

# Welcoming Our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015 - 2020

The English for Speakers of Other Languages  
(ESOL) Strategy for Adults in Scotland 2015





"I am learning English to improve my language skills, to communicate, find a good job, meet new people and learn the traditions of Scotland."

"My son is going to nursery and I want to communicate by myself with teachers. And I am looking for a job, so lessons will help me."

"I need to speak English in everyday life - to go to appointments and to go shopping."



"It is very important to learn English to communicate."



"I hope that some day, I can speak English fluently."

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# Ministerial Foreword

**As Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages I am committed to the principle that everyone in Scotland has the right to access high quality learning. This learning should be designed to meet the needs and aspirations of people throughout their lives and should include the ability to communicate effectively. The Government's languages policy reflects the continued growth of Scotland as a diverse, complex, multicultural and multilingual nation.**



**The acquisition of English language skills is important for participation in a democratic society. Without adequate language skills, people can neither fully participate in their local and national communities nor can they meet their full potential.**

This refresh of the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Strategy for Adults in Scotland re-affirms our vision to provide high quality English language provision to enable participation and integration in Scottish life through work, study, family and local community.

Since the publication of the original strategy in 2007, ESOL is increasingly delivered in the context of public service reform, meeting skills requirements for immigration and benefits purposes as well as contributing to wider social and economic agendas.

The Scottish Government is working collaboratively to create a Scotland which is the best place to grow up; ensuring through our education system that our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens; that we are working with schools, colleges and employers including third sector organisations, communities and businesses to give every young person the best possible chance of finding a sustainable career. The recently launched Adult Learning Statement of Ambition outlines the principles of lifelong, life-wide, learner-centred learning and these are the very same principles which inform this refreshed strategy.

The strategic direction for the next five years is framed within the objectives set for adult learning.

In today's economic climate, it is vital that everyone involved in ESOL – the policy makers, the referral agencies, the academic researchers and the delivery organisations and their staff work in partnership to maximise the resources available and to share best practice. Employers must also play their part in identifying and supporting employees who need help to improve their English language skills.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to thank all stakeholders who contributed to this refresh. The process of refreshing the strategy has involved a consultative and collaborative approach working with those directly involved in the provision, including those who matter most – the learners. ESOL learners include New Scots, refugees and asylum seekers, learners from settled communities and those coming here to work.

I welcome everyone's commitment to achieving our ambitions for ESOL language learning in Scotland.

**Dr Alasdair Allan, MSP**

Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages

# Introduction

**This refresh of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy for Adults in Scotland provides an updated and informed context for the provision of publicly funded ESOL in Scotland. It sets ESOL in the broad context of learning in Scotland with the expectation that providers will look at this broader context to inform the direction of provision.**

ESOL provision contributes to lifelong learning in terms of language learning for progression and integration, both economically and socially.

Society has changed since the **The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland**<sup>1</sup> (2007) was first launched. Social, political and economic factors have impacted on ESOL provision. These include the change in profile of refugees and asylum seekers coming to Scotland, migrants becoming settled communities, changes to the requirements for English language skills for immigration and welfare benefits and the reform of public services following the **The Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services**<sup>2</sup> (2011) report. Public services are adapting to reduced funding while technology becomes increasingly prevalent and public services and personal lives are challenged to maximise the use of technology. We know more about the ESOL provision which takes place in Scotland including who delivers, how it is delivered and what is delivered.

Refreshing the strategy re-affirms our vision and principles against a backdrop of policy development and challenges us to continue to aim for high quality, relevant, appropriate and accessible ESOL provision in today's economic climate.

In refreshing the strategy, the views of learners, providers and wider stakeholders were captured in meetings, focus groups and written feedback. This process confirmed that ESOL provision is seen by learners, providers and stakeholders as a crucial part of public services which helps overcome language barriers and ultimately enables people to live, work and integrate in Scotland's communities.

This paper sets the strategic direction for ESOL for the next five years. It aims to build on successes to date and to continue to improve the quality, co-ordination and delivery of ESOL provision for all residents in Scotland for whom English is not a first language.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/05/09155324/0>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0>

# 1. ESOL Learning Landscape in Scotland

## Why is ESOL learning important?

- 1.1** ESOL learning is crucial to supporting residents in Scotland for whom English is not a first language.
- 1.2** ESOL learning equips those residents with the communication skills necessary to contribute and integrate economically, culturally and socially.
- 1.3** ESOL learning is key to improving adults' personal skills which help to achieve improved life chances and better outcomes for communities.
- 1.4** The refreshed ESOL strategy will form part of the implementation of the Adult Learning Statement of Ambition.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.5** The impact of ESOL learning affects all age groups. It can have a positive impact on children and young people in nursery and school whose parents/carers are accessing classes; young people in secondary school can be given the opportunity to obtain recognition of their English language learning through SQA qualifications which can help as they move into further learning or employment; and adults themselves as parents, carers, workers and adult learners recognise the need and benefits of learning English for living and working in Scotland.
- 1.6** Demand will continue from those coming to Scotland for whom English may not be a first language. Since 2007, Scotland has seen a steady flow of people from countries where English is not the official language. Of the countries in Europe, the largest cohorts have been from Poland, Germany, France and Spain. Outside of Europe, the largest cohorts have come from China, India and Pakistan.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.7** Another indication of continued demand comes from figures showing the number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in primary and secondary schools in Scotland between 2008 and 2013 which shows a range between 4% and 6% of pupils having English as an additional language.<sup>5</sup> This is comparable to the census data from 2011 on the percentage population over the age of three who spoke a language other than English in the home (see 3.2).
- 1.8** ESOL learning is recognised as a key factor to the successful integration of those coming to live in Scotland.
- 1.9** The right kind of ESOL learning can help people access further learning opportunities, enhance their employability, as well as support them to progress within the workplace.
- 1.10** ESOL provision can support personal and family life enabling independent communication and building capacity to live, integrate and be actively involved in local communities.

