



English for Everyone

Evaluation Report 2022



BRADFORD
Stronger Communities
Partnership



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



City of
BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction

Project background

According to the 2011 Census data, 24,000 people do not speak English well or at all in the Bradford District. Evidence suggests this includes some long-settled members of the South Asian community, newly arrived migrants, people seeking asylum and refugees. Pakistani women aged 45-64 are the most likely group to speak little or no English. ESOL provision in the District is delivered by colleges and ESOL providers for example, WEA (Workers Educational Association) and the voluntary sector.

Talk English programme funding ended in Summer 2020, and there were real concerns about a lack of provision to replace it. As an Integration Area, the district was locked out from replacement streams of ESOL funding. This project was therefore commissioned to bridge that gap using £135,000 from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).

The project offered:

- much-needed provision for improved English language and digital skills (proven to be essential during and following the pandemic) for people with low level proficiency in English;
- ESOL and digital skills provision for people when they first arrived in the country, therefore differing from most provision across the country where people often have to wait a year before being eligible;
- informal, community-based provision with routes to further progression for learners;
- opportunities for integration and increased use of local facilities and learning about the local area, thereby reducing isolation and improving health and wellbeing;
- much-needed opportunities for volunteers in Bradford district to increase employability skills and engage with their local communities.

The project provided mentoring support and appropriate training and skills to volunteers who wanted to become volunteer tutors. Themed 'Life in Bradford' digital



Entry 3 ESOL, Velvet Mills

resources were developed to accompany resources that volunteers could use in sessions. The course offered high quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) support for further learning opportunities, volunteering and employability and included a small budget for digital devices and childcare services. The sessions incorporated digital literacy, which benefitted learners and helped them to access services. It was thought that enhancing digital skills for learners would provide an added benefit of using online resources for self-study provided they had access to internet facilities, something that proved particularly crucial during COVID-19.

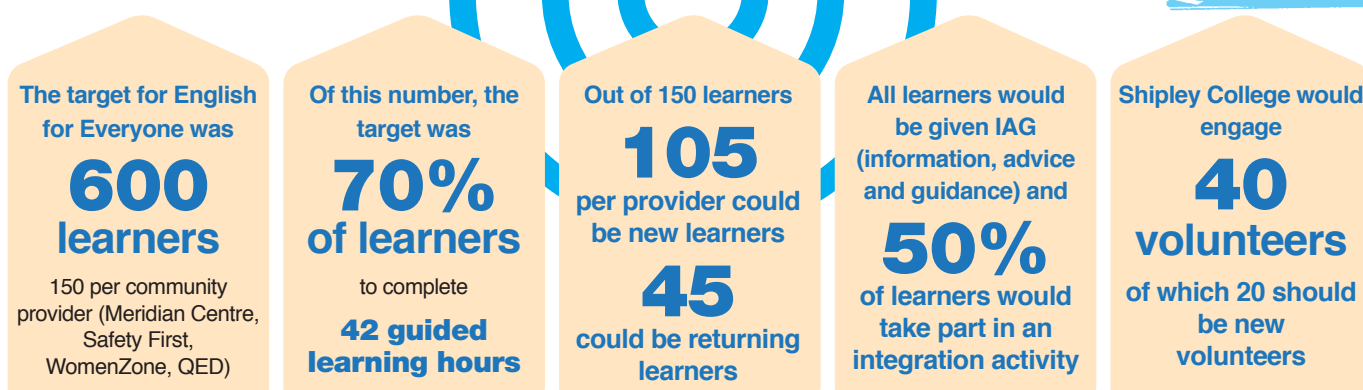
Meridian Centre, Safety First, WomenZone and QED delivered the language classes and Shipley College managed the data, trained volunteers, provided resources for use by the four providers (the consortium), and monitored the quality of delivery through lesson observations and case studies.

Project targets

The target for English for Everyone was **600 learners** -150 per community provider (Meridian Centre, Safety First, WomenZone, QED). Of this number, the target was for **70% of learners** to complete **42 guided learning hours**. Out of 150 learners, **105** per provider could be new learners and the other **45** could be **returning learners**. All learners would be given IAG (information, advice and guidance) and 50% of learners would take part in an integration activity. Shipley College would engage **40 volunteers**, of which 20 should be new volunteers.

