

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Chanel Williams and Karen Chapman for their tireless work in data entry and for suggesting improvements to the database, which allowed for more precise and accurate data collection; Martin Gwarada for creating the ESOL database and for his technical support during the year; Steve Bray for his design expertise and Alice Robson, Marta Paluch and Silvia Perin for editing and proof-reading multiple drafts of the report during an exceptionally busy time of year. Finally, we would like to thank Marta Paluch for actualising the idea of a Hackney ESOL Advice Service.

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Contents

The Learning Trust and the ESOL Advice Service	3
Data:	
· Origin and Language	6
· Gender	8
· Home Office, income-based benefits and employment status	10
· Distribution in Hackney	12
· Age	13
· Levels of English	14
· Length of time in the UK	17
· Prior Education	19
· Preferences	22
· Referral routes	23
· Reasons for learning English	25
· Children and crèche needs	26
· Disabilities	27
· Outcomes	28
Conclusion	31
Appendix 1: Initial Assessment Form (page 1)	34
Appendix 2: Initial Assessment Form (page 2)	35
Appendix 3: Regions	36

The Learning Trust

The Learning Trust is a not-for-profit company responsible for education in Hackney. Within the Trust, the Adult Learning Service caters for the needs of adult learners through ICT, Literacy, Numeracy, Family Learning and ESOL classes, among a large number of other accredited and informal courses. In addition, the service provides a dedicated Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service, which offers 1:1 support for those interested in progressing onto further and higher education and employment.

What is ESOL?

ESOL stands for *English for Speakers of Other Languages* and refers to English language provision for people who speak languages other than English, and are settled or soon-to-be-settled residents of the United Kingdom. Courses can be accredited or non-accredited and are typically arranged by levels progressing from Entry 1 (E1) to Level 2 (L2). For level descriptors, please see page 14 and for more information please refer to the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum*.

ESOL Advice Service

Funded by the Migration Impact Fund (MIF), the ESOL Advice Service has assessed and advised a total of 858 learners this academic year; a 50% increase from numbers seen in the 2009-10 academic year. We have recorded over 1000 enquiries to date, received via the ESOL Advice Line and in person. A significant number of these enquiries were from organisations, particularly from Job Centre Plus (JCP) advisors keen to place their clients onto suitable ESOL classes.

-  Regular ESOL Advice
-  On-site ESOL Advice
-  Recruitment
-  Statistics
-  Annual Report

Four regular ESOL Advice sessions were held weekly at Homerton Library, The Learning Trust, Linden Children’s Centre and Woodberry Down Children’s Centre. An additional advice session was introduced early in the year, to accommodate the overwhelming demand for ESOL advice at The Learning Trust.

Alongside regular ESOL advice at community venues, the service offered on-site advice in local venues for groups of learners who were more effectively engaged in familiar settings. Where these sessions were very popular, bi-monthly drop-ins were arranged. A total of 19 on-site advice sessions were held during the academic year and further sessions have been scheduled in advance for the coming academic year.

The ESOL Advice Service maintains waiting lists for The Learning Trust’s Direct Teach provision, as well as refers learners to The Learning Trust’s

commissioned providers. In addition, the service has recruited eligible learners for courses run by other organisations, including the Refugee Women’s Association, Working Links, Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project, Stoke Newington School, Homerton Library, TBG Learning- Hackney and Tower Hamlets, ELATT and Hackney Community College. An electronic form requesting information on vacancies was sent to all partners on a fortnightly basis and based on the response, suitable learners from our database were invited to join courses. News of vacancies and new ESOL provision was also circulated via the ESOL Working Party meetings, a regular cross-borough forum for ESOL providers and other strategic partners.

A number of organisations have accessed data collated by the ESOL Advice Service in order to provide ESOL provision which responds to the demand in the borough. The most recent requests included figures highlighting the demand for evening ESOL courses; a forecast, based on current figures, on how learners will be affected if government proposals on ESOL funding proceed; numbers on new arrivals to the UK and crèche needs in specific clusters. In addition to these one-off requests, statistics relating to the level of learners, crèche needs, income-based benefit status, etc. were presented at the end of year Cluster meetings, with the intention of allowing for more appropriately targeted ESOL provision.

ESOL advice venues

- 1 The Learning Trust**
1 Reading Lane
E8 1GQ
Tuesdays 1-2pm
- 2 Linden Children's Centre**
85-92 Rectory Road
N16 7SH
Thursdays 1-2pm
- 3 Homerton Library**
Homerton High Street
E9 6AS
Tuesdays 10-11am
- 4 Woodberry Down Children's Centre**
Springpark Drive, Green Lanes
N4 2NP
Fridays 10-11am

The ESOL Advice Service has been publicised in Trust News, the Black and Ethnic Minority Working Group (BEMWG) newsletter, HCVS newsletter, Adult Learners’ Week booklet and Hackney Schools Bulletin. We have also attended a number of community events, including the Hackney Community Empowerment Network (CEN) annual conference, Hackney Refugee Forum, REACH annual conference, Anatolian Cultural Fair, Asian Women’s Aid annual conference, the Family Information Service’s Fun Day and Adult Learners’

Week Launch. New A5 flyers and A3 posters were produced and distributed to all schools, children’s centres and libraries. In addition, fifteen banners, advertising the ESOL Advice Line were bought this year. A pilot of one multilingual banner in a housing estate prompted a number of enquiries, particularly from people very new to the English language.

The process

During an ESOL advice session, learners are interviewed by a qualified ESOL teacher, who assesses their English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In addition to other relevant information for example, childcare requirements and eligibility status, the learner is then referred to suitable provision. Where the learner cannot be catered for via mainstream provision, for example because they are on a spousal visa, appointments are made with the appropriate organisation. We

often receive learners who are not in need of ESOL and these learners are signposted to the IAG, Literacy and/or Numeracy teams at The Learning Trust (Adult Learning Service).

Learners who are referred to partner organisations are sent along with a copy of their initial assessment form (see Appendix 1 and 2), so as to reduce the duplication of processes. The initial assessment form has the following uses:

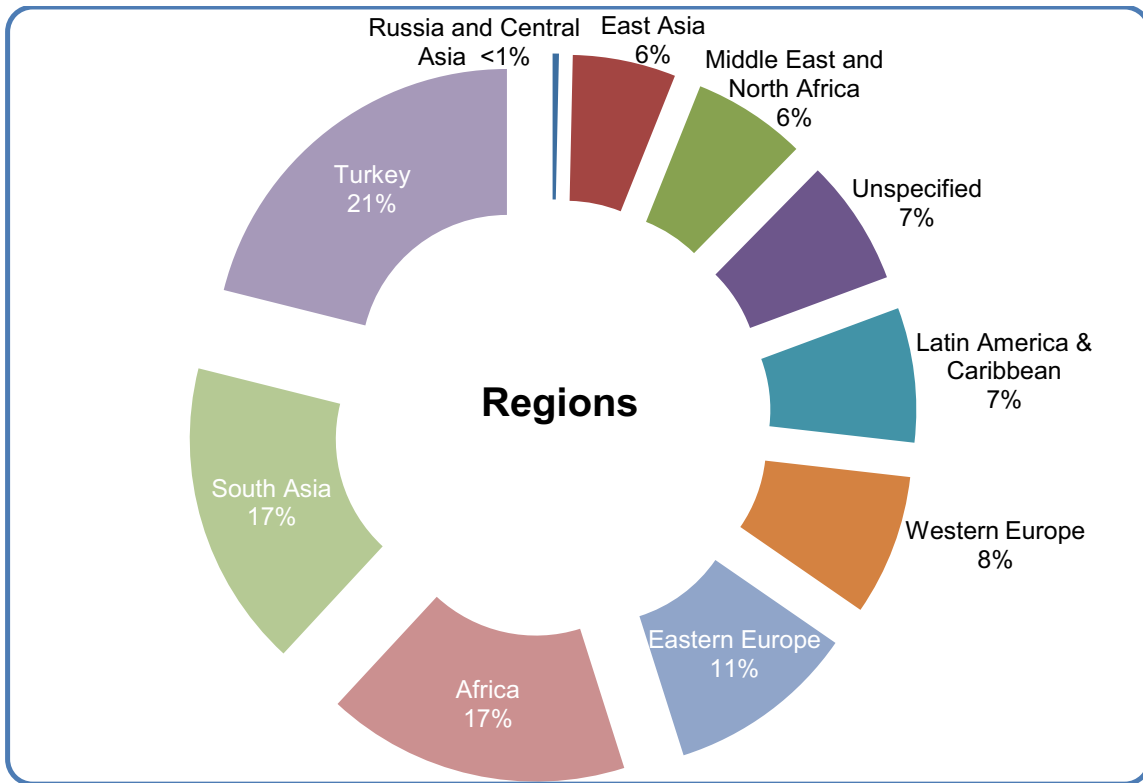
- It informs the learner about their current English speaking, listening, reading and writing levels
- Tells the organisation receiving the referral about the learner's levels and other needs, so that they can be placed in a suitable class
- Provides the class teacher with a brief profile of the learner, so that learner's individual learning needs and context can inform the development of the scheme of work
- Finally, it collects information for the ESOL Advice Service's database, which analyses all students' records to gain information about the profile of the ESOL learner in Hackney and investigates areas of unmet need

The database

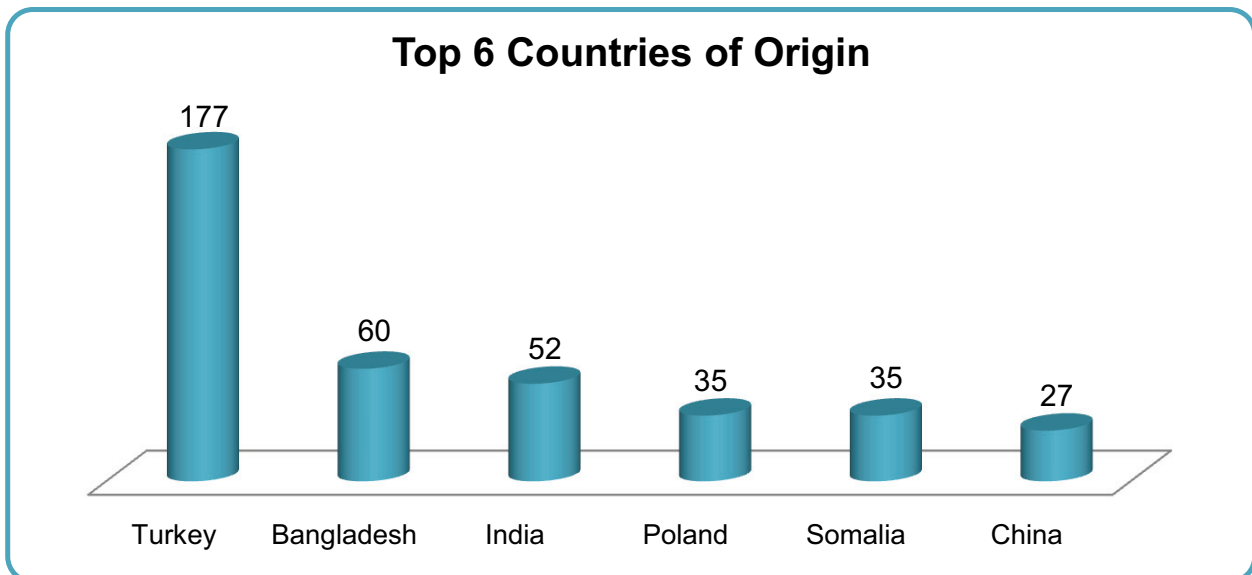
All of the information collected on initial assessment forms is entered into a database and in this report, we will present the analysis of the data collated between September 2010 and June 2011. There are gaps in the data, due to changes being introduced to the initial assessment form mid-year and there being a delay in synchronising the form with the ESOL database. We have included these unknowns (unspecified) in order to allow for the reader to draw realistic conclusions bearing in mind what is unknown and as a service, identify necessary improvements in our data collection processes.

A total of 858 records have been analysed and all records have been included in calculating percentages, except where explicitly stated. Our sample is relatively small compared to the actual number of potential ESOL learners in Hackney and smaller still compared to the estimated 200,000 ESOL learners registered on ESOL courses in England. Therefore, although we do not assert that the findings are generalisable, we do hope they will be relatable, and indeed, prompt further investigation.

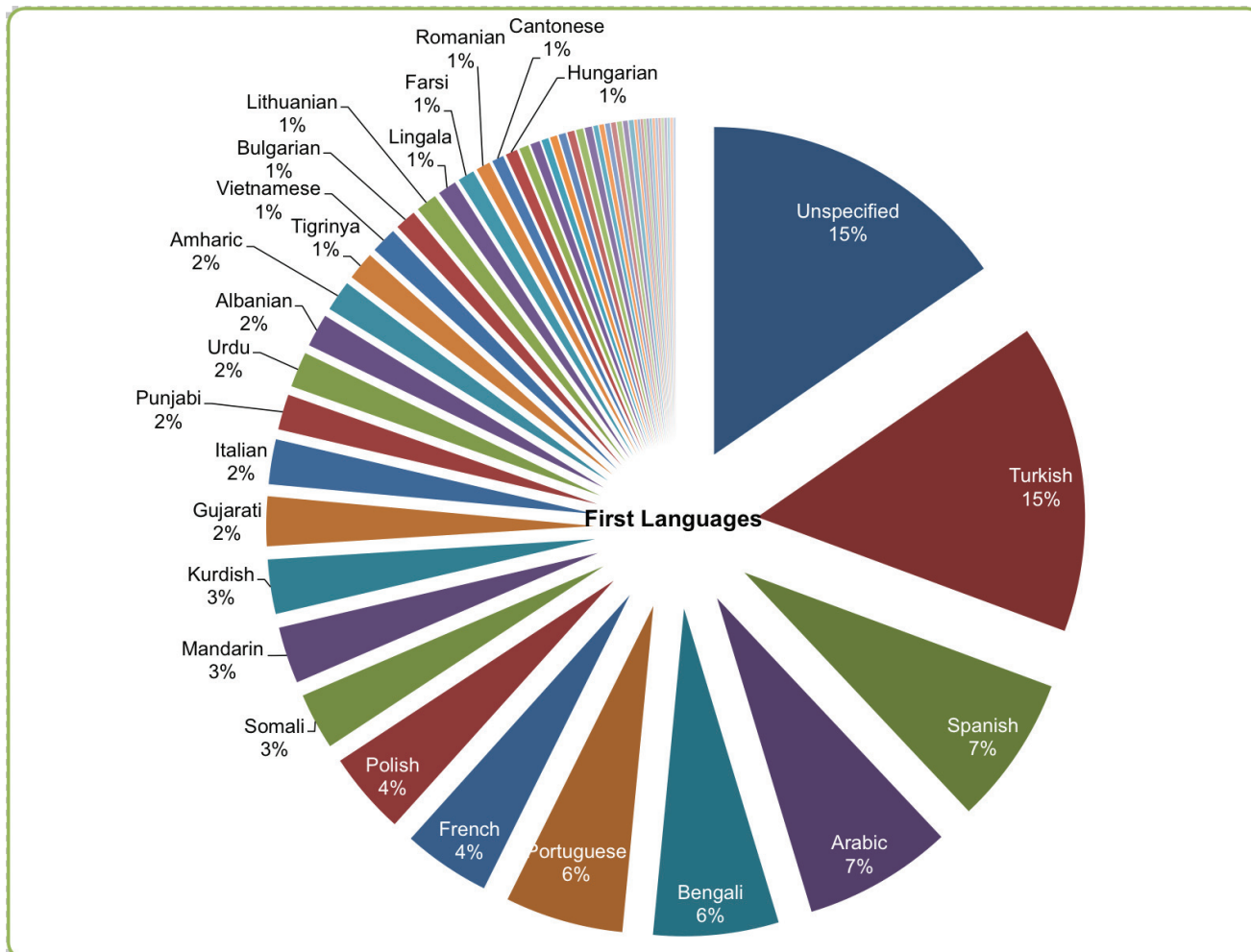
1) Origin and Language



The majority of learners seen this year came primarily from Turkey, Africa and South Asia. Smaller numbers came from Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa and East Asia. Analysed by country of origin, the largest number of learners originated from Turkey. A significant number of learners were from Bangladesh and India, followed by Poland, Somalia and China. The top six countries make up 45% of the total learners seen.

