

Good Practice in Working with Volunteers in ESOL



A framework
2020





Anna is studying English.
Is Anna studying English?
Anna has a red hat.
Does Anna have a red hat?
She will be here soon.
Will she be here soon?
Can you eat it?

"My tutor has helped me very much for three years because she explained everything to me that I do not know. She is very helpful and is a great tutor – I don't know how my English would be without her."

– Learner, Fife

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"I enjoy teaching and meeting people from different cultures speaking different languages. I know what it is like to live in a country having little or no knowledge of the language with very few people, including colleagues, willing to help."

– Volunteer tutor

Introduction

Volunteers in ESOL

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to supporting adults to learn English, or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) in Scotland. Volunteers offer thousands of hours each week to aid English language learning for adults, in a variety of roles and settings, within organisations or independently.

Volunteers are enthusiastic about their rewarding roles and the difference they are making to learners. Some volunteers are highly skilled in teaching English and many bring additional skills and experiences to their role, but all have a shared motivation of helping people to learn English so that they can settle into life in Scotland.

The Framework for Good Practice in Working with Volunteers in ESOL aims to be a source of advice and guidance for organisations involving volunteers in their ESOL delivery. It aims to support organisations to reflect on how they work, ensuring a positive experience for volunteers and meaningful progression for learners. It invites organisations to connect with others and share their practice.

ESOL is taught in Further Education colleges, local authority Community Learning and Development (CLD) teams, third sector organisations, in grassroots and religious organisations, as well as by individuals. Welcoming Our Learners – Scotland's ESOL Strategy (2015-2020) sets out Scotland's vision for how Scotland aims to offer the opportunity to adults to learn English. ESOL learners in Scotland come from a range of backgrounds, including settled communities,

refugees and economic migrants. They bring with them many languages and skills but may also face barriers to learning because of current or previous life circumstances, including low income, caring responsibilities, poor mental or physical health, trauma or disadvantage due to educational background, racism, protected characteristics or immigration status.

Each learner's experience will be different, and ESOL teaching in Scotland takes into account these diverse needs. Involving volunteers in ESOL delivery can help meet the varied needs learners have.

Engaging volunteers can offer learners and organisations increased flexibility and more opportunity to offer additional support. Many volunteers work with low level, or more vulnerable learners, and are often involved with initial engagement in language learning.¹ Volunteers can provide another accent, another friendly face to practice English with and different life experience to help with integration and language learning.



Organisations that involve volunteers to support their ESOL delivery have a responsibility to meet the learners' needs and this should be the main focus of any volunteer ESOL project. The organisations also need to ensure that volunteers contributing their time and effort have a fulfilling experience and feel valued and nurtured.

¹ Glasgow ESOL Forum, Working with Volunteers in ESOL Provision in Scotland 2018



Volunteers are deployed in a variety of **roles** including – language support in the community, classroom assistants, individual and group tutors. Scotland's ESOL strategy states that "Volunteers are supported to be competent and confident in their support role to learners"². 'Support role' is key in that volunteers should not replace paid teaching staff. However, where demand is not being met through fully funded ESOL classes, volunteers often play a part in attempting to meet demand. The framework aims to guide organisations, of any type, working with volunteers by connecting them with resources, other projects and ideas for improvement.

Teaching ESOL is a highly skilled role and tutors, paid or volunteer, need to continue to develop their skills throughout their practice. Professional Learning and Development (PLD) in ESOL delivery and in other areas that affect learners is a key theme in this framework. Volunteers report being keen to enhance their skills in order to support their learners better and are willing to take up opportunities.

Beyond developing teaching skills, individuals who volunteer their time are proven to benefit from increased confidence, the satisfaction of making a difference to their communities, and the enjoyment of meeting new people, making friends, learning new skills and having fun. Recent research also shows volunteering improves mental and physical health, reduces social isolation and loneliness, and contributes to more engaged communities.³

Teaching ESOL is a highly skilled role and tutors, paid or volunteer, need to continue to develop their skills throughout their practice.

Volunteers can provide another accent, another friendly face to practice English with and different life experience to help with integration and language learning.

² Scottish Government, Welcoming Our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015-2020

³ www.volunteerscotland.net

The framework

Funded by the Scottish Government, Glasgow ESOL Forum has led the development of this framework by bringing together volunteer involving organisations from across Scotland.

Following national discussion events on working with volunteers in ESOL, volunteer coordinators agreed that a framework could provide a shared vision of what good practice is and take steps towards ensuring professional support for volunteers and quality of provision for learners. The framework development is summarised on page 45.

The framework aims to raise the profile of volunteers and the significant contribution they make to ESOL learning, highlighting to funders, organisations and decision makers that investing in volunteers and supporting them to develop in their roles and beyond, has benefits for ESOL learners and the wider community. Throughout the framework, there is a focus on increasing the diversity of volunteers to better reflect the communities learners live in.

This framework is for organisations who involve, or would like to involve, volunteers in supporting their ESOL delivery. Its purpose is to share and learn from the experience of other organisations in Scotland, and to reflect on current practice.

Framework themes

The framework examines 7 themes:

1. Volunteer roles
2. Volunteer recruitment and selection
3. Induction and initial training
4. Professional learning and development
5. Coordination, support and management
6. Making a difference to learners
7. Making a difference to volunteers



“Working with volunteers allows for flexible ESOL provision. I am part time and do not have the hours needed to meet the needs of all my ESOL learners. The support of volunteers allows me, as an ESOL tutor, to expand language learning out with the classroom environment.”

– ESOL tutor, Ayr

How to use this guide

Each section has good practice goals, suggestions for useful resources, and challenge questions to help organisations reflect on their practice.

Evaluation templates in the appendices provide organisations with a structure to do this. We have included examples of good practice and volunteer interviews and we invite organisations to continue to contribute to them.

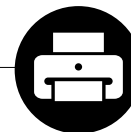
The appendices provide more detailed information on potential volunteering roles, minimum requirements, induction training topics, policy suggestions, the volunteer survey that has contributed to the framework's development and evaluation templates.

Live resources shared by organisations can be found on CLD Standard's Council **i-develop**.

As you use the framework, please complete a **short evaluation survey** to support its future development.

For quick printing of good practice goals, print pages 11, 17, 21, 27, 32, 38, 42.

For quick printing of evaluation templates, print pages 59-61.



Good practice goals



Challenge questions



Case study



Volunteer interview



Resources

We encourage organisations to ask: what can we learn from other organisations?



Glossary

organisation or project (used interchangeably)

An organisation involving or planning to involve volunteers. This includes organisations of any size and from any sector.

tutor

Tutors (paid or volunteer) plan and deliver ESOL lessons in groups or individually.

coordinator

Someone who is responsible for the overall delivery of a project or ESOL class, including volunteer recruitment, training and development. This may be a paid or unpaid role, depending on organisation. Projects might use other names such as support worker, course tutor or development worker.

qualified

Someone (paid or volunteer) who has the experience, skills and/or qualification to undertake teaching or tutor training. It is recognised that some organisations may source delivery of training from external sources.

Professional Learning and Development (PLD)

This term refers to any training or learning opportunities undertaken by volunteers, or paid staff, to improve their skills in working with learners. This is referred to by some organisations as Continued Professional Development (CPD) or Career-long Professional Development (CLPL) or simply volunteer training. The term professional is relevant to all those involved in ESOL delivery as supporting language learning is a professional skill.







1

Volunteer roles

1 Volunteer roles

Volunteers are involved in supporting ESOL learners to practice language skills in four main roles: language support in the community, learning assistant, one-to-one tutor, group tutor.

"I was so pleased to join the ceilidh dance at social events. I had never experienced ceilidh dancing before."

– Learner

"I prefer these class than others because we practise speaking. And you get involved in the Glaswegian culture better."

– Learner

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	Volunteer roles are created to meet identified needs of ESOL learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do the volunteer roles we offer meet learners' needs in this area? How do we identify and respond to any unmet needs?
2	Clear role descriptions are implemented for all volunteering roles that support ESOL learning.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know our volunteer role descriptions reflects the volunteers' roles? How do we ensure volunteers have distinct roles to paid staff?
3	Volunteer roles are inclusive and open to a diverse range of volunteers, including non-native speakers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do the roles we offer encourage a diverse group of volunteers and reflect the communities we work with?
4	Volunteer roles are developed to support English language practice within other contexts, using the skills of volunteers e.g. in STEM, art, music, local knowledge.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do the roles we offer use skills volunteers have, beyond English language teaching? How do we know?

* **Score your organisation on each good practice goal:**

1 = We are satisfied with this | 2 = Let's consider a change | 3 = Let's make a change

RESOURCES

Volunteer roles

Summary of potential volunteering roles and minimum requirements

[Appendix A1, p48](#)

Resources developed by volunteer involving organisations in Scotland available for members on CLD Standards Council ESOL discussion forum on i-develop

i-develop-cld.org.uk

NATECLA's A Framework for Good Practice in Voluntary ESOL outlines 4 roles for a language volunteer

natecla.org.uk

VIME (Volunteers in Migrant Education) model in working with volunteers, includes role descriptions for language volunteers

elatt.org.uk

Resources to support volunteers in language conversation clubs

learningandwork.org.uk

Diverse volunteering roles for refugees that support integration and language practice
Scottish Refugee Council's Sharing Languages, Sharing Lives

scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

COSLA report on integration case studies in Scotland working with refugees, including ESOL

migrationscotland.org.uk

Report: "A Part of Society : Refugees and Asylum Seekers Volunteering in the UK"

tandem-uk.co.uk



"You have given us a warm welcome and you have taught us the culture of our new home."

– Learner, Stirling

"I also teach refugee doctors – using my current profession (general practice) and combining ESOL – very satisfying."

– Volunteer



CASE STUDY

Welcoming diverse volunteers – The Language Café

Grampian Regional Equality Council, Aberdeen

What we do

The Language Café is a project aiming to boost English language self-confidence and integration among people attending weekly sessions to speak about chosen topics and useful information. 'Cafetistas' (service users, learning English) and volunteers socialise in a comfortable and relaxed environment.