Project

targets



The project was co-designed between the English Language Hub and Shipley College on behalf of their consortium. This meant that some of the criteria stipulated by government for eligibility to study could be changed. For example, to be eligible for the Talk English course, people have to have lived in the UK for 12 months. For most other courses, it is 6 months. This means that new arrivals often struggle to get more than very basic quick courses for 6 months. The co-designed project eliminated this stipulation on the basis of the baseline needs assessments that the English Language Hub had been conducting with learners explaining the barriers they faced.



ESOL walk - students trip

Project aims

The aims of the project were:

- to enhance access to ESOL and progression onto further learning/next ESOL level;
- to develop access to information about services, reducing the burden on services and the cost of interpreting;
- to promote greater independence and enable people to be in charge of their own lives, and;
- to establish better economic outcomes through improvement of language and digital skills.

Structure and approach

This report begins with a process evaluation of the English for Everyone programme, in order to understand whether the programme's activities have been implemented and have resulted in the intended outputs. This is followed by an outcomes evaluation, which looks at the programme's outcomes and assesses the extent to which these were achieved.



Volunteer tutor supports the English for Everyone programme

Process Evaluation

Was the number of anticipated learners and volunteers recruited?

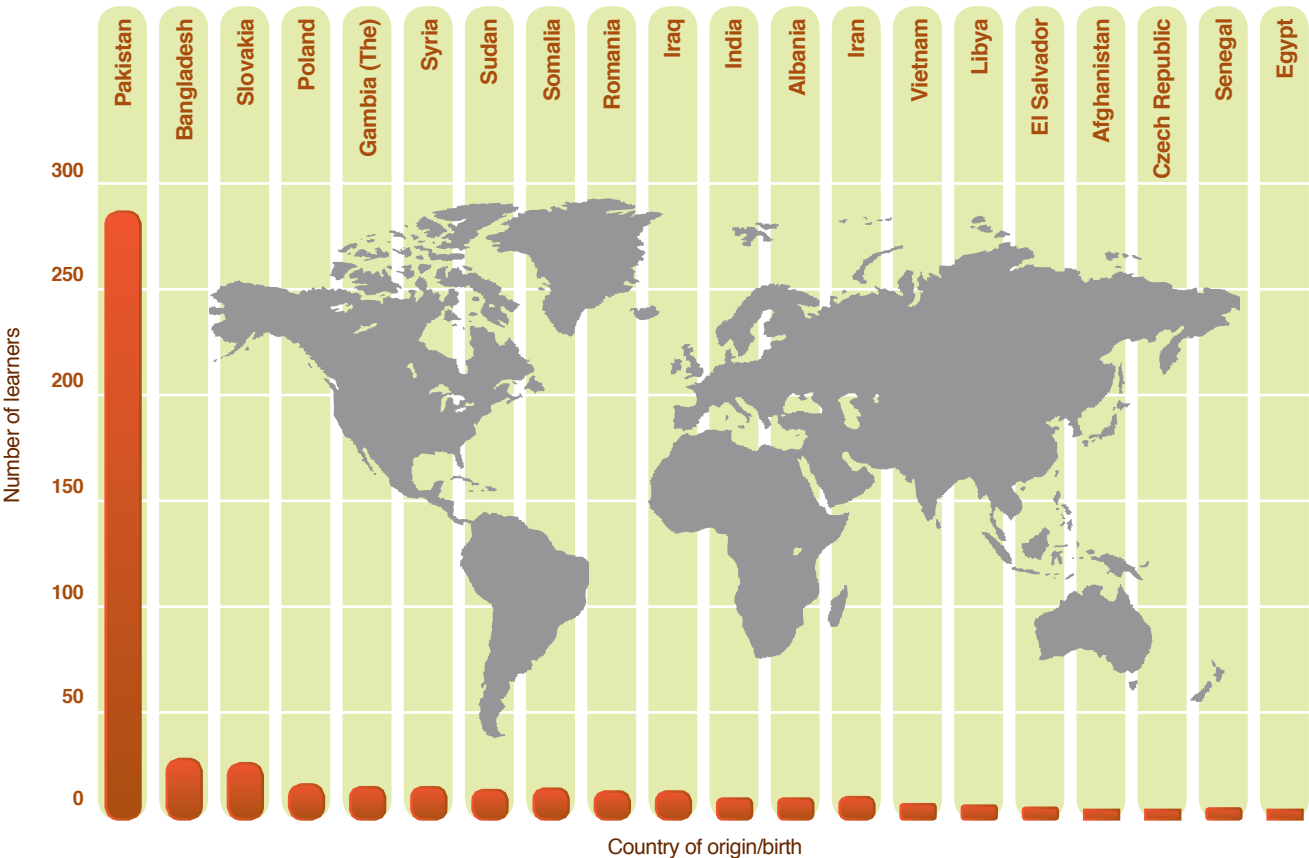
The project engaged **612** learners, 81% of whom (n = 497) were female and 18% of whom (n = 112) were male. The majority of students were born in nations within South Asia (58%, n = 353) (see Figure 1). On an individual country count, just under half of all 612 learners stated they were of Pakistani origin (48%, n = 291) (see Figure 1). The data suggests that the project managed to reach those it intended to, primarily the South Asian community and Pakistani women.

