



The role of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in helping to strengthen community cohesion

Open Agenda Event at St. George's House, Windsor Castle
12th –13th June 2008

Background Paper

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If anyone needs to contact you urgently whilst you're attending the event, the telephone number for St. George's House is **01753 848848** and the fax number is **01753 848849**.

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to this confidential ideas-building event. As you know, the purpose of this session is to build on responses to the recent consultation “**Focusing ESOL on Community Cohesion**” to consolidate thinking and agree how we can begin to put the proposals put forward into practice.

For those who haven't been to an Open Agenda event before, the reason that we are holding this session at St. George's House is that the aim of the House is to create an atmosphere of trust in which well-informed people can bring fresh thinking to key issues that will have impact on our future. It is **NOT** the sort of place where delegates with badges listen to speeches. It **IS** a place where you can try out new ideas without fearing the consequences.

In order for this happen, we place great stress on the need for our discussions to be confidential. At this event, we want to be able to work creatively, and this means we may disagree with each other at times. We may be persuaded by an argument and want to change our minds on an issue. Everyone will need to feel that they are able to speak plainly without feeling they are rocking the boat. There can be no feeling of hidden agendas operating.

We have a hugely important and sensitive task before us. If we're going to succeed, we need to feel that we can trust each other, really put our propositions through the mill, and be mindful of the changes we are proposing for others to deliver. This is why we place such an emphasis on confidentiality.

The Dean, Canons and Warden welcome you to St. George's House as their home. We hope that you'll feel that you can enter into the spirit of the place as a safe and welcoming environment, and that the experience will be both creative and enjoyable.

ESOL and Community Cohesion

Community cohesion has been placed in bold above to remind us of the context in which we will be considering ESOL. We want to avoid the pitfall of **dislocating** ESOL from the context of community cohesion.

At the same time, we need to recognise that the tight focus we want to maintain throughout our discussions is part of a **wider package of measures** that is being developed and recommended for people who do not speak English as their first language. Our challenge will be to place our discussions within this wider context, but not yield to the temptation of exploring the other measures taking place in detail. If we do allow this to happen, we will find ourselves without sufficient time to work through how we can put into practice a policy aimed at reaching those who have lived in England for a considerable time and yet still lack the language skills needed for them to be fully integrated within wider communities.

The relationship between ESOL and community cohesion is not simple. The role that ESOL plays in strengthening community cohesion may look different for each local area. For example, one locality's priority may be to encourage parents to take a more active role in schools whilst in others, it may be to reduce tensions between groups of teenagers from different ethnic backgrounds.

We know that ESOL will play several different roles in local areas. We want a clear understanding of the complex relationship between ESOL and community cohesion not only to inform our discussions, but also inform our proposals to ensure that we build in sufficient flexibility for ESOL to contribute towards strengthening community cohesion in a wide and varied range of different contexts.

Agenda

12th June	From 11.30 pm	Arrival at St. George's House
	12.15 pm	Light sandwich lunch
	1.30 pm	<p>Opening Session in the Vicars' Hall. Welcome from Right Hon. John Denham MP, Secretary of State, DIUS. Agree goals, scope and ground rules for our discussions.</p> <p>Begin by exploring what success will look like from different perspectives. How will the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion be known to be successful (and how can we measure this success) from the perspective of communities, Agencies and Government Departments?</p> <p>Build on emerging ideas to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → affirm principles for protocols and processes for the delivery of ESOL designed to strengthen community cohesion, and → identify the essential infrastructure that needs to be in place locally, regionally and nationally, and the connectivity between the component elements
	4.50 pm	Tea
	5.05 pm	Sung Evensong in the Chapel for those who wish to attend
	6.00 pm prompt	Evening Session Welcome to Bill Rammell, MP, Minister of State, DIUS Focus on specific issues that need to be resolved in order to put this policy into practice. These will include those issues raised in this Background Paper and from our first session
	7.40 pm	Pre-dinner drinks in the sitting room
	8.00 pm	Informal Dinner (it is the custom of the House to say a short grace before Dinner)
	9.45 pm	Private Tour of St. George's Chapel, led by Rev. Canon John White

13th June	8.00 am	Communion in the Chapel (optional)
	8.30 am	Breakfast
	9.10 am prompt	<p>Morning Session Share ideas that emerged from our discussions the previous evening and identify key areas that require capacity building and development to ensure that the infrastructure is fit for purpose and in place by Autumn 2009</p> <p>We will then have an opportunity to respond to initial draft proposals on support and entitlement for employees who speak other languages, and explore how well these ideas would dovetail with our proposals for the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion.</p>
	11.00 am	Short break
	11.15 am	Final Session Agree timeline and key actions needed to take place over the coming months in to prepare for and deliver ESOL provision focused to strengthen community cohesion
	No later than 12.45 pm	Lunch

Our starting point – the objectives and principles that define the proposition

Our discussions will build on the objectives and principles that will shape the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion outlined below. We don't want to open up debate on the detail of this work at Windsor, but draw on these statements to inform our thinking and ideas building.

Possible objectives for the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion

The following are all possible objectives for providing ESOL as **part** of an approach to help strengthen community cohesion. They are not intended as an exhaustive list, but are **examples** of just some of the kinds of objectives that may be priorities in a given area.

