather than just face to face learning. 100% face to face learning is more expensive than online or blended learning so the idea is that this could be a more efficient use of the current funding in some cases. However, it would not work for all learners as it requires a high level of digital skills and study skills. Both MAES and the Manchester College are piloting this with students with higher levels, where it might be more appropriate. Blended learning has the advantage that it mixes self-directed online learning with face to face learning and support.

To develop clearer signposting

- 2.6 The challenge we face is that 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. The response has been to move towards developing a centralised referral system; a single ESOL gateway, to cut waste, be fairer and allow clear data to be collected on the level of demand. Current provision has also been mapped as part of a separate project.
- 2.7 The Home Office has provided funding to employ a regional ESOL coordinator to work with each of the 12 national Regional Strategic Migration Networks from January 2017 until June 2018. The role is to map ESOL provision in each region and to work with local authorities to increase the amount of ESOL provision to refugees arriving via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme (SVPRP). MAES has seconded a member of staff to this role in the North West region. Although Manchester had no SVPRP refugee placements, it was included in the overall mapping project.
- 2.8 The North West ESOL Coordinator has produced a map of ESOL provision in the North West after extensive research and contact with a range of providers. The map is available to all providers and partners and has been viewed over 800 times since September. There has been positive feedback from stakeholders such as Refugee Action, who have used the map to find provision for their clients. The map shows a range of provision from formal to less formal and includes ESFA funded provision, DCLG funded provision, Family Language, Community ESOL, private provision, employability provision for ESOL learners and IELTS provision.

The link to the map of ESOL provision is:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1G9Dbi61GtcqAX3Vwg09Aa7oGcFo&hl=en&usp=sharing>



2.9 Some other cities already have centralised waiting list systems and research has been carried out into different possible systems for Manchester. Three different systems have been examined in detail – used in Leeds, Nottingham and Hackney.

2.10 The Leeds system is not a waiting list system but is a website, which all providers contribute to, which gives clear information about all the different ESOL learning opportunities in Leeds, including some information on the availability of places. It also offers advice and links for independent learning while waiting for a place. It can be used by potential learners and also by professionals looking to refer learners to classes. It is the most low cost option and costs approximately £6,000 pa. www.lel.help

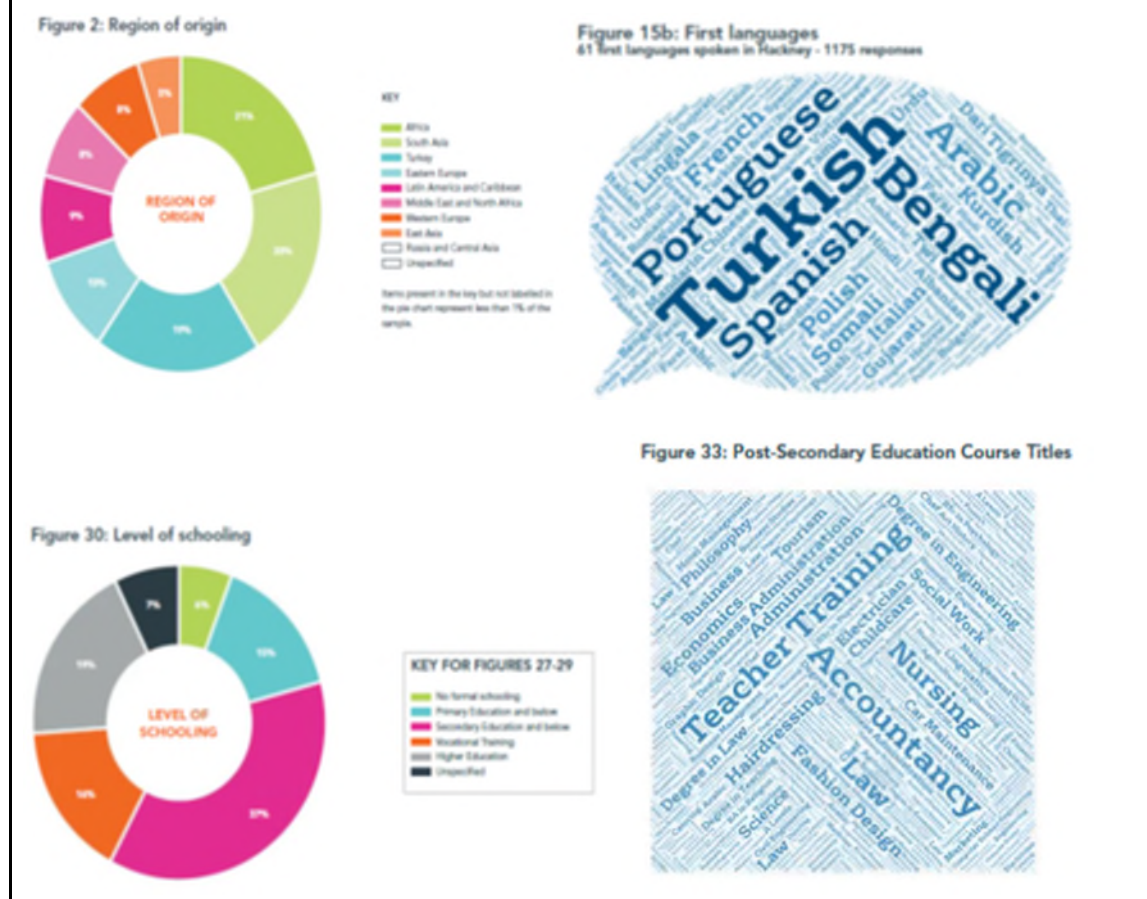
2.11 The Nottingham system has been running since 1982 and is called 'Begin'. Potential ESOL learners or referrers either fill in an online form OR a postcard OR ring a central line with their details. Begin staff follow up each enquiry and

