

The Creative English Programme 2019/20:

Confidence, Integration and Inclusion through Language Learning



Faith
Action



C
CAPTURE
consulting

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Executive Summary

Creative English is a community-based, English language-learning programme providing courses for people with limited English language skills, using a range of drama-based teaching methods. The programme is operated by FaithAction, a national network organisation for faith-based and community organisations and was funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to deliver across England in 2019/20. This latest iteration of the programme saw 3,904 learners register across 45 local Creative English hubs. This was against a target of 3,300 registrations and represents a significant over-achievement.

This report finds conclusive evidence that Creative English is effective in creating statistically significant changes in the English language proficiency of learners. It also finds that the programme's ambitions and success stretch far beyond this arena and connect logically to broader societal goals around integration, social isolation and sense of belonging.

The team articulate the Creative English overarching aim as contributing to a '*happier society in which people have more opportunity to belong and contribute*'. Creative English works towards this with a prioritised focus on building the confidence of learners to speak English and to meet, work and live alongside people who are different to them. This report and those before it provide compelling evidence that the programme is highly successful across a wide range of impact indicators that relate to increased social integration including: meaningful social mixing, access to local services and support and enhanced sense of belonging in local areas.

At the beginning of each course, the average Creative English learner is not proficient or confident in speaking English and would, for reasons related to educational ability, culture or confidence, not access or succeed within mainstream further education or traditional ESOL courses. By delivering in partnership with trusted local hubs and the faith sector, Creative English is able to reach and support people who otherwise would not engage with this and many other types of services. For many learners, Creative English is their first encounter with civil society in the UK and a crucial step towards a sense of belonging in their local area. Importantly, for some this first step happens after being in the UK for many years, even decades.

At the end of the course, the average Creative English learner has experienced a statistically significant change in their language proficiency and confidence in using English outside of the classroom, as well as a range of other positive outcomes related to friendship, integration, belonging, educational opportunity and access to services.

The combination of efficiency and flexibility in delivery, creative teaching approaches, locally-connected partners and a deftness in connecting English language learning with the tackling of wider social issues provides an impressive offering which is entirely distinct to most other forms of English language interventions, including traditional ESOL.

The headline outcomes of this report are that:

- Against a target of 3,300, the programme registered **3,904** learners up to the end of March 2020.
- **83%** of learners who completed the Creative English programme saw their English language proficiency levels increase.

- Creative English engaged widely and with people deemed at high risk of social isolation or low levels of integration. Muslim women, a group identified as a priority by government in relation to integration outcomes, comprised the single largest demographic group of learners.
- Learners who complete Creative English experience **positive attitudinal changes** related to a stronger sense of belonging to the area in which they live and more confidence in engaging with people who are different to themselves.
- Additionally, learners who complete the programme also see **positive behavioural changes** including being more likely to speak English to others, have friends and connections outside of their own national, cultural or faith background and more likely to engage with public services.
- **Faith** underpins much of the delivery of Creative English. This is not a religious programme but one which harnesses a pool of facilities, volunteers and recognisable, trusted ethos to create a space in which learners feel comfortable and able to learn.

The report finds that Creative English is a successful programme that is about more than learning a language. Feeling a sense of belonging, meaningful social mixing and access to a range of opportunities underpin the approach to integration in the UK and are also vital in fighting social isolation and mental and physical health issues. This is an impactful programme that should use the robust statistical evidence presented in this report to bring greater recognition to its success and potential across all of these areas. With this in mind, we recommend the following:

1. FaithAction explore funding opportunities for the programme related to integration, social isolation, social prescribing and mental and physical health.
2. The programme continue with its current offering and makes emphasis of it being a distinctive offer to other forms of English language learning, including traditional ESOL. English language proficiency, integration outcomes and learner self-efficacy are all linked and should be promoted equally.
3. FaithAction should resist gaining formal accreditation of the programme as an English language course as it runs a strong risk of undermining this distinctiveness and ethos.
4. The existing recruitment model for hubs is maintained through existing networks, memberships and other current national and regional contacts.
5. The programme should consider capturing the outcomes against partial completions of the programme by learners. This would best be achieved by the hub evidencing that the learner has failed to complete 10 sessions because they have already achieved a successful outcome, such as employment.
6. FaithAction work with hubs to produce a limited piece of research which captures and maps community development outcomes that have occurred in hubs as a result of their involvement in Creative English, showcasing the positive local impact which is described within the Gladca case study.
7. FaithAction to investigate the differences in Learner Score outcomes between hubs. In particular for hubs which were outliers with regards to both overall scores and change.
8. The Theory of Change document be updated annually and used as a framework for future monitoring and evaluation of the programme, with the addition of 'ambitions' into outcomes around learners and volunteers.

Introduction

Creative English is a community-based, English language-learning programme that provides courses for people with limited English language skills, using a range of drama-based teaching methods. The programme is operated by FaithAction, a national network organisation for faith-based and community organisations and was funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to deliver across England in 2019/20. This latest iteration of the programme saw 3,904 learners register across 45 local Creative English hubs.

Operating nationally since 2013, Creative English is now a well-established feature of the English language learning provision in the UK, with a consistent and impressive record of accomplishment relating to outcomes around English language proficiency and social integration. Delivery of the programme has always been built on a core ethos of making learning fun, accessible and inclusive for learners, focusing on holistic impact for those often excluded by traditional language and integration work. This report provides an external check on how this ethos has shaped the delivery and outcomes of the programme for learners and provides a range of new insights into what has worked well in delivery and what lessons can be learned to refine and improve delivery in the future.

The report also aims to provide an analysis of the sustainability of the programme and its outcomes as well as identifying potential future areas of work and focus in programme delivery.

The report addresses the following objectives:

1. To articulate how Creative English delivers the programme to learners;
2. To develop a comprehensive picture of the impact and positive change created by Creative English and how this can be assessed;
3. To present the successes, learning and experiences in 5 key areas of the programme.
 1. FaithAction Programme Management
 2. Creative English Hub Recruitment and Training
 3. Creative English Course Delivery
 4. Language Proficiency Learner Outcomes
 5. Wider Community and Integration Learner Outcomes; and
4. To provide insights into how Creative English can become more sustainable and to explore potential new areas of delivery and impact.

Methodology

FaithAction and the Creative English team have been proactive in encouraging research into the programme which goes beyond surface-level analysis of programme data and which, instead, works with the programme and its learners to better capture the outcomes and externalities which result from its unique approach, ethos and delivery.