- Improved contact and communication between different groups within a neighbourhood. For example, this could be measured through an increase in take up of multi-ethnic informal leisure and learning opportunities from members of minority communities, such as cooking clubs that include members of minority communities as well as those from the indigenous population;

- Improved perceptions of mutual cross cultural understanding and respect. An indicator could be increased participation in multi-ethnic neighbourhood forums (Tenants' and Residents' Associations, Neighbourhood Watch etc.) from members of minority communities in the local area;
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour directed at a particular group(s);
- Reduction in negative publicity and reporting about a particular group(s);
- Positive change in false perceptions that a particular ethnic group is responsible for crime and/or antisocial behaviour;
- Increase in the number of people from ethnic minority communities who feel that they have the same life chances as others in the local area;
- Decrease in perception that members of a particular ethnic group are disadvantaging others in terms of life opportunities and access to services (health, housing, education, employment, support);
- A reduction in worklessness amongst members of a particular ethnic group. As well as employment, this could include increased participation in volunteering in organisations that are outside of their communities (schools, hospitals, police, community organisations etc.) from members of minority communities in a local area; and
- Improved intergenerational communication and understanding between parents and children.

While this list of possible objectives demonstrates the supporting role that ESOL can play, it can only **be part of the** approach to achieve the objectives, working alongside activities to improve community safety, housing, health, education and employment.

Principles

Drawing on the responses to the consultation¹, the key principles that it was felt should characterise approaches that focus ESOL on community cohesion are outlined below.

- i. **English language support is an 'enabler' that helps people to get the other skills, knowledge and self confidence that they need.** Making English language tuition more effective is important in its own right. But for it to have maximum impact in strengthening community cohesion, it should be embedded as part of wider personalised and tailored packages of support. This must be reflected in planning and investment strategies and mechanisms by contextualising English language support in ways that contribute to the achievement of cohesion objectives and are relevant to people's personal goals.
- ii. **English language skills alone cannot create cohesion.** We need to improve our 'reach' so that those who are excluded in isolated communities and in the workplace are also engaged and helped to progress. We know that ESOL plays a pivotal role in this process, but it can only be fully effective when combined with tackling the other issues that isolate people – poverty, poor health and housing, poor education and lack of opportunity.

¹ Many thanks to all contributors who responded to the consultation held by DIUS. Your views have been closely reflected both in the five principles outlined, and in the key issues raised and questions posed in this Background Paper as the focus for discussions on 12 – 13th June.

- iii. **The fundamental skills and attributes that make us 'employable' are also those that promote cohesion and integration.** Most people who require help with their English language skills want and need to work sooner or later in their lives. Good jobs and thriving local economies are essential for successful communities. English language skills are vital if people are to support their families effectively, be part of wider communities, get involved in volunteering and be successful at work.
- iv. **People whose first language is not English do not just have language needs.** They also possess skills, experience and attributes that are very valuable – personally, for their families, communities and for employers. People's talents must be acknowledged in the process that plans their support and progression. Recognising people's skills and talents is a key step in helping people to feel part of their local community.
- v. **Success rests on effective cross agency and local partnership working.** Success will be realised through new national, regional and local partnerships. This shared commitment will yield planned integrated services and align public investment to support those with greatest need and, where appropriate, encourage contributions from employers and individuals. The commissioning and delivery process must recognise local priorities and conditions within a shared and robust regional/sub-regional strategic framework.

Issues to explore

At this event there are four major areas that we need to consider to move from the concept of the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion to creating and implementing a framework to put the concept into practice.

1 Identifying provision to meet need

There are three key factors to be considered if we are to make sure that ESOL provision has an effective role in supporting community cohesion. These factors are:

- i. **Community cohesion objectives** – we need to understand what the specific objectives for community cohesion might be for each local area where variations may be identified through local research for 'place shaping' and planning for Local Area Agreements and other local strategies. For example, one Local Authority may have a particular priority for the reduction of racial harassment. Another local area may have a particularly urgent need to support better intergenerational understanding, and for another it may be specifically related to improving skills and employment levels to reduce racial tension. Of course most, if not all, local areas will have a range of objectives for community cohesion.

In all cases, there will be strong links with Local and Multi Area Agreements and other local strategic plans. PSA 21², which has 3 National Indicators provides an excellent starting point for identifying priorities for ESOL for community cohesion and there is a great opportunity for local areas to develop their own objectives that underpin these Indicators and at the same time reflect particular local priorities.

- ii. **Personal goals** – people with ESOL needs have varying goals, depending on their circumstances, skills and other needs. For some, looking after families will be the priority and for others, getting a job and being successful at work. We know that most people will have more than one goal in life. Being

² Details of PSA21, and other PSAs that are relevant to one or more of the potential objectives for ESOL in playing a role to strengthen community cohesion are included in Appendix 4 on pages 27 – 29 to this Paper.

accepted, valued and respected (key components of community cohesion), will be important goals for the vast majority of people across all groups.

- iii. **Individual needs** – people with ESOL needs are not a homogenous group. As well as having different personal goals, their learning needs will also vary. To be effective, ESOL for community cohesion must have the flexibility to respond to needs ranging from those who are illiterate in their mother tongue and have no English language, to those with some spoken or fairly fluent English but cannot read or write the language.

It is the interplay between these three key factors that is critical for planning ESOL so that plays an effective role in community cohesion. We need to understand the priority objectives for community cohesion in a given area, how this relates to people's personal goals and the range of individual needs within the groups of people that require ESOL support.

