

# Stepping-stones to a skilled workforce

Evaluation Report of ACER's Stepping-stones ESF Project  
by Synergis

April 2011



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“This project helped us to get more main stream as it enabled us to offer entry level programmes. It allowed us to expand what we were doing. Entry level support continues to be a need.”

Training Provider

### Acknowledgements

Synergis would like to thank staff at ACER, Steering Group members, sub-regional leads, training providers, employers and employees for their contributions to this evaluation study.

Written by Pauline Davidson, Barbara Mason and Harry Zutshi, Synergis.

# Foreword

by Projects Lead for ACER, Keith Middleton

The Stepping-stones project was funded under the East of England Learning and Skills Council's ESF Prospectus in November 2007. The objective of the specification was to fund entry level literacy, language and numeracy courses in the workplace. These would lead to recognised qualifications, thereby addressing a gap in Train to Gain funding. As a result of successful delivery, the target number of learner starts was extended from 2,726 to 3,300.

The project has been a great success. The Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER) has enabled providers to offer something different to employers and to learners. The slogan for the project was 'Make it meaningful to employers, providers and learners' and that was how ACER approached the management of the project. As part of the drive to support employers in understanding the benefits of the training to their businesses, ACER worked closely with a range of Sector Skills Councils. They have assisted the project in branding materials and shaping the delivery of programmes. Template marketing materials were produced by ACER for a range of sectors using the needs of the sector to promote underpinning skill development.

A range of support was available to the learning providers that ACER engaged for the project. This included one to one support visits, observations, regular workshops and development of exemplar materials. Materials were designed to both engage employers and learners. Learning providers have been given support funding to carry out organisational and training needs analyses. ACER has helped providers to address barriers to learner engagement; one to one and small group work was funded to enable providers to build learner confidence. Short taster courses were offered, ideal for the workplace, as an introduction to what could become a full programme. Learners were also engaged through incentives and subsidies.

Overall, the project exceeded its initial start targets by nearly 20%; it exceeded initial learner achievement targets by approximately 10%. ACER has worked with a delivery network of 45 providers, partners and a range of stakeholders. Key to the success of the project is the collaborative partnership that ACER has facilitated. ACER has encouraged the sharing of good practice, joint planning, collaboration in marketing and development of programmes.

ACER has also been able to provide additional support to providers delivering programmes through its other ESF projects: Skills for Life Professional Development and Regional Mathematics Centre. The professional development support has played a central role in helping providers ensure that delivery meets employers' and learners' needs. More recently, ACER has been able to target additional funding and support towards these and other skills for life providers in its capacity as East of England lead for Learning and Skills Improvement Service Support for Literacy, Language and Numeracy Programme.



Keith Middleton, Projects Lead, ACER

10th March 2011.

This report is an independent evaluation study, by Synergis, of the long-term project delivered by the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER) and its partners. The project has been funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and contract managed by the East of England Learning and Skills Council (which became the Skills Funding Agency during the life of the project). A steering group of stakeholder agencies, working with ACER, oversaw the strategic direction of the project. See Appendix 1 for the membership of the steering group.

“We have a more confident workforce and we can communicate so much better with them now; it is easier to manage them.”

Sue Williams,  
Health and Safety Manager,  
Top Flora

The Stepping-stones project started in summer 2008. It completed at the end of March 2011, following additional funding and an extension as a result of successful delivery. A group of ten county and sector based organisations, known as sub-regional leads (SRLs), were responsible for the day to day coordination of the training delivery. 45 training providers delivered literacy, language and numeracy training. See Appendix 1 for a list of providers and SRLs. ACER has been responsible for the strategic direction and delivery of the project.

At the heart of the project is the key aim to meet the numeracy and literacy skills gaps of the working adult population in the East of England Region. ACER and partners have used the Stepping-stones project to tackle these skills gaps in a strategic and operational way. They have developed an inclusive regional infrastructure to deliver training and qualifications to a targeted 2,276 (raised to 3,300) adult employed learners. This infrastructure is designed to be sustainable beyond the life of the project to ensure the skills gaps continue to close.

Another important facet to the project has been the focus on priority employment sectors, including:

- Community and voluntary
- Construction
- Engineering
- Food manufacturing
- Health and care
- Logistics
- Security

For the list of objectives and innovative activities planned for the project see [our website](#).

This evaluation has used a robust methodology including a data review; examination of feedback from 1,163 learners and 19 employers. In addition, Synergis has carried out primary research through 53 one to one interviews. These were conducted with a sample of all key parties involved in the project. The response from interviewees has been overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the projects.

# The need for English and maths skills

Two key drivers have influenced the Stepping-stones project:

- the ambitious national targets resulting from the Leitch Review of Skills, (Lord Leitch, 2006), requiring 95% of adults to achieve functional literacy and numeracy by 2020
- the level of English and maths skills in the East of England Region which was lower than the national average.

The national Skills for Life (SfL) survey for 2007 showed that in the region about 70% of adults, about 2.4 million individuals, were at or below level 1 for maths, with the majority classified at entry level. About 1.8 million individuals, just over 50% of the adult population in the East of England, were at or below level 1 for English.

Stepping-stones was designed as a response to the low skills levels and lack of funded pre-entry and entry level training for employed adults. It aimed to offer progression opportunities for learners, leading to higher level courses and qualifications.

Many of the sample of Stepping-stones providers and the steering group members we interviewed noted the big demand for entry level training and progression, particularly from migrant workers, but also employers:

“We have a long waiting list of ESOL learners. We deliver a lot of pre-entry training so it was good to have a provision which they could progress onto. It’s also good to have an accredited programme.”

**Kate Mumford,**

Project co-ordinator, Community Service Volunteers Training & Enterprise

The importance of English and maths skills in relation to industry standards and legislation was a key issue noted by providers and sector skills council representatives we interviewed:

“There is a big need for entry level training in the care sector. There is often an issue when providers are inspected as staff need to be able to communicate effectively with their clients.”

**Su Pointer,**

Business Development Manager, Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd

“In the food manufacturing industry there are a lot of workers with low levels of literacy and language. We want to get them working more as a team with supervisors and managers. We can then make sure they are meeting legislative requirements for health and safety.”

**Donald Northwood,**

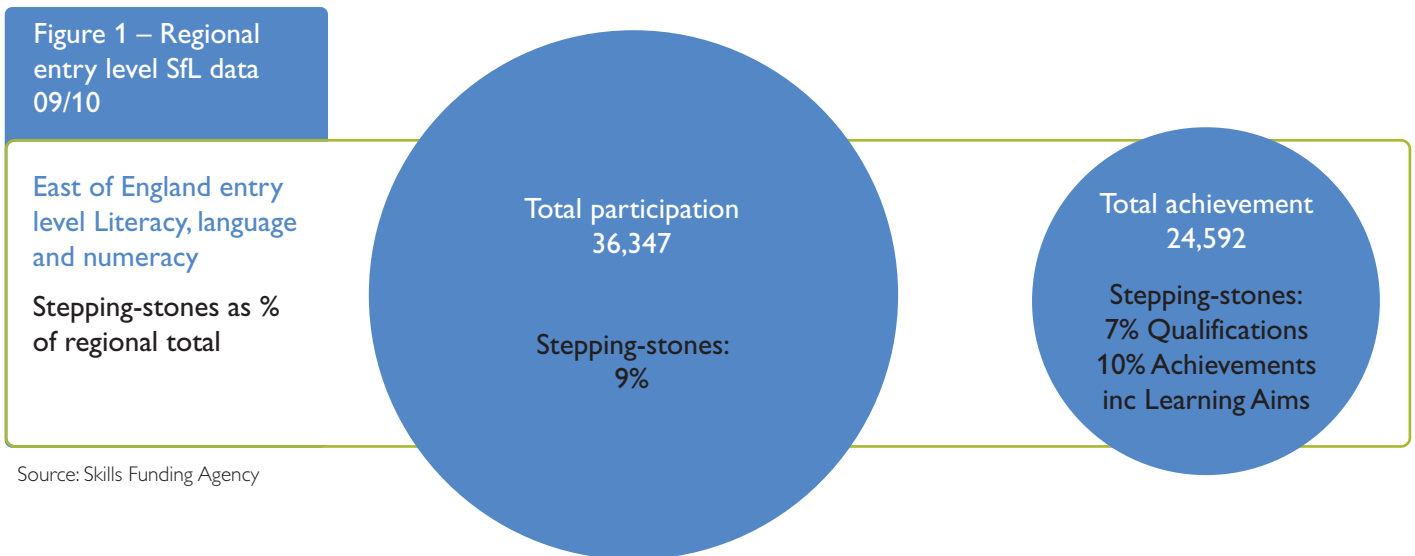
formerly Operations Manager, East of England at Improve, Food and Drink Sector Skills Council