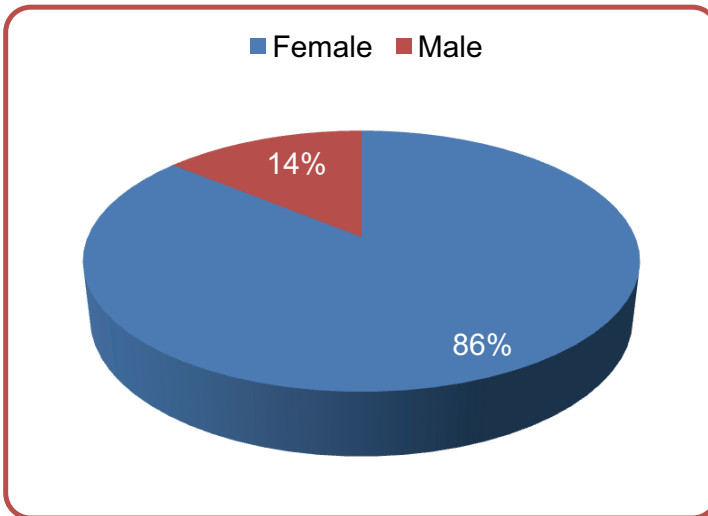


A total of 53 different languages were spoken by our sample. Turkish was the first language most widely spoken by those accessing the ESOL Advice Service, followed by Spanish and Arabic equally. The data on languages differs from that collected for the previous annual report in that previously, no distinction was made between first and additional language. It is only therefore, possible to make limited comparisons between the figures. Languages spoken by less than 1% of learners have not been labelled, but have been included in the calculation.



Indigenous African languages combined made up a total of 9% of the total first languages spoken. The most widely spoken African languages were Somali (33%), Amharic (18%), Tigrinya (16%) and Lingala (11%). 3% of learners stated that Kurdish was their first language. All of these learners, except for two (from Iran and Iraq), were from Turkey. A further 3% listed Kurdish as an additional language; all except 10%, who were from Iraq, originated from Turkey. It is worth noting that due to the ban on the Kurdish language being only recently lifted in Turkey (between 2001 and 2004); it may be the case that some of these learners have continued to specify Turkish as their first language or indeed, speak Turkish more fluently than Kurdish. They may also avoid specifying Kurdish as a language they speak because of the status of the language while they lived in their home country. Numbers of those who speak Kurdish as a first language may therefore be higher than these statistics suggest.

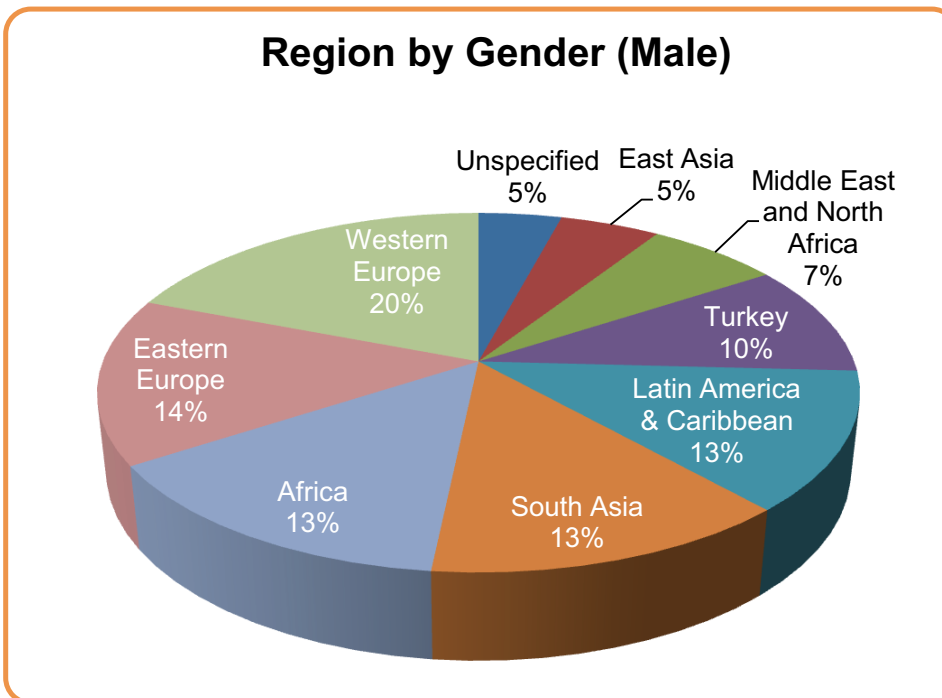
2) Gender



Gender	No.
Female	738
Male	120
Grand Total	858

The vast majority of the 858 learners seen were female. In comparison to last year's figure of 11% however, there has been a slight increase in the number of men seen. This, in real terms, means that almost twice as many men were seen this year. Work commitments have been cited as one of the reasons for the under-representation of men and in

response, the ESOL Advice Service will be piloting an evening advice session as of September 2011 and commissioning evening classes at all three entry levels to cater for the potential demand.

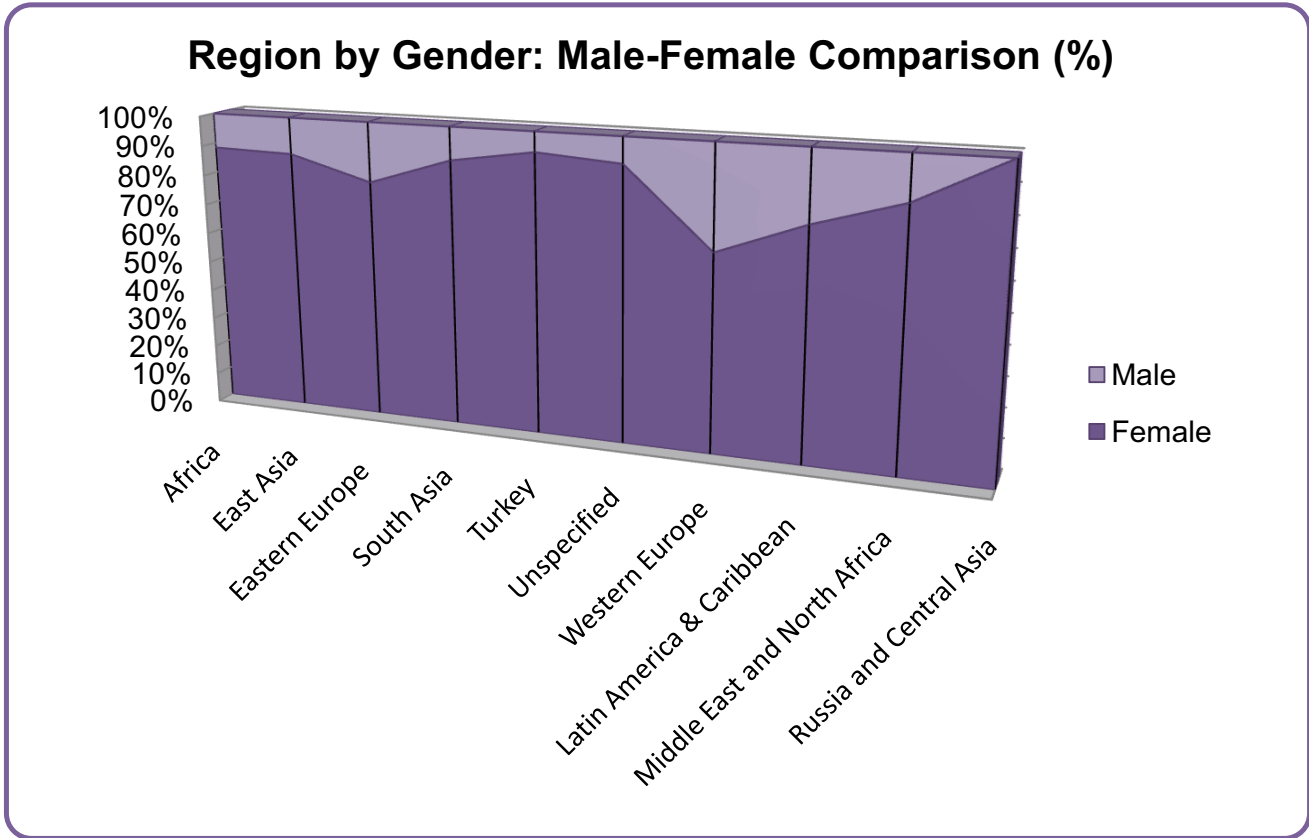


An analysis of the regions of origin (see Appendix 3 for regional classifications) by gender shows that about one-third (34%) of male learners originated from Europe. In our previous analysis of the data (2009-10), Western Europe was not included as the numbers were deemed insignificant during the last academic year. In 2010-11 nonetheless, there has been a marked rise in male learners from this region. In addition,

there has been a slight increase in the percentage of South Asian and African men seen from 9 to 13% and 9 to 14% respectively. We have also seen a marked drop in the percentage of Latin American men, from 32% to 13%.

Males, as a percentage of the total learners from their respective regions, appear to engage with the ESOL Advice Service differently; those from Western Europe make up over one-third (34%) of

all learners seen from this region. Similarly, although less significantly, Latin American and Caribbean men counted for just under one quarter (23%) of the total Latin American and Caribbean cohort. Eastern European men were next at one-fifth and finally, the Middle East and North Africa at 15%. In contrast, for all other regions males made up equal to or less than 12% of each regional group, with the lowest representation amongst Turkish men (7%). Speculating on the reasons for the under-representation of males using anecdotal evidence, it may be the case that men are more likely to be working, or working during unsociable hours, are uncomfortable attending courses run at schools and children's centres and/or are less inclined to attend classes constituting mainly women.

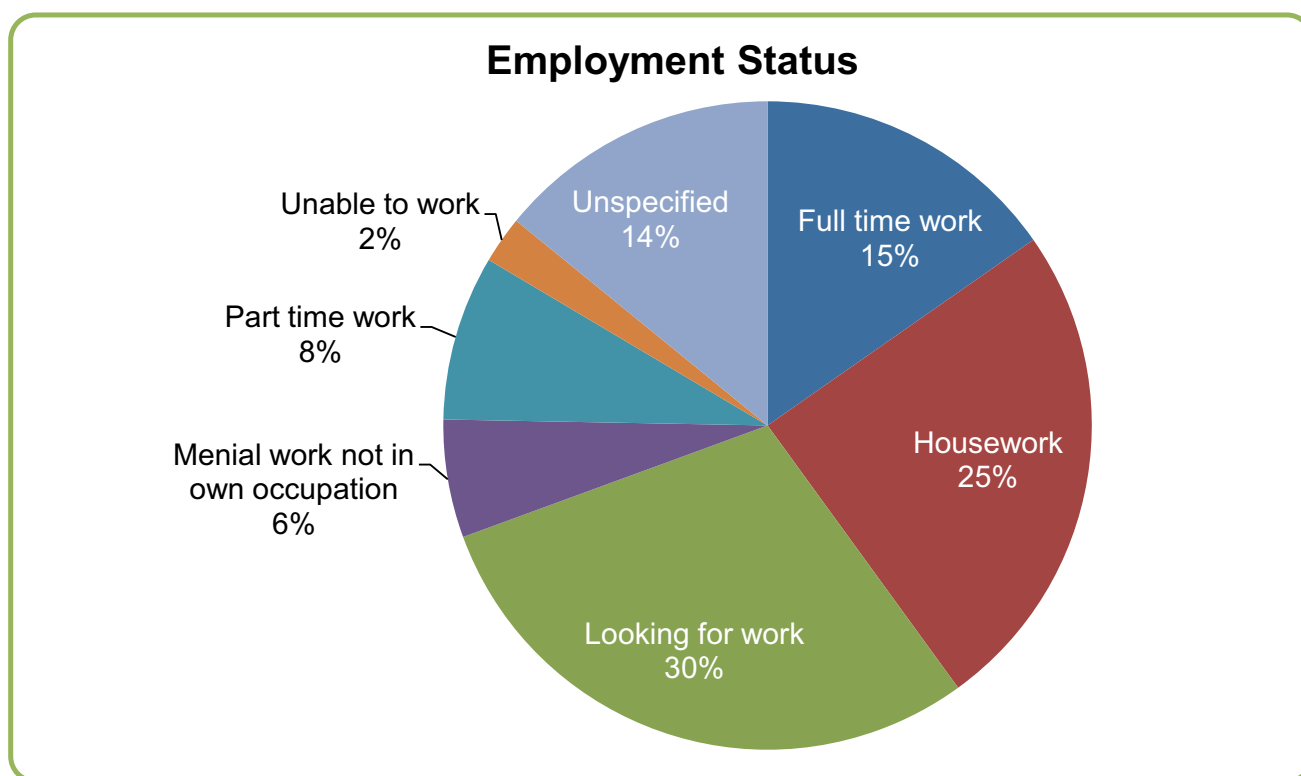


A total of 738 female learners accessed the ESOL Advice Service. Of those, the majority were from Turkey, South Asia and Africa, making up 58% of the total females seen. Similar proportions of women from East Asia and the Middle East and North Africa were seen as men from those regions. Nonetheless, there were far more Turkish female learners than their male counterparts (23% compared to 10%) and males from Western Europe and Latin America were more numerous than their female counterparts (20% compared to 6% and 13% compared to 7% respectively).

3) Home Office, Employment and Income-based Benefit Status

Most (69%) of the learners who used the ESOL Advice Service were British Nationals, EU Nationals or had Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR); 8% were on a spousal visa; Refugees and Asylum Seekers made up 3% of the sample and a very small number (<1%) were on student or working visas. This shows that the vast majority of learners were settled or soon to be settled residents of the UK.

Almost one quarter of the people in our sample were in some form of employment. 30% were looking for work and 2% were unable to work. One quarter of learners were not actively looking for work. Although we did not ask or record learner's reasons for not looking for work, where learners offered a reason, young children, lack of confidence in speaking English and health problems were cited.