<sup>3</sup> Adult Learning in Scotland: Statement of Ambition (2014)  
<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/adultlearning/communitybasedadultlearning/statementofambition.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/business-transparency/freedom-of-information/what-can-i-request/published-ad-hoc-data/pop/october-2014/index.html?translation-component=&calling-id=77-6854-4&currLang=English&format=normal>

<sup>5</sup> Source: Scottish Government Analytical Services



## Who are our ESOL learners?

- 1.11** ESOL learners come from a range of backgrounds and can include settled communities, refugees, asylum seekers and recent migrants coming to live and work in Scotland as well as their families.
- 1.12** ESOL learners in Scotland have a range of skills, talents and knowledge which, through improving their language skills, can be maximised to fulfil their potential and to contribute and integrate economically and socially.
- 1.13** ESOL learners have a variety of reasons for learning English. This can include changes in personal life, family life, working life and community life that needs the right kind of ESOL learning to help overcome changes, enhance health and well-being, reduce isolation, increase employability and support integration.

## Who delivers ESOL?

- 1.14** ESOL provision is offered by a range of providers including Community Learning and Development (CLD) services through local authority partnerships, colleges, schools, voluntary organisations, universities and private language providers. Much of publicly funded provision is delivered through local partnerships.
- 1.15** Providers use a range of learning approaches which are influenced by learners' goals and learning context. This can range from working towards accredited learning in college, community and workplace settings to learning in non-formal and informal settings.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.16** Many providers work with learners who are required to show evidence of language skills at levels set by the UK Government through the Home Office.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.17** Providers work in partnership to improve co-ordination and delivery of provision. This, along with the increasing professionalisation of the workforce, helps to set standards to be maintained and built on.

<sup>6</sup> Source: ESOL end of year reports. Go to: <http://www.esolscotland.com/impactreports.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/370969/20141106\\_immigration\\_rules\\_appendix\\_b\\_final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/370969/20141106_immigration_rules_appendix_b_final.pdf)

## 2. Our Vision and Principles for ESOL Provision in Scotland

The refresh reaffirms the vision of ESOL provision in Scotland.

### Our Vision

**That all Scottish residents<sup>8</sup> for whom English is not a first language have the opportunity to access high quality English language provision so that they can acquire the language skills to enable them to participate in Scottish life: in the workplace, through further study, within the family, the local community, Scottish society and the economy. These language skills are central to giving people a democratic voice and supporting them to contribute to the society in which they live.**

As well as enabling people to contribute to the society in which they live, the impact of ESOL provision can help support integration. The vision and principles of ESOL provision contribute to the following national outcomes:<sup>9</sup>

**We are better educated, more skilled, more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.**

**We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.**

**We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.**

**We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect each other.**

And where partnerships between providers and schools are developing to support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence:

**Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.**

<sup>8</sup> The term Scottish resident carries no legal definition. However, there are a number of eligibility criteria, currently used in Scotland, for access to funding for learning which is updated every year.

