

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee – 5 March 2024

Subject: To receive information from Manchester Adult Education Service on performance.

Report of: Director of Inclusive Economy and Head of MAES

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on MAES performance in 2022/23 and the skills challenges in the city.

Recommendations

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

Wards Affected: All

Environmental Impact Assessment -the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city	MAES has a sustainability plan to raise awareness and promote behaviour change with staff and learners. It includes actions across the course programme and in MAES venues to reduce energy use and increase recycling in our centres and the community.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments	

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	MAES 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, contributing to a more inclusive economy.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city’s economic success	MAES provision is focused on improving skills to enable learners to progress to employment and/or higher-level skills and careers. It is a fundamental

	building block to enable more of our residents to begin their skills pathways.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	MAES provision assists residents who are disadvantaged in obtaining work because of low skills & language barriers. MAES supports residents into sustained and healthy work with opportunities for in work progression. The service course offer and enrichment activities also play a fundamental part in improving integration and developing greater community cohesion.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	MAES provision is embedded in communities, making it an accessible and sustainable offer and MAES is working to embed carbon literacy as part of its learning offer.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Improving the digital skills of Manchester residents is a key contribution that MAES can make to this theme ensuring that more of our residents are connected.

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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 Adult Education and Skills Plan 2019-2025
Report to Scrutiny Committee 2023
MAES OFSTED inspection report 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on MAES performance in 2022/23 and the skills challenges in the city.
- MAES is a successful service that delivers core provision aligned to the strategic skills priorities for GMCA (Our People, Our Place) and Manchester City Council (Our Manchester, Investing in Success and the Work & Skills Strategy) to develop a more inclusive economy and ensure all Manchester residents have access to the skills they need to participate. The provision, both for adult skills and community learning include vital components of the education and skills required for routes into employment, well-being, inclusion, and community cohesion, such as ESOL, English, Maths and Digital proficiency. Operating from centres geographically spread across Manchester, the MAES provision is accessible and provides adults with learning opportunities at the heart of their local community.
- MAES works in a challenging financial environment with the Adult Education Budget (AEB) at a standstill over the past decade with the GMCA allocation remaining fixed despite rising costs
- Venues such as Greenheys (Moss Side), Newton Heath and Withington continue to need urgent attention
- MAES received a full Ofsted inspection in June 2023 and received an Ofsted Good judgement.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 MAES is in the Growth & Development Directorate, Inclusive Economy service. Its provision makes an important contribution to the Greater Manchester priorities and the new Economic Plan for Manchester: Investing in Success. MAES has a key role in improving the skills and qualifications of Manchester residents so that they can access employment and benefit from and contribute to economic growth.
- 2.2 In 2022/23 MAES continued to work with other key providers and stakeholders to support the Manchester Adult Education and Skills Plan which was launched in November 2019. Its ambitious vision is that by 2025 Manchester will be the best city in the UK for adult education and skills, which will be integral to the growth of the city, the integration of our communities and the prosperity of our residents. The UNESCO recently announced award to Manchester to become part of the UNESCO Global Cities of Learning, takes us a step closer to this ambition.
- 2.3 The vision for MAES continues to be: **To deliver inspirational adult education that connects Manchester’s adults to their potential, their community and their future.**

Four objectives:

- Connecting to potential – enable individuals to build on their strengths & develop the skills and mindset they need to succeed

- Connecting to community – equip learners with the skills and confidence they need to engage with and contribute to their community
- Connecting to futures – empower learners to progress with determination and clarity about their next steps
- Connecting to employers – provide employers with access to a skilled and resilient workforce and the opportunity to shape MAES provision

2.4 Leaders and managers have aligned MAES provision with Manchester's plans and priorities to promote an organisational culture which is ambitious for what learners can achieve. This focused provision enables learners to develop skills and behaviours and achieve their goals and qualifications.

2.5 MAES provides agile and flexible provision which contributes to the achievement of the Manchester Work and Skills Strategy priorities, Making Manchester Fairer and Early Years and Early Help strategies. Our unique selling point is a community-based model of informal/first step learning and qualification courses delivered in 8 adult learning centres and over 50 community venues. We work with partners and stakeholders to co-design and deliver services to meet individual, employer and community needs and to support the city's strategic priorities.

