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ESOL in Wales: Learning from the Voluntary Sector

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ESOL IN WALES: LEARNING FROM THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Contents

SUMMARY

This study investigated innovative and effective approaches used by the voluntary sector to deliver ESOL to reach marginalised and excluded groups and individuals. The methodology employed included an extensive literature review and data collection through interviews, focus groups and questionnaire. Analysis of this data is presented in the context of both UK and Welsh Assembly Government policy, and gives particular consideration to the planning and funding arrangements in Wales.

The study shows that ESOL has an extremely wide impact, for example: on individuals' aspirations; improved health; increased access to services; more opportunities for civic, democratic and community participation. The ability of citizens to speak English forms a vital part of the future of Wales and should be of primary importance in terms of policy relating to education and skills, and also in terms of policy agendas relating to social justice, social and community cohesion, citizenship and economic and social regeneration. In short ESOL must be a priority for Wales.

This study also illustrates the diversity of ESOL learners: in settled communities; refugees and asylum seekers; migrant workers and their partners and spouses. Demand for ESOL fluctuates over time from all these groups, and organisations providing ESOL and other support have to respond.

A number of major challenges facing organisations delivering ESOL in Wales emerged in this study: demand for ESOL is outstripping supply; there is insufficient funding; the context of learning does not always align with learner demand; the quality of delivery is variable; and in many areas there are significant difficulties in recruiting and training ESOL tutors and teachers.

Case study analysis revealed the variety of ESOL being offered by voluntary sector organisations: formal ESOL; informal ESOL; conversational ESOL; and embedded ESOL. Many lessons can be learned from good practice in the voluntary sector on issues including: partnership working; development and outreach work with

communities; embedding ESOL and informal learning; the use of technology; and the benefits for organisations of supporting volunteers.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government on a range of issues including: maximising the impact of ESOL; funding; support; and staff training and development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The number of individuals who require English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in Wales has increased substantially in recent years, particularly with the increase of migrant workers (Statistics for Wales, 2007). This has impacted greatly on the demand for ESOL, which is widely acknowledged to help individuals settle into Wales, contribute to community cohesion and increase individuals' wider skills (Estyn, 2008).

Individuals come to Wales for a wide variety of reasons, whether this be to study, work, or seek asylum or refuge. Often, migrant workers, asylum seekers or refugees who speak little or no English will have a complex set of needs and barriers to accessing ESOL provision. This could include, for example, lack of money, lack of time, cultural traditions and lack of confidence (NIACE, 2008).

Work conducted through the RAMOD network (of providers working with black and ethnic minority learners, facilitated by NIACE Dysgu Cymru (NDC)) shows that learners are keen to take part in learning that is community based (NIACE, 2008) and it is believed that a lot of innovative and effective ways of working with marginalised and excluded individuals and groups (accessing ESOL) occurs in the voluntary sector.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) commissioned NDC to undertake this research project on ESOL and the voluntary sector. The research sought to identify and investigate effective and innovative approaches used in the voluntary sector to engage the most marginalised and excluded individuals and groups who are accessing ESOL in Wales. The research findings are to be disseminated to providers in the belief that they can learn from the voluntary sector.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research techniques used for the largest proportion of this study were focus group interviews and semi-structured individual interviews, and these are detailed below.

Literature Review:

For the review of the literature, the initial step was to search for research that had collected data about some aspect of ESOL and of ESOL provision. The review was limited primarily to studies in the voluntary sector but not to any particular nation state. The key word internet search was conducted using the principles of Boolean logic.[1] The abstracts and summaries of potentially relevant citations were examined to determine the relevance of the original research. Full texts (preference being PDF files) of all relevant articles were then obtained. In addition bibliographies and secondary references of obtained articles were examined for any additional studies. The review was conducted using specific criteria and a summary table of review results was then constructed.

Data Collection:

This report is primarily based on individual interviews and focus group interviews with a range of ESOL providers in Wales, however data was also collected from a questionnaire which was sent out to providers (Annex 1). Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which were supplemented by observational data from ESOL classes, meetings and informal conversations with ESOL providers and ESOL learners.

A total of two focus groups and seven in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. A broad range of ESOL providers were invited to attend the focus group events. Case study visits and interviews were arranged as follow-ups to the focus group interviews. Individual organisations were purposely selected to be representative

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[1] Boolean logic is a complete system for logical operations and refers to the logical relationship among search terms. Much database searching is performed on the basis of Boolean logic.

of the different forms of ESOL provision identified in the analysis of the focus group interviews.

All the interviews and focus groups took place between December 2008 and February 2009. The focus group events were held at Yale College, Wrexham and City Hall, Cardiff. A full list of the organisations that took part in these events is available in Annex 1. The individual interviews were held at the case study venues (Swansea University, South Riverside Community and Development Centre, Dragon Arts Centre and the Polish Centre). Individual interviews were also conducted with ESOL tutors at Race Equality First and Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group (SBASSG). These interviews were held at the Race Equality First office in Cardiff and at the SBASSG conversation class in Swansea.

The interviews and focus groups were guided by a semi-structured interview schedule that addressed the participants understanding of the different forms of ESOL provision, the barriers learners face in accessing ESOL classes, and the challenges and effectiveness of the ESOL they provide. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Notes were taken at each interview and focus group, and fully written up.

Analysis:

A thematic analysis of the data was conducted. Individual transcripts were read repeatedly and coded to identify emergent themes. Transcripts were then re-read to identify recurrent and more focused themes. Respondent validation, in the form of feedback, was used to check whether the data analysis and interpretation was a true representation of the participants' views and thoughts. Throughout, the process of analysis itself, and specifically, the process of data interpretation, was subjected to a rigorous and reflexive analysis.

3. BACKGROUND

It is estimated that in the year 2000, around 175 million people resided outside their country of birth- meaning that one out of every 35 people in the world was an international migrant (IOM, 2005: 379). A little over 50 per cent of these migrants were economically active, with the majority residing in industrialised nations – mainly in the United States, Canada, Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom (ILO, 2004). These migration flows comprised mainly of people moving from countries in the Global South, together with an increasing movement from Central and Eastern European countries to Northern Europe, particularly from the new European Union Member States (A8) following EU enlargement in 2004 (Portes & French, 2005). Thus while migrant workers have been characteristic of the functioning global economy for many centuries, they are now a growing presence, especially in the economies of the industrialised North of England.

The underlying causes of migration in general are highly complex and diverse ranging from individual, household to macro-structural factors. In practice people move for a number of specific reasons such as political conflict, repression, poverty, famine, the search for economic and/or educational betterment, and family commitments. Repeatedly, however, empirical studies have found that economic factors, in various guises, are often major considerations for migrants, albeit that these concerns intersect with gender, race and class as migrants negotiate their identities in the context in which they decide whether to move (Pessar, 2005; Silvey & Lawson, 1999). As a result, whether by design or not, many migrants end up as migrant workers in the country they have moved to.

Migration has long been a feature of the demography of Wales and the UK. Far from being static, migration is a dynamic process in which there are both continuities and shifts. In cities and towns across Wales, the scale and nature of recent migration into the UK can be viewed in demographic and cultural changes that are taking place. In Merthyr Tydfil, for example, the Glamorgan GATES community regeneration project has recently started to publish a monthly Community News magazine in both Portuguese

and Polish languages; as for a number of years, EU funded Polish and Portuguese volunteer workers have worked as classroom assistants and translators at the Bishop Hedley Roman Catholic School in the town. Moreover, the Polish Centre at Llanelli emerged from the numbers of Polish workers approaching the Credit Union in the town requesting information relating to their rights both as workers and as citizens. The Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group was formed as a grassroots community group following the announcement of the UK Government's 'dispersal' strategy in 2000. In North Wales, the Caia Park Partnership has, for the past three years, provided an advice and advocacy service for newly arrived Polish workers in the area.

English language is one of the multiple factors that affect the well-being, prosperity, economic advancement and settlements of migrants (NIACE, 2006). The ability to use English offers a platform for empowerment– it enables people to gain autonomy and take control over their everyday lives, to achieve greater prosperity, and to participate fully and effectively in social and civil society. In addition, it has wider social and cultural benefits including raised aspirations, improved health, increased access to services, more opportunities for civic, democratic and community participation and community activism (O'Leary, 2008; Schuller *etal*, 2004; Ward, 2007; Ward & Spacey, 2008). A recent study published by the Audit Commission (2007) suggests that creating opportunities for migrant workers to improve their English is one of the most useful things councils, their partners and employers can do in addressing the challenges posed by rapid changes in population.

3.1 *ESOL in the UK*

The ESOL 'classroom' in the UK is neither homogenous nor stable. There have been a number of changes both in terms of policy and in the profile of ESOL learners. Historically, policy towards ESOL provision has been piecemeal and isolated from other provision for adult education and learning (Hamilton & Merrifield, 2000).

ESOL forms part of the UK Government's *Skills for Life* strategy to meet the literacy, numeracy and language needs of adults. Demand for ESOL has increased

considerably since the launch of *Skills for Life* in March, 2001. Despite increases in overall funding, from £103 million in 2001-2002 to over £300 million in 2007-2008, the funding allocated by the UK Government is insufficient to provide free ESOL for all who need it. When considering a solution to this dilemma, it was the UK Government's decision to reprioritise public funds towards those people viewed as being the most in need and to encourage contributions to the cost of learning from learners to employers, rather than expand the funding of ESOL.

3.2 *ESOL in Wales*

Policies that impact on the need for ESOL in Wales, are primarily determined by the UK Government, with the Home Office retaining control over issues of immigration and naturalisation. However, the provision of ESOL as an element of lifelong learning is determined by the Welsh Assembly Government, which funds the delivery of language training for the promotion of social inclusion for non-English speakers and to ensure a productive and effective contribution from migrant workers to the Welsh economy.

