

This factsheet has been produced by members of Newham ESOL Exchange as a good practice guide for organisations planning to set up new ESOL classes. The guide focuses on key decisions that need to be taken and offers suggestions for ways of setting up and delivering classes that have worked well in Newham.

This guide assumes the classes will be delivered by an organisation that is already set up.

If you are new to ESOL provision you can access a wealth of support and expertise by engaging with the ESOL Exchange – you don't need to do this alone!

DECISIONS BEFORE THE COURSE BEGINS

Is a new ESOL course is actually needed?

- Check out demand – are people asking for classes that don't already exist? Does your organisation have sufficient enquiries and/or a waiting list?
- Is there a specific need in terms of geography, community, age or gender?
- Use our directory of ESOL classes to see if you can signpost to existing provision before setting up new classes.
- Engage with Newham ESOL Exchange to confirm the need.

Which learners and levels will you target?

- This should always respond to need.
- If you are setting up a class in response to specific enquiries, initial assessments will be needed to check out these learners' levels.
- Funding may affect your target group. Non accredited courses are harder to fund.
- Unmet needs frequently identified through the Exchange include parents with ESOL needs; Pre-entry or Non-literate levels.

Where will you run the classes?

- Most learners prefer local classes.
- School or community based venues work well.
- You will need tables, chairs, possibly ICT facilities.

When will you run the classes?

- Appropriate timings will depend on learners' circumstances – whether employed or unemployed; whether childcare is needed; whether parents need to work within school or nursery hours.
- Day time morning or afternoon works well for parents; twilight for shift workers; evening for day-time workers.
- Monday – Thursday are popular days.
- A minimum of 12 weeks works best.

Should the course lead to a qualification?

- Find out if students want this.
- Depends on learners and their ESOL level: pre-entry means no exam. Exams are only available from entry 1.

How will you fund the course?

- Work out a costed budget at an early stage.
- If charging a fee ensure this is affordable - compare to other providers, talk to potential learners.
- Free courses recruit more easily.
- Potential funders include Skills Funding Agency (SfA), European Social Fund (ESF), trusts and corporate partners.
- Some funders have strict eligibility criteria for learners; some fund by results.
- SfA fund accredited courses with exams, generally at more advanced levels.
- Access advice on funding through the Exchange or Aston-Mansfield CIU.
- Applying for funding takes several months.

Who will deliver your course?

- You need a qualified tutor ideally with experience of working with learners at different levels and definitely with your target group.
- Minimum qualification CELTA, preferably DTTLS.
- At interview ask for a mini teaching session.
- Expect and enable tutors to have ongoing professional development.
- Informal, non-accredited classes such as peer learning/ conversation groups can be delivered by volunteers but you should still have contact with experienced tutors – maybe through the Exchange.
- Volunteers or tutors on training placements can add useful support.

DELIVERING ESOL CLASSES – GOOD PRACTICE

Ensure learners are recruited to match your provision:

- Find out what learners' needs are (talk to them one to one)
- An experienced tutor should complete initial needs/ diagnostic skills assessments to confirm learners' levels

Ensure classes are accessible to your target group:

- Adjust times and location to suit.
- Offer family friendly hours for parents (eg not during school holidays).
- Use accessible, local venues
- Is a crèche needed?
- Are classes affordable?

If you need to recruit learners ensure effective publicity:

- Publicise through the ESOL Exchange
- Simple design and text for flyers
- Ad in local paper/Yellow Advertiser
- Clear information on your organisation's website
- Outreach – eg. flyers at shopping centre
- Open days so potential learners can visit/meet the tutors or organisers

Using appropriate materials/resources:

- Knowledge of good resources – through the Exchange
- Share good practice – through the Exchange
- Research through the web
- Use the British Council's web portal (<http://esol.britishcouncil.org>)
- Design your own resources
- Use Skills for Life materials

Ensure learners gain maximum benefit from the course:

- Find out what motivates your learners
- Use real context wherever possible
- Relate classes to learners' needs
- Use ongoing assessment to track progress
- Use ongoing evaluation with feedback from learners shaping delivery
- Be clear about intended outcomes –skills/knowledge, life skills etc.
- Gather evidence of learning

Ensure learners progress with their English beyond the course:

- Learning targets to include exposure to host culture (watch a film in English; read a newspaper, 10 minute chat over coffee)
- Look at distance travelled.
- Include Individual Learning Plan (ILP) targets for learning outside the course (reading newspapers, trips, books.)
- Aim to expand social/cultural horizons.
- Track what happens at end of course.
- Invite previous students to talk to new group
- Monitoring and tracking of retention, attendance, achievement and success.

To find out more about Newham ESOL Exchange go to:

www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/what-we-do/community-involvement-unit/esol/