



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

A large, abstract graphic composed of numerous colored dots in shades of teal, green, and orange, arranged in a pattern that resembles a stylized, branching structure or a map of the United Kingdom.

Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund

A guide for applicants

September 2018

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Section 1 – Introduction

1. The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, which we published in March, sets out our vision of what true integration looks like – communities where people, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Boosting English language skills is an important theme in the Green Paper, given they are fundamental to being able to take advantage of the opportunities of living in modern Britain such as getting a job, mixing with people and playing a full part in community life.
2. We are launching the new English Language Co-ordination Fund (referred to as an ‘Infrastructure fund’ in the Green Paper) to help support places, outside the five Integration Areas, to support activities which improve the co-ordination of provision to enhance the suitability of the offer available to learners. The fund will also develop a better understanding of the demand for English language classes and profile of English language (ESOL) learners.
3. We have shortlisted a set of local authorities who are eligible to make an application to the Fund through a combination of census data and a metric to highlight areas where there may also be significant unmet demand. We think this targeted approach makes the best use of the funding available in order that proposals can benefit large numbers of learners.
4. The English Language Co-ordination Fund aims to support local authorities and their local partners in improving both the number of people with English language needs accessing support, and the experience potential learners have when trying to find help to improve their English language proficiency. The Fund encourages proposals which address the needs of a diverse group of learners, including learner groups such as refugees and people who have lived in the UK for a number of years with poor English skills, through engagement, data collection and better matching of learners’ needs and local provision, by geography, proficiency level and accessibility. The strongest applications will therefore have the needs of learners at their heart. As this Guide sets out, co-ordination models also stand to deliver significant benefits for referral organisations, providers and strategic partners.
5. Building new partnerships and developing new co-ordination models takes time, dependent on the extent and quality of existing partnerships. We are looking to support ambitious proposals, but ones which are realistic about the incremental steps that need to be taken in order to make progress towards the ultimate goal. None of the existing models showcased later in this guide emerged overnight and we are open to funding proposals that adopt a staged approach where partners have a clear understanding where they want to get to.
6. We have allocated up to £1m for the new English Language Co-ordination Fund in each of 2018/19 and 2019/20 and are looking to support up to 10 areas to take forward new proposals.

Section 2 – The benefits of stronger local co-ordination

7. Drawing on the analysis we undertook in developing the Integrated Communities Green Paper and a recent rapid review of local English language partnerships, commissioned by the Department for Education and MHCLG, from the Learning & Work Institute, we have identified a range of outcomes and the underpinning success factors in effective local co-ordination of English language provision.
8. We recognise that partnership working and co-ordination models come in many different forms, and that the objectives of local approaches will vary according to context and need.
9. There are several outcomes that English language co-ordination models can achieve in addressing a range of issues that can negatively impact on learners' access to support and their progression. The following section sets out some of the difficulties we have identified with the current delivery landscape and the positive outcomes that better co-ordination can achieve.

A better local offer for learners

10. Some people with English language needs may not always be aware that support to improve their skills is available. Others may be interested in accessing support, but do not know where to find it or are interested in learning, but do not know suitable provision exists that matches their needs. In some cases people may not want to learn English, but may be encouraged to do so if the right outreach is in place and accessing provision is made as easy as possible.
11. We know some learners do not have ready access to support to navigate what can be a complex landscape. People with English language needs and referral organisations acting on their behalf, may approach a number of different providers before they are able to access provision. They may, for example, be placed on a waiting list by the provider they first approach when suitable vacancies may exist at another provider nearby. Each provider often requires an initial assessment to be carried out, which can be stressful for learners, and involves unnecessary duplication and resources.
12. People with English language needs and referral organisations may not always be aware that there are a variety of different funding streams and eligibility criteria. Learners may be told they are ineligible for provision or fully funded provision, and may be unaware they may be eligible under a different funding stream at another provider. Even referral organisations who know their way around the landscape can sometimes find up to date information is time-consuming to access, which makes it difficult for them to sign-post learners quickly and confidently. Often, individual organisations carry out mapping exercises, or individual advisors carry out this work for learners resulting in additional pressure on workloads and needless duplication.