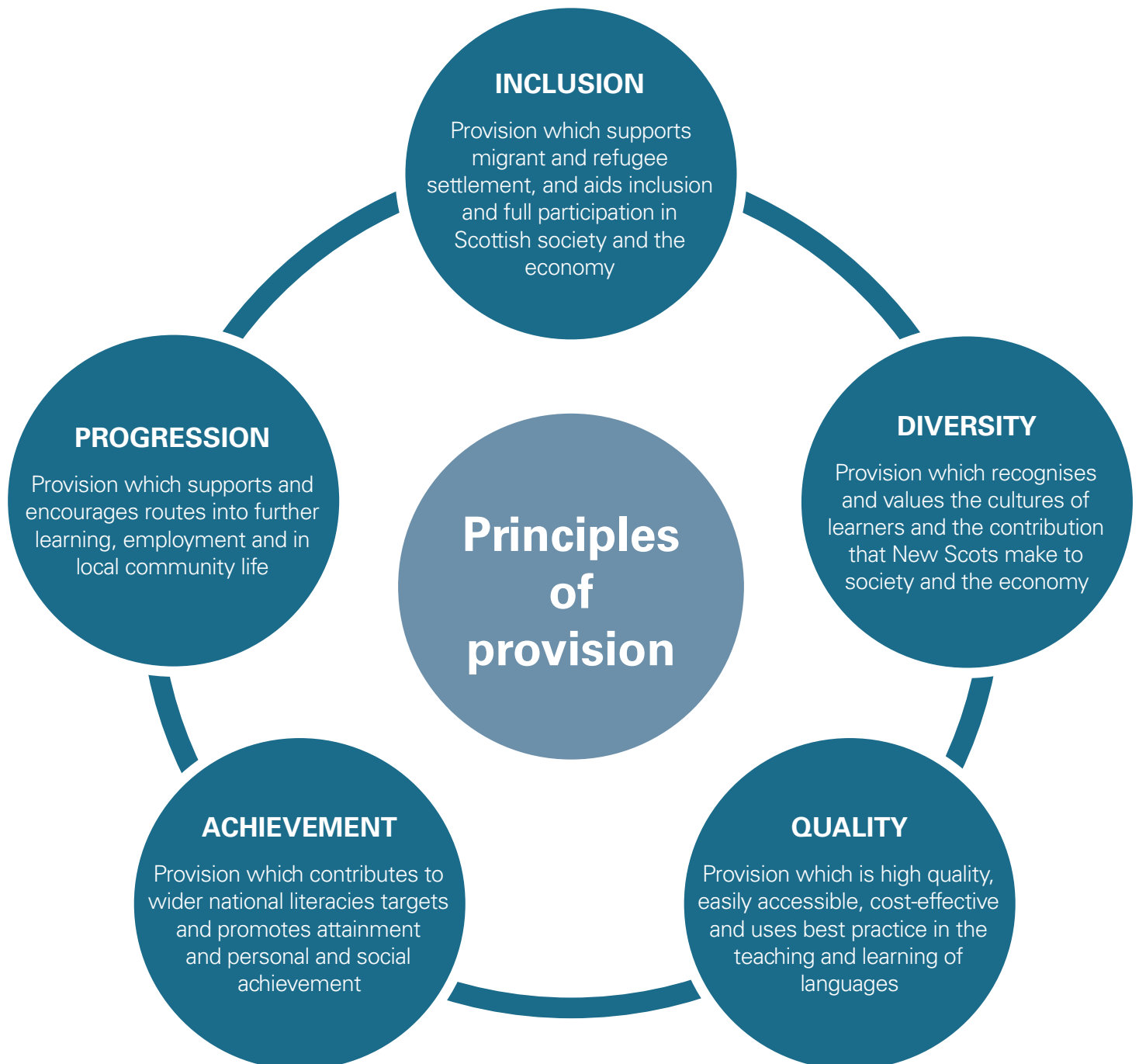
Links to the current information: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/learnerfunding/highereducation/HelpingYouMeettheCostsofLearning>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/learnerfunding/highereducation/HelpingyoumeetthecostsoflearningDisabledStudents>

<sup>9</sup> In 2007, a concordat was signed between local and national government and committed both to move towards single outcome agreements (SOAs) for all local authority councils. Single outcome agreements set out how local and national government will work towards improving outcomes for local people and within the context of the Government's National Outcomes. Go to: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome>.



## Guiding principles for provision



# 3. Policy Context and Social Landscape

**3.1** As outlined in the introduction, social, political and economic factors impact on ESOL provision. ESOL also has a significant role in the delivery of a range of policies and strategies developed since 2007.

**3.2** Scotland's population at the last census was recorded as 5,295,403. The census also showed that 310,676 people, around 5%, over the age of three spoke another language other than English in the home.<sup>10</sup>

**3.3** ESOL provision plays a vital role in improving the life chances of people for whom English is not their first language by facilitating access to services, further training or work, and helping them to support their families, particularly their children's learning.

**3.4** In 2010 the Literacy Action Plan emphasised the Scottish Government's commitment to raising the literacy skills of Scotland's citizens. The strategic guidance **Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020**<sup>11</sup> (2010) notes the importance of literacy and language skills for ESOL learners (p.12):

**“Some adults whose first language is not English may have reading, writing and number difficulties very similar to those encountered by ‘traditional’ literacies learners, due to limited schooling in their first language or because they come from a mainly oral culture.**

**“It is important to support people whose first language is not English to become full and active citizens. These adults can make an important contribution to the economic success of Scotland, but to do so they must be able to read, write, speak and understand English.”**

**3.5** For young adults **16+ Learning Choices**<sup>12</sup> (2010) is a commitment in the **senior phase of education**<sup>13</sup> that guarantees a place in learning for every eligible young person who wants it. It is the model for helping young people stay in learning post-16.

**3.6** Provision which supports ESOL learners to find employment has great returns personally, socially and economically. Economic integration can help to reduce isolation in a new country as **The Government Economic Strategy**<sup>14</sup> (2011) notes (p.59):

**“Increasing the opportunities for individuals to develop and use their skills as best they can is not just a strategy for improved economic performance. It is also an effective way of improving the satisfaction and security of work, promoting the health and well-being of individuals and enhancing the fabric of our communities.”**

<sup>10</sup> This figure excludes 55,000 Scots speakers and 12,000 BSL users that have been deducted from the total figure 377,676. [http://scotlandcensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/rel2A\\_Language\\_detailed\\_Scotland.pdf](http://scotlandcensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/rel2A_Language_detailed_Scotland.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25121451/1>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/03/30180354/0>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/thecurriculum/whatcanlearnersexpect/seniorphase.asp>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/EconomicStrategy>



- 3.7** Public spending is under greater pressure than ever before. A focus on how public services are delivered has been informed by **The Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services** (2011) report.
- 3.8** Renewed strategic direction for Community Learning and Development through the **Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships** (2012)<sup>15</sup> and **The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations** (2013)<sup>16</sup>, regionalisation of colleges<sup>17</sup>, a focus on early intervention and employability all reflect public service reform.