In *Skills for Sustainable Growth* (2010), the government proposed changes to the public funding of ESOL. These changes include the following to be implemented from 1st August 2011:

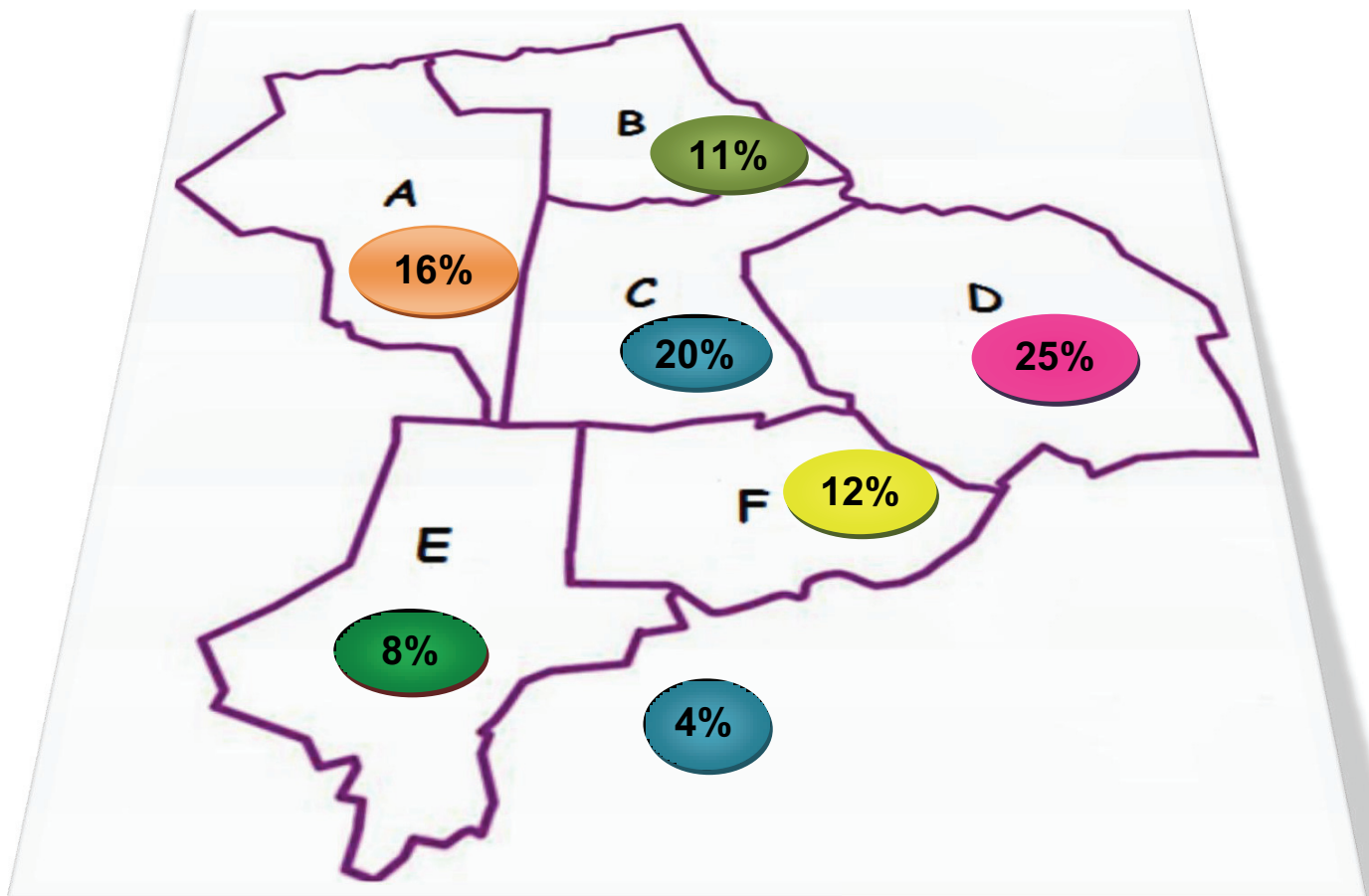
- Full fee remission to be limited to learners receiving 'active benefits'- Job Seeker's Allowance and Employment Support Allowance: Work-related Activity Group (ESA-WRAG). Currently, full fee remission also includes people on other benefits including Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit and Income Support and their dependents. These learners will now be expected to pay 50% of the full cost of their place. Dependents of those on JSA or ESA-WRAG will also be expected to pay full fees, unless the claim is a joint one.

- The Programme Weighting Factor (PWF), previously 1.2, to allow for the slightly longer length of time it takes for ESOL learners to progress from one level to the next relative to mainstream FE learners, will be removed.
- There will be an end of funding in the workplace. The cost of tuition will need to be borne by the learner and their employer.

The changes will affect ESOL provision provided under FE funding streams. Our data indicates more than 88% of the learners seen by the ESOL Advice Service will not be eligible to access free ESOL at FE institutions in September. This will have major repercussions, as a large proportion of the 69% of learners who were placed in a partner organisation's ESOL provision, were placed at Hackney Community College. This route will now be closed to the majority of learners.

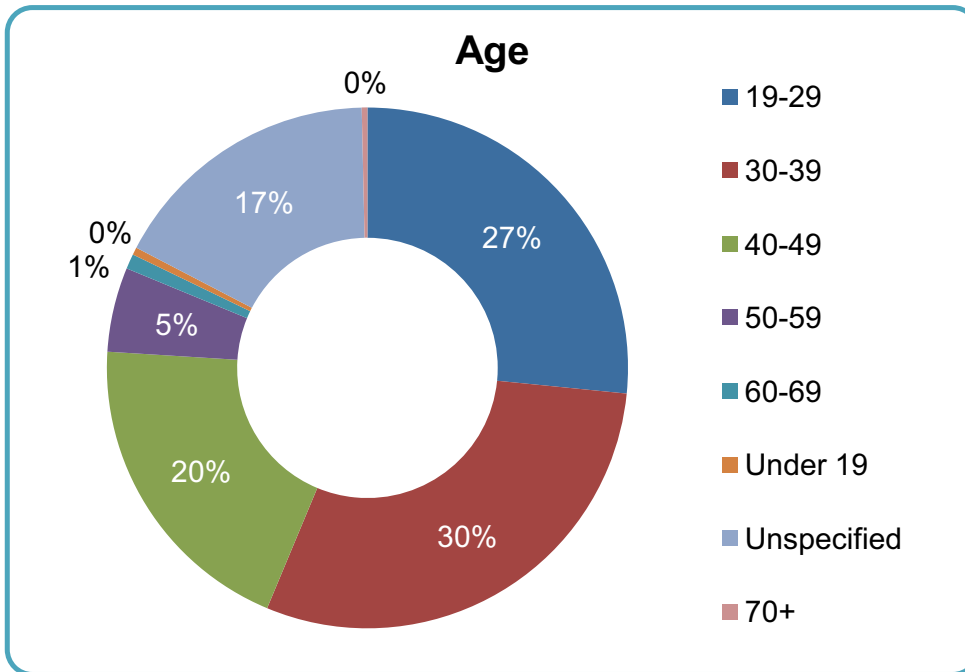
4) Distribution in Hackney

The Learning Trust divides Hackney into six areas called clusters. Within each cluster, schools, children's centres and other services work together to provide services which respond to the needs of the residents. The following map charts learners seen by cluster of residence. The largest number of people seen were from cluster D, followed by cluster C. A much smaller number of learners seen were from cluster E, but this is as would be expected; ELATT and Hackney Community College are located here. From outside of the borough a total of 4% of learners were seen. 4% of learners did not have a valid postcode.

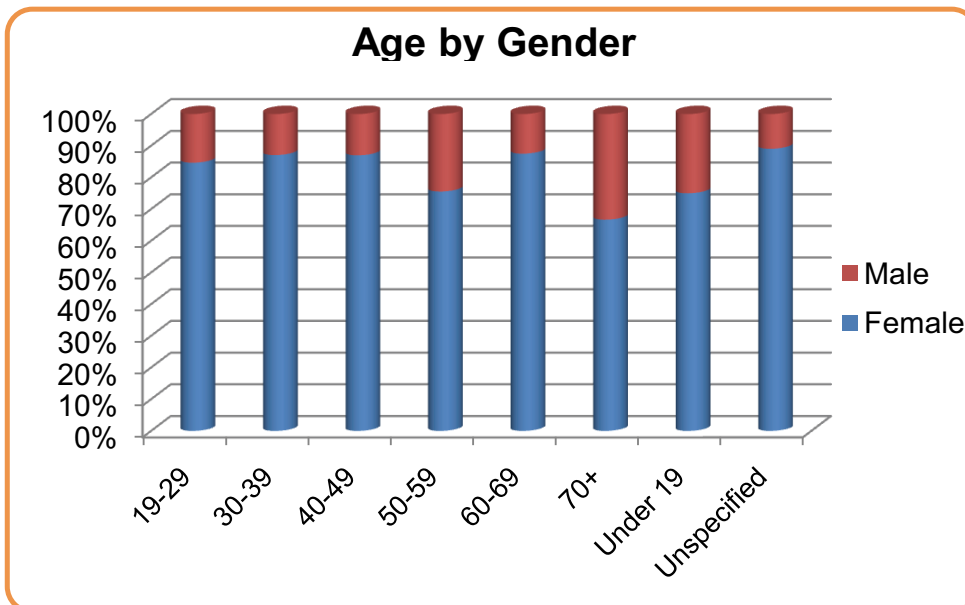


5) Age

This year, as last year, the majority (57%) of learners have been between 19 and 39 years old. A slightly lower percentage of people in their 50s and 60s were seen this year. The larger proportion



in each age group were women, however, men were better represented in the under 19, 50-59 and 70+ age groups. Adult ESOL provision does not usually cater for learners under the age of 19. These learners were nevertheless, signposted to local colleges which do, and also the Connexions service. 17% of learners did not or were not able to specify a date of birth. We have not distinguished between the two reasons for missing data, but intend to do so next year.



Although it might have been expected that interest in ESOL would lessen with age, there appears to be no consistent trend. Age by region data analysis shows that for each region similar numbers of people in the 19-29 and 30-39 age brackets engaged with the ESOL Advice Service. Nevertheless, more African and Latin American learners aged 30-39 years old accessed the service

than their younger counterparts. In the case of Eastern Europeans, the opposite was true; 19-29 years old were more likely to express interest in joining an ESOL class. Learners aged 70 and above were only present in the African, South Asian and Middle East and North African groups. 60-69 year olds did not feature at all in the Eastern Europe, South Asia or Latin American and Caribbean regional groups. It could of course, be the case that these numbers reflect the age spread nationally and do not necessarily indicate a reluctance to access ESOL advice.

6) Levels

The following sections will compare learners' level of English with a number of other variables. A brief outline of what learners should be able to do by the end of each level has been outlined to aid those who are unfamiliar with the grading criteria. Writing criteria have not been included due to reading and writing skills usually reflecting each other. It should be noted that at initial assessment, the level recorded indicates the level of ESOL course a learner is 'ready' for. That is, it is not the level they have already reached, but will hopefully reach by the end of their course. Each level does not correspond to one academic year of learning. Learners, depending on their individual learning needs, may take a longer or a shorter length of time to progress to the next level.

Reading: Level Descriptors

E1

- "Read and understand short texts with repeated language patterns on familiar topics
- Read and obtain information from common signs and symbols in texts such as public signs and notices, lists, forms, notes, records, simple narratives.'

E2

- Read and understand short, straightforward texts on familiar topics read and obtain information from short documents, familiar sources and signs and symbols in texts such as public signs and notices, lists, forms, notes, records, e-mails, simple narratives, letters and diagrams

E3

- Read and understand short straightforward texts on familiar topics accurately and independently read and obtain information from everyday sources in texts such as forms, notes, records, e-mails, narratives, letters, diagrams, simple instructions, short reports"

L1

Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades D-E

L2

Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades A-C

Speaking and Listening: Level Descriptors

E1

- "Listen and respond to spoken language, including simple narratives, statements, questions and single-step instructions
- Speak to communicate basic information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics
- Engage in discussion with another person in a familiar situation about familiar topics in simple and familiar formal exchanges...

E2

- Listen and respond to spoken language, including straightforward information, short narratives, explanations and instructions
- Speak to communicate information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics
- Engage in discussion with one or more people in a familiar situation, to establish shared understanding about familiar topics in straightforward familiar formal exchanges ...

E3

- Listen and respond to spoken language, including straightforward information and narratives, and follow straightforward explanations and instructions, both face-to-face and on the telephone
- Speak to communicate information, feelings and opinions on familiar topics, using appropriate formality, both face-to-face and on the telephone
- Engage in discussion with one or more people in a familiar situation, making relevant points and responding to what others say to reach a shared understanding about familiar topics in familiar formal exchanges..."

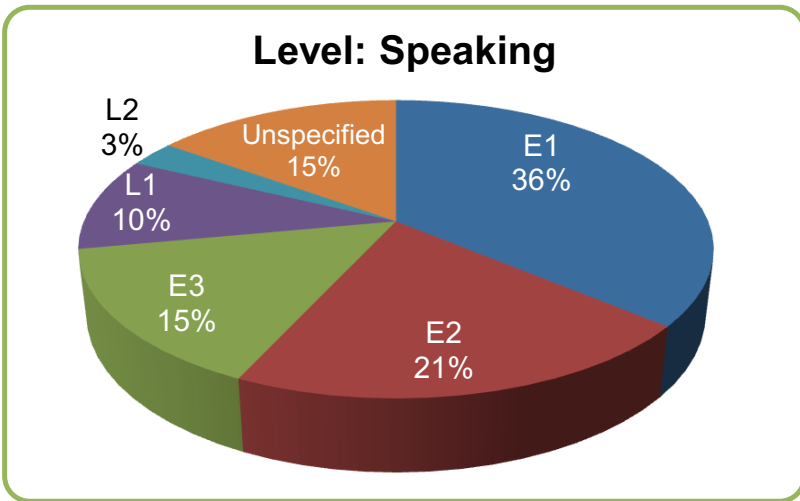
L1

Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades D-E

L2

Roughly equivalent to GCSE grades A-C

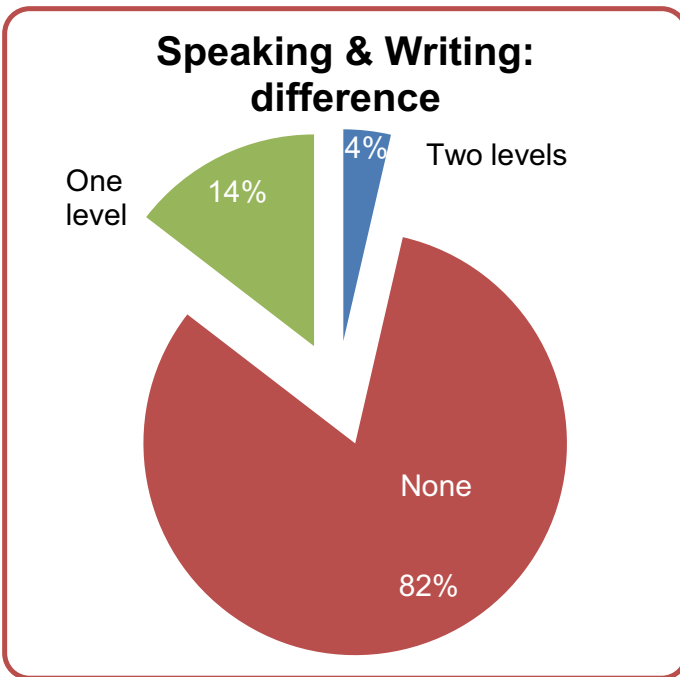
Source: Adult ESOL Core Curriculum



In addition to these national ESOL level descriptors, in order to differentiate within levels the ESOL Advice Service has introduced sub-levels 'a' and 'b'. The first indicates an emerging skill and the latter a consolidating or established skill. Due to the sub-levels 'a' and 'b' being introduced much later in the year there are gaps in the data; we have used only whole levels in the analysis below for this reason.

The largest proportion of learners seen were speaking at Entry Level 1

(E1), followed by Entry Level 2 (E2), then Entry Level 3 (E3), Level 1 (L1) and finally, Level 2 (L2). Cluster-based analysis shows E1 speakers as the majority in all clusters and progressively fewer learners as the level increased. However, in Cluster B, more E3 learners were seen than E2.