# The success of Stepping-stones

There are impressive outputs relating to the project. By the end of March 2011, Stepping-stones had helped 3,313 people in the East of England Region gain new skills or a qualification. This represents over 100% of the revised target for starts of 3,300. The total of 1,835 qualifications achieved to date represents 78% of the qualifications target of 2,339. Targets were revised to respond to the successful delivery and demand for ongoing provision. Achievement figures are incomplete and will increase when provider final returns are submitted.

Table 1 – Stepping-stones output figures as at 03/11						
	Literacy		Language		Numeracy	Total
Participation	1,084		1,477		752	3,313
Achievements including learning aims	669		1,133		635	2,437
Qualifications achieved by level	E1	118	Unit	275	E1	46
	E2	114	E1	176	E2	52
	E3	301	E2	183	E3	429
			E3	141		
Total	533		775		527	

Using regional entry level SfL participation and achievement rates from partial 09/10 data, ACER can show that the Stepping-stones project has made a significant contribution to the East of England Region’s outputs, see Figure 1 below. These data are from the Statistical First Release and are subject to change.



ACER and partners successfully involved 866 employers from a wide range of sectors, including the following:

Agriculture	Hospitality
Community and voluntary sector	Leisure
Construction	Logistics
Education	Manufacturing
Engineering	Retail
Health and social care	Security
	Telecommunications

The most successful sector, in terms of starts, achievement of learning aims and qualifications, was health and social care. Other sectors which were also productive included food and drink, hospitality and manufacturing. Overall, there were 45 providers. 16 providers were particularly successful with over 100 starts each.

95% of the employers completing ACER's feedback forms rated the quality of contact with those arranging and delivering the training as 'good'.

In addition, learners rated highly the programmes they had attended. A telephone survey of learners showed that 95% rated the training they had received as 'good' or 'excellent' on a rating scale from 'poor' to 'excellent'. Drop-out rates were lower than the 20% anticipated by the LSC. The actual drop-out rate for those taking qualifications was 10%.

# ACER's delivery and support model

## 4.1 Sub-regional lead model

ACER developed an innovative delivery model for Stepping-stones. This was based on delivery and support through sub-regional leads (SRLs) with a mixture of geographical and sector specific remits. Each SRL took responsibility for a number of providers, as well as mostly being providers in their own right.

Six SRLs had a lead for each of the six counties. In addition, four SRLs led on the specific sectors of construction, community and voluntary, health and social care and employability. These sector-focused SRLs worked across the region.

Providers and SRLs interviewed commented on the effectiveness of the SRL model. Many strengths were highlighted:

- liaison, communication, networking and meetings with other providers
- standardised approach across a county or specialist area combined with local knowledge
- easier to manage across a smaller number of providers
- support with paperwork and administration is easier to manage with SRLs coordinating providers
- learning from good practice
- greater flexibility of approach
- support with engaging employers
- building on existing learning partnerships.

Generally, both providers and SRLs were positive about the SRL model. Providers praised the practical help they received with paperwork and administrative arrangements. They welcomed the networking opportunities and discussions of how to improve quality. Many were positive about close contact with their SRL and used the support for problem-solving, sorting out paperwork, referring learners and sharing employer leads. Good communication was key to the success of the SRL role. The role was particularly helpful to new providers.

“Our SRL at West Suffolk College was fantastic; I have worked with her before. I cannot sing her praises enough. She has worked as a tutor, so really understood problems we came up against. She was very good at giving advice about working with employers. We had formal meetings with other training providers which was good for networking and sharing information”.

**Lynn Cross,**  
Employment and Training  
Manager, Suffolk ACRE.

“We have a matrix which looks at quality, delivery, track record and staff qualifications. If providers did not meet all the criteria we worked with them to build capacity. For example, we worked with three community and voluntary sector providers and they contributed a lot to the project. We tried to bring on board a good spread of providers. This worked well as they had different information, ideas, and ways of working to share.”

**Vanda Bailey,**  
Project Manager, The Learning Partnership - Bedfordshire and Luton Ltd

## 4.2 Developing the sub-regional lead approach

Where providers were less positive about the model, they had wanted more cooperation with their SRL, or between the network of providers. Typical issues were:

- the SRL had too limited a focus, concentrating on administration and paperwork rather than wider issues
- sector-focused SRLs appeared to have less impact than geographically based SRLs
- some providers bypassed the SRL role and went straight to ACER with queries – this may have extended lines of communication and response rates, with queries going to ACER and then back to the SRL
- sometimes there was confusion between the SRL and ACER roles where providers worked on a number of different projects. It would be helpful to introduce a common paperwork system to reduce administration time
- it would help to have more standardisation of the individual learning plan (ILP).

There is also a need to develop the capacity of the VCS. The SRL for this sector, Community and Voluntary Forum East of England Region, reported that initially there were few VCS providers ready to deliver training. The SRL tried to work with providers to become accredited centres. However, they found that the project's focus on entry level learners in employment meant that providers needed to be already working with the LSC. In addition, providers found too few employees in companies and that it was not cost effective to deliver Stepping-stones. This is considered further in our recommendations and conclusions.

## 4.3 Professional development support for providers

ACER offered a range of professional support to providers in the planning and delivery of work related Skills for Life programmes. The support reflects ACER's quality improvement role. The aim is to develop the capacity of the learning and skills sector to deliver Sfl and introduce new providers into the network.

Support was focused on key areas of teaching and learning identified by providers themselves in an initial questionnaire and through ongoing quality development visits. These areas included:

- skills check and initial assessment resources
- how to draft ILPs and set learner targets
- Core Curriculum frameworks for literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- embedded delivery models
- differentiation strategies
- planning short courses
- marketing and engaging employers.

Following on from the workshops, support focused on collecting evidence of effective leadership and management of provision and teaching and learning via session observations.

“Monthly workshops were delivered to support providers; share good practice and resources. Providers who were new to work based learning got our support in how to engage employers.”  
Wendy Wilkinson,  
Project Manager,  
Stepping-stones

“The focus of all the support work is to improve provider quality. A critical aspect of the support is to be able to follow the workshops and build relationships with providers. There are opportunities for coaching, peer coaching and learning from what others are doing”.

Bob Read,  
Training Adviser, ACER

Exemplar materials were developed in partnership with practitioners to support providers. This led to the development of illustrative materials including: session plans, embedded schemes of work and an ILP.