This is a complex interplay. In appendix 1 (pages 17 – 21) there is a range of more detailed information that provides a starting point to clarify the detail for each of the three factors. This is accompanied by a matrix that gives a common format for key local (and regional) partners to plan ESOL provision that is fit for purpose in relation to the identified community cohesion objectives, personal goals and individual needs.

At the event, we want to explore whether you feel this approach would help planners to commission the type of tailored provision that will be effective in strengthening community cohesion, or whether there are alternative, more effective ways that should be considered.

2. Commissioning and delivery

In order to develop a strategy for commissioning and delivery of ESOL provision that meets one or more objectives in strengthening community cohesion it could be helpful to consider the **key players** that will be involved in one or more ways.

- **Community and voluntary sector groups** are closest to the people and neighbourhoods in which community cohesion needs to be strengthened.
- **Providers of ESOL** in further and adult education, the voluntary and private sectors have a track record of delivering a wide range of different types of ESOL for different purposes...
- **Local Strategic Partnerships** are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships which match Local Authority boundaries. These Partnerships bring together, at a local level, different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. Responsibility for identifying priorities and delivery of Local and Multi Areas Agreements will rest with the Partnerships.
- **Local Authorities** are accountable for co-ordinating delivery of different types of support to specific geographic areas and groups of people under newly introduced Local and Multi Area Agreements. They may also deliver ESOL provision funded through Learning & Skills Council contracts, European Social Funds, and other sources. If Local Authorities were to take on a commissioning role,

consideration would need to be given to limiting their involvement with regard to delivery to avoid compromising the procurement process.

- **Learning & Skills Council** is involved in a number of ways and on a number of different levels, reflecting its structure and remit. Nationally, through DIUS, the LSC holds responsibility for the achievement of ESOL qualifications which is a key feature of its culture, as is ensuring the quality of provision.
- **Regional Development Agencies** which have a remit to strengthen and grow regional economies, guided by the principles of sustainability to ensure a healthy long-term future for everyone.
- **Government Departments: DIUS** has responsibility for the delivery of most of ESOL provision. However, it does not hold sole responsibility.

In May 2007, the ESOL Ministerial Cross-Government Group was established following recommendations in both the NIACE report *"ESOL - more than just a language"* published in November 2006, and the Race Equality Impact Assessment in February 2007. Both reports indicated that the quality of ESOL provision would be significantly improved if there were greater coordination of planning across Government departments, for example across health, community cohesion and employability.

Bill Rammell, Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education invited key Ministers, including the devolved administrations, to an initial meeting on 10 May 2007 to discuss the cross Government approach to ESOL.

The group, under the Chairmanship of Bill Rammell, has met several times since then with the emphasis on ensuring coherent and consistent policies across other Government departments. The most recent meeting took place on 28 February 2008 with the next meeting scheduled for 02 July 2008.

The tough issue that we want to work through at Windsor is what the process for commissioning and delivery should be. Consideration needs to be given to the roles and relationships that need to be in place³ to ensure that:

- commissioning is responsive to local need – which includes the scope for rapid and timely responses where needed;
- commissioning sits within regional/sub-regional frameworks to maintain coherence and consistency;
- there is a shared understanding and agreement of the indicators that should be used to measure success, and
- systems for accountability and quality which meet local and national Government requirements are in place.

³ Processes need to be in place by April 2009 to test bed the approach, and implement the new policy fully by September 2009

3. Funding

If we are to maximise the positive impact of ESOL on community cohesion, we need to consider new ways of using public investment so that it reaches people most at risk of isolation more effectively and helps them to acquire the skills needed to be part of wider communities and successful at work.

While DIUS will be the lead Department in funding ESOL provision that plays a role in strengthening community cohesion, other Government Departments also contribute funding within their policy remits. Departments include: the Home Office, Departments of Work & Pensions, Health, Communities and Local Government, Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Culture Media and Sport. In addition, together with DIUS, all these Departments have a key role to play in helping to strengthen community cohesion.

The challenge we want to work through at Windsor is how these strands of funding can be woven together so that they can be drawn upon to respond to local demands and opportunities for strengthening community cohesion.

The funding mechanics that are being developed to deliver Local and Multi Area Agreements may provide us with some insights about how this might be done.

We may also wish to consider models of funding that follow the individual, such as **Skills Accounts**. Adopting this approach would mean that we have an opportunity to be more precise in targeting investment on people who fall into priority groups. It also provides the scope to fund differing **packages** of support that can respond to more effectively to individual needs. In this way it could link up with 'funding following the individual' pilots that have been tested successfully in other arenas, such as health.

One key issue related to funding systems (particularly those drawing funding from different sources) is how to measure success in a way that is meaningful to individuals, communities, Agencies and Government Departments. All these stakeholders need to agree what success looks like and how it can be measured. Once again, we make be able to draw from the experience of the development of Local and Multi Area Agreements in how this can be achieved.

One of the goals we want to achieve through our discussions is to develop a funding model that provides individuals with tailored packages of ESOL support that will help strengthen community cohesion.

The design principles for the model are that it needs to:

- reach the individuals whose needs are greatest;**
- be seen to be fair by members of a community;**
- be efficient, and**

→ achieve agreed measures of success that different Government Departments can equate with a return on their investment because they relate directly to the Public Service Agreements and Departmental Service Objectives that they are charged to achieve.

4 Business Planning

Introducing any new policy requires adjustment to planning cycles, and this one is no exception.