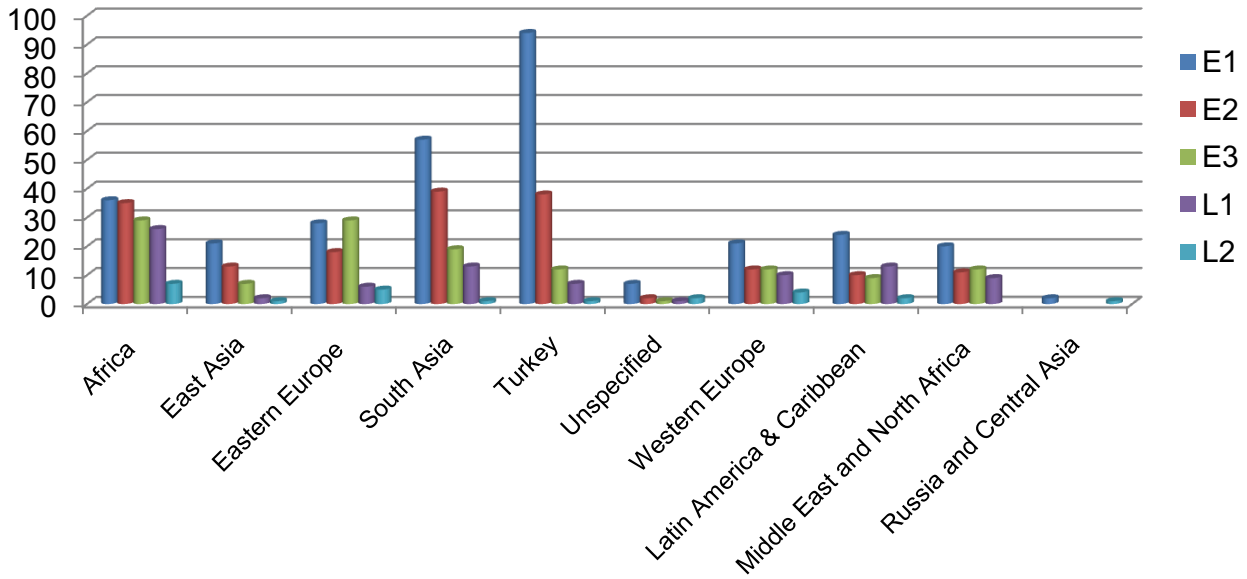


In terms of literacy skills, similar figures were found, except that there were fewer people writing at L2 and L1 than might be expected based on the total numbers in each group. Literacy needs were identified in 18% of learners. This is where a learner's reading and writing level was graded at least one whole level below their speaking level. Although a difference of a sub-level, for example, speaking: E3a and writing: E2b, is common amongst ESOL learners and catered for in ESOL classrooms, learners with a one or two level difference would normally be referred to an ESOL-literacy course. Hackney Community College ran a number of such courses this year and they proved highly popular. Unfortunately, as is often the case, demand outstrips supply and there is a very urgent need for more ESOL-literacy provision in the borough.

Not included in the 18% above are E1 learners in our sample who are not literate in any language. We refer to these learners as E1a or E1 basic literacy learners (the term pre-entry is often incorrectly used). Due to introducing this distinction between the two groups much later in the year, we are unable to include E1 basic literacy figures in our overall literacy needs figure; 18% is therefore, an underestimate. Generally, basic literacy learners consist of learners who speak at all levels of English, but who are taking their first steps into English reading and writing. Learners include those who are literate in another language, with a non-Roman script, and those who are not literate at all. The latter type of basic literacy learners typically take longer to develop their writing skills compared to their peers who are literate in another language.

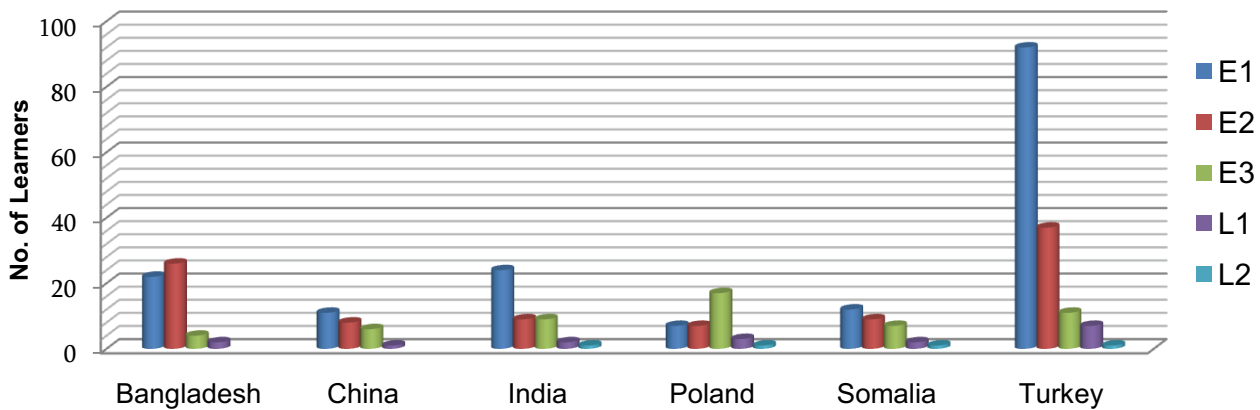


Region of Origin and Level of English (Speaking)



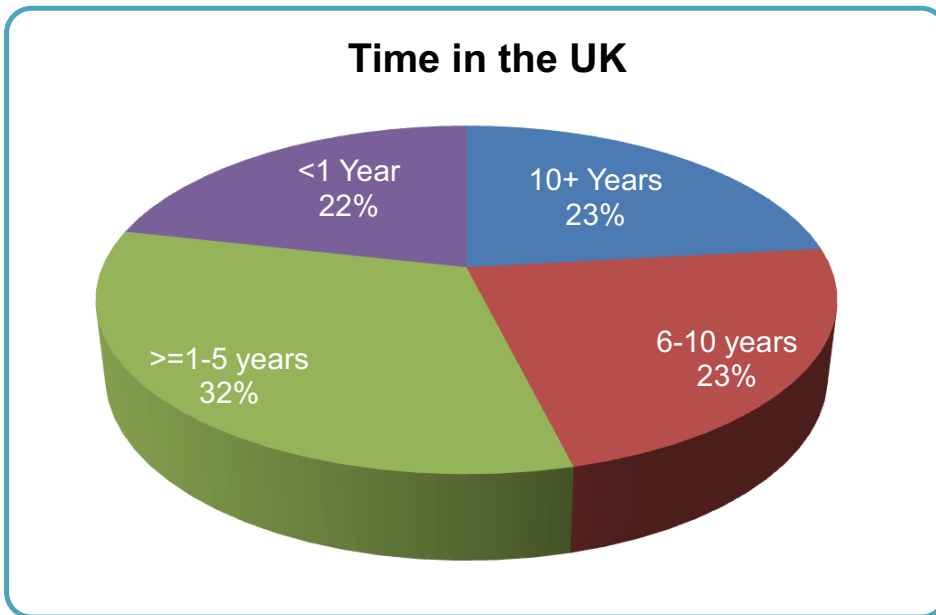
Generally, the number of learners decreased as the level of English increased in each region. This however, was not always the case. Eastern European learners were more numerous in number at E3 than E1 or E2. There were equal numbers of E2 and E3 learners from Western Europe. L1 Latin American learners were more common than E2 or E3 Latin American learners and finally, the E3 group was one learner larger than the E2 group in the Middle East and North African cohort. For all except the Eastern European region, the greatest number of learners seen were at E1.

Top 6 Countries by Level of English



Focussing solely on our top six countries, the trend continues, except for Poland, where learners were more likely to be speaking at E3; India, where learners were more likely to be speaking at E3 than E2 and finally, Bangladesh, where learners were marginally more likely to be speaking at E2 than E1. Interestingly, there were no L2 speakers from Bangladesh and China.

6) Length of time in the UK

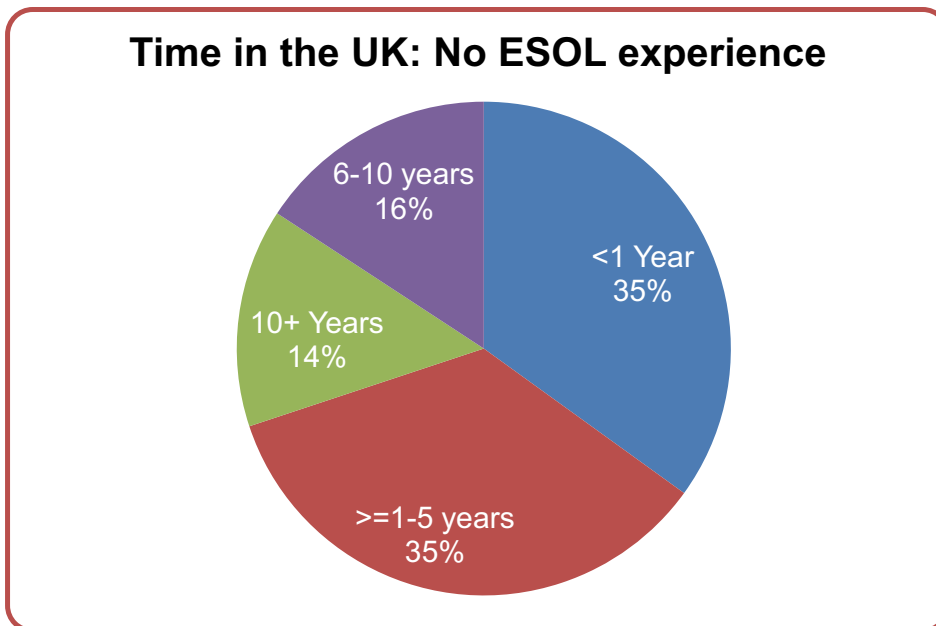


Most learners had been in the country between one and five years. This is a shift from last year, where most were resident 6-10 years. This year the number of learners who had been in the UK less than 1 year has doubled and those who had been here 10 years or more were over three times greater (7 to 23%).

Learners who had been in the UK less than one year were, as might be

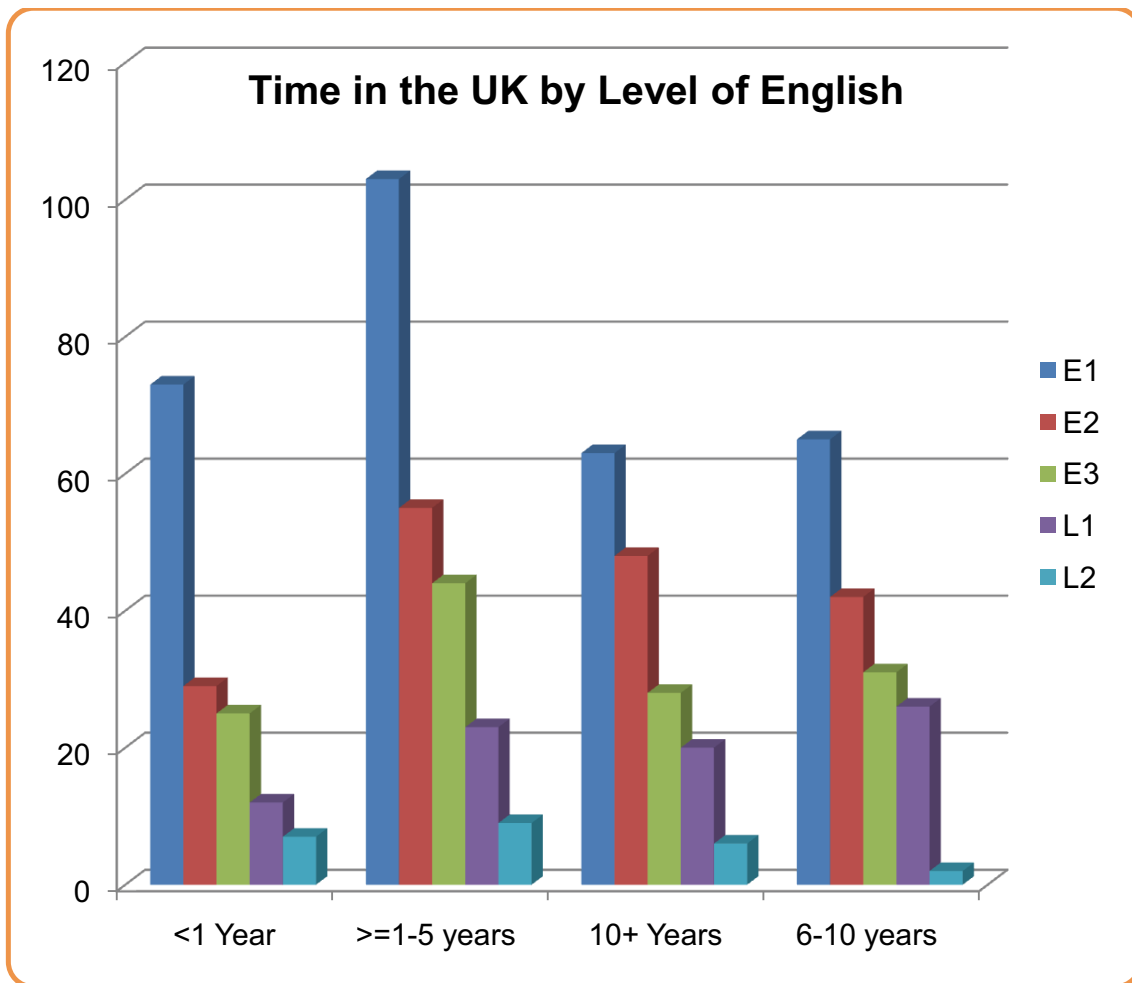
expected, of those least likely to have had experience of an ESOL course. What is surprising is that those who had been in the UK between 1-5 years were equally as likely not to have had any ESOL experience, i.e. they had never been to an ESOL course, even an informal, non-accredited one. In addition, three out of 10 learners who had been in the country 6 years or more, had not engaged in an ESOL class before. These are worrying statistics, particularly as research suggests learners made the most rapid progress in the first five years of residency in the UK and even more within the first 12 months (see Baynham et al., 2007). Some learners explained they were unaware of free classes being available, while others decided not to pursue learning English until their children began full-time school. A significant

number also described trying to join an ESOL class, but always being placed on lengthy waiting lists due to the lack of provision. Some learners on spousal visas assumed they would not be able to access free provision until they had been resident in the UK one year, and others thought they would be ineligible until they had received ILR. One learner, a refugee, explained that the uncertainty of whether she would be granted refugee status prevented her from joining an ESOL class; unfortunately, the learner was only granted refugee status after ten years of living in the UK, so delaying her start in learning English. We have recently started collecting information on the



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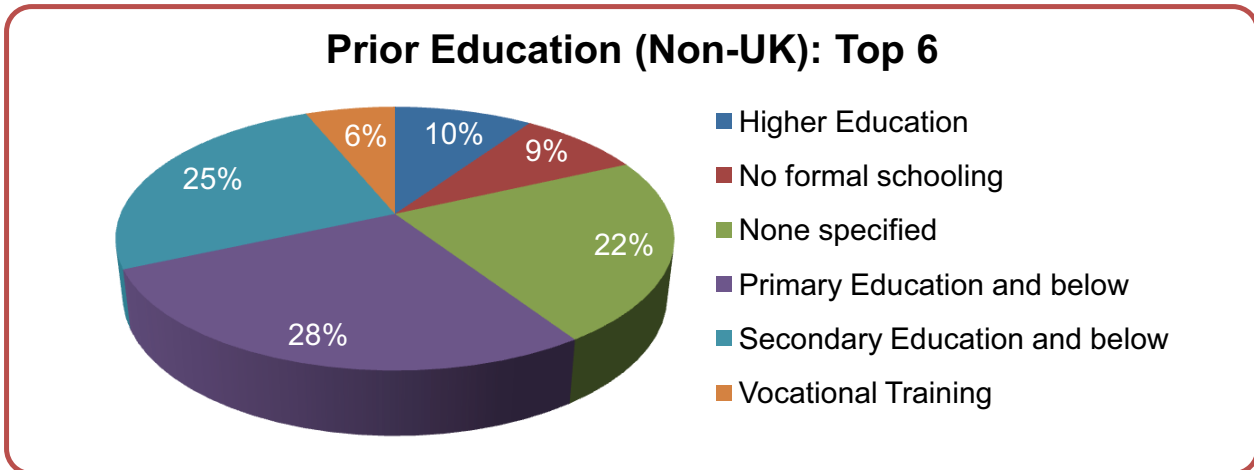
reasons learners were not able to join an ESOL class, so hope to be able to offer more conclusive evidence on the reasons for the delayed engagement next year.