ACER also supported the Health and Social Care Skills for Life (SfL) Practitioner Network. This met termly throughout the project. In the light of the high level of Stepping-stones project activity in this sector, the network was a valuable forum for the development of new short course formats and resources.

Stepping-stones had productive links with ACER's Skills for Life Professional Development and Regional Maths Centre ESF projects. These projects offered an extended range of accredited and non-accredited training opportunities for Skills for Life tutors. These projects were promoted at the monthly providers' workshops. Collaboration and partnerships have been a particular success of this project.

A number of the 15 training providers we interviewed used or adapted Stepping-stones exemplar materials. Others made use of their own resources that they had already developed, or used commercially and freely available paper-based, CD and online materials.

Several of the training providers interviewed had received a quality development visit from ACER. They all found the visit useful, citing opportunities to review paperwork; pass on good practice and find new ways to help learners who were not literate in their first language.

### ACER support makes a difference

A number of NACRO workers attended workshops. They accessed all the resources and got engaged early on. They shared ideas and modified ILPs in response to exemplars. They sent in schemes of work for comment. NACRO is now looking at using some e-learning linked to open source software. NACRO was able to borrow a flip video camera from ACER. It proved a valuable resource:

“This worked really well. I was able to go round the trainees' workplace taking photos, and then we discussed the photos in the training. It saved me having to take bundles of cards into the training, and it was more fun.”

Kate Nottidge, Skills for Life Trainer, NACRO

## 4.4 Areas for development

There were suggestions for further development of professional support:

- materials used as exemplars for professional development could be made available for other projects
- e-learning needs further exploration, such as making best use of blended learning approaches
- ACER could continue to provide a forum for sharing good practice and enabling access to exemplar learning materials through downloads
- the professional development model was very effective and could be built on for future projects so that good practice is not lost.

# Marketing to hard to reach communities

## 5.1 Marketing and promotion

A large proportion of the region's workforce comprises migrant workers and can be classed as hard to reach. In addition, the employers operating in these sectors require particular skill and flexibility from providers to engage them in training. Many employers are working to very low margins, with complex shift patterns for their staff and rely on low skilled or unskilled labour. This presented ACER and partners with a challenge in promoting the project.

The Stepping-stones project reached the targeted low paid, low skilled workers by using a range of approaches within an overarching strategy of 'make it meaningful to all parties'. There was collaboration with sector skills councils (SSCs) and other employer bodies to deliver a targeted message about support available through Stepping-stones. Agencies and other projects included:

- SkillsActive; Skills for Logistics; Skills for Care; Skills for Health
- Unionlearn
- Other ESF projects, including: professional development, brokerage, Advantage East, the Learning Champions project run by North Hertfordshire College and the Transqual Project managed by the Learning Partnership Bedfordshire & Luton
- New Deal projects.

"We used the flyers to target the workforce for our numeracy courses; the promotional material was helpful as it was clearly aimed at workers in different situations"

James Cronin,  
Skills Coordinator, Community  
Learnirect

### Sector collaboration

The project management team worked with Skills for Health who part-funded a health and social care manager's guide to 'Supporting your employees with ESOL needs'. This can be downloaded from [our website](#). The team also collaborated with Unionlearn to produce a general workforce flyer linked to adult learners' week.

ACER produced a range of promotional materials. The materials included postcards, flyers, employer focused leaflets and posters which training providers could adapt. Sector specific materials and guides were created for these sectors:

- cleaning
- construction
- health and social care
- logistics
- passenger transport
- playwork
- retail.

"The postcards were very good because they were easy to distribute at community events."

Kate Mumford,  
Project Co-ordinator CSV

Most of the training providers we interviewed had used the promotional materials, noting the postcards, flyers and posters and sector-targeted material as the most useful.

A small number of providers thought the literature would benefit from simplification and that providers could have been involved more in the development of materials.

“The impetus came from our Ofsted inspection. We didn’t have a formal literacy and numeracy programme, so we brought in North Hertfordshire College. We wanted something more measurable.”

Liz McCue,

Workshop Manager/Training Manager, Watford Workshop

A broker support package was developed to enable brokers to identify organisations and employees with entry level skills needs.

Employers we interviewed were asked how they had heard about the programme. Some approached colleges directly as they had identified their own training needs, whilst some had received direct marketing from the provider.

Sector specific information packs for employers were provided. “We had help in presenting the information to staff and it got them interested. It was very clear information without jargon.” Sue Williams, Health and Safety Manager, Top Flora.

12 of the 22 learners we interviewed had heard about the course from their employer, whilst the others had heard from a range of sources including providers, friends or colleagues. Most trainees were happy with the course information they received and did not require anything else. This was the case for 17 (77%) of the trainees we surveyed. However, the remainder would have liked some simpler information.

## 5.2 Incentives and tasters

### Incentives

A range of incentives and tasters were deployed to engage hard to reach communities. The incentives included:

- shopping vouchers
- reimbursement of travel and childcare costs
- wage subsidies
- completion awards.

Shopping vouchers were successfully used by a small number of providers and 91 learners accessed them. None of the employers we interviewed had used the incentives. Two noted that they had not needed an incentive as staff would have participated in the training anyway.

The learners we interviewed had not been in receipt of the incentives but were motivated to attend the training anyway. They had several reasons for attending the training. The majority (15) wanted to improve their English or maths. Many had particular skills they wanted to develop, such as speaking and listening, writing skills or their grammar.

“I wanted a better understanding of how equality and diversity affects people” Learner  
Eight of the training providers interviewed said they had not used the incentives offered. The reasons were local learners not requiring travel costs; extensive waiting lists or their organisation’s policy not supporting incentives. Those who did use the incentives had mixed experiences:

- two providers used vouchers successfully, Learning and Skills Solutions created one that linked the training to the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)
- three providers used vouchers but found they either made little difference or that the administration was too time-consuming.

“We use our own match-time system, the company will give an hour and the staff give an hour. The incentives for our staff are job progression, maybe from the warehouse floor to an office job.”

Cathal Killeavy,

Union Learning Rep (ULR),  
The Co-operative.

“We used the £20 voucher with Pratt’s Bananas to attract the people who were not attending the numeracy courses in favour of working overtime.”

Denise Meacham,

formerly Projects Manager,  
Barnfield College

### Incentive exemplar

One provider had a good solution to the incentive issue. Worknet consider there is sometimes no commitment from the employer or learner if the course is at no charge to them. They charge a bond which is the learner's commitment to complete the course. Learners are charged a small amount of £5-£15 which they get back when they achieve the outcomes. It may not necessarily be a certificated course but it will be payable on outcomes. Employers are charged bonds of up to £100.

“This approach has made such a difference, our overall success rate has risen from 45% to 92%,” says Alison Overington, Manager.

Providers made some suggestions for how incentives could make more impact in the future and these included having an allocated budget to purchase resources which linked to the subject, such as dictionaries or calculators. They also wanted to reward learners for achievement with vouchers.

“It would be a good idea to brand the freebies, such as calculators, and give them out on open days and recruitment drives.”

Jane Powling,

Senior Business Development Coordinator, West Suffolk College

### Tasters

Tasters were designed to be part of the strategy to engage hard to reach learners. Providers offered 38 short courses for 188 learners. These taster sessions were often in the form of half day workshops, and focused on vocational hooks for recruiting learners, such as:

- Writing Skills for Care
- Spell with Splendour
- Get Ready for your NVQ
- Maths for Medication
- Food Safety at Work.