During the three years this programme has been running, over 30 nationalities, with ages ranging from 17 to 85, with varied backgrounds and educational levels, have benefitted from the cafe. Our volunteers actively encourage Cafetistas to integrate and participate, but they also learn about their own capabilities to interact and integrate with other cultures and walks of life.

Interested volunteers are required to attend a language café session before joining and Cafetistas who develop their language skills, are welcome to join the volunteering team. This provides a further opportunity for integration and strengthens the view that non-native English speakers can become actively involved in local projects as they settle to live in Aberdeen.

Volunteers attend a generic induction session carried out by the volunteer coordinator and a Language Café specific induction where they are trained on the aims of the project and their responsibilities as volunteers.

They support the project in 3 different areas:

- Language support at the weekly Language Café sessions: they are only required to attend one session a month, however they are welcome to come to as many sessions as they wish.
- Promotion of activities and sessions in their own communities and groups
- Researching information to share at the sessions or leading individual activities during the meetings.

Volunteers are invited to attend training events run by GREC as well as social events, organised by GREC and partners. The coordinator also organises specific social events to strengthen bonds between staff and its volunteers.

Why it works

As a fundamental necessity to integrate, ESOL requires an open, relevant and safe space to flourish. The Language Cafe promotes the acquisition and development of language skills and interaction while building a sense of local community which is not always achieved in a classroom setting.

The impact of people attending the cafe has been documented through testimonials and surveys and they show that the social aspect is essential to achieve confidence in language and further personal and social development. Success in these initial steps is likely to then be replicated by participants in other circumstances and with other family or community members who may otherwise fall into isolation.



CASE STUDY

Volunteer roles to support mixed level classroom learning



CLD and AL Services, South Ayrshire Council

What we do

CLD AL Services provide a range of ESOL classes throughout South Ayrshire. Volunteer tutors support the teacher in the mixed level classroom or work one to one with more vulnerable learners and those who need the additional support the most.

Volunteers assist in the mixed level classroom where lessons and resources are planned by a paid tutor. The lesson is structured to facilitate whole group participation in some activities, while allowing mixed levels to continue to build their skills. Volunteers are briefed before the lesson by sending the plan and resources. Volunteers can then support either the lower level or the higher-level learners with their given task.

In addition to this, some volunteers also meet up with a learner, usually for an hour a week, outside the class. Volunteers are initially assisted in structuring and planning lessons, given support by regular guidance and feedback sessions. In time, volunteers plan their own lessons. In one specific case, a volunteer supports a learner struggling with writing, grammar and punctuation. The learner's spoken skills are good, and he appears confident. The learner left school in Syria, aged 11. The learner presents as dyslexic although there has been no diagnosis. The volunteer tutor has been assisting by reinforcing homework tasks set in class. Guided to use the error correction

technique, the volunteer focuses on specific weaknesses which would not be possible to do during a lesson. The volunteer is also able to respond to direct individual needs as they arise. This learner wishes to learn driving theory and the volunteer has been using the language around this to develop learning opportunities and build literacy.

Why it works

Most learners are from Syria and present with a wide and varied range of educational and cultural backgrounds and spiky language profiles. Due to limitations in resources, and the relatively small numbers of learners, all the classes delivered have to be mixed level. This is where volunteer tutors can provide invaluable support to paid staff.

Volunteers can build more personal relationships with learners that is not always realistic (or desirable) for a staff member to do. With support, volunteers often become "buddies" and take their role beyond the classroom. Meeting learners this way the volunteer can better respond to the individual needs of the learner, and focus on a bespoke, tailored programme.





VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Aneta

Language café volunteer, age 35

Role

Weekly language support at Saturday Language Cafe in a community venue. Initially recruited to help teach English but latterly has been providing structured craft activities which aim to generate language practice and development for children. This allows parents to generally work with staff.

Volunteer experience

Professional background in teaching language (English as an Additional Language), with interests in art and drama

Learners

Children of resettled Syrian refugees, on average, 3 children per week

What motivates you to volunteer

New to the area and wanted to get involved with community work which tied in with interests and skills.

Highlights

- Fun and laughs across cultural and language divides
- Building relationships with people from different countries and cultures and getting to know them in depth
- The satisfaction of seeing small steps in progress e.g. a learner finally mastering pronunciation of a multi-syllable word they had previously struggled with.

Challenges

Would like a role that was suited to her skill set, for example, for example a language buddy using her artistic and drama experience.

Support from the Organisation

- Clear guidance on boundaries and what to expect, together with pre-placement reading, prior to embarking on voluntary role. Shadowing of practitioner before commencing
- Sustained support and supervision
- Being part of a supportive team who are committed to volunteers, and willing to resolve any issues arising.



"I wanted to get involved in community work which tied in with my interest and skills."

– Volunteer

A woman with long dark hair and glasses is looking down at a document. The image has a warm, orange-toned background with blurred figures of other people, suggesting a group setting or meeting. The number '2' is centered above the main title.

2

Volunteer recruitment and selection

2 Volunteer recruitment and selection

Supporting English language learning, in order to be effective, requires specific skills and suitable volunteers should be selected for all opportunities.

Projects should consider how to engage with volunteers from diverse backgrounds, especially volunteers that reflect the background of learners they are working with.

“When I heard Syrian families were moving to my area, I wanted to help and show appreciation of what they had been through.

As a child of immigrant parents, I can recall my own parents’ struggles – English wasn’t their first language – I would act as interpreter in dealings with doctors, teachers, shop assistants etc.”

– Volunteer

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	Volunteer roles are created to meet identified needs of ESOL learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do the volunteer roles we offer meet learners’ needs in this area? How do we identify and respond to any unmet needs?
2	Clear role descriptions are implemented for all volunteering roles that support ESOL learning.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know our volunteer role descriptions reflects the volunteers’ roles? How do we ensure volunteers have distinct roles to paid staff?
3	Volunteer roles are inclusive and open to a diverse range of volunteers, including non-native speakers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do the roles we offer encourage a diverse group of volunteers and reflect the communities we work with?
4	Volunteer roles are developed to support English language practice within other contexts, using the skills of volunteers e.g. in STEM, art, music, local knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do the roles we offer use skills volunteers have, beyond English language teaching? How do we know?
5	Projects identify and address barriers to volunteering, where possible. These may include income, time, physical access, confidence, skills, health, caring commitments or criminal convictions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we remove barriers to volunteering, especially from under-represented groups?
6	Volunteers come from a range of backgrounds, genders, nationalities, and levels of experience, with targeted recruitment for under-represented groups, e.g. asylum seekers, refugees, ethnic minorities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are the communities we work with and wider society reflected in the volunteers we recruit?
7	Projects retain committed and competent volunteers to support their learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we retain committed volunteers?

* Score your organisation on each good practice goal:

1 = We are satisfied with this | 2 = Let’s consider a change | 3 = Let’s make a change

RESOURCES

Volunteer recruitment and selection

Resources developed by volunteer involving organisations in Scotland available on i-develop
i-develop-cld.org.uk

Advice and support from Volunteer Scotland on carrying out disclosure or Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks
volunteerscotland.net

Volunteer Scotland: guidance and templates for recruiting and managing volunteers
volunteerscotland.net

Information on barriers to volunteering Scottish Government's Volunteering for All
gov.scot

Example of a regional volunteer charter (Glasgow)
volunteerglasgow.org

Time Well Spent: NCVO's UK wide report on volunteering
ncvo.org.uk



"For me, the main motivators are to help learners develop confidence (generally), a sense of belonging, friendship, hope and help them to live a full life. ESOL is a tool to these ends."

– Volunteer

"My tutor is lovely, well-prepared, full of patience and finally I can understand perfectly what she says to me!"

– Learner





VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Diane

Classroom assistant, age 70

Role

Classroom assistant, supporting a class tutor, and occasionally supporting learners in small groups.

Volunteer experience

Retired civil servant with 10 years of experience as Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) volunteer tutor and experience of working with high level ESOL learners in other volunteering settings.

Learners

The class is mixed level, including some learners that are absolute beginners, with little experience of literacy in their own languages. All learners are Syrian refugees and are able to support each other – both a help and a hindrance for ESOL learning. The group also has some complex needs, including mental and physical health issues.

What motivates you to volunteer

- Understanding the barriers that not knowing English has and wants to help open doors for people
- Seeing the difference, it can make for people to do other things, like volunteer.

Highlights

Seeing learners progress, especially with everyday tasks such as using public transport and shopping independently.

Challenges

Meeting all the learners needs in a mixed level class presents a challenge for tutors and learners. There is also inconsistency where learners attend classes taught by different tutors. Progress can be slow in a community setting, which might be frustrating for some learners.

Support from the organisation

Recruited by the project because of previous experience in ALN and these skills are useful in supporting community ESOL

Any other support that would help?

A clearer introduction to the role; more time to liaise with tutor on how best to meet learners' needs.

"The class is mixed level, including some learners that are absolute beginners, with little experience of literacy in their own languages."





3

Induction and initial training

3 Induction and initial training

Resources will differ across organisations, and therefore, the capacity to offer induction and initial training. Some organisations can offer an accredited course and some a shadowing session with an experienced volunteer. While being realistic, organisations should review their induction processes regularly to ensure their volunteers feel prepared for their specific role. This will help retain volunteers and ensure learners receive good quality language support.

"I am a newly qualified CELTA tutor and I found the training sessions extremely useful. Also, having a coordinator at all of the teaching sessions is useful."

– Tutor

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	All volunteers receive an induction to the project and their role, by a qualified coordinator.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we evaluate our induction procedure?
2	Initial training meets the needs of the role and ensure volunteers feel prepared for their role. (Key areas summarised, appendix A4)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What changes do we need to make to our induction or initial training to reflect the needs of the learners, volunteers and our project? How do we know how well we prepare volunteers for their role?
3	Induction procedures include safeguarding and the boundaries of the volunteering role.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we review whether training on safeguarding and boundaries is sufficient for the role?
4	Volunteers are supported join the CLD Standards Council or an associated teaching body, such as NATECLA, where eligible.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we support volunteers to join professional bodies?