To this end, the research team have undertaken the following:

- a full literature review of contemporary UK social integration and cohesion policy with focus on English language proficiency, social isolation and 'hard to reach' groups including marginalised women;
- a one-day Theory of Change training and drafting session with stakeholders from across the Creative English programme. This included funders, FaithAction staff and representatives from new and established hubs and culminated in the co-production of a Theory of Change diagram (Figure 5) for the Creative English programme;
- conducted 27 in-depth interviews with stakeholders drawn from across the programme, including funders, FaithAction staff, hub contract managers, volunteers and learners;
- undertaken 3 detailed observations of Creative English session delivery;
- an advanced statistical analysis of quantitative learner outcome data synthesised thematically.

The vast majority of quantitative data used in this report is programme data that was collected either at the request of the programme funder or for internal purposes at FaithAction. Where possible the Capture team has worked to shape data collection in such a way that it has made use of pre-existing methods and formats so as not to overburden those delivering on the frontline of the programme and to detract efforts away from delivering to learners.

Understanding Creative English: Framework and Audience

This section provides a clear picture of how the Creative English programme is delivered and to whom it is delivered. Given the unique nature of the programme and aspects of programme delivery, it is often a challenge for those who have not experienced it to visualise how the programme works in a real world setting. Data drawn from interviews with stakeholders external to FaithAction describes initial pre-conceptions of the course being a '*beginner ESOL*' and their contrasting views after experiencing the programme.

Framework for Delivery and Overall Performance

FaithAction were funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) via the Integrated Communities English Language Programme to deliver the Creative English programme in specified areas across England in 2019/20. Overall, 3,904 learners registered with the programme against an initial target of 3,300. This is a significant and commendable overachievement and many hubs reported a backlog of potential learners.

Learners were recruited to the programme through 45 hubs in local areas, often based in faith institutions, community and voluntary sector organisations or training centres. Many of these hubs have prior experience of delivering Creative English but new hubs were recruited through formal association with local and regional networks, active recruitment and awareness raising by FaithAction, word of mouth or self-application.

Creative English is delivered in the local hubs at times and a frequency to suit local need and demand. This may range from sessions run during school hours so that parents can attend to sessions being run early in the morning or late in the evening to accommodate childcare, faith practice commitments or other parts of everyday routine. Regardless of timings and frequency of sessions, learners must attend 10 or more sessions to qualify as having "completed" the programme. Of the 3,904 learners registered, 1,951 attending 10 or more sessions and thus qualifying as 'completing' the programme. This a completion rate of 50% (rounded up from 49.97%).

A particular, and recurring, issue across many hubs was that learners gained skills and confidence from being on the programme and that the initial sessions which they attended were enough for them to either move into employment, volunteering or more formal education. This led to them 'dropping out' of the course and not meeting the required 10 sessions to complete. This was a source of frustration for hubs as they are financially incentivised around completions but was also a concern for the Creative English team.

A low completion rate does not accurately reflect the impact of the programme, and so the caveat here around learners not completing, but for positive reasons, is an important one. Learners using an initial tranche of Creative English sessions to build their confidence, knowledge, skills and/or networks in order to progress towards their own goals at a faster rate than the prescribed 10 sessions is undoubtedly a positive outcome for the programme.

Learner Demographics

Creative English works in areas identified as having high levels of diversity and deprivation and much of its impact can be seen in the associated challenges that can come with this, such as low levels of belonging, opportunity and social exclusion. This section presents an overview of who joined and completed the programme, using descriptive data on the

demographics of learners who have registered in 2019/20, presenting first data from registrations and then data from completions (those who completed 10 or more sessions).

Beginning with faith, **Error! Reference source not found.** shows that nearly three quarters of learners registered to the programme came from Muslim faith backgrounds, with other major faith groups represented.

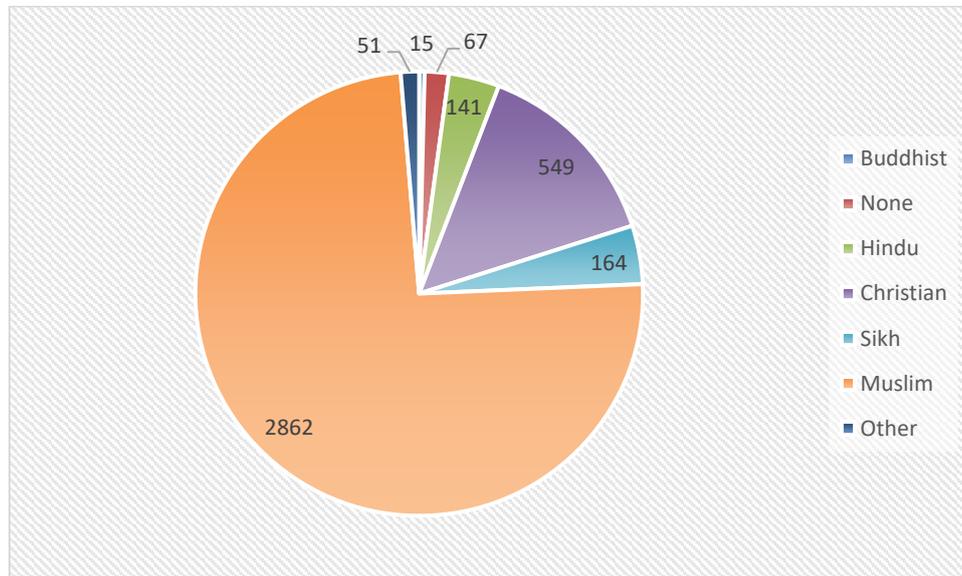


Figure 1: Learner Registrations by Religion

Linked closely to demographic figures by faith, Figure 2 shows that the vast majority of learners registered to the programme are from Asian backgrounds, and predominantly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The ethnic make-up of individual hubs did vary greatly by local area and by the target groups of each hub though, with some being significantly less multicultural than others.

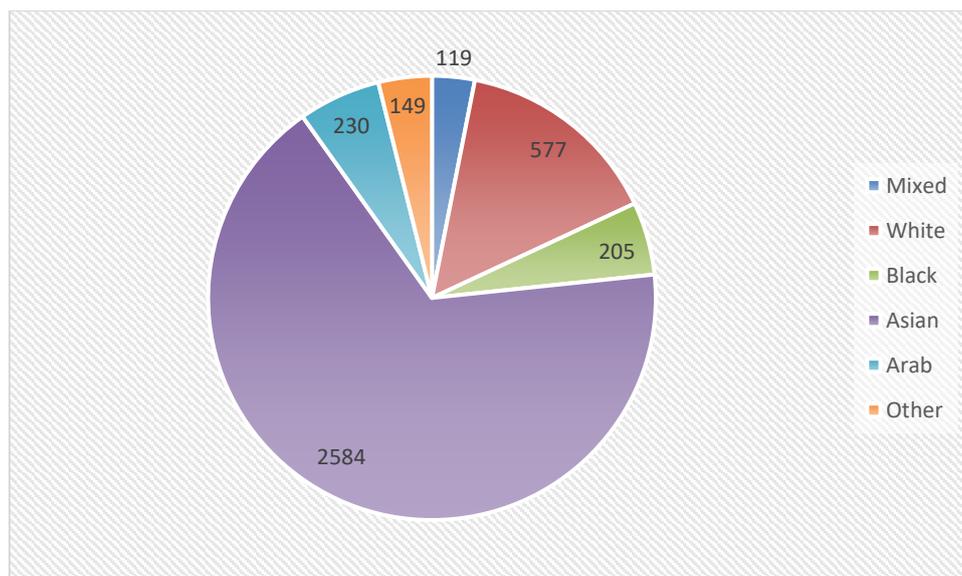


Figure 2: Learner Registrations by Ethnicity

Using data which records those who completed the programme, Figure 3 and Figure 4 give detailed pictures of the levels of diversity within the programme and show the make-up of the

sample cohort on which analysis in this report is based. Each layer of each circle demonstrates a different demographic category.