The table given in Appendix 3 (pages 25 – 26) is intended as a **starting point** to identify the different timelines and processes that will need to align to ensure joint planning between the LSC, Local Authorities and other key national, regional and local bodies to enable better locally defined demand for ESOL for Community Cohesion to be delivered from Autumn 2009.

As such, it is a high level 'transition' plan, taking into account the different planning timelines. Once this high level planning approach is agreed and implemented, it can be drawn upon to develop a sustainable process that enables joint planning between national, regional and local partners. This process will also need to accommodate Machinery of Government and other changes.

The table gives the **known** existing mainstream LSC planning process in *italics*. All other processes are suggested. This is not to imply an LSC-centric view of planning! We have used the LSC's business cycle as it currently has greatest responsibility for funding ESOL provision.

Joint, cross agency regional planning processes vary significantly and this will need to be reflected in the planning process. Furthermore, the establishment of local Employment and Skills Boards and the business planning cycles for Local and Multi Area agreements will need to be taken into account.

To ensure that Local Authorities areas better define their ESOL for Community Cohesion need and that necessary LSC funding decisions can be made from April 2009, we suggest the following timescales may need to be adopted.

- In 2008, the LSC would set aside a provisional allocation **without prior sight** of Local Authorities' needs analyses. This could be based on either current analysis available within the LSC or Local Authorities or by the LSC establishing a proxy based on historic data. For delivery in 2009, Local Authorities would provide the LSC with costed plans (for implementation in September 2009) by February 2009.
- From 2009 onwards, Local Authorities would provide by September each year analysis that reflects priorities in their area, linked with key Community Cohesion issues that will range across health, housing, crime etc. In some instances, it may be relatively easy to extract these from Local or Multi Area Agreements but this will vary considerably across local areas.
- Local Authority plans will also need to reference regional strategies, for example, refugee integration strategies, as well as relevant aspects of skills and employment strategies where they have a direct impact on Community Cohesion.

The timetable above assumes that ways of working and key issues have been agreed. These would include:

- Local Authorities, the LSC and other key partners would consult and collaborate to ensure that a **fully rounded evidence base** drives locally focused ESOL.

- Local Authorities would need to clarify their role and position – particularly in terms of the dual role of commissioner of and 'bidder' for funds that is the current arrangement in some areas.
- A procurement process and methodology would need to be agreed. The planning above assumes that LSC procures on the basis that this will provide consistent management information.
- Management information would need to be reviewed to ensure that what is measured is able to assess impact on community cohesion.

The key questions we want to tackle through our discussions on business planning are:

- Is the approach outlined the right one, or is there a more effective alternative?
- If this approach is favoured, are there any issues that have been overlooked and need to be considered?
- What are the next steps to firming up a planning process for the introduction of this new policy strand?

Our Approach to this event

Important key notes of our approach to these events are informality and confidentiality. So we dispense with the usual 'round robin' of introductions and format of opening presentations. Instead of going through the creeping death of introductions, we will just put first names on badges to make it easier to see each other's names. When you arrive, you will find your name badge on a table in the Patricia Hotung Room on the ground floor of St. George's House. Alongside the first name badges you will also have a first name participant and contact list.

We are delighted that the Right Hon. John Denham MP, Secretary of State at DIUS will be joining us for our opening discussions on Thursday afternoon. Following the style of Open Agenda events at St. George's House, the Minister will **not** be delivering a speech. Instead, he will set out **the Government's expectations** of what should be in place to test out the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion by March next year, with a view to implementing the policy fully in September of next year.

What the Minister will be charging us with is the challenge of playing a key role in putting policy into practice. The challenge is both creative and practical. If we are going to demonstrate the effectiveness of the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion, it will require us all to be prepared to see and, in some instances, do things differently.

At this event, we want to tackle issues by drawing on our collective expertise and experience and, most importantly, by being willing to consider propositions **from different viewpoints**.

I'm sure you're all familiar with events where participants act as strong persuasive advocates for a particular group, organisation or sector. That's not what Open Agenda events are about. We actively encourage participants to view issues from different angles, and try and put organisational loyalties to one side. At this

event, the viewpoints we will **all** need to consider will be how **collectively** we can ensure that the role of ESOL in helping strengthen community cohesion is fully effective, and drive the policy forward and make it happen in a coherent and connected way.

Advocates only represent one viewpoint. Their aim is to persuade others round to their way of thinking by the power of their arguments. While this is a valued role, it is not helpful for ideas-building. It can often result in people becoming locked in battles of views, where no one is prepared to shift in their thinking, or give up an inch of ground!

This is why we hope everyone joining the event will be as open minded as possible, and accept that we are engaging in areas of debate in which **no one is certain of all the answers or the best way ahead**. This can sound risky to some – and feel even riskier as we go through the process – but the great pay-off is that it really does give us the opportunity to break new ground in our thinking.

We want to begin this event as we mean to continue – with a fast flowing informal discussion, in which we **all** feel that we have a responsibility to put forward ideas and, in doing so, **take risks** in breaking new ground.

Our opening question

Before we launch into how we can put policy into practice, we first want to agree what success will look like. The clearer we can articulate **the indicators** that will demonstrate the success, the better we can design the infrastructure and systems to achieve these indicators. Our opening questions will be:

Drawing on the possible objectives outlined, how will the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion be known to be successful from the perspective of communities, Agencies and the Government Departments?

What are possible indicators that can be used to measure the success to ensure accountability for funding, the achievement of relevant targets and contribution to Public Service Agreements?