get full details, including an initial assessment of the learner's level and place the learner on a database. Begin staff visit providers and place them on their provision list. Providers regularly tell Begin how many spaces they have and Begin sends them the details of learners from the waiting list, who the providers then full assess and place in their classes. This enables detailed reports on supply and demand to be created and leads to more efficient use of ESOL provision, maximising the utilisation of all available spaces in ESOL classes. It is the most high cost option of the three and costs approximately £130,000pa. www.begin.org.uk

- 2.12 The Hackney ESOL Advice Service has been running since 2010. Hackney Learning Trust (LA) coordinate the ESOL providers who all provide staffing for advice sessions across the borough. All learners attending these sessions are assessed and their details entered onto a database. All providers tell Hackney ESOL Advice Service about vacancies they have and are sent the details of learners from the waiting list to fill the spaces. The system ensures that ESOL provision in Hackney is fully utilised and enables detailed reports on the need and supply of ESOL in Hackney. The cost is lower than for Nottingham because providers all contribute staffing to advice sessions. It costs approximately £80,000pa www.learningtrust.co.uk/AdultLearning.
- 2.13 MAES and the Manchester College, as the two largest providers of ESOL in Manchester, have had a number of meetings to look at these options further and are in agreement that the best version of a centralised waiting list to explore further for Manchester would be the Hackney model. MAES and the Manchester College have also had one meeting with Manchester University to explore possibilities of a partnership to take this forward further, which was positive. The next stage is to work up the details, including costings. This work is at an initial stage but there is agreement that we would aim at getting something in place for September 2018.

Some examples of the rich data Hackney get from their centralised waiting list system to inform planning and identification of gaps

Data about both the individuals accessing ESOL and those on waiting lists – where they are from, first languages, levels of previous education, employment status, professional backgrounds etc. Interests and employment backgrounds are used to develop new embedded ESOL courses, fast tracking residents into vocational areas and employment where appropriate.



Improve progression pathways into vocational courses

2.14 The challenge is that progression pathways between providers and onto vocational pathways are underdeveloped. The response is to improve partnerships between providers, including VCS providers, focused on learner progression and to work towards using a standardised initial assessment and screening tool in order to collect the same data across providers.

2.15 There is a regular meeting cycle in place between the MAES ESOL management team and the Manchester College ESOL management team. These are the two biggest providers of ESOL in Manchester. There are plans in place to bring both teaching teams together to share good practice and encourage further links. The two teams are also planning to work together to revive the North West NATECLA branch.

- 2.16 The Manchester College have been running vocational 'taster' sessions for their ESOL learners, with advice and guidance about vocational pathways and options and we have put plans in place to open these sessions out to ESOL learners from MAES and VCS provision. We also have plans to offer more open sessions for the 'vocationally unsure', to help learners to explore different options for their future.
- 2.17 There are a number of case studies on the following pages which clearly illustrate the impact learning ESOL has and what this can lead on to. There is no doubt that ESOL can lead onto vocational learning and higher level employment but the vision is to broaden this out to more learners to have a greater impact.