*** Score your organisation on each good practice goal:**

1= We are satisfied with this | **2=** Let's consider a change | **3=** Let's make a change

RESOURCES

Induction and initial training

Resources developed by volunteer involving organisations in Scotland available on i-develop
i-develop-cld.org.uk

Evaluation resources and support from Evaluation Support Scotland
evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

Education Scotland conference on Teaching ESOL to Refugees
 Volunteer Boundaries exercise and Teaching Literacies training
education.gov.scot

SQA accredited courses in teaching ESOL learners at 3 levels
sqa.org.uk

SQA accredited courses in supporting and tutoring adult literacies learners
sqa.org.uk

SQA accredited Volunteering Skills awards
sqa.org.uk

CLD Standards Council Ethical Practice for CLD and community ESOL practitioners
cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

Membership of NATECLA National Association for Teachers of English and
 Community Languages to Adults, available for organisations and individuals
natecla.org.uk



“Clear guidelines on how
volunteers should approach
learner background
information would be useful”

– Volunteer

“The training provided
a foundation which I
have referred to over
and over again.”

– Volunteer

“I had no training but felt happy
enough to jump in and am
experiencing no particular problems
thus far. Perhaps some feedback on
how I am doing would be useful in
addition to some quality training.”

– Volunteer



CASE STUDY

First Steps in ESOL induction training

Inverclyde Council CLD Adult Learning & Literacies Team

What we do

Inverclyde Council CLD Adult Learning & Literacies Team developed a short in-house training course – First Steps in ESOL in response to a sudden increase in ESOL learners arriving in the area through the Syrian Resttlement Programme. The ESOL team observed a need for conversational support, particularly for pre-literate and very low level learners.

The 10-hour programme, run over 2 days, focuses on speaking and listening. Volunteers are introduced to the project and their roles; the CLD ethos; the ‘learner-centred’ approach; introduction to ESOL approach and how to support language acquisition in adults.

A section of the training is dedicated to ‘ESOL in Inverclyde’ and looks at who the learners are, where they are from, challenges they may face. Volunteers gain a good sense of who the learners are before they start assisting in learning sessions.

A lot of time is dedicated to looking at resources after participant feedback stated that this was a useful and enjoyable part of the course. The training has been amended to spend a whole afternoon to look at digital resources, apps, textbooks, realia, which has remained popular with prospective volunteers.

Beyond their initial training course, volunteers are offered further PLD.

Why it works

This short sharp training course means mixed level classes can quickly benefit from trained volunteers’ support. (Previously, the team had delivered ITESOL over 12 weeks, which was too lengthy for this purpose).

During the training the participants get the chance to meet both current learners and volunteers to talk to the and ask them questions. This gives them a real insight to what they will be doing, who they will be working with and also allows the coordinators to see how prospective volunteers interact with other volunteers and most importantly, with ESOL learners.

The whole team is involved in training delivery, allowing volunteers to get to know all the support tutors and will know who they are volunteering with.

What changes might we make?

The training course works well but staff review it depending on the need for volunteers and staff capacity. Different delivery patterns are always considered to see what suits the project best.

“I found the sessions challenging to my preconceived ideas of language and general communication, eye-opening to the extent of resources used and very engaging through group discussion.

The volunteers were given the opportunity to give their understanding of how best resources/techniques could be used to their best advantage and how cultural barriers may be overcome to encourage the engagement of the learners.

I particularly enjoyed the tutor led group discussions and regular tutor feedback as it helped me to gauge my own personal understanding and progress.”

– Volunteer

CASE STUDY

Online accredited volunteer tutor training

Scottish Rural University College, Cupar, Fife



What we do

Feeling strongly about the need for a consistent baseline of training for volunteer tutors, the Volunteer Programme at The Scottish Rural University College (SRUC), Elmwood campus in Cupar, Fife decided to train all volunteers in the SQA PDA iTESOL qualification. To overcome restricted available time for delivery, the course was designed for online through the SRUC's Moodle platform.

After completing a pre-course written task, recruited volunteers take 2 modules – 'Learning and Language in ESOL' and 'Developing ESOL Tutoring Skills'. Module 2 requires the trainee to work with a student gaining experience of tutoring individual ESOL learners.

Weekly units are unveiled each Monday and are available for a week for volunteers to work on them, offering built-in flexibility for volunteers. The course is aimed to take 4 hours a week for 16 weeks, and supplementary reading is included for those who want a deeper understanding. To gain their qualification, volunteers take 8 assessments – 2 essays, 2 closed book assessments and 4 combined assessments to create portfolio of work with an ESOL learner.

In order to do the course, volunteers need internet access and can access college resources, including photocopying. They also need to commit to volunteering for 6 months following training.

Why it works

This model offers flexibility to volunteers in a rural setting, reaching volunteers from across Fife. It is also the most convenient way, due to time restraints for the sole lecturer to deliver it.

Prospective volunteers must have an interest in supporting ESOL learners and appreciation of the challenges of settling in another country, but do not necessarily have a teaching background. By completing this qualification, volunteers will have a good foundation in the experience of learning English. Volunteers are supported with ongoing PLD.

Involving volunteers offers invaluable additional support to college and community provision, focussing on individual learners' needs, which cannot be met within class time and existing capacity. Volunteers are matched as class assistants or individual tutors. The volunteers bring so much to the service and the commitment and dedication they can give an individual learner is priceless.

The course is regularly reviewed, considering volunteer feedback and changes in the ESOL learning landscape.





VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Margaret

Learning assistant, age 61

Role

Volunteers twice a week as learning assistant in a community class, in a small city

Volunteer experience

Past experience in teaching adult literacy and support for learning; and a more recently gained weekend TESOL qualification.

Learners

The group is made up of 8, mainly Syrian and Kurdish learners, with a low level of English. They are mixed group in terms of gender, age and background, including some refugees.

What motivates you to volunteer

'I love teaching, I just love teaching. I enjoy supporting learners lacking confidence and seeing them blossom. There is great pleasure in working with a multicultural group with people who are seriously motivated to learn.'

Highlights

- The challenge that this volunteering role brings.
- Developing resources for use in the class, including New to ESOL for beginners, adapting a phonics game, which was well received among learners and tutors.
- A collaborative role with the class tutor and observing the very positive approach the tutor has with learners.

Challenges

- Frustration that volunteers' skills and experience are not always fully utilised
- Time pressure on coordinators means that they are often too busy to implement group support meetings with volunteers
- Clear guidelines on how volunteers should approach learner background information would be useful.

Support from the organisation

- After an initial interview and chat with tutor, there was one day training which was a good opportunity to meet other volunteers
- Valuable ongoing collaborative relationship and support from class tutor, and good relationships with all staff on the project
- The organisation has given volunteers the opportunity to be involved in consultations and development regarding ESOL and it feels good to be included

"I love teaching, I just love teaching. I enjoy supporting learners lacking confidence and seeing them blossom."

– Margaret, volunteer learning assistant



4

Professional learning and development

4 Professional learning and development


The term Professional Learning and Development (PLD) is used, in a volunteering context, as it emphasises that teaching English and supporting language learning are professional skills that should be developed and nurtured.

The aim of PLD is that volunteers are suitably prepared for their role in working with adult learners, including vulnerable learners. Teaching ESOL is a changing environment and skills and knowledge need to be updated and refreshed on an ongoing basis.

“Alan is a very competent and calm volunteer tutor. He is always prepared and tries to make the classes interesting.”

– Learner

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	Volunteers are supported to keep a PLD plan and set personal learning goals to encourage reflective practice.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we support volunteers to identify and set their own learning goals?
2	Through consultation with volunteers, organisations provide resources to support PLD through in-house training; external training; independent study; peer observation; practice sharing with peers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know if the PLD opportunities we offer build the confidence, knowledge and skill of volunteers in supporting our learners?
3	Partnerships or projects within local or wider areas work together to provide volunteer training opportunities or practice-sharing sessions.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we work with other volunteer projects in our local and wider area to support volunteer PLD?

* Score your organisation on each good practice goal:

1 = We are satisfied with this | 2 = Let's consider a change | 3 = Let's make a change

RESOURCES

Professional learning and development



ESOL teaching resources

i-develop discussion forums for volunteering in ESOL
i-develop-cld.org.uk

British Council general ESOL teaching resources
esol.britishcouncil.org

Excellence Gateway ESOL teaching and learning resources
esol.excellencegateway.org.uk

BBC teaching ESOL
teachingenglish.org.uk/article/esol

BBC learning English
bbc.co.uk/learningenglish

FutureLearn online courses for PLD
futurelearn.com

Scottish Refugee Council training
scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/working-for-change/training

Scottish Refugee Council resources
scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/resources

British Council article on working with trauma
teachingenglish.org.uk

Aleks Palanac (University of Leicester)
 articles on trauma
www2.le.ac.uk

SQA support teaching and learning materials for all levels, developed in Scotland
sqa.org.uk

Onestop English teaching and learning materials for all levels, some free and some available through membership
onestopenglish.com

ISL Collective teaching and learning materials for all levels
en.islcollective.com

Linguahouse learning materials from elementary levels, including resources for mixed levels
linguahouse.com

“Assisting experienced teachers has been very helpful in informing and developing my teaching approach in classes that I lead. It’s easier to know which ideas to pinch when you’ve seen how they work with a real group.”

– Volunteer

ESOL teaching membership organisations

NATECLA
natecla.org.uk

NATECLA Scotland
nateclascotland.wordpress.com

SATEFL
satefl.co.uk

IATEFL
iatefl.org

IATEFL ESOL Special Interest Group
iateflesolsig.wordpress.com

Publishers’ webinars and resources

Pearson:
pearson.com

Oxford University Press
elt.oup.com

Cambridge University Press
cambridgeenglish.org



CASE STUDY

Providing PLD for volunteers

Stirling School of English

What we do

The volunteers at Stirling School of English are group tutors, working with small, yet diverse groups of learners. The project offers one Professional Learning and Development (PLD) session per semester which all volunteer tutors are expected to attend. Volunteers are invited to take part in a chosen webinar once per semester as part of ongoing support and training for their roles. The webinars are free and run by Cambridge University Press, Pearson or other training centres.