In 2001, the Welsh Assembly Government awarded the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) the responsibility for managing the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales (Wales National Assembly, 2001). This aimed to raise achievement in numeracy, reading, writing, speaking and understanding in both English and Welsh, and included ESOL. Since the launch of the strategy in 2001, demand for ESOL has grown appreciably. In 2002 / 2003, the BSA convened an ESOL/EAL advisory group with the aim to support the development of the ESOL/EAL strand of the National Strategy. The focus, during the initial stage, was on supporting ESOL programmes to achieve the Post-16 Quality Mark, training and developing Levels 2 & 3 programmes for adult learning support staff and for staff delivering ESOL, developing family language programmes, working with asylum seekers, and producing teaching and learning resources.

In 2007, the Basic Skills Agency in Wales merged into the Welsh Assembly Government and Basic Skills Cymru is now a division of the Department of Children,

Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS). In 2008, Basic Skills Cymru established the ESOL development group to advise DCELLS on ESOL.

The Department of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) is the primary source of ESOL funding in Wales, in 2006/7 an estimated £8m was spent on ESOL of which DCELLS contributed approximately £5m (GHK 2008). Other funders include the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Big Lottery. Student fees and employer contributions account for only a small percentage of the total (11per cent and 4 per cent respectively).

4 THE VALUE OF ESOL AND THE ESOL LEARNERS

4.1 *The Value of ESOL*

The ability of citizens to speak English forms a vital part of the future of Wales and as this report suggests, ESOL is an issue of primary importance, not only in terms of policy relating to education and skills, but also in terms of much broader policy agendas that relate to issues of social justice, social and community cohesion, citizenship and, economic and social regeneration.

The NIACE Committee of Inquiry on English for Speakers of Other Languages report (NIACE, 2006) offered a 'broad and inclusive' definition of ESOL as being 'English language provision for adult speakers of other languages'. This definition, they note, 'embraces the fact that ESOL has to meet the needs of diverse learners who want English language for different purpose and at different levels' (NIACE, 2006: 19). ESOL, however, is more than simply language. Learning the English language is the primary purpose of ESOL and ESOL shares many features of other language learning. However, what makes ESOL different, is that ESOL learners study English as a means of making it possible for them to live and work in Wales, and thus gain control over their lives. Language is more than a set of clearly defined skills and is specifically linked to different cultural, social and communicative contexts in which it is used. Thus the development of technical linguistic skills necessary needs to be integrated within an understanding of the structures, cultures and institutions of society, and the means of operating and communicating within them (NIACE, 2006).

A plethora of studies[2] inform on the value of ESOL to the life chances of individual learners and their families, and the contribution they make to the economic, social and cultural life of the nation. The ability to speak English empowers people to take control over their lives, it enables people to find employment and achieve progression at work, it helps people communicate and interact with one another in their communities, and it supports parents to enhance the life chances of their children.

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[2] See for example: NIACE, 2006; O'Leary, 2008; Ward, 2007; Barton & Pitt, 2003; GHK, 2008; Commission on Integration and Cohesion, 2007; TUC, 2007; McKay, Craw & Chopra, 2006.

There is thus a compelling rationale in favour of investment in ESOL and in making English language learning a priority for policy in Wales. The value of ESOL, however, goes even further as it is central to the life chances of individual learners, and it is also key to a broad range of policy issues (NIACE, 2006). Poor basic skills are directly linked to economic and social disadvantage, high levels of unemployment or low skilled employment, intergenerational educational underachievement, high levels of crime, poor health, poor housing and low levels of participation in civic society (Moser, 1999). For ESOL learners, these issues are too often further compounded by their experiences of racism and discrimination. A recent report by the Social Exclusion Unit (ODPM, 2005) demonstrates that adequate levels of literacy, language and numeracy, and in particular literacy, are crucial to the effective delivery of public services to the most disadvantaged sections of society.

In looking at literacy, language and numeracy, the reports of Moser (1999) and the Social Exclusion Unit (ODPM, 2005) place particular emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However many of the conclusions drawn, apply to ESOL learners for whom issues of education and health, work, immigration, settlement, integration, citizenship, neighbourhood renewal, fighting racism and community cohesion are of particular relevance, but at present, are rarely specifically considered in relation to learning (NIACE, 2006).

The NIACE inquiry into ESOL (2006), highlights the ways in which, areas that appear in terms of policy or service delivery to be distinct are, in practice, 'inextricably linked', particularly in the lives and experiences of service users. The report presents particular importance for both policy and delivery. The issue for policy makers is to recognise the ways in which effective language skills are a precondition to success in a number of key policy areas. The issue for funders and providers is to ensure that services are planned, funded and delivered in a coherent way which responds to the full range of ESOL learners' needs. The report notes that this goes beyond an alignment of the curriculum to the wider needs of learning, although thus can be an effective strategy.

Rather it is a matter of aligning policy development, planning and funding streams for ESOL learning and delivery with the programmes of other organisations dealing with ESOL learners. The aim being 'to provide services which the users themselves experience as joined-up and mutually reinforcing' (NIACE, 206:17).

4.2 *Who are the ESOL Learners?*

Critical to any discussion of ESOL is knowing who the learners are and understanding what it is they want to learn. A recent report by Estyn indicates that ESOL learners in Wales are a very diverse group:

'Their English language skills and competence vary greatly. Their reasons for wanting to learn English are just as varied. They access ESOL classes in further education colleges, adult community based learning provision, in the workplace and in a small amount of voluntary sector provision.' (Estyn 2008)

In recent years, the profile of ESOL learners has been in a state of flux. In 2000, *Breaking the Language Barriers* (DfEE, 2000) identified four broad categories of learners

- Settled Communities
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Migrant Workers
- Partners and Spouses of Students who are settled (and need to participate in the local community but are prevented by family responsibilities or low income from following ESOL courses).

The report recognised that within these broad groupings, the needs of learners varied widely depending on a number of factors that include 'their aspirations, educational background, language and literacy background and aptitude for learning languages' (DfEE, 2000: 9). These four groups remain the core client groups.

Since the publication of *Breaking the Language Barriers* (DfEE, 2000), demographic changes have altered the profile of learner demand. Most particularly, there has, in

recent years, been a marked increase in the number of learners from the EU, most specifically, migrant workers from the A8 countries. These changes have a number of important consequences for demand and an impact on the nature of ESOL provision (NIACE, 2006). With few exceptions, learners attending ESOL classes have become even more heterogeneous with diverse cultural backgrounds and educational histories, aspirations and learning needs.

There remains significant demand for ESOL from settled communities. Learners in these communities include long-settled migrants as well as more recent arrivals and refugees.[3] Many settled residents look to improve their English a number of years after arrival. There may be a number of reasons for this: Many may have little space in busy working lives to attend classes, have relied on support from their families and wider communities, have been unaware of, or reluctant to, access learning opportunities, or have been discouraged by material costs, a lack of accessible provision or support such as childcare, or by male family members. Insecure employment and/or the threat of unemployment are often noted as being catalysts for language learning among settled communities (Tackey *etal*, 2007) and moreover, new naturalisation requirements mean that many settled residents are now expected to learn English. Characteristically, these potential learners experience difficulties in accessing provision, requiring outreach work to make initial contact often prefer community–based provision, which is expensive and time-consuming to provide.

There is concern that these groups of people will be excluded in areas where classes are full and have long waiting lists of potential learners who are easier to reach and teach. There is a further risk that members of resident communities who have experienced few educational opportunities and may have no or limited literacy skills (particularly women) become reluctant to join classes where provision designed to meet their specific needs is not available. As one interviewee noted, learning alongside more recent arrivals with higher-level literacy and skills can be a key deterrent.

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[3] Robust data are not available to indicate the proportions of each.

There are particular issues in relation to refugees and asylum seekers.[4] The government's policy of dispersing asylum seekers across the UK has increased pressures on service providers in some cities and towns in Wales. In these circumstances, ESOL providers have to adapt to learners with whose background they are unfamiliar. Such learners have complex lives- they may be highly fractured, suffer a multiplicity of complex problems, including poverty, destitution, a loss of dignity or hope. All these factors affect their learning. ESOL tutors are often looked to for support and assistance with these wider issues, and not all tutors are in a position to help learners in this way.

Recent research (TUC, 2008a) highlights the extent to which, in certain circumstances, migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers. The Trades Union Congress (2003) has described the legal protection available to such workers as being 'wholly inadequate' and such vulnerability is increased where workers do not possess adequate English language skills and thus experience difficulties in accessing systems which may protect them. Recent research commissioned by the Health & Safety Executive considering health and safety risks among migrant workers, concluded:

> *Migrants are more likely to be working in sectors or occupations where there are existing health and safety concerns and that it is their status as new workers which may place them at added risk*

> (McKay, Craw & Chopra, 2006: v)

The reasons for this were found to be due to factors including:

- The ability to communicate effectively with other workers and with supervisors, particularly in relation to their understanding of risk;

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[4] In line with the inquiry into speakers of other languages (NIACE, 2006), we use the following definitions. A 'refugee' is a person who has fled, or is unable to return to, their country of origin because of a 'well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a social group'. An 'asylum seeker' is a person who has claimed refugee status and is awaiting decision on their claim.

- Access to limited health and safety training and their difficulties in understanding what is being offered, where proficiency in English is limited;
- Failure of employers to check on their skills for work and on their language skills; and
- Lack of knowledge of health and safety issues and how to raise them.

Evidence presented to the TUC's Commission on Vulnerable Employment (CoVE) (TUC, 2008a) identified multiple potential benefits of ESOL in reducing vulnerability:

- ESOL encourages interaction and integration with the wider workforce and community;
- Increases individual workers' ability to understand and to enforce employment rights;
- Increases individual workers' confidence;
- Enables workers to understand health and safety information and/or training;
- Enables workers to make use of skills and gain employment appropriate to their qualifications; and
- Enables workers to engage in other learning and to progress and develop in their employment.

Clearly these benefits are felt not only by individuals but also by their employers, wider community society and the economy. Research (NIACE, 2006; TUC, 2008b & 2007) suggests that many migrant workers need provision specifically geared to their work situation – language skills appropriate to the demands of their work, including communication and workplace cultures. It should include issues that confront them living in their communities, offer opportunities of progression, and be available at times to fit their working hours.

This increasing demand has raised questions of how EU migrant workers' ESOL needs should be paid for, and whether they and/or their employers should bear some proportion of the cost.