Short duration, accessible, fun and related to work are all key facets of the Stepping-stones tasters which attracted workers into learning. Often, once they had experienced a taster they would then be persuaded to try a longer course.

### Tasters lead to success

Lowestoft College used tasters with Royal Mail employees to launch the company's Work Time Learning staff development programme. 22 staff members tried out literacy and numeracy activities which were embedded in IT training. The tasters led to a 12 week course and a 95% achievement rate for the learners.

This also benefited the providers as Wendy Wilkinson, Stepping-stones Project Manager explains, “tasters helped providers explore working with employers whilst receiving a small amount of funding. The next step was up to the provider; they would persuade learners to progress to a nine hour course or a longer programme leading to a qualification.”

### Tasters tailored to company’s needs

Tasters were also used to offer a stepping-stone to employment for workers facing redundancy. Eleven staff at Oakley Sunglasses were given a three-hour taster which incorporated CV writing, interview techniques and employability skills. Whilst the taster was short, the provider strove to offer the employees links with their own guidance officer and Jobcentre Plus to offer support beyond the training.

### 5.3 What worked well?

The training providers we interviewed summarised what worked well in terms of engaging hard to reach communities:

- offering progression from pre-entry to entry level
- flexible delivery in contexts suitable for migrant workers, eg cultural issues, CVs, citizenship
- taster courses engaged learners and employers
- contextualised courses and workplace delivery
- partnership working with other charities and agencies, such as Suffolk Refugee Forum, Genesis, the Probation Service and Jobcentre Plus.

### 5.4 Areas for development

There were few areas for development in terms of marketing and promotion, these included:

- review of marketing strategies and distribution of promotional materials since the comprehensive promotional material had not reached the employers we interviewed, indicating other approaches had been more effective
- adapt the incentives for future projects since those used on this project had not always met the needs identified by providers.

# Working with employers to meet their needs

## 6.1 A whole organisation approach

ACER's extensive track record of promoting a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life development was invaluable on this project. ACER described how this approach can work, in their recently published information pack: 'Supporting your employees with ESOL needs' developed for managers in the health and social care sector. This can be downloaded from [our website](#).

Figure 2 – Employee development cycle

Good communication skills at work are such a key element of an organisation's effectiveness that some employers have developed an overarching strategy that offers literacy, numeracy and ESOL support within all the key stages of the employee development cycle:



### Whole organisation approach in the care sector

Ana-Maria Tudorache, the Registered Manager at Barling Lodge, found the SfL training not only boosted the confidence of the staff but also helped them relate the skills to company-wide systems and documents. She and seven staff from a wide range of job roles, including line managers, senior carers and cleaners participated in entry level 2 and 3 Adult Literacy training.

The training by Universal Training UK has contributed to a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life by training staff at all levels as well as in a sister care home, also part of the company. Trainers helped the staff to link the training to their own jobs and company documents, such as accident reports and hand over notes.

Suffolk ACRE, a community and voluntary sector (CVS) provider, noted that the literacy training they had delivered to a charity, Genesis, helped the organisation write a person specification for new members of staff and volunteers. This demonstrates the wider impact that SfL development can have on organisations.

Another example of an organisation that uses Skills for Life across the whole organisation is The Co-operative. Cathal Killeavy, ULR, notes that the company already has lifelong learning centres at a number of their distribution depots. "We wanted to use our resources to link language and literacy training to the really important things at work, such as health and safety; communicating with your manager; filling in company documents," says Cathal.

# Working with employers to meet their needs

## 6.2 Skills for Life set in a work context

ACER worked with providers to deliver relevant and accessible training to a range of employers across the region. Learning materials, developed by ACER with the input of practitioners, enabled providers to improve their skills in delivering SfL learning embedded in vocational courses such as NVQs.

Many providers already had a good understanding of employers' needs and their business. North Hertfordshire College employed a dedicated SfL sales and workplace coordinator who liaised with employers and designed bespoke programmes to ensure their needs were met. Employers were encouraged to identify specific skills which were relevant to their workforce, such as report writing, metric conversions and reading charts.

A number of providers first of all carried out a training needs analysis (TNA) which was funded by the project. Poultec found that this helped them get to know the organisation, their policies and procedures. They were able to obtain copies of company paperwork to use in training sessions. 95% (18) of the 19 employers completing feedback forms said that their organisations' Skills for Life needs were discussed prior to the training. 100% of respondents said the course met the needs of their organisation.

Providers successfully contextualised learning to make it relevant to both employer and employees. They ran courses about writing care plans and communicating with clients, and used company paperwork and forms. Some providers linked training to citizenship which helped learners progress to citizenship courses.

Jane Powling, Senior Business Development Coordinator at West Suffolk College noted the success they had delivering contextualised training in high market hospitality. "The French staff at a hotel and restaurant were very knowledgeable about their work and products but needed a tailored course in customer service to help them communicate with customers. After the SfL course they were much friendlier to customers."

The majority of learners we interviewed noted that the training was contextualised to their job which demonstrates how well the training providers embedded the English and maths training.

"The training was about what we need to do in our jobs, for instance, how to write an accident report." Learner

"We learnt vocabulary for medication and illnesses which was relevant to our residents." Learner

## Working with employers to meet their needs

### ESOL at work qualification

One of ACER's objectives for the project was to pilot the ESOL at Work qualification. Peterborough Regional College have been successfully doing this with a group of 28 learners from four local companies: Daniels Group, Paperchase, Hotel Chocolat and RB Organics. This ESOL programme is shorter and more work-focused than traditional ESOL qualifications. It can help learners gain English skills in important workplace areas such as customer service and health and safety.

“Our tutors use company paperwork and language. They focus on topics like health and safety as most of our work for this certificate is in factories” notes Sarah Mitchell, Key Account Manager, Business Training Services at Peterborough Regional College.

The benefits of the training were promoted to employers, rather than selling it as standalone literacy or numeracy development. For example, Suffolk ACRE identified that developing the numeracy skills of volunteers at Easton Primary school would give staff the skills to support young children more effectively.

### 6.3 Flexible approaches to delivery

Flexible and accessible training was provided. Flexibilities included working with small groups of learners; accommodating shift patterns and tailoring course content. At The Co-operative the tutor delivered the training on site between 7.30 and 9.30 pm to accommodate shift patterns. Many learners interviewed commented positively about small group learning which facilitated discussion and enabled them to work at their own pace.

Providers adopted a blended approach to delivery. This included training in the workplace or training centre, home study, individual coaching and e-learning. One learner commented that she liked working at home as it gave her time to think.

Employers noted that the systems for keeping them informed about staff progress on training courses were good. Tutors conducted debriefings after training sessions and kept in contact by phone and email. Watford Workshop noted that “the tutor was a good communicator, very responsive and helpful.”

# Working with employers to meet their needs

## 6.4 Challenges of working with employers, and how these were overcome

Working with employers can present a range of challenges, from limited time for training to learner resistance and poor attendance. Here are some of the challenges that providers noted and the ways in which they overcame them:

- Training needed to be delivered at a time and place to suit employers and learners. Shift patterns were accommodated and training was offered on site. Lunchtime sessions proved popular with learners.
- Providers had to take account of long holidays taken by some migrant workers when they returned home. They also needed to work round seasonal peaks in trading such as Christmas at The Co-operative and Mothers' Day at Top Flora. They did this by offering short courses; splitting workers into different groups and offering one to one support.
- Some providers found it difficult to engage employers. More experienced providers were able to share information about how they did this.
- Group sizes needed to be viable. Small businesses networked to enable this.
- Short taster courses helped overcome learner and employer resistance to training.
- Regular communication between the employer and provider helped maintain attendance.