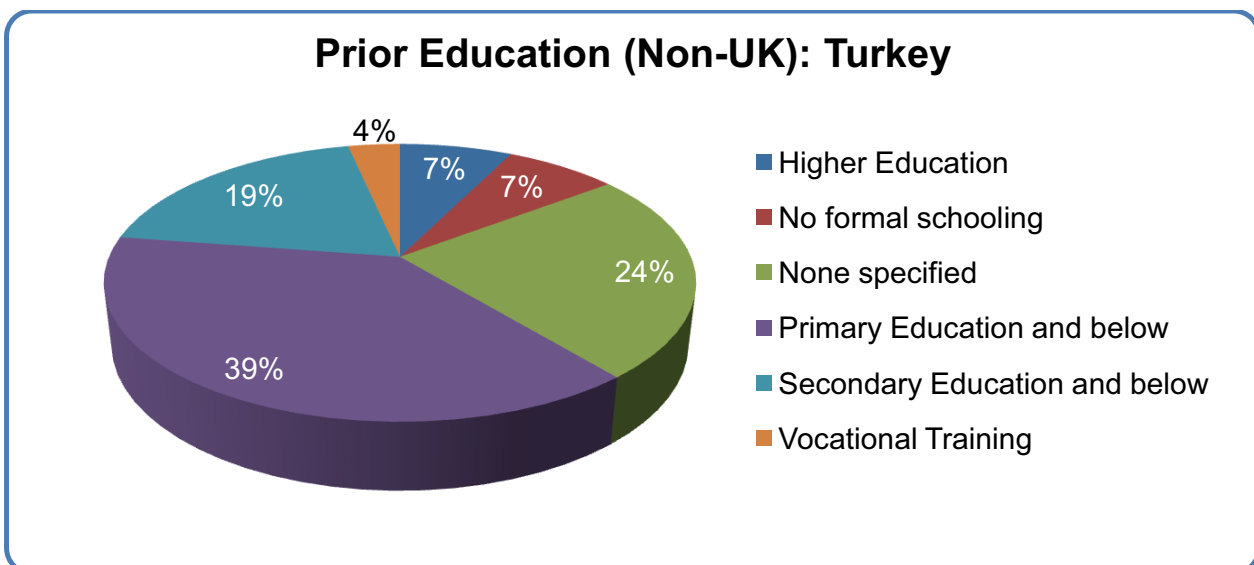
Length of time in the UK did not correlate to level of English in this sample of learners, i.e. the level of English does not increase with the number of years of residence in the UK. Language acquisition and learning is dependent on a whole host of factors including exposure to English, which does not always correlate with length of residence, the need to use the target language, age of arrival, etc (see Rasinger, 2007). The bar chart shows that in all age categories E1 learners were the most numerous. There is a peak between 1-5 years, suggesting this is the stage learners decide to engage with learning the language and therefore, approach the ESOL Advice Service. It could also be the case that it is at this stage that learners first encounter the service, possibly due to the publicity they are likely to discover in children’s centres and schools. Finally, some learners have said they consciously decided against trying to join a class to learn English until their children joined school full-time, when they would have more free time to study and manage their other responsibilities.

7) Prior Education

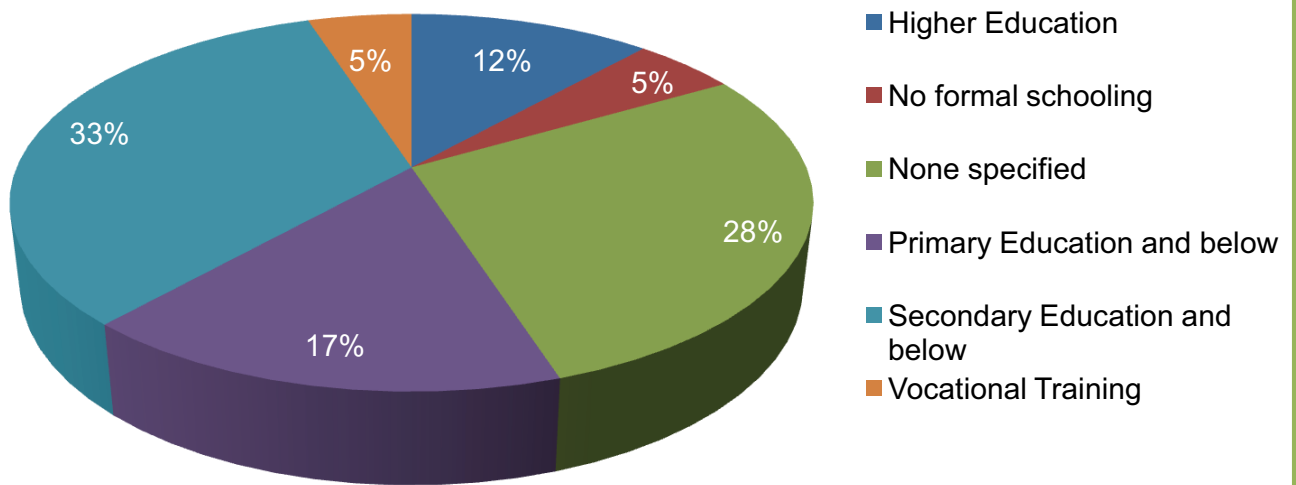
9% of learners seen had not engaged in any formal schooling in their countries of origin. A little over one quarter had had a primary education and a quarter had received secondary schooling or below. 16% of learners had engaged in further or higher education. In total, 28% of all learners seen did not specify literacy in any language. In contrast, 34% spoke at least two languages other than English.



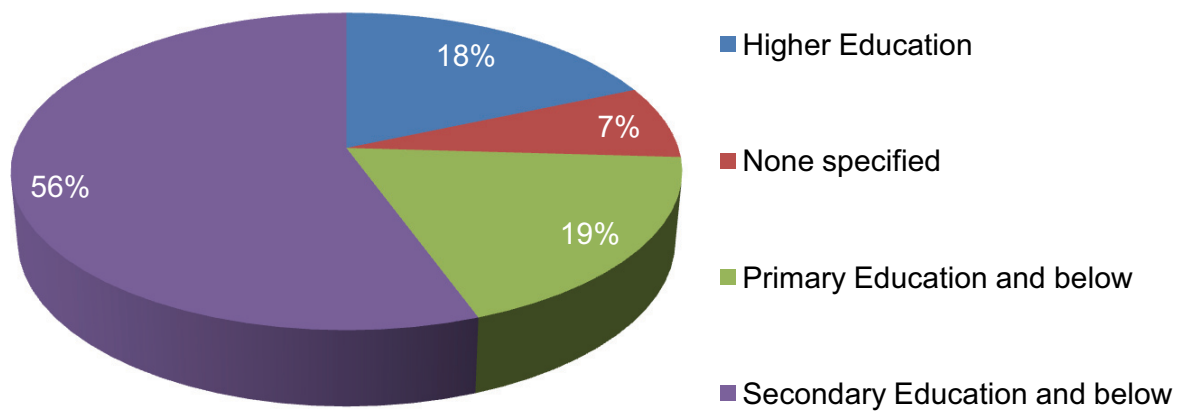
Broken down by the top six countries, between 5 and 8% of Bangladeshi, Turkish and Indian learners had no previous schooling. This figure rose to 40% for Somali learners. 22% overall did not specify the level of schooling they had had. The charts illustrate that for a significant number of learners, the course they joined or will eventually be placed on will be their first experience of formal education. A number of challenges and opportunities will arise as a result. Furthermore, many learners possess valuable skills and expertise, which they can share and develop, once they have a good command of the language and if they are offered effective advice and guidance.



Prior Education (Non-UK): Bangladesh

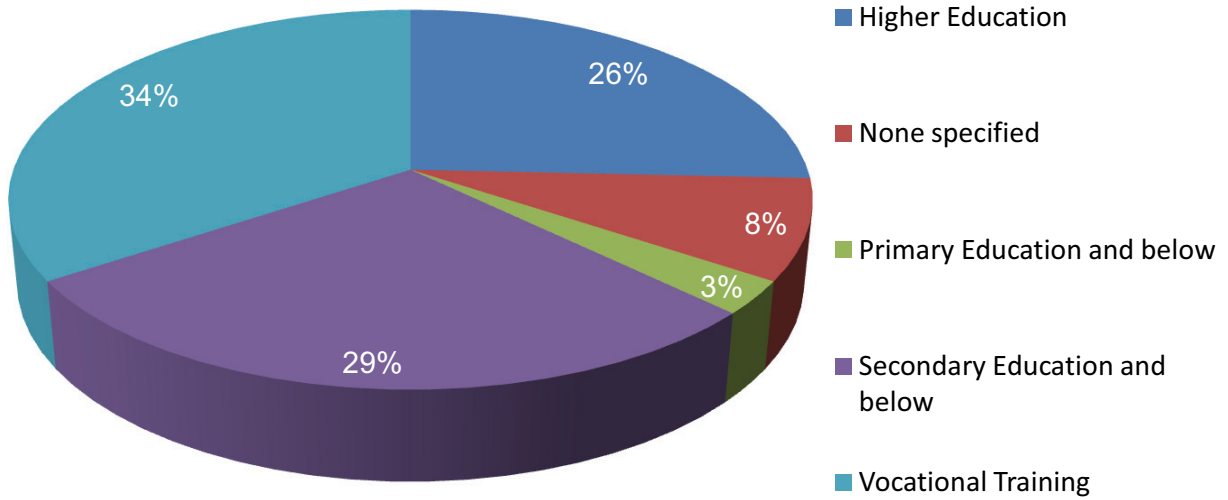


Prior Education (Non-UK): China

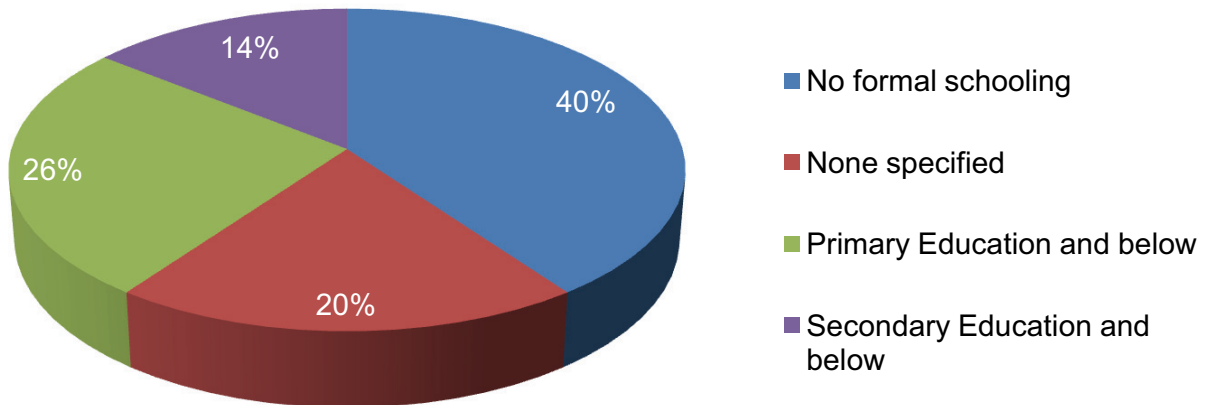




Prior Education (Non-UK): Poland



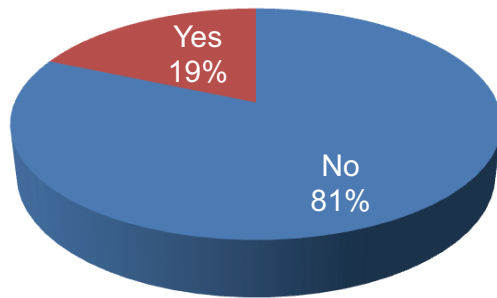
Prior Education (Non-UK): Somalia



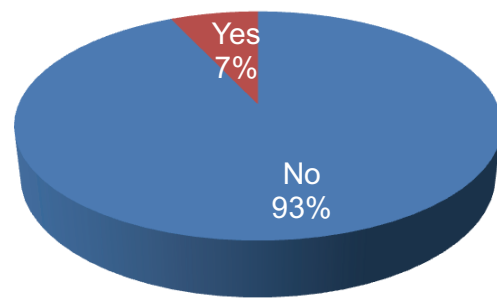
8) Preferences

Wherever possible, learners were placed in ESOL provision suited to their preferences. Learners were asked whether they preferred evening classes, intensive classes and how willing or able they were to travel. 19% of learners said they would be interested in joining an evening ESOL class. Males were more likely to express this preference than females (58% compared to 12%). Intensive classes were a preference for 7% of learners; 12% of males opted for this option compared to 6% of women.

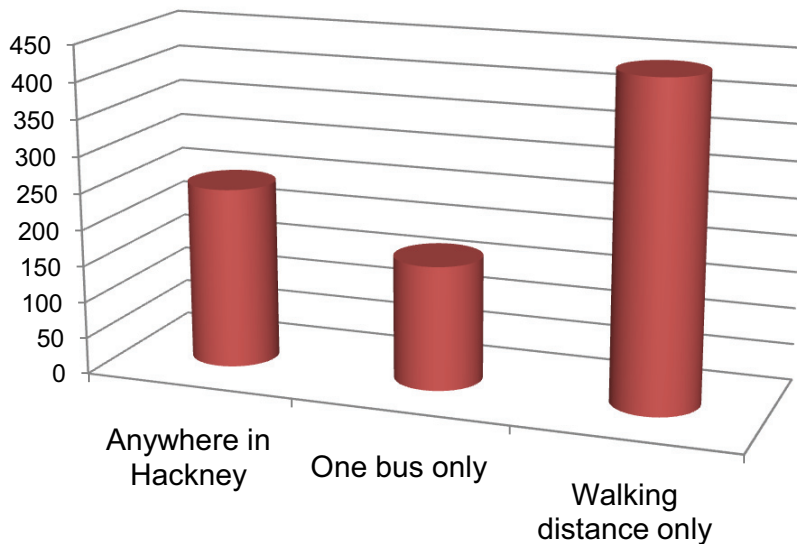
Evenings ESOL Classes?



Intensive ESOL Classes?