40 volunteer tutors were recruited to take part in the programme. 27 of these tutors ended up leading or supporting teaching in classes. Overall (Table 20), across all providers, these individuals averaged 189 hours of volunteering over the duration of course delivery, with an average involvement of 26 weeks.

Which wards did learners come from?

Learners participated from across 24 of Bradford’s 30 council wards, with 84% of those enrolled residing in the 10 most deprived wards within the district. In terms of geographical coverage, just under half of all learners (48%, n = 293) lived within the Bradford East parliamentary constituency, followed by Bradford West (39%, n = 236) and Bradford South (8%, n = 48). Within Bradford East, the majority of students lived in the Bowling & Barkerend (36%, n = 105) and Bradford Moor (35%, n = 104) council wards. Indeed, these wards contained the largest amount of learners who took part in the programme, followed by Manningham (82), City (69) and Little Horton (59).

Figure 1 20 most frequent responses of E4E learners to ‘country of origin/birth’ question



Did the anticipated number of learners complete the course?

578 out of 612 learners completed the course, which is a good retention rate, especially given the additional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift to digital platforms meant that some learners were unable to access the provision. Others had increased childcare/educating at home demands on them. However, the inclusion of digital skills meant that learner numbers were higher than they might have been in the circumstances.

Within the consortium, the distribution of learners who attended classes was roughly evenly split amongst the 4 providers, with Meridian Centre taking on the most number of students (156), followed by QED and Safety First (both 153) and WomenZone (152). These figures show that each of the providers exceeded the required output for enrolment (150). In addition, they collectively surpassed the total target (420) for recruitment of learners who had not previously attended ESOL classes, with 498 students meeting this criterion. Approximately one-fifth of students (112) had previously enrolled on a course – including classes run under the Talk English programme – which was below the required threshold of 180. Another key output was the number of guided learning hours each student received. The stipulated amount of 42 hours was achieved by 78% (476) of learners, higher than the target of 70% of enrolled students.

What constituted barriers to delivering agreed outputs?

For all providers, the COVID-19 crisis acted as the primary barrier to delivering agreed outputs.

- **Online provision:** The shift to online provision during lockdowns presented a barrier to delivering agreed outputs. However, QED supported learners to get set up on Zoom and WhatsApp following in-house staff and volunteer training. Shipley College supported QED with this task by providing a very useful visual step-by-step guide. A QED tutor worked as a “trouble shooter” to support others when issues arose. QED also purchased a bank of tablets with a grant and managed to secure some donated laptops for volunteers and staff to use at



Learner completing the course

home. Where learners had no access to a suitable IT device or smart phone, QED loaned out devices. During lockdown, all QED's provision was delivered online on Zoom and using WhatsApp. QED set all learners up with email addresses for communications.

Safety First trained their ESOL Volunteer tutors to use the interactive Smartboard so that they could teach the ESOL learners. Some learners found it difficult to access remote learning as they didn't have the digital knowledge or the hardware needed, e.g. smartphone, tablet, laptop. Safety First was able to lend laptops and tablets to some learners but was unable to give everyone a device. Other learners were contacted regularly by phone to 'catch up' and practice their spoken English.

Shipley College as the overseer for the project saw lockdown as the main barrier overall as face-to-face classes and outdoor activities and trips were very limited. The lack of digital skills in volunteers and learners was an additional barrier to dealing with online classes during lockdown. This needed to be overcome quickly so everyone could access the project. Some learners were unwilling or unable to come to remote sessions so missed out.

