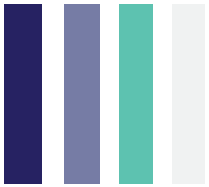


2024

Learning English in Somerset

Delivered by



CCS

people • place • enterprise



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Section 1 Introduction

“Я буду дуже вдячна якщо ви створите он-лайн курси та розмовні клуби.Дякую.”

“I will be very grateful if you create online courses and speaking clubs.”

Google translation from Somerset ESOL survey respondent

“I hope I can attend English classes. Thank you for your interest in me, in us. I appreciate it.” Somerset ESOL survey respondent

Somerset Council commissioned the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) to compile a map and directory of English classes for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and English Conversation Clubs in Somerset.

Somerset Council wanted to identify gaps in provision and the needs of people whose first language is not English. They also wanted to test interest in a potential Somerset ESOL network.



1.1 The Context

The brief noted that national and local reports have shown that poor English language skills are a key barrier to employment, integration and more generally, community cohesion. [1]

The availability of support for learning English was felt to be unclear or hard to find by individual learners and support agencies in Somerset. There is a wide range of provision at varying levels including classes within a college setting, to more informal classes held in local village halls. Many classes are dependent on funding that is often allocated on a yearly or course by course basis.

[1] Somerset Council: ESOL Project Brief

1.2 The Methodology

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted using a standardised interview guide, which was available as an online JotForm questionnaire. The three Further Education colleges, Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L) and community organisations providing English lessons were interviewed to identify:

- a) The current provision of ESOL classes, their locations and levels taught
- b) Any gaps in provision including level of provision, locations, availability
- c) The barriers that people face when accessing English language courses
- d) Their interest in joining a Somerset ESOL network

In addition, an online survey called “Is English your first language?” asked individuals, who do not speak English as their first language, about their learning needs. It also asked about their current level of English and what could help them access English courses and wider learning opportunities in the future. This social media survey was disseminated in twenty-three languages through the ESOL providers and other agencies and individuals supporting refugees. Respondents could reply in their first language.

The Southwest ESOL Network, Bristol Council, Devon County Council, North Somerset Community Education, Weston College, and Weymouth College were also consulted.



Executive Summary

Section 2 Course provision

Formal provision of ESOL courses in Somerset is delivered through the Further Education Colleges, Somerset Skills & Learning (SS&L) and CHARIS Refugees' Welcome Hubs. The colleges run courses throughout the academic year, taking students through the ESOL levels. SS&L offer shorter courses for each level, mostly in 8-week blocks.

Informal English Conversation Clubs and English courses have developed in the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise Sector (VCFSE) in response to the needs of refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and others. They also provide welfare support and enable newcomers' orientation and integration in the community through social activities.

Alongside the established charities like CHARIS, CCS and Diversity Voice, there are new Community Interest Companies e.g. MC Inspired Together, who have set up ESOL classes.

SS&L are the main Somerset-based provider of online ESOL courses.

A map and directory of ESOL classes and English Conversation groups in Somerset is now available on <https://ccslovesomerset.org/esol-map/>. This will be updated on a quarterly basis or as necessary as courses change.

Appendix 1: Acronyms and definitions table

Appendix 2: ESOL course provision matrix



2.2 Funding

Funding for accredited ESOL classes in Further Education is received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). SS&L are funded through Somerset Council (SC) from the Adult Education Budget (AEB).

CHARIS and other organisations in the VCFSE sector provide non-accredited ESOL classes. CHARIS courses are funded through Somerset Council, through the resettlement schemes.

Courses in the community are financed through short-term project funds and in-kind contributions, including volunteer support, free facilities, and services.

2.3 Network

Consultation with providers demonstrated an appetite for developing a Somerset ESOL Network to strengthen training, access funding opportunities, develop best practice and improve outcomes for learners.

2.4 Conversation Clubs

The English conversation groups provide additional social benefits and links to welfare support. These wrap-around activities support integration and community cohesion. Nightingales, in Chard, for example, work with the whole family, join in with local community activities, and run social events themselves.

For the purposes of this report, all the informal English conversation provision is grouped together under Conversation Clubs. See Appendix 1: Acronyms and Definitions Table.



Taunton Conversation Club

2.5 ESOL course levels

Course providers identified that a wider variety of levels and types of courses would be welcomed as learners' needs vary according to their motivation and educational background.

The survey "Is English your first language?" reflected a need for:

- more flexible course times
- more online courses
- more English Conversation Clubs for learners at all levels.

2.6 Conclusion

English language provision is offered to a wide range of speakers of English as a second language and has grown in response to need in Somerset.

Community groups have responded to refugees' needs on the ground, providing welfare support and English conversation groups to help their refugee guests settle in.

Provision has accelerated through the government resettlement schemes, as well as through Further and Adult Education. Other regional and national agencies have also expanded their offer to learners and teachers.

The findings from this report indicate that although ESOL provision is available across the county, more variety and flexibility could support more learners.

There is potential to develop ESOL provision in Somerset by addressing gaps in provision, tutor training and further social opportunities.

a) Tutor training

Although all the tutors are qualified to teach English, there is no standard accreditation. Some tutors are TEFL trained, others have a teacher's qualification in their home language for teaching English. Some have the Certificate for English in Language Teachers Assessment (CELTA) qualification which qualifies them to teach the full ESOL curriculum at all levels.

The Southwest ESOL Forum provide further training opportunities and CELTA courses, so these could be publicised more widely to Somerset tutors.

Volunteers would also appreciate further teaching resources and training opportunities, in some cases to increase their employment opportunities.



Numatic employees celebrate achieving their ESOL qualifications with Yeovil College.

b) Gaps in provision

- **ESOL and other courses**

Various levels of courses were requested by learners. As progress is made at beginner and intermediate stage, more advanced levels are likely to become more in demand.

However, colleges reported a higher demand for elementary and intermediate courses indicating new learners are continuing to enrol.

Just under half of the respondents showed an interest in other courses including other languages, IT & computers, creative courses, business, and employment routes.

- **Conversation Clubs**

Just over half of respondents, from beginners to more advanced learners, indicated that they would like to learn or improve their English through Conversation Clubs.

Since less than a fifth of respondents indicated they are currently learning through Conversation Clubs, this would indicate that more Conversation Clubs would be welcomed and attended.

- **Geographic areas**

The main urban centres and some larger market towns are served by the key providers. There is a noticeable lack of provision in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge, as well as Wincanton and further east of Yeovil. However, this could be because there is little demand there, so further analysis of the places where non-English speakers live and work would be useful to ensure there are no unmet needs.

- **Support for learners**

A considerable proportion of learners requested more flexible course times, as well as childcare and transport support. Other respondents mentioned access to laptops and devices to be able to study better.

“Transport, elastyczne godziny zajęć ” (Transportation, flexible hours)

“Childcare, funding, computer& iPads for online learning, online courses, smart phones to access anywhere.”

“Transport, laptop or tablet is required. Something for work. It is very difficult to be without a working computer. Maybe there's a place where I can borrow it for a while.”

- **Welfare and social support**

Social opportunities in the community alongside welfare and pastoral support were mentioned by several providers as significantly helping new migrants and asylum seekers integrate into society as well as helping them learn English.

“Convo clubs have an outward facing approach, with visiting groups such as National Energy Action, Fire Service, Somerset Artworks. We also have a holistic approach, helping with school concerns, financial help.”

2.7 Recommendations

No.	Recommendations	Action and by whom
1	<p>Course provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work in partnership to collaborate and seek funds to provide more levels and types of courses, including more accredited courses, Conversation Clubs, and online provision. • Encourage and support accreditation of ESOL courses provided in the community. • Explore and develop potential sources of funding to provide childcare and transport costs, and access to mobile devices to enable more individuals to learn English. 	<p>Somerset Council, providers & Somerset ESOL Network</p> <p>Somerset Council, providers & Somerset ESOL Network</p> <p>Somerset ESOL Network</p>
2	<p>ESOL Information and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and develop the ESOL map and directory • Develop the ESOL webpage 'Learning English in Somerset' to include teaching and learning resources, and useful links. • Raise awareness with other support agencies such as CAB about the current ESOL provision offered. 	<p>CCS & providers</p> <p>CCS</p> <p>CCS, providers & Somerset Council</p>
3	<p>Somerset ESOL Network</p> <p>Establish a Somerset ESOL Network to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop best practice • Share knowledge and understanding of learner's needs. • Provide or signpost to training opportunities including skill sharing, further teaching qualifications e.g. CELTA for ESOL. • Raise awareness of employment and educational opportunities, as well as inclusive cultural and social events and activities. • Provide opportunities to expand ESOL course provision 	<p>CCS, Somerset Council, and members of the Somerset ESOL Network</p>

<p>4</p>	<p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with employers to establish their employees' needs, and to develop further ESOL courses in workplaces. • Explore training and support that employers can offer e.g. how to apply for work with them, H&S training. • Promote the Refugee Employment Programme and other work-related pathways. • Explore other opportunities to extend ESOL provision, e.g. through Job Centres, libraries. 	<p>Somerset Council Economic Development team, SS&L, FE Colleges, CCS</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Budgets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain funding streams for current provision • Explore further income streams with other stakeholders e.g. Economic Development team at Somerset Council, DWP 	<p>Somerset Council</p>

Learning English in Somerset Full Report

Section 3 ESOL Consultation

3.1 Consultation on ESOL course provision

Fifteen course providers were consulted using a structured interview process. Two further providers were interviewed in North Somerset, although their responses are not included in the data findings.

There were 209 responses to the online survey conducted with speakers whose first language was not English. Online research was also carried out.

3.2 Current course provision and levels

English classes for speakers of other languages are provided across Somerset in a variety of ways. Appendix 2 ESOL Course Provision Matrix.

The National Association of Teaching English and Community Languages (NATECLA) provide a full list of the awarding bodies for ESOL, and the various ESOL programmes and approaches offered nationally. [2]

[2] <https://www.natecla.org.uk/content/596/ESOL-qualifications-for-learners>



Further and Adult Education

Bridgwater & Taunton College and Strode College are accredited by Pearson (Edexcel); while Yeovil College's accreditation body is City & Guilds.