5. CONTEXT: THE CHALLENGES FACING ESOL

There are a number of major challenges affecting the provision of English language teaching for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Demand for the provision of ESOL is rising continually. The arrival of workers from the new members of the European Union has increased demand for ESOL classes, but there is also a need for ESOL among refugees and asylum seekers, as well as there being significant demand, that is currently unmet, from members of settled communities. As a result, the provision of ESOL has never been more complex. In spite of substantial investment in ESOL, funding is not always well targeted, and the quality of provision is 'worryingly patchy', with provision and appropriacy too often being at a level that is sub-standard (NIACE, 2006). In Wales there is a shortage of qualified teachers, and the structure of ESOL teaching qualifications is currently in a state of flux while the Qualifications Framework has not been signed off.

In November 2005, with the 'enormous problems' besetting ESOL amounting to 'a crisis that needed urgent attention' (Ward, 2007), NIACE established an independent Committee of Inquiry to investigate ESOL in England. The findings, published as *More Than a Language ...* (NIACE, 2006), offers the first comprehensive overview of policy relating to ESOL since the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) produced the *Breaking the Language Barriers* in 2000. The report concluded that notwithstanding many examples of responsive provision and creative teaching and learning, there are enormous challenges in ESOL which need urgent attention:

- Demand has outstripped supply;
- There is insufficient funding;
- The context of learning does not always align with learner demand;
- The quality is variable; and
- In many areas there are huge difficulties in recruiting and training ESOL teachers.

These challenges shall now be looked at in more depth, in the context of Wales and drawing on empirical data arising from this study.

5.1 *Increases in Demand for ESOL*

Demand for ESOL is increasing year-on-year in Wales.[5] The increased demand from migrant workers, in particular those from the A8 countries, has attracted much attention and publicity and is, without doubt, significant. But such learners, refugees and asylum seekers, form only one element, (albeit a growing element), of ESOL learners. There is also growing demand from settled communities. One consequence of this changing pattern is that there are now demands in some areas, particularly rural areas with concentrations of A8 agricultural migrant workers, which have no previous experience of high demand for ESOL provision and which do not have the infrastructure of providers or teachers to cope. This presents a significant challenge to the current infrastructure.[6]

5.2 *Insufficient Funding*

Research undertaken by GHK (2008) indicates that across Wales only 44% of ESOL needs are being met, with the shortages being most severe in South Wales.

Funding for ESOL currently comes through a multiple range of sources and a number of different streams, each governed by different eligibility rules, targets and reporting requirements. While the majority of provision is funded by DCELLS through the National Planning and Funding System (NPFS) there appears to be concern and confusion amongst providers around the NPFS eligibility criteria. Providers engaged in this project were particularly concerned about the availability of funding for individuals who have leave for remain, but have not yet been in the country for three years. There was also concern around individual's access to support, for example from the Assembly Learning Grant, which requires individuals to be resident in the UK for three years before application. In general, concern was expressed that funding is not always well targeted.

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[5] As mentioned previously, three was an overall increase of 22 per cent in the numbers of ESOL learners in Wales between 2004/2005 and 2006/2007.

[6] However, it is difficult to be precise in relation to the demand from A8 learners. While there are no recent figures available for Wales[6], recent figures (2004-2005) from the LSC suggest suggest that such learners form only a small proportion of total ESOL enrolments in England – Some 4.03 per cent. This, however, is almost certainly a significant underestimate (NIACE, 2006).

Most providers who engaged with this project expressed concern about the lack of availability of funding for childcare and transport, and these were deemed to be the biggest barriers to learners accessing ESOL. There were innovative examples from providers who had sought to overcome, or at least alleviate this issue, through for example family learning programmes, or groups operating 'buddy' systems to share childcare to enable each other to attend classes. However, all providers who raised this issue remained concerned that such measures did not address the problem fully, and significant numbers of individuals who would like to access ESOL, and would benefit from doing so, were not.

Employers' Contributions:

There is an increasing expectation from both UK and Welsh Assembly Government's that employers and employment agencies should invest in training for developing their workforce, particularly where training has been customised to their needs. However, there appears to be little evidence of this happening to date. In fact providers still report considerable hostility from some employers towards funding ESOL, or even supporting learners to attend classes through for example offering more flexible hours.

5.3 *The Quality of ESOL is Variable*

In the sphere of ESOL, the quality of teaching and learning has been a persistent and recurring theme across the UK. Awareness of variations of good quality ESOL alongside poor practice, has been realised over the past 25 years at least (Rosenberg, 2008). The most excellent ESOL, whether in discreet language classes, language support or embedded in programmes, is creative, inspiring and enables learners to realise their aspirations (Ward, 2007). While there has been some outstanding practice of this nature in recent years (Ofsted, 2005 & 2008), the overall picture of both discreet and embedded ESOL, and leadership and management, is of variable quality. Shortcomings in assessment processes, management leadership and support, are coupled to teaching that is too often uninspired and ineffective (Estyn, 2008; GHK, 2008).

Evidence from inspections makes it clear that too little ESOL is good or better, and that there is still too much that is inadequate. The most recent ESOL inspection in Wales suggests a decline in the quality of teaching and assessment between 2004/2005 and 2006/2007 (Estyn, 2008). Estyn found that the overall quality of ESOL courses has suffered due to increases in demands providers experience, with almost half of all inspections highlighting some shortcomings in the quality of course delivery and many finding poor standards of teaching.

5.4 *The Context of Learning*

A striking finding in carrying out this research has been the huge diversity within and across the population of ESOL learners in Wales. This diversity is played out at both national and localised levels and has been not only in terms of the country of origin and cultural background of the learner, but also in terms of the learners' educational and employment backgrounds, skills, life histories and experiences. The spectrum of needs and expectations of these learners is incredibly vast, and personal circumstances (for example: marital status, caring, domestic duties and attitudes) affect, and in some cases dictate what, where and how they want to learn. In addition, time and again, we were told of the extent to which childcare responsibilities impacted on all women's ability and willingness to participate and progress in learning and employment. The availability, affordability and inflexibility, especially the absence of provision during school holidays, of childcare, influence heavily, and in some cases determine, women's participation and progress in learning.

The people we spoke with told us of many different reasons and motivations for wanting to learn English. While specific aspirations were often expressed within generalised aims and ambitions, these people rarely sought English for a sole purpose. While their general aims often related to English for the purpose of helping them gain/find paid work or to improve their position within paid work, the prospects of improved access to services and opportunities to participate in community, cultural and political life were also important incentives.

Previous research (Baynham *etal*, 2007) suggests that differential educational backgrounds and language skills matter much as factors such as length of time in the UK or first language literacy are significant for progress and achievement. Adults with little literacy in any language and lacking experience of study skills from previous formal education, make slower progress and require more intensive and different forms of support than individuals with high educational levels and literacy skills in other languages. Learners who hold educational qualifications are most likely to seek provision that enables them to make rapid progress. Despite this, however, providers often told us of mixed level classes. Indeed at an observed ESOL class in Swansea, an Iranian physicist, an older Bangladeshi restaurant worker who had lived in Wales for more than 25 years but spoke no English and had always worked in catering, a Polish factory worker, a Liberian refugee with no previous educational or work experience and a young Tibetan student learned alongside one another in the same class.

This huge diversity can create interesting groups with rich internal resources and potential for peer support. However, there is also concern about the extent to which present forms of ESOL provision in Wales provide an adequate response to the diverse learner needs in ways that take account of their differing histories, expectations and learning styles. Writers such as Baynham *etal* (2007) and Ivanic *etal* (2006) identify the challenges of attempting to respond to the diverse and complex needs and priorities of different individuals learning in the same group. Baynham *etal* (2007) conclude that notwithstanding the best efforts of teachers to differentiate learning to meet different needs within their groups, it is almost impossible to satisfy the diverse needs of all learners within the same heterogeneous class.

If the Welsh Assembly Government wishes to position learners at the centre of learning processes in order to respond to their priorities and learning needs, these challenges need to be acknowledged and a range of different and appropriate curriculum responses and pedagogic practices formulated in response.

5.5 *Staffing: Recruitment and Training*

The expertise of ESOL teachers is a major factor in language development. It thus follows that the employment of sufficiently trained and experienced staff is essential to the provision of excellent ESOL. At the same time, however, it is widely recognised that the recruitment, training and retention of sufficient numbers of qualified ESOL teachers to deal with the expansion of provision, poses significant challenges. In a recent report, Estyn (2008) attributed a 'steady decline' in the quality of ESOL provision in Wales to a continuing shortage of specialist teachers. This shortage of suitably qualified ESOL tutors is further reflected in the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) '*Sector Skills Agreement for Wales*',[7] and moreover, GHK (2008), in their *Review of ESOL in Wales* highlight the difficulties providers face in attracting suitably qualified teachers, which in many cases was limiting their ability to deliver ESOL. Indeed over a third of the twenty eight providers interviewed by GHK, considered teacher shortages as a 'significant or highly significant' barrier to ESOL delivery (GHK, 2008).

Research studies thus highlight a critical dearth of specialist ESOL tutors and this affects the nature and quality of ESOL provision (Estyn, 2008; GHK, 2008; Dalziel & Sofres, 2005). In our own fieldwork, time and again, providers told us of the difficulties they face. As one provider in South Riverside, Cardiff affirmed to us, '*We all know there are huge difficulties in the recruitment and then retaining of ESOL tutors'*. In the urban areas, in particular, the high demand for ESOL often means high waiting lists and rationed classes. Even in rural areas, where populations of migrant workers have increased in recent years, providers spoke of demand beginning to outstrip supply.

Addressing the question of what type of teacher would best create positive learning experiences and drive up quality is thus a critical issue in Wales (Estyn, 2008). Attracting new entrants to work in the sphere of ESOL poses significant challenges, not least in small part because employment conditions are less than attractive to anyone, particularly new graduates, seeking permanent full-time posts with a clear career

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[7] Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) are the sector skills council responsible for the professional development of staff working in the UK lifelong learning sector.

structure (See also GHK, 2008). The ESOL workforce is characterised by a flexible labour model in which relatively few teachers hold full-time posts and there are few career pathways. Many ESOL teachers are employed on a hourly/sessional paid basis, which carry few of the securities, benefits, opportunities or pay of full-time employment. This undermines the value accorded to, or felt by, teachers, and is likely to account for the huge turnover in ESOL (Sunderland, 2006). Making the profession more attractive by improving employment conditions is thus necessary in addressing recruitment problems.