- 3.9** ESOL family learning has an early intervention approach to supporting families particularly at key transition points for children such as moving from nursery to school. This interventionist approach reflects the work being taken forward through the **Early Years Collaborative**<sup>18</sup> (2012).

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0039/00394611.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/175/pdfs/ssi\\_20130175\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/175/pdfs/ssi_20130175_en.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/09/15103949/0>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/early-years/early-years-collaborative>

# 3. Policy Context and Social Landscape [continued]

**3.10** Language learning remains an important curriculum area in schools and is supported by **Language Learning in Scotland: a 1+2 Approach**<sup>19</sup> (2012). The policy (while aimed at schools) notes the potential of language learning in general (p.6):

**“The Government’s languages policy offers the opportunity to reflect on the development of Scotland as a diverse, complex, multicultural and multilingual nation. We, as a nation, should celebrate this diversity and the diverse languages in our midst. This diversity includes Scotland’s own languages, Gaelic and Scots. The languages spoken increasingly in communities throughout Scotland offer schools and learners the chance to learn more about their own and other cultures.”**

**3.11** The UK Government’s **Welfare Reform Act**<sup>20</sup> has meant the introduction of a range of reforms to welfare benefits and employment services aimed at simplifying the welfare system and increasing the efforts of those on out of work benefits to move into work. At the time of writing, the new benefit conditionality requires those who make a new claim to Jobseekers Allowance or **Universal Credit**<sup>21</sup> to undertake learning where they do not have basic English listening and speaking skills.

**3.12** Work-based ESOL and ESOL for employability can be considered in the context of the government’s employability and economic strategies. **Working for Growth: A refresh of the employability framework for Scotland**<sup>22</sup> (2012) provides a framework which focuses on jobs and growth and recognises the importance of ESOL in helping to address inequality issues which impact on employability.

**3.13** Providers and practitioners report that migrant workers are now becoming part of settled communities in Scotland. ESOL learners in general are becoming less transient.

**3.14** Providers also report an increase in older learners who are often family members of people who have settled in Scotland in recent years.

**3.15** The Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development (2012) gives a clear statement of the purpose of CLD which is to (p.3):

**“empower people, individually and collectively, to make positive changes in their lives and in their communities through learning”**

and recognises that this aim can be achieved through community based adult learning including ESOL.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/05/3670>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/5/contents/enacted/data.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-universal-credit>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/09/5609>

## Reflections and impact of our ESOL provision – learners' comments



**"I live here. Learning another language is good for mental health."**



**"It's for my education, so I can be a personal sports trainer."**



**"I want to improve my language skills to integrate in Scottish society."**

**3.16** *The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations* (2013) requires local authorities to:

**"initiate, maintain and facilitate a process which ensures that CLD in the area of the local authority is secured in such a way that it:**

- **identifies target individuals and groups;**
- **considers the needs of those target individuals and groups for CLD;**
- **assesses the degree to which those needs are already being met; and**
- **identifies barriers to the adequate and efficient provision of relevant CLD.**

**"In meeting this requirement, the local authority must involve and consult those representative of both the target individuals and groups and CLD providers within the area of the local authority."**

ESOL learners, as part of the community, will be included in this process.

**3.17** Providers offer ESOL provision that supports learners who need to show evidence of language skills for citizenship requirements.

**3.18** Changes made in October 2013 by the **Home Office**<sup>23</sup> means that applicants must demonstrate a particular level in English language as part of their application for citizenship or settlement.

**3.19** Those applying for citizenship or settlement are also required to pass the **Knowledge of Language and Life in the UK**<sup>24</sup> test.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/english-language>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/life-in-the-uk-test>

# 3. Policy Context and Social Landscape [continued]

**3.20** Dispersal of asylum seekers to Glasgow commenced in 2000 following the introduction of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999. It is very difficult to ascertain precisely how many refugees have been granted some form of refugee status and remain in Scotland, the Scottish Refugee Council estimate that there could be as many as 20,000.<sup>25</sup> However, these populations have changed with more males seeking asylum compared to families that previously made up the majority of those coming to Scotland through the asylum process.<sup>26</sup>

**3.21** The asylum process has also changed and decisions are being made more quickly. This has created a more immediate need for asylum seekers and refugees to access ESOL provision in order to prevent social isolation and exclusion.

**3.22** *The New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities*<sup>27</sup> (2013) strategy identifies the need for a more co-ordinated approach by services to support refugees and asylum seekers and recognises key areas to support integration including improving English language skills.

**3.23** *The Adult Learning in Scotland Statement of Ambition*<sup>28</sup> (2014) aspires to three core principles of adult learning (including ESOL) that it should be lifelong, life-wide and learner-centred.

**3.24** The new Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) ESOL qualifications support the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. As well as colleges, CLD providers and voluntary sector organisations, the qualifications are delivered in schools mainly by EAL teachers and services ensuring that young people in schools have an opportunity to improve their language skills in the context of Curriculum for Excellence.