There are five levels of accredited ESOL courses, from Entry Level 1, 2 & 3 to Level 1 & 2. Bridgwater & Taunton College, Strode College and Yeovil College all offer ESOL accreditation from Entry Level 1, 2, 3 through to Level 1& 2. Bridgwater & Taunton College explained that students only need to reach Level 1 to gain access to further education such as GCSE or a vocational programme.

The colleges integrate ESOL provision into wider accredited qualifications e.g. Functional Skill and English Skills for Life. Most courses are on campus, though Yeovil College also provides an ESOL course at Yeovil Library.

Somerset Skills & Learning CIC (Community Interest Company) deliver an accredited ESOL course in Taunton and Bridgwater, as well as non-accredited ESOL courses in Bridgwater, Frome, Minehead, Norton St Philip, Shepton Mallet, Somerton and Wells.



Voluntary sector

The Welcome Hubs and other VCSFE organisations run non-accredited ESOL courses from beginner to intermediate levels. There are fewer opportunities for ESOL advanced level courses in the community, and learners are redirected to the colleges. Tutors said that learners sometimes left the course when they reached a proficient level to gain employment.

Eight Conversation Clubs were identified, mostly for beginners, although Watchet Welcome Hub hold a Conversation Club for intermediate level speakers.

Community groups such as Nightingales Charity and Forefront Community Church in Chard responded to the needs of Ukrainian guests by setting up informal Conversation Clubs, as did Taunton Welcomes Refugees and Wiveliscombe Welcomes Refugees.

CCS identified gaps in provision for women only Conversation Clubs, where they could bring pre-school children and set up three new clubs in Taunton (in partnership with CHARIS Taunton Welcome Hub), Chard and Glastonbury. Another Conversation Club in Bridgwater has been set up this year due to demand.



Online

Online ESOL courses at Entry Level 1, 2 and 3 (English for Starters, Developers and Enhancers) are offered through SS&L.



Workplace provision

SS&L run an ESOL Functional Skills course at Mademoiselle Desserts in Taunton.

Yeovil College provide ESOL Skills for Life classes at Yeo Valley, Numatic, Norseland, Thomas Fudges and Eurilait factories.

One of the providers commented that some employers said the cost of ESOL provision was prohibitive. They also commented that it could be difficult to find a regular weekly time and a consistent cohort when many employees were working shifts.

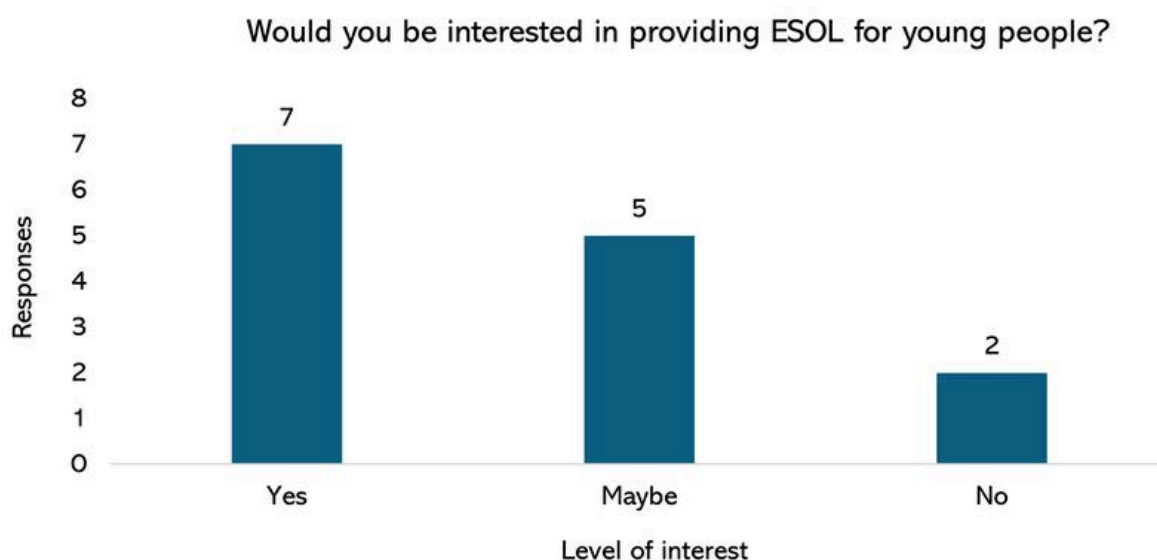


Teacher training

There does not appear to any specific ESOL teacher training taught in Somerset. The Certificate of English Language Teaching Assessment (CELTA) is the recognised route to teaching ESOL and is available regionally and online.

3.3 Provision for young people

Chart 1 – Course providers: young people ESOL provision



Answered: 13

Skipped: 2

Young people (16-18 years) were offered ESOL through Skills for Life at Bridgwater & Taunton College. Yeovil College already has 16 - 18-year-olds enrolled into ESOL courses plus 'Narrowing the Gap' sessions and will be expanding provision to full time ESOL courses for this age group. Strode College commented that age group need to be in full time education.

CHARIS offered an unaccredited ESOL Pre-entry Level 1 course for unaccompanied minors (16-18 years) which they say, ***“Has its own challenges but very rewarding”***.

Yeovil4Family run a Children’s Club on Saturdays for children aged 7 and 17 years, dividing them into three groups depending on age and ability.

English as an Additional Language is being taught within schools.

One community provider said ***“Engage with all of the family - whatever age and provide entertaining activities and refreshments. English then learnt naturally.”***

Providers recognise the additional resources, safeguarding policies, training, and administration that working with young people entails. One provider who responded ‘maybe’ said it would depend on funding. The only community provider who said ‘no’ to providing ESOL for 16 - 18-year-olds said it was *“too difficult as need DBS checks etc”*.

3.4 Somerset ESOL map and directory

A map and directory of the providers and classes is now available on <https://ccslovesomerset.org/esol-map/>. CCS will ask providers to check their course details on a quarterly basis, and updates can be made as classes change.

3.5 Cost to learners

All the classes identified are currently free to learners, although the accredited courses have eligibility criteria.

3.6 Funding for ESOL courses and Conversation Clubs

ESOL classes in the Further Education Colleges are funded by Education and Skills Funding Agency.

SS&L is funded through Somerset Council from the national Adult Education Budget. English classes at the Welcome Hubs are funded through Somerset Council and the national resettlement schemes.

Courses provided by community organisations are often delivered by volunteers supported through contribution-in-kind e.g. Forefront Community Church in Chard where the venue is given free of charge. Frome Town Council supports the Frome Welcome Hub to run an informal English class.

The CCS Conversation Clubs are funded through the Somerset Community Foundation’s Small Grants Fund, until the end of March ‘24, with a possible extension to December ‘24.

Strode College ties in English Functional Skills with the five ESOL levels as the Functional Skills courses are fully funded. They only have one ESOL tutor presently, partly because of funding constraints. They are not recruiting though running to capacity. In future, they say, it could possibly be difficult to get the offer right.

“We are planning next year now, but there are so many variables e.g. How long are the Ukrainians’ residencies going to last and will their residencies be extended?”

3.7 Welcome Hub awareness

All the providers were aware of the Welcome Hubs in their area, if not the whole of the county. If not acting as the Welcome Hub themselves, all interviewees referred individuals to the Hubs for welfare support, information, social activities, and Conversation Clubs.

3.8 Tutors

There are over forty qualified tutors providing ESOL classes in Somerset, supported by approximately thirty volunteers in the community. Five tutors were recorded as full time with the colleges, sometimes co-ordinating the course provision as well. Most tutors worked part-time, often providing several classes in their area.

Eight tutors were Ukrainian speakers with one Portuguese speaker, and all have English teaching experience. Qualifications included Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL), a Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) which qualifies tutors to teach ESOL, to a qualification for teaching English in their home language.

Having a tutor with the ability to speak to the learner in their own language was seen as advantageous for learners by the course co-ordinators. However, pronunciation was raised by two respondents as needing extra attention by both course providers in Somerset and in Dorset.

Recruitment

Recruitment is easier for some organisations than others. One co-ordinator in South Somerset expressed an uncertainty of where to advertise. Other providers found that strong links between tutors locally were helpful in recruiting new tutors, as were good community connections.

“Not very difficult. We have 13 volunteers currently – mostly with us for 18 months. We are not taking new students. We advertised in local paper and had 9 volunteers come forward which so now needs are met”

“No (not difficult) - current tutors attract others”

“Finding the right skill set can be difficult as extra communication and personal skills are required alongside teaching skills and experience.”

“Yes, very difficult to find the right people who can do this”

“Have had a bad experience with one tutor who was not suitable.”