Research studies have identified teacher expertise as being one of the most crucial factors in effective ESOL practice (Baynham *etal*, 2007). Initial training and continuing professional development are critical to support teachers to develop the vision and skills essential to the progress of learners' and further success (Ward, 2007). In a recent report Estyn (2008: 6), recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government 'urgently consider ways to improve training opportunities for ESOL teachers'. The report highlights the limited number of teacher trainers to deliver courses at appropriate levels and limited opportunities in accessing training locally.[8] In their research, GHK (2008) recommend the development of a workforce strategy, in conjunction with LLUK Wales, to consider changes in the employment conditions and training opportunities and routes for ESOL tutors. At the time of writing, the Welsh Assembly Government are considering an accredited 'Training the Trainers' programme for ESOL and Basic Skills as part of the Basic Skills Cymru delivery plan for 2008-2010.

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[8] The Estyn (2008) report notes that of those providers who have access to local training, most state that have no dedicated staff development budget for ESOL.

6. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The diversity of ESOL learners is clear and responses to demand for English language tuition play out differently in different cities, towns and rural areas of Wales. The variability in the quality of ESOL provision and the context of ESOL learning are discussed in sections 5.3 and 5.4. In addition, there are now demands for ESOL in areas of Wales with little or no tradition of making such provision, for example in rural areas with concentrations of A8 migrant (agricultural) workers. This presents a significant challenge to the current infrastructure. At the same time, however, there is a strong unifying element. As mentioned previously, learners rarely want to learn English for its own sake but are usually seeking a tool to enable them to do something else.

The boundaries of what counts as ESOL provision have become more fluid (Barton & Pitt, 2003), as the flow between ESOL and EFL, between distinct forms of ESOL and ESOL embedded in other subjects, and between ESOL and adult literacy has changed. In our research, learners pursued their goals in different formal and informal settings that included colleges, community centres, church halls, schools and workplaces. Learners sought to develop proficiency in English in formal ESOL programmes or within other subjects, while others still attended adult literacy classes. The following offers a number of examples of the different forms of ESOL we observed when carrying out our fieldwork.

6.1 Formal ESOL:

Swansea Learning Partnership:

Swansea, as well as being a dispersal city for asylum seekers, has many migrant workers living in its communities. In February 2009, the city launched its campaign of gaining 'City of Sanctuary Status'. The 'City of Sanctuary' is a national movement to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary on the UK. In Swansea, local people, community groups, businesses, organisations and institutions have formed a 'City of Sanctuary Working Group' to this end.

The Swansea Learning Partnership Project, funded by the European Social Fund, aims to provide a useful and informative resource for all new arrivals to Swansea. The partnership consists of the Department of Adult Learning (DACE) at Swansea University, Gorseinon College of Further Education, Swansea College of Further Education, the City and Council of Swansea Lifelong Learning Service, Swansea Women's Centre and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service. The project works with a group of ESOL learners in the city to develop additional language learning resources beyond the class, that are accessible to all ESOL learners in Swansea. The learners, in the process, and in addition to creating useful resources for others, increase their own IT skills in the areas of audio, video and web-design.

Using the internet and inexpensive MP3 players, ESOL students have worked with IT tutors, and the web and graphic design team at DACE at Swansea University, to create web-based resources. These resources include audio files, with accompanying transcripts, that provide additional practice in language use. This additional resource supplements the learner's time in an ESOL class. The website further includes local information,[9] sound files for downloading[10] and other facilities,[11] and acts as an online resource for newcomers to Swansea. The website[12] was launched in June, 2008 and to date over 500 ESOL learners have been trained to use the website and have been allocated free MP3 players.

The Swansea Learning Partnership Project has been effective in reaching 'hard to reach' groups such as mothers who traditionally stay at home, shift workers, restaurant and catering workers, and partners of current ESOL learners who, due to their circumstances, are unable to attend classes. The project has, moreover, been successful in reaching migrant workers who are required to pay for ESOL classes but who, often trapped in low-paid jobs, cannot afford to attend class. The website resource

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[9] For example: How to find a solicitor, how to make appointments by telephone, visiting the Citizens Advice Bureau, how to find specific locations in Swansea, as well as an introduction to the local culture.

[10] For example: Short interviews, example of difficult pronunciations, paragraphs, read at slow speed, phrase by phrase, with spaces for repetition.

[11] For example: Video stories, texts to go with sound files, other ESOL resources (games, quizzes), link to the Swansea Learning Partnership e-learning portal, links to other refugee and asylum seekers organisations and resources.

[12] www.swansea-arrivals.net

also provides free additional support to those learners who need it. In addition, thirty five ESOL tutors have been trained in the use of new technologies and many of these have contributed to the website.

Importantly, the project has created a sense of ownership among the different and diverse communities in the city. Migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers have all worked on the project in a voluntary capacity. This work has involved constructing the design of the website, as well as producing sound files and video stories.

The Dragon Arts and Learning Centre:

The Dragon Arts and Learning Centre in Swansea aims to promote social inclusion through learning. Since September 2007, the centre has provided free ESOL classes for learners who are engaged in paid work for no longer than 16 hours per week. The curriculum caters primarily for single asylum seekers and refugees, and a smaller number of people from traditional migrant communities in Swansea. At present, Dragon Arts are working with ESOL learners from 27 different ethnicities, who come from a range of cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds. Learners vary from those who have a basic understanding of English but have limited formal educational experience in their home country to educated professionals who speak little or no English. In recent times, the centre has seen a marked increase in the number of female learners enrolling on their ESOL courses.

ESOL classes cover the spectrum from Pre-Entry to Entry Level 3 and learners at the Dragon Arts and Learning Centre have the option of undertaking both accredited and non-accredited courses. In addition to the designated ESOL classes, learners are encouraged to enrol on other learning activities including Basic Skills, ICT, ceramics, photography (film and digital) and music courses. Learners at the centre further participate in visits to local historic and cultural places of interest.

The Dragon Arts and Learning Centre has been successful in a number of ways. Firstly in November 2007, a working group between the statutory and voluntary sector, was

formed in Swansea with the purpose of providing direction and structure for ESOL provision in the city.[13] This partnership has enabled voluntary organisations in Swansea to structure their enrolment around the traditional enrolment dates of the statutory sector. In doing so, organisations like Dragon Arts in effect become the primary point of access to ESOL throughout the remaining dates of the academic year, thus ensuring that ESOL learners in Swansea are being best served through the ways in which provision in the city is structured. Secondly, the Dragon Arts and Learning Centre have shown itself to be an effective 'stepping stone', with many ESOL learners either moving-on to take further accredited ESOL learning at Swansea College or entering paid employment. In addition, while studying at Dragon Arts, ESOL learners are afforded the opportunity to learn new skills through additional learning activities, and are offered an insight into local history and culture in the form of trips and visits. Finally, as mentioned previously, Dragon Arts work with learners from a broad range of cultural backgrounds, with the focus being on notions of interaction and inclusion. For Refugee Week 2008, the Dragon Arts and Learning Centre organised a *'Positive Encounters: Food From Around the World'* event, held at the centre, where learners and members of the local community were encouraged to experience, taste and enjoy different food, music and culture.[14]

6.2 Informal ESOL

In our fieldwork, we came across a number of examples of informal ESOL provision designed at meeting the needs of different groups of ESOL learners. In the following, we outline the approaches designed and utilised at the South Riverside Community and Development Centre and at Race Equality First, Cardiff, in engaging the most marginalised of ESOL learners.

South Riverside Community and Development Centre: Reaching the Disengaged

One of the perennial issues for ESOL providers is how to attract, recruit and retain learners from traditional migrant communities. The Community and Development Centre at South Riverside, on the edge of Cardiff City Centre, has been functioning

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[13] The result of this group has been the *ESOL Strategy for Swansea* document.
[14] See: http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southwest/sites/swansea/pages/refugeeweek08slideshow.shtml

since the middle of the 1970s. In the years since, the centre has established networks with the South East Asian communities in the locality and in the process, have slowly built up significant levels of trust in these communities. For the people at the South Riverside Community and Development Centre, commitment to the long-term process has been critical in achieving this. As the Communities First Coordinator there puts it, '(T)his has been a gradual process of persistence and patience'.

The South Riverside Community and Development Centre run a number of different forms of ESOL classes and in 2008, the centre recruited over 370 ESOL learners from in and around the local community. All learners were recruited through 'word of mouth', with no formal advertising taking place. Indeed, so established are the local networks, that the centre have not advertised a class in over four years.

Engaging Marginalised Women:

A key message from the focus groups held with ESOL providers is that childcare responsibilities impact heavily on all women's ability and willingness to access learning and employment, and that many women in traditional migrant communities neither work, nor have spending power of their own within the family unit. It emerged that, particularly among traditional South East Asian communities, women expect to have children and often have large families. They prioritise mothering over studying and work – Choosing to care for their children themselves when they are young. This, we were told, is due primarily to the practical challenges of combining caring responsibilities with learning or employment, to their position within the family, as women, and as they themselves regarded looking after the family and home as their primary responsibility.[15] Where childcare is accessed, there is a tendency to favour informal childcare arrangements using the extended family, and many are reluctant to use childminders and other formal arrangements.[16]

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[15] This broadly reflects Ward and Spacey's (2008) research into the learning journeys of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Somali women.
[16] See also the work of Aston *etal* (2007), Hall *etal* (2004) and Tackey *etal* (2006).

Within the Southern Asian community, moreover, poor health, including poor mental health, suicide and self-harm, are viewed as being significant problems for women, in particular, young women (Anand & Cochrane, 2005). Research shows that a number of factors affect the mental health of these women. A recent study (Muralidharan, 2007) of girls and young women between the ages of 11 and 25 from all backgrounds, found that most of the factors affecting their emotional health were similar, regardless of class or ethnic background. However, young women from South Asian backgrounds faced a number of barriers in accessing support. These include the everyday realities of male privilege existing in some families and communities, the difficulties that some associated with being part of a tight-knit community and the notion of family honour (*izzat*).