The topics for CDP sessions are chosen by volunteers during volunteer tutor meetings (beginning of each semester). These topics are the result of tutor and student feedback. The sessions are delivered by experts in a certain field, often one of the skilled volunteers, due to budget constraints.

Most tutors are observed once a year to monitor the effectiveness of the teaching and provide necessary support and guidance to tutors to help them realise their full potential. All observations include a pre and post meeting with relevant documentation (lesson plan, reflection, and observation feedback). This is not compulsory; however, a lot of tutors sign up for it.

All volunteers also have regular access to the Volunteer Manager who receives regular feedback, provides support, and discusses future development.

They are the first contact point if problems arise. Support sessions are arranged outside of teaching hours.

Why it works

Tutor and student feedback allows tutors to express their views at both regarding their own needs as well as those of the service users. PLD is then something volunteer tutors look forward to and a great opportunity for them to get to know each other, exchange ideas and experiences.

Through learners' feedback, learners request areas they want to work on or if there is something they want changed about the teaching. Last year, learners requested more pronunciation teaching so the PLD session focused on that.

Voluntary class observations are good practice and nothing to for volunteer tutors to worry about. They contribute to improving the quality of students' learning by providing valuable information about the teaching and learning environment.

Regular access to the volunteer manager who is always present when classes are on ensures that the volunteers are supported and listened to.

What changes might we make?

PLD sessions are offered in the mornings, excluding volunteers unavailable at this time. In the future, the project would like to offer more flexibility in PLD perhaps by using video conferencing software or recording sessions.

A lot of volunteer feedback is done very informally during breaks and the project would like to move to a more systematic approach of recording this.





VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Kat

Conversation café volunteer, age 37

Role

Conversation café volunteer, supporting small groups of learners around the same level to talk about the topic of the week, chosen collectively by the coordinator and group.

Volunteer experience

Experienced EFL teacher, CELTA qualified, non-native English speaker.

Learners

Learners living in the city come from all over the world with no prevalent group, including students, refugees, people on spouse visas, members of the settled communities.

What motivates you to volunteer

To help people communicate.

Highlights

- The community aspect of the group and the opportunity for people to practise speaking in a safe environment
- Seeing people being able to express their thoughts in English.

Challenges

Finding time to volunteer whilst working.

Support from the organisation

Introduction training, travel expenses, in person and email support from an engaged coordinator and additional training from external trainers

Any other support that would help?

- More opportunities for volunteers to explore cultural awareness and their own motivations for volunteering, therefore ensuring the best possible support for ESOL learners
- Opportunities to volunteer out with working hours, and therefore support learners that cannot attend during those times.

"More opportunities for volunteers to explore cultural awareness and their own motivation for volunteering."

– Volunteer



A blue-tinted photograph of three people in a meeting. A man in a white long-sleeved shirt with dark stripes on the sleeves is kneeling and pointing at a large sheet of paper on the floor. A younger man in a striped polo shirt is sitting on the floor to the left, looking up at the man. A woman in a striped dress is sitting to the right, holding a white mug and looking towards the man. The background is a plain wall and floor.

5

Coordination, support and management

5 Coordination, support and management

Coordination and management of volunteers will look very different depending on the size of the organisation. Some coordinators may themselves be volunteers. Volunteer support is important to ensure that the volunteers can fulfil their role.

Volunteers also report a desire to feel included the development of projects. Coordination, support and management of volunteers should be given adequate time and thought, whatever the size of the project to ensure volunteers are able to help their learners to make progress.

* Score your organisation on each good practice goal:

1= We are satisfied with this

2= Let's consider a change

3= Let's make a change

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	Projects have sufficient resources to support volunteers. This includes time for coordinators to offer advice on ESOL teaching and learning; pastoral care (for learners and volunteers); training opportunities; expenses and resources to celebrate volunteer achievement.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do our existing resources meet the needs of our project and our volunteers?
2	Projects have clear user-friendly policies and procedures in place, easily accessible for all volunteers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know our volunteer policies reflect our learners' and volunteers' needs?
3	Policies recognise that volunteers have diverse needs and support participation by addressing these.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we identify and respond to any unmet needs?
4	Volunteers and coordinators sign a volunteering agreement, which clarifies expectations, including time commitment and adherence to organisational policies.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does our volunteering agreement reflect our current practice? How do we review this?
5	Projects reward and recognise volunteers' contribution and achievements, through a variety of methods, appropriate to their volunteers.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does our organisation celebrate and promote volunteer contribution and achievement?
6	Volunteers are consulted in decision-making within the organisation and, more widely on issues affecting ESOL learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we represent volunteer views and opinions within our organisation and beyond?
7	Projects retain committed and competent volunteers to support their learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we retain committed volunteers?
8	Coordinators are qualified and engage professional learning and development opportunities in order to support volunteers, including sharing good practice with other organisations.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we support volunteer coordinators to engage in PLD? How well does we engage with and learn from sharing practice with other volunteer involving ESOL projects?
9	Organisations consider how their good practice could be recognised through achieving quality standards such as CLD Standards Council Standard Mark, Volunteer Friendly, Invertors in Volunteers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is our practice quality assured through nationally recognised quality standards awards? How would achieving a recognised quality standards award support and enhance our work?



RESOURCES

Coordination, support and management

Policy list in appendix A5

Discussion forum and resources developed by volunteer involving organisations in Scotland available on i-develop

i-develop-cld.org.uk

Join Scotland's Network of coordinators of ESOL volunteers with Glasgow ESOL Forum

glasgowesol.org/volunteers-co-ordinators

VIME resources on a Skilled coordinator

elatt.org.uk

SCVO Funding Scotland for sources for funding for volunteer expenses

fundingscotland.com

SQA accredited qualification for volunteer managers

sqa.org.uk

Information on the CLD Standards Council Standards Mark

cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

Information on quality standards awards for volunteering

Investing in Volunteers

iiv.investinginvolunteers.org.uk

Volunteer Friendly

volunteerfriendly.org.uk

Resources and training for volunteer coordinators from your local volunteer centre

Volunteering Scotland

volunteerscotland.net

Scottish Volunteering Forum

scottishvolunteeringforum.wordpress.com

Association of Volunteer Managers

volunteermanagers.org.uk

"I have felt supported and included. My previous experience has been valued and there is trust between the team."

– Volunteer

"The project offers peer support which is very helpful. Staff members are readily available to help and advise."

– Volunteer

CASE STUDY



Supporting volunteers to carry out their role

Volunteer Tutor Project, Glasgow ESOL Forum

What we do

Glasgow ESOL Forum works with around 50 CELTA qualified volunteers as mostly group tu-tors, with some additional roles for individual tutors and learning assistants. The role of the volunteer is clearly defined from the outset, both in the induction training and through volunteer role descriptors. A volunteer handbook and policies, which are regularly reviewed, help make the expectations of the volunteer and the organisation clear and these are acces-sible on the website for reference.

Volunteers are matched to volunteering opportunities by coordinators, who discuss their experience and what they would like to do. Coordinators will provide ongoing advice and support on teaching and other issues, where required. In community classes, volunteers teach small groups of learners or the same level. There is a coordinator in each class, so volunteers have support on hand, as well as peer support from other volunteers, working with the other groups. Each class will have a termly meeting to discuss changes that need to be made, although suggestions are welcome at any time. Development workers also provide phone, email and in-person support.

Training and practice sharing sessions happen at least once a term. Volunteers are encour-aged take up opportunities of peer observation.

All coordinators are qualified with, at minimum, a CELTA (or equivalent) and have experience teaching ESOL. The organisation supports coordinators to do training on managing and supporting volunteers (provided by specialised volunteer centres).

Why it works

Learners in Glasgow benefit from the many suitably qualified people willing to volunteer their time and skills, which helps meet the high demand for ESOL in the city. The project has a small team dedicated to volunteer support.

Initial training supports volunteers' existing skills to start teaching in a community setting. Support is on hand from coordinators to protect the teaching aspect of the volunteer tutor's role. Coordinator support with the class might include advice in finding suitable learning materials or with planning lessons; training and sourcing opportunities for learners and volunteers to participate in; and pastoral care.

The project responds to volunteer surveys twice a year where volunteers comment on the support they receive and any changes they would like to be made. Volunteers report that they feel supported and feel comfortable making suggestions.

Some volunteers have remained with the project for many years but most people volunteer between 1-3 years, which offers stability for learners.

What changes might we make?

The project currently works only with qualified volunteers to fulfil specific roles. Creating new roles for volunteers with less experience in teaching ESOL might attract a broader diversity of volunteers and introduce more people to learning about supporting ESOL learning.



VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Adam

Volunteer classroom assistant, age 64

Role

Volunteer classroom assistant.

Volunteer experience

Retired senior Social Worker, experienced in working with disadvantaged young people.

Learners

Learners are mostly (but not all) Syrian refugees and are diverse in terms of age and life experience.

What motivates you to volunteer

'Volunteering is something I have done all my days. I think I have the qualities needed to do it – approachable and calm.'

Highlights

'I enjoy it and it is important work. I like bringing humour to the role.'

Challenges

- The group is a large mixed group, with people coming and going. Lack of progression for learners, as the group becomes more social. The social aspect is important but the class needs to offer progression in learning
- There wasn't much initial training and I had to jump straight in
- Working with learners who have experienced trauma, without preparation has been challenging.

Support from the organisation

Regular reviews with development worker and able to discuss the role are useful.

"Volunteering is something I have done all my days. I think I have the qualities needed to do it – approachable and calm."

– Adam



ORGANISATION VIEW



Supporting volunteers to carry out their role

CLD AL Services , South Ayrshire

Timely volunteer tutor forums are held where volunteers are given the opportunity to meet others. This is a popular event.

Volunteers share stories, best practice, challenges and rewards.