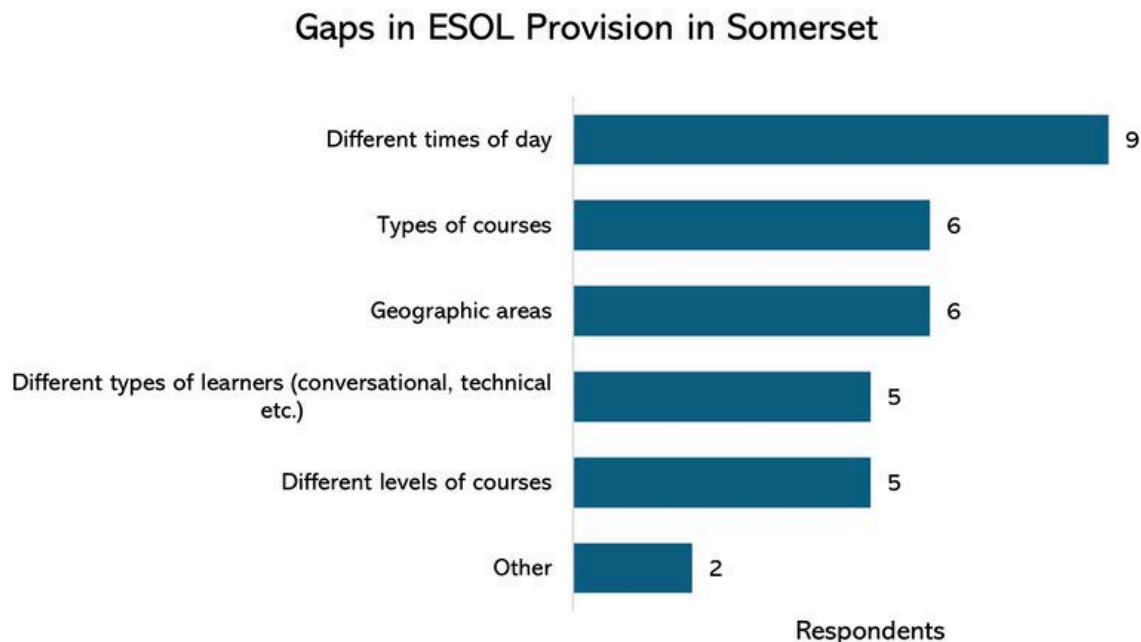
“Trying to find local tutors in Yeovil was difficult. How to advertise? Went through networks, The Gateway church, CHARIS. Needs more than just ESOL teaching skills.”



3.9 Gaps in Provision

Course providers were asked “Where do you think there are gaps in provision of ESOL in Somerset?”

Chart 2 – Course providers: perceived gaps in provision



Answered: 15

Of the fifteen respondents, nine tutors and course co-ordinators said finding the best time and day for learners can be difficult as students often have inconsistent working patterns and family responsibilities. The larger scale providers such as SS&L and the colleges can offer more flexibility. For example, Yeovil College offers the same ESOL classes in the morning, afternoon, and evening to reach as many students as possible. They also run a Conversation class on Saturdays and an ESOL Book Club.

Course providers said that learners who had progressed beyond Intermediate Entry Level 3, wanted to keep learning but may have to travel further to progress or go online.

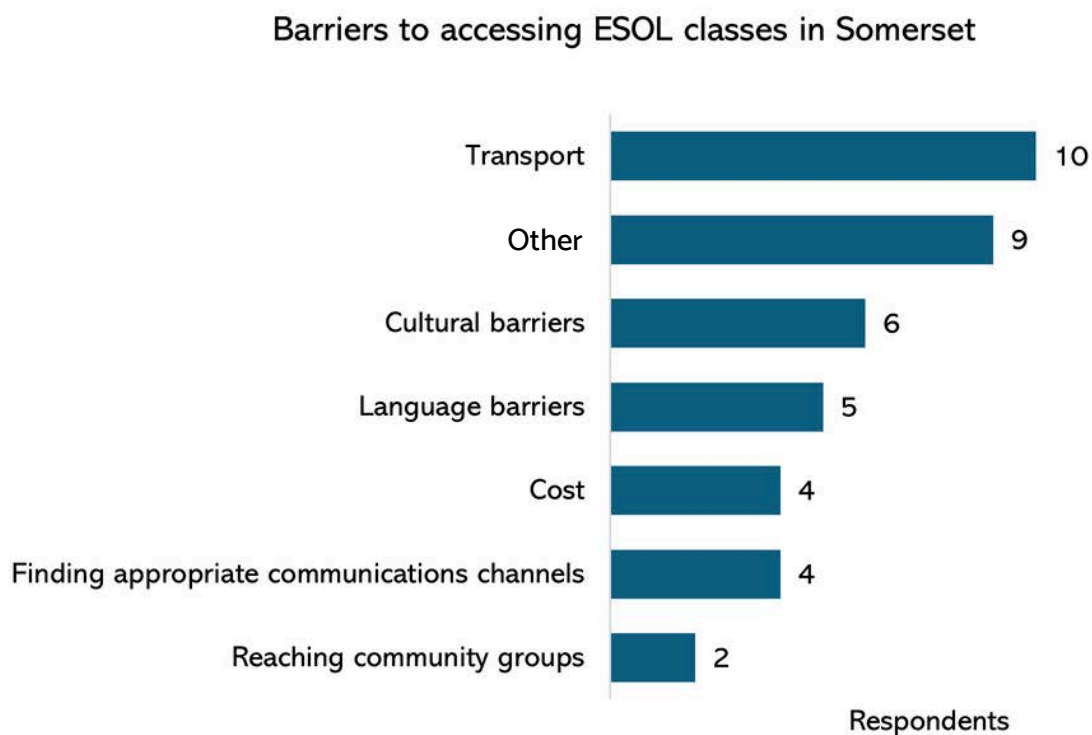
Providers noticed a drop in attendance when learners had learnt enough English to start employment, and their working hours meant they could no longer attend. One SS&L tutor said learners often left the course without informing the tutor about their reasons for stopping, though she expected it was either work hours or another change in circumstance such as a move.

Finding the right level of course was seen as problematic by over half of the respondents. More appropriate types of courses for diverse types of learners (conversational, technical, academic) were mentioned as well. This indicates that finding the best provision to match all the learners’ needs and abilities in a particular area can be difficult.

English for Citizenship and Courses for Asylum Seekers were suggested by the two other providers.

3.10 Perceived barriers to accessing ESOL classes

Chart 3 – Course providers: barriers to accessing courses and classes



Answered: 14

Skipped: 1

Fourteen interviewees mentioned that transport, cultural and language barriers, cost, and childcare were perceived as the main barriers to people accessing their courses and classes.

Of the nine other respondents, four suggested child-care could be problematic, with another indicating elsewhere that childcare could help people access courses. Other responses also included:

- No barriers as they work locally
- Finding the time to study if people are working can be difficult.
- Enrolling on the Somerset Skills & Learning website without guidance was also raised as a potential barrier to people starting their learning English journey.
- Word of mouth and strong community connections were seen as essential



3.11 Ease of learners applying for courses

Fourteen providers responded to the question “How easy is it for learners to access your courses?”

Nine said their learners found it easy to apply to their classes. This particularly applied to the Conversation Clubs and Welcome Hubs, as the learner was welcomed at whatever stage in their learning journey and were able to join immediately.

Seven respondents said learners register online; two of them commented that this is not easy especially for new learners. This included SS&L, who said there was no translation option on their enrolment form and all their publicity material is in English.

3.12 Success factors

Personal support to join an English class is seen as critical in ensuring people attend at the appropriate level and feel welcomed, particularly at Conversation Clubs and Refugee Hubs. Where there was an online form to complete, it was recognised that new English learners often needed support to enrol.

Flexibility, childcare, other community activities and an inclusive and safe environment were also seen as supportive factors in helping people learn and practice their English. The social aspect and the opportunity to meet other people, especially within a mixed cohort of learners, was seen as an additional benefit.

What have you found has been successful in helping learners to access your courses?

Cutting out paperwork, offering childcare, drop-in sessions rather than having to come every week. Flexibility to come earlier and leave later. Keeping it about spoken English, opportunity to practice spoken English in a safe environment.

Collaboration with Gateway (Community Church). Pre entry classes - with zero English skills. Instead of turning them away, invite them to pre-entry class at Yeovil Library. Practising conversation and writing skills, building confidence and language skills to do entry 1 + in future. At least 30 have progressed from pre-entry to entry 1.

Personalized approach to checking learners can assess the course.

Weekly welcome hub learning sessions, plus doing things with and for refugees with other local community groups, like the church, schools, and setting up a clothes banks, sharing meals.

Being flexible and changing delivery as people progress, their needs change and they gain employment. It started as group classes but now is 1 to 1 classes.

What have you found has been successful in helping learners to access your courses?

Using specialist agencies for referrals. Using native speakers as tutors who are multilingual. Using Community Champions. Using translators to help access enrolments.

Tried different ways to motivate and make learning interesting - now trialling a drama session with trained drama teacher to enhance beginners' class.

Providing classes that are inclusive (Nationalities-cultures-gender) and meeting the needs of different levels within a group.

Running welcome hub drop ins, friendly, informal - learner fits into the right level and progresses at their own pace.

Word of Mouth, other learners.

Good reputation, known within community, relationship with college, church middle of town.

Helping learners directly fill in the enrolment form.

Volunteers, conversation beforehand, pitching classes to learners' needs.

Pre-school children welcome. Volunteers support learners, more social group than formal classes -signpost to ESOL.

3.13 Waiting lists

Nine out of fifteen respondents had no waiting lists for their courses as they assimilated people into the groups whenever they joined.

Bridgwater & Taunton College, Strode College and Yeovil College were three of the six respondents who had waiting lists. CHARIS Taunton Welcome Hub and Forefront Community Church also reported that they had a waiting list, and although learners had to wait until the next available appropriate course usually within 8 weeks, they were redirected to another alternative option to keep practicing. Frome Welcome Hub said they were looking for volunteers to offer one to one English Conversation for another five learners on their waiting list.

The colleges interviewed had the longest waiting time as they run to the academic year. Students could miss up to nine months, if they could not join at the start or catch up in the first term. Bridgwater & Taunton College offer a personalised support programme to ensure that potential students stay engaged and attend the following year.

SS&L run termly ESOL courses in eight-week blocks, so they did not report any waiting lists. Two respondents mentioned that beginners and elementary courses were most in demand.

3.14 Initial assessments

Of the fifteen respondents, nine ESOL providers said they completed initial assessments with learners to find the appropriate level. SS&L tutors and Nightingales agree an Individual Learning Plan with their learners.

Two respondents said they had individual conversations with people initially to understand their needs, whereas another two in the community said they did not have an initial assessment, but they too adjusted to learner's levels.

3.15 Assessment methods

Bridgwater & Taunton College, Strode College and Yeovil College have end of unit tests and exams. SS&L use Individual Learning Plans to measure outcomes against goals with performance reviews, as do Nightingales. The other ESOL providers through CHARIS and the Welcome Hubs have end of term assessments.

Four respondents who run informal English classes and conversation groups said they do not use any formal methods to assess progress, and learners move as they need to. Often, people continue to attend to socialise as well as practice their English.

