

# Supporting young refugees with an ESOL need: a co-created checklist

This checklist is intended to provide information and guidance about supporting young refugees to access suitable ESOL provision. It is the output of an event held by Learning and Work Institute (L&W) and the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) that focused on young ESOL learners aged 16 to 19. This checklist was created by and is aimed at resettlement coordinators and other stakeholders involved in the refugee resettlement process who attended.

## ► Initial assessments

To ensure that young refugees access appropriate provision, conducting a thorough initial assessment is important. A comprehensive approach includes gaining basic information about any previous education or learning, any factors that may impact on learning such as learning difficulties and/or disabilities, current language skills, wider needs such as health, family and faith as well as future aspirations. It is also important to take vocational skills into account as some young people may have acquired relevant skills at an earlier age than is typical in the UK.

## Take a collaborative approach

Consider involving Virtual Schools in assessment and support for Personal Education Plans for 16 to 19 year olds as standard. Virtual Schools are a Local Authority tool used to help promote the progress of educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC) and care leavers. Think about working with other relevant colleagues and organisations during this process to ensure that the young person has access to appropriate provision.

## Promote flexibility

Consider whether there is a benefit for a young person starting their study the year (or two) below their age. For example, starting in Year 10 when, age wise, they should be in Year 11.

## ► Provision and delivery

### Provide a range of delivery options

It is important to have a range of provision options available to meet the different needs of the young refugee cohort. Consider different approaches such as classroom and non-classroom-based delivery, and using online and interactive learning platforms. Offering non-formal, or alternative provision can be beneficial for young people as it fosters social interaction and maximises learning opportunities when mainstream provision may be unavailable or inaccessible.

Be aware that school holidays can increase a gap in education and present a risk for learning and integration. A summer school can be an effective way of keeping young people engaged in learning when colleges are closed. To maximise engagement, activities should be coproduced with young people, fun and can include whole family sessions.

### Create a sense of belonging

For new arrivals who are adapting to life in the UK, creating a sense of belonging can support their learning. Encouraging peer to peer interaction, promoting student representation opportunities, engaging with student representatives and offering non-formal learning opportunities are all effective approaches to fostering social interaction and creating a sense of belonging.

### Non-ESOL provision

Engaging in non-ESOL related activities supports young refugees' social integration, develops language skills and promotes wellbeing. Approaches to supporting engagement include:

- Signposting and supporting access to extra-curricular activities such as sport, music, arts and other creative activities, and local orientation.
- Engaging and training mentors or befrienders
- Promoting access to youth clubs

## ► **Partnership working**

Multiagency working is an effective approach to supporting young refugees and meeting their needs.

### **Who to involve?**

To ensure that multiple needs are met, take a holistic approach to partnership working. Build links with FE colleges, schools, youth organisations, JCP, health services, faith groups, local employers and apprenticeship providers etc. Ideally, this should start early during assessment process and maintain momentum thereafter.

### **Tap into existing networks**

Local authority and refugee support agencies' representatives need to meet regularly with schools/children's services. There may also be a local ESOL partnership. Find out if there are existing forums that bring everyone together and join them.

### **Share knowledge and resources**

Hold regular meetings, events, workshops, professional development sessions etc. – either face to face or virtually - to share knowledge, effective practice and resources. This can foster trust between partners and provide an opportunity to support each other to overcome challenges.

## ► **Accessibility**

Once appropriate provision, activities and wider support services have been identified, it is important to ensure that the young person accesses them and maintains engagement.

### **First steps to ensure access**

Consider the best transport options for the young people you work with. For example, providing a minibus as an alternative to public transport or covering travel costs. It may be beneficial to accompany some young people to college or learning centre and be with them during the process of creating a learning plan.

### **Maintaining engagement**

To support engagement, taking a holistic approach to meeting needs – such as learning, faith, health - can be effective. Practical steps include ensuring young people have access to healthy food, as well as pastoral and peer support.

## ► **Employment-related support**

### **Careers information, advice and guidance**

Accessing relevant and useful information about employment opportunities can be a key way to support 16-19 year olds think about and take steps towards their future career. Effective approaches include:

- Ensuring one to one support is available
- Working with a specialist career advice service
- Nurturing high aspirations
- Engaging parents and carers
- Providing advice on higher education pathways (useful links include: [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#), [Universities of Sanctuary](#), and [Student Action for Refugees](#))
- Create short and long-term action plans
- Use labour market information to consider local employment prospects

### **Preparing for and moving into work**

There are a variety of effective ways to support young refugees to successfully prepare for and ultimately secure good work, including:

- Embedding ESOL in vocational training, which can be achieved through vocational and ESOL tutors co-delivering a course
- Working with local employers (including the local authority) to create pathways into apprenticeships, specifically for refugees
- Engaging with local employers or other youth organisations (e.g. Prince's Trust) to create work experience and volunteering opportunities. Ensure that the role is matched as closely as possible to the young person's interests and aspirations.

## ► **Workforce development**

### **Training for staff**

Staff training (through webinars to save time) to understand learner/client group and key information about their needs and circumstances is key. Ensure access to trauma training for all professionals/practitioners and consider trauma informed practice.

### **Engage mentors**

Ensure there are mentors (people who are experts by lived experience) in the support team.

### **Know your cohort**

Having a good understanding of your cohort will help to meet their needs more effectively. 16-19 year old refugees and asylum-seeking people include: LAC who are the responsibility of the local authority, LAC who are placed in your area by other local authorities, those on the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and children arriving with families and other circumstances.

## Effective practice examples shared at the event

- Pathways to Independence - [bit.ly/2SK7RV2](https://bit.ly/2SK7RV2)
- Philips – supporting refugees into employment - [bit.ly/2v5nNZ1](https://bit.ly/2v5nNZ1)
- Milton Keynes College - [bit.ly/2wt9xJL](https://bit.ly/2wt9xJL)
- East Surrey College - [bit.ly/2Te0Paj](https://bit.ly/2Te0Paj)
- John Ruskin College - [bit.ly/2T4M8pG](https://bit.ly/2T4M8pG)

This slide pack from the event includes additional information and a wide range of useful resources to use with learners. [bit.ly/39K8Pgo](https://bit.ly/39K8Pgo)

## Links to useful resources

**Pre-entry ESOL: A Guide for the South East Region** (Learning and Work Institute)  
[bit.ly/2Sl6igY](https://bit.ly/2Sl6igY)

**Learners New to ESOL** (Education and Training Foundation, Learning and Work Institute and Learning Unlimited, 2019) [bit.ly/37llqbJ](https://bit.ly/37llqbJ)

**Progressing resettled refugees into employment** (Learning and Work Institute, 2019)  
[bit.ly/38Jy4bH](https://bit.ly/38Jy4bH)

**Supporting low-paid workers with an ESOL need to progress in work: Top tips for providers** (Learning and Work Institute, 2019) [bit.ly/2SJKwmv](https://bit.ly/2SJKwmv)

**Establishing and developing ESOL local partnerships: An effective practice guide** (Learning and Work Institute, 2019) [bit.ly/2T10Luk](https://bit.ly/2T10Luk)

**Supporting people with English language needs to access apprenticeships** (Learning and Work Institute, 2018) [bit.ly/2P7MdYs](https://bit.ly/2P7MdYs)