Feedback from sessions included comments about feeling part of a community, giving something back and feeling motivated to continue. Volunteers also comment that it is great to meet other volunteers and hear their stories.

Often volunteers work in isolation and it important to host these events to remind them of how much they are valued and a key part of the service we deliver.



6

Making a difference
to learners

6 Making a difference to learners

All projects and all volunteers want to know that they are making a difference to the lives of people they are supporting with ESOL learning and language practice. Volunteers bring additional skills and experiences that enhance or offer opportunities for learners that might not be possible or available within mainstream provision.

"The lessons are really great. I progress every week."

– Learner

"My tutor helped me so much, for my volunteering job I got. It is helping in a school. I want to change jobs and she helped me to do that. She is amazing and she can change my life"

– Learner

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	Learners are supported to evaluate their progress and learning experience; and to recognise their achievements in language learning and the difference it makes in their lives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we build the skills of volunteers to support learners to reflect on their learning and recognise their progress?
2	Projects can evidence the positive difference working with volunteers has on ESOL learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know that volunteers have a positive impact on learners?
3	Working with diverse volunteers makes a positive difference to learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know that working with diverse volunteers has a positive impact on learners?
4	Organisations work collaboratively with other ESOL providers and support organisations to ensure learners make progress in language learning.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we ensure that volunteers are aware of learner progression opportunities and can signpost learners?
5	Pathways are created to enable ESOL learners to become volunteers to support ESOL learning		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we enable ESOL learners to become volunteers supporting ESOL learning?
6	Volunteer-involving organisations across Scotland share volunteer project outcomes to show the difference volunteers make to ESOL learners.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well do we share the positive difference volunteers make on ESOL learners, with partners and nationally?

* Score your organisation on each good practice goal:

1 = We are satisfied with this | 2 = Let's consider a change | 3 = Let's make a change



RESOURCES

Making a difference to learners

Resources developed by volunteer involving organisations in Scotland available on i-develop
i-develop-cld.org.uk

ESOL Volunteer coordinators discussion on evaluating your evaluation, Dundee 2019
secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk

Examples of good practice and self-evaluation tools, search ESOL
education.gov.scot

Evaluation Support Scotland
evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk



"I feel more confident because at home not speaking English."

– Learner

"Although I have been staying for two years and half, I feel this town is the second hometown in the world to me. This is owing to kind, patient and interested in our lives volunteer teachers and all my friends in Stirling."

– Learner

"I think that I have passed the Citizenship test as a result of the Life in the UK course, A's commitment and volunteering."

– Volunteer

"With the help of a volunteer teacher, I can continue my English during the lockdown. Learning English is very important to me because it gives me a chance to live better in Scotland."

– Learner

VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Liz

Group tutor, age 61

Role

Group tutor for 2 different weekly groups in community venues in Glasgow.

Volunteer experience

Retired community worker with 30 years of work experience in Community Education; previous qualifications in teaching and CELTA; volunteered in this role for 5 years.

Learners

Learners are from a large mix of nationalities (over 40 different nationalities over 5 years). They are women from settled communities wanting to improve language and literacy skills; refugees, and economic migrants from the EU and beyond.

What motivates you to volunteer

'As a retired person with a career in providing learning, I wanted to continue to use and improve my skills in helping others. The response to the refugee crisis prompted me to do something practical to welcome those for whom Glasgow was their new home.'

Highlights

- A learner reporting improved confidence in understanding and conversing with child's teacher, including raising points about their child's welfare
- A learner was delighted that she could understand her children's conversations when they switched to English and laughed at the surprise on their faces
- A learner reporting being able to email her children and grandchildren.

Highlights are learner progression generally – seeing friendships and confidence develop; learners trying new things like writing for Glasgow's Aye Write Festival and volunteering; learners moving on to college, work and other opportunities.

Challenges

Limited resources for ESOL and the volume of learners that need support.

Support from the organisation

- Confidence and satisfaction of working as part of a well-organised team where the volunteer role is clearly defined and valued
- Coordinators provide support for volunteer tutors and learners logistically and on welfare issues
- Ongoing investment in volunteers (not just front-loading through initial recruitment and training) promotes retention and satisfaction in the role.

Any other support that would help?

More IT support to successfully navigate use of online teaching platform software e.g. dealing with compatibility issues when using different devices etc.



"Highlights are learner progression generally – seeing friendships and confidence develop; learners trying new things."

– Liz

A photograph of an elderly woman with short, curly white hair and glasses, smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding an open book with both hands and appears to be reading. She is wearing a light-colored, patterned blouse. The background shows a library setting with tall bookshelves filled with books, slightly out of focus. The entire image has a strong magenta/pink color overlay.

7

Making a difference
to volunteers

7 Making a difference to volunteers

Volunteers are motivated to give their time and skills in order to support learners. Volunteering also offers opportunities to learn new skills, increase social connections, engage with their local community and makes a positive difference in volunteers' own lives.

"It has developed my own personal skills and given me an appreciation of the challenges faced by the learners in a setting so different to them and the commitment it takes."

– Tutor

"It's been an extremely rewarding experience watching a group of Syrian refugees go from no or little language to being able to converse in English and with growing confidence when doing so."

– Tutor

Good practice goals and challenge questions

	Good practice goals 	Score*	Challenge questions 
1	Projects can demonstrate that they provide a positive volunteering experience, where volunteers feel valued, nurtured and included.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know we provide a supportive environment for volunteers?
2	Volunteering for your organisation has a positive effect on volunteers' lives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know volunteering has a positive effect on volunteers' lives, and where relevant their families?
3	Organisations recognise that the goal of some volunteers is working within the sector. This is supported with a clear policy on recruiting volunteers into paid roles, signposting to suitable job opportunities and providing references.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know if volunteers want to pursue paid employment in the ESOL sector? How well are we able to support volunteers to progress to paid roles in ESOL?

* **Score your organisation on each good practice goal:**

1 = We are satisfied with this | 2 = Let's consider a change | 3 = Let's make a change

RESOURCES

Making a difference to volunteers

Resources and discussion forum available on i-develop
i-develop-cld.org.uk

Using [#ESOLScotland](#) or [#becauseofCLD](#) on social media

CLD Standards Council Competencies for practitioners
cldstandardscouncil.org.uk

Saltire Awards for 12-25 year olds
saltireawards.org.uk

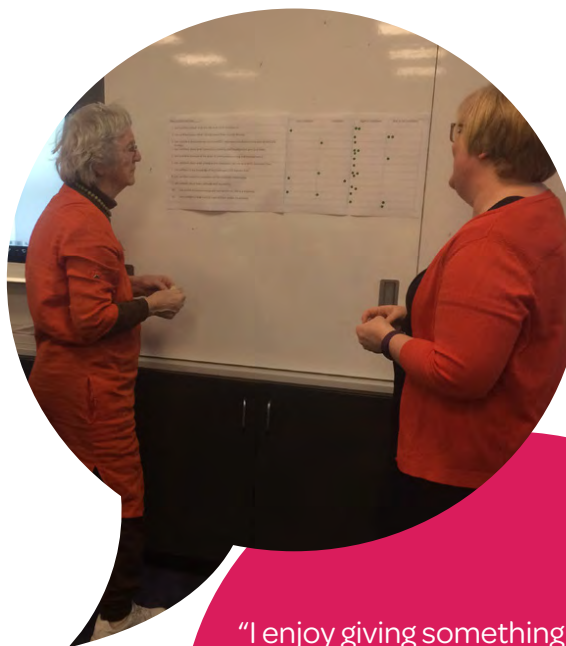
Youth Awards in Scotland
youthscotland.org.uk

Adult Achievement Awards may be suitable for volunteers without qualifications
newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk/adult-achievement-awards

Evaluation Support Scotland
evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

Local authority and third sector ESOL jobs advertised on S1jobs
s1jobs.com

Local authority and third sector ESOL jobs advertised on Goodmoves
goodmoves.org.uk



"I enjoy giving something back, I enjoy doing something different to my day job and I particularly enjoy getting to know the individuals and learning about their background and culture."

– Volunteer

"The reward of volunteering is enjoying the experience of individuals' moving forward from a small start of learning to read or learning a new language – building confidence in their own abilities."

– Volunteer



VOLUNTEERING STORIES

Linda

Classroom assistant, age 52

Role

Classroom assistant in two small community classes in a small town, supporting a class tutor with tasks, depending on learners' needs.

Volunteer experience

Experienced social worker assistant; online TEFL qualification and project's induction training.

Learners

Drop-in class supports mixed level vulnerable learners of different nationalities.

What motivates you to volunteer

- Supporting people to communicate in the country they now live in
- Meeting people from different countries and learning about different cultures and customs.

'I absolutely love it and I get more out of it than I ever thought I would'.

Highlights

- A very positive experience with keen learners and supportive staff
- Learning about other cultures, languages and supporting people to learn so they are less vulnerable.

Challenges

Realising how much there is to learn about teaching English.

Support from the organisation

- Supportive coordinator
- Initial training was thorough and we evaluated our own progress.

Any other support that would help?

Further ESOL specific training would be useful, especially with e-learning

"I absolutely love it and I get more out of it than I ever thought I would."

– Linda



Framework development

In 2016, Glasgow ESOL Forum was awarded funding from the Scottish Government's Adult Learning and Empowering Communities Fund to host discussion events with representatives from projects who worked with volunteers to support ESOL delivery. The aim was to share good practice in how volunteers are recruited, trained and supported and how that, in turn, benefits ESOL learners.

Discussion events were held twice yearly in Dundee, Glasgow and Stirling with volunteer coordinators participating from 23 local authorities and several national organisations including NATECLA, CLD Standards Council, Education Scotland, COSLA and SATEFL. Most of the 43 organisations involved are publicly funded with 18 local authorities, 7 FE colleges, 11 third sector and 6 national organisations.

After the first discussion group, Glasgow ESOL Forum invited coordinators to reflect on their projects, via a survey. Using the survey results and volunteer coordinator experiences from the first discussion event, a report was produced *Working with Volunteers in ESOL Provision in Scotland*. This followed a volunteer's journey, giving a brief picture of what work takes place across the country, its successes and challenges.