### Partnerships overcome challenges

A numeracy training course for manual workers at Superdrug and Pratt's Bananas which also led to an in-house ESOL certificate was successfully delivered as a result of partnership working. Liliya Brabbs, Project Worker at GMB Union noted: "the employers were unable to supply a training room and Barnfield College knew that the training was important for the workers' career prospects. So, we offered space at our GMB offices in Luton and twenty people got an in-house certificate."

Many training providers were enterprising in engaging with employers. Approaches they used included:

- being prepared to travel to other areas to link with employers
- hiring tutors with other languages, eg Portuguese, to liaise with learners
- partnership working with organisations, such as Mobile Europeans Taking Action, to access the migrant worker population
- offering a sliding scale to encourage employers to make a contribution to the courses
- networking with employers through the probation service and other agencies.

# The impact of Stepping-stones

## 7.1 Overview

There have been significant impacts as a result of the Stepping-stones project. The evaluation study has looked at the difference the project has made to:

- learners
- employers
- training provider organisations.

There are also wider, strategic and regional impacts. These impacts are part of the bigger picture of sustainability of the work that has been started with the project.

“The maths training was great for confidence building; it stopped learners feeling stupid and gave them the “I can do it” attitude. We trained parent volunteers and they are now more aware of modern maths teaching methods.”

Lynn Cross,  
Employment and Training  
Manager, Suffolk ACRE.

## 7.2 Impact on learners

We asked learners, training providers and employers about the impact Stepping-stones had on learners. The key impacts included:

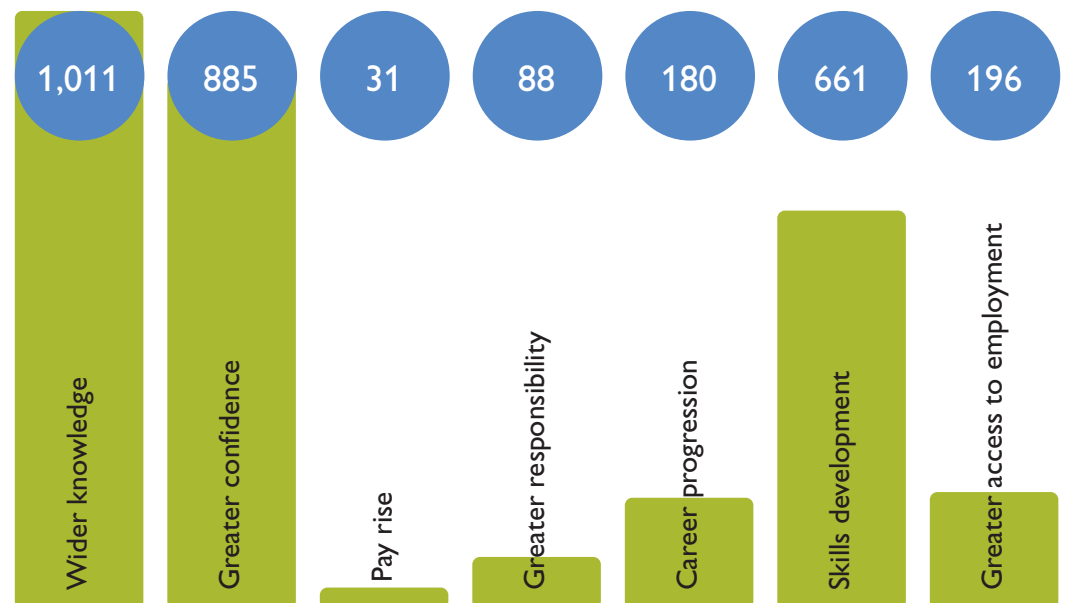
- higher levels of English and maths skills
- improved confidence
- progression to other training
- enhanced job prospects
- increased pay.

“The language skills helped me to get another job with Ocado.”

ESOL entry level 1 learner

The chart below shows the benefits of the training for the 1790 learners that completed ACER’s feedback forms. The three main benefits of the training, according to the learners, were wider knowledge, greater confidence and skills development.

Chart 1  
Benefits of training to learners



The majority (97%) of these respondents said they would recommend the course to a friend or colleague which demonstrates the potential reach of Stepping-stones. This is further evidenced by the fact that just over half of the learners (1,012) stated that they had further training needs that they wanted to talk about.

The learners we interviewed told us more about the skills and knowledge they had gained, they included:

- speaking and listening and writing skills
- numeracy skills for ICT
- job search abilities
- knowledge of the British culture
- ability to liaise with customers and service users
- better team working skills
- improved concentration.

#### Improved skills in the care sector

An ESOL entry level 3 learner, working in a residential care home, said “I can understand residents better and am more able to give them emotional support. I understand my work role better now as well. I am able to write better, understand better, and have better vocabulary with new words as well as improved grammar.”

This feedback was echoed by many learners we interviewed, most of whom wanted to improve their skills at work. Several learners talked about how improving their English had led to having deeper understanding of complex work issues, such as dementia awareness.

“My speaking has improved, I am normally shy and silent and now I can express my feelings and understand the residents, their accents and what they say.” Learner

There are also other outcomes for learners relating to increasing their motivation and ability to access further or higher training and education. This will have a longer-term impact on their career prospects and earning capabilities; a significant factor in achieving ESF project aims. Half of the 22 learners we interviewed cited a range of training courses they had already commenced since participating in Stepping-stones. This included NVQ level 2 and 3 in Care; ESOL and literacy training and a degree. The purpose of further training was to help them gain access to further or higher education; a work visa; promotion at work or a new job.

Some of these learners had already gone on to complete a range of other qualifications, including Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy at level 2 and a Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector course at level 3.

### Progression from Skills for Life to NVQ

Stepping-stones has helped 17 supervisors at May Gurney, a household waste recycling service provider for Norfolk County Council, progress from Adult Literacy and Numeracy entry level 1 and 2 qualifications to NVQ level 2 Waste Management Operations.

“Employees now feel empowered to write confidently as well as read and understand changes to legislation,” says Mark Allen, Norfolk County Council’s Waste Resource Manager. Wider impacts of the training include improved job prospects; greater earning potential and improved family learning “they can now help their children learn” adds Mark.

Promotion and job opportunities have been the impacts of Stepping-stones for some of the learners. Two of the 22 learners we interviewed had already got a new job in logistics and security, two of the targeted sectors.

### Stepping-stone to promotion

One of the learners successful in gaining a Certificate in Adult Literacy also got promotion to a new job as well. “I got a job seven weeks ago as a security dog handler. The Stepping-stones course helped me in my job as I have to do notebook writing. It helped to correct systematic mistakes I was making. It gave me confidence, it boosted me. I can go into anything new now, without feeling nervous.”

Case study material gathered by training providers showed other learners had also gained work as a result of the training. One learner had gained a job at a training provider, following work experience with them. Whilst one woman returner describes how she felt after gaining her first ever qualifications:

“I got a job offer and I’m now a full time care worker, going for my NVQ level 2. I am enjoying every minute of it. Brushing up my Skills for Life has prepared me for this. I feel good about work and it makes me want to do even better.” Learner.

Job progression had also been experienced by learners:

“My job has changed as I help the team leader more, now I’ve got my entry level 3 in numeracy and literacy I don’t just pick things from the warehouse.” Learner

The impacts that have resulted from learner engagement in Stepping-stones are further supported by the fact that 62% (1115) of the respondents to ACER’s learner feedback forms said they would not have done the course if it had not been funded.