3.16 Drop-out rates

Of the fifteen respondents, most said that learners tended to complete their courses, unless they had to drop out because of a change of circumstance, including further moves for jobs or resettlement. Two tutors identified a 10% drop out rate due to new employment and their subsequent work patterns.

3.17 Interest in Somerset ESOL Network

"High need for ESOL network in Somerset"

"Good to work with others"

"It would be good to have a webpage so we can signpost people easily to other opportunities."

Many of the tutors work in isolation and would welcome opportunities for further training and teaching resources. Volunteers would also like to enhance their skills and knowledge to support their students, and some would like to potentially gain employment teaching English. There is currently little access to further training in Somerset, although tutors can join the SW ESOL Network and access resources online.

All fifteen respondents within the county plus another two in North Somerset said they would like to join a Somerset ESOL Network.

One respondent requested the Network could facilitate skills and knowledge sharing, and others expressed an interest in learning about further training.

Section 4 What are the needs of learners of English as another language?

4.1 Languages spoken in Somerset

At the time of the 2021 census there were 515 Somerset residents aged over 3 who could not speak English, with a further 3244 who reported not being able to speak English well. [3] However, there has been a steady increase in those resettling in Somerset over the past three years, particularly those fleeing from the war in Ukraine. Over 1600 Ukrainian guests have arrived since March 2022, with an average of 20 people per month expected until 2026. This will be an ongoing consideration as different national schemes for displaced people who are either refugees or asylum seekers are expected to continue.

Changes in EU and UK legislation over recent years have also seen a shift in economic migration patterns. Some recruitment agencies recruit workers internationally to fill skills gaps in Somerset, particularly in health and social care, production, and manufacturing. [4]

4.2 Survey findings

The survey, "Is English your first language?" was translated into 23 languages, with 31 first languages listed. 209 respondents took part in the survey.

The consultation was open for three weeks between 12 February and 8 March 2024. It was shared using CCS and Somerset Diverse Communities social media channels and emailed to the course providers and Somerset Council resettlement team to share with their clients.



[3] Somerset Intelligence: <https://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/census-2021-ethnic-group,-language,-and-religion.htm>

[4] Briefing Net Migration to the UK: Migration Observatory <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/MigObs-Briefing-Net-Migration-to-the-UK-2024.pdf>

Table 1 – Respondents’ First Language

First Language	No. of respondents
Ukrainian	92
Turkish	18
Polish	16
Spanish	7
Spanish Latino	1
Cantonese	7
Kurdish	7
Portuguese	7
Russian	4
Russian, Ukrainian	3
Arabic	4
Dari	4
Mandarin	4
Bangla	3
Bulgarian	3
French	3
Hungarian	3

First Language	No. of respondents
Persian	3
Hindi	2
Latvian	2
Romanian	2
Thai	2
Albanian	1
Georgian	1
Japanese	1
Korean	1
Lithuanian	1
Sinhala	1
Somalia	1
Unknown	5

Answered 209
Skipped 0

Table 1 shows that the largest proportion of respondents speak Ukrainian as their first language (92 respondents) with a further three people who speak both Ukrainian and Russian. Turkish and Polish speakers are closely aligned (18 and 16 respondents respectively), followed by Spanish speakers (8 respondents), Cantonese, Kurdish, and Portuguese (7 respondents in each case).

An interesting comparison with the recent 2021 Census shows that Ukrainian, Turkish, Kurdish and Cantonese did not appear in the list of top languages in Somerset. While the survey sample is small, it may reflect that more recent changes in legislation such as the special visas for Hong Kong nationals and the resettlement schemes for Ukrainian refugees have made an impact in Somerset.

The large Ukrainian response may also indicate that the survey primarily reached current learners who are already connected to the Welcome Centres, Community Centres, and other providers.

The needs of learners vary depending on their cultural and educational background, as well as their motivation for learning English. Some learners will come to learn a little English and meet people at the informal groups on a weekly basis, while others are keen to progress as quickly as possible through accredited courses to improve their education or employment opportunities.

4.3 Respondents' characteristics

Table 2 - Age

How old are you?	Number of respondents	Answered 207 Skipped 2
16 - 18 years	2	
19 - 30 years	37	
31 - 50 years	142	
51 - 70 years	25	
71 years plus	1	

Table 3 - Gender

Identify as?	Number of respondents	Answered 208 Skipped 1
Female	173	
Male	34	
Prefer not to say	1	

4.4 Locality of learners

Of the 204 respondents to the question “Which town or village do you live in?”, just over half live in one of Somerset’s largest towns: Taunton (50), Bridgwater (47), Yeovil (16) and Frome (10). There were 12 responses from Wells, and 10 from Minehead and it was noted that there were very few respondents from Chard which is known by CCS to have a sizeable ethnically diverse population. It may be that further investigation is needed, to establish the learning needs of non-native English speakers.

Other respondents were spread out in smaller villages across Somerset.

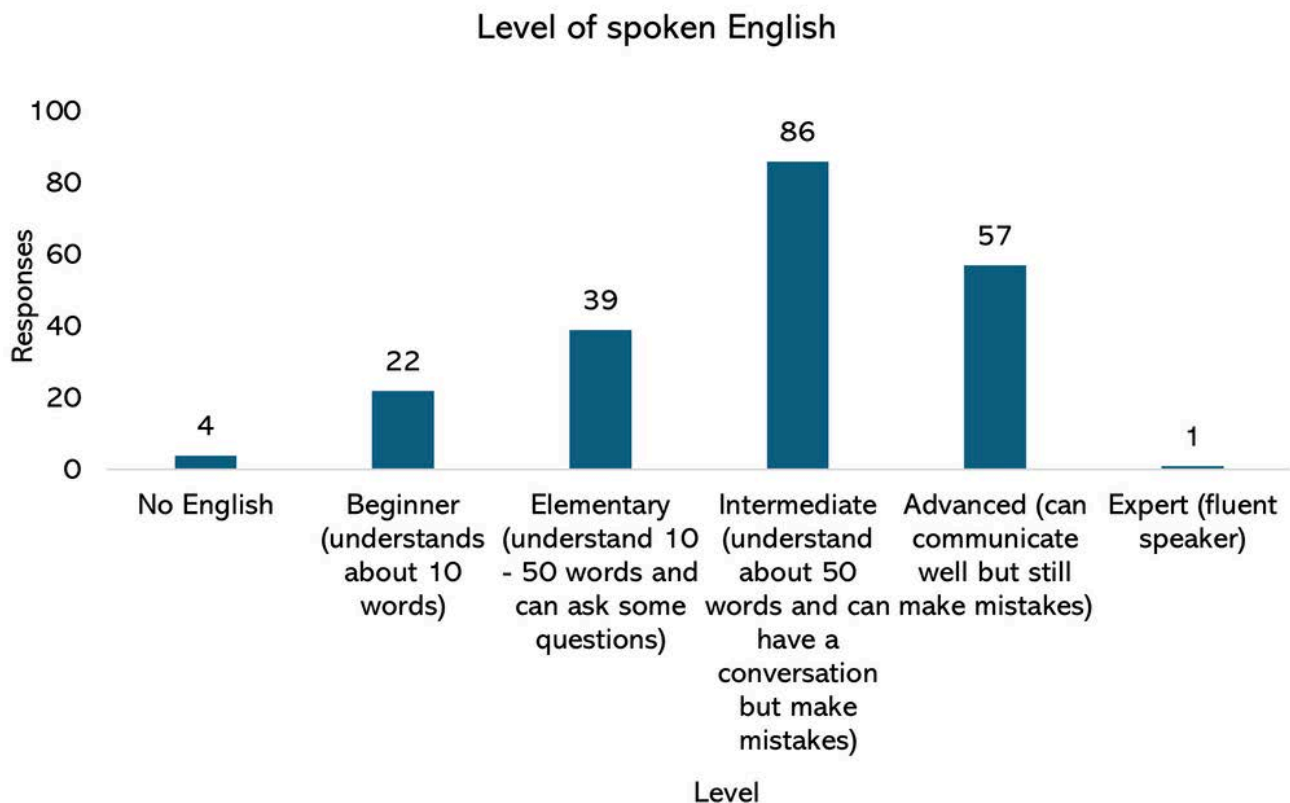
Table 4 – Respondent location

Area	Town/Village	Responses
East	Wells	12
	Frome	10
	Bruton	3
	Shepton Mallet	4
	Street	3
	Glastonbury	3
	Cheddar	2
	Nunney	1
	NortonSt Phillip	1
	North	Bridgwater
Burnham on sea		4
Axbridge		1
Brent Knoll		1
Donyatt		1
Highbridge		1
North Petherton		1
Puriton		1
Shapwick		1
Theale		1
South	Yeovil	16
	Castle Cary	2
	Chilthorne Domer	1
	Donyatt	1

Area	Town/Village	Responses
	Stoke sub Hamdon	1
	East Lambrook	1
	East Lambrook	1
	Sherborne	1
	Chard	2
	Wincanton	1
	North Cadbury	1
West	Taunton	50
	Cotford St Luke	6
	Wellington	3
	Burrow (Mump)	1
	Monkton Heathfield	1
	Staple Fitzpaine	1
	Wiveliscombe	1
West	Minehead	10
	Timberscombe	1
	Kilve	1
	Washford	1
	Williton	1
	Bath & North East Somerset (BANES)	Compton Martin
Wiltshire		Trowbridge