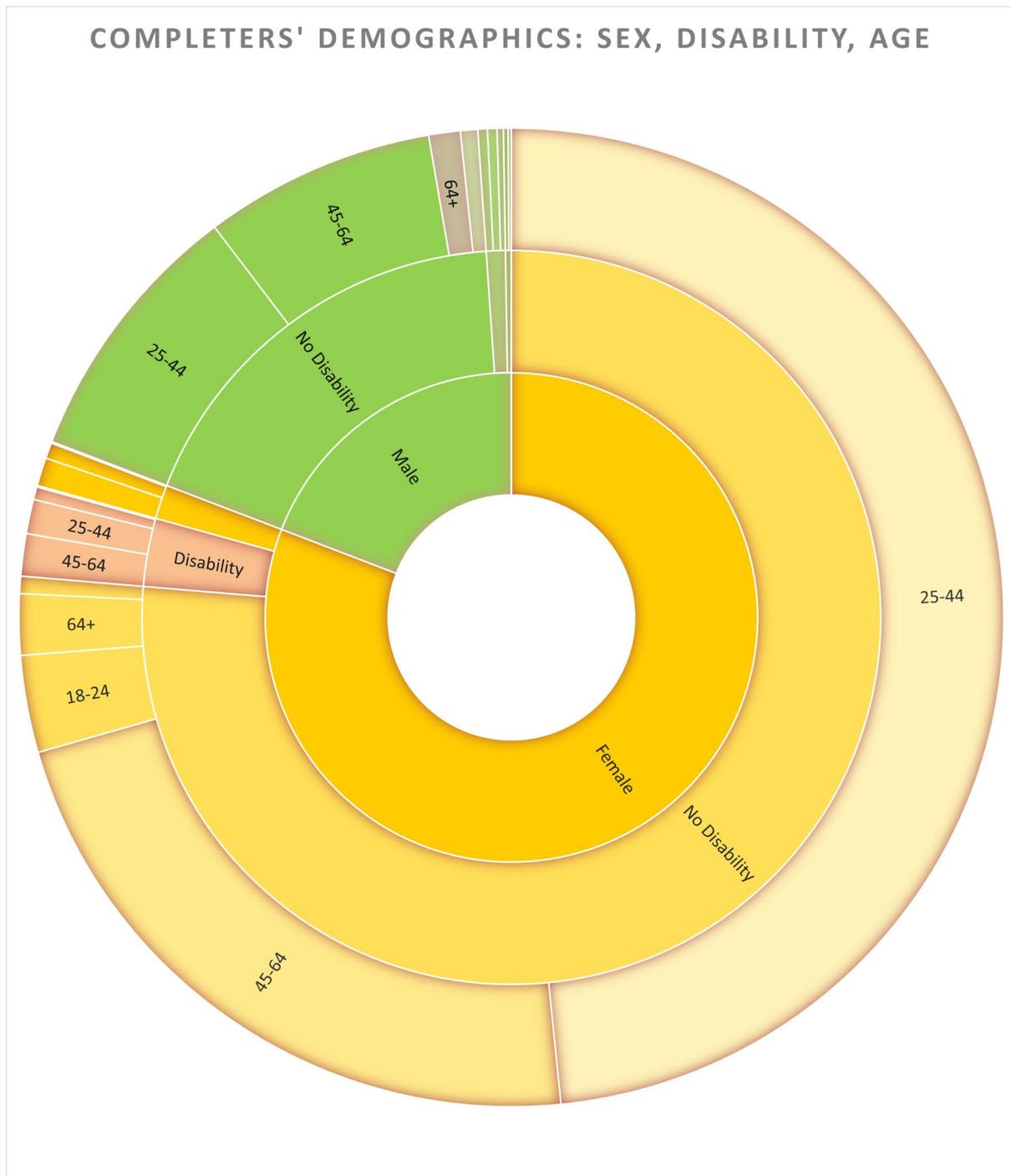


Figure 3: Completers by Sex, Disability and Age

Figure 3 shows that learners who completed the programme were most likely to be female with no disability and from both the 25-44 and 45-64 range. The next largest category of completers being males with no disability from the same age groups.