2.6 MAES expertise and niche is in delivering both qualification courses (Adult Skills) and non-qualification courses (Community Learning) with the largest cohort aged 25-50. We also deliver a small programme for 19–24-year-olds with learning difficulties. In response to identified need by the Virtual School, we have started a small scale ESOL provision for 16–18-year-old unaccompanied asylum seekers (UASC). The Adult Skills programme includes Maths and English up to GCSE, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and Vocational courses in Health & Social Care, Childcare & Education and professional development including leadership & management. The Community Learning programme includes Everyday English, Preparation for Work, Digital Skills, Community Interpreting, Talk English plus a programme of short courses promoting healthy living and improving access to health information and advice. MAES also commissions projects and engagement activities as a preparation for further learning, work and to improve health and wellbeing.

2.7 MAES learners include those who have left compulsory education with no or low qualifications, recent immigrants who have poor English language skills, some of whom are highly qualified in their country of origin and residents who have had long periods of unemployment or no work history, many with mental health issues. The provision enables residents with low skills and complex dependencies the opportunity to improve the skills, qualifications, attitudes and behaviours they need to secure and progress in work and become less dependent on public services. Our employed learners come to improve their skills and qualifications in order to secure sustainable employment and progress at work. Most of the job outcomes are in the education, health, care, retail, hospitality and facilities sectors.

3.0 Current Projects

3.1 Keeping Warm in Winter and vaccination programme

MAES is working with Public Health to deliver a programme to improve access to healthcare and increase the uptake of Covid and Flu vaccinations, especially in communities where uptake has historically been lower.

We are doing this by:

- offering English for Health Courses - 18 short courses aiming to develop participants literacy and language around health information, health services and self-care, including the Winter Vaccination Programme (and the Childhood Immunisation Programme where appropriate).
- running a further 10 workshop / information sessions, reaching 300 residents – so far we have run 7 events at Greenheys, Abraham Moss, Longsight Library and Forum and engaged over 500 people with information and activities about protecting themselves from cold, flu and covid, flu and Covid vaccinations, which services to use in different scenarios, healthy eating and information about cost of living support. At four of the events, MLCO arranged for the peripatetic vaccination van to be present, and they were able to administer 196 Covid vaccinations and 17 flu vaccinations. The events were also attended and support by a range of other organisations, including Be Well, Black Health Agency, Ethnic Health Forum, Citizen's Advice Bureau, TFGM, Sow the City, Umeed and Neighbourhood Health Champions
- recruiting and training volunteers to support delivery of the programme alongside fully qualified tutors
- developing materials to embed health messages around winter vaccination and childhood immunisation across MAES mainstream programmes

Learner feedback from the English for Health courses have highlighted the positive impact these courses are having.

Learners state that they:

- feel more confident about discussing their symptoms with GPs and they are not scared to ask questions,
- have a greater understanding how stress can impact on their mental health,
- understand how the pharmacy can help them
- know how the 111 service can help them
- feel more confident about where to find reliable health information
- have attended their cervical smear appointments for the first time because of the information they've received
- are spending time planning for their appointment and can describe symptoms in more detail.

3.2 MAES has co-developed several professional development sessions with the learning and development team to upskill the MCC workforce. Those include, Mental Health Awareness, train the trainer, facilitating groups, performing at

interviews and presentation skills. In the last year we have delivered sessions to over 260 MCC participants.

- 3.3 The Let's Talk About Racism programme has continued to be rolled out across council services. An additional facilitator has been trained within MAES to meet the growing demand of participants expressing interest in this training. Feedback from these sessions is extremely positive. 90% identified they have made some personal changes. 96% felt more confident discussing race at work and 96% expressed an interest in follow-up training.