## Case Study

## Glasgow Clyde College – 16+ ESOL Programme

The 16+ ESOL programme began as a response to the growing number of unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee young people who began arriving in Glasgow and who required ESOL classes. Initially the programme worked with young men from Afghanistan and Somalia. However, with changing demographics, the programme now has both male and female young people from China and Vietnam who have been trafficked as well as large numbers of young Eritrean and Sudanese whose countries are affected by civil war and where young people become child soldiers.

The 16+ ESOL programme is designed to address the specific needs of this group of young people. The programme currently provides age appropriate ESOL classes, Personal and Social Development, ICT and the John Muir Conservation Award. The additional

non-ESOL subjects supplement the curriculum to give young people as much experience and qualifications as possible.

Additionally, students are supported and receive specialist guidance from their lecturers and are referred for counselling to a Freedom from Torture therapist and Compass (mental health services for young people) if appropriate. A particular strength of this programme is excellent communication and relationships with other agencies such as the local authority social work department and accommodation providers. This allows the young people to feel secure and receive a holistic service.

The young people need on-going support when making the transition from the programme to other ESOL or non-ESOL courses.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/5495/4087\\_SRC\\_Referendum\\_Report\\_V3.pdf](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/5495/4087_SRC_Referendum_Report_V3.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Source: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) Strategic Migration Partnership

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/4581>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/AdultLearningStatementofAmbition\\_tcm4-826940.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/AdultLearningStatementofAmbition_tcm4-826940.pdf)

- 3.25** The national youth work strategy **Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland**<sup>29</sup> (2014) contributes to the agenda for young people in Scotland to provide valuable and recognised learning opportunities to young people whose learning needs may not all be met within the school curriculum to ensure their life chances are improved.
- 3.26** The **Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce**<sup>30</sup> (2014) brings forward a range of recommendations designed to improve young people's transition into sustainable employment. While there is no specific focus on young people whose first language is not English, the recommendations from this report can potentially benefit those at risk of disengaging economically because of language barriers.
- 3.27** The regionalisation of colleges aims to help the sector to work more collaboratively. It has helped to support further co-ordination and delivery of ESOL in colleges but has also led to a reduction in provision in some places.
- 3.28** A greater presence of digital technology in people's lives is providing new ways for people to learn and communicate as well as access services and this has led to increasing demand for Information Technology (IT) for ESOL learners.
- 3.29** Providers report that demand for ESOL provision remains consistently high in larger urban areas such as Edinburgh and Glasgow.
- 3.30** So how then do we build on the approaches and achievements since 2007?

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/youngpeople/youthwork/strategy/index.asp>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/edandtrainingforyoungpeople/commissiondevelopingscotlandsyoungworkforce>

# 4. Building on the Approaches and Achievements of the 2007 Strategy

The 2007 strategy aimed to achieve the vision for ESOL by:

- improving collaboration and co-ordination
- raising quality through learning and teaching and
- supporting learning and progression.

This section gives an overview of the achievements to date and reflects the points that were raised in feedback and discussions with learners and providers. This document recognises the need to build on these achievements as we look ahead to the next five years.

## 4.1 Improving collaboration and co-ordination of ESOL provision

- In many areas, there is strong successful partnership working between providers which has led to improved co-ordination and delivery of ESOL provision.
- Stronger partnership working has helped to improve local knowledge of what provision is being offered. It has also enabled joint/partner assessment of demand, improved the placing of learners into the most appropriate learning and helped to avoid duplication which has ensured efficient use of resources.
- There is increasing partnership working with schools focusing on support for parents and family groups.
- There are effective models of delivery of ESOL qualifications by colleges for young people in schools as seen in Edinburgh and West Lothian.
- Awareness of ESOL continues to be raised with referrals to provision coming from a variety of organisations and services.
- ESOL has an important role to play in relation to the development of early language skills. The role of primary carer in children's language development has been highlighted through the **Early Years Collaborative**<sup>31</sup> (2012).

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/early-years/early-years-collaborative>



## Case Study

## The Edinburgh ESOL School – College Partnership

The Edinburgh ESOL school – college partnership is a unique and very successful project between Edinburgh College and the EAL Service. Bilingual secondary school pupils can attend an after school class in ESOL at Drummond Community High school, which supports them in their school work but also provides them with the opportunity to gain a qualification to allow them to enter Higher or Further Education.

The project started in 2006 and in 2014-2015 140 school pupils from all over Edinburgh are undertaking

courses for full awards at SQA National 4, National 5 and Higher level. In addition the classes provide a supportive environment for pupils, who may often feel isolated but who will be experiencing the same challenges and issues, to meet and provide mutual help and advice. The social benefits derived from such classes plays a key role in the academic success of bilingual learners. The classes help pupils develop confidence and the transferable skills needed to perform better in other subjects, thus raising overall achievement.