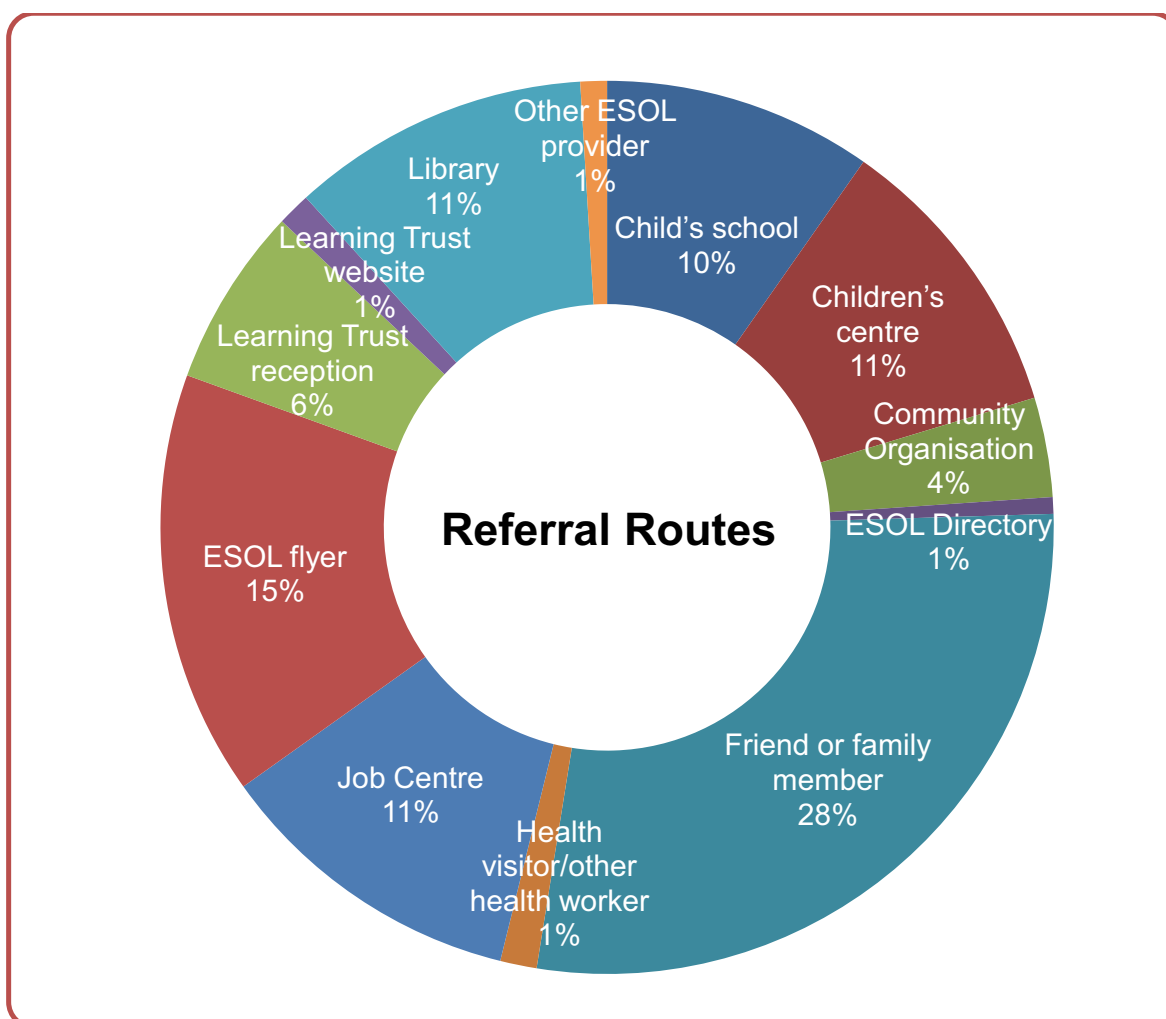
Travel preferences



Just over half of all learners preferred to join a course within walking distance only (51%). Reasons given included the school run, not being able to afford travel expenses, ill-health and being unfamiliar with bus routes or area. One-fifth said they would consider taking one bus only and 29% were willing to travel anywhere in Hackney. 36% of those willing and able to use a bus were successfully placed compared to a smaller 23% for those who said they would only consider a course within walking distance. Bearing in mind that it is not necessarily the case that learners adhered

to their initial preference in all cases, the statistics highlight one of the major difficulties faced by the ESOL Advice Service in placing learners.

9) Referral routes



Although it is difficult to capture actual referral routes, often due to comprehension of the question and that learners may have encountered a number of prompts, our analysis reveals that most learners come to learn about the ESOL Advice Service through friends and family. The next most cited referral route was the ESOL flyer. It is likely that the ESOL flyer figure captures a number of referral routes, as flyers have been distributed to all schools, children's centres and libraries on a bi-monthly basis. Following the ESOL flyer, children's centre, schools and the library and Job Centre equally were cited.

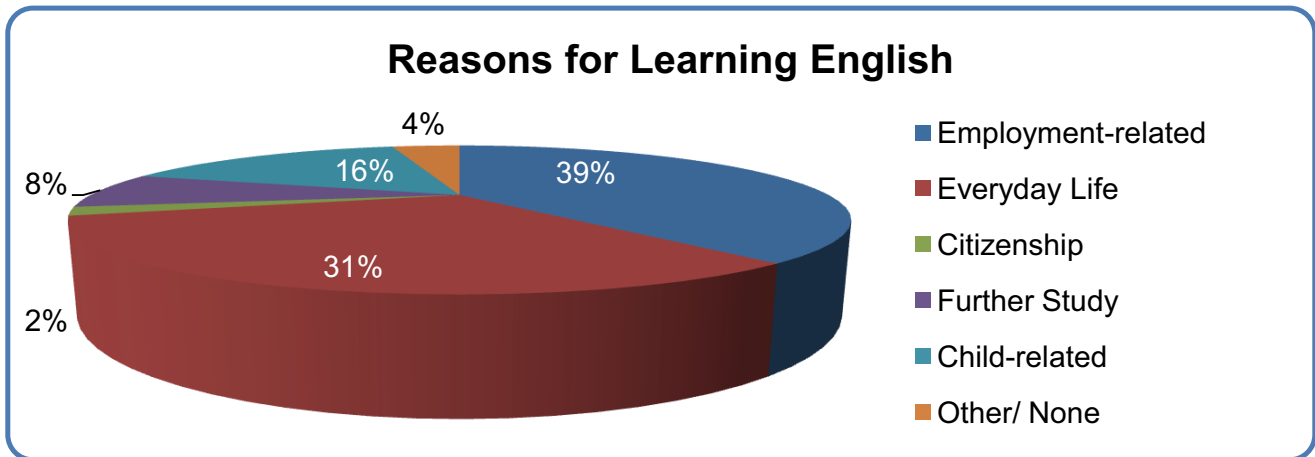
There has been a 7% increase in the number of Job Centre Plus referrals, particularly in recent weeks since JCP and DWP-funded ESOL provision at Metropole, Working Links and A4e has been closed. Learners, who were previously sent for ESOL assessment and advice from JCP to JCP-funded providers, are being redirected to the ESOL Advice Service. A large number of the learners placed with these providers have returned to the ESOL Advice Service, having been offered no alternative progression routes following the completion of their course. Given the shortage of places in ESOL classes, learners who are sent by JCP to the ESOL Advice Service are often faced with the dilemma of being obliged to show evidence of having joined an ESOL



class, in order to continue receiving their benefits. Meetings with JCP to discuss these issues and possible solutions are being planned for the coming academic year.

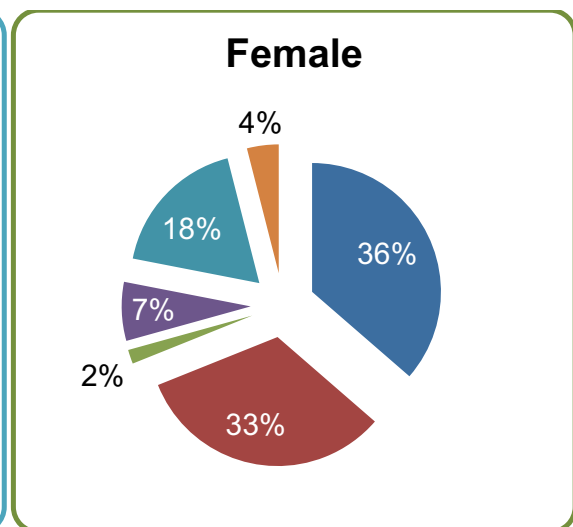
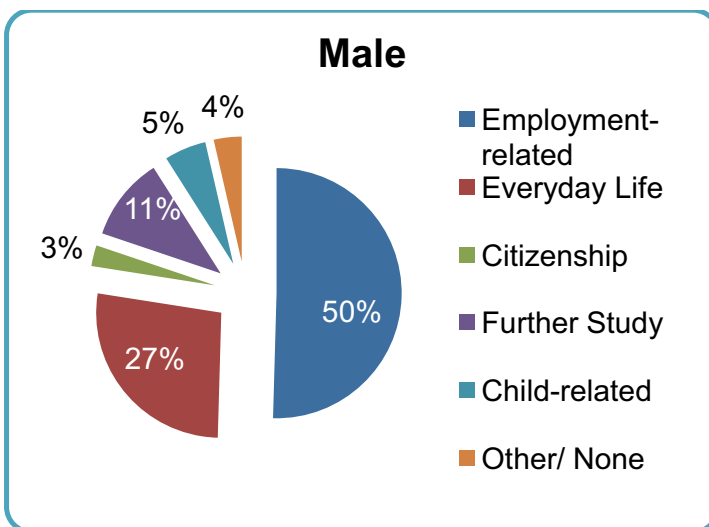


10) Reasons for Learning



The reason people chose to join an ESOL class varied, however, the primary reason appears to be employment-related; either to get a job or get a better job. The next most common reason given was speaking English for ‘everyday life’, which included talking to the doctor, shopping, etc. 16% wanted to learn English to help with their child’s education or understand their child and 8% hoped to learn enough English to go onto further study.

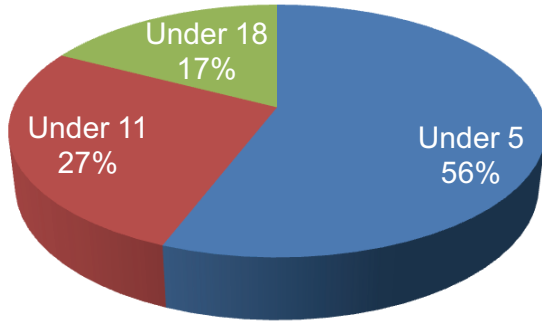
Both men and women cited employment-related reasons, everyday life and child-related reasons as their three main reasons for learning English. There were differences in reasons for learning by gender, nonetheless; males were more likely to want to learn English for employment-related reasons than their counterparts. They were slightly less likely to want to learn English for citizenship or community-related reasons and further study and significantly less interested in learning English for child-related reasons (5% citing this compared to the female 18%). We also found that as the level of English increased, so did the number of learners who cited employment-related reasons for learning English: E1- 22%, E2- 55% and E3- 62%. Conversely, as the level of English decreased, English for everyday life was more often cited as a reason: E1- 57%, E2-26%, E3-14%. It would be interesting to investigate how learners’ reasons for learning change following each year of ESOL achievement.



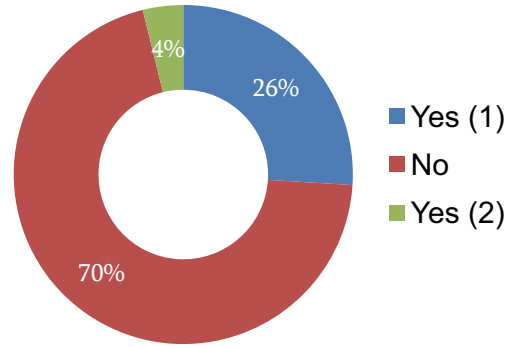
25

11) Children

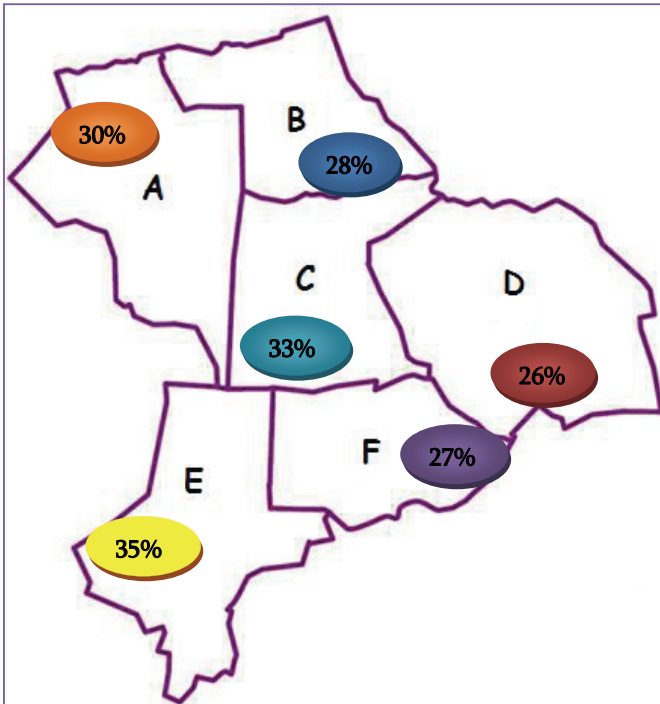
Parents: Age of children



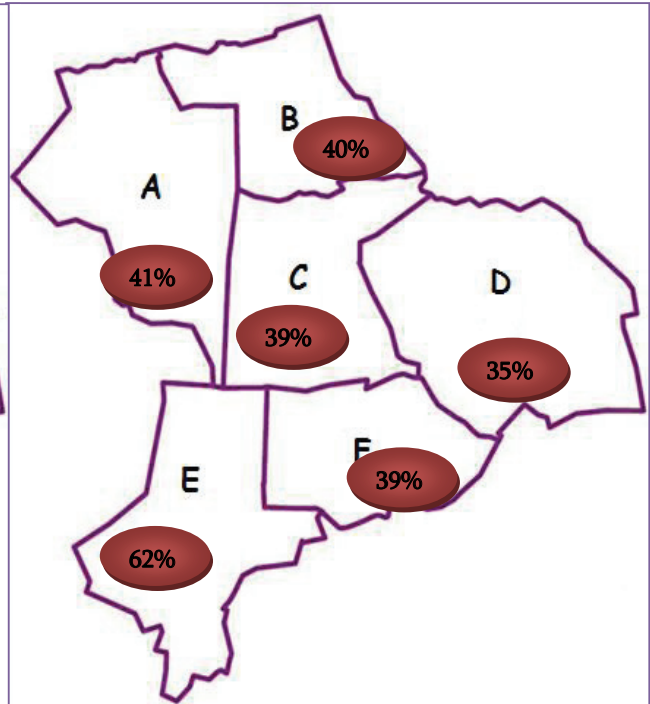
Crèche needs?



69% of the learners seen had a child under 18 years old. 39% of all learners had at least one child under 5 years old, 19% at least one child between 5 and 11 years old and 12% at least one child between 11 and 18 years old. Almost one-third (30%) of learners seen had crèche needs for at least one of their children. ESOL courses without childcare have often been the most difficult to fill. In other cases, where children’s centres have insisted on learners with crèche needs only, we have had a shortage of parents with children needing crèche. And yet, there are also cases where we have been unable to invite learners with crèche needs to a course with vacancies, due to the restrictions on staff to child ratios.