Further **themed discussion events** were held on training, support and evaluation. Through the exchange of ideas and challenges, it emerged that a framework to present what was collectively agreed as good practice would be useful in supporting new and existing volunteer projects. Two consultation events with volunteer coordinators were held in Dundee and Stirling.

Glasgow ESOL Forum presented workshops on at NATELCA's national annual conference in Birmingham and NATECLA Scotland's annual conference in Dundee on **Working with Volunteers in ESOL Provision** and was involved in the consultation process of NATECLA's 2019 **Framework for Good Practice in Voluntary ESOL in England and Wales**. This and **Merton School of English's A Snapshot of English language teaching in seven voluntary sector organisations in 2017** have been influential in the development of this framework.

Participants involved in the discussion groups were invited to join a steering group to take the development of the framework forward. This included representation from volunteer-involving and CLD/ESOL organisations of varying sizes from across Scotland. The steering group guided and decided on the format and content of the framework, drawing on their own expertise as well as reaching out to other coordinators, volunteers and learners.

They developed a survey to capture the volunteer voice, interviewed a small sample of volunteers, gathered case studies and learner feedback.

The later stages of the development of the framework have taken place during the lockdown and the changed circumstances brought about by COVID – 19. During this time, organisations have responded and evolved out of necessity, creating new ways of working with volunteers to continue to support ESOL learners. We are yet to know the full effects of this period on ESOL learners and our sector. During this time, it has been evident that the need for clear structures and support for volunteers is as important as ever in providing effective services that fulfil learners' needs and nurture the contribution volunteers bring.

Beyond the publishing of this framework, we encourage those working with volunteers not only to use this framework to reflect on their practice but also to share ideas with other volunteer tutor projects.

1. **Join the conversation on i-develop**
2. **Join national coordinators mailing list**
3. **Participate in national or regional good practice events.**

Volunteer involvement

To capture the opinions of volunteers involved in ESOL delivery across Scotland, volunteers were invited to participate in a survey. This was circulated widely, through volunteer-involving organisations, ESOL and CLD networks and social media. The survey invited volunteers to be involved further and seven volunteers participated in a short interview.

127 volunteers from 21/32 local authority areas participated in this way. The biggest responses came from Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling (48% collectively) and the remaining 52 % came from other cities, smaller towns and rural local authority areas. This represents a small sample of volunteers supporting ESOL delivery and, therefore, is not the full picture of the contribution of their work. Volunteers from different roles, backgrounds and experiences have expressed their views and while this will not reflect all aspects of volunteering in ESOL delivery, it does represent a wide range of volunteering experience. In the responses received, there were recurring themes and areas suggested for development, raised collectively and individually, that organisations can learn from.

Results from the volunteer survey have been embedded throughout the framework and accompanying notes but it is worth emphasising some key points:

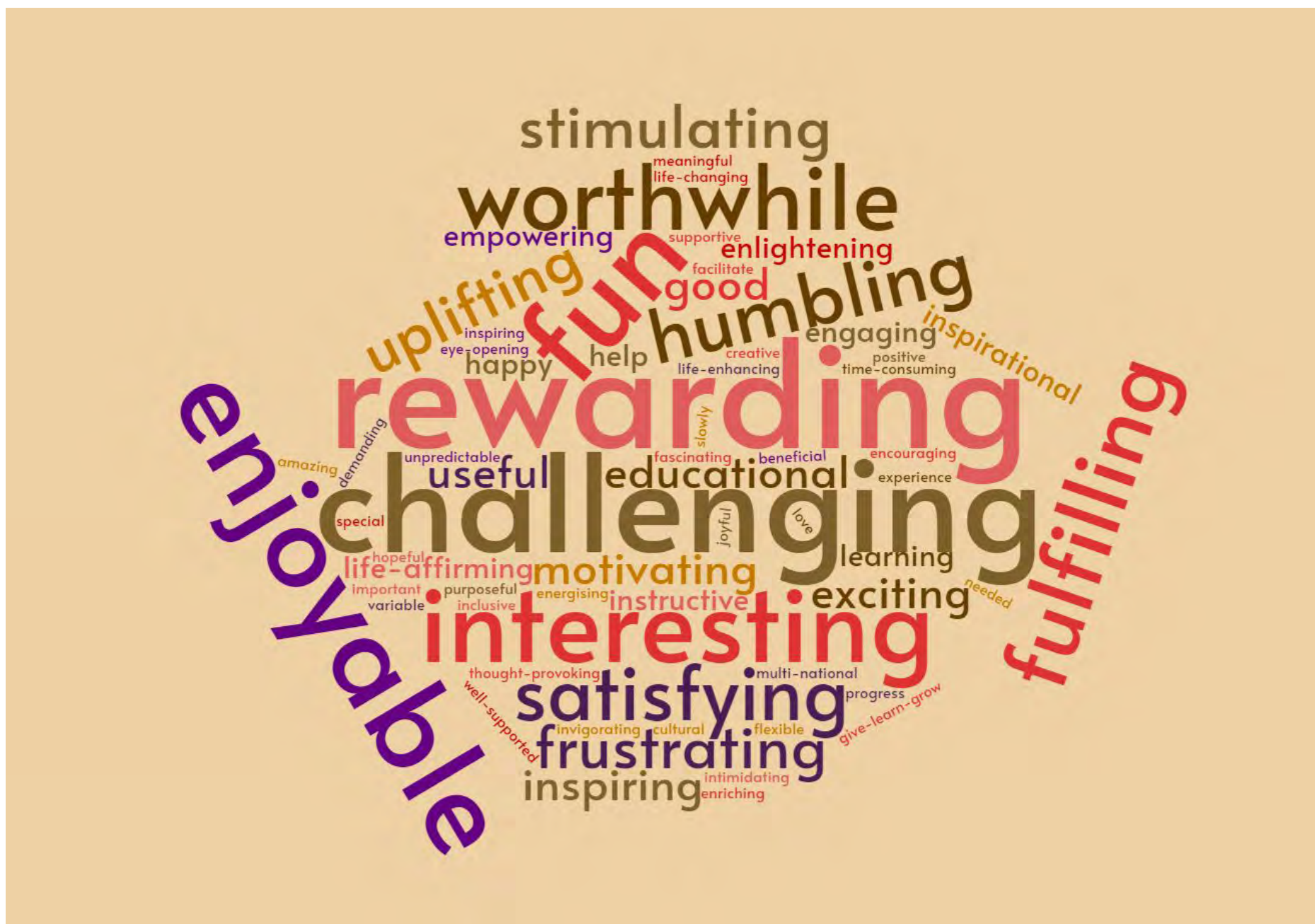
- Volunteers report that volunteering in ESOL delivery is a rewarding and fulfilling experience. Overall, volunteers feel they are making a difference and feel personally enriched by working with ESOL learners and getting to know people from around the world.
- Volunteers value the support they get from the organisations, especially having a good working relationship with class tutors and/or coordinators.
- Volunteers recognise that there are many challenges in their role and often more broadly, that there are challenges in delivering ESOL with learners progressing slowly.
- Volunteers have a wealth of experience and are invested in their learners' progression. They have suggestions and ideas on developing projects and appreciate being consulted.

Appendix A6 offers a very brief synopsis of the results from the survey.

"A highlight is being part of a team that is generous in helping others and at the same time having your own life enriched by the experience and contact with a variety of people from other countries and cultures."

"I really enjoy doing this and meeting learners from all different countries. It is also so interesting learning about different cultures and customs. It is so important to help those who do not speak English learn how to communicate in the country they now live in."

Word cloud: volunteers were invited to give 3 words that summed up their volunteering experience



The appendices



APPENDIX 1

Volunteer roles

1.1 Volunteer roles are created to support the identified needs of ESOL learners in an area

In most circumstances, ESOL learning in Scotland should be delivered by an experience, qualified and paid workforce. Some organisations support this delivery by working with volunteers. It is acknowledged that volunteers are involved in ESOL delivery, in place of paid staff and where this is the case, we recommend that there are clear reasons why this is the practice.

We recommend that organisations involving volunteers in ESOL delivery carefully consider the roles volunteers will fulfil and how the organisation will support them to do so. Different role descriptors, policies and training materials to support organisations have been shared by organisations, involving volunteers around Scotland on CLD Standards Council i-develop website.

Broadly speaking volunteers will support ESOL learners in these four main roles:

Volunteering Roles

Language support in the community – volunteers support learners in a variety of settings, out with a classroom. This might involve language buddying or befriending, employability or digital support or support in a conversation café. The role would be ideally be guided by an ESOL coordinator or tutor. Where this is not possible, organisations and volunteers are encouraged to link in with local or national ESOL organisations for advice and training resources.

Classroom, or learning, assistant – volunteers provide extra support in the classroom by working with individual or small groups of learners. The work will be prepared and guided by the class tutor.

One to one tutor – volunteers plan and deliver ESOL lessons to individual learners, based on their individual needs. The role would be guided by an ESOL coordinator or tutor.

Group tutor – volunteers plan and deliver ESOL lessons to adults, based on their learning needs. The role may be guided by an ESOL coordinator or tutor.

APPENDIX 2

Volunteering criteria



Prior to being recruited for a volunteering role, consider these criteria for potential volunteers. Organisations may provide extensive initial training which supports meeting the requirements for the role. Volunteers should be encouraged to complete pre-course, or volunteering, written task on their own skills levels.