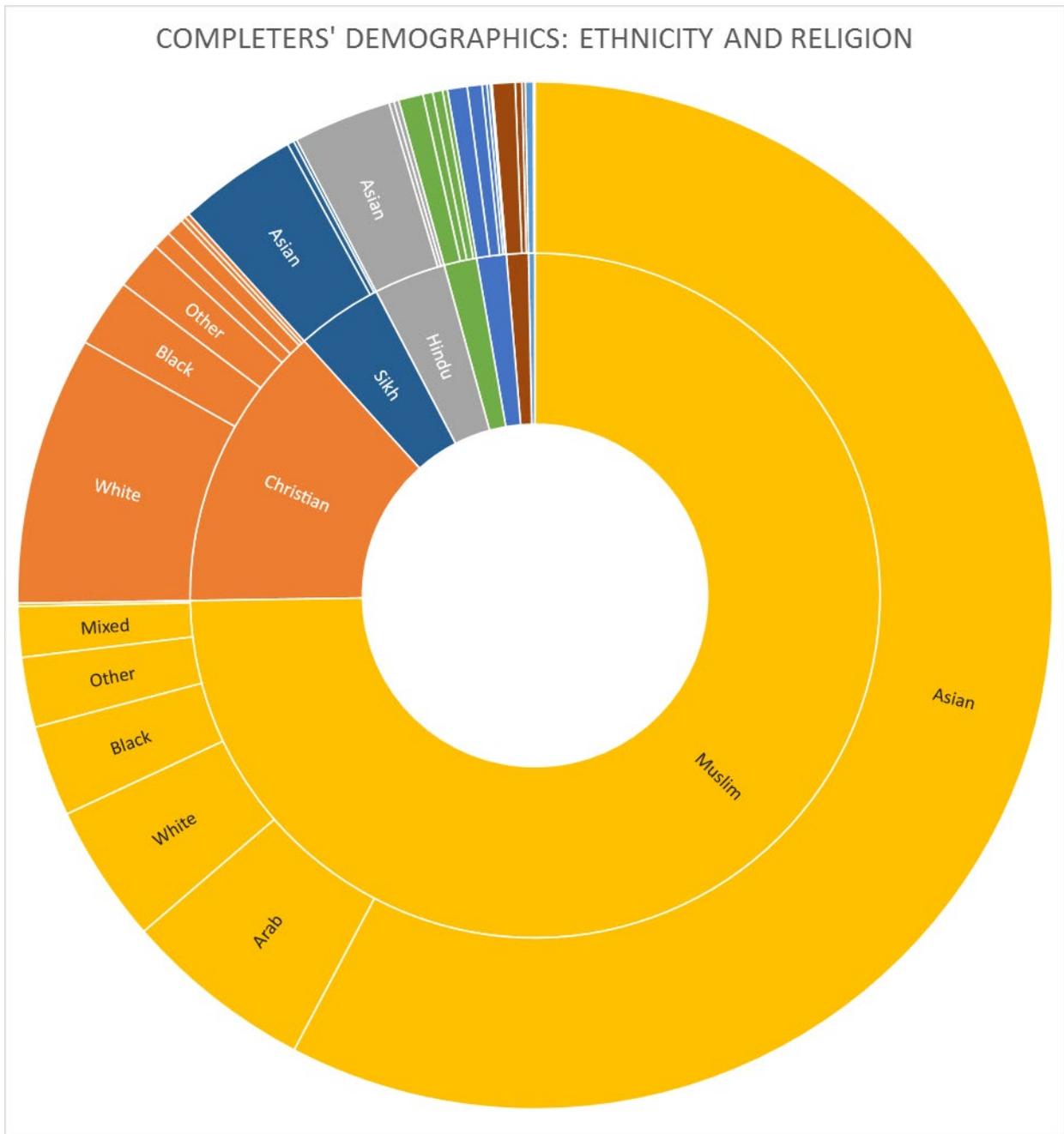


Figure 4: Completers by Ethnicity and Religion

Figure 4 again emphasises the close link between ethnicity and religion across the programme cohort, showing that whilst those completing the programme represented many different faith and ethnic groups, the majority were Asian and Muslim. This data is used as the basis of analysis in later sections of this report which focus on learner performance.

Articulating the Impact of Creative English: A Theory of Change

Established as a national programme since 2013, there is a significant amount of evidence that demonstrates the success of Creative English: since inception, the programme has exceeded every target set by funders and has made a significant difference to the lives of thousands of learners. One aim of this report is to create a clearer, more comprehensive articulation of how this positive change happens, helping to communicate the distinctiveness and logic of the programme. For this purpose, a bespoke Theory of Change has been created which aims to explain the Creative English change logic, as expressed and experienced by those closest to the programme's delivery. This is presented and analysed below.

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change is a way of describing the logic of a programme or organisation. It shows how each activity of the intervention creates small changes in society and how those changes contribute logically to a bigger, overarching aim. There are many ways of developing a Theory of Change; the method used here asks the following questions:

1. What is the overarching aim of the programme, in one sentence?
2. What does the programme do in practice – what are its activities?
3. What are the smaller, intermediate outcomes created by those activities and how do they logically connect to each other?

The Theory of Change for Creative English is presented in a one-page diagram. Each part of the diagram is connected by arrows which represent assumptions. For example, we assume that 1) providing more opportunities for people to learn English will lead to an increase in 2) the proficiency of English language and 3) the confidence of learners to speak English beyond the classroom. These assumptions have been tested with evidence, presented through the course of this report.

Developing the Theory of Change

A wide range of stakeholders from delivery hubs, FaithAction and UK Government took part in a day-long interactive Theory of Change workshop. Delegates were lead through three stages, developing aims, activities and outcomes. At each stage, the facilitators challenged the assumptions and thinking of the group and, through lengthy discussion and debate, the group reached consensus over the wording and demonstration of the programme's logic. The day ended with a draft diagram which was later designed, circulated for further comment and finalised. The diagram is presented below.

The Purpose of Theory of Change

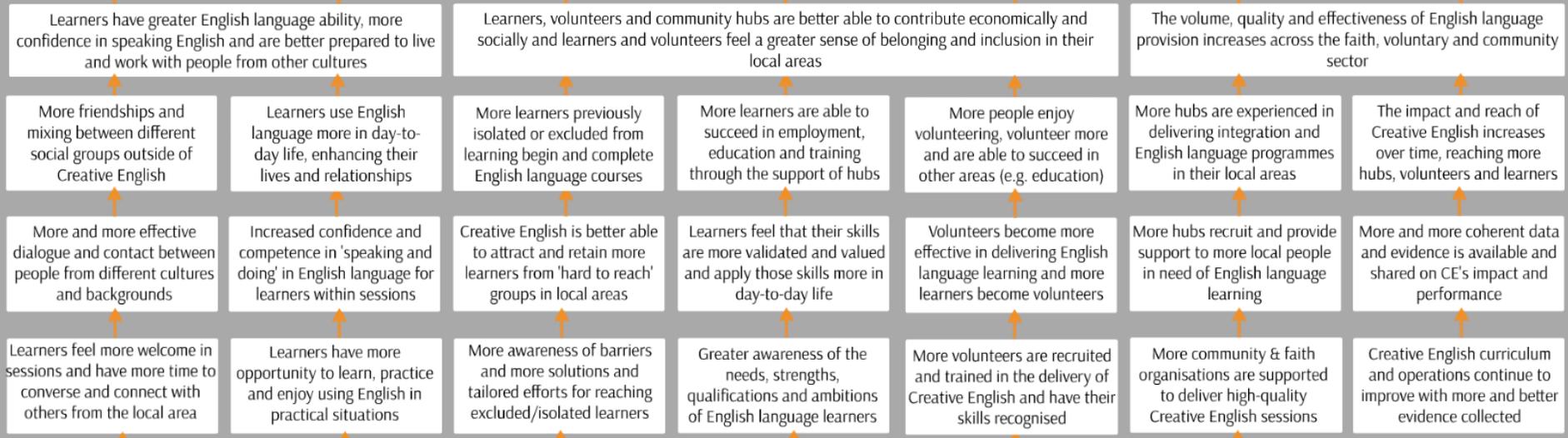
Theory of Change is an analysis tool used in evaluation, strategic development and the pursuit of funding. It has been used in this programme to support programming coherence and evaluation. Often in national programmes such as Creative English, each partner will have a slightly different interpretation of what the programme is trying to achieve. Developing a Theory of Change has allowed a diverse set of stakeholders from different parts of the country to work together on a common vision of the programme's impact. Feedback from the workshop shows that, for many, this was the first opportunity to think through exactly what the purpose of the programme was, beyond teaching English through drama-based methods. It has also allowed an articulation of how the programme aligns with government strategy, including the use of terms such as 'social mixing' which are central to the current UK integration strategy.