Haitham Khalaf – from Entry 1 to Law School

Haitham started with the Manchester College at the St. John's Campus in the academic year 2012 / 2013. He was originally on a Job Centre Programme which is tailored to meet the needs of learners with very low levels of English.

Haitham could speak very little English, yet he had the confidence and the tenacity to try new vocabulary and to work hard. With the support of his tutors he quickly gained the skills needed to progress on to the higher levels of ESOL and in the academic year 2014 / 2015 he studied level 2 English.

Haitham is now in his second year of study at university. He is studying towards a Graduate Diploma in Law at The Manchester Law School / MMU.



Tatiana Blom – from Entry 2 to employment

When Tatiana and her family arrived in the UK in 2011, she soon realised that despite being fluent in three other languages, she needed to improve her English language. So, in September 2012, she started studying Entry 2 ESOL with MAES in Longsight Library. She studied hard both in class and at home, trying to speak only in English in her daily life. She soon progressed to ESOL Entry 3 and then Level 1.

Whilst studying Level 1, she also achieved Community Interpreting Level 1 and OCR Level 1 ITQ. But she soon found she was in a vicious circle; she couldn't get a job because of her lack of work experience and she couldn't get work experience because she couldn't get a job.

However, she was determined to find a way to overcome this. She became a volunteer digital mentor in the ICT course at Longsight Library. This was so successful that she then started volunteering with Talk English, working with pre-entry ESOL learners, while also studying Level 2 Literacy and Community Interpreting Level 2. She has now got a paid job she loves working as a library assistant.



Constanta-Cristina Paunescu – from Entry 3 to teaching

Cristina started at the Manchester College in the academic year 2014 / 2015, she started on an Entry 3 ESOL programme at the St. John's Campus. Cristina believes that the support she has received from the tutors at the college has allowed her to progress quickly. She attained entry 3 and level 1 Functional Skills qualifications in English in one year.

In 2016/17 Cristina completed her placement as a student teacher at the college's Openshaw Campus - she has achieved a Post Graduate Certificate in Education at Bolton University. In October 2017, Cristina successfully secured a full time teaching position as a maths tutor at the Manchester College; she has become an inspiration for many ESOL students.

Improve the data collected on ESOL demand and develop targeted provision for under-represented groups

- 2.18 The challenge is that 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. The response has been two-fold, in that it is linked to the work on the development of a centralised waiting list system, which would give us much better data on unmet demand for ESOL in the city in the medium to longer term but we have also done some more limited analysis of the types of provision available. This analysis has identified a gap in provision for two groups: recent arrivals with higher level professional qualifications and people already in work who want to progress.
- 2.19 MAES is keen to test whether good quality work experience placements aligned to the professional occupations of learners, alongside learning English, will make a difference to the employment outcomes for these learners. We have had an initial discussion with Price Waterhouse Cooper and will meet with them in early December to discuss possible placements for ESOL learners with an accountancy background. MAES has identified current learners who have professional qualifications in accountancy from their country of origin and/or work experience in this area.
- 2.20 Some initial discussions have taken place with the Central Manchester Foundation Trust in terms of ESOL learners with a professional healthcare background. There is further work needed to look at the feasibility of a similar pilot. This may be a route to partially fill some of the skill gap areas in the GM health and social care system, where Brexit poses an additional risk.
- 2.21 Calderdale College lead for Basic Skills in the Workplace, ESF project in GM. They have identified lack of take up of ESOL in the Workplace by employers and the Manchester College has also not had a high level of response to its ESOL offer to employers so a new approach. We will review with both providers and look at options for developing an alternative approach.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 There has been significant progress made against the ESOL strategy action plan, particularly in terms of mapping provision, contributing to national policy and expanding the volume of ESOL provision in the city. There is a very productive partnership between the two biggest ESOL providers in the city, MAES and the Manchester College, which is moving forward on strengthening progression pathways for ESOL learners. Some important groundwork has been done in terms of researching options for a centralised waiting list for Manchester.

- 3.2 The next steps are to work up a detailed plan for the centralised waiting list system and to explore possibilities for new provision for the two areas where a gap has been identified: recent arrivals with higher level professional qualifications and people already in work who want to progress. MAES and the Manchester College will also share the learning from their pilots of blended ESOL learning and share good practice in this area.