13. Potential learners and referral organisations may be unaware of the full range of provision available in the locality, which may be a better match with a learner's needs, prior qualifications and experience than the option they are placed in. This can lead to missed opportunities, slower progress and poor attendance or retention.
14. The quality of English language provision can be variable, and we know some learners who are able to join a course are not offered progression options to continue their learning once they complete this stage. Some learners would like to do a larger number of hours than are available on their course, but are unaware of further opportunities to practice their English, through other funding streams and programmes, such as volunteer led conversation clubs.
15. The main outcomes for learners through better local co-ordination include:
- **Better information** and increased awareness about provision in the local area, making it more likely that those with learning needs will actively contemplate participation in learning.
 - **Improved and faster access to appropriate and relevant provision** that meets their learning and wider needs, including in relation to eligibility for different funding streams and childcare provision. This can lead in turn to follow-on benefits for learners (and providers), including sustained participation in learning and good attendance in classes.
 - **Enhanced progression opportunities** for learners, to higher levels of English language support and other education provision, through mapping and creation of progression routes.
 - **More opportunities** for different target groups to become engaged in learning, as provider capacity is more efficiently utilised.

Better outcomes for local providers

16. Often learners register with multiple providers, and therefore appear on multiple waiting lists. When individual providers use this data to plan additional provision, this can lead to low turnout, as unbeknownst to the provider, the learners have already joined a course elsewhere.
17. Providers are not always aware of other providers within the locality. This can prevent the smooth referral of learners between providers where this would better fit learners' needs. Providers working in isolation from each other can also result in identical provision been offered in close proximity, which can lead to competition for learners and vacancies in classes.
18. Providers are sometimes able to secure additional funding for English language provision, and particularly where this funding comes mid-year or at short-notice, are required to make decisions on levels and location based on anecdotal evidence, in the absence of detailed data on local need. This can result in recruitment targets not being met.

19. Providers are sometimes required to compete for a smaller pool of learners than would be the case if a larger proportion or all of the people who have English language needs, as identified by the Census, were actively seeking a class. This competition can inhibit the development of partnerships between providers.
20. Often, small community organisations are able to engage people with English language needs who would not otherwise engage with support. These smaller organisations often need support to develop partnerships with providers, or find or apply for funding directly. In addition, some providers have long waiting lists, but are not aware of or do not know how to apply for additional or alternative funding.
21. The main outcomes for learners through better local co-ordination include:
- **Better understanding of the local landscape and learner needs** – supporting the development of more tailored provision, and signposting and referral to a single point of contact which can assist learners in finding alternative provision where necessary.
 - **Reduced likelihood of duplication or oversupply of provision**, for example through information sharing and mapping of provision in the local area, prior to finalising delivery plans.
 - **Increased take up of provision**, improving utilisation of the provider's delivery capacity and therefore efficiency.
 - **Improved, more efficient recruitment of learners**, whose learning needs can be met by the level, content and type of provision on offer
 - **More opportunities for continuing professional development, sharing good practice and lessons learned**, supporting increased quality of provision locally and ensuring it is tailored to local need.
 - **Increased staff capability, capacity and morale** through development opportunities and collaborative working on shared issues and challenges.
 - **Improved ability to secure external funding**, potentially increasing investment in ESOL provision and infrastructure locally.
 - **Increased visibility of English language** – internally and to local strategic partners, leading to further improvements in provision (e.g. new progression routes, links with external agencies and services).

Better outcomes for strategic partners

22. Lack of data often prevents councils and their partners from understanding the full picture of English language needs in the locality. Although Census data is now available on English language proficiency, the information is now several years old and does not distinguish between learners attending a course, those actively seeking one and those not intending to engage in learning English. The most effective strategies and engagement activity need to be tailored to the profile of people with English language needs in a given locality.

23. Paper-based mapping information on English language provision, where it exists, can become out-of-date quickly, due to the changing landscape and variety of funding streams and providers. Where provision is mapped online or otherwise to facilitate easy sign-posting, tracking of take-up by learners is sometimes limited or absent, so measuring the impact of this resource can be difficult.
24. Data on learners who are not able to access existing provision is often not collected or analysed in a way that supports positive change. Lack of data on these learners, such as proficiency levels, income and immigration status, prior qualifications and experience, schooling and interests, prevents providers from sourcing funding for and/or developing provision which caters for the diverse needs and skills of local learners.
25. The main outcomes for strategic partners through better local co-ordination include:
- **Within strategic partner organisations, increased awareness of local residents' English language needs**, supporting better planning and delivery of a range of local services for people with English language needs.
 - **Increased visibility of local English language provision, providers and related services**, with clear information and referral options for strategic partners who wish to support people to access provision – but who are not providers themselves.
 - **Increased capacity to tackle local issues** associated with poor language skills (e.g. social integration, unemployment, difficulties accessing other public services). Local English language partnerships have the potential to enhance local capacity through innovations in service delivery and collaborations on projects to address specific issues – this can include accessing additional funding to invest in services in the area.