Skills required for volunteering role (Essential/Desired)	Language support in the community	Classroom assistant	One-to-one tutor	Group tutor
CELTA or equivalent qualification	D	D	D	D
ITESOL or equivalent qualification	D	D	D	D
Experience teaching ESOL to adults	D	D	D	D
Experience teaching ALN to adults	D	D	D	D
Experience teaching children				
Experience in working with vulnerable people	D	D	D	D
Completion of induction training	E	E	E	E
Understanding of language as an empowerment tool	D	D	D	D
Commitment to equalities and anti-discrimination	E	E	E	E
Willingness to work with others	E	E	E	E
Interest in other cultures	E	E	E	E
Experience in working with refugees	D	D	D	D
Understanding of living in another country	D	D	D	D
Commitment to volunteering (after training)	E	E	E	E
Confident in own spoken and written English	E	E	E	E
Commitment to participating in ongoing training	E	E	E	E



Qualifications for teaching ESOL

Entry level

Qualification	Awarding body	Link
ITESOL – Introduction to Teaching ESOL	SQA	sqa.org.uk/sqa/42437.html
Online TEFL courses	various	

Postgraduate with observed teaching practice

Qualification	Awarding body	Link
CELTA – Certificate of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages	University of Cambridge	https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/celta/
Cert TESOL	Trinity College, London	https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/teaching-english/certtesol
Professional Development Award (PDA) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages	SQA	https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/42437.html
MEd Education TESOL	Various universities	https://www.postgrad.com/courses/tesol/scotland/

APPENDIX 4

Induction and initial training



4.2 Initial training meets the needs of the role and ensure volunteers feel prepared for their role

Inductions and initial training may be delivered in person, online, with written handbooks and/or with shadowing or peer support. Organisations should consider the role of the volunteer and how to prepare them on the following topics:

Initial training content (Essential/Desired)	Language support in the community	Classroom assistant	One-to-one tutor	Group tutor
Introduction to organisation and its policies	E	E	E	E
Safeguarding/adult protection/ child protection	E	E	E	E
Barriers to learning	E	E	E	E
Expectations of the volunteer role	E	E	E	E
Boundaries of the role	E	E	E	E
Learner background – Case studies of typical learners, appropriate to role	E	E	E	E
Working with trauma	E	D	E	E
Taking care of yourself while volunteering	E	E	E	E
Other sources of advice and support for learners, including local networks	E	D	E	E
Opportunity to observe a class	D	E	E	E

Table continued...

...table continued

Initial training content (Essential/Desired)	Language support in the community	Classroom assistant	One-to-one tutor	Group tutor
An overview of ESOL in Scotland	D	D	D	E
Language acquisition in adults	E	E	E	E
Social practice approach to literacy	E	E	E	E
Learning in the community – informal and formal education	E	E	E	E
Preparing a learning programme	D	D	E	E
Planning a lesson	D	D	E	E
Setting learning goals, creating individual learning plans	D	E	E	E
Teaching 4 skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing, individually and using an integrated approach	-	-	E	E
Selecting and adapting resources	D	D	E	E
What to teach at different levels	D	D	E	E
Needs analysis	D	D	E	E
ESOL Literacies awareness	E	E	E	E
Teaching ESOL literacies	D	D	E	E
Phonics	D	D	E	E
Information about formal qualifications ESOL SQA	D	D	D	E
Leadership	D	D	D	E
Designated named contact for support and ESOL advice	E	E	E	E
Ongoing CPD opportunities	E	E	E	E

APPENDIX 5

Suggested volunteering policies

6.2 Projects have clear user-friendly policies and procedures in place, easily accessible for all volunteers.

Examples can be found at Volunteer Scotland
and on CLD Standard's Council i-develop.



Organisations should consider the following policy list to support volunteers in their role.

Policy	Essential	Desirable
Volunteer Role Descriptor	✓	
Volunteer Agreement	✓	
Volunteer Handbook <i>This should clearly outline expectations of the volunteer and the organisation</i>	✓	
Adult Protection Policy	✓	
Child Protection Policy	✓	
Volunteering Policy	✓	
Volunteering Expenses Policy		
GDPR Policy	✓	
Confidentiality Policy	✓	
Lone working <i>(working in learners' homes)</i>	✓	
End of Volunteering Policy	✓	
Problem-solving Policy		
Counselling out	✓	
Complaints Policy	✓	
Recruitment of volunteers into staff positions		✓
Offer of support	✓	
Giving references	✓	



APPENDIX 6

Volunteer survey summary

1. Volunteer roles

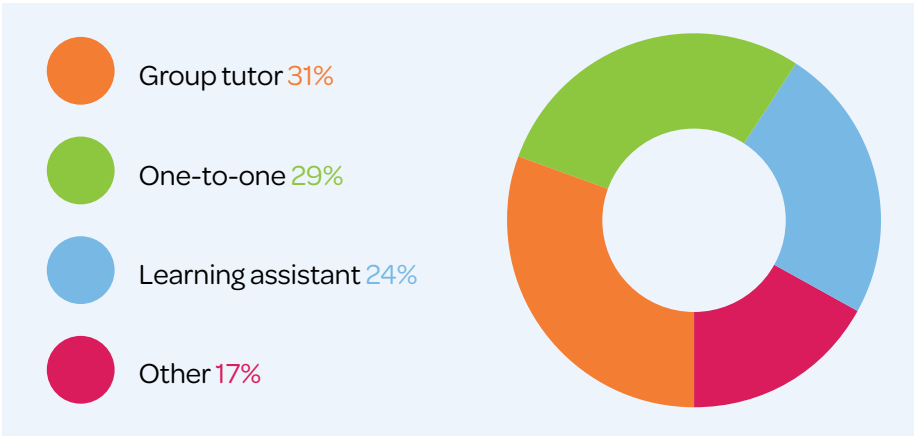
Roles covered by volunteers in ESOL delivery are summarised in **appendix A1**. These charts show the deployment of the volunteers who took part in the survey and where they volunteer.

92% volunteers give their time for between one and five hours per week and 8% give 6-10 hours.

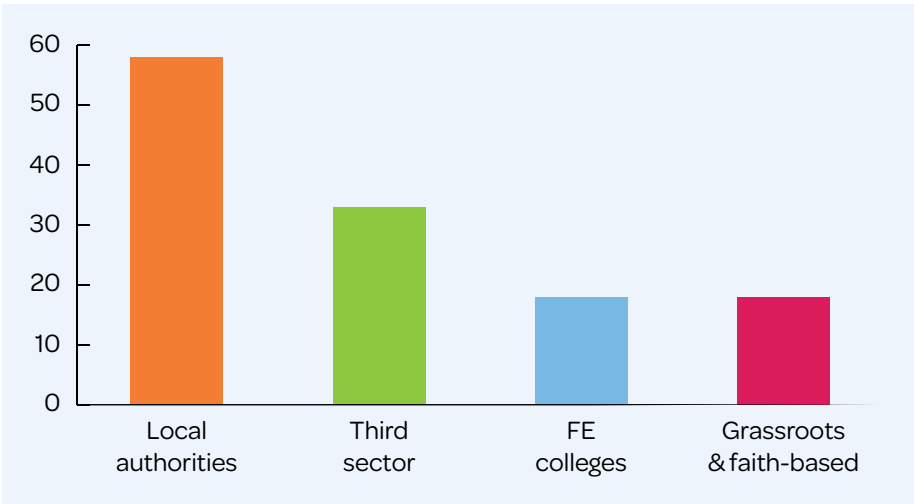
Other roles included were befriender, language mentor, language buddy, conversation café supporter, volunteer coordinator, social media coordinator and teacher trainer. Some volunteers do more than one role, within an organisation or for different organisations.

Volunteers participating volunteered their time in a range of organisations.

Volunteering roles



Organisations involving volunteers



2. Volunteer recruitment and selection

The survey showed that volunteers have a range of relevant qualifications. 51% of volunteers surveyed have a CELTA (or equivalent) or above; others have other teaching qualifications (non-ESOL specific), including 14% with a PGCE (or equivalent). 31% have no direct teaching qualifications.

The survey asked about volunteers' motivation to give their time. Most volunteers are motivated to volunteer because they want to support people learning English in Scotland, use teaching skills to benefit ESOL learners and to give something back to my community. Many volunteers have experience of living abroad and trying to learn a language and therefore want to support people in Scotland to settle into their new lives. Improving their own teaching skills did feature as a motivation but largely in the context of supporting their learners.

"My relationship with the organisation has always been open, supportive and encouraging, and focused almost entirely on the learners and their needs."

3. Induction and initial training

Induction processes and initial training varied across projects – with some offering training (62%), including accredited training (7%) and some offer a combination of meeting with coordinator, reading a handbook or observing another tutor in action and some projects need volunteers to 'turn up and teach'. Half of induction processes take less than 2 days with 26% takes 3-5 days and 24% takes 6 days or more.

Volunteers were largely positive about induction training and most volunteers were able to reference content from their induction that they found useful. Examples given were: 'understanding of social practice model, barriers to learning, specific learning difficulties, methods of learning and ways to present information to learners, equalities and diversity'. Areas volunteers feel are particularly useful and have highlighted gaps in induction training are having more information about the situations learners are in (i.e. more on the immigration system); confidentiality; ESOL levels; a picture of how ESOL is delivered in Scotland and useful resources.

After their induction, most volunteers (73%) feel prepared to start their role but sometimes this can be due to the prior experience rather than what an organisation has provided them with.

Volunteers recognise that there is limited time and resources for induction training, and learning 'on the job' is a big part of building skills in a volunteering role.

4. Professional learning and development

Volunteers are motivated to participate in ongoing professional learning and development in order to improve their skills to work with ESOL learners. Training opportunities are effective when the volunteers understand their role and learners and want to develop their skills with this in mind. The survey showed a gap in knowledge of volunteers of sources of external training, ESOL and CLD organisations that can offer professional guidance and support. Throughout the framework, there are sources of support aimed co-ordinators, many of which are relevant to volunteers.

The survey also highlighted a gap in knowledge of volunteers of ESOL Strategy in Scotland and how ESOL is funded and delivered although they are acutely aware of the need and the challenges learners face in making progression.

5. Coordination, support and management

“Ensure the volunteer feels part of the team. That the volunteer is clear on their role and where to get resources, guidance and help when needed to deliver that role. Offer opportunities for CPD and for volunteers to share their experiences and ideas. Provide feedback on the difference being made through the contribution of volunteers and ways this could be improved”

–Volunteer Survey

69% of volunteers state that support from a coordinator makes their role easier to carry out. Other notable support was access to teaching resources (56%), teaching advice (43%), peer support (43%) and training (32%).