For WomenZone, online provision was difficult at first as many learners didn't have access to digital devices or the digital know-how to access learning online. They delivered tutorials for learners and supported them in setting up accounts and emails. Additionally, a lot of their learners had families, which meant they no longer had the time to participate in lessons as they had children and partners to care for and home school. As a result, WomenZone sent out work booklets as well as links for useful websites and aimed to be as flexible as possible in their delivery.

- **Isolation and self-isolation:** For Meridian Centre, quarantine played a role with some users unable to participate in person and unable to participate from home as others (e.g. children) were forced to isolate, limiting the time users could take part. At points, teaching staff became unwell with coronavirus or had to self-isolate, which inevitably hampered learning. Fortunately, Meridian's staff were skilled across disciplines and were able to handle these situations with minimal disruption to learners.

- **Psychological impact:** At times, there was a level of inconsistency due to breaks in learning. The uncertainty of the pandemic also impacted learners emotionally. Meridian provided psychological support to users to help them manage their distress. Meridian also offered in-house bereavement support (qualified counsellors) to users and their families due to the high mortality rate in the community (with over 40% of local families losing a loved one).

For QED, many learners reported difficulties at home with children being away from school and families being together all the time. This exacerbated anxieties and caused breakdowns in relationships along with additional struggles with requests for help with school work. Contacts with schools increased to dovetail support with community provision. This was all part of the creative ways in which the providers rose to the new challenges.

- **Changing restrictions:** When restrictions eased, it was necessary for QED to introduce stringent COVID measures following a dedicated risk assessment for all visitors to Quest House. These included routine cleaning between classes and stringent hygiene. It was challenging to enforce requirements at times. Bilingual staff, using a variety of languages, were able to translate requirements both verbally and in written form. Costs were incurred by QED in purchasing masks, thermometers and hand sanitiser etc. On a positive note, QED had the space for staff and volunteers to socially distance so they could come into QED House to use the resources and equipment, which was a bonus. The erratic nature of lockdown and lifting of restrictions at times was a challenge as it was hard to predict from one week to the next how delivery would take place. Volunteers and staff were very flexible and extremely accommodating.



Karmand Centre – ESOL

It was necessary for QED to send out paper-based materials for learners to use to ensure continuity and group sessions progressed well. Copying and postage was expensive and the process required forward planning. Most material was hand delivered due to the unreliability of the postal service. Everything just seemed to take longer.

ShIPLEY College observed that when the providers resumed face-to-face classes, there were restrictions on numbers in class and social distancing, which meant classes were smaller than normal and more classes had to be run to meet targets. A challenge when returning to face-to-face sessions was keeping everyone safe and adhering to government recommendations around mask wearing and hygiene. ShIPLEY College was unable to organise a meaningful end of project celebration to recognise achievements of volunteers and learners as volunteers and partners felt that an online event wouldn't be attended. Furthermore, sharing paper registers was complicated by lockdown and working from home as moving paper from one place to another meant that everything took longer to process. ShIPLEY College also had to ensure hygiene and safety was considered when transporting paperwork from place to place.

Likewise, when restrictions were eased and WomenZone returned to face-to-face classes, a major challenge was ensuring the safety of staff, volunteer tutors and learners. Therefore, class sizes were reduced in line with risk assessments; more classes were delivered; cleaning of training rooms was increased; and face masks and hand sanitizer were provided to students.

- **Funding:** For ShIPLEY College, having one year of funding inevitably leads to a huge amount of set up and not enough time to gain fully from the processes that have been put in place. This not only means financial inefficiencies, but also that partner organisations are threatened by lack of continuity in funding and are unable to ensure consistent levels of work for staff.

- **Progression opportunities:** ShIPLEY College felt that the major lack of progression opportunities for students constituted a barrier to delivering outputs.

Outcomes evaluation

Improved awareness of barriers and solutions for providers in ESOL provision in the District

Key differences that improved the outcomes for learners were the provision of ESOL in community spaces, in small groups of learners where they could form support groups and the number of hours available for tuition.

84% of those enrolled resided in the 10 most deprived wards within the district. The average distance travelled by learners to attend classes across all providers was 1.01 miles (this is an 'as the crow flies' distance, calculated using the postcode of the class location and that of the home address given by the student on enrolment). This indicates how important it is to have ESOL available in community spaces close to home. Learners will be more familiar with such spaces, giving them confidence to enrol. It also provided opportunities to make new friends and extend their networks.



Aiman Malik and Sarbjit Kaur E4E

(with students' permission) which meant that interaction could take place outside of class time and after the course had ended.