Section 3 – What models do we want the fund to support?

Single point of contact for learners and referral organisations

26. In developing your proposal it is important to be clear as to the aims and objectives of a co-ordination model and the outcomes it is designed to achieve. For example, the activities of a network which exists primarily to support the sharing of effective practice between ESOL providers may be considerably different to a partnership which is establishing an organisation to act as a single point of contact for and source of data on English language learners.
27. We are particularly interested in supporting proposals that are ambitious in establishing or moving towards a single point of contact for learners, but will consider proposals to achieve other outcomes where they clearly benefit learners, such as collaborative planning to improve access and progression routes for learners.
28. Creation of a single point of contact can not only add value by helping to deliver operational objectives such as increased take up of provision, but also improve relationships within partnerships through the successful shared outcomes.
29. Developing trust and agreeing the purpose and role of local co-ordination activity between providers can be a lengthy process. Investment in this can be particularly necessary in the early stages of building new models while organisations are becoming accustomed to others' work culture and methods of communication. We are encouraging applications that start from the position of wanting to better understand and meet the needs of learners. This can, in some instances, create tensions which need to be resolved through intensive engagement. This is one of the reasons we are particularly keen to support the establishment of a single point of contact which can build individual relationships with the range of providers and strategic partners in the local area.
30. This Fund seeks to improve access to English language provision for learners, and also suitability of the provision on offer, through partnership working with all providers within the locality. Stakeholder engagement has highlighted that the governance arrangements put in place to manage activities are a critical success factor for these partnerships. We therefore encourage expressions of interest for co-ordination models which are independent of any one English language provider, and ideally that the governance body does not deliver provision directly. Learners should be able to access impartial advice on the most suitable provision for them based on their needs, requirements and interests.
31. Leadership could be provided by a lead organisation or individual acting as a single point of contact. The Fund is open to local authorities as lead organisations but we encourage councils to work with others and councils may not always lead the development and running of the new co-ordination models we want to support. The organisation should have sufficient credibility with the full range of

stakeholders, and the basis on which they are co-ordinating the activity should be clear and transparent.

32. We encourage applications to the Fund that emphasise the need for data collection, analysis and dissemination, where possible. Proposals which contain data collection should include high level reporting plans.

English Language provider networks

33. Where ESOL provider networks are proposed, clear working protocols can be helpful in setting out the outcomes sought by the network, so that everyone engaged in its development and running can work towards common aims in achieving better outcomes for learners. Potential benefits of a written protocol include:

- Fostering relationships based on collaboration and reciprocity, rather than competition (particularly where this does not benefit learners).
- Building collaborative working relationships in instances when partner organisations have potentially conflicting business priorities, or different organisational cultures.

34. Sharing knowledge, data, expertise and practice should be a core activity of the networks we want to support. Each organisation's role and area of expertise could also be set out in the working protocol to avoid duplication or confusion. Networks and partnerships might also organise continuing professional development sessions where partner organisations and their staff participate in good practice sharing events.

35. Branding for the network and communications activity (for example, a name and logo, and web or social media presence and open events) can help to sustain and develop the partnership, for example by recruiting new members. Visibility can help to raise awareness of English language related issues with local decision-makers in a range of fields, and secure their support.

36. The achievement of shared objectives through collaboration and co-ordination is likely to help sustain and develop local networks as the benefits and impact can be evidenced. This can be effective in engaging with new stakeholders and recruiting new members. Evidence of impact and effective working can also support sustainability, as this evidence can be used in support of funding applications and proposals.

Sustainability

37. The Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund will offer funding in financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. As noted earlier in this guide we are encouraging applicants to submit proposals for models that will have a positive and measurable impact on the offer for local learners within the funding period. We are open to applications that seek funding to take incremental steps towards a full co-ordination model, where applicants make clear the end goal and how they intend those steps will help achieve this.