This has also provided the basis of an evaluation framework for the Creative English team to apply in future iterations of the programme. This will allow the team to ensure future data collection aligns with the wider ambitions of the programme and can be analysed within a clear

and commonly-held narrative. Finally, the Theory of Change can be used in any future funding pursuit, to communicate the aims of the programme to those who are not aware of its logic.

Aim

A happier society in which people^x have more opportunity to belong and contribute



- | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Enabling friendship and social mixing | Improving language skills and confidence | Communication and Overcoming Barriers to Participation | Recognising and Developing Learners' Strengths | Training and Developing Volunteers | Recruiting and Developing Hubs | Operations, Evidence and Development |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific emphasis on a welcoming, inclusive environment within the learning space • Encouraging people to socialise within and outside lessons • Focusing on commonalities between learners and shared issues • Using community and faith spaces designed to bring people together for dialogue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a breadth of role plays, scenarios and practical exercises to learn and practice English language skills in practical situations • Prioritising fun, laughter, confidence and forms of 'play' in learning over traditional forms of education • Developing and implementing lesson plans • Getting people 'talking and doing' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with trusted, locally-embedded partners to understand local barriers and recruit learners • Innovative participation solutions, e.g. creches for parent-learners • Ensuring flexibility in attendance and session timings • Developing future volunteers from learner-base to help with translation and cultural relevance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing an informal skills audit at the start of courses • Understanding and legitimising learner's needs and ambitions • Encouraging learners to build on their strengths and collaborate with others • Providing or signposting to supplemental training and development opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding, training and supporting a group of passionate and skilled community volunteers in the delivery of English language learning • Encouraging learners to become volunteers • Recognising volunteers' skills, history and ambitions and supporting them to develop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and delivering training packages for hubs • Developing procedures and auditing processes • Regular communication and relationship building with hubs before, during and after delivery • Providing financial support and incentives to hubs • Brokering relationships with new hubs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and refreshing Creative English curriculum and materials • Quality assurance and hub liaison processes and policies • Fundraising and funder-liaison • Financial and project management • Evaluation, monitoring, research and impact communication • Marketing and communication (e.g. website, social media) |

Intermediate Outcomes

A Theory of Change for



Figure 5: A Theory of Change for Creative English

The Creative English Way

On the face of it, Creative English is a programme that supports people to speak and understand English more effectively, through creative and drama-based methods. We know from the data presented in this report and from previous studies that Creative English is extremely effective in enhancing learner's English language proficiency and, importantly, that the confidence of individuals to use their English language in their day-to-day lives also increases significantly as a direct result of the programme. Whilst these changes are central to the programme's ambitions – and that of many English language learning programmes – and relate to the key indicators selected by programme's funders, the Theory of Change shows a far more complex, distinctive change logic and the team's ambition to create much grander positive social change.

The Theory of Change diagram shows the programme's overarching aim as:

'A happier society in which people have more opportunity to belong and contribute.'

During the workshop, there was significant discussion around each word used in this aim. As an example, 'happier' was ultimately chosen by the group but many alternatives were discussed during the day, including: 'more prosperous', 'more integrated', 'better' and 'healthier' society. 'Happier' was chosen in part because it is non-prescriptive and an entirely subjective concept. Happiness is different for each person, aligning with the idea that the programme provides the tools for people to succeed – confidence in English language – but the success that follows is beyond the scope of the programme to prescribe: the programme aims to support learners to succeed in diverse, uncountable ways. Moreover, 'happier' was chosen over 'better' or other synonyms because it relates directly to the ethos of each Creative English session: the lessons are designed to be enjoyable. The design of the programme from the start has been for learners to have fun – in roleplays, with props and puppets, in informal scenarios, with friends and often inclusive of children and family members – and to be happy throughout their experience on the programme.

Similar discussions took place on each element of the aim. Taken as a whole, though, the aim shows the levels of change that the programme is aiming to implicitly achieve. Clearly, the focus of the programme is on people coming together to learn: on enhancing the skills and agency of individuals. The aim, however, also relates to much broader concepts which stretch beyond individuals and apply to both society as a whole and groups within society. The notion of a *'happier society'* sets out the intention to affect change on a much grander scale. Likewise, discussions around a greater sense of belonging and contribution to society demonstrate the desire for systemic change. This can be viewed through the sociological lenses of 'structure' and 'agency': the interplay between the role of systems and macro-factors in society and the power and role of individuals and groups to affect change.

Within this framework, the Creative English team recognise that whilst working with individuals is their primary role in affecting change, there are limitations to creating change on that level alone. In the Creative English philosophy, individual learners exist within and are influenced by societal and group structures and, to create wider change, Creative English also aims to influence those structures. For instance, if a learner's English language proficiency is increased by the programme but that learner does not have a social or family network in which it is viable to practice their English, then the sustainability of their increase in skill is likely to be less. If that same learner wants to use their English to gain employment but is not aware of how the job market operates in the UK, there is a barrier to positive change and integration. And, if that learner's friend is inspired to improve their English language proficiency but he/she lives in an area where English language learning is not available, the multiplier effect of the programme is diminished. The Theory of Change shows that Creative English attempts to

affect change in these wider structures because better systems enable the programme to create change for more people, more effectively.

The Theory of Change demonstrates that change in the programme happens on three overlapping and connected levels: change for individuals (micro), changes for groups and organisations (meso) and changes in structures and systems (macro).

On a **micro, individual level**, Creative English aims to:

- improve language, skills and confidence, ultimately leading to learners using English in their day-to-day life more and using this to enhance their lives;
- recognise and develop learners' strengths: taking time to understand the skills of learners at the start of courses, learning about and supporting learners' ambitions, etc. As a result of this, learners feel that their skills are more recognised and valued and that they can apply those skills in day-to-day life, leading to better prospects in employment, education and training; and
- invest heavily in the recruitment and development of volunteers to deliver the programme, including supporting learners to become volunteers where viable. As a result of this, the programme aims to have more people gaining positive and enjoyable experience as volunteers, increasing the likelihood of them volunteering again in the future and enabling volunteers to prosper in future employment based on this experience. One example of this can be seen in the number of volunteers using this experience as the first step to becoming teachers or trainers.