### 7.3 Impact on employers

Impacts experienced by employers were wide ranging and included:

- employees able to work more independently
- raised standards in completion of paperwork eg forms, care plans and reports
- greater integration between migrant and British workers
- improved team working
- reduced absenteeism
- employees more responsive to change
- improved productivity and customer care.

Here is what some of the employers we interviewed said:

“Stepping-stones has helped us achieve a reduction in sickness which is a financial impact, people are more engaged in their jobs.”

**Cathal Killeavy,**

ULR, The Co-operative.

“I can trust the staff more to do accurate counting; so less supervision is required.”

**Liz McCue,**

Workshop Manager/Training Manager, Watford Workshop

“Written and spoken English has improved as a result of seven of the staff achieving the entry level 3 Adult Literacy. Staff have to complete a lot of records on a daily basis, such as reports about service users and medical records. They also have to administer medication; liaise with residents and staff and external agencies such as GPs and social workers. They now have more understanding and confidence.”

**Laura Binge,**

Manager, Aisling Lodge

#### Improved productivity

A tailored ESOL and numeracy course was designed for BR Pharma, a pharmaceutical company, by Worknet. “It was very important for them to be able to read the labels on packaging and also weigh and count contents required for each package” said Alison Overington, Manager at Worknet. The impact on the company included an improvement in productivity and there was a marked improvement in absenteeism.

**Table 2**  
Impact on businesses

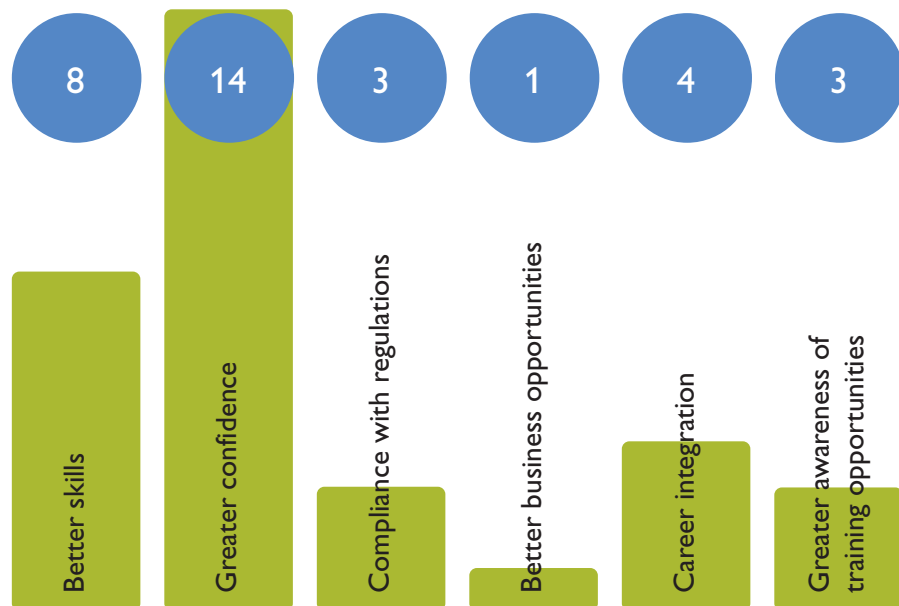
Case study material gathered by providers for ACER offer good evidence about impacts on businesses, a selection of this feedback is summarised in the table below.

Training undertaken by organisation	Impact
19 Royal Mail staff achieved level 1 and 2 Adult Literacy and Numeracy awards	Staff are more confident and can deal with changes to their job roles and handle new technology
4 staff at BUPA improved their measuring, weighing and writing skills	Improvement in quality of work Increased levels of confidence
16 learners at Sainsbury's Distribution Centre improved their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills	Some have been promoted within the company, saving on recruitment costs and contributing to the workforce development plan
Fenland District Council trained 27 staff in their Environmental Services section in Adult Literacy	Improved productivity has resulted from better written English skills and increased motivation
Witnesham Nursing Home accessed the embedded ESOL course for 13 staff working as carers	Enhanced care is being provided to residents as a result of improved confidence and communication skills
Stevenage Borough Council used Learning Reps to identify staff needing to improve literacy and numeracy skills	Improved services are resulting from better communication and team working
Hertfordshire County Council had a bespoke ESOL course for 30 workers in care homes	Raised quality of care plans, report writing and social skills with residents

A number of providers have tailored Stepping-stones courses to form part of redundancy packages. For example, 12 learners at Boots Distribution Centre improved their numeracy, literacy and ESOL skills as part of such a programme. This demonstrates a further impact the project has had in providing valuable support in preparation for job applications. Employees may be less likely to be workless as a result of improving their skills through the project and may find it easier to get another job.

89% (17) of the 19 employers responding to ACER's feedback form said the training had a beneficial effect on their organisation. The two key benefits were greater confidence and better skills, see chart 2 below.

**Chart 2**  
Benefits of the training to employees and companies



The majority (68%) (13) of the respondents said they would increase their training as a result of the experience, with 42% (8) having identified training needs they wanted to discuss. 79% (15) also considered it had resulted in better links between their company and training providers. 58% (11) of employers also said that without the funding they would not have asked their employees to attend the course.

Whilst this is a small sample, it is a clear indication that, as shown above with learners, Stepping-stones has acted as a catalyst on the region's employers, engaging them in training now and in the future. Stepping-stones has had a positive and sustainable impact on training and development within the region's businesses.

"We are traditionally known as a crime reduction charity and Stepping-stones expanded our portfolio of projects."

**Balwinder Gill,**  
Area Manager,  
NACRO East Anglia

"It had a tremendous impact because of the funding, we were able to continue to offer training to employers. We have also employed an additional ESOL tutor because of this project."

**Rachel Öner,**  
Skills for Life Programme  
Manager, Poultec

## 7.4 Impact on training providers

Training providers that we interviewed commented on the positive impacts Stepping-stones had on their own organisations. These included:

- increased markets by enabling providers to deliver work based learning as well as their existing centre-based or e-learning portfolio
- helping providers develop and deliver accredited courses
- enabling them to offer higher level courses as progression
- widening access to pre-entry level learners
- improved staff skills
- creation of new jobs
- raising organisations' profiles
- networking with other providers.

There is scope for the collection of quantitative impact evidence by providers and partners on future projects and this is discussed further in the conclusions to this report.

## 7.5 Regional impacts

The project has clearly made a contribution to the Leitch targets with 1,308 individuals gaining literacy and language qualifications and 527 gaining numeracy qualifications. In addition 45 providers have engaged in the project, developing systems, resources and staff skills for SfL delivery. This supports the infrastructure required to meet the Leitch targets. Regional data shows that the East of England Region is now above the national average in terms of:

- SfL participation
- SfL qualifications achieved by learners.

Data made available by the Skills Funding Agency demonstrates significant growth in Skills for Life activity and achievement in the region, see table 3 on the next page. The data also indicates that the region is above the national average for growth for 08/09. Complete data for 09/10 is not yet available.

Table 3 East of England Skills for Life activity and achievement

		06/07	07/08	% growth from previous year	08/09	% growth from previous year
Participation	National	1,922,248	1,919,429	-0.1%	2,154,850	12.3%
	Regional EofE	134,915	129,219	-4.2%	175,204	35.6%
Achievement	National	1,162,587	1,130,298	-2.8%	1,325,742	17.3%
	Regional EofE	80,050	79,797	-0.3%	104,762	31.3%

Source: Skills Funding Agency,  
East of England Region

Further, detailed information made available by the Skills Funding Agency for the region shows that there has been an impressive 40% growth in the participation in numeracy in the years 07/08 – 08/09. There has been a further 31% increase in participation from 08/09 to date with a likely higher growth once final data is available.