4.5 Current level of English

Chart 4 – Non-native speakers: level of spoken English



Answered: 209

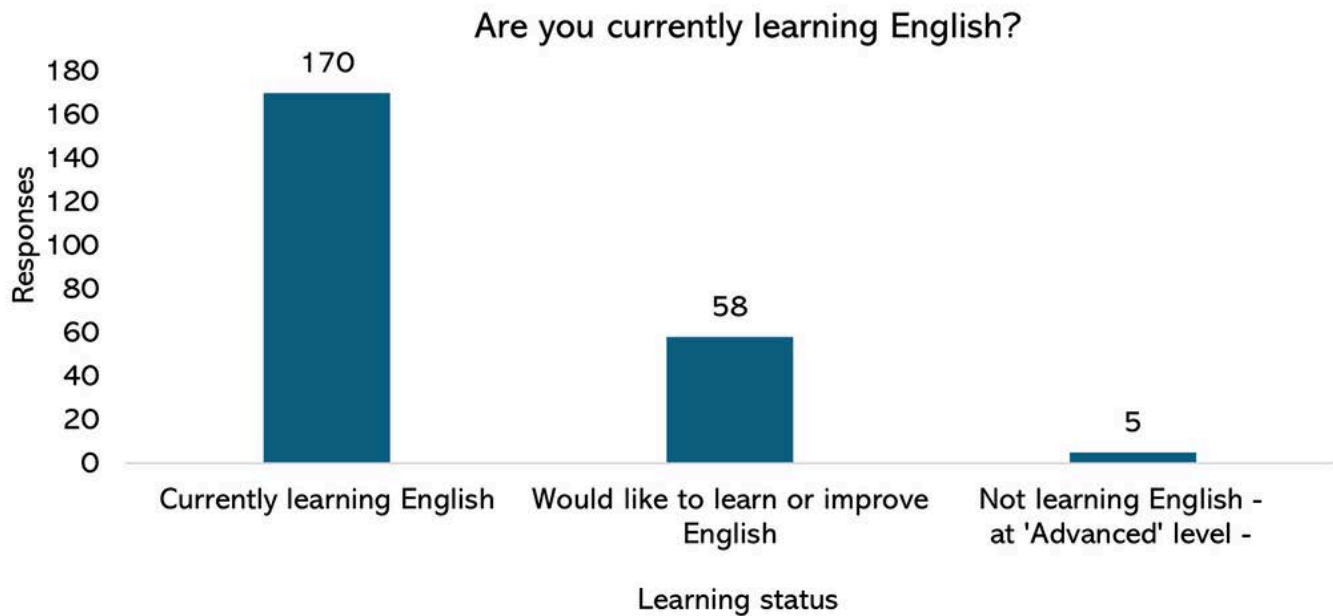
Most respondents (151) have an Intermediate level of spoken English or below, compared to those who are at an Advanced level or above (58).

Given that the parameters for Intermediate learners are quite narrow at understanding around 50 words and being able to hold a conversation, this suggests that a large proportion of the respondents taking part in this survey will require extended learning in the future to bring them to a level of English that would be beneficial in both accessing the workplace and more generally in their everyday lives.



4.6 Learning English

Chart 5 – Non-native speakers: current English learning status



Answered: 207

Skipped: 2

Note: respondents could select more than one option

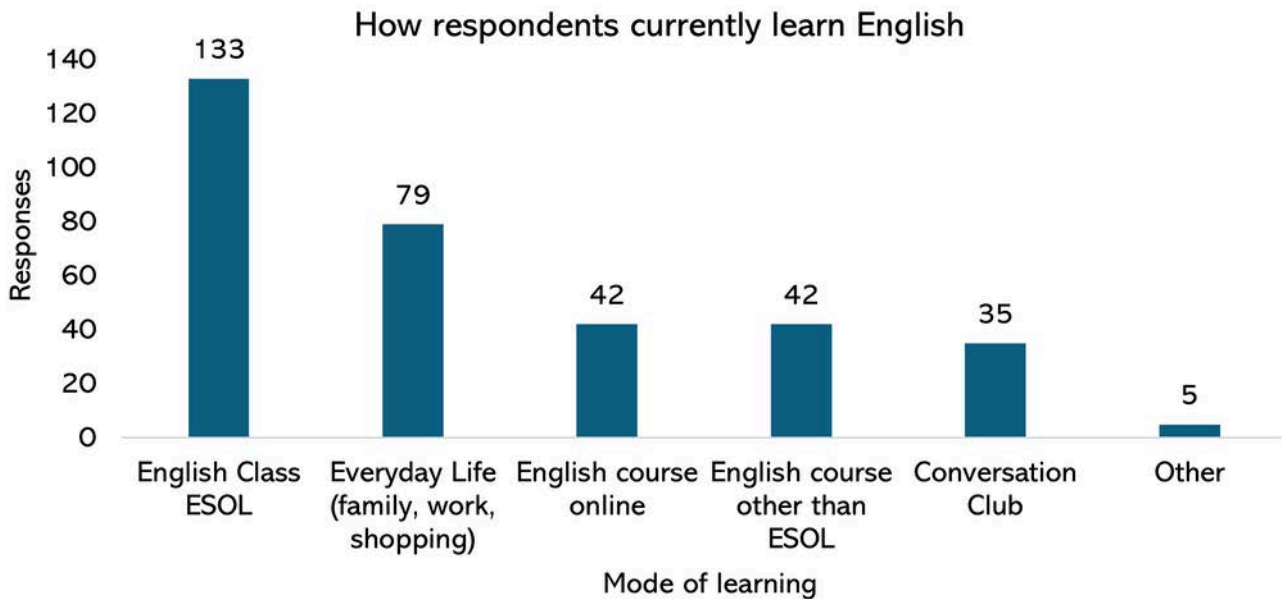
The sizeable majority of respondents are already learning English (170). Only one respondent already learning English, was not engaged in structured learning or Conversation Clubs; implying 169 respondents were already engaged.

58 respondents indicated that they would like to learn or improve their English; of whom, 14 are not currently engaged in any form of structured learning or conversation groups. Their preferred methods of learning English are explored further at the end of Section 4.8. Five respondents who are not learning assess their English skills as 'Advanced.'



4.7 Current learning methods

Chart 6 – Non-native speakers: mode of learning



Answered: 198

Skipped: 11

Note: respondents could select more than one option as a mode of learning

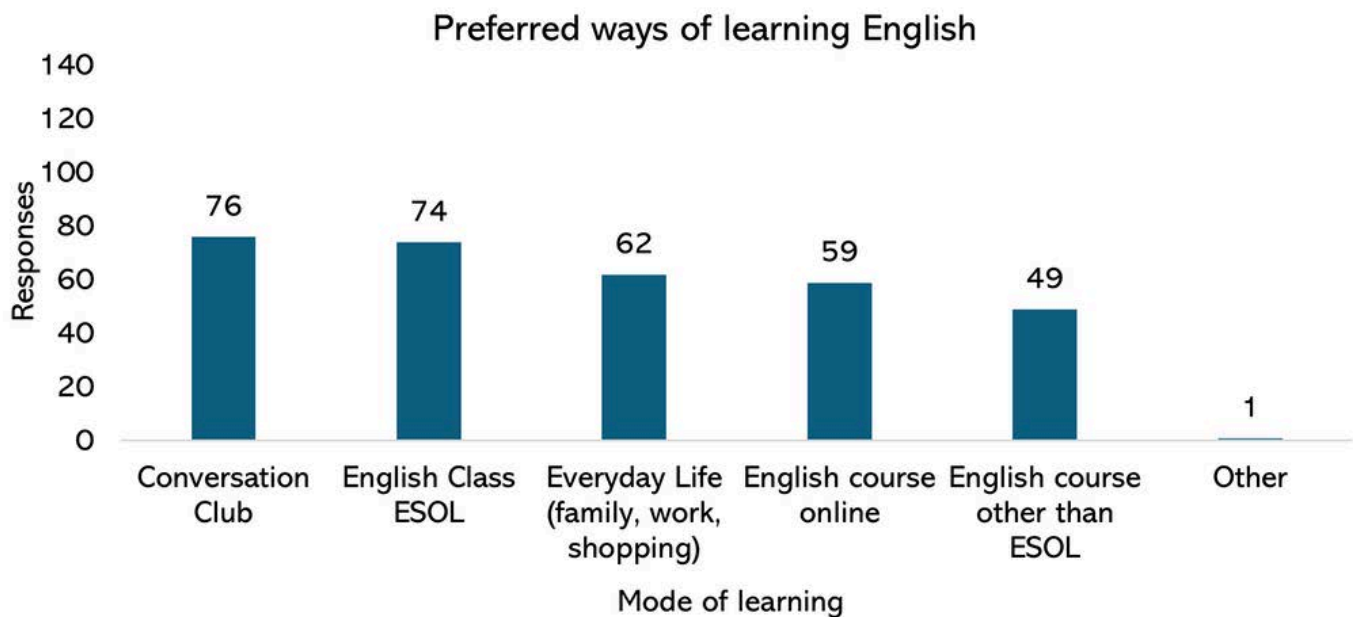
The largest proportion of respondents answering the question were improving their language skills through a structured ESOL course. It is worth noting that this data may reflect a higher response from these types of learners since identified course providers shared the survey widely through their channels.

Of the 79 respondents who were learning English through everyday life, only 18 are using this as their sole form of learning. Of these, 10 respondents range from 'No English' to 'Intermediate level, the other 8 are at an Advanced level (8). This might suggest that a small proportion of people do not speak English either at home or work.

English learning via online and courses other than ESOL are equally popular, as are Conversation Clubs. Other modes of learning include the use of private/volunteer tutors (2) and other Diversity Voice courses.

4.8 Preferred learning methods

Chart 7 – Non-native speakers: preferred learning methods



Answered: 154

Skipped: 55

Note: respondents could select more than one option as a preferred method of learning

Many respondents who indicated that they are already learning English shared their preferences for learning in this question alongside those who are not engaging in any structured learning or less formal Conversation Clubs.

Of the 14 respondents who indicated that they would like to learn or improve their English earlier in Section 4.6 above and are not currently engaged in any form of structured learning or conversation groups, around half would like to learn through Conversation Clubs/groups and online learning (7 respondents in each case). ESOL and other English courses would also suit this group (4 respondents in each case). Only two respondents in this group would choose to continue learning through everyday life experiences.

The demand for Conversation Clubs spans across all levels of learning, indicating that people want the opportunity to practice their English, share experiences, find support, meet other people, and feel part of the community.