4.0 New Programmes

- 4.1 As part of the work with our colleagues in Learning & Development and MCC's Good Managers Guide, MAES started delivering the Aspiring Managers programme to MCC colleagues in September 2023. 53 learners enrolled onto the programme which enables colleagues to achieve a Level 3 Diploma in Leadership & Management (ILM) qualification. Employers and managers are showing commitment to their team's personal and professional development by facilitating time away from their work duties to complete the programme.
- 4.2 Level 3 courses became fundable in April 2021, along with a suite of others which are regarded as being 'high value' for the needs of the labour market. The qualifications are suitable for residents who are in employment in front line roles but looking to progress their careers further, as well as those who want to gain higher level skills before beginning their careers in these sectors. There has been a significant expansion on Level 3 Counselling pathway and following learner and tutor feedback, MAES intends to continue to grow its provision at levels 4 and 5 in the next academic year as these qualifications enable residents to access quality employment in a range of sectors. In preparation for this MAES has submitted an advanced loan application and an application to become an apprenticeship provider.
- 4.3 In September 2023 MAES introduced a new qualification to run parallel with the Level 3 Award in Education and Training. The Level 3 Award in Literacy and Language Teaching aims to develop the understanding of the English language and develop skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening to be able to apply these skills within a teaching role. We have had 20 enrolments on this programme since September, which is positive number on its pilot year.
- 4.4 Sector based Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) whereby a learning provider collaborates with a recruiting employer and DWP to train residents for specific vacancies, continue to be delivered successfully by MAES. In the last 12 months, the service has delivered these programmes in collaboration with the Civil Service, Supply desk, Metro link and Premier Inn. Around 70% of participants have secured employment as a result of participating in a MAES SWAP, a 10% increase on the previous year.

4.5 16-18 ESOL programme

In response to identified need for ESOL classes for 16–18-year-old Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) and lack of sufficient provision in the city, MAES has started a new course to cater for this group. The course started on 29 January 2024 and runs Mondays to Thursdays. 15 hours per week of ESOL classes are provided and in addition to that, enrichment activities including sports and art therapy sessions. 17 young people have been enrolled so far.

5.0 Performance and Funding 22/23

5.1 Targets and key performance indicators are set each year and performance is monitored monthly by MAES senior leaders. Headline Service level performance indicators are detailed in the table below.

MAES Performance Indicators	Actual 21/22	Targets 22/23	Actual 22/23	Actual % of Target
Adult Skills Formula Funding	£3,750,808	£3,808,634	£3,767,062	98.90%
Learners No (All Streams)	9865	10045	9473	94.30%
Adult Skills Learner No	3098	3035	2986	98.38%
Community Learning No	6767	7010	6487	92.53%
Adult Skills Enrolments*	7562	6306	6363	100.90 %
Community Learning Enrolments*	11036	10201	12092	118.53%
National Qualifications Achieved	3330	3350	3305	98.65%

*An enrolment is a start on a course therefore a learner can have multiple enrolments.

**Figures above relate to the GMCA devolved Adult Education Budget

MAES Performance Indicators	Actual 21/22	Targets 22/23	Actual 22/23	Percentage point Variation to target
Adult Skills Retention Rate	95.2%	95%	95%	0%
Community Learning	91.2%	92%	93.2%	+1.20%

Retention Rate				
Adult Skills Achievement Rate	86.3%	88%	86%	-0.30%
Community Learning Achievement Rate	88.6%	90%	91.1%	+1.1%

- 5.2 In 22/23 the service reached 111.80% of its enrolment targets for the year. (18455 enrolments against a target of 16057) this compare with the year of 21/22 where performance was 112.40%. Performance varied depending on the type of provision. For Adult Skills provision was 100.90%% of target. Achievement rates were 86.0% a small decrease of 0.30 percentage points over 2021/22. Achievement rates are a combination of factors, retention (if a learner stays on course) and pass rate when a learner achieves the qualification.
- 5.3 The total numbers of national qualifications achieved by MAES learners also decreased from 3330 in 21/22 to 3305 in 22/23, a decrease of 0.75% on the previous year. Overall performance against the formula funding target was 98.90%. (£3,767 million as against a target of £3,808 million). This was a small improvement on the previous year and is the best performance since pre the pandemic.
- 5.4 Community Learning recruitment continues throughout the entire year and overall performance was 118.53% of target (12092 enrolments against a target of 10201) this compares with 21/22 where MAES achieved 93.71% of target. This included 1362 'harder to engage' learners, on programmes delivered by our Community Learning Fund Partners (CLF). Through CLF, MAES commissions VCSE organisations with trusted connections and relationships with communities which are under served.
- 5.5 ESFA Funded 19-24 High Needs Funding participation figures were slightly up 55 against a target of 48 however the financial target was underachieved by some 8.5 % because some young people found that the programme was not for them, and this impacted the overall volume of learning.
- 5.6 MAES also continued to develop a small Level 3 provision through the national/regional skills for Jobs fund. The programme performed very well in terms of participation doubling between the pilot year of 21/22 (84 enrolments) and the outturn in 22/23 (177 enrolments) a more than 100% increase year on year. Commensurately funding also increased from (101K) in 21/22 to (213k) in 22/23. The ongoing success of this small programme has meant that MAES has developed an increased offer for 23/24.