The number of tuition hours that learners received increased from 30 hours to 60 hours through the additional funding available. This had a major impact on the improvements made by learners. The end-of-course data shows a change from a third of participants initially assessed at being at the Pre-entry (PE) emerging stage, to just 0.5% of students. Moreover, from recording 119 learners as PE consolidated at the beginning of the course, that figure subsequently increased to 190, with PE established numbers similarly rising from 80 to 135. During benchmarking 31% of students were assessed at a stage within Entry 1, and by course completion this had increased, with 43% of learners within this level.

CASE STUDY

Aiman and Sarbjit

"Aiman and Sarbjit both attend the Howard House 8 course through Safety First. They have done all of their classes face to face.

They have become friends through the course and both commented it was really good to get to know people from other countries."



Community volunteers were trained and supported to provide ESOL classes. 40 volunteer tutors were recruited to take part in the programme. 27 of these tutors ended up assisting in or taking classes. Overall, these individuals averaged 189 hours of volunteering over the duration of course delivery, with an average involvement of 26 weeks. Courses throughout lockdown meant that students weren't as isolated and had links with others, this increased positive mental health and social interactions. Some courses created Whatsapp groups

“Doubling the guided learning hours, allowed us to go from speaking and listening, to incorporating reading and writing. This allowed more opportunities to develop linguistic skills and speech and to practice in simulated scenarios.”

The removal of the 12-month eligibility criteria helped greatly as providers were able to recruit those who needed the support the most. This meant that the refugee community had access to food parcels in addition to ESOL throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. If it was not for the English for Everyone project they may not have come into contact with the provision and therefore would not have known about the additional services offered.

CASE STUDY

Testimonial from Tutor

"With English for Everyone [students] can come straight away and it is actually 60 hours which for us teachers is amazing because obviously the learners come and they can't speak any English or very little English, they cannot read, they cannot write. So the 60 hours for us means we can teach them how to read, how to write, also we do a lot of listening and speaking, they do a lot of role-play. With the Talk English we couldn't cover all of that because it was 15 sessions, which was 30 hours and we couldn't fit it all in. We were concentrating on speaking more than reading and writing so progress wise we've found that the learners are all writing, they can read by the end of the 60 hours, their confidence is much better, so they're more confident in their speaking, making appointments. Also, I've noticed with their benchmarking at the end that they have progressed much more with the 60 hours."



Understanding gaps in provision through matching need to provision

94% of learners wished to progress to further ESOL classes and few felt ready to enter the job market. The availability of childcare was very important for many of the learners, especially those that had arrived more recently.

“ They've come to this country alone, they have no partner/husband and no family members, they don't have friends, only a few of them have friends, but I don't think it's friends where they would leave their children with them. So for them without this childcare they wouldn't have learnt, anything, they wouldn't have been able to attend class. ”

Of those within the non-working group, the most frequent reason given for a student not being in paid employment was their childcare responsibilities (43%). Those not in work but who declared that they were looking for work made up the next largest cohort of overall responses (38%). A small but significant number of learners also stated they were unable to work due to ill health. For those with a relative or friend who could look after their children the timing of the classes was still important.

The four delivery partners were very different and brought different and diverse skills and benefits to the project.

They offered different wrap around support, from food (fair trade and food parcel support) to additional activities and support for learners. The learners all spoke highly of their tutors and their lessons. They were all enjoying the process and many of them wanted to continue with lessons after the course finished.

Range of profiles of learners

The number of learners with childcare responsibilities formed a considerable portion of the overall students on the English for Everyone programme, with 71% answering that they had responsibility for a child or children. Approximately half of students (47%) have lived in the UK for less than 5 years, with just over a third (35%) having resided for less than 3 years. However, the largest individual grouping of learners on the program was that within the residency bracket of between 10 and 20 years, making up just over one-fifth of all learners. Moreover, 12% of all those enrolled have lived in the UK for at least 20 years. This breakdown is also largely reflected in the data concerning duration of living within the Bradford local authority area. Although the proportion of students stating they have lived within the district for less than 5 years is slightly more (51%), the largest cohort is again those learners who have lived in Bradford for between 10 and 20 years (18%).