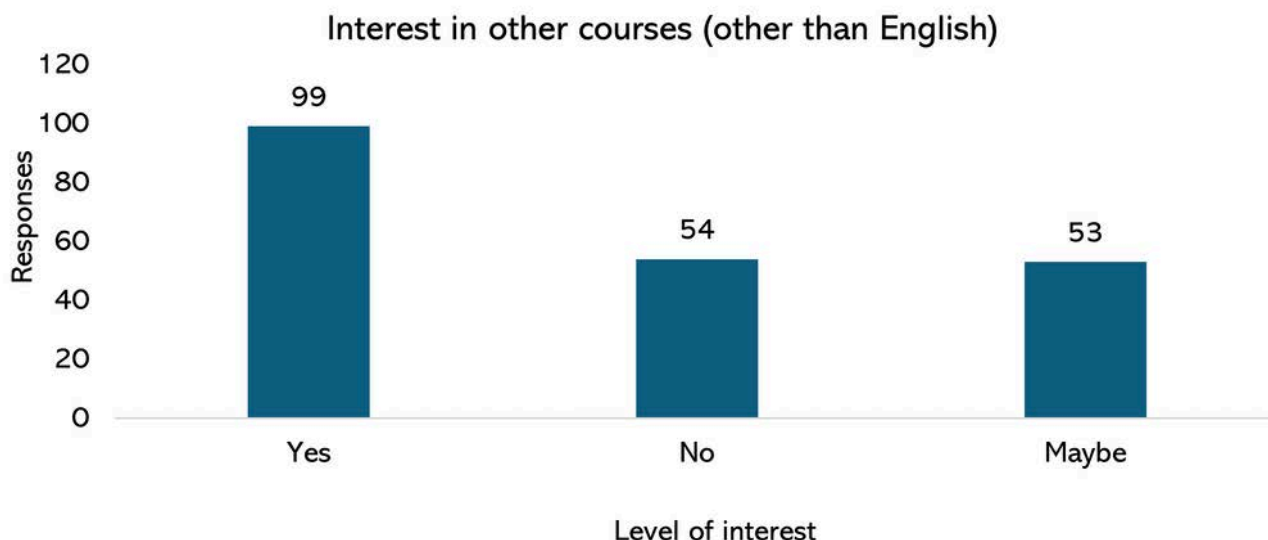
Accredited ESOL courses at other levels, and online English courses were also popular learning methods. This was reinforced with conversations with those supporting displaced people and similar to responses in the previous question in Section 4.7.

Interestingly a slightly larger number of respondents would also be interested in English courses other than ESOL when compared to the previous question (49 respondents vs. 42 respondents previously).

One respondent suggested learning via a film club.

4.9 Interest in other courses

Chart 8 – Non-native speakers: level of interest in other courses (other than English)



Answered: 206

Skipped: 3

Just under half of the respondents are very interested any other courses other than English (99 respondents). There is a fairly even split between the remaining respondents, who may consider additional courses (53) or who are not currently interested in further learning (54).



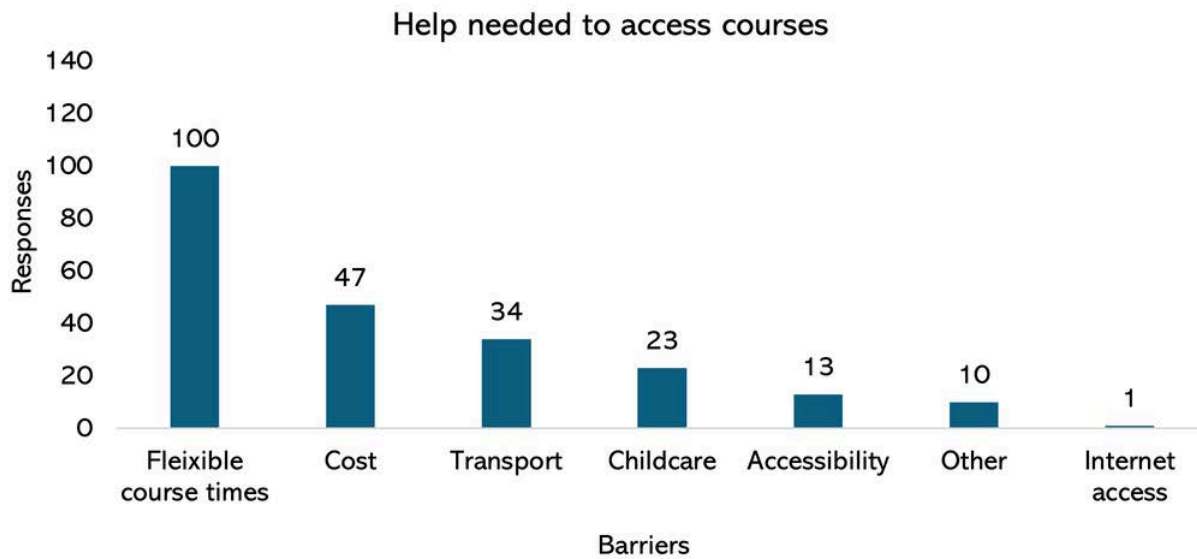
4.10 If yes, what other courses are you interested in?

Respondents were interested in more English courses and other languages. IT and computers, and Maths were also mentioned along with a variety of creative courses. Respondents also wanted to learn more about finding employment, self-employment, and business management.

Other courses of interest to learners (categorised)	Responses	Notes
English	35	English Conversation, Business English, English for children, more intense courses, online courses, English GSCE
Other languages	27	French, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish
IT, computers	16	Included programming
Creative	13	Art, design, music, photography, sewing, crafts, ceramics
Employment	11	
Maths	11	
Self-employment/business	10	
Health and medicine	10	
Hairdressing/beauty	8	
Catering	7	
Accountancy	6	
Driving	6	
Teaching	3	
Engineering	2	
Social Care	2	
UK culture	2	
Other	4	Law, sport, social worker, social group,
None	34	

4.11 Support to access courses

Chart 9 – Non-native speakers: help to access courses



Answered: 161

Skipped: 48

For those answering the question, flexible course times were seen by many respondents as the most crucial factor in helping them access courses. Work patterns, shift hours, zero hours contracts were all mentioned as problematic by respondents. These factors were also raised in conversations with tutors as common barriers that learners face.

Transport and childcare were also seen as important in helping access courses. Other accessibility issues included procuring laptops, computers, or smart phones to access online courses.

Although lessons are free to learners, there are still costs to individuals such as travel, childcare, learning materials, time, and opportunity costs.

The survey findings correspond to the providers' perceptions of learners' barriers to access particularly around flexible learning, transport, and childcare.

Section 5 Regional context

5.1 Southwest ESOL Forum

The Southwest ESOL Forum is coordinated by the South West Strategic Migration Partnership (SWSMP) for South West Councils. This network publicises training opportunities for tutors teaching English as a foreign language and flags up resources for learners. The co-ordinator has confirmed that Somerset providers can link to the regional website, join the network, and take advantage of the training materials offered and knowledge sharing opportunities it offered. The college providers are already members, although one respondent mentioned they could not attend the SW ESOL meetings as they taught on the morning that the SW ESOL Forum meets.

5.2 Neighbouring County Provision

Somerset's model of provision is similar to other counties in the region. However other county agencies and authorities are taking different approaches to developing provision and the sector. Devon County Council have taken a lead role in supporting partners and co-ordinating courses. Their website provides a map and directory, and a comprehensive guide to Learning English in Devon on www.devon.gov.uk. A list of providers with resources for teachers and learners is offered. Officers in the displacement team have confirmed that the Somerset ESOL Network can put a link to these resources, rather than duplicating them.

Dorset Council has partnered with Help and Kindness CIC, and MIND Dorset to co-ordinate ESOL provision. Help and Kindness also provide welcome support services and English language classes, and signpost to other providers including the Colleges and Dorset Adult Education.

Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council focus on support for Ukrainian guests and those arriving through their resettlement schemes. They signpost to the relevant English classes, but do not refer directly to ESOL on their website.

Bristol Council co-ordinates support services and English courses for refugees and non-English speakers through a wide range of community organisations as well as Adult Education and Further Education providers across the West of England area. They also provide a centralised resource on <https://onefrontdoor.org.uk/learn-english/>

North Somerset Community Education supports learners for whom English is not their first language through Community Education groups in Weston Super Mare. They provide ESOL courses Pre-entry level, Level 1 and 2, and have set up an ESOL job club at the Job Centre, and ESOL for IT as well.

The Community Education coordinator of the ESOL provision in North Somerset was interested in providing learning opportunities in a variety of settings including working with the North Somerset Arts Department, Super Culture and Orchard Theatre to support young ESOL learners learn through the arts. It includes confidence building and mental health issues and roleplay situations to learn how things work in the UK.

The North Somerset coordinator also said, ***“informal learning, such as Conversation Clubs, are so important around formal learning, to give people time to practice and to learn stuff that is not on the curriculum on a formal course.”***

Weston Super Mare College run a range of ESOL courses and are well connected into the community. They are currently looking into running courses at the Job Centre as well. The ESOL course manager suggested that courses in English which develop the individual’s career options would be helpful, when discussing gaps in provision.

“Often people are very experienced back home, and through no fault of their own are having to start again. They need job specific language skills and career introduction sessions to support them to their full potential.”