6.0 Enrolment/Recruitment Term 1 September to December 23

6.1 The table below shows a breakdown by curriculum areas of MAES performance for Term 1 September to December. There were 5787 enrolments against a target of 5754 which is 100.57% of target. (See table below)

Curriculum Area	Target Course Enrolment Sept to Dec 23	Actual Course Enrolment Sept to Dec 23	% Target
Maths	696	702	100.86%
English	636	648	101.89%
ESOL	1785	1696	95.01%
Community Interpreting	180	171	95.00%
Vocational & ER	588	551	93.70%
Community Learning	888	1138	128.15%
Digital Skills	609	506*	83.08%
Prep for Work	348	351	100.86%
STEPS	24	24	100%
Total	5754	5787	100.57%

* This includes 61 enrolments not yet entered on the MIS system
 NB These are retained enrolments and exclude withdrawals

6.2 We are taking further actions in term 2 and 3 to ensure that that current shortfall in ESOL Vocational, Digital and Community interpreting are recouped/minimised. This includes Infilling into existing provision where appropriate, selective additionality and additional recruitment campaigns for new courses.

6.3 MAES has commissioned provision from eight community partners in 2023/24 These include:

Back on Track	Run a range of courses, activities and volunteering opportunities with unemployed adults going through a period of recovery or rehabilitation, having experienced problems with alcohol or drugs, offending, homelessness and mental health.
Impact for All	Run courses aimed at raising self--confidence, improving skills and motivation, tailored for local unemployed Longsight residents and the barriers they face to gain employment.
Proper Job	Run courses which use drama with psychotherapy-based approaches to empower unemployed individuals, raise confidence and lead to positive change.

Reform Radio	Run courses which focus on personal development and employability through social media training for young adults aged 19-30.
Healthy Me, Healthy Communities	Healthy Me Healthy Communities run Community Grocers and Food Hubs to help address food poverty and run courses for volunteers and local communities.
Blossom	Blossom offers food, growing, wellbeing activities, and opportunities to learn to cook from scratch, including how personal lifestyle changes can impact climate change.
Sow the City	Run courses in foraging and growing and cooking food from scratch, to support sustainable living and help with cost of living.
Manchester Deaf	A deaf--led organisation providing support to deaf, deafened, deafblind and hard of hearing people. Runs BSL classes and Deaf Awareness training.

6.4 Performance to date of Commissioned partners is as follows.

All partners have recruited strongly against profiled targets. However, two new providers, have struggled to recruit to their innovative courses and are therefore struggling against profiled target.

The Service held performance review meetings with each partner in December to identify areas of concern with consideration given to a reprofile of targets or a reduction in contract value. We have now agreed a revised level of funding that we and the provider believe is achievable.

6.5 Funding 22/23 & 23/24

In 22/23 Academic year the GMCA were able to provide an exceptional cost of living payment to all providers of 5% of total contract value, in MAES case this amounted to 330K. This was very welcome and enabled the Service to break even on the year without the need to draw on its limited strategic reserve.

For 23/24 the GMCA has chosen not to continue with this methodology and have increased formula funding rates by 6.5%, which means that you can generate the same income but for 6.5% less activity. They have also confirmed that they will pay for up to 110% on formula funded provision whilst this is positive it means that there is no increase in funding on MAES Community Learning funding (50% of MAES provision) which creates a difficulty for MAES, due to the current inflationary pressures on staff and non-staff budgets. As with formula funded provision, the GMCA has indicated that providers can do less for the same amount of funding. However, we are reluctant to reduce our provision given the scale of need in the city and we are less agile than some other providers because staff are quite rightly on MCC terms & conditions, and we also have fixed overheads and costs which we need to cover. This emerging budget pressure is currently being managed by drawing down on the strategic reserve, however the reserve will be fully depleted by the end of the 24/25 Academic Year. We are actively managing this with the support of corporate finance colleagues and looking at a range of options to mitigate the budget pressures.