On a **meso, group and organisational level**, the programme aims to:

- enable friendship and social mixing between cultural groups, focusing on inclusive environments, shared issues, commonalities and cultural exchange within sessions. As a direct result of the drama-based environment, there is more contact between people from different groups (e.g. ethnic, religious, age) within sessions, logically leading to more friendships and mixing between people outside of sessions. The case studies below illustrate how friendships start during Creative English courses which have gone on to form bonds and social capital beyond the programme: an important part of integration; and
- recruit and develop the capacity of hubs to deliver Creative English, leading to more people having access to the programme, more hubs having experience in delivering English language provision and an ultimate increase in the volume and quality of English language provision in local areas. One of the case study hubs, for example, had not delivered English language provision at this level before and is looking to purchase the Creative English license in the future – a sustainable change at the organisational level.

On a **macro, structural and system level**, the programme aims to:

- overcome structural barriers to participation by working with hubs that are able to reach those often missed by national programmes, groups often referred to in policy as 'hard to reach'. The reasons that people are hard to reach or excluded are diverse but often relate to structural challenges such as precarious employment, cultural attitudes, traditional gender roles, economic opportunity, social isolation and disability. By working with hubs that 1) have a commitment to inclusion, respect and widening access and 2) the capabilities, flexibility and connections to reach people who have never successfully engaged in English language programmes before, the programme is aiming to overcome the effects of structural limitations and reach those excluded by systems. As a result, a specific outcome of the programme is *'More learners previously isolated or excluded from begin and complete English language courses'*; and

- develop the evidence base on the efficacy of ‘the Creative English way’: working in this inclusive, confidence-building manner, with local faith and community hubs to address micro, meso and macro factors in one programme. As a result, the programme aims to grow its reach, creating systemic and culture change within the delivery of English language learning across the country.

Taken as a whole, the programme deftly recognises the interplay between the needs of individual learners, their families and community environments and the societal forces which shape their experiences beyond the sessions. By focusing on each of these areas, it aims to have a transformative effect on the provision of English language learning in the UK.

Next Steps for Implementing the Theory of Change

The next step is to test the theory: each step of the diagram makes an assumption that one change will logically lead to another. This logic has been used to shape the development of this report, using the evidence from the programme to test the claims in the diagram. Beyond this iteration of the programme, the Theory of Change can be used to form the basis of a bespoke evaluation system. Some elements of the current data collection process fit neatly into this already but there is room to systematise the data collection to more coherently support and test the Theory of Change.

Creative English Extended Case Study: Gladca, Peterborough



This is a detailed case study of a Creative English hub based primarily on two sites visits, classroom observations and discussions with volunteers, hub managers and Creative English learners. The purpose of the case study is not to make comment on the performance of one hub but to provide practical and valuable insights on how the Creative English programme operates at the local level. By doing so, the case study provides the opportunity to examine in detail the logic of the Creative English Theory of Change, showing how the change described in the diagram is seen in the real-life delivery in one Creative English location. The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution and cooperation of the volunteers, managers and learners at Gladca in developing this case study.

Case Study Context

Gladca has been part of the Peterborough community and voluntary scene for more than 40 years. It began as a community centre serving the Pakistani and Ugandan immigrant population who settled in Gladstone Street, Peterborough in the 1960s, with an initial mission to become a community hub for signposting, support and assistance with integration. Since inception, Gladca's aims and audience have broadened alongside the changes in Peterborough's migrant population: today, the team operate in a city in which more than 100 languages are spoken and on a street which is home to migrants from Asia, South America and Eastern Europe and asylum seekers and refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and many parts of Africa.

Gladca's offices are part of Peterborough's Central ward, on the edge of two neighbourhoods, one of which is in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK, the other is in the 20% most deprived (Indices of Deprivation 2019). Gladca's mission today is focused around *'inclusivity and universality'* (Gladca's Website): open to supporting the needs of anyone in the city, including those born in the area. They provide a range of services, including housing and pastoral support for those experiencing domestic abuse, homelessness or issues related to being an ex-offender, as well as serving those who require help with re-settlement, immigration status and English language.

English language learning provision is a long-established part of Gladca's operations. The team provide courses from functional English and Entry 1 through to Level 1 and Level 2 City and Guilds qualifications, delivering through a 17-year partnership with New College Stamford. Gladca's most recent Ofsted rating shows them as a 'Good' provider of ESOL, each year reaching around 400 students with a 90%+ pass rate. Their classes reach a range of ethnic groups, with Asian and Eastern European students being the most highly represented. Crucially, Gladca have a long waiting list for ESOL courses: one reason for their joining the Creative English programme.

Throughout the Gladca building, the walls are covered with posters and pictures showcasing the values of the organisation: references to the role of respect, tolerance, democracy and human rights sit alongside posters highlighting both British and Islamic values. The organisation is not faith-based but there are many signs of a connection, both past and present, to Islamic influences and the Muslim community, including flags and pictures on office

walls displaying Quranic quotes about peace and tolerance. These complement well the organisation's ethos of cultural exchange and diversity: Gladca's commitment to welcome, and inclusion is obvious from the moment you enter the building; as one Creative English volunteer stated:

'It's incredibly diverse here but I don't think about it anymore. I'm so used to it. I'm so used to mixing with different backgrounds here.'

During site visits, there was a hive of activity, with the classroom space managed on a tight rota and diverse groups of people moving in and out of the building throughout the day. Two Creative English sessions were observed with conversations with learners, volunteers and the Gladca Manager taking place around the sessions.

Creative English at Gladca

At the time of the site visits, Gladca has had engaged 73 students on their Creative English programme. According to the official completion statistics, 35 learners completed 10 or more sessions. On average, those learners began the course at 2.1 on the proficiency scale and increased their English language proficiency by 1.2 points, with the average learner finishing on 3.3. This is close to the mean performance across all hubs but with a higher-than-average learner starting score, demonstrating that the hub maybe considered above average in performance overall.

There are two courses running from the centre, a women's group and a mixed group. The majority of learners are women: between the two observed sessions, there were two men present. Learners in those sessions had migrated to Peterborough from Morocco, Poland, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lithuania, China, Albania, Brazil, amongst other places. Gladca's Creative English referrals come from the job centre, the Lithuanian Community Centre and New Stamford College but many also come from word of mouth, especially within families.

Testing the Creative English Theory of Change at Gladca

The Creative English Theory of Change aims to see impact at the micro level, with learners and volunteers, at the meso level, in hubs and groups, and at the macro level, in tackling structural barriers and gaps in systems. Using data from the site visits, the below analysis demonstrates the extent to which impact has been achieved at Gladca, setting the experiences of learners, volunteers and managers alongside the Theory of Change outcomes. The analysis is structured in 3 themes: micro, meso and macro impact.

THEME 1: Micro-level Impact at Gladca: Learners and Volunteers

Learners: Improving English language skills and confidence

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) more opportunity to learn, practice & enjoy using English in practical sessions will lead to;
- 2) more confidence and competence within sessions and that will lead to;
- 3) learners using English more in day-to-day life, enhancing their relationships and lives.