### 4.2 Raising quality through learning and teaching

- National developments to support learning and teaching include a curriculum framework, professional development qualifications and a range of support and guidance materials as well as new qualifications. For example:
  - **ESOL Initial Assessment Guide**<sup>32</sup>
  - **Adult ESOL Curriculum Framework**<sup>33</sup>
  - **SQA Professional Development Awards in TESOL**<sup>34</sup>
  - **Professional Development Framework for ESOL practitioners**<sup>35</sup>
  - **SQA ESOL Curriculum for Excellence qualifications**<sup>36</sup>
  - **Evaluation guide**<sup>37</sup>
- Learners and providers, actively engaged in discussions during meetings to discuss the strategy refresh, reported that learners are more empowered to voice their views revealing that they have higher expectations in the learning and teaching of ESOL.
- Learning Community inspection findings note the impact of ESOL provision on learners. One of the key outcomes from Learning Community inspections is the way ESOL learning has increased the confidence of learners to be able to use their language skills for everyday life and work, to be able to communicate with parents and staff in their children's school, to progress onto college courses, to start new careers or find a job and to take up other learning opportunities offered in their local community.
- Providers have seen the success of embedding SQA ESOL qualifications in provision. Partner providers in colleges, local authority CLD services, schools and third sector organisations co-ordinate their delivery of the qualifications.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.esolscotland.com/initialassessmentguide.cfm>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/adultlearning/ESOL/framework/about/aims.asp>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42436.html>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.esolscotland.com/professionaldevelopmentforpractitioners.cfm>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45678.html>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.esolscotland.com/evaluationguide.cfm>

# 4. Building on the Approaches and Achievements of the 2007 Strategy

- Learners are also seen to be volunteering in their local communities. (See case studies of ESOL learners active in, and contributing to their local communities.)
- Practitioners have continued to develop professionally to meet the changing demands of provision and the set-up of provision. For example, practitioners have actively sought further information and professional development opportunities looking at areas such as supporting ESOL literacies learners, delivering the new SQA national qualifications for ESOL and carrying out initial language assessment.
- There is an increase in the number of people involved in supporting ESOL learners or who have an interest in supporting ESOL learners. This can be seen by the uptake of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Professional Development Award (PDA) Introduction to Tutoring English to Speakers of Other Languages (ITESOL) qualification which has been awarded to 135 candidates since it became available in 2008.<sup>38</sup>
- There is also a number of volunteer projects that are run by providers to recruit volunteers to support ESOL learners who cannot access provision for a variety of reasons.<sup>39</sup>
- Learning Community inspections are a rich source of evidence. Findings show that volunteers are also seen to improve the learner experience by being able to offer one-to-one support on courses.<sup>40</sup> Learners are involved in the planning of their learning through the use of individual or group learning plans ensuring that course design and delivery meets the learning needs and goals of the learners and that learning and teaching is relevant, appropriate and inclusive.
- One of the findings from Education Scotland's **ESOL Aspect Task Report** (2014)<sup>41</sup> on ESOL provision in colleges is that employment or improved employment prospects is the main reason for many learners accessing ESOL provision. Colleges have responded to this through the delivery of the National Certificate (NC) in **ESOL for Employability**<sup>42</sup> as well as the development of combined programmes of learning which include ESOL with a vocational subject.
- ESOL for employability and ESOL in the workplace are also offered widely by providers across Scotland to accommodate learners' reasons for improving their English language skills, i.e. to help them find a job or improve their language skills for their job or progress in their job.

<sup>38</sup> data as at March 2014 from SQA

<sup>39</sup> Edinburgh College Home Learning Scheme  
Glasgow ESOL Forum Volunteer Tutor Project

<sup>40</sup> findings from Learning Community inspections

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ESOLinScotlandsColleges130614\\_tcm4-832231.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ESOLinScotlandsColleges130614_tcm4-832231.pdf)

Education Scotland: ESOL Aspect Task Report before the url address

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/63579.html>

# [continued]

## ESOL learners active in, and contributing to, their local communities

### Case Study

Lochinver, Sutherland

*"Having as many words as possible gives freedom when working in a new country. If you want to meet people, go shopping, get a job you need to express yourself in the language. Also, if you want to express your feelings and your needs, language is important."*  
(Gui, ESOL learner)

Gui came to Scotland from Spain and worked in the hospitality and tourism sector of the Highlands – an area characterised by seasonal employment. Gui accessed ESOL provision to improve his language skills and was supported by a volunteer tutor.

During the first year Gui was here, he generously offered to run a 'Spanish for Beginners' class at the Learning Centre within the Assynt Leisure Centre, as a way of saying thank you for the support he was receiving. It has been recognised as a beneficial arrangement on both sides giving Gui an opportunity to improve his English and giving people an opportunity to learn Spanish from an authentic speaker.

### Case Study

South Lanarkshire

The Core is a project that evolved from the Community Learning Home School Partnership looking at ways to support further progression and integration of ESOL learners within their provision. Social connections were particularly valued by ESOL learners which was shared by other learners attending a drop-in computing class.

The Core targets certain groups including ESOL learners, young parents, the elderly and the unemployed. It brings ESOL learners together with other learners. The focus of the project is on participation and access to relevant information. A great variety of activity takes place and ESOL learners have played an active part in this. Activities have enabled ESOL learners to share their language, skills and culture with others in the

local community. Activities have included sharing cooking skills, jewellery making, writing in Arabic, hairstyling skills and make-up skills.

The partnership works with other organisations to provide talks and information on wider public services including advice on welfare, finance, health, safety and law.

ESOL learners feel more relaxed and have a better sense of belonging in the community and less sense of isolation. People are volunteering their skills and their time in exchange for a chance to improve their speaking skills and to integrate in their local community. It has also helped learners' confidence levels.