7.0 Quality of Education

7.1 MAES had a successful inspection in June 2023, achieving an overall judgement of 'good', grade 2. In the normal course of events another inspection is not likely to take place until 2028.

7.2 The Ofsted inspection concluded that MAES has the following strengths:

- Governors, leaders and managers are passionate about their provision. They promote a culture of compassion and care through an inclusive and ambitious curriculum. Leaders and managers align and adapt their curriculums to meet the strategic skills priorities of GMCA and MCC.
- Leaders have a clear rationale for their subcontracted provision. They collaborate with their subcontractors, who provide high-quality education through a curriculum that meets the needs of learners.
- Most learners benefit from high-quality education and training. Tutors are well qualified and hold relevant professional qualifications.
- Learners benefit from a range of opportunities that help them to develop their personal and social skills.
- Leaders have an accurate oversight of the progress that learners make from their starting points.
- Leaders and managers have developed a comprehensive careers strategy across MAES provision.
- The large majority of learners progress on to employment or further learning after finishing their courses.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses at MAES.

7.3 Ofsted identified the following areas for improvement:

- Leaders and managers should ensure that learners develop a good understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and how it applies to them in their personal lives and at work.
- Leaders should ensure that they fully embed their careers guidance programme across all curriculums and centres so that learners receive independent information, advice and guidance that helps them to make informed career choices.
- Leaders should put in place suitably robust plans to help learners with high needs who are transitioning out of MAES know what actions they need to take to prepare for their next steps.

7.4 MAES has a Service Improvement Plan in place to address these areas for improvement. Actions include:

- an audit of schemes of work to identify good practice and areas we need to improve in regard to embedding learning about the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism
- staff training on how to embed British Values and Prevent

- closer monitoring of uptake of careers advice and guidance and targeted interventions as a result to promote the offer to learners
- development of a Make It Happen Google Classroom which all learners have access to
- assigning responsibility to a specific member of staff in the High Needs team for transition who will meet with learners and parents and carers at key points

8.0 ESOL and ESOL Advice Service

8.1 Manchester ESOL Advice Service was established by MAES in July 2019 in partnership with The Manchester College (TMC) with one-off £197k funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG). Based on its initial success MAES, TMC and the GMCA committed resources to continue the Service in 20/21, 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24.

- It provides a **single gateway** for adults with English language needs in Manchester to access the learning that is right for them
- It is a **partnership between 27 providers** in Manchester including the WEA, community ESOL organisations and training providers
- **A centralised waiting list** is at the heart of this approach. Providers no longer hold their own, separate waiting lists and do not carry out their own assessments for ESOL after their open enrolment period in August/September

The mapping of ESOL provision and establishment of regular communication between the ESOL providers in Manchester, has led to a better understanding of the provision available and enabled us to work collaboratively to address the gaps and ensure a more effective use of existing resources.

Providers can maximise the use of existing spaces on courses quickly and efficiently with the referrals made through the ESOL Advice Service. Learners are contacted and offered a place only if they meet eligibility requirements for each course and are assessed at the level required to join the course. Comprehensive data reports on the demand and unmet need and custom reports have been created and shared with ESOL providers and stakeholders to inform their planning and delivery.

8.2 We have been leading the other 9 Greater Manchester local authorities to replicate the model in their areas. This work is supported financially by GMCA who were keen to see the Manchester model operating across Greater Manchester. So far 7 of the other local authorities are up and running and further work is being done to get the remaining two (Wigan & Tameside) operational. Local ESOL hubs deliver assessments for people resident in their areas and run a referral service to ESOL provision in their local authority area, including the management of one waiting list per area that serves all local providers. Manchester is providing central coordination, including cross-area placements where it meets the learners' needs, and has supported the development of the local ESOL hubs including constructive and practical