Overall, there is evidence that Stepping-stones has made considerable impact on individuals' lives; companies' productivity; training providers' systems and staff skills. There is also measurable output which contributes towards the regional SfL targets.

# Conclusions and lessons learnt

## 8.1 Meeting targets and objectives

The evaluation study has demonstrated that the Stepping-stones project has been well managed by ACER. Together, with the high quality delivery by partners, this expert support by ACER has ensured the project has met its overall aim to deliver SfL learning and assessment, from pre-entry to entry level 3 to employed learners.

There are strong indications that the project is on course to meet its revised targets. To date 3,313 learner starts have been achieved with 2,437 individuals achieving their learning aim and 1,835 achieving qualifications. There is evidence of continued demand for entry level provision and ESOL support.

The project has been successful in meeting all of the specific objectives that were set. The following have been fully met:

- Partnership working with key stakeholders, priority sector employers and other networks.
- Work with learning provider county-based networks to commission learning programmes.
- Development of materials to promote benefits of SfL to employers and learners.
- Link this project to other complementary projects, offering employability skills, mentoring/learning champion development (approx 200 employees) and engaging learners in ICT provision.

The following have been met with some changes or adaptations made to the original objective in order to respond to regional and local requirements:

- Provision of support to the voluntary and community sector leading to increased delivery of SfL learning. Support was available to all providers; however the planned VCS SRL was unable to flourish for reasons considered above. Overall, VCS providers did participate in the project and were able to deliver SfL learning.
- Provide effective information, advice and guidance (IAG) support to increase numbers accessing and achieving national qualifications, eg NVQs, apprenticeships and improve vocational programme recruitment rates. IAG support was made available to learners, however data has not been available to confirm the increase in recruitment rates to vocational programmes, see recommendations below.
- Pilot new ESOL at Work qualification with Unionlearn. This qualification is being piloted at the time of writing by Peterborough Regional College, with successful employer engagement as has been noted above.

## 8.2 Success factors

There are a number of factors that led to the success of Stepping-stones:

- good project leadership, co-ordination and monitoring by ACER
- professional support from ACER for providers to improve quality of delivery
- co-ordinating role of the SRLs
- effective communication between ACER, the SRLs and the providers

- successful targeting of specific sectors such as social care and food manufacturing
- strong partnerships with sector skills councils and other stakeholders
- flexibility of delivery
- close links to employers and the workplace
- creating networking opportunities
- enthusiasm and commitment of stakeholders
- progression opportunities for learners.

### 8.3 Contribution to regional targets

The project has clearly made a contribution to the Leitch targets with 1,308 individuals gaining literacy and language qualifications and 527 gaining numeracy qualifications. In addition 45 providers have engaged in the project, developing systems, resources and staff skills for SfL delivery. This supports the infrastructure required to meet the Leitch targets.

### 8.4 Partnership working

The partnership model developed by ACER has been impressive and there are very active networks of providers. There has been positive engagement by the voluntary and community sector and significant collaborative work with national bodies, eg sector skills councils and Unionlearn, producing tangible results.

ACER's role as a project manager is highly valued and staff expertise was widely praised. ACER's professional development support was comprehensive and well-received. It was not always needed by more experienced providers but helpful for those developing their services and skills. The Training Adviser support offered by ACER was commented on very positively by many providers. Providers made a range of suggestions for continued support: materials; topics and a provider forum.

The benefits of the sub-regional lead role were widely recognised and the objective to work with county-based networks was met. It was noted that the model can be less successful when combined with a sector focus. SRLs seem to work best when focused on a county. The added sector focus may require too wide a coverage.

Two potential drawbacks to the SRL model are the possibility of a conflict of interest where providers have the dual role of SRL and training provider on the same project. There is also the potential for duplication of handling the paperwork in the existing model. There appears to be a need to streamline the paperwork and tie it in more closely with other projects. In addition, it is noted that there were requests to simplify the documentation for ESOL learners.

Overall, we conclude that the SRL model plays an important role in project management and delivery. Whilst it may require some further development to make the role more strategic and less administrative, it is clearly a model that can be adopted for future projects.

### 8.5 Engaging employers

An impressive 866 companies participated in Stepping-stones. The project met its target of working with the five priority sectors and particularly had success with care and food manufacturing. The sectors of construction, logistics and security were also engaged. Sector packs were developed for seven different sectors, including the care and health; cleaning and warehousing sectors. A range of flyers and posters were developed for the other focus sectors.

Training providers worked hard to overcome the challenges of delivering courses to employers. In addition, providers for whom work based learning was a new market have developed systems and staff skills to continue delivering to this market.

The objective of working with the community and voluntary sector through an SRL is still developing. The project has successfully laid the foundations for the infrastructure required by this type of project.

### 8.6 Marketing and engaging hard to reach communities

ACER had a comprehensive marketing strategy for the project which included a range of promotional materials, partnership, networking and offering tasters to learners. Providers and SRLs rated the marketing strategy and promotional materials highly, including the postcards, flyers and posters.

The demand for the training available through Stepping-stones was significant and many providers reported they had not needed to promote the courses. Many learners were recruited through word of mouth. In addition, employers had often identified their skills needs and were proactive in contacting colleges and training providers. This indicates that as well as responding to demand, there may also be a need for a more collaborative approach to marketing which utilises the existing provider and employer networks and sub-regions.

Incentives were designed to promote access to the Stepping-stones offer however they were under-utilised and proved to be difficult for some providers to administer. Providers preferred to reward success or buy resources for collective use. One provider demonstrated a successful 'bond' approach.

Stepping-stones clearly succeeded in recruiting and retaining the targeted low skill and low pay employees. The drop-out rate of learners was lower than anticipated and there were high satisfaction ratings from learners.

Whilst the project did not allow funding of more than one course per beneficiary, providers were able to refer learners to other programmes or funding streams. It is encouraging that some employers and learners wanted a more structured approach to progression and referral.

There continues to be a demand for the level of training offered by Stepping-stones, particularly for literacy and ESOL courses.

## 8.7 Theories into practice

Where groups of employees participated in training there was added value in terms of contribution to a whole organisation approach, eg in care homes and at The Co-operative. There were good examples of providers introducing employers to the whole organisation approach in a way that was accessible to them. This was also supported by ACER with production of the health and social care 'Supporting your employees with ESOL needs' pack.

Providers showed good practice in linking SfL to equality and diversity or health and safety to assist embedding practices. There was significant evidence that the programmes were contextualised to the workplace.

Initial assessment was widely delivered; a small proportion of learners interviewed had not received initial assessment. It is possible, however, that learners were not aware they had received this service; there may be a need to make it more explicit, particularly with ESOL learners.

Overall, providers demonstrated that they were flexible with their delivery models and learners were given the full range of opportunities to learn at work; at college; at home; using blended learning; in groups and one to one.

## 8.8 Impact

There is a wide range of positive impacts from the project on individuals in addition to improved skills and the achievement of qualifications. Feedback demonstrates raised confidence leading to improved productivity; development of job roles, progression to other learning; better jobs and pay.

Impressive impacts have been recorded by some participating employers, including reduction of absenteeism and increased motivation and productivity of employees. However, the gathering of data relating to the impact of the training could be improved. A number of case studies have been produced by providers, with employer contributions, yet many lack significant detail about the outcomes or impact of the training. In addition, there is a lack of baseline data against which to measure impact.