Studies exploring the experience of women diagnosed with depression and other mental health problems highlight similar issues. The need to conform to social and cultural values, experience of violence and abuse, and social isolation are key factors affecting their mental health. However, assumptions about 'South Asian Cultures' and stereotypes about women from these cultures have meant that service provision does not address these issues (Burman, Chantier & Batsieer, 2002; Burr, 2002).

For a number of years the South Riverside Community and Development Centre, in partnership with the Workers Educational Association (WEA), have provided women only health and well-being classes with ESOL embedded. These classes are aimed specifically at engaging South East Asian women living in the locality. Classes are kept to a maximum of 10-12 learners. A local female Asian doctor has been recruited to deliver the course. Those attending the classes range from pensioners who have lived in South Riverside over the last thirty years to new and recent arrivals, young women who have arrived in Wales following arranged marriages. These women primarily come from poor rural backgrounds in Somalia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, suffering poor economic circumstances and being constrained by cultural expectations regarding the role of women and girls. The large majority have either never been to school or had

very limited experiences of education and neither speak, read nor write any English. Very few leave their homes alone, other than to attend their class.

Engaging Marginalised Men:

There has been a South Asian presence in Britain since the 1600s. Large-scale migration from South Asia began following World War II, and continued through the economic boom and labour shortage in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, Cardiff, and in particular South Riverside, witnessed a gradual influx of economic migrants, primarily men, from South East Asia. Their purpose for coming to Wales was to find paid work. Some of the immigrants were professionally qualified, but the majority were unskilled labourers from rural areas who found work in manufacturing, food production and catering industries. This pattern has continued and still today, young men find themselves in South Riverside looking for paid work, having recently arrived from the South East Asian continent. While a few may have experienced some education in their home country, the large majority speak limited or no English. The strong expectation of these men is that of wage earner and provider, in much the same way that women are expected to be homemakers.

Since 2007, the South Riverside Community and Development Centre and the WEA have been providing twice weekly Open College Network (OCN) accredited ICT classes with ESOL embedded for these men:

> We tried many different ways to attract them [men] and soon realised that the only time of day we could run any classes was in the middle of the afternoon. It's the only time of the day they are not working. Their lives are chocca. They're in their cabs in the day and working the restaurants at night.

In the two years the classes have been running, over twenty young men, the entire cohort of students in that time, have achieved OCN qualifications/certificates.

In seeking to engage the 'hardest to reach' men and women from traditional migrant communities, the South Riverside Community and Development Centre have been successful in a number of ways. Firstly, ESOL at the centre is shaped around the lives and needs of the local community. These needs have been identified over a number of years, through working in participation with the local community and of actively listening to community groups, community elders and community members. In working in this way alongside the community, the people at the centre have acquired an in-depth understanding of the local community, and the ways in which the centre and the centre's initiatives function within the community context, that is grounded within the locality of South Riverside. This understanding goes beyond a simple 'cultural awareness' of the local community, and involves a 'cultural competence' that shapes the ways in which the centre, at all levels, works with the community. That is, the development of an understanding and respect of the diverse communities that make up South Riverside, the differences in those communities, including gender differences, and the gradual changes in those communities that take place overtime. In working in this way, the South Riverside Community and Development Centre has placed itself in a position whereby they are able to engage with these communities in a way that respects their cultures and their values.

Initiatives designed to meet particular needs are shaped around an understanding that the community *has* to identify with those initiatives. Initiatives in which the community are unable to identify will fail to serve the people whom they aim to serve. Working in a way that is 'culturally competent' has increased the capacity of the centre to connect with the community and moreover, draw a commitment from the local community. This has been so much so that the centre is now in a position to reach beyond the community and into the families and households of South Riverside:

> Ten years ago when we started the health classes for women, male family
> members were actually coming in and removing the women from the
> class. Today, we're in a position where male family members are
> recommending and encouraging women in their families to attend our

classes. That hasn't happened overnight. It's taken ten years of hard
work and persistence to get to where we are. Ten years to gain the trust
of the community.

In doing so, South Riverside have been able to move beyond a situation whereby rather than seeking to meet the *demands* of the local community, the centre is in a position to continually shape and adapt its learning to meet changes that come about in community *needs* (and community contexts), in a way in which the community identifies with what it is the centre is trying to achieve.

A second factor contributing to the success of the South Riverside Community and Development Centre, has been the strength and breadth of the networks they have built-up and their pragmatism in collaborating with different organisations, in different ways, to the benefit of the local community. These networks, built on the broad support the centre has within the community of South Riverside, range from locality based networks to large institutions and organisations including; local authorities, universities and global charitable organisations. Central to these networks is the transfer of knowledge; of ideas, research, and skills between South Riverside, the local community and the wider organisations, to enable innovative new services and ways of learning to be developed.[17]

A final factor contributing to the success and sustainability of the ESOL provision and wider work at South Riverside Community and Development Centre, is the effective and committed leadership both within and outside of the organisation. Leaders and centre staff within the organisation and rooted within the local community, as well as more informal learning champions who proactively promote the ESOL learning within the community and within families and households, are critical to creating an environment that facilitates and supports the learning that takes place at the South Riverside Community and Development Centre.

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[17] For example see the section below: ESOL and Parallel Family Learning.

Race Equality First and the Wales TUC: Working with Migrant Workers

As mentioned previously, migrant workers form the largest group of ESOL learners in Wales (GHK, 2008; Estyn, 2008). Figures from a recent survey of ESOL providers in Wales (GHK, 2008), show that almost half (47 per cent) of all learners attending their ESOL provision are migrant workers,[18] primarily from the new EU Accession States of Eastern Europe, Bulgaria and Romania. Within this group, the majority of providers surveyed stated Poland as being the most frequent country of origin for their learners.

Based in the centre of Cardiff City Centre, Race Equality First have been running weekly ESOL classes, from their offices, for migrant workers, primarily Polish workers living and working in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, since the end of 2007. The classes are aimed at pre-entry level ESOL. The large majority of learners have limited educational experience in their home country and speak limited or no English. It has thus been important that the ESOL classes at Race Equality First are taken by a fluent Polish speaker. To this end, Race Equality First have recruited a Polish teacher, a migrant worker herself who has lived in Wales since 2006. The classes, devised by the people at Race Equality First, have been made possible by funding from the Wales TUC. Classes are informal and non-accredited, and weekly topics are shaped around everyday life: Work, welfare issues, access to local services, banking, health care and health advice, and so forth.

The classes have proved to be successful in a number of ways. Firstly, Race Equality First have succeeded in attracting a number of learners who have often proved elusive. The majority of learners attending the classes have limited educational experience in their home country and were thus often left feeling isolated and with low self-esteem. The confidence learners have gained through the classes have encouraged them to form friendships with people at work and in the communities in which they live and moreover, to engage in 'social' activities and events at work. Secondly, Race Equality First have designed the classes in a way that ensures learners quickly become familiar with the English vocabulary and structures necessary to enable them to cope with day

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[18] Asylum Seekers account for 14 per cent and refugees 5 per cent of the total of ESOL learners in Wales (GHK, 2008).

to day situations. Thirdly, the classes have increased the individual learner's ability to understand and to enforce their employment rights. Finally, a number of learners attending classes at Race Equality First have continued to improve their knowledge of English by 'moving-on' to take further accredited ESOL learning, at The Parade ESOL Service in the city,[19] thus demonstrating that this initial, specifically targeted provision, has successfully provided them an initial positive learning experience, which has encouraged them to undertake further learning.

6.3 Conversation ESOL:

One of the most striking and most vibrant forms of English language learning we observed during the fieldwork stage of our research, were the conversation / survival English taking place in Swansea and Llanelli.

Survival English in Swansea Bay and Llanelli:

The Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group (SBASSG) is a grassroots community group formed and run by asylum seekers, refugees and other local people, in and around the city. The group was set-up in 2000, following the announcement of the UK Governments 'dispersal' strategy and meet weekly in the basement of an old Methodist church in the city centre. SBASSG operates on a total voluntary basis and functions primarily on donations. The Polish Centre at Llanelli has been developed around a credit union facility. The credit union is owned and controlled by its own membership and offers a convenient place to save money, as well as providing access to low-cost loans when needed. The majority of the people who use the centre are migrant workers form Poland and a smaller number of Lithuanian workers. Most of these people work in and around Llanelli – In food production, private care homes and in shop work. Since 2005, the people at the centre, funded by the Wales TUC, have been running informal conversation classes every other Friday evening at a local catholic church. The classes, devised by the people at the Polish centre, are based around the Polish phonetics system.

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[19] The ESOL project at Race Equality First has a close working relationship with F. E. college based ESOL classes in the city and this 'signposting' is reciprocal.

Both the Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group and the Polish Centre in Llanelli, shape negotiated learning topics around everyday situations – 'Survival English': Work, accessing health and social services, banking, road signs, directions, schooling and schoolwork, human rights, employment rights and so forth. Classes are supported by teaching and learning champions, and volunteers from the local community. Both groups organise social and cultural public events and visits. Families are encouraged to attend the conversation classes together and to date, over three hundred people have done so.

Both the Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group and the Polish Centre in Llanelli provide a crucial means of support for people forced into desperate situations. Migrant workers, although making a huge contribution to the Welsh economy and to society in general (Winckler, 2007), most often find themselves trapped in low skill, low paid jobs with poor working conditions. Their lack of English language skills and low awareness of their employment rights, marginalises them and makes them vulnerable in the relatively unregulated labour market in Wales (TUC, 2008a). Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees are most at risk of living in poor circumstances in already disadvantaged areas, and are disproportionately living in inferior housing and in poor health (The Refugee Council, 2005).