38. While funding is only available until the end of 2019/20, we want to support co-ordination models which seek to operate beyond 2019/20 and therefore strong applications will provide assurances of their financial sustainability without continued funding from the Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund. We are aware of a range of different long term funding models which could, for example, include subscriptions from local providers where they gain clear benefits from the model.

Examples of existing co-ordination models

39. The following examples are intended to support applicants by summarising some of the existing examples of co-ordination of which we are aware. This is not an exhaustive list and examples are intended to be illustrative. Strong applications will propose models which reflect and cater to the local context.

Leeds Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) & Newham ESOL Exchange

40. The Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) in Leeds hosts the Learning English in Leeds website which lists all of the ESOL providers within Leeds. The website is primarily for learners with English language needs, those supporting them, and referral organisations, aiming to help them identify an English language class. The website also features a translation function which allows computer-literate learners to access the information in a range of languages. Potential learners are able to enter their location and a search radius to see a list of providers nearby. Courses can also be filtered by categories such as day of the week, availability of childcare and level. Finally, people accessing the site are able to rate the provider on a five-star scale. ESOL providers in the city are able to sign up to a newsletter which keeps them informed on developments and networking opportunities.

Newham ESOL Exchange manages a similar website and mailing list. Referral organisations and others supporting people with English language needs are able to enter their location to find their nearest ESOL venue, and filter for free classes, childcare facilities and disability access. In addition, the service hosts regular meetings for ESOL providers and stakeholders for ESOL-related activities, including the sharing of good practice.

41. These central points of information increase the awareness of learners, their support networks and also, English language providers of the full range of ESOL provision available locally.

Hackney ESOL Advice Service

42. The ESOL Advice Service (EAS) offers potential learners regular advice and assessment sessions with a qualified ESOL teacher. The teacher uses an assessment tool to identify their learning needs, and provides information and guidance about available and appropriate provision. The advice sessions are held in community venues, including children's centres, primary schools, academies and community centres, and the service also offers bespoke registration sessions to organisations which identify groups of learners who are unable or unwilling to access regular sessions. The EAS operates outside of the

main enrolment period for providers in September and July, to avoid duplicating already efficient processes.

43. The data on the initial assessment form are recorded on the EAS database. When a vacancy arises, or a new class is scheduled, providers contact the EAS directly, which then contacts learners who are waiting for a class, forwarding those who are interested and eligible to the provider's enrolment session, along with their fully completed initial assessment paperwork. All providers are able to access the waiting list and all providers accept the initial assessment tool and paperwork the service utilises, reducing the number of times learners have to complete initial assessments before joining a course. Only sending those who are eligible reduces staff workload and the number of steps taken before learners are placed on a course.
44. In addition to termly reports on waiting list figures, the service publishes a comprehensive annual report aimed at interested parties, including ESOL providers and policy makers in the borough, detailing the demographic profile of ESOL learners, their prior education, skills, needs, goals, barriers faced in accessing suitable ESOL course and satisfaction levels once placed. A dedicated and detailed section on learners who were not able to access ESOL provision within the academic year is included and aims to assist ESOL providers with planning for the following academic year.
45. ESOL providers are also able to request additional reports as and when they secure additional funding for ESOL to ensure classes are filled to capacity and respond to current demand. Waiting list data is accompanied by information on planned provision in the vicinity through other providers, so that duplication is avoided.
46. The data collected by the service gives a more accurate representation of ESOL supply and demand across the borough than individual provider data. The EAS shares detailed analyses of waiting list figures with all providers and key stakeholders on a termly basis, recognising that funding often becomes available mid-year.
47. Providers report that working in partnership enables parties to make efficiencies by drawing on each other's resources. For example, the EAS assists the 13 ESOL providers it currently represents in filling class places, replacing learners who have needed to withdraw from classes, and filling new provision, throughout the academic year which saves providers time and administrative costs in relation to recruitment.
48. In return for the savings made, the ESOL providers are asked to contribute advice hours to support the service. This entails their contributing an ESOL tutor to run a two-hour advice session on a weekly or monthly basis. Contributions are reviewed each year and based on the number of learners successfully placed in the previous academic year.
49. As a result of providers buying in to this service, the EAS has been able to streamline recruitment services for providers and learners in Hackney. Since its

inception, the Hackney EAS has built more and more reciprocal relationships with ESOL providers across the borough, demonstrating the success of the service for all interested parties.