Improved confidence in learners

Low confidence levels manifested in a reluctance on the part of learners to engage with people who speak English and in accessing cultural and heritage services. On enrolment, just under two-thirds of all learners answered that they never talk to English speaking people. When



Class and tutor at work

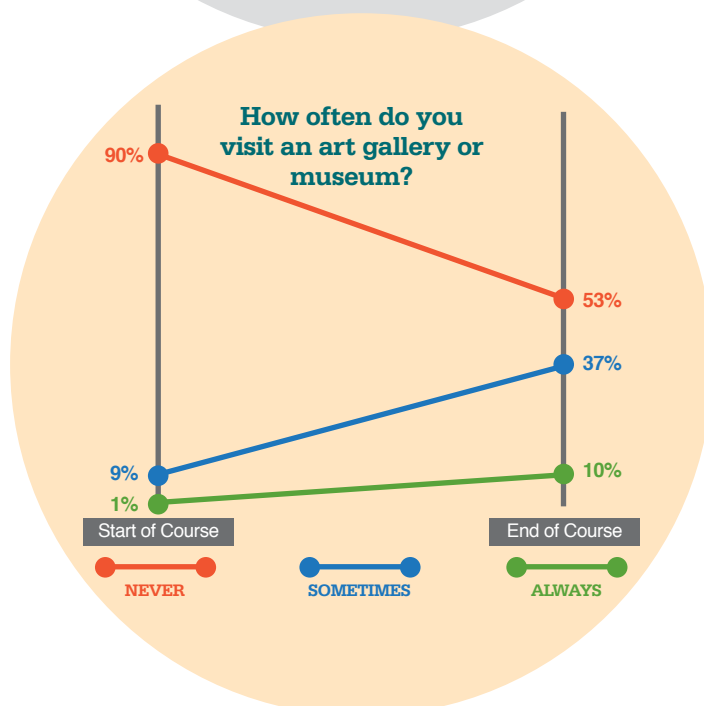
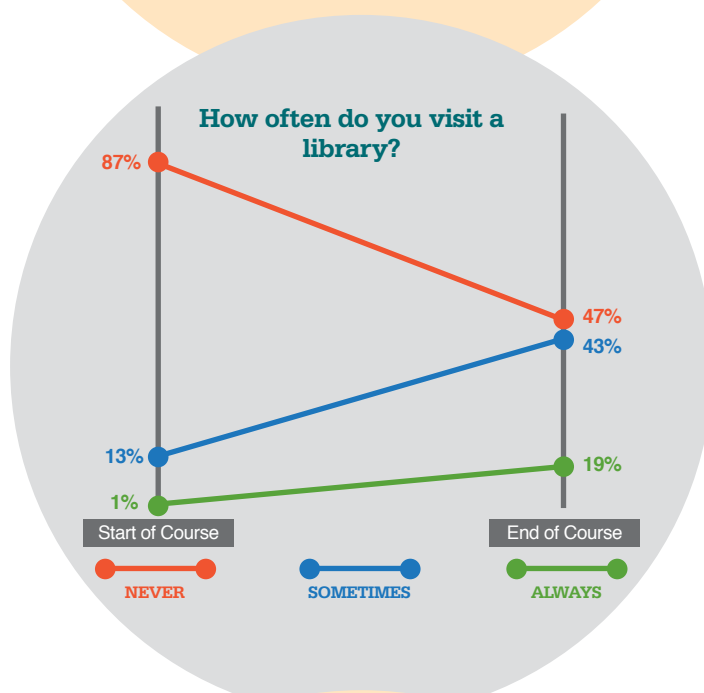
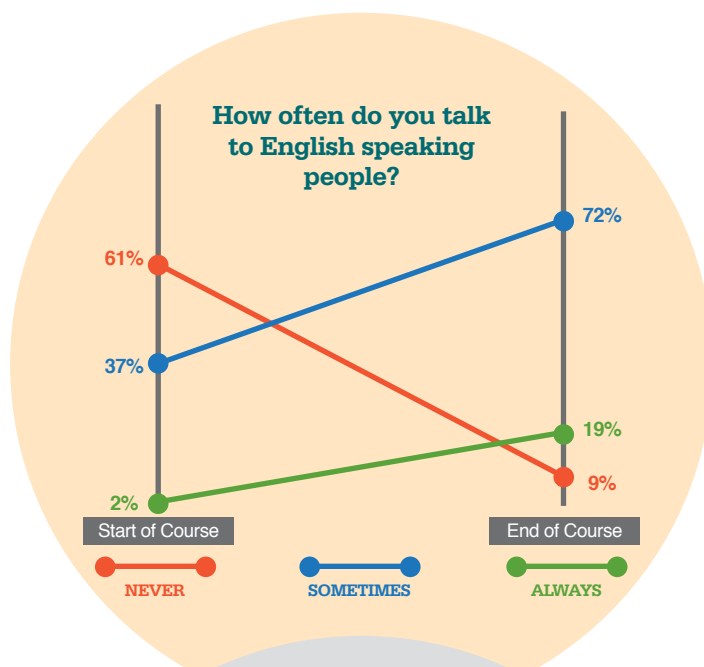
asked “how often do you visit a library?” 87% of students answered ‘never’. Similarly 90% of learners never visited a gallery or library. These factors perhaps influenced the learners’ sense of belonging and community, as evidenced in the largely ambivalent or negative responses of just over half the students to the question “how strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?” On enrolment, 33% declared they ‘didn’t know’, with 20% stating ‘not very strongly’ and 4% declaring ‘not at all’.