There is often little public understanding of the underlying circumstances that force refuges and asylum seekers to flee political conflict, repression, poverty and famine, or for migrants to leave their homes and families in search of economic and/or educational betterment. Thus, on arriving in Wales, rather than encountering understanding, asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers are too often confronted by racism. In these circumstances, the conversation classes have become a refuge and the volunteers act as committed activists for the rights of the learners. Both groups work effectively with other organisations in the public and voluntary sectors to improve conditions for refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers in their locality and beyond, and work to improve public understanding of the issues these groups of people face. Opportunities

to liberate learners to build the language skills and knowledge they need to access services, increase their awareness of their rights, including employment rights, and take action, are woven in to the negotiated learning topics. Moreover, the 'drop-on / drop-off' nature of the conversation classes and the modular structure they take, allows enough flexibility whereby these particularly vulnerable learners are able to attend when their circumstances allow. In addition, the participation of local volunteers, as well as the coming together of people from different cultures and ethnicities, encourages interaction and inclusion in a very real and vibrant way, and supports notions of community cohesion.

6.4 Embedded ESOL:

(In)formal forms of ESOL provision is only one route to developing proficiency in the English language. Research by Eldred (2005) suggests that many adults prefer to study other subjects because their main interest is in pursuing wider goals, interests and purposes, often related to employment, citizenship or further study.

A number of studies have identified different models and success factors (Eldred, 2005; Casey *etal*, 2006; Roberts *etal*, 2005; Dalziel & Sofres, 2005). However, the majority of these studies conclude that there is no one fixed model of embedding. English language can be almost totally embedded within the teaching of a subject, linking directly to subject matter and tasks. Other approaches offer bolt-on language support. This is often designed to relate to specific programmes of learners, but can take the form of generic English language skills development sessions not related to any particular subject.

The Parade Cardiff and South Riverside Community and Development Centre: ESOL for Pregnancy

It is argued that with community-based working, often the the most desired results of the community are best accomplished through collaborative working partnerships (Altman *etal*, 1991). That is, where relevant partnership organisations share a vision in order to sustain the community effort (Goodman & Steckler, 1989) and where the organisations

involved have clearly identified responsibilities (Bamberger & Cheema, 1990). During our fieldwork, we observed where statutory and voluntary organisations came together in forming an effective working partnership that sought to meet the needs of a section of the local South East Asian community in South Riverside.

South Riverside Community and Development Centre and The Parade ESOL Service, a local authority initiative in Cardiff, have been running ESOL for Pregnancy classes at the South Riverside centre since 2007. Project draws on an initiative that has run for 20 years, involves ESOL for Pregnancy classes at the Parade Centre and moreover, trains health worker volunteers to go into the homes of pregnant women primarily from the South Asian community in Cardiff. The women only ESOL for Pregnancy classes at the South Riverside are aimed specifically at young to middle age women from the South East Asian community, many of whom neither speak, read or write any English and very rarely, if ever, venture from their homes alone.

In much the same way as antenatal classes, the ESOL for Pregnancy at the South Riverside Community and Development centre are aimed to help prepare women for labour, birth and early parenthood. Topics covered include the process of labour and childbirth, and the medical procedures and interventions involved. Women are also offered advice on good nutrition and exercise, relaxation techniques, pain relief choices and feeding their babies. The have been developed at the Parade in conjunction with consultant midwives and include a tour of the maternity ward at the University of Wales Hospital, in Cardiff. Many of the classes are run by midwives and are free.

As mentioned previously, the ESOL for Pregnancy classes at the South Riverside centre are aimed specifically at the hardest to reach women from the local South East Asian community. In the face of resistance, particularly from the mothers in law and male family members, the initiative has been successful in engaging these women in their wider community and in offering them a platform to take control over their own bodies. The classes offer women the opportunity to meet other mothers-to-be from the South East Asian community in South Riverside and for many, it is the first time they

have been exposed to the English language. A number of the women attending the classes, only rarely, if ever, leave their homes alone. Moreover, as mentioned previously, poor health, including poor mental health, suicide and self-harm, are viewed as being significant problems for South Asian women, particularly young women (Anand & Cochrane, 2005). The ESOL for pregnancy classes offer women the opportunity to interface with health authorities and access information, support and services appropriate to their wider health needs.

6.5 Future Developments

ESOL and Parallel Family Learning

The UK government promote ESOL family learning programmes as an important means of bringing about greater social inclusion (DfES, 2005a). Current policy and practice emphasises the importance of parental involvement in children's learning and, increasingly, in participating in shaping and planning activities in childcare organisations and schools (DfES, 2005a; DfES, 2005b). The UK government affirm that family learning makes a powerful contribution to the educational achievement of children, as well as bringing benefits to families and the schools in which their children learn. In addition to family learning providing opportunities for parents to develop their own language skills, as well as their ability to assist in raising their children's educational achievements and aspirations.

The South Riverside Community and Development Centre are in the process of developing a particularly innovative approach to family learning, that they term *'Parallel Learning'*. While a number of ESOL courses take place at the centre, the people at South Riverside were concerned that at home, families in the locality were reverting to their mother tongue. To address this problem, the South Riverside Community and Development Centre, in collaboration with a local primary school, sought to identify ways of 'taking English language learning into the home'. To this end, the South Riverside Community and Development Centre are looking to implement a programme

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at the centre for parents, which mirrors the learning of their children at school. In this way, the programme offers the parent the opportunity to further develop their own English language skills, as well as increasing their capacity to support their children with their schoolwork at home and accelerate their child's progress. The programme is being devised in a way that increases the parent's knowledge of the education system in Wales and at the same time, supports teachers and parents in negotiating cultural boundaries. The South Riverside Community and Development Centre and a local Primary School hope to pilot the programme with nursery and reception classes, before the end of the 2008/2009 school year.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section draws conclusions from the research project and makes a number of recommendations. The recommendations are primarily aimed at the Welsh Assembly Government, as the elected body with the most power to effect change. However, some recommendations are aimed at, or have implications for organisations involved in delivering ESOL and other stakeholders. Drawing on the evidence collected in this project, this section is organised in two parts. Firstly, it looks lessons that can be learned from good practice in the voluntary sector, and the second makes more general recommendations aimed at improving the delivery of ESOL.

What can be learned from voluntary sector organisations delivering ESOL?

This project engaged with a large number of voluntary sector organisations (see Annex 1 for full details) working with learners in some of the most challenging circumstances. The voluntary sector is well placed to respond to the ever changing ESOL needs of individuals and communities in Wales, through its outreach and development workers embedded in communities. In fact voluntary sector organisations are usually established directly in response to an identified need in their communities; *"We are stakeholders in the community"*. Outreach and development staff build up relationships of trust over long periods of time, and are particularly effective at engaging learners from the more settled communities who may not otherwise engage with learning; *"Voluntary sector organisations target particular learners, we network using our volunteers"*.

While these learners may characteristically experience difficulties in accessing learning provision, voluntary organisations have had considerable success in some areas, not least due to the long- term approach to community outreach work. These learners often prefer community- based provision which can be more expensive and time consuming to provide: *"Community venues are more accessible for our learners. Also, we don't use the words 'class' or 'curriculum' we use 'projects' and 'activities'"*.

These learners also often have complex needs, and having not accessed learning for a long time, if ever, and may have no or limited literacy skills. In these cases, learning

alongside more recent arrivals with higher level literacy can be a major deterrent. This is where ESOL tailored to the individuals' needs, or embedded in other provision is crucially important. We found much evidence of effective practice, particularly including family learning.

Partnership

Partnership working was welcomed and encouraged by the voluntary sector organisations involved in this project, though concerns were expressed about the difficulties faced by some smaller organisations with capacity issues. Voluntary sector organisations also faced basic stumbling blocks to effective partnership working, for example, where organisations are not able to offer accreditation themselves, they were keen to work with colleges or other providers to do so. However, some colleges will not accredit learners from other organisations unless the learner enrols at college full time. Often these learners are not able to do so, particularly if their status is such that they have no recourse to public funding. There were also examples of partnerships overcoming such barriers, for example MEWN working with Swansea College.

Informal Learning

Informal 'first steps' learning is a particularly important aspect of the learning offer when working with individuals and communities who are marginalized or who have not previously engaged in learning. The voluntary sector also offers a range of informal learning opportunities to learners engaged in more formal ESOL to support and/or supplement their learning, such as informal conversational groups should be encouraged (e.g. Friends and Neighbours Groups). Where learners face a long wait to access ESOL provision, informal learning opportunities offered by the voluntary sector provide an important bridge, increasing confidence, facilitating social activities and contributing to community cohesion amongst other things.

Technology

The use of technology as part of ESOL provision can have a number of benefits. It can be effective at engaging learners who have difficulties with the traditional 'classroom' delivery, or who have responsibilities which limit their ability to attend classes on a regular basis (for example caring for children or relatives). It also encourages learners to broaden their skills, and can often lead to progression onto other learning.

The voluntary sector organisations engaged in this project used technology in many innovative ways; for example using mobile phones/ texting to keep in touch with tutors, using MP3 players to practice listening and speaking skills, and using learndirect to progress learners. The use of technology is also cost effective, and there are a lot of free materials available that need to be made better use of.

Volunteering

Many learners who access ESOL through voluntary sector organisations go on to volunteer for the organisations, often out of a desire to help others like themselves. This project encountered examples of this from the Welsh Refugee Council, Sudanese Association, Red Cross, BEN and MEWN who all told us of the importance of volunteers to their organisations:

"Many of our staff come through volunteering- they have been there, done it, and want to come back and help others. They bring their own wealth of experience".

Volunteers play an extremely important role; often acting as committed activists for the rights of learners, being role models and supporting learners who are often vulnerable and who have complex needs. Volunteering with organisations involved in the delivery of ESOL is therefore important in itself, and much of the good work carried out by voluntary sector organisations relies on the goodwill of its volunteers. It can also offer the first steps into employment for the volunteers themselves. However, voluntary sector organisations would welcome greater links with more different organisations to enable more different volunteering opportunities for its learners.

Recommendations:

The impact of ESOL

ESOL is an issue of primary importance, not only in terms of policy relating to education and skills, but also in terms of much broader policy agendas that relate to issues of social justice, social and community cohesion, citizenship and economic and social regeneration. ESOL learners have complex lives and face issues to do with education, health, work, immigration, settlement, integration, citizenship, neighbourhood renewal, fighting racism and community cohesion. Learning has a particularly important role to play in equipping individuals with the skills they need to face such issues and become happy and healthy members of society. Therefore, learning is inextricably linked to all these issues, and should not be considered as separate.