We can then begin to explore how we adapt or develop the infrastructure and processes needed to achieve and measure success.

Let's agree our givens


I'm sure you've all had the experience of joining discussions where you're not 100% certain that everyone is talking about the same thing or, even what they are talking about. The only thing to do in these circumstances is call a halt on discussions to check whether when using a word or phrase we do all mean the same thing and what that is. While it is essential for clarity, the problem with doing this is that it also stops debate and ideas building. It can also lead us quickly off course, with the main purpose of the debate forgotten.

For this reason I would like to suggest up-front that we take as givens in this debate the following:

- we will adhere to the new definition of Community Cohesion as set out in the Government Response to the final report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (4 February 2008)

"Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

*Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community is based on **three foundations**:*

- *People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities;*
- *People knowing their rights and responsibilities; and*
- *People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.* 

*And **three key ways of living together**:*

- *A shared future vision and sense of belonging;*
 - *A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity; and*
 - *Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds."*
- We will also adhere to the difference between race equality, community cohesion and preventing violent extremism as set out in the above Government Response.

"We believe that all three are different, all three are important and, if done effectively, all three will support one another. Hence both in central, regional and local government the same person or group of people is often responsible for all three. But to ensure that we deliver success in all three areas we think that it is important that at the national, regional and local level we are clear both about the differences and the synergies between the three agendas.

***Race equality** is about building an equally free and fair society for all people regardless of their racial or ethnic background. It focuses on narrowing gaps - in outcomes - for different groups. This will help promote cohesion and tackle extremism, but it's not enough on its own, and there are other, wider, motivations for promoting race equality.*

*Building **community cohesion** is about building better relationships between people from different backgrounds including those from new and settled communities. Experience has shown that violent extremism can emerge from even the most cohesive communities, but that extremist messages are less likely to find support in this environment. So work to build cohesion can help prevent violent extremism but will not be enough on its own.*

*To **prevent violent extremism** we often need a targeted approach which deals with the specific threat, builds resilience to extremist messages at a community level but also works to counter the global terrorist ideology. At the same time a community in which extremism is minimised is likely to be one where people have more confidence to build relationships with one another and so increase community cohesion and racial equality."*

- Speakers of other languages who are employed (as well as those seeking work) may well benefit from ESOL that helps to strengthen community cohesion. That said, we need to recognise that this group is generally not 'the hardest to reach'. So, while we will include this group in our discussions, we want to

ensure that we are vigilant about retaining our focus on those who experience greatest social exclusion and poverty.

Concurrent with the development and implementation of the community cohesion policy, proposals are also being developed for ESOL for employees. We will have an opportunity to explore how well these emerging proposals **dovetail** with our propositions for the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion on Friday morning.

We'll agree any other 'givens' we want to include immediately prior to and during our discussions.

We determine the agenda

One of the key principles of Open Agenda sessions is that we determine the agenda as we go, in order to get the most from our time together. This means that, at any stage of our discussions, we can change the structure of a session if we feel that it will help us achieve stronger outputs – with one important proviso. We find that groups go away far more satisfied with what we have accomplished by the end of an event if we start off with a commitment to achieving **as much clarity as possible** in our discussions, and really push ourselves in **breaking new ground and moving ideas forward**.

Working in idea-generating groups

As part of the ideas-building process, we will break into '**idea-generating**' groups during the session to tackle key questions raised through our discussions.

We use these groups because it gives everyone an opportunity to think through different points of view and have their say, when this would be impossible as one large group because of time constraints. We will use our time in small groups to sharpen up issues and develop ideas that we want to pick up and run with. Please use your time in groups to sound out your ideas and do **not** be tempted to try and develop a group view. If you do resist the temptation we can benefit from a number of different – even opposing – ideas that emerge from small group discussions.

For those who haven't been in on an Open Agenda session before, it's worth saying that it really helps us to leave the groups behind, if you make a point of **not sitting with members of your group** afterwards, and agree to outlaw the phrases "we think" or "my group thought that". "We think" makes it difficult for group members to change their minds without feeling disloyal to their group. Also, "we think" has more authority than "I think" and, completely unintentionally, can make it less easy for others to challenge or discard ideas.

We may also break into groups for longer periods of time to '**build ideas**'. In this instance, it is more likely (but not certain!) that there will be agreement amongst members of the group. What we ask is that when you come to share your thinking with the rest of us, you **just give us the idea**. Please don't feel you need to share the journey your group has travelled in developing this idea! If we are not clear about its rationale, we can always ask questions.

Listening, going with the flow and sharing debate

We need to manage our time together carefully as one large group, if we're going to develop the momentum we need to move our discussions forward. Developing ideas needs careful listening. Let's try and stick to the rule that when someone comes in on the discussion, they **follow on** from what the person before them has

said, before moving on and starting a fresh train of thought. This event is **not** a stage for position statements – even with Ministers amongst us!

Please also resist the temptation of making more than one point. As soon as someone says "*I'd just like to make two or three points at this stage in our discussions*" the ideas stop flowing, as we are drawn to recap on what's gone before.

Of course, when we're together as one large group we want **as many people as possible to participate**: ideas building is not a spectator event. So we'll try and ensure that the more confident, natural talkers amongst us don't squeeze others out.

Meeting everyone's expectations

We are bound to arrive at Windsor with very different (and strong) views about how the role of ESOL in strengthening community cohesion.