# 4. Building on the Approaches and Achievements of the 2007 Strategy

## 4.3 Supporting learning and progression

- The 2007 ESOL strategy was published with a dedicated funding commitment to improve the quantity and quality of ESOL provision in Scotland. It has enabled provision to be developed in ways that successfully engage learners.
- This additional funding has enabled many new learners to access ESOL provision in Scotland.<sup>43</sup>
- Innovative and accessible approaches to provision such as the self-access ESOL Hubs in North Ayrshire and the online accredited learning offered by North Highland College have helped to ensure that there is a range of ways that ESOL learners can access provision.

## Case Study

## North Ayrshire ESOL Self Access Hubs

The Community Development Team in partnership with North Ayrshire Library and Information Service created ESOL Self Access Hubs in three local libraries in North Ayrshire. The resources aim to address the barriers to learning that ESOL learners in rural communities face on a day-to-day basis: unpredictable and unsociable working patterns, availability of transport to classes and limited access to learning provision. The libraries' ESOL collection aspires to provide learners with access to a large array of multimedia self-study materials in a highly accessible setting.

The ESOL Self Access Hubs in Saltcoats Library, Irvine Library and Brodick Library on Arran have a selection of resources for adult ESOL learners from

beginner to advanced levels including picture dictionaries, grammar reference books, graded readers with CDs, self-study books and tutor-devised self-study activity folders.

ESOL learners are encouraged and supported in using the materials in a variety of ways. The provision of individual learner portfolios, class visits, targeted training sessions, extended class activities along with ESOL newsletters are all part of the team's engagement work with the project's participants.

As a further encouragement learners also have the opportunity to gain ESOL Self-Study Certificates at Beginner, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate or Upper-Intermediate levels, based on the self-study materials provided.

<sup>43</sup> Source: ESOL impact reports. Go to: <http://www.esolscotland.com/impactreports.cfm>

# [continued]

- The national **ESOL initial assessment guide**<sup>44</sup> has helped providers and learners to identify prior learning and current English language levels giving a starting point from which they are able to progress.
- Personal learning plans help learners to review and track progress. They reinforce the learner-centred approach and encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and progression.
- Education Scotland's **ESOL Aspect Task Report**<sup>45</sup> on ESOL provision in Scotland's colleges highlights the effectiveness of a dedicated member of staff in college provision who acts as a single point of contact to signpost learners to other services as well as engage learners in activities within the wider college or help to support learner needs which go beyond support for learning.
- Increased awareness of ESOL availability and learner need has created smoother referral pathways for individuals to access the right kind of learning for them. Referral agents have included Job Centre Plus who refer clients to ESOL provision.
- Learning and teaching has improved with the use of better resources and having competent and confident practitioners who are knowledgeable in their subject area.
- The SQA ESOL qualifications have provided a framework to support learners in their learning progression. These qualifications are now recognised by colleges and universities and have supported ESOL learners to progress on to college and university courses in particular.
- Schools are beginning to look at other ways to support pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) in accessing wider curriculum activities beyond ESOL to encourage further language development.
- Partnerships have supported progression routes from one setting to another such as CLD or school to college.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.esolscotland.com/initialassessmentguide.cfm>

<sup>45</sup> Education Scotland: ESOL Aspect Task Report  
[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ESOLinScotlandsColleges130614\\_tcm4-832231.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ESOLinScotlandsColleges130614_tcm4-832231.pdf)

# 5. Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

The engagement process with learners, practitioners, providers and stakeholders highlighted areas for improvement which are taken into account in this section which looks at strategic objectives for the next five years.

**5.1** ESOL provision has become an established part of public services and should be considered in all public service planning that affects those for whom English is not a first language. As people continue to move to Scotland to live, work and settle, there will always be a need to provide ESOL services.

**5.2** Other policy areas and reports have highlighted the importance of ESOL to those for whom English is not a first language and who are accessing public services.<sup>46</sup>

**5.3** Its importance, relevance and value has been highlighted in discussions and communications with learners, practitioners, providers and wider stakeholders with first-hand experience of working with ESOL learners and first-hand accounts from ESOL learners themselves.

**5.4** Building on these valued contributions and the strong foundations from the 2007 ESOL strategy, we can continue to work towards delivering our vision.

**5.5** The strategic direction for the next five years will be framed within the objectives set for adult learning and the Statement of Ambition.

## Our Objectives

### 1. ESOL learners access and recognise learning opportunities throughout all stages, changes and circumstances in their lives.

- Barriers to provision are addressed.
- Effective partnerships exist between ESOL providers at a local level.
- ESOL provision is coherent and clear in CLD plans, college regional outcomes and local authority ESOL provision in schools.
- Effective partnerships exist between local ESOL providers and wider services (these may be local or national) to support the wider needs of ESOL learners.
- Providers offer more flexible approaches to provision which is determined by purpose, type and mode of provision.

<sup>46</sup> Education Scotland: ESOL Aspect Task Report

[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ESOLinScotlandsColleges130614\\_tcm4-832231.pdf](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/ESOLinScotlandsColleges130614_tcm4-832231.pdf)

Mapping the Roma Community

<http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Mapping-the-Roma-Community-in-Scotland-FINAL-REPORT-Sept13.pdf>

Scottish Refugee Council: Women and Children First?