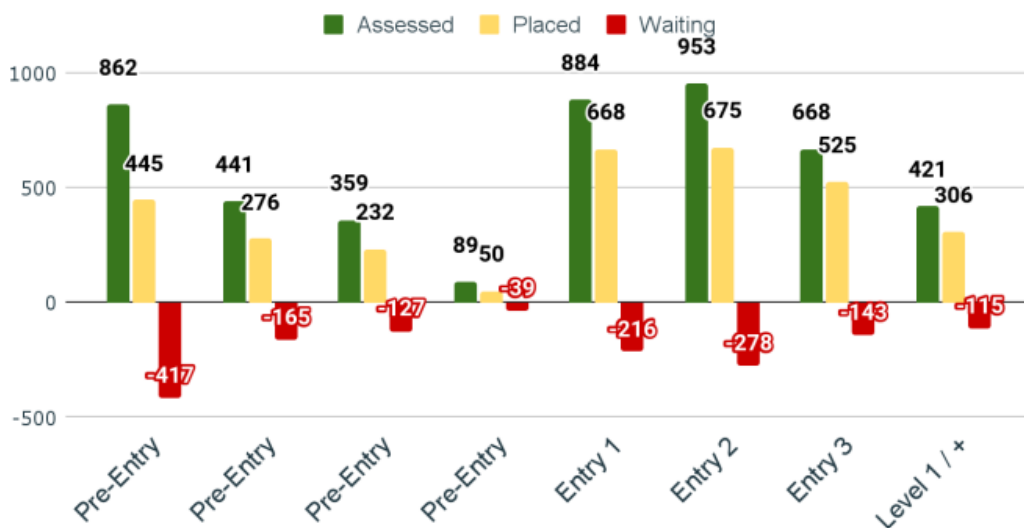
assistance such as editable tools and templates, relevant training and support for data collection and evaluation activities.

8.3 We have further developed our website at www.gmesol.org with clear and useful information for learners, stakeholders and ESOL providers including a bank of links to resources by level to support delivery. There are links to online learning for learners to use independently where possible while they are waiting for a place. We have also developed a referral pathway on the website, whereby an organisation, a professional or a friend can refer a learner, with their consent. Both parties are then contacted with details of the assessment date and outcome.

8.4 **August 2022 – August 2023**

In 22/23, the Manchester ESOL Advice Service completed a total of 5,379 4,385 assessments (an increase from 21/22 of 23%).

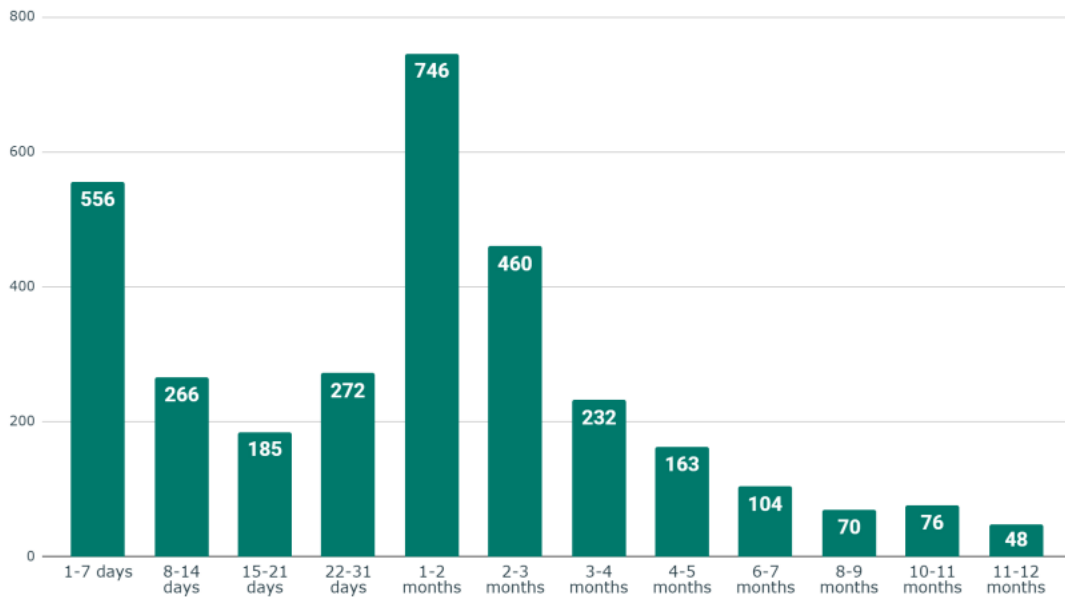
Learners assessed, placed and waiting



A total of 3,177 (67.6%) learners were placed on a suitable course. This is an increase of 740 more residents being offered places compared to 2021/22. 1,500 learners remained on the waiting list. However, 434 (28.9%) of all learners on the waiting list have been contacted with an offer of at least one suitable course.