5.3 National research

The National Association of Teaching English and other Community Languages (NATECLA) in their report ‘Towards an ESOL Strategy for England’ state that respondents to the consultation called for funding and entitlement including:

- Provision to be free at the point of delivery not only for people who are unemployed, but also for:
 - people in receipt of other benefits not related to unemployment
 - beginner learners of English at Pre-Entry and Entry 1
 - those with low literacy levels in their first language
 - new arrivals such as spouses and asylum seekers
- National funding arrangements which enable local demand for ESOL to be met including sufficient hours and cultural orientation where appropriate
- Additional costs of learning e.g. childcare, travel, examination fees etc to be publicly funded where this represents a barrier to learning
- Incentives to encourage employers to support employees with ESOL needs. [5]

In a policy briefing by the University of Bristol, entitled “Improving language learning and integration outcomes for adult migrant and refugee learners of English,” Dr Jill Court describes the difficulties that migrant and refugee non-expert speakers of English can encounter. In-depth accounts of 14 ESOL learners’ trajectories were captured through repeat interviews, and a questionnaire was conducted with 409 learners across England and Wales. [6]

[5] <https://www.natecla.org.uk/uploads/media/208/16482.pdf>

[6] Policy Bristol: Improving language learning and integration outcomes for adult migrant and refugee learners of English. <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/language-learning-migrants/>

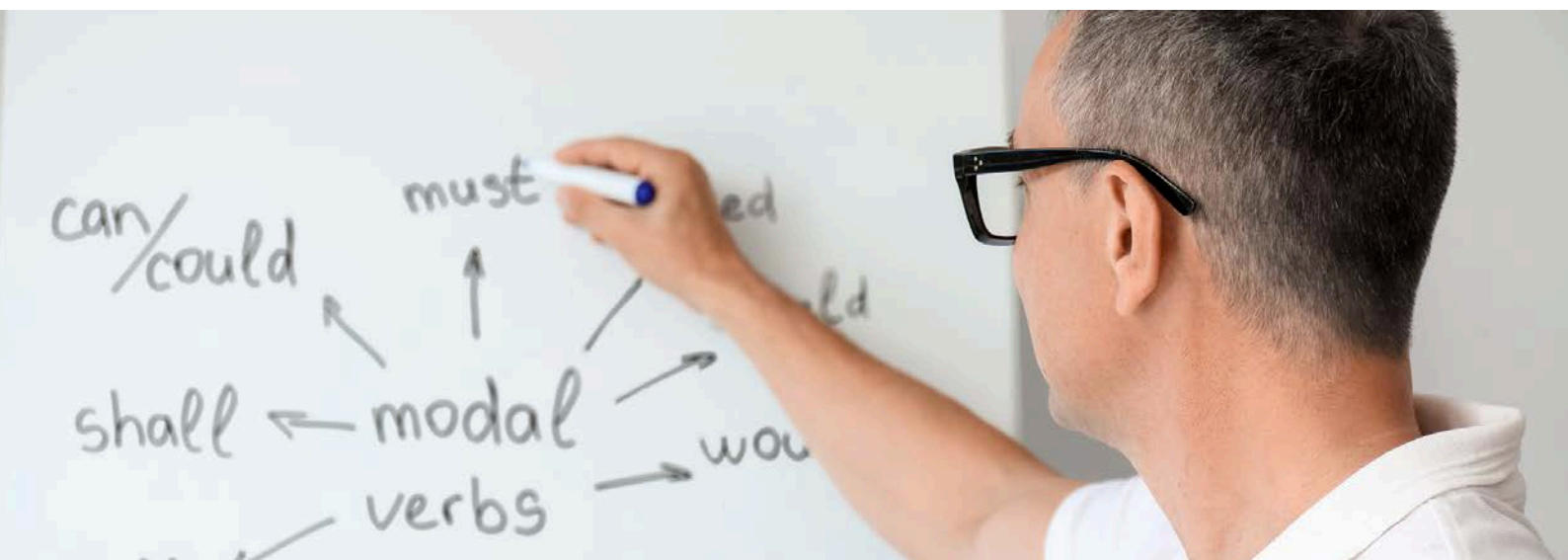
Section 6 Research reflections

6.1 Complexity of the language and terminology

For the purposes of this report, ESOL means any English language course or Conversation group teaching speakers of other languages.

The use of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) can be interpreted as either as only those courses with recognized ESOL accreditation, or the full range of informal and formal provision.

Also to confuse the issue, there are different course names for similar levels. For instance, SS&L list their courses as English for Starters (Entry level 1), English for Developers (Entry level 2) and English for Enhancers (Entry level 3) which run in 8 weeks blocks. However, the colleges combine their courses with other core subjects, such as ESOL English Skills for Life. The various levels of each course as they relate to the ESOL Entry Levels 1,2 and 3 and Levels 1 and 2, are often unclear to the learner as they are not always publicised by the provider.



6.2 Accreditation

Bridgwater & Taunton College and Strode College are accredited by Pearson Education. Yeovil College's accreditation is through the City and Guilds.

SS&L offer an ESOL qualification for their Skills for Life course, although their other community learning courses are not accredited.

Most community providers do not run accredited courses. However, they tend to cover a course programme and adapt to learners needs.

Section 7 Conclusion

English language provision is offered to a wide range of speakers of English as a second language and has grown in response to need in Somerset. Community groups responded to refugee's needs on the ground, providing welfare support and English conversation groups to help their refugee guests settle in.

Provision has accelerated through the government resettlement schemes, as well as through Further and Adult Education. Other regional and national agencies have also expanded their offer to learners and teachers.

The findings from this report indicate that although ESOL provision is available across the county, more variety and flexibility could support more learners.

The following themes arose around how to develop ESOL provision in the county.

7.1 Teacher and volunteer training opportunities

Although all the tutors are qualified to teach English there is no standard accreditation used. Some tutors are TEFL trained, others have a teacher's qualification in their home language for teaching English. Some have the Certificate for English in Language Teachers Assessment (CELTA) qualification which qualifies them to teach the full ESOL curriculum at all levels. The Southwest ESOL Forum provides further training opportunities and CELTA courses, so these could be publicised more widely to Somerset tutors. Volunteers could also benefit from these courses, and potentially improve their own employment opportunities.

7.2 Address gaps in provision

Variety of courses and levels

Different levels of courses were requested by learners. As progress is made at beginner and intermediate stage, it is likely that more advanced levels will become more in demand. However, colleges reported a higher demand for elementary and intermediate courses.

Just under half the respondents indicated they would like to attend other courses besides English, and these included other languages, IT & computers, creative courses, and support around business and employment.

Conversation Clubs

Just over half of respondents, from beginners to more advanced learners, indicated that they would like to learn or improve their English through Conversation Clubs.

Since less than a fifth of respondents indicated they are currently learning through Conversation Clubs, this would indicate that more Conversation Clubs would be welcomed and taken up.

Geographic areas

The main urban centres are served by the key providers along with some larger market towns. There is a noticeable lack of provision in Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge, as well as Wincanton and further east of Yeovil. However, this could be because there is little demand there, so further analysis of the places where non-English speakers live, and work would be useful to ensure there are no unmet needs.

Welfare and social support

Social opportunities in the community alongside welfare and pastoral support was mentioned by several providers as significantly helping new migrants and asylum seekers integrate into society as well as helping them learn English.

“Convo clubs have an outward facing approach, with visiting groups such as National Energy Action, Fire Service, Somerset Artworks. We also have a holistic approach, helping with school concerns, financial help.”

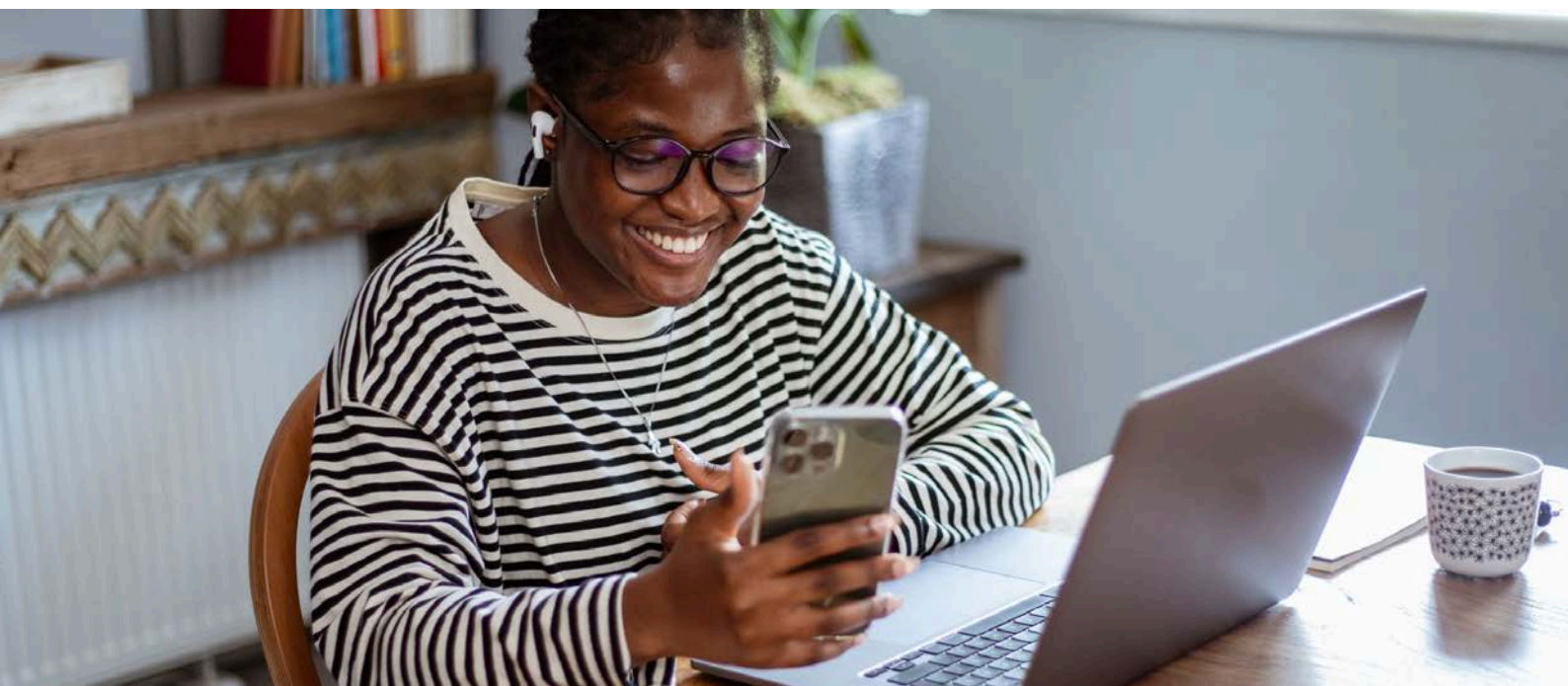
Support for learners

A considerable proportion of learners requested more flexible course times, as well as childcare and transport support. Other respondents mentioned access to laptops and devices to be able to study better.