The statistics noted above show a categorical improvement in English language proficiency and confidence as a result of Creative English at Gladca for those who have completed 10 or more sessions. For the total group of 73 learners, though, the Gladca team report seeing a much broader improvement, describing how the team has seen improvements for all learners, some of which are not captured in the learner assessment data:

'We've actually had 100% make progress. Even asking them simple things like 'where are you from?' and getting a response is a big thing' (Gladca Representative)

One example provided by a volunteer shows how Creative English's focus on confidence, speaking and doing is central to this positive change for learners:

'There is one lady. She can write whole paragraphs in English. She passed her driving theory test but her speaking and listening was nothing. She had a driving instructor that told her he couldn't teach her because she didn't understand. She was a researcher before she came to the UK. She's skipped all the pre-entry because she's very good at writing and reading but I couldn't communicate with her. After Creative English, the Entry Level teacher said to me that she's so much more confident. The roleplays helped her and listening to the others. It was just not having the chance to speak before. She's moved on to Entry Level 1 but we're finding her a driving instructor that speaks her language in the meantime.'

Building on this, there is clear evidence that, for some learners, their increased English use continues beyond the classroom and has contributed to a variety of positive changes in their lives. This can be seen in a number of examples provided by Gladca volunteers and learners, including in two below:

Learner: *'I am more confident. I can easily talk to the doctor when I have a health problem now.'*

Volunteer: *'She's now able to communicate with the doctor. It's given her the boost now. She now feels that she's able to help – before it was always her husband. She can go alone now.'*

'One person used a bus for the first time. 'How did I come today?' She said. 'I caught the bus' – so happy that she spoke to the driver and got here.' (Gladca Volunteer)

These examples, and many more observed by the Gladca team, demonstrate that the logic of this part of the Theory of Change is valid. Creative English at Gladca has led to positive changes in people's lives as a result of greater English language confidence and proficiency. There are also a number of more substantial improvements from learners at Gladca, including in employment, education and training discussed in the next section.

Learners: Recognising and Developing Learners' Strengths

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) greater awareness of the needs, strengths and qualifications of learners will lead to;
- 2) learners feeling that their skills are valued, resulting in greater use of those skills leading to;
- 3) more learners succeeding in employment, education and training with the support of hubs.

There are many examples in which the Gladca volunteers have learned about the skills and qualifications of learners and the professions they held before they came to the UK. Often, volunteers have been able to tailor Creative English sessions to bring out their skills.

In one of the observed sessions, learners were asked to make dresses for each other from bin bags and craft material: supporting a focus on clothing and shopping terminology. A volunteer had heard that one of the learners was an accomplished dressmaker and so set the lesson up in a way that the learner could lead the practical part. Whilst creating a dress for a

fellow learner, she shared the names for different styles, accessories and clothing parts in her native language and worked with the group to translate them to English, resulting in full exchanges in English to describe the finished outfit.

It was clear during the observation that the recognition and sharing of a skill that the learner was confident in visibly and positively changed the learners' demeanour and positively affected the atmosphere in the room during the activity. The volunteers described how they have successfully done this in many of their sessions, giving opportunities for learners to apply their skills to session topics. Opportunities to engage learners' wider strengths whilst they learn English is clearly supportive of an increase in confidence in speaking English.

Through Creative English, Gladca staff members have also been able to use their knowledge of the strengths and ambitions of learners to support them to take further training and gain employment experience. There are range of examples provided by the Gladca team, including:

- a learner who came to Gladca at the start of their Creative English delivery who was not able to speak any English. She now has full conversations with Gladca staff and learners and is currently employed as a cleaning assistant by Gladca;
- two learners who have completed Creative English expressed an interest in care work so they have been set up with voluntary placements in residential care and are enrolled on a further ESOL course at Gladca;
- A number of learners who were not previously able to take any training because they did not understand the instruction who are now able to enrol on local programmes, including a learner who enrolled on a sewing course and is confident enough to take the bus to attend for the first time.

The logic of the Theory of Change works well here. It appears to work in part because the informality of the programme allows people to get to know each other but, crucially, this is facilitated in large part by the wider capabilities of Gladca (as is the case with many Creative English hubs). It is clear that the infrastructure and ethos at Gladca creates a clear pathway for learners to be signposted and supported following Creative English. The organisation is able to draw upon its other services and range of local connections to support learners to take up further opportunities. Importantly, from the Gladca experience, Creative English does not just recognise the strengths of learners, it also allows some learners to share and take steps towards their aspirations and ambitions. This wording could be a useful addition to the Theory of Change.

Volunteers: Recruiting and Developing

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) more volunteers are recruited and developed and have their skills recognised;
- 2) volunteers become more effective and more learners become volunteers, leading to;
- 3) more people enjoy volunteering and are able to succeed in other areas (e.g. education).

Creative English at Gladca is delivered by 4 volunteers, all of whom were or are still English language learners at Gladca. 3 of the 4 volunteers are new to volunteering and all are from different parts of the world. They were provided with training from FaithAction which all found enjoyable but some felt should have been longer, as there was a lot of content to cover. Overall, each of the volunteers explained how they have found Creative English to be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience and would volunteer again in the future as a result.

'People are so lucky to have this opportunity and come out of their comfort zone. I wanted to help those people – I have empathy to those people. Speaking was my problem when I started learning. I would like our learners to have the confidence now.'

Even [other volunteer's name] was very, very shy and when she got into the CE training she became a different person' (Gladca Volunteer)

Crucially, all four volunteers saw Creative English as a route to other areas of success. One volunteer has a degree in biology and wanted to gain experience in teaching to allow her to become a biology teacher. Another had volunteered in a school before but wanted to get more experience before taking up a placement as a teaching assistant. A third was using the opportunity to gain the confidence of working with adults and people from different cultures in order to become a driving instructor in the local, multicultural area.

'I wanted to increase my confidence. It's been a great experience. I've learned a lot about teaching' (Gladca Volunteer)

'My experience is working in a lab. I want to be a biology teacher. It's very hard to get a job. And I'm thinking about becoming a biology teacher. It helps me decide what to do next' (Gladca Volunteer)

The volunteers spoke at length about how they have become more confident in teaching and communication over the course of delivery and that their ability to work flexibly with the teaching material and bring in ideas and props from home has increased a great deal.

Clearly, there is a strong link between motivations for volunteering to deliver the programme and future career ambitions. Some volunteers are using this to explore their options and others see it as experience for a specified career path. Not enough time has passed to see how the Gladca volunteers use their Creative English experience but there is definitely a logical link in their view that the programme is connected to their future success. They are also looking at ways of developing Creative English learners into volunteers.

THEME 2: Meso-level Impact at Gladca: Groups and Hubs

Enabling friendship and social mixing

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) learners feel more welcome in sessions and have more time to connect with other learners;
- 2) more effective contact between people from different backgrounds, leading to;
- 3) more friendships and mixing between different social groups outside of Creative English.

