

# Hackney Skills, Economy and Growth Scrutiny Commission

ELATT Submission, July 2022

## Context

Lifelong learning is key to retraining, accessing better job opportunities and transitioning to new employment sectors. The UK Government committed £3 billion over 5 years, from 2021, to a National Skills Fund to retrain and upskill the adult workforce to meet identified skills gaps. The commission would like to know how the council and further education providers' invest this money for the benefit of Hackney residents.



### What are the skills gaps identified in Hackney?

English language – both for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and literacy amongst first language or bilingual residents  
Basic IT – there are still high numbers in the borough without basic digital skills. This is not limited to older groups but spans all ages – it is also true of so-called 'digital natives', who often have good social media skills but not necessarily ability in office staples such as Word, Excel etc.  
Employability – in particular confidence and self-esteem  
More advanced digital skills knowledge amongst disadvantaged groups eg. coding, computer engineering, web development.  
Maths



**What is the breakdown of the demographics accessing adult education, learning and skills courses provided by your organisation in the borough?**

**Are there any specific cohorts or ethnic minority groups that tend not to access adult learning or skills development, or access it less than the average? If yes, what can be done to address this?**

At ELATT we have high levels of representation across most ethnic and faith groups in the borough, and due to the nature of our provision (with Sixth Form provision for 16-19), adult vocational and life skills for 19+, we have a very wide spread of ages, though adults tend to be in the 30 – 50 age group.

Our students tend to come from the lower socio-economic groups within the borough and very few from the wealthier borough demographics as we would expect, given the nature of our services focussed on those in low pay or no pay.

Although Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Baha'i communities are well represented, we rarely have students from the Orthodox Jewish community.

Overall we have a broad gender balance of 50% women and men. However, this overall figure hides wide differences in each department. Our sixth form provision is overwhelmingly male at about 80%, our adult digital skills course are far more balanced (and although Tech remains very male and Office IT female, Software, Web Design and Media are very balanced). Meanwhile, our ESOL provision is overwhelmingly female at around 75%, perhaps because men are more likely to be working in casual work often with erratic hours.

Working with secondary schools is important as a way to ensure that both boys and girls understand that Digital Skills routes are attainable and open to them. This approach also benefits from awareness-raising sessions for parents to understand that digital jobs present genuine career paths. For adults, we ensure we provide similar sessions for adult learners in first steps learning provision, so that they too understand their progression options, including digital and tech skills. We have on occasion made inroads into providing ESOL support for men within the Jewish community through partnership with specialist non-profit organisations.



**Please provide a breakdown of the income stream / funding source for adult learning for your organisation?**

Our breakdown of income per year is broadly:

Greater London Assembly, devolved Adult Education Budget: £700,000  
Education Skills Funding Agency, Dept. for Education: £350,000  
SEND support (Education, Health and Care Plan 'top-up' funding): £350,000  
Alternative Provision: £50,000  
National Lottery co-financed with ESF: £400,000  
National Lottery Reaching Communities: £150,000  
Home Office Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF, EU), £400,000  
Corporate and Private Foundations: £200,000  
Charitable Trusts: £100,000  
Local authorities inc. Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest: £120,000



**How do you measure the success of this investment?**

Hard outcomes: progression into jobsearch, progression into further learning at a higher level, progression into work placement and/or paid employment

Other outcomes: progress against individual learning plans; student impact surveys at start of course, end of course and six months after the course end showing distance travelled; case studies and testimonials.



**What conditions are applied by national government to this funding and what consequences does such criteria have on the effectiveness of the investment?**

The rules on Adult Education Budget becoming increasingly strict in some ways (in particular learner eligibility) although since devolution the GLA have brought in some substantial improvements through their devolved authority, notably a 10% improvement in funding rates at Entry, Level 1 and Level 2, and full funding again for Level 3, which is a great help as we find that job outcomes are often significantly better following Level 3 courses than Level 2 (80% against 25%).

Government funding will not support asylum seekers for the first six months of arrival, which means refugees can be left in limbo in those first few months, which can be a very difficult negative cycle to break out of.

For adults, there is also a major strategic problem emerging because the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the replacement to ESF funding, which the non-profit sector is relatively dependent on, will not start funding its skills priorities til April 2024 at the earliest – if the programme stay on timetable. This means a gap of at least eight months between the end of ESF in September 2023 and its replacement starting in April 2024. This could be very negative for the voluntary sector infrastructure.

At the 16-19 provision point, the move to T Levels is a concern because there really are not enough substantial work placements available to meet the expected conditions of the T Level programme. The lack of work placement has become acute since Covid, as companies are less willing to commit to being open.



**The Council has pledged to make sure there are opportunities for lifelong learning, excellent skills courses with qualifications and routes to good jobs. This is in addition to the new green deal pledge to support the local green economy creating green skills mapped to the green skills gap. What does ELATT understand by the “green skills gap” and how do you plan to plug it?**

In our understanding of the green skills gap, there is a gap between the skills needed and the skills available for the UK to achieve net zero, with green skills being those jobs that can directly contribute to low carbon, improved environmental efficiencies and reduction of waste and harmful pollutants. We hope to be able to contribute to addressing this by supporting students to move into digital skills such as logistics, data analysis and networking, all of which have the potential to reduce carbon and waste.