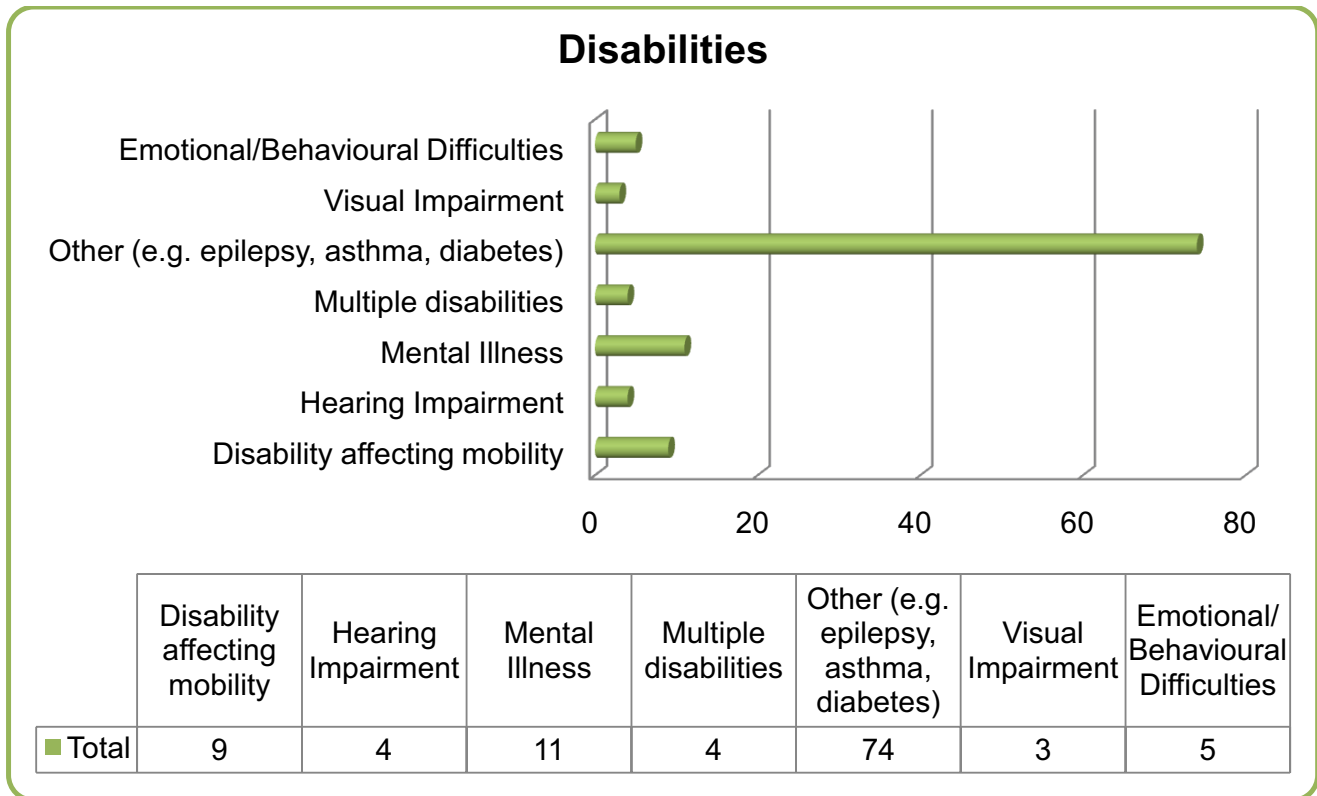


Crèche need by cluster (as a % of people seen in that cluster)



Child under 5? Yes - by cluster (as a % of people seen in that cluster)

12) Disabilities

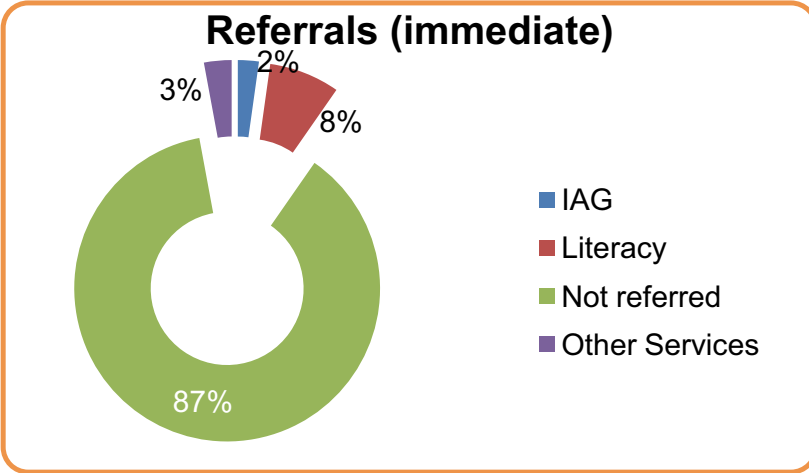


110 learners (13%) declared a disability or condition which would affect their learning. Of these, 74 (9% of total sample, 67% of this group of learners) specified a health problem such as epilepsy, asthma and/or diabetes. Not including this group, who were at least as likely to be placed as those who did not declare a condition, we are left with 36 learners, 14% of whom were successfully placed. Provision for learners with mental health problem was available through the Trust's commissioned courses at City and Hackney Mind and also, a Hackney Community College course. There were no profoundly deaf learners in our sample.

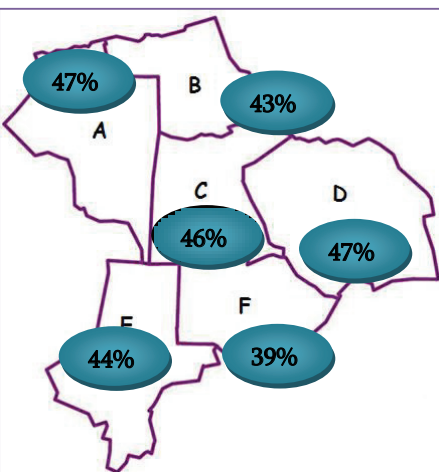
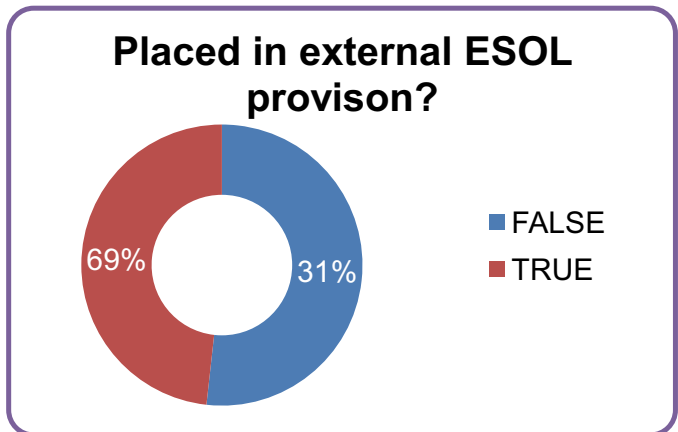
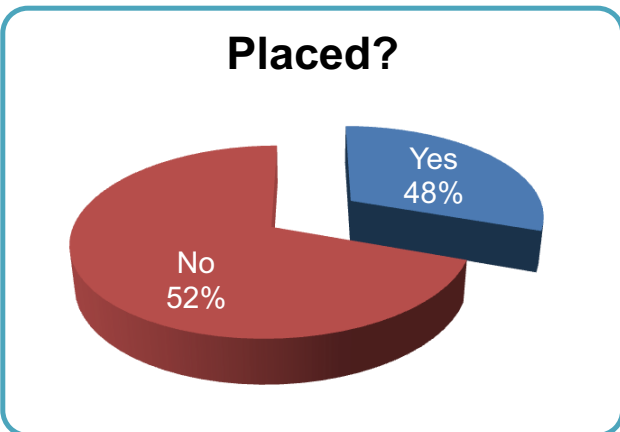
Learners with multiple disabilities, those with disabilities affecting mobility and the sole blind learner were not placed. Due to travel being difficult for learners with mobility problems and being unable to find specifically tailored provision for the blind learner, placing these learners proved impossible. All remain nonetheless, on our waiting list. In the case of the blind learner, numerous organisations were contacted in an effort to find specifically tailored provision; none appears to be available in Hackney or Tower Hamlets. This inequality needs to be addressed and has been included in the agenda for the next ESOL Working Party meeting. There are hopes that a joint bid, partnership and cross-borough working will alleviate the barriers faced by this and other learners who are disabled.

13) Outcomes

The following section will explore the outcomes for the people who were advised and guided by the ESOL Advice Service.



Learners who attended an ESOL advice session who on assessment were found to have needs other than ESOL, were referred to other services. Those speaking at L1 with literacy problems for example, were given details of the Learning Trust's Literacy advice sessions; under 19s were referred to Connexions and colleges offering ESOL for under 19s; and finally, learners fluent or almost fluent in English were referred to The

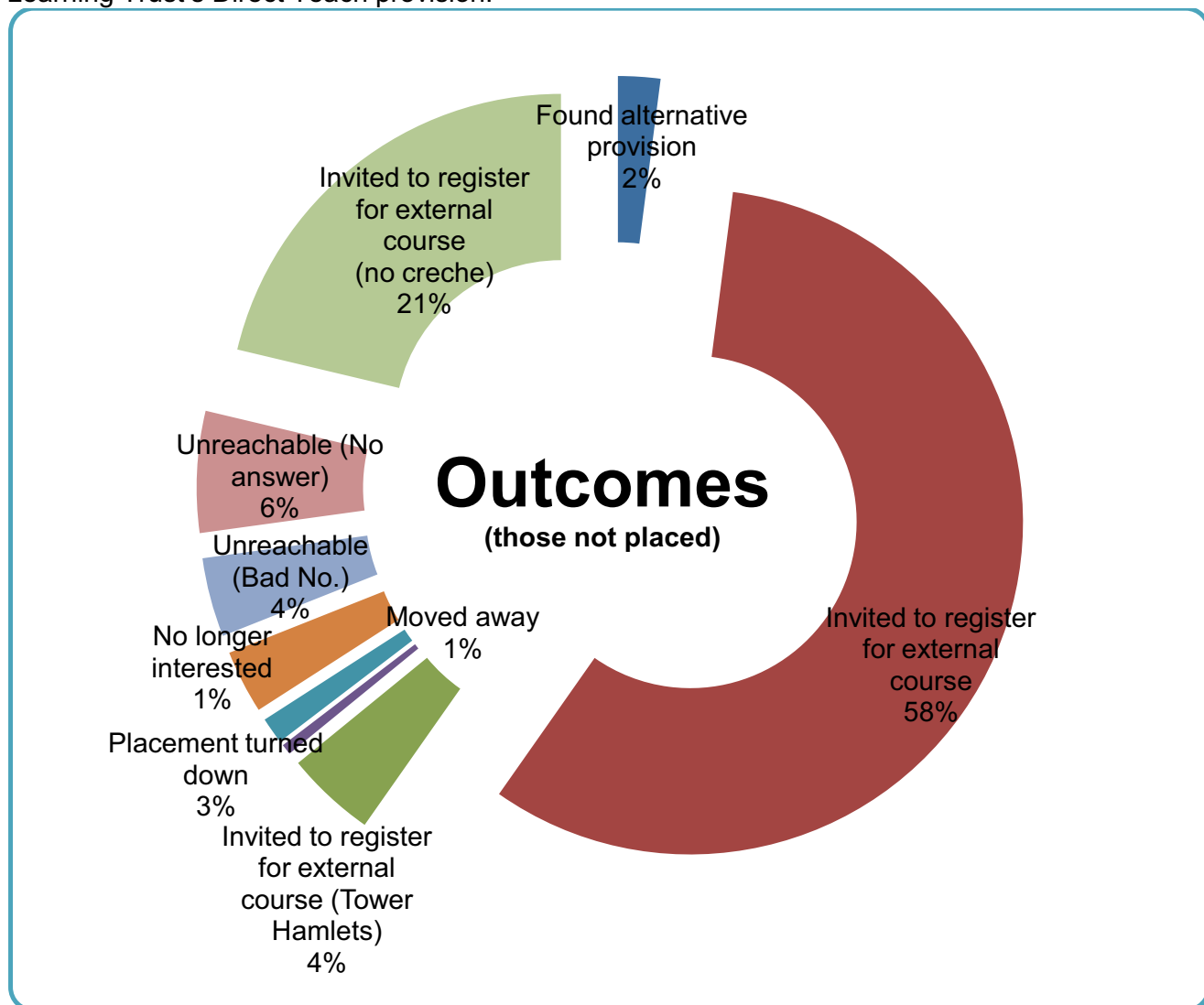


Placed? Yes- by cluster (as a % of people seen in that

Learning Trust's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) team. The IAG department offers learners specialist advice and guidance on further education, higher education and employment. A total of 13% of learners were referred in this way. The 13% have not been included in the subsequent percentage placed figure.

In total, 48% of all ESOL learners who accessed the service were definitely placed in an ESOL class. Of those placed, over half (69%) were placed in provision offered by partner organisations, including ELATT, Hackney Community College, Working Links, Refugee Women's Association, Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project, Stoke Newington School, Homerton Library, TBG Learning and other community organisations. The successful placements highlight the importance of partnership working; these learners would have remained on our waiting list potentially for the entire academic year without it. The other 31% of learners were placed in The

Learning Trust's Direct Teach provision.



52% of learners were not placed as far as we are aware. In the chart above, the outcomes for only the not-placed learners has been detailed. 17% of those not placed were contacted with an invitation for a class but proved to be unreachable or turned the placement down. There were a number of reasons for learners turning offers down, including the class times being unsuitable, the distance from home being too great, being unable to afford travel expenses and registration fees, change in circumstances, etc. We have not this year recorded all the reasons for refusal in way which can be quantified, although this data will be collected in the coming year. 2% of learners were successfully able to find ESOL provision independently. A small number were no longer interested in ESOL when called with an invitation to join. Reasons included ill-health, work commitments and other more pressing matters such as housing, homelessness, newborn children, etc. It is worth noting when considering the 'Placed?' data that had those learners who were contacted to be offered a place accepted the offer, the total placed percentage would increase from 48 to 57%.

62% of those not placed were invited to register for at least one ESOL course provided by a partner organisation. These invitations took into account learners' ESOL levels and crèche needs. They may however, have required learners to travel further than specified in their preferences during initial assessment. Where learners were invited to register for a course outside of Hackney,

these cases were recorded separately. One course in Tower Hamlets, received a relatively high number of invited learners despite being out of borough and a number of learners were placed. The placement of all learners who attended was hampered by differences in our understanding of levels, as is often the case during the first referral to a new organisation. For example, some organisations, under pressure to show high achievement rates in very short periods of time, accept only those at the established end of each level, others do not accept basic literacy learners in their E1 classes, etc. As we work more regularly together nevertheless, these differences in opinion are identified and accommodated. It is highly likely that at least some of the learners invited to register for other external courses were also accepted onto classes, as referrals were only made when the ESOL Advice Service was informed of vacancies or imminent vacancies. It is nonetheless, impossible to tell without confirmation from the partner organisation or learner and confirmations remain out-standing at the time of writing. Where confirmations have not been received, we have not been able to record as placed learners who may well have gained a place.

While we have always referred learners who have called from outside of the borough to their most local ESOL provider, we have also developed new partnerships with organisations, which have some flexibility in accepting out-of-borough residents within Tower Hamlets. One such example is The About, an organisation which caters for women on spousal visas and also, more recently dependents of those on working and student visas. The Bromley-by-Bow Centre has also kept the ESOL Advice Service informed on vacancies on their courses situated in the Bethnal Green area. These out-of-borough examples highlight not only the benefits of joined-up, inter-borough working, but also to what extent demand for ESOL outstrips supply in Hackney.