Developing ideas is always a messy process, especially during the opening stages. It can be frustrating for those who like to focus quickly on what they feel is **the** key issue that needs to be tackled, and want to get on with sorting it out. The difficulty with this approach is that one person's key issue is another's back burner!

So, we would like to ask that we all try to be as relaxed as possible during the afternoon and evening discussions, and let as many as possible have their say, so that we can build up a head of steam **as a group** in identifying the issues we want to explore in greater depth.

On page 30 are the Conventions of St. George's House for consultations and ideas building events held here at Windsor Castle. At the beginning of the event, we will ask you if you are happy to adopt them as ground rules for our discussions.

We very much hope that you'll be open to giving them a go, as experience has shown that their application can make an enormous difference to both the quality of debate and the ideas that emerge.

Krysia & Jo Hudek, Open Agenda

28th May 2008

Appendix 1

Identification Templates for:

- Community Cohesion Objectives
- Priority Groups
- Personal Goals

A suggested methodology for defining cohesion objectives, priority groups and personal goals to ensure provision meets objectives

Range of possible cohesion goals/objectives

These are some of the possible goals that would prompt the need for targeted provision. The idea would be that local partnerships could modify and add to this list, using it as a checklist to identify the community cohesion goals that they want ESOL for Community Cohesion to help address. These goals can be linked to the National Indicators identified by Local Authorities and/or Local Indicators that may be being developed over the coming months as measures for progress in their local areas.

DESCRIPTION OF GOAL	
Improved informal contact and communication between different groups within a neighbourhood Indicators could include an increase in take up of multi-ethnic informal leisure and learning opportunities from members of minority communities e.g. cooking clubs that include members of minority communities as well as those from the indigenous population	
Improved perceptions of mutual cross cultural understanding and respect demonstrated, for example, by increased participation in multi-ethnic neighbourhood forums (Tenants' and Residents' Associations, Neighbourhood Watch etc.) from members of minority communities in the local area	
Reduction in anti-social behaviour directed at a particular group(s)	
Reduction in negative publicity and reporting about a particular group(s)	
Positive change in false perceptions that a particular ethnic group is responsible for crime and/or antisocial behaviour	
Increase in the number of people from ethnic minority communities who feel that they have the same life chances as others in the local area	
Decrease in perception that members of a particular ethnic group are disadvantaging others in terms of life opportunities and access to services (such as health, housing, education, employment, support).	
Reduction in worklessness amongst members of a particular ethnic group As well as employment, this could include increased participation in volunteering in organisations that are outside of their communities (schools, hospitals, police, community organisations etc.) from members of minority communities in a local area	
Improved intergenerational communication and understanding between parents and children	

Cohorts and sub-groups

The table below gives a breakdown of the key characteristics of people that can be found in the three main cohorts. In each cohort, the level of English language skills (and needs) will vary from those who are illiterate in their mother tongue and have no English language skills right the way through to those with professional qualifications and a need for very specific ESOL training. The **priority** for ESOL for Community Cohesion is likely to be at the lower skills levels. A fourth cohort of 14-19 year olds has been added in recognition of the different needs that young people may have. These sub-groups are not intended to be exhaustive, but to act as a starting point for understanding the different characteristics and needs of the broad groups of people with English language and other needs.


	SUB-GROUP	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
Cohort 1 Adults not in work, with personal, family and/or community goals as first priorities	1A	People, often women, whose primary role is that of carer (of children, elders or other family/ community members), with very poor skills and no work experience. In some groups English language skills are likely to be poor and there may also be numeracy needs. For those with English as a first language, there may be literacy and numeracy needs.
	1B	People whose primary role is that of carer, with skills at Level 1.
	1C	People whose primary role is that of carer, with skills at Level 2 and above.
	1D	Adults who are <u>severely</u> long-term ill and/or disabled in such a way that they are unable to sustain paid work.
	1E	Older people over 64 who are unlikely to move into jobs. Some people in this group may care for children and could come under group 1A.
	1F	Asylum seekers (i.e.: no permission to work). Currently a diminishing group, but subject to potential sudden increases due to international events. Needs will vary according to English language skills levels, but will include orientation.
	1G	Adults in the early stages of serving very long custodial sentences.
Cohort 2: Adults not in work, but with work as a primary goal.	2A	Adults with low/no vocational qualifications and skills and with critical additional barriers to work including health, social issues, childcare, disability. This group will require particularly intensive support to gain vocational and Sfl skills, address barriers and move into work.
	2B	Adults with low/no vocational qualifications and skills. Some initial additional literacy/English language may be required to prepare for vocational training with embedded Sfl (including numeracy)
	2C	Adults with very poor skills and no/low qualifications (below Level 1). Needs could include some additional literacy/English language, numeracy, as well as embedded provision, including key skills, as part of vocational skills training. Those with English language needs may also require orientation for UK 'employability'.
	2D	Adults without a Level 2 qualification. Needs include literacy/English language, numeracy and key skills embedded in vocational skills training.
	2E	Adults with learning disabilities and difficulties, including dyslexia.