Recommendation 1:
The Welsh Assembly Government should establish a cross departmental group to ensure that both ESOL needs, and the contribution of ESOL providers is considered in relation to all government policies and strategies. Such a group should work with providers to keep abreast of ever changing needs and responses to need in Wales.

Recommendation 2:
ESOL should be considered as a basic skill and as such considered with equal importance as literacy and numeracy. As such ESOL should remain within the remit of Basic Skills Cymru, however DCELLS should consider an appropriate learning policy lead for ESOL within the department.

Funding

While DCELLS currently funds the majority of ESOL delivery, organisations also access funding from other government departments, European funding, lottery funding and other (often charitable) sources. Providers also access funding for staff development

and quality improvement in relation to ESOL teaching from various sources, often within DCELLS.

During the course of this project concern has been expressed both about the overall level of funding for ESOL required to meet current demand, and about the provision of ESOL in context of falling budgets for post 19 learning more generally. Providers' ability to respond effectively to learners' needs is clearly influenced by funding constraints. This can also put pressure on existing Adult and Community Learning (ACL) budgets, which is further exacerbated by the different weightings for basic skills and ESOL currently.

Concern was also expressed about the way funding is currently targeted and those involved in this project would welcome a more systematic approach to collecting data about ESOL demand/ need (not all learners express a demand) is required, not least due to the dynamic nature of in-migration in recent years.

Recommendation 3:
DCELLS should work with other departments of the WAG to increase funding for ESOL where it has a cross-departmental benefit.

Recommendation 4:
DCELLS should ensure methods for collecting data in relation to ESOL are robust, and share information with providers in a more meaningful way to ensure they are able to respond effectively.

Recommendation 5:
There should be closer working between DCELLS teams/ divisions. BSC currently provide funding for training for literacy, language and numeracy teachers and tutors (including ESOL). However, there should be clear and transparent information available to all providers about what funding is available for all training and staff development from the various divisions and teams within DCELLS.

> **Recommendation 6:**
>
> In light of the funding issues identified in Section 5.2, to address issues of parity with basic skills the ESOL uplift should be increased from 50% to 90% for all courses funded by DCELLS at level 1 or below.

> **Recommendation 7:**
>
> The Welsh Assembly Government should encourage employers to contribute more to the cost of ESOL for their workers, by promoting the benefits it brings to their workforce and productivity.

Support

During the course of this project many DCELLS funded providers expressed concern about their ability to offer appropriate support to learners to enable them to take advantage of ESOL learning opportunities. Most providers expressed particular concern about childcare. In many cases where childcare was offered it was underpinned by ESF funding or staffed by volunteers. Despite the availability of funding via DCELLS for this type of support (for example through the Learners Support strand of the NPFS and, more generally the deprivation uplift of the Learner Provision strand) there still appeared to be significant problems in providing the appropriate level of support.

> **Recommendation 8:**
>
> DCELLS should investigate providers' use of funding accessed through the NPFS:
> To identify any the reasons why practitioners are having difficulties accessing funding where there is a perceived need.

Staff training & development

Organisations who engaged in this project expressed concern about the lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff required to deliver ESOL. This has also been evidenced in recent research undertaken by GHK (2008) and Estyn (2008). In addition to the concern about the number of staff needed to meet current demand, fears were expressed that Wales is increasingly falling behind England, Scotland and Northern

Ireland in developing the ESOL workforce. There appears to be little investment in professional development for ESOL tutors and teachers in Wales, with providers reporting huge variation in the quality and content of CPD currently delivered to ESOL tutors.

Employment conditions of ESOL tutors (who are usually part time) are often poor and retention of staff is a problem. One local authority told us that they had lost 21 ESOL tutors in one year. This can have a direct impact on quality of delivering, and continuity of staff working with vulnerable learners is a particular concern.

Despite this, organisations report that staff are usually deeply committed to their work. Staff in the voluntary sector in particular report that they remain committed despite current strains and demands.

"I chose to work for my organisation because of the culture and feel of the place. I could earn more money elsewhere but I choose to work here- that creates a certain culture among staff. We are committed to our work."

Recommendation 9:

DCELLS should ensure that the Qualifications Framework for teachers, tutors and trainers which has been developed is implemented as soon as possible. Funding for the necessary staff development should then be made available.

Recommendation 10:

A programme of training the trainers should be facilitated to ensure consistency in the quality of CPD being delivered. It is suggested that the Learning Improvement and Professional Development Division within DCELLS take the lead on this.

Recommendation 11:

Partnerships should consider use of full time tutors across variety of sites or projects to improve the terms and conditions available to staff, and DCELLS should work with providers to disseminate more widely examples of this good practice where it currently exists.

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Annex 1

ESOL & the Voluntary Sector

Name	
Organisation	
Role in organisation	

Please indicate which sector/ type of organisation you represent:

Voluntary sector (large/ national organisation)	
Voluntary sector (small/ local organisation)	
FE College	
HE Institution	
Local Authority	
Work Based Learning	
Other (please specify)	

What methods do you use to recruit learners?

What are the THREE most effective strategies that you use to recruit learners? Why do these work?

	Method	*Why is this successful?*
1		
2		
3		

What are the main barriers learners have to overcome to attend the provision you offer?

Please give at least TWO examples of support you provide to help them to overcome these barriers:

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What strategies do you use to support the learner to STAY on the course/ continue learning?

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Thank you for completing this form. It will help inform our discussion on 10th December. Please return by e mail to Julian.hunt@niacedc.org.uk

Annex 2

	Organisation	Name	Website	Description
North				
	Deeside College	Sara Bishop / Michelle Turner	www.deeside.ac.uk	In 2007, we became the first college in Wales to be awarded Grade 1s by Estyn Inspectors for all aspects of our performance across both our further education and work-based learning provision.
	Yale College	Andrew Edwards / Moria Edwards / Sarah Williams	www.yale-wrexham.co.uk	An outstanding UK tertiary college, Yale College is renowned for delivering excellence in further and higher education. Its impressive results and state of the art facilities attract over 14,000 students every year to achieve the skills they need for employment and further study. As well as providing education and training for most post 16 year olds in

				the area, the College is at the forefront of adult training, not only to meet individual aspirations, but also to serve the staffing needs of the diverse and expanding Wrexham economy.
	Coleg Llandrillo	Helen Smith	www.llandrillo.ac.uk	With campuses in Colwyn Bay, Abergele, Denbigh, Rhyl, 'Glasdir' at Llanrwst, a specialist business support centre in St. Asaph, and close to 200 learning venues across Conwy and Denbighshire, the College delivers an impressive range of Further Education and university level courses, all providing pathways to careers or higher level study. Particular attention is given to supporting our students, listening to

				them and guiding them through the College experience.
	Coleg Meirion Dwyfor	Kath White	www.meirion-dwyfor.ac.uk	
	College Llysfasi	Clare Willain	www.llysfasi.ac.uk	the College is based on two main campuses, Llysfasi near Ruthin and Wrexham Training at Felin Puleston, Wrexham. Coleg Llysfasi supports life long learning and education in the community and offers many courses in a variety of outreach centres across the Vale of Clwyd, the Dee Valley and the North Wales coast.
South East				

	Cardiff County Council	Rhian Anderson	www.cardiff.gov.uk	The county of Cardiff is the largest in Wales in terms of population and the Council delivers services to approximately 320,000 people. Cardiff, along with all other Welsh Local Authorities, operates on a modernised executive structure. Councillors that have been elected to the Executive have a range of additional responsibilities over and above their duties as councillors.
	Ystrad Mynach College	Samantha Anthony	www.ystrad-mynach.ac.uk	The College Ystrad Mynach was opened in 1959 to meet the needs of the local coal mining industry. Since the 1970s the curriculum has diversified to assist the diversification and development of the locality. The College works closely with Caerphilly County Borough Council to improve the economic future of the County

				Borough.
	Torfaen	Linda Bailey	www.torfaen.gov.uk	
	Torfaen Community Focussed Schools	Rhiannon Bennett		A Community Focused School is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community (Community Focused Schools – Guidance Circular, National Assembly for Wales, 2003)
	Cardiff	Deb Evans		
	Cardiff	Swinder Chadha		
	University of Wales Newport	Jenny Cann	www3.newport.ac.uk	

	Coleg Glan Hafren	Michelle Hiller-Foster / Rob Parkin	www.glan-hafren.ac.uk	Coleg Glan Hafren aims to put you, the learner, at the centre of everything we do and to include everyone in the learning experience. We are Cardiff's largest further education college, spread over four sites, with 800 courses and 13000 students, from all learning abilities and backgrounds, ranging from 16 to 80 in age
	Glamorgan Gates	Lesley Hodgson	cell.glam.ac.uk/Projects/glamorgangates	Glamorgan GATES is a partnership between the University of Glamorgan and the Communities First Unit of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is both a concept – a "gateway" between the university and the community – and a physical presence – a GATES Centre – sited in Merthyr Tydfil

	Coleg Morgannwg	Elizabeth Horrocks	www.morgannwg.ac.uk	
	Pontypridd Library	Lindsay Morris	www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk	
	Coleg Gwent	Maliika Kaaba	www.coleggwent.ac.uk	The largest further education college in Wales, Coleg Gwent offers a wide range of opportunities to help you find the course that's right for you. Each year thousands of students enrol at one of the College's six campuses to study on one of the hundreds of courses available.
	Merthyr & Valleys Mind	Debra Roberts	www.mind.org.uk	Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. We work to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress
	Blaenau Gwent	Karen Ross		
	Cardiff	Robina Samuddin		