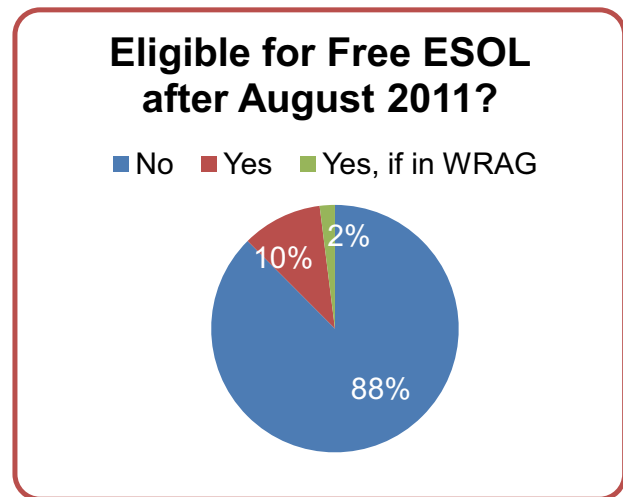
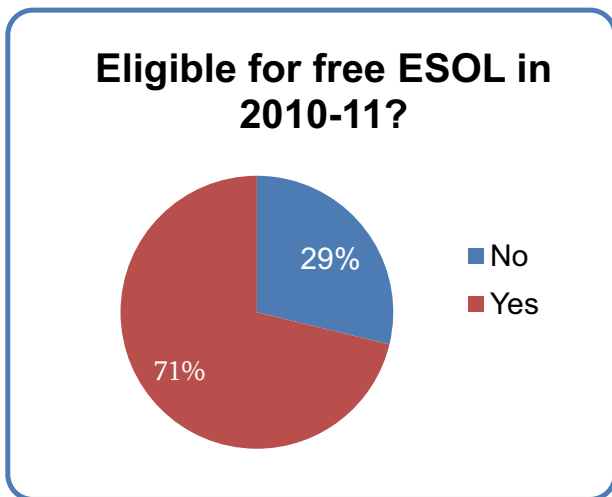
All learners were offered some ESOL provision and most learners were offered more than one opportunity. Learners with crèche needs nevertheless, were of those least likely to be placed and offered the fewest opportunities, due to the lack of ESOL provision with crèche. 21% of the learners who were not placed were those with crèche needs. Although these learners were also offered an ESOL course, the course they were offered had limited crèche availability. The learners have been recorded separately, as we appreciate that not everyone is able to arrange childcare independently. They remain however, on the Learning Trust's Direct Teach waiting list. This year, as last year, we have found the learners with the following profiles most difficult to place. Often more than one barrier affected a learner's ability to begin learning English:

- Learners requiring crèche, particularly those with babies under 6 months
- Learners who are unable to travel due to disabilities affecting mobility
- Learners requiring specialist sensory support
- Those who cannot afford to pay for travel expenses, despite being willing to travel
- Learners who are unwilling to travel due to being unfamiliar with the borough
- Male learners on spousal visas, who have been resident in the UK for less than one year
- Learners who cannot afford to pay one-off enrolment fees required by some ESOL providers
- ESOL basic literacy learners at E1, E2 and E3
- Learners ineligible for benefits and free ESOL due to their spouse's income, but also unable to access this income to learn English
- Learners who work in irregular shifts
- Those who can only attend evening classes
- Learners seeking intensive courses only

14) Conclusion

Migration Impact Funding for the ESOL Advice Service comes to an end at the end of July. Fortunately, the popularity of the service with learners, internal departments and external organisations and the crucial importance of ensuring people with English language needs are catered for, has prompted the Trust's Adult Learning Service to continue funding the project. Though there are limitations in that the advice coordinator post is only part time, this timely endorsement will allow for the service's successes to be built upon and some of the areas which are in need of being developed to be given due attention in the coming academic year.

- **Changing context for ESOL**



The most significant issue for the ESOL Advice Service in the coming academic year will be the effect of drastic government funding changes for ESOL, outlined in BIS's *Skills for Sustainable Growth*. There has been strong resistance to the proposals; a national campaign, *Action for ESOL*, was set up in January 2011 to lobby the government into commissioning an ESOL-specific Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) published a second EIA, which largely dismissed local evidence on the impact of the policy, in the week of writing. ESOL practitioners and learners are disappointed with the outcome. The new policy will exclude a large portion of the ESOL learner population from mainstream FE-funded provision. It is therefore, more important than ever before that a service, which identifies alternative provision and helps learners make sense of the options available to them exists.

- **Demand for and supply of accessible ESOL provision**

The ESOL Advice Service's regular advice sessions have been highly successful and often overwhelmed by the number of learners interested in joining an ESOL course. As we are able to see only a limited number of learners in each two-hour slot, every session a number of learners are asked to return the following week or to try another advice venue. At the advice session held at The Learning Trust this year, we routinely received up to twenty learners hoping to be assessed and advised; a second advice session was arranged in response to this demand. With the closing of three key JCP-funded ESOL providers, JCP referrals being redirected to the ESOL Advice Service and the new changes to ESOL funding, we anticipate that this demand will increase

substantially. The ESOL Advice Service will need to explore funding options in order to respond accordingly.

Some have questioned whether running assessments while waiting lists grow longer is creating a false expectation. Although we regret that some learners are required to wait lengthy periods before joining an ESOL course, we believe that only by highlighting unmet need will organisations be prompted to fill the gaps in provision. The Learning Trust has itself been prompted to act on being presented with the data; the Trust's Family Learning team is currently in the process of piloting Family ESOL courses for parents who have registered with the ESOL Advice Service. It is also the case that learners who have not definitely been placed in this academic year, will be given priority in registering for old and new Learning Trust Direct Teach provision in September. It is therefore, better to be on a waiting list than not. Figures on placements during September will be included in the next annual report.

It remains the case that there is a shortage of accessible ESOL provision in Hackney. This shortage is likely to worsen from September, when free ESOL classes at local FE colleges will no longer be available for learners on 'inactive benefits'. Unless steps are taken to counter the reduction in FE-funded ESOL with more and accessible alternatively funded provision, waiting lists will grow at an even faster rate and a majority of learners will be excluded from or required to wait even longer for a class. Such an outcome will delay or prevent learners' progress in gaining the language skills needed to access services, gain employment, engage with teachers and neighbours and more generally, become independent and active members of their communities.

- **Standardisation of paperwork**

The standardisation of initial assessment paperwork began in 2010 and currently ELATT, Hackney Community College and The Learning Trust are using a single form for all ESOL learners (see Appendix 1 and 2). At present, only The Learning Trust appears to be analysing the data collated however, the use of a single form is a first and significant step towards our aim to provide a single point of assessment and advice for ESOL learners in Hackney. Such a service would ensure that duplication is avoided and learners, who are new to the country and English language, are not deterred by the confusion inevitable when they are required to approach multiple organisations, sit numerous tests and fit into a myriad of eligibility criteria before they are able to begin learning English. A single point of information, for all basic services, was suggested during the consultations on the *Hackney Migrant Strategy*, although the degree to which the recommended action points will be adopted is yet unclear.

- **Partnership working**

The data collated and analysed by the service should inform the mapping of provision. The Advice Service's database allows for vacancies on courses to be filled without partner organisation having to run recruitment sessions themselves. Often places remain vacant on ESOL courses, due to in-filling being difficult to arrange once courses have started. Allocating this task to the ESOL Advice Service is cost-effective and means that these places can be utilised. Furthermore, only those suitable for the class, fulfilling the level and eligibility criteria, attend to register therefore there is no need for organisations to invest time in screening learners. We intend to work towards encouraging a greater number of smaller community organisations to utilise this service in the coming year.

Migrant and refugee community organisations, often the first point of contact for those new to the UK, are key partners if we are to engage learners who may otherwise be unable to access the services they are entitled to. The ESOL Advice Service's work with migrant and refugee community organisations has primarily been via the Hackney Refugee Forum and Hackney CVS email newsletter. It remains the case however, that due to funding being available only for a part-time co-ordination post, we have not been able to place as much focus on developing partnerships with these organisations as is necessary. It has predominantly been possible only to maintain partnerships developed at the beginning of the year in order to maximise the placement opportunities for learners. A number of vacancies remained in courses for Refugees at two organisations this year; there is little doubt that these vacancies could have been filled if all learners accessing migrant and refugee community organisations had been engaged by the ESOL Advice Service. The ESOL Advice Service's success, i.e. ability to place learners or increase opportunities for their placement, lies in partnership working. As we develop our work with different organisations and as our ability to fill courses with suitable learners improves, more organisations will, we hope, come on board and opportunities for learners will thereby increase.

- **Further Research and the database**

We hope in the coming academic year to record information which will allow us to later compare how learners have progressed once they have joined an ESOL course. For example, we intend to introduce questions which aim to discover the degree of engagement a learner has with their child's teacher, whether they use interpreters, how often they speak English during the week, etc. Later in the year, we hope to run a follow up survey. At present we use basic Microsoft Excel and Access functions to produce the annual report and these have served us well. As we develop and extend our research into the profile and experiences of ESOL learners, the barriers they face prior to engaging with the service and if and how their lives and aspirations change as a result of joining an ESOL class, we will be required to run tests for statistical significance and control variables, in order to ensure that our findings are valid and on par with mainstream educational research. At present there is a disparity between academic educational research, which many education practitioners find too abstract to implement, and research carried out by practitioners, which is often not considered rigorous enough for dissemination by the academic community. The ESOL Advice Service hopes to bridge this gap to some degree and will need to use more sophisticated software, such as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and NVivo, in order to do so. We are currently exploring research funding opportunities to allow for this.

An evidence-based approach to ESOL will ensure that as many learners as possible can access the opportunities available to them, the impact of interventions can be monitored and organisations can in turn meet their targets. In addition, the sharing of quality research will prompt others to adopt a similar approach, identify gaps in provision and collaboratively work towards improving the life chances of learners, their children and the community at large.

Questions and suggestions on the data presented are very welcome.

Khadijah Amani
Community ESOL Advice Co-ordinator
July 2011
Khadijah.Amani@learningtrust.co.uk

Appendix 1: Initial Assessment Form (page 1)

CONFIDENTIAL							
Record of Learner Initial Assessment – ESOL							
Personal Information							
Name				Surname			Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address							
e-mail							
Home Telephone				Mobile			
Country of Origin			Nationality			DoB	
Length of time in UK / status	/		Languages Spoken			<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Literacy
Education and qualifications in own country	No Schooling <input type="checkbox"/>		Secondary School not completed <input type="checkbox"/>	Higher Education Started <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Primary School not Completed <input type="checkbox"/>		Secondary School Completed <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree Completed <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Primary School Completed <input type="checkbox"/>		Vocational Training <input type="checkbox"/>	Post Graduate Studies Completed <input type="checkbox"/>			
Previous learning in UK	Y N	Where/when/qualifications			Reason for not attending/stopping		
Past Paid/Voluntary Work Experience	Home country						
	EU/UK						
Current employment	part-time <input type="checkbox"/>	full-time <input type="checkbox"/>	Registered unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>	Casual work <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Working in own occupation <input type="checkbox"/>	Carer <input type="checkbox"/>	Housework <input type="checkbox"/>	Looking for work <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Menial work not in own occupation <input type="checkbox"/>					
Hobbies/ Interests							
Any means tested benefits?	NASS <input type="checkbox"/>	HB <input type="checkbox"/>	Council TC <input type="checkbox"/>	Child TC <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Pension credit <input type="checkbox"/>	IS <input type="checkbox"/>	low pay (under £15,276) <input type="checkbox"/>	WTC <input type="checkbox"/>			
	ESA <input type="checkbox"/>	JSA <input type="checkbox"/>	DA <input type="checkbox"/>	No benefits <input type="checkbox"/>			
How did you hear about the service?							

Appendix 2: Initial Assessment Form (page 2)

Record of Learner Initial Assessment – ESOL

ESOL Needs



Name						
Reasons for learning English (Please tick up to 3)	To understand my children	To deal with everyday life	To be active in community life			
	To help children at school	To become independent	To get a job			
	To go on to further study	To make friends	To get a better job			
Other reasons						
Long term goals						
Class preferences	Morning	NOTES:	2 sessions per week	More than 2 sessions per week		
	Afternoon					
	Evening					
Parent	No children <input type="checkbox"/>	Under 11 <input type="checkbox"/>	DOB children requiring crèche			
	Under 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/>				
	Child's school:					
Additional needs				Disability:	Y / N	
Ability to travel to class	Walking distance only <input type="checkbox"/>		One bus only <input type="checkbox"/>	Anywhere in Hackney <input type="checkbox"/>		

LEVEL

Speaking		Listening		Reading		Writing	
-----------------	--	------------------	--	----------------	--	----------------	--

Course placement

Days	Times	Centre	Tutor

Waiting List

Level	Venue	Crèche or other requirements

Other referrals : organisation & course	
If classes are full can we give your information to other organisations?	Yes / No

Assessor's name (PRINT) _____ Date _____ Venue _____

Appendix 3: Regional classifications

Countries	Region
Afghanistan	South Asia
Albania	Eastern Europe
Algeria	Middle East and North Africa
Angola	Africa
Argentina	Latin America & Caribbean
Bangladesh	South Asia
Bolivia	Latin America & Caribbean
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Eastern Europe
Brazil	Latin America & Caribbean
Bulgaria	Eastern Europe
Myanmar (Burma)	East Asia
Cameroon	Africa
Chile	Latin America & Caribbean
China	East Asia
Colombia	Latin America & Caribbean
Cyprus	Turkish Cypriot included in Turkey, Greek Cypriot included in Greece
Czech Republic	Eastern Europe
D.R of the Congo	Africa
Dominican Republic	Latin America & Caribbean
Ecuador	Latin America & Caribbean
Egypt	Middle East and North Africa
Equatorial Guinea	Africa
Eritrea	Africa
Estonia	Eastern Europe
Ethiopia	Africa
France	Western Europe
Gabon	Africa
Georgia	Russia and Central Asia
Germany	Western Europe
Ghana	Africa
Greece	Eastern Europe
Guinea	Africa
Guyana	Latin America & Caribbean
Hungary	Eastern Europe
India	South Asia
Iran	Middle East and North Africa
Iraq	Middle East and North Africa
Israel	Middle East and North Africa
Italy	Western Europe
Japan	East Asia

Jordan	Middle East and North Africa
Kosovo	Eastern Europe
Latvia	Eastern Europe
Liberia	Africa
Libya	Middle East and North Africa
Lithuania	Eastern Europe
Malaysia	East Asia
Mali	Africa
Montserrat	Latin America & Caribbean
Morocco	Middle East and North Africa
Mozambique	Africa
Nepal	South Asia
Nigeria	Africa
Pakistan	South Asia
Palestine	Middle East and North Africa
Peru	Latin America & Caribbean
Poland	Eastern Europe
Portugal	Western Europe
Puerto Rico	Latin America & Caribbean
Republic of the Congo	Africa
Romania	Eastern Europe
Russia	Russia and Central Asia
Rwanda	Africa
Sao Tome and Principe	Africa
Saudi Arabia	Middle East and North Africa
Senegal	Africa
Sierra Leone	Africa
Slovakia	Eastern Europe
Slovenia	Eastern Europe
Somalia	Africa
Spain	Western Europe
Sri Lanka	South Asia
Sudan	Africa
Taiwan	East Asia
Thailand	East Asia
Turkey	Turkey
Uganda	Africa
Unspecified	Unspecified
Venezuela	Latin America & Caribbean
Vietnam	East Asia
Yemen	Middle East and North Africa