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	SUB-GROUP	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
	2F	Adults who have higher or professional level qualifications and advanced skills and who have English language needs. Conversion qualifications (IELTS etc.) may be required, and English language specifically tailored to suit the professional environment (medicine, nursing, dentistry, law, teaching etc.)
	2G	Adults serving non-custodial sentences or re-integrating after custodial sentences. Many of this group will have poor skills and low/no qualifications as well as other complex needs.
	2H	Adults coming towards the end of custodial sentences. A similar range of needs to 2G. Needs will also vary according to the length of sentence.
Cohort 3: Adults in employment with skills needs	3A	Adults in low-paid, low-skilled or insecure employment
	3B	Adults in skilled or semi-skilled employment, but where SfL needs prevent career progression or are hindering business performance (including the voluntary sector).
	3C	Adults in higher level or professional/technical occupations with English language needs and/or specific numeracy needs e.g. in nursing, engineering, mechanics, management etc. Adults in higher level occupations with lack of competence in a particular discipline such as, for example, report writing.
Cohort 4: 14-19 year olds with skills needs	4A	School age pupils (14-16) at risk of not achieving Maths and English GCSEs, and those on vocational courses.
	4B	16-19 year olds in pre-Apprenticeship provision. Specific support with employability, vocational skills and underpinning literacy/English language and numeracy.
	4C	16-19 year olds in Apprenticeships. Specific support with employability, vocational skills and underpinning literacy/English language and numeracy and to achieve key skills.
	4D	Young people in the NEET group who have a range of other 'urgent' needs in addition to skills. This may include offending, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour, mental and/or physical health needs.
	4E	Young people serving custodial or non-custodial sentences. These young people may have skills and a range of other support needs similar to the NEET group and will also have re-integration needs.
	4F	Young people who are <u>severely</u> long-term ill and or disabled in such a way that they cannot sustain paid work.
	4G	Young people in temporary, insecure and/or unskilled or low-skilled employment.
	4H	Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including dyslexia.

Broad range of individual goals

These goals are a selection of those that can form the meaningful goals for people across the four cohorts outlined earlier. People and employers may have more than one goal. Goals will change over time as people acquire new skills and progress.

	DESCRIPTION
	Business Improvement
	Promotion to a job with Level 3 skills or above
	Movement into job in different skills sector
	Start up business, including community businesses
	A full time job requiring Level 3 skills with appropriate qualification
	A full time job requiring Level 2 skills with appropriate qualification
	A part time job requiring Level 2 skills with appropriate qualification
	Qualification (should be specified and should not be the only goal)
	A part or full-time entry level job with appropriate qualification
	An intermediate labour market placement/job
	Work experience, work placement with training or work trial
	Volunteering
	Contributing to the life of wider communities in some way
	Contributing to family life and/or personal effectiveness in some way
	Attending provision regularly and developing soft skills associated with group work etc.

Appendix 2

Provision to meet need identification matrix

Matrix to facilitate initial discussions between partners

This matrix provides a common format for partners to identify their investment and key planning/development needs in relation to particular groups of people and the services that they will need. For each 'cell' of the matrix, partners should identify:

- Which **agency/funding stream** should support the group and element?
- Which key **types of organisations** are best placed to deliver the element to the specified group?
- What **changes** need to take place to make the element fit for purpose for the specified group?
- How, for a specified group, the **elements will be joined up** sufficiently to prevent individuals from 'falling through the gaps'?
- What measures of success will reflect the **goals of individuals, the community to improve cohesion and the public agencies?**

The matrix can be customised to help planning in a variety of ways:

- One particular group can be reviewed at a time – the key questions becoming the columns of the matrix
- Some elements could be grouped together, added or taken away – according to the groups being looked at and any particular regional or local services that are on offer

It's important that the matrix is seen **as a tool to facilitate discussion** and planning between partners, rather than a 'form' to be completed.

Community cohesion goal/objective.....

Personal goal of individuals in group.....

System element		Group 1A E.g. Women with pre-school children and poor English living in isolated communities	Group 2A E.g. People with very poor English, illiterate in their mother tongue and with no work experience, wanting to work in admin jobs	Group 3A E.g. people with very poor English working in kitchen jobs wanting better jobs
Initial Elements	Outreach for priority groups under represented in provision			
	Marketing and promotion for individuals and employers where appropriate			
	Information, Advice and Guidance (learning and job related) for individuals			
	Skills diagnostics and assessment services for individuals (and screening for other needs)			
	Business support for employers to diagnose skills and vacancies needs			
Programme content	Development of Individual Action/Employability plan			
	Access/foundation learning for Entry level or below learners, including English language skills			
	Vocational skills training (with embedded English language and numeracy skills as appropriate)			
	Employability skills training, including 'soft skills'			
	Pre-employment support for individuals e.g. CV writing, job applications, mock interviews, preparation for self-employment etc.			
	Co-ordinating support for individuals as a bridge between employment and training			
	Work placements/work trials			
	Flexible and responsive recruitment services and solutions for employers			
Programme content (in work)	Training and assessment services delivered on employers' premises			
	Post recruitment bespoke training to meet the needs of employers			
	Skills coaching/workplace mentoring/support for people in self-employment			
	On-going business and skills development support for managers			

Appendix 3

Business Planning Grid

The role of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in helping to strengthen community cohesion