Training providers have noted significant impacts on their organisations, including development of new markets, products and progression routes; raised staff skills and income. This has helped meet the aim of capacity building. Again, more systematic gathering of impact evidence would benefit future projects in demonstrating impact.

The Stepping-stones project has clearly made a contribution to the Leitch targets with 1,835 individuals achieving SfL qualifications. Regional data shows that the East of England Region is now ahead in terms of percentage growth from 07/08 to 08/09 in terms of SfL participation.

In some areas, such as contribution to the recruitment to vocational qualifications' programmes, it has not been possible to show impact. Providers have not been required to gather data which could demonstrate this. We make recommendations about this.

The recommendations that follow are designed by Synergis for ACER, member organisations and strategic bodies with which ACER works.

It is recommended that:

- 1 ACER and members continue to develop partnerships and collaborative working; there is a clearly stated need and providers are willing to engage in networks even if project funding is not available.
- 2 ACER continues to offer professional development for providers, including topics such as e-learning.
- 3 ACER strengthens the SRL role to make it more strategic.
- 4 ACER reviews how business sectors can be engaged at county level; if there is a gap in provision at county level SRLs may need specialist support to generate the provision necessary for projects.
- 5 Future projects establish the minimum baseline data required. This can be used to track progress during the lifetime of significant projects to establish the impact in terms of recruitment to vocational programmes; outputs in relation to regional targets etc.
- 6 Future projects systematically measure the impact on employers and ACER considers offering provider development workshops or developing a guide on evaluation to support this.
- 7 ACER and providers continue to develop a collaborative approach to marketing to employers, engaging both SRLs and providers in the process.
- 8 ACER, members and stakeholders continue to promote the messages about embedding and whole organisation approach, using employer case studies to demonstrate the benefits.
- 9 ACER reviews documentation for projects such as these and considers how it can be streamlined further; dovetailing with other funding streams' documentation where possible.

- 10 ACER considers using incentives on future programmes that link to the topic, eg calculators and dictionaries or focus incentives on outcomes.
- 11 ACER considers improvements to the template it gives to providers for case studies, to assist in more systematic data gathering which records the impact of training. A number of exemplars could be made available to providers.
- 12 Voluntary and community sector representatives and ACER review the scope or developing targeted SfL provision to this sector and produce a strategy for developing the infrastructure required.
- 13 Sector skills councils, Unionlearn and other key agencies involved with the Stepping-stones project assist in the dissemination of the key messages from the project to their sectors; possibly rebranding the synopsis leaflet for wider online distribution.
- 14 ACER, providers, Sector skills councils, Unionlearn and other key agencies involved with the Stepping-stones project assist in the dissemination of the good practice from the project to their sectors and a wider audience, including AOC and ALP.
- 15 ACER and partners seek other funding streams to continue offering entry level SfL and ESOL training and support to meet the regional demand.
- 16 Literacy Language and numeracy support at entry level should continue to be a priority for all providers and key stakeholders; this support is an important foundation, from which learners can progress onto vocational pathways.
- 17 Providers and stakeholders to further develop the pathways for learners to progress from entry level literacy, language and numeracy learning, via level 1 key skills, to an apprenticeship programme.
- 18 The Skills Funding Agency continues to fund developmental activity for Skills for Life in the region.

# Appendix 1

## Steering Group Members

ACER	Mark Barnsley	Regional Projects Manager – SfL Professional Development and Regional Maths Centre
ACER	Rob Shaw	Numeracy Specialist Adviser
ACER	Keith Middleton	Projects Lead
Consultant	Andrea Mearing	Steering Group Chair
Consultant	Wendy Wilkinson	Project Manager – Stepping-stones
Asset Skills	Sharon Simpson	National SfL lead for SSCs
Beds and Luton Partnership Trust	Steve Ferris	SRL/link with other ESF projects
CfBT	Denise Montague	QIA SfL improvement programme
COVER-East	Jan Cunningham Andrew Cogan	SRL/Voluntary & Community sector
EECETT	Rob Fiddy	Manager, EECETT
EEDA	Jenny Newbury	Regional economic strategy
Exemplas	Bryn Roberts	ESF Brokerage
Go-EAST	Claire Nicholson-Clinch	SfL Regional Partnership
Job CentrePlus	Stuart Durrell	Job CentrePlus and its SfL & Employability programme providers
LSC	Pam Adams	SfL Train to Gain
LSC	Lorraine Tonks	OLASS
LSC East of England region	Helen Mann	Regional LSC SfL lead
Move On	Anna Poulton	Entry level provision
National Skills Academy	John Brierley	Financial Services
NCETM	Joan Ashley	Adviser – Regional Maths Centre
NIACE	Sue O’Gorman	ACL/Family learning
Norfolk County Council	Andy Edmonds	Local Education Authorities
Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Regional)	Hazel Courtley	Renaissance Project - Museums
NRDC	Alison Wedgbury	National research – SfL/Teacher Education
SkillsActive Playwork East Region	Hanna Boyce	Playwork Engagement Manager
Skills for Logistics	Daryl Keyworth	Regional Manager
Tribal CTAD	Jim Pateman	Director – Policy Adviser
Unionlearn	Mick Hadgraft	Union learning engagement

# Appendix 1 cont.

## Sub-regional lead organisations

The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton  
City College Norwich  
COVER  
Harlow College  
Learning and Skills Solutions  
NACRO  
Norfolk & Suffolk Care Support Ltd  
North Hertfordshire College  
Peterborough Regional College  
West Suffolk College

## Training providers

A4E	Huntingdonshire Regional College
ABA Training	Learning and Skills Solutions
Augusta Partnership Training Ltd	NACRO Huntingdon
AZTAK	NACRO Ipswich
Barnfield	NACRO Luton
Basic Skills Consultancy	NACRO Peterborough
Bedford College	NACRO Wisbech
Cambridge Regional College	NCC Skills Ltd
Cambridgeshire Training & Consultancy Ltd	Norfolk County Council
Cambridge Women's Resource Centre	North Hertfordshire College
Cameo Network Services	Peterborough Regional College
City College Norwich	Poultec
City College Peterborough	Q Training
College of West Anglia	Qube Learning
Community Learndirect	South Essex College
Computer Gym	Suffolk ACRE
CSV Media	T&L Training
Energize	Universal Training
F1 Training	WEA
Great Yarmouth Community Trust	West Herts College
Harlow College	West Suffolk College
Hertford Regional College	YMCA Training
Hertsmere Worknet	

## References

[Leitch Review of Skills](#): Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills, HM Treasury, 2006

The Skills for Life Workforce in England: Summary Report, LLUK, July 2007

## How to contact ACER

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Some of the materials that have been cited in this report and created for the project can be found on our website.

## ACER membership

ACER is an organisation run on behalf of its members in order to achieve the charitable aim of improving learning and skills in the FE sector.

ACER's membership services include:

- Networks and forums
- Professional development services
- Projects, East of England Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training and research
- Representation
- Consultancy services
- Advice, guidance and support

## Useful links

Food & Drink SSC

[www.improveltd.co.uk](http://www.improveltd.co.uk)

NIACE

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

Skills for Care SSC

[www.skillsforcare.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

Skills for Health SSC

[www.skillsforhealth.org.uk](http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk)

Skills for Logistics SSC

[www.skillsforlogistics.org](http://www.skillsforlogistics.org)

Synergis

[www.synergis.co](http://www.synergis.co)

Unionlearn

[www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)



European Union  
European Social Fund  
Investing in jobs and skills

Skills  
Funding  
Agency

