

# 1. Understanding ESOL support

What does this leaflet cover?

- What do we mean by the term 'ESOL'?
- Different levels in English skills
- Some key features of ESOL provision

This leaflet is the first in a series of five that aims to help managers in the health and social care sector who

## What do we mean by the term 'ESOL'?

- ESOL is short for English for Speakers of Other Languages.
- Since 2001 ESOL has formed one of the three main strands of the Government's national Skills for Life strategy. The other two strands are literacy and numeracy.
- ESOL learners might be migrant workers, asylum seekers or refugees, or they may have lived here with their families for many years but still need to improve their English.
- Many ESOL learners can read, write and speak several languages and may have achieved qualifications in their home countries leading to highly skilled jobs; others may not have learned to read and write in their own languages.

## English skills and qualification levels

ESOL programmes are delivered using the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. It has five levels which, like the Skills for Life frameworks for literacy and numeracy roughly match up to other qualifications in the schools and further education sectors.

Skills for Life qualifications	Vocational and academic equivalents	National Curriculum (schools)
Entry Level 1 Entry Level 2 Entry Level 3	No equivalent	Key Stage 1
Level 1	NVQ Level 1 GCSE grades D-G	Key Stage 2
Level 2	NVQ Level 2 GCSE grades A*-C	Key Stage 3/4

## What do the levels mean in terms of

At **Entry Level 1** employees should be able to understand simple English but the meaning should still be clear e.g.

*“ What time did you start work today? ”*  
*“ I start 8 o'clock. ”*

At **Entry Level 2** employees should be able to understand simple English e.g.

*“ I arrive from my country one year. My husband is a nurse seven years. Now I need to improve my English. ”*

At **Entry Level 3** employees should be able to understand simple English e.g.

*“ This is a great place to work, because the staff are friendly. He has had a more interesting life than most people I know. I used to be a teacher of history and he has travelled a lot. ”*

At **Level 1** employees should be able to use complex English e.g.

*“ I'm so sorry I'm late, but we had to call the doctor. The line was engaged. I do want to make up my mind, but I could do that. ”*

At **Level 2** employees should be able to express their views e.g.

*“ I wonder why Pawel hasn't got here yet. He's a good player. Why couldn't he give me a ring? What's he playing? ”*

to offer information and practical guidance to  
who wish to support staff with ESOL needs

## of speaking and listening skills?

to follow single step instructions and respond to simple questions. At the three Entry levels learners may make mistakes in their

“ What job do you do? ”

“ I’m kitchen assistant. ”

“ What kind of things do you do at work? ”

“ I am cooking the breakfast every day. ”

to follow short explanations and give information about themselves e.g.

*My husband was already here. He got a job at a nursing home. After that I came with our baby. I work also as a  
nurse in English and put an application for the NMC register.* ”

to give a short description e.g.

*The staff they are really friendly and helpful and especially I love caring for the residents. One man he is very nice.  
The people here and he can remember what he did a long time ago more better than that he did yesterday. He  
has been to Egypt many times.* ”

to use complex sentences to give a clear explanation or an apology e.g.

*I called the doctor during the night. My little girl had a fever and she was vomiting. I have been trying to call you  
at my hours if possible. Perhaps I can swap shifts with Elena tomorrow? She asked me last week if I* ”

to express their views with a confident use of idiomatic English and intonation e.g.

*He doesn't exactly live far away, does he? Elena has been hanging on for ages. I'll have to let her go soon.  
What's going on at? I really will have to have a word with him.* ”

# Some key features of ESOL programmes

- ESOL programmes are designed to respond to the learners' practical needs in everyday contexts.
- Community-based ESOL programmes often focus on the English skills that learners need to look for a job, go shopping, prepare meals, visit the doctor, deal with schools, use transport or perhaps become British citizens.
- Most workplace ESOL classes will focus on key communication tasks in health and social care e.g. how to read and update care plans, record observations, give reassurance, answer the telephone, give instructions, leave messages.
- Group and pair work is a key element of ESOL teaching. Tutors will be keen to use authentic materials and tasks to reflect the specific personal needs and work roles of the learners.
- If you ask a learning provider to deliver a workplace ESOL programme, they will therefore be keen to discuss the content of the course with you.
- Work-based ESOL programmes delivered by colleges and training providers are not automatically free. You will normally be expected to contribute to the cost of a course.

