

AGENDA ITEM 5 - A New Approach to English for Speakers of Other Languages

(http://www.dius.gov.uk/skills/skills_for_life/esol)

Report and Recommendations from Ellen Quaye, West London Learning & Skills Council

As one of the designated Pathfinder Local Authorities, the paper outlines the proposed work plan for Hounslow, and recommends that Hounslow Together members provide the strategic direction and agree reporting lines for this high profile government activity.

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Hounslow Together:

- 1.1 Endorse the proposed Steering Group members and identify a local authority officer to act as the strategic lead for the activity;
- 1.2 Consider and agree the proposed reporting lines for the Hounslow LA Pathfinder;
- 1.3 Provide the strategic direction for this pathfinder and the New Approach, as well as ensuring synergy between this activity, the Migrant Impact Fund and the LAA targets.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (now known as Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, DBIS) published their response to the ESOL consultation – ‘A New Approach to English for Speakers of Other Languages’ – in May 2009. The document sets out the Government’s proposed approach to planning and delivering provision for people with ESOL needs in order to acquire the necessary language skills to support community cohesion. It places the responsibility on Local Authorities, working with a range of partners, to identify (and meet the needs of) the most vulnerable people in their area who need to improve their English skills.
- 2.2 A number of Local Authorities have been identified as ‘Pathfinders’ who will implement the new approach and provide best practice/case studies to support national roll out. There Pathfinders in London are – London Boroughs of **Hounslow**, Ealing, Camden, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth, Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

3.0 KEY POINTS

3.1 Aims of the New Approach

- a. To ensure that planning and delivery of ESOL supports integration and community cohesion in local areas.

- b. To facilitate access to learning for those suffering social exclusion and poverty.
- c. To shift the balance of provision and resources towards locally identified priority learner groups.
- d. To allow Local Authorities to have more say over who has priority for government funded ESOL provision and where provision ought to be targeted.
- e. Key Characteristics of Priority Individuals/Groups:
 - *Have poor or no English language skills;*
 - *Are isolated/excluded from, and not connecting with communities outside of their own;*
 - *Are currently not accessing or are under-represented in learning provision, or are not progressing in their learning;*
 - *Those seeking to meet the Language and knowledge requirements citizenship;*
 - *Those who have been granted refugee status.*

3.2 Funding

- a. The new approach seeks to bring together all funding (LSC, LA, and other local sources of funding) to produce a co-ordinated approach to funding services and provision.
- b. There is no additional funding available for the implementation of the new approach. The LSC will remain responsible for allocating the current ESOL.
- c. Need to prioritise public funds to allow those who can afford to pay to make a contribution and support those most in need and who show a commitment to adapting to life in the UK.

3.3 Role of Local Authority

- a. Bring key local partners together (the LSC providers, Job Centre Plus, PCT, voluntary and community organisations and other members of local strategic partnerships) to identify currently excluded groups.
- b. Share all relevant information on priority groups and local authority funded services that could be reshaped to meet their needs.
- c. Work with local ESOL providers and the LSC to agree how to drive up demand among these priority groups and what changes could be made to provision to meet their needs.
- d. Ensure that all appropriate funding streams that can address the needs of the identified priority groups are considered and mobilised.

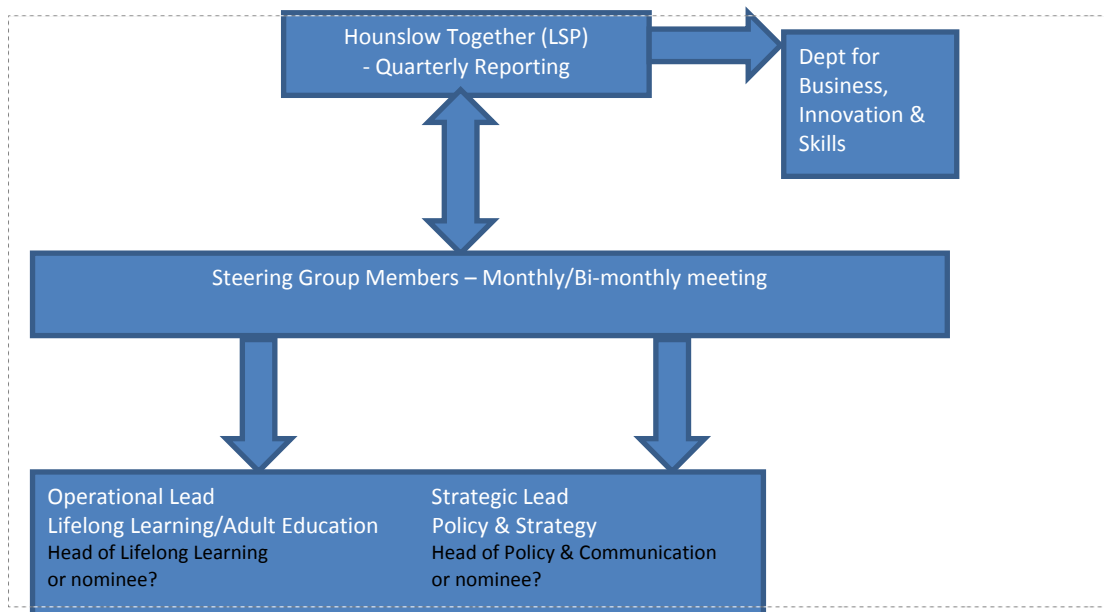
4.0 PATHFINDER STEERING GROUP & REPORTING

- 4.1 To take forward this important piece of work, a Hounslow Pathfinder Steering Group with the following agency membership is proposed:
 - West Thames College
 - Hounslow Adult Education Service
 - Richmond Adult and Community College
 - Hounslow LA Officers (Extended Schools & Children's Centres AND Policy and Strategy)
 - Learning & Skills Council
 - Hounslow Primary Care Trust
 - Job Centre Plus
 - CVS Hounslow
 - Hounslow Racial Equality Council

- Hounslow Homes
- Greater London Enterprise (Provider delivering ESOL for work programme in Hounslow)

4.2 Quarterly updates of progress towards action plan will be presented Hounslow Together Partner meetings.

Hounslow ESOL Pathfinder – Reporting Lines



5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 a. Gather data from different sources to inform rationale for prioritisation.
- b. Initial Steering Group member meeting to be held on either 8th (AM) or 13th (PM) October to share data.
- c. To collate ESOL data which can be used to ESOL needs to Hounslow LAA targets.

Ellen Quaye
West London Learning & Skills Council
September 2009

Ellen.Quaye@lsc.gov.uk