“Transport, elastyczne godziny zajęć” (Transportation, flexible hours)

“Childcare, funding, computer & iPads for online learning, online courses, smart phones to access anywhere.”

“Transport, Laptop, or tablet is required. Something for work. It is very difficult to be without a working computer. Maybe there's a place where I can borrow it for a while.”



Section 8 Recommendations

There are opportunities to develop the current level of provision and strengthen the sector and improve outcomes for learners and the tutors

	Recommendations	Action and by whom
1	<p>Course provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work in partnership to collaborate and seek funds to provide more levels and types of courses, including more accredited courses, Conversation Clubs and online provision. • Encourage and support accreditation of ESOL courses provided in the community. • Explore and develop potential sources of funding to provide childcare and transport costs, and access to mobile devices to enable more individuals to learn English. 	<p>Somerset Council, providers & Somerset ESOL Network</p> <p>Somerset Council, providers & Somerset ESOL Network</p> <p>Somerset ESOL Network</p>
2	<p>ESOL Information and resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and develop the ESOL map and directory • Develop the ESOL webpage 'Learning English in Somerset' to include teaching and learning resources, and useful links. • Raise awareness with other support agencies such as CAB about the current ESOL provision offered 	<p>CCS & providers</p> <p>CCS</p> <p>CCS, providers & Somerset Council</p>

	Recommendations	Action and by whom
3	<p>Somerset ESOL Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Somerset ESOL Network to: • Develop best practice • Share knowledge and understanding of learner’s needs. • Provide or signpost to training opportunities including skill sharing, further teaching qualifications e.g. CELTA for ESOL. · • Raise awareness of employment and educational opportunities, as well as inclusive cultural and social events and activities. • Provide opportunities to expand ESOL course provision 	<p>CCS, Somerset Council, and members of the Somerset ESOL Network</p>
4	<p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with employers to establish their employees’ needs, and to develop further • ESOL courses in workplaces • Explore training and support that employers can offer e.g. how to apply for work with them, H&S training. • Promote the Refugee Employment Programme and other work-related pathways. • Explore other opportunities to extend ESOL provision further in libraries and Job Centres 	<p>Somerset Council Economic Development team, SS&L, FE Colleges, CCS</p>
5	<p>Budgets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain funding streams for current provision • Explore further income streams with other stakeholders e.g. Economic Development, DWP 	<p>Somerset Council</p>

Section 9 Appendices

Appendix 1: Acronyms and definitions

Acronym or group	Definition
CELTA	Certificate of English Language Teaching Assessment
CCS	Community Council for Somerset
Conversation Clubs	Conversation groups includes all the informal English Conversation Clubs and groups provided in VCSFE sector
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
SC	Somerset Council
SS&L	Somerset Skill and Learning CIC
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
VCFSE	Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise

Appendix 2: Somerset ESOL Course Provision and Levels matrix (see separate spreadsheet)

Appendix 3: Interview questions to ESOL course providers

Appendix 4: Survey questions “Is English your first language?”

References

- 1.1 Brief and scope for ESOL project, Somerset Council, (September 2023). Extract below.
2. The National Association of Teaching English and Community Languages, (NATECLA) Skills for Life qualifications , <https://www.natecla.org.uk/content/596/ESOL-qualifications-for-learners>
3. Somerset Council: Somerset Intelligence. Available at <https://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/census-2021-ethnic-group,-language,-and-religion.html> [accessed 15/1/24]
4. Briefing Net Migration to the UK, Migration Observatory, Sumption, M., William Walsh, P. and Brindle, B., University of Oxford (2024). Available at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/MigObs-Briefing-Net-Migration-to-the-UK-2024.pdf> [Accessed: 19/02/2024] Extract below.
5. Towards an ESOL Strategy for England, Jenny Roden, J and Cuppe, J. National Association of Teaching English and Community Languages (NATECLA), (2016). Available at: <https://www.natecla.org.uk/uploads/media/208/16482.pdf>
6. Policy Bristol: Improving language learning and integration outcomes for adult migrant and refugee learners of English, Dr Court, J., University of Bristol, (Policy Briefing 138: August 2023). Available at <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/language-learning-migrants/> [accessed 15/1/24]

References source material

Below, are extracts of the key references included in the report.

1. Somerset Council: Brief and scope for ESOL project, (September 2023)

National and local reports have shown that poor English language skills are a key barrier to employment, integration and more generally community cohesion.

Support for learning English is unclear for individuals and professionals in Somerset, with various levels of support being offered including classes within a college setting, to more informal classes held in local village halls. Many classes are dependent on funding that is often allocated on a yearly or course basis.

Somerset – what does the data show us.

Using the Census 2021 data, the following gives an insight into the population:

Language

- 96% of Somerset speak English as a main language.
- The top 5 other languages in the county include:
 - Polish
 - Romanian
 - Portuguese
 - Malayalam
 - Tagalog or Filipino
- Other languages seen include Spanish, French, Hungarian and Bulgarian

Ethnic Group

- 91.3% identify as white
- 4.4% identify as white other
- 1.5% identify as Asian
- 1.2% as Mixed
- 0.4% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/languages-and-english-language-proficiency/>

Over the last 3 years Somerset has seen a steady increase in those resettling in Somerset due to different National schemes. This will be an ongoing consideration as these schemes are expected to continue.

Scope

Somerset Council are keen to robustly understand what ESOL provision is available in Somerset. This could be certificated courses delivered in college settings to talking cafes delivered in the community. This is to make sure that professionals understand what is currently available, individuals are able to make informed decisions about the course that is right for them, and lastly, that gaps by area or provision can be identified. We are seeking a community partner to map the following:

1. The ESOL classes which are provided by a trained professional in Somerset.
2. The towns/locations in Somerset where ESOL is being provided.
3. Whether provision is within a workplace or held outside of work
4. Length of course, time of delivery and start date of course or open access if can be joined at any time
5. What level is ESOL being taught at (introduction, community skills, full qualification), identifying the different levels for each class being taught
6. Funding provision – if the course is funded or if there is a fee. If there is a fee what this is and any areas of support?
7. Talking café provision including locations and frequency
8. Identify any barriers to seeking attending such as transport, and childcare.

This information should then be shared on a mutually agreed platform.

It is expected that as part of this project relationships will be built with suppliers to inform any future developments or joint working network.

It is also expected that information collected on the Platform will be promoted with organisations throughout Somerset.

	Somerset Council Brief	Information available from CCS
1	The ESOL classes which are provided by a trained professional in Somerset.	Course provision table and summary in report Website, map, and directory
2	The towns/locations in Somerset where ESOL is being provided.	Report and table Map and directory
3	Whether provision is within a workplace or held outside of work	Report and map
4	Length of course, time of delivery and start date of course or open access if can be joined at any time	Directory
5	What level is ESOL being taught at (introduction, community skills, full qualification), identifying the different levels for each class being taught	Report and directory Appendix 2: Course provision matrix
6	Funding provision – if the course is funded or if there is a fee. If there is a fee what this is and any areas of support.	Report
7	Talking café provision including location and frequency	CCS map website
8	Identify any barriers to seeking attending such as transport, childcare.	Report

3 Briefing Net Migration to the UK, Migration Observatory, Sumption, M., William Walsh, P. and Brindle, B., University of Oxford (2024).

- The UK has experienced broadly similar levels of migration compared to other high-income countries, on average, over the past few decades.
- Net migration was unusually high in 2022 and 2023, driven by an increase in non-EU citizens coming to the UK.
- Almost all of the increase in non-EU arrivals from 2019 to 2023 occurred through the study and work routes. Rising emigration may put downward pressure on net migration from 2024 onwards.

- For example, increases in study migration have contributed to net migration in the short run, although most international students leave the UK within a few years. EU citizens made up most of the immigration and net migration in the run-up to the 2016 EU referendum.
- By the year ending June 2023, EU net migration was negative, according to official estimates.

The rise in overall net migration was driven by an increase in non-EU citizens coming to the UK. Non-EU net migration gradually increased during the 2010s, reaching 184,000 in 2019. It fell briefly in 2020 due to the pandemic but has since risen sharply, to 768,000 in the year ending June 2023.

This was the result of a large increase in the number of non-EU migrants coming to the UK—there were 968,000 non-EU long-term arrivals in the year ending June 2023, over two and a half times more than the number recorded in 2019 (368,000) (Figure 3).

ONS estimates show three main explanations for the 600,000 increase in non-EU immigration in 2022-2023 compared to 2019 (see also Figure 3):

- International students. The largest single group explaining the rise was international students and their dependants, accounting for 43% of the increase from 2019 to the year ending June 2023. The UK has an explicit strategy of increasing and diversifying foreign student recruitment, and it is also plausible that the reintroduction of post-study work rights post-Brexit has made the UK more attractive to international students.
- Skilled workers: 37% of the increase in long-term immigration from 2019 to the year ending June 2023 resulted from those arriving for work purposes—particularly skilled workers—and their dependants. Health and care was the main industry driving the growth, including care workers who received access to the immigration system in February 2022. There has also been higher demand for some workers who were already eligible for visas under the old system, such as doctors and nurses.
- Humanitarian visa routes and refugee resettlement accounted for a further 13% of the increase in long-term international migration. This follows the introduction of visa routes for Ukrainians and Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) status holders, which together make up almost all of the arrivals under the 'Humanitarian' category in Figure 3. The number of non-EU migrants coming to the UK via humanitarian routes peaked in December 2022 and has since been in decline.

The Migration Observatory briefing note, 'Why has non-EU migration to the UK risen?', explains these figures in more detail, and more information on the drivers of work and student migration is available in the Migration Observatory briefings, Work visas and migrant workers in the UK and Student migration to the UK.