Camden ESOL Advice Service

50. Based on the Hackney model, the Camden ESOL Advice Service provides a similar offer to people with English language needs, referral organisations and providers. In addition, the service has funding for English language, which enables it to respond to identified need which cannot be met using existing funding in the borough. The service does not deliver ESOL provision directly, using a commissioning model to aid partnership development and increase the capacity of smaller ESOL providers. To prevent learners losing interest during their waiting period, following registration (initial assessment), they are immediately offered a one-hour, weekly conversation club at the same location as the advice session. In addition, the service is currently developing additional support for learners at Entry 1, through a volunteer scheme for bilingual staff at the local authority.

Nottingham BEGIN

51. Basic Education Guidance in Nottinghamshire (BEGIN) offers a central advice and placement service for ESOL across the Nottingham area, working with a wide range of referrers and providers to offer in-depth individual screening of need, initial assessment and 'best-match' advice and placement.

52. Central logging of all communications with/for 3,500 to 4,000 individuals a year enables BEGIN to track changing circumstances, all of which can affect learners' access to a range of different provision, e.g. UK residency, benefit status and income, study and employment background/needs, levels of English, childcare, work times, travel times/costs. Support is ongoing until learners attend formal accredited courses with long-term progression routes.

53. For the majority of learners this involves a 'staged' approach, offering opportunities to learners while they are waiting to be enrolled on formal courses, including:

- Support to address barriers such as childcare, welfare entitlement, job search, and NARIC UK qualification Conversion
- Conversation classes
- Online learning
- Unaccredited community courses

54. Nottingham College is currently a major funder and, for an agreed sum, host the service in terms of accommodation, staff contracts and banking. However, since its foundation in 1982, BEGIN has also worked with a wide range of other

stakeholders to raise funding for service development and gaps in learning provision.

55. Key features include:

- Bespoke web-based client/contacts/course database
- Neutral learner-centred 'case-work' approach address individual need
- Staffing that includes apprentices and/or volunteers recruited via ESOL
- Independent Steering Group with public and voluntary sector members
- Daily contact with a wide-reaching network of community referrers and providers
- Coherent/non-competitive marketing
- Mapping - courses, conversation groups and other relevant services

56. BEGIN's approach reduces public spend and increases effectiveness for many local services:

- It avoids multiple enquiries from learners and local services to multiple ESOL providers, and the waste of duplicated assessment, enrolment, exam registration
- It maximises precious, limited provision, increasing attendance and retention by targeting learners to the right courses
- The 'waiting list' system is fair and ensures less assertive learners are not lost
- 'Live' data reports are used to address duplication, gaps and inconsistent policy
- Partnership work levers additional or shared resource, including significant funding over many years, venues, childcare, volunteers, materials or good practice

Section 4 – Eligibility Criteria

57. The government will be investing in supporting the proposals set out in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper over the next two years. This includes English language support through a new Integrated Communities English Language programme (the prospectus was published on 5th September) and the next phase of the Controlling Migration Fund (applications close on 1st October).
58. Funding under the Integrated Communities English Language Co-ordination Fund is not intended to subsidise existing models which are already being funded by other government funding sources (including the Controlling Migration Fund), councils own resources and those of local partners. However, we are open to applications where the proposal focuses on further developing or extending existing models to the clear benefit of learners. We are also open to applications from a consortium of local authorities, who will need to nominate a lead local authority. The Home Office funded network of ESOL regional coordinators for the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme should also be involved. Coordinators are in place in each of the Strategic Migration Partnership areas.
59. Applicants are advised to ensure proposals do not duplicate or destabilise existing English Language co-ordination activities within the local area. Where activities already exist, proposals should be submitted in partnership with these services or organisations. Where English Language co-ordination units exist within the local authority, projects should be led directly by them. Co-ordination funding should supplement and extend existing services and funding, rather than replace them.
60. There is no minimum or maximum amount of funding for which applicants can apply; however the value for money the project offers will be one of the criteria used to assess applications.
61. Funding is only available for 2018/19 and 2019/20. For projects that run beyond 2019/20, applicants will be required to secure alternate means of funding.
62. We will provide funding for delivery of the agreed-upon proposal only. All funding from the department is revenue funding only; it may not be spent on capital items (e.g. property and fixed assets).
63. We will not fund contingency costs, loans, endowments of interest payments and recoverable VAT.

Applicants must provide submit their applications using the Application Form provided as a separate attachment by 11.45 pm on 31st October 2018.