Throughout the survey and interviews, volunteers refer to positive relationships with both coordinators and tutors they support. They appreciate feedback and encouragement and where organisations are respectful of their time and offered thanks for their contribution.

Volunteers recognised that where support and training was minimal, this might be a resourcing issue but felt this should be considered by volunteer-involving organisations.

The survey showed that volunteers want to feel included in the team, whether that was with paid staff or other volunteers, and they appreciate time spent sharing practice and ideas. It is important to them that they feel part of the organisation and have the chance to give feedback and be involved in decision making.

In the survey, volunteers offered lots of suggestions for project and service development, demonstrating their understanding of the needs of learners they support and creativity in meeting those needs. Suggestions relating to volunteering have largely been embedded into the framework.

The word ‘frustrating’ featured in the survey, when volunteers described their experience and learner progress. Organisations are invited to consider how to manage feelings of frustration in volunteers through clearly defined expectations and ongoing support and consultation.

Ideas for development included: more representation for volunteers’ perspective; utilising volunteers’ other skills; online volunteering opportunities; blended learning; more training on literacies; more educational trips or cultural visits; increasing digital skills; more family ESOL; increase in ‘real life’ situations through buddying and social groups; increasing awareness of what ESOL is and how it is delivered.

“Make your expectations clear. Be supportive at all times and answer questions, even if they are quite basic. Give reassurance to volunteers, even if they seem confident and experienced, we all need praise and encouragement. Small gestures like saying ‘Thank you’ at the end of a session and sending Christmas cards are also important.”

– Volunteer survey

6. Making a difference to learners

Making a difference to the lives of ESOL learners is the main motivation for most volunteers and it is therefore important that this is clearly communicated. Volunteers want to know how learners are progressing and how learning English is improving their lives.

7. Making a difference to volunteers

It was evident in the survey that volunteers feel that they are making a difference to learners but also find it personally fulfilling. Volunteers noted feeling personally connected to learners and their role and this was reflected in the main motivations for volunteering.

34% of volunteers have volunteered for more than 4 years, 33% have volunteered between 1-4 years and 8% were very new to their role. 76% said their future intention was to continue their role (the timing of the survey during COVID – 19 lockdown in Spring 2020 may have impacted on this.)

36 % of volunteers surveyed said that they would like to work in the ESOL/EFL sector which is worth noting for organisations to support volunteers in their own progression.

APPENDIX 7

Self-evaluation: reflecting on our projects



This framework is intended to encourage practitioners and organisations to reflect on our work and consider making changes to better suit learners' and volunteers' needs, including people not yet engaged in ESOL learning.

Please remember volunteer-involving organisations – including yours – do great work and both learners and volunteers appreciate the opportunities you are providing. If you know you are doing something well, share it with others on i-develop.

Making changes to a project can be challenging and the planning tools included are intended to support you. Projects are invited to focus on making changes on a small number of good practice goals at a time (1-4 should be manageable). You might want to consider some changes with different timescales. Some changes may take a considerable amount of time and resources, some will be more straightforward to implement.

As you read the framework, you will start considering your work. You may decide to make changes in your own way or use the tools and templates in this framework.

The review process:

1. Quick check – what might we want to improve
2. Action Planning Discussion
3. Creating an action plan

Part 1 – Quick Check

As you are reading the framework, mark how you feel about your current practice.

Score your organisation on each good practice goal: 1= We are satisfied with this; 2= Let's consider a change; 3=Let's make a change.

You might want to invite other stakeholders, including volunteers to do this. There might be lots of things you would change if your resources were unlimited. However, that will not be the case. Your project runs well enough and it is important that you prioritise actions that will make a difference to learners and be manageable for you.

Part 2 – Action Planning Discussion

Choose between 1-4 good practice goals to work on. Some may be quick actions to take, others may take longer to implement, requiring consultation, support from other organisations or additional funding.

Have a team discussion using the **Action Planning Discussion Template** in **appendix A8**:

1. **Consider the challenge questions.** They are designed to support you to think about how you currently evaluate your project and how you know about the difference you are making

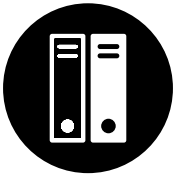
2. **Think broadly about all the possible actions you could take.** This is not a to-do list but a way of thinking about possibilities. Look at the resources list and examples of the other projects approaches at this stage or in part 4. Think about actual and potential resourcing. Can you work with other organisations to support this?
3. **To help prioritise, consider using the effort/ impact matrix in appendix A9.** Consider resourcing, timescale, who will do the work, who you can get advice from, what resources might help, and how you will evaluate any changes. Write your plan down in the planning tool.

Part 3 – Creating an Action Plan

Once you have agreed some actions you want to take forward, create an action plan using the Action Plan template.

Action planning discussion template

For a worked example, visit [i-develop](#)



Theme:		
Good practice goal:		Date:
Our response to the challenge question(s) How do we know about our work?	Possible actions	Priorities and sub-tasks

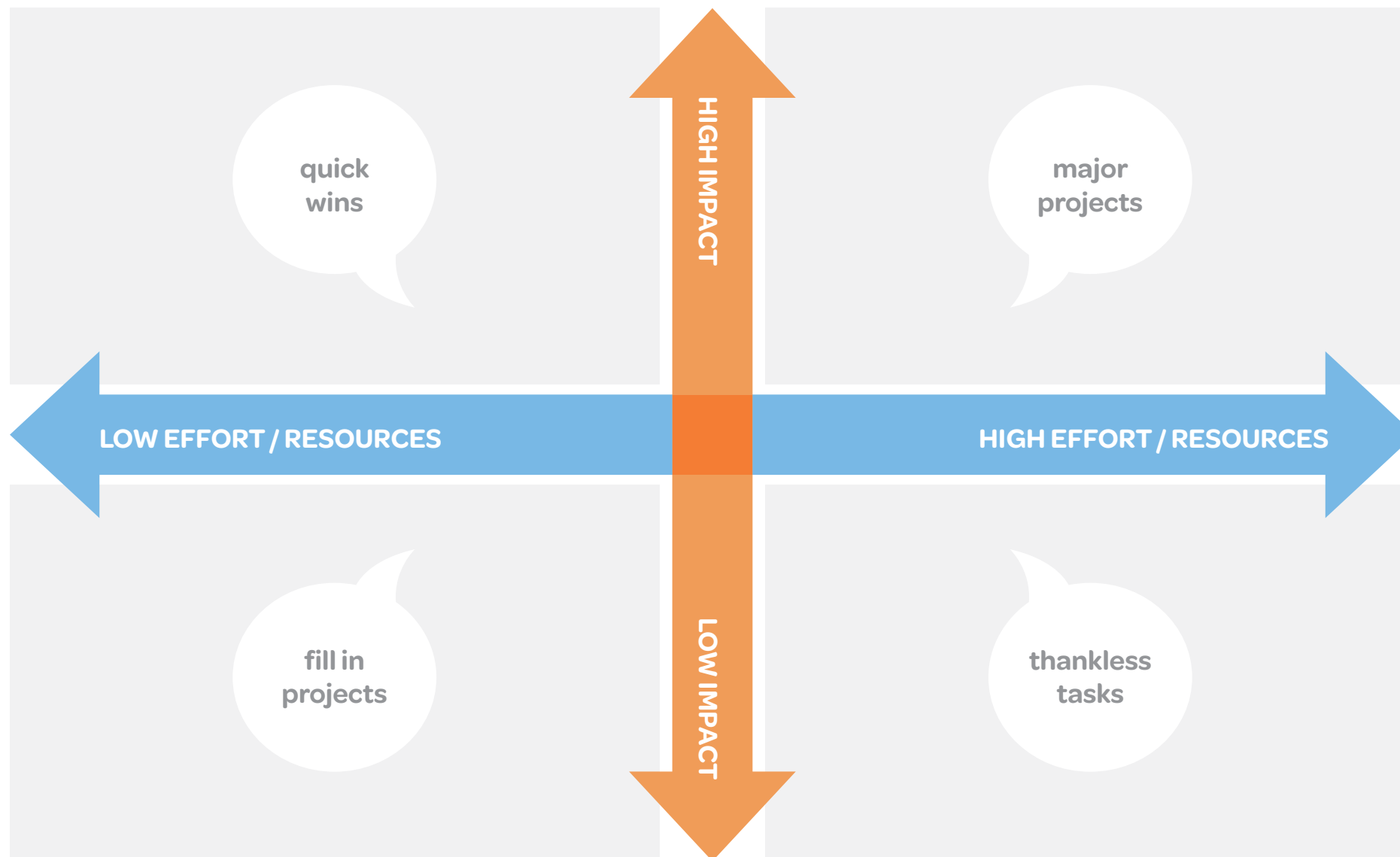
APPENDIX 9

Impact/effort matrix

For a worked example, visit [i-develop](#)



Consider possible actions from your team discussions: **1. What effort and resources do they require?** and **2. What impact they will have on your project?**

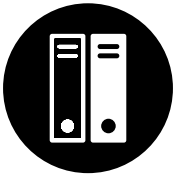


APPENDIX 10

Action plan template

From your team discussion, put the agreed actions into the table. The tasks should consider how you are going to consult stakeholders, resourcing and evaluation. Be as specific as possible. For a worked example, visit [i-develop](#).

Framework Good Practice Goals we want to address	Agreed Actions	Tasks	Complete by time/ person	Resources required	Other organisations to involve and specific actions	Progress made	Complete	Review date



Thank you

We would like to thank...

The volunteers who participated in our survey and interviews.

More widely, we would like to thank volunteers, past and present, who have offered their time and skills to make a huge difference in so many people's lives.

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Michelle Ozturk, North Lanarkshire Council,
Kate Sangster, South Ayrshire Council
Ilona Witoszek, Stirling School of English





Hello my name is

Volunteers make a valuable contribution to ESOL in Scotland. Sharing the wealth of knowledge and practice will improve the learning experience for learners, volunteers and organisations.

Join the conversation with
Glasgow ESOL Forum
and **i-develop**.



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