[http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/7924/Women\\_\\_Children\\_First\\_Final.pdf](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/7924/Women__Children_First_Final.pdf)

New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/4581>



## 2. ESOL learners co-design their learning experience.

- Relevant and appropriate provision is delivered, enabling learners to achieve work-related goals, study-related goals or personal goals that have a positive impact on them, their families and their communities.
- Initial language assessment helps to establish language learning needs and wider learning goals.

## 3. ESOL learners transform their lives and communities through learning choices in personal, work, family and community settings.

- Learners become active citizens and get involved in their communities fostering conditions for integration.
- Learners apply their language learning skills in wider social contexts through adopting active learning approaches to English language learning.

## 4. ESOL learners effectively influence strategy and policy at local and national levels.

- Provision is mapped to the adult ESOL curriculum framework<sup>47</sup> and results in learners being responsible multi-lingual citizens and effective communicators.
- Learners' views are represented where policy impacts on their access to provision.

## 5. ESOL learners are effectively supported in their learning journeys.

- Learners are recognised for the positive contributions they make to Scottish society.
- Learners are able to access pastoral support to overcome personal, economic and social barriers.
- Providers and wider partners work together to deliver support and guidance in an integrated way which meets learner needs.

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/communitylearninganddevelopment/adultlearning/ESOL/index.asp>

# 5. Strategic Objectives and Outcomes [continued]

## Our objectives for professional and workforce development

We reiterate the points made in the 2007 strategy around professional development in that every practitioner involved in ESOL delivery in Scotland should have a relevant specialist qualification in the teaching of ESOL. Building on this are the following objectives:

- ESOL practitioners are supported to enhance and develop their skills so that they effectively support ESOL learners to achieve their learning goals
- in working with learners, ESOL practitioners will engage in career long professional learning to meet the changing demands and contexts in which learners access provision
- volunteers are supported to be competent and confident in their support role to learners.

## Supporting and promoting equality and diversity

This strategy refresh recognises the important contribution that ESOL providers and their provision makes to promoting equality and diversity with ESOL learners coming from a wide variety of backgrounds.

- ESOL learners cut across all of the protected characteristics.
- By overcoming any language barriers ESOL provision helps to advance equality of opportunity for all individuals.
- By supporting language and communication skills, this strategy helps to foster positive relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Case Study Workers' Educational Association (WEA) Scotland – Workplace ESOL

Workplace ESOL responds to the need for improved language skills of the migrant workforce in Scotland. The WEA works in partnership with a number of trade union organisations to plan, co-ordinate and deliver courses to employers with large numbers of migrant workers. The courses are organised and targeted at workers who would struggle to attend community or college based ESOL courses making these courses highly accessible to the workers. Courses take place on-site and cover ESOL topics supporting everyday communication as well as workplace/employability ESOL.

Working with Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) and Scotbeef in Queenslie, the WEA offer workplace ESOL courses to a

migrant workforce that have come from Eastern European countries such as Poland and Lithuania. The migrant workforce is mixed with young people in their 20's and 30's working alongside others in their 40's and 50's.

Learners have reported increases in their confidence in their English language skills and it has increased their motivation to pursue further learning opportunities. The impact of workers improving their language skills goes wider fostering improved communication between colleagues and the local community as well as supervisors and managers.





## Next steps

In helping to progress the direction of this refreshed strategy, Education Scotland will identify learners, key partners and providers to draw up an implementation plan to work towards achieving these outcomes.

Education Scotland will seek commitment from learners, key partners and providers to support and progress actions within the implementation plan.

# Appendix 1: Refreshing the 2007 Strategy

- The Adult ESOL Strategy for Scotland (2007) provided the foundation for the direction of publicly funded ESOL provision in Scotland. It was ambitious in its aims to raise the quality of ESOL provision and to improve the learning experience of people coming to live in Scotland with English as a second or other language.
- The process of refreshing the Strategy in 2014 has given providers an opportunity to reflect on how far ESOL provision has developed since the strategy first came into being and how it relates now to current government priorities in education and wider policy areas. In addition, the process has enabled current ESOL learners to feedback their comments and their views of ESOL learning and what it means to them.
- Building on the achievements since 2007, the refreshed Strategy and its strategic objectives will help to ensure that providers continue to work towards improving the quality and delivery of provision to the best of their capabilities within the context of public service reform.
- Meetings were held across Scotland with around 130 people, including ESOL learners, contributing to the discussions.
- People were asked:
  - o What has been achieved since the 2007 strategy?
  - o What still needs to be done?
  - o What has changed in the ESOL landscape in Scotland since 2007?
  - o How should these changes inform the refresh of the ESOL strategy?
  - o What improvements should the refreshed strategy be focused on?
  - o Who should be involved in the process?

The feedback from these discussions have informed this document.

- Learners were asked:
  - o How long have you been learning English?
  - o Which class/classes are you going to?
  - o How did you find out about English classes?
  - o Was it easy to get information?
  - o Why are you learning English?
  - o Do you think learning English is important?
  - o What do you like most about your English class?
  - o How could English classes be better?

The views of learners are captured throughout the document.

"My English classes give me confidence. I can speak without embarrassment."

"My English class has a friendly atmosphere and way of teaching. I come to the class without stress and I can meet people from different countries."

"What I like most is to learn and practise English that we really need for our lives."

"Everyone in class has an opportunity to read, speak and write. We encourage one another."

"People come from different cultures to this English class - and they are all improving their English."