A high proportion of learners (78.2%) joined a course within three months of being placed on the centralised waiting list. 556 of these learners were offered a learning opportunity at the time or within a week of their assessment. The breakdown of average waiting times from assessment to joining a class in the chart indicates that the likelihood of joining a course decreases with the time on the waiting list - only 21.8% of all learners who were placed (692 individuals) accepted the offer of a course after they had been on the waiting list for over 3 months.

Average waiting times from assessment to class



In 2022/23, Manchester ESOL Advice Service achieved a number of positive outcomes for learners, ESOL providers and stakeholders and the wider impact on a strategic level through collaborative work on the Greater Manchester ESOL Advice Service.

The key outputs include:

- Comprehensive data reports on the demand and unmet need and custom reports. Quarterly reports shared with ESOL providers and stakeholders have led to optimising provision, i.e. helping fill the gaps quickly and efficiently and setting up new provision based on the evidence of need, which created additional 272 spaces at Pre-Entry-Entry 3 levels
- Establishing clear referral routes for stakeholders looking for ESOL provision for their customers, which has ensured a consistently high number of referrals, particularly from JCP offices. Discussions have taken place throughout the period regarding measures to improve the conversion of referrals that lead to a completed assessment. ESOL awareness sessions were delivered online and in Job Centre offices in areas with a higher concentration of ESOL residents, which were designed to promote ESOL Advice Service and highlight the referral process. Regular assessment sessions currently take place in four Job Centres, with the intention that by having an increased presence, communication with work coaches will improve, thus enabling more learners to attend their assessment. The data has demonstrated that these measures have had a positive impact, as there has been a 3.6% increase in the conversion rate of referral to assessment since October 2022, with 918 JCP customers having been assessed overall.
- 67.9% of all assessed learners (3,177 individuals) have joined a suitable course following an assessment. Learners have access to and are made aware of a greater number of options than if they registered

with one provider and 77.2% of all assessed learners have been offered at least one course or learning opportunity.

- Collaborating with other local authorities in Greater Manchester and supporting new local ESOL Hubs (Bolton) based on the Manchester model and developing agreements and processes to enable collaborative working between the participating areas.
- Developing and maintaining the website at www.gmesol.org with clear application and referral processes, as well as useful information for learners, stakeholders and ESOL providers across seven local authorities in Greater Manchester, including a bank of links to resources by level to support online learning.

8.5 September 2023 – January 2024

8.5.1 There has been a continuing demand for ESOL courses across Manchester. Since August 2023, face-to-face assessments have been offered at MAES centres, the Manchester College sites and three job centres.

8.5.2 From September 2022 to January 2023, 2,607 assessments have been completed.

8.5.3 A total of 1,350 (51.8%) learners have been placed on a suitable ESOL course following an assessment so far in 23-24. An additional 362 learners have been placed from the 2022-23 waiting list. 1,132 remain on the 2023-24 centralised waiting list. 389 of the learners who remain on the waiting list have been offered at least one learning opportunity. Some residents do not require a place following an assessment. Overall, the majority of Manchester residents looking to join an ESOL course have been assessed at low levels, the majority ranging from Pre-Entry to Entry 2.

8.5.4 The highest volume of learners on the waiting list is at Pre-Entry level (49% of the total waiting list).

9.0 Priorities for the current academic year

9.1 For the service to continue to support the priorities of Manchester and the wider community, it must successfully return to a position of financial stability where it provides a high-quality service to residents. It is important that the service focuses on the following priorities for the remainder of the current academic year:

- Continue to utilise the curriculum planning process. This plan aims to ensure that the efficient use of resources is maximised therefore shortfalls in recruitment and funding are addressed.
- Improve headline achievement rates to meet national rates, (potentially between 86% and 92%)
- Improve headline pass rates on adult skills programmes to 95%

- Continue to work on the future shape of MAES, to ensure that it is financially sustainable, agile and can respond to current & future need and opportunities.

9.2 The priorities outlined above will allow MAES to continue to exist as a service that is a financially sound, high-quality provider of Adult Education and Skills.