

Question on access and provision of ESOL from Adela Belecova, English for Action

Question:

How will Lambeth Together improve access to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision for migrant and sanctuary-seeking communities, particularly given the impact that limited English can have on health, wellbeing and access to services? How will you work with us at English for Action to improve access to ESOL in Lambeth?

Response: Adult Learning, Skills and Employment, Lambeth Council

The Lambeth Adult Learning service delivers adult learning courses in the community for residents who are over 19 years old to help them develop their skills for life and work.

As part of this offer, we deliver ESOL from Pre-entry to Level 2 in many settings, including schools, children's centres, libraries and community centres to make learning accessible to residents. This may include needing to access ESOL courses with a creche which is provided at children's centres, or fitting learning around work through courses taking place at a range of times and days including Saturdays. The ESOL curriculum includes language development for improving access to health and wellbeing services, language for developing confidence for work and developing skills for becoming more active in communities.

In the meantime, residents can register or be referred for initial assessment and enrolment through contacting the providers directly or emailing our Lambeth Adult Learning mailbox: adultlearning@lambeth.gov.uk. The full timetable, details of our providers and an overview of the offer can be found on the website [Adult courses in Lambeth | Lambeth Council](#).

Lambeth Adult Learning service works closely with the council's Sanctuary Services team as part of our work as a Borough of Sanctuary. We run language and digital skills courses for asylum seekers and refugees as part of this work. Our learning provider partners do outreach to the hotels for asylum seekers in the borough to engage them in ESOL courses. We run courses specifically located close to the hotels to remove the barrier of cost of travel (in libraries very close by, for example).

The Adult Learning Service is funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) via the Adult Skills Fund (ASF), devolved from Department for Education. Under the ASF funding rules, asylum seekers only become eligible for fully funded courses once they have been resident in the UK for 6 months while waiting for a decision on their claim for asylum. (This is a national as well as a London-wide restriction.)

Meanwhile, as we are keen that new arrivals are engaged and supported as much as possible during their first six months in the country, we ensure they are signposted to wider services - including ESOL conversation clubs within our provider

network - to keep them engaged until they become eligible for mainstream funded provision.