Similarly, the question “how comfortable do you feel talking to people from different backgrounds (more than just saying hello)?” found that 51% were ‘neither comfortable, nor uncomfortable’, 27% were ‘not comfortable’ and 22% answered ‘comfortable’. The graph below (Figure 2/chart V) shows how these answers had changed by the end of the course.

Learners progress into positive pathways

As well as receiving English language tuition, students also took part in classes and workshops that covered a range of topics relating to integration, health & wellbeing, digital inclusion and confidence. Altogether 71% of those enrolled took part in these sessions (totalling 1048 contact hours) which was higher than the required output of 50% of students participating. Similarly, all enrolled learners were to have received Information, Advice and Guidance and it was accessed by 68% of students.

Improved language proficiency is important not only for the individual learners, but also has significant impacts on social cohesion and economic indicators. The need to provide lessons through digital platforms jump-started people’s confidence in using social media. For some this had positive economic impacts. Confidence with digital tasks went from 31% at the start of the course to 60% at the end of the course.



“My Journey”

“My journey started in the 2001 when my husband passed away and I have six kids. My youngest was born after my husband passed away and I had no English and I didn't know how to drive and it was very hard. I used to live in Dewsbury and my kids born in Dewsbury hospital. In 2002 I moved in Bradford from Dewsbury and Bradford was a very big city and I was really scared because I never went anywhere out alone [...].

In 2019 I started again English. I did customer service L1 and L2 and 2020 was lockdown so my daughters are home, they used to work but they were home and said ‘Mum you have a passion with cooking and so we should do something.’ So we made an Instagram, they made an Instagram and I start to cooking and making dishes and they record it and so that's how I made the Instagram. In 2021 then we started making TikTok because TikTok is easy to use and I can use myself [...] TikTok was easy for me in doing cooking and I start doing baking. And my INstagram page is ‘South Asian Inspired’ Homeland Taste and the cake one is ‘Comfort with Cream’ and you can order cakes.”



As well as enabling small class sizes, the volunteer tutors gained experience that was key for helping them progress in their careers. In future projects it would be more valuable/effective for volunteers to be offered a Level 3 teaching qualification as this would give them a recognised qualification for teaching adult learners.

“ I have no teaching background so this is new for me but it's really interesting. I want to now do a course in teaching which will help me and also help the learners so I can do a better job here. ”

“ I started my journey by joining the ESOL from QED and then the employability course. This helped me to improve my learning skills and increase my social contacts. Sarah taught us EFE volunteer course online and that leads me to this volunteer teaching job in Meridian Centre. ”



Key learnings



- 1 The elimination of the requirement to have been resident in the UK for a stipulated period of time differed from other programmes across the country, but was highly effective as it meant recruiters were able to provide immediate provision for those who needed it the most.
- 2 Increasing the number of tutor hours from 30-60 had a significant impact on the improvements made by learners.
- 3 The opportunity to take part in classes covering practical skills, integration, health and wellbeing, and digital inclusion helped students feel more confident.
- 4 The programme provided opportunities for volunteer tutors to enhance their employability and skills, and engage with their local communities. In future programmes volunteers could be offered a Level 3 teaching qualification for teaching adult learners.
- 5 The shift to online provision during lockdowns helped students feel less isolated and improve their digital literacy. When allowed, providing in-person, small, community-based classes improved outcomes for students.
- 6 The short-term nature of the funding has meant that partner organisations have been unable to engage in any continuity planning or ensure consistent levels of work for staff.

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