Open Agenda Event at St. George's House, Windsor Castle, 12th –13th June 2008

Background Paper

	July 08	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan 09	Feb	March	April	May	June
Cross Agency Regional Planning (DWP, LSC, RDA, DCLG, DCMS, DCFS, HO, DoH)	Identification of priorities for ESOL for CC in regional plans					Discussions and agreements on LSC regional commissioning						
<i>Existing LSC Mainstream Business Planning and commissioning</i>		<i>Start of financial year</i>	<i>Stock take</i>		<i>Statement of priorities published</i>	<i>National delivery plan published</i>	<i>Regional commissioning plans signed off</i> <i>Mainstream provision tendering process begins (PQQs)</i>		<i>Provisional allocations to colleges</i>		<i>Mainstream provision ITTs</i>	<i>Performance review to Oct</i>
LSC 2008/09 Process for ESOL for Community Cohesion (CC)	Set aside nominal funds	Procurement process agreed with LAs	Outline plans from LAs – key priorities and costs	Review of plans against regional priorities and funds available	Plans revised where required and agreed with LAs.	Next step depends on procurement process						
Local Authority Plans (LAA, MAA and others) which will also need to factor in funds that are available locally from Govt Depts.	LAAs signed off LAs identify key priorities for ESOL for CC	Procurement process agreed with LSC	LAs provide outline plans of key priorities and costs		Discussions with LSC and other partners and plan revisions where required.	Next step depends on procurement process – for open tendering, specifications would need to go out before Christmas.				Start of financial year Delivery of ESOL for CC begins		
Other local planning (Health Authority etc.)										Start of financial year		

Appendix 4

Some relevant Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and
National Indicators (NI)

The Cohesion Public Service Agreements

PSA 21 is to build cohesive, empowered and active communities. The cohesion element of this is measured against three national indicators.

- The percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area;
- The percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood; and
- The percentage of people who have meaningful interactions with people from different backgrounds

The first and third of these are also included within the single set of 198 national indicators as part of the new performance framework for local authorities and local authority partnerships. All local authorities will be required to report performance against these indicators.

Furthermore, where local areas decide that improving community cohesion should be a particular priority these indicators can be the basis of priority improvement targets within their new Local Area Agreements. Local areas' success in achieving these targets will have a bearing on whether the PSA is achieved. This performance framework provides real incentives both nationally and locally for a new focus on building cohesive and integrated communities.

A checklist of other for identifying priority areas and reasons for strengthening community cohesion

The National Indicators (NI) and PSA Targets that underpin the new local performance framework could provide a useful tool in identifying local areas that would benefit from ESOL provision focused on strengthening community cohesion. Local Authorities will be required to report on all indicators agreed within their respective Local/Multi Area Agreements.

Relevant Indicators that reflect what we want our vision for people with English language needs to achieve span a number of Departmental Strategic Objectives and PSA Targets. This provides a very helpful way of demonstrating how our vision touches the work of all Government departments and agencies, and requires their buy in for it to be delivered successfully.

The table overleaf suggests the range of Indicators that can measure the difference we want to make for people with English language needs. They encapsulate the progress that is needed if people with English language needs are to have the same life chances as other people, and the aspirations that they have in their families, communities and working lives.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but it illustrates the range of Indicators that may be used to measure success.

National Indicator	Description	Departmental Strategic Objective/Public Service Agreement
NI 1	Number of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.	PSA 21 Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities.
NI 13	Migrants English language skills and knowledge.	Home Office DSO Secure our borders and control migration for the benefit of our country.
NI 23	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity.	Home Office DSO Help people feel secure in their homes and local communities.
NI 107	Key Stage 2 achievement for BME groups	Dept for Communities, Schools & Families DSO Achieve world class standards in education.
NI 108	Key Stage 4 achievement for BME groups	
NI 116	Proportion of children in poverty	PSA 9 Halve the number of children in poverty by 2010-11, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020.
NI 151	Overall employment rate	PSA 8 Maximise employment opportunity for all.
NI 161	Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy	PSA 2 Improve the skills of the population on the way to ensuring a world class skills base by 2020.
NI 162-165	Learners achieving an Entry 3 qualification in numeracy. Working age population qualified at Levels 2, 3 and 4.	
NI 166	Average earnings of employees in the area.	Dept. for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform DSO Promote the creation and growth of business and a strong enterprise economy across all regions.
NI 173	People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits	Dept. for Work & Pensions DSO Maximise employment opportunity for all.
NI 174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers.	Dept for Innovation, Universities & Skills DSO Improve the skills of the population throughout their working lives to create a workforce capable of sustaining economic competitiveness, and enable individuals to thrive in the global economy.

St. George's House Conventions

1. Please be open to changing your mind

We hope that during your time at the House you will see yourself as a “free spirit”, open to the possibility that the opinions you hold most dearly, on the topic under discussion, might actually be wrong. Once we each take that step, we find that it is much easier to persuade others to question their own assumptions, as well.

2. Please do not attribute remarks to individuals after the event

At all House events, we ask groups to agree at the outset that comments made in plenary or small group sessions will not be attributed to individuals afterwards. We have a firm convention that people should not be quoted without their permission, and commend this to you most strongly.

3. Please take risks with ideas

The most successful Consultations at the House have been those where individuals feel sufficiently relaxed, and supported by others, to be able to take risks with ideas. This requires a high degree of trust among a group, and we hope that from the outset you will seek to build that trust.

4. Please try and avoid any false consensus

We hope that if you find a consensus emerging in your discussions, you will check to ensure that it is soundly based. It can sometimes be very difficult for individuals to resist the pressure to agree with their peers, and we hope that healthy debate will not be stifled by a false consensus.

5. Please use “plain English”

At just about every event, one of the biggest struggles is with the weight of technical language that some speakers tend to use, and others leave unchallenged for fear of displaying ignorance. We ask **everyone** joining a Consultation at the House to avoid using acronyms, and to be ready to intervene in debate to ask colleagues to use “plain English”.

Canon Hueston Finlay
Acting Warden of St. George's House