	Cardiff		www.westa.co.uk	Westa Essential Skills Training is an independent, community based, basic skills training centre that offers enjoyable Hands-On Computer & Skills fo Life ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) training. Our courses extend from Basic Level - right through to advanced classes. We specifically aim to train adults in key skills & Vocational courses.
Mid				
	Siawns Teg	Tony Blunden	www.siawnsteg.co.uk	Siawns Teg means Fair Chance. We support people who are, or believe they are, excluded from their local community. We work with statutory, public, voluntary and private organisations to improve opportunities for people to connect

				with them. Most of our work evolves around two specific groups
	Montogomery Powys	Jilly Kibble	www.montgomery-powys.co.uk	
	Aberystwyth	Grace Hagen		
West				
	National Waterfront Museum	Sue James	www.museumwales.ac.uk	The National Waterfront Museum at Swansea tells the story of industry and innovation in Wales, now and over the last 300 years. Our vast industrial and maritime heritage is ready to explore via cutting-edge, interactive technology married with traditional displays. It means that a unique, captivating and involved visitor experience lies in wait at Wales's newest national museum

	Pembrokeshire	Marilyn Miller		
	Swansea	Mike Burridge	www.swansea.gov.uk	
	Pembrokeshire	Jenni Griffiths		
	Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers	Sadhbh O'Dwyer	www.croesoproject.org	SBASSG is a community group run by asylum seekers, refugees and other local people. The group was set up in 2000 when the 'dispersal' policy was announced. The Home Office has since sent hundreds of asylum seekers to await decisions on their fate in Swansea; increasing numbers, having been given status, settle here
	Blaenau Gwent	Sue Thorne		

	Cardiff YMCA	Jane Tucker	www.cardiffymcaha.co.uk	The Cardiff YMCA Housing Association is a charitable Housing Association and a Registered Social Landlord as registered with the Welsh Assembly Government. It directly manages board and lodge hostels in the Roath area of Cardiff. The hostels provide temporary accommodation for homeless people of both sexes, all ages and various backgrounds. The Association also provides support to all residents in their search for permanent accommodation as well as support for a range of other identified needs. The Association also manages smaller housing projects, details of which may be provided on request

	Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group		www.hafan.org	The Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group (SBASSG) is a grassroots community group run by asylum seekers, refugees and other local people, in and around the city of Swansea. The group was set-up in 2000, following the announcement of the Governments 'dispersal' policy/strategy.
	Polish Centre, Llanelli			The Polish Centre in Llanelli provides a crucial means of support for people forced into desperate situations because of exploitation by employment agencies. The centre has been developed around a credit union facility, owned and controlled by its own membership. The majority of the people who use the centre are migrant workers form Poland and a smaller number of Lithuanian

				workers. Most of these people work in and around Llanelli – In food production, private care homes and in shop work.
Wales				
	TUC	Barbara Hale / Sian Cartwright	www.tuc.org.uk	With member unions representing over six and a half million working people, we campaign for a fair deal at work and for social justice at home and abroad.
	Welsh Refugee Council	Gillian Lewis / Susan Jones	www.welshrefugeecouncil .org	Welsh Refugee Council is an independent charity that empowers refugees and asylum seekers to rebuild their lives in Wales. We provide advice, information and support for asylum seekers and

				refugees in four offices in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham
	Deudraeth Cyf	Keneuoe Morgan	www.deudraethcyf.co.uk	
	British Red Cross	Daniel Williams	www.redcross.org.uk	We are a volunteer-led humanitarian organisation that helps people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are. Find out more about how we help
	Somali Intergeneration Society	Hodane Abokor		
	The Parade ESOL	Helen Adams	http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2869,3067,3924&parent_directory_id=2865&id=2142&pagetype=&keyword=	The Parade ESOL Service (English for Speakers of Other Languages) , learn English at your level, learn English to help you understand your children's school, learn English to help you, through your pregnancy, learn English to help you live your life in the UK, learn English to help you

			get a job, learn English to go to college
	Somali Progressing Centres	Abdi Adan		
	BEN	Amina Ali		
	Voluntary Community Service	Amanda Blackwell / Gemma Davidson	www.volunteercardiff.co.uk	Voluntary Community Service, more often referred to as VCS, is the Volunteer Centre for the county of Cardiff. We are funded by Cardiff County Council, the Welsh Assembly Government's core funding for Volunteer Centres, Millennium Volunteers and the Russell Commission.

	OCN Wales	Christine Blewitt	www.ocnwales.org.uk/	Open College Network Wales supports learning and widens opportunity by recognising achievement through credit based courses and qualifications and works in partnership with colleges, universities, adult education centres, voluntary and community groups and employers
	ContinYou Cymru	Angela Bliszko	www.continyou.org.uk	ContinYou works across the UK and beyond and ContinYou Cymru is the dedicated team working in Wales to provide services and information that meet specific agendas and priorities.
	WAG	Andrew Clarke / Bethan Webb	wales.gov.uk	The Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for most of the issues of day-to-day concern to the people of Wales, including the economy, health, education, and local

				government.
	Open University	Eleri Chilcott	www3.open.ac.uk	The Open University (OU) is the United Kingdom's only university dedicated to distance learning
	Princes Trust	Jane Davies / Janet O'Toole	www.princes-trust.org.uk	Give practical and financial support, developing key workplace skills such as confidence and motivation. We work with 14 to 30-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law.
	Basic Skills Cymru	Annette Farr	www.basic-skills-wales.org	Our aim is to have a significant influence on the development of national, regional and local strategies to improve basic skills in both English and Welsh. More about the National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales.

	Estyn	Gill Downer / Lisa Thomas	www.estyn.gov.uk/	Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. We are an independent inspection service, led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales.
	Ufi Ltd	Emma Harvey	www.ufi.com	The creation of Ufi and the two strands of the learndirect service – learndirect Skills and Qualifications and learndirect Business - means the UK is now leading the world in online learning for individuals and the country's workforce. Through learndirect, Ufi has enabled millions of people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland to access learning and acquire new skills

	Women's Workshop	Sadie Hayes	www.womensworkshop.org.uk	The Women's Workshop is a well established centre that has been operating for the benefit of women since 1984. We provide a range of services that promote gender equality and aims to improve the lives and role of women in society. Services include training, consultancy and support to individual women, groups and organisations.
	Communities First	Hamid Hicham	http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/regeneration/communitiesfirst/?lang=en	Communities First is the Welsh Assembly Government's flagship programme to improve the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities across Wales.

	Dragon Arts & Learning	Carey Hill	www.dragonarts.co.uk	The Dragon Arts Centre provides free arts and training classes and opportunities to anyone who has experienced homelessness or social exclusion and who may have difficulty accessing mainstream education. We do this through a wide range of activities and events both on and off-site.
	Equalities Wales	Gareth Hughes	www.equalityhumanrights.com	The Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales champions equality and human rights for all, working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society

	HEFQW	Emma King	www.hefcw.ac.uk	The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) was established in May 1992 under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Our mission is to promote internationally excellent higher education in Wales, for the benefit of individuals, society and the economy, in Wales and more widely.
	Academi	Bob Mole	www.academi.org	The Academi is the Welsh National Literature Promotion Agency and Society for Authors. The Academi runs events, competitions (including the Cardiff International Poetry Competition), conferences, international exchanges, events for schools, lectures and festivals. Academi is also responsible for the National Poet of Wales project and the Encyclopaedia of Wales. The

				Academi works with the support of the Arts Council of Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. Academi is pleased to be the recipient of an Arts Council of Wales Beacon Company Award 2008 - 2010.
	WEA	Jane Murphy / Sian Thomason	www.wea.org.uk	The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is the UK's largest voluntary provider of adult education. Ever since it was founded in 1903, in order to support the educational needs of working men and women, the WEA has maintained its commitment to provide access to education and learning for adults from all backgrounds, and in particular those who have previously

				missed out on education.
	Refugee Voice Wales	Drazen Nozinic	www.refugeevoicewales.org	Refugee Voice Wales (RVW) is an umbrella organisation that represents Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) in Wales. The organisation was established to empower refugees and asylum seekers, creating a platform for the voices of these often vulnerable groups to be heard.
	WEFO	Chris O'Connell	www.wefo.wales.gov.uk	The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) is part of the Welsh Assembly Government and manages the delivery of the EU Structural Funds programmes in Wales

	Dry Solutions	Sue Poole		
	Educ8	Carley Pritchard	www.educ8training.co.uk	At Educ8, we are an organisation committed to delivering specialist training throughout Wales
	Barnados Neville Street	Sue Rees	www.barnardos.org.uk	Barnardo's Neville Street Service is situated in central Cardiff and provides a range of services for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families from BME communities.
	Ofcom	Karen Roberts	www.ofcom.org.uk	We are an independent organisation which regulates the UK's broadcasting, telecommunications and wireless communications sectors. We also set and enforce rules on fair competition between companies in these industries.
	Café Co-ordinator	Naomi Roberts		
	J H Training	Alison Saunders		

	Barry College	Haydn Scoging	www.barry.ac.uk	Barry College is a Further Education College, based in the Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales
	VALREC	Tara Sinclair		
	PCS Wales	Jayne Smith	www.pcs.org.uk	The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) is the fifth largest trade union in the UK, with over 300,000 members. We are organised throughout the civil service and government agencies, making us the UK's largest civil service trade union. We also organise widely in the private sector, usually in areas that have been privatised.

	RISE	Ann Williams	www.learnwithrise.com	learning network that works in partnership to encourage learners to have their say in the facilities and provision available to them. The RISE Partnership is made up of everyone involved in adult education and lifelong learning, across the five counties of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. A network of Learning Centres has been established and professionals work with learners to ensure that the Learners' Voice is at the very heart of RISE
	Tinopolis Interactive Ltd	Joel Williams	www.tinopolisinteractive.com	Tinopolis Interactive is part of the award-winning Tinopolis Plc group of companies. We build and deliver creative Learning and New Media solutions. Creativity, quality, reliability, and technical excellence

				are at the heart of everything we do.
	Race Equality First	Alisia Zelesinska and Marta Bzikot	www.refweb.org.uk	Race Equality First (REF) is an independent charity and a race equality council. We work in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to promote race equality. We offer a range of services including free confidential advice & support to victims of racial discrimination/racial harassment. We also offer advice, training and information relating to equalities and diversity. Our membership includes representatives of community groups, voluntary and statutory organisations and individuals