Much of Creative English is implicitly about successfully facilitating contact between people during the sessions, often those from different backgrounds. In the sessions observed at Gladca, there were many different nationalities present and many differences in age, religion and English language ability. The groups also had representation from people who were new to the UK and those who had lived in Peterborough for a long time. Certainly, most learners had not met before they started Creative English. The classroom environment in both groups felt welcoming and relaxed, including to the observer as an outsider. There was no formal table set up, people sat in circles for most of the sessions and there was a lot of laughter and informal conversation between learners between and after the session activities.

The main theme of the second session was 'birthdays'. For most of the session, learners took on role-play characters as people attending a birthday party: the room was decorated for the purpose. Lots of time was given for introductions as people arrived to the fictional party and took their seats. The volunteer facilitators allowed the group plenty of time and a few prompts to make small talk about their journeys and how they knew 'Peter', whose birthday it was. The

volunteers invited the more confident speakers to the table first, allowing the less confident learners to follow their example. After a while, three or four separate conversations were underway, in English, between learners, no longer reliant upon the input of the volunteers. In this session, learners had lots of opportunity to connect with each other during structured and unstructured activities. The social dynamics of a birthday meal in a restaurant in which not everybody knows each other were replicated very closely: the feelings of anticipation, awkwardness and need for small talk were easy to recognise for the observer.

At certain points, the volunteers – often following the Creative English materials but also adding a number of examples of their own experience – interjected with new elements of the activity: exchange of presents, the introduction of the birthday cake, the dynamics of the payment process. At each stage, the volunteers asked learners to share the similarities and differences between the role-play and how birthdays and ‘meals out’ happen within their own cultures: *‘where you’re from, do you split the bill or do you expect the organiser to pay?’*.

As well as a way of teaching English language, the role-play became an effective method for cultural exchange and confidence building. The volunteers recognised repeatedly that this scenario is daunting for people who are not from the UK (including for the volunteers) because the norms and practices that underpin it are so context-specific and quite different to those of most people in the room, particularly to those who come from cultures that do not celebrate birthdays. Rather than over-emphasising the differences and between UK cultural practice and that of those in the room, recognising the challenges presented by these social events for everyone in the room allowed a discussion on how to best approach these scenarios, to which most learners contributed personal experiences and lessons.

Towards the end of the scenario, one volunteer introduced the idea of invitations and ‘party bags’ for children’s parties, noting that she had recently had negative experiences because of not knowing what the expectations were around these. She had brought in an invitation that her child had received to illustrate the practice of ‘RSVP’ to invitations, that she had not known about before, which had led to a social faux pas. This was not within the Creative English material but was certainly welcomed by the learners, sparking a number of discussions and ensuring that the group, many of whom were parents of young children who found this to be useful information, would be more prepared in future situations. Crucially, the sharing of the volunteer’s feelings of embarrassment and her aim to help learners avoid this themselves had a highly positive effect on the group: lots of signs of empathy towards the volunteer added to an already jovial and friendly environment.

In social-psychology’s ‘contact theory’ (Allport 1954), it is posited that contact between people from different social and cultural groups is more effective in reducing prejudice if there are a set of favourable conditions in place. To assist in the analysis of this session, these are set out below, with examples from the session described above.

- 1) Equal status between participants – the diverse group were equals as learners, each with their own experiences to contribute to the discussion of birthdays and parties and with limited knowledge of this British cultural practice;
- 2) Common goals – learners shared the goal of trying to understand the language, etiquette and cultural norms of a British birthday party, and to learn English more generally;
- 3) Intergroup cooperation and personal interaction – learners were required to cooperate with each other extensively throughout the scenario and share personal experiences, as well as small talk; and
- 4) Support of authorities, law and customs – in this case, the volunteers established that they were competently leading the scenario but, through the introduction of personal anecdotes and challenges, were able to gain the trust and empathy of the

group. The addition of posters around the room setting out the expectations of respect, tolerance, inclusivity, etc. will also have helped with this factor.

In this example, and those in other observations, the volunteers had seemingly established effective conditions for contact between people. Following this session, the volunteers explained that a number of *'really good friendships'* had developed outside of the course between people who would not have otherwise met. This demonstrates well the logic of this part of the Theory of Change and, whilst this degree of fit with those conditions might not happen in every session, it is demonstrative of the potential of Creative English at Gladca in supporting effective 'social mixing' and social integration generally.

Recruiting and Developing Hubs

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) more community and faith organisations are supported to deliver high-quality CE sessions;
- 2) more hubs recruit and provide English language support to more local people, leading to;
- 3) more hubs are experienced in delivering integration and English language programmes.

As mentioned above, Gladca have used the Creative English opportunity to recruit and develop 4 new volunteers who have been trained by FaithAction. The volunteers and the materials and support provided by Creative English have become important assets to the organisation both in reaching new people and in providing those learners on their waiting list with support at an appropriate level. The team reported that many of the learners beginning traditional ESOL were finding it too difficult and were dropping out very quickly.

The Gladca team noted how Creative English has allowed them to learn much more about learners at the starting point of English language proficiency. The team describes understanding how their learning needs are very different to those who have some, limited English proficiency. Often the team has needed to rely on pictures and the Google Translate function to communicate during registration and to adapt their practice to be able to include those with little to no English:

'We realised with this latest group that many of them have never been in a school environment. Never been in a classroom.' (Gladca Representative)

'They are so keen to learn because they've never really had that opportunity. So concerned about the speaking aspect. A course like this is ideal. It's fun. It's very different to our other courses here.' (Gladca Representative)

From conversations during the site visit, Creative English has helped Gladca to better serve those in the community that have no spoken English and to signpost them onto other services to support other needs and areas of development. As a result, the work of the programme has been recognised by Gladca's partners:

'Stamford College have praised the programme – They think it's fantastic that we're delivering this. They've seen the difference in confidence in the learners. It's definitely been a massive help with that. Just to say good morning.' (Gladca Representative)

Gladca already has 40+ years of experience in integration work and supporting migrants but Creative English appears to have added to their portfolio and experience in a new way. It has provided an opportunity to engage with people they had not worked with before, including those that are more isolated and harder to reach than their standard ESOL client base.

THEME 3: Macro-level impact at Gladca: Tackling structural barriers

Communication and Overcoming Barriers to Participation

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) more awareness of barriers and more solutions for reaching excluded learners leads to;
- 2) CE is better able to reach learners from 'hard to reach' groups in local areas, leading to;
- 3) more learners previously isolated or excluded start and complete English language courses.

Like many Creative English hubs, Gladca has close ties within a very small area of a city. Its distinctiveness in part comes from its longevity and history but also in its daily work with the local community, in the many facets of its community development work. It also has quite a small team: likely known and trusted faces in the local community. As a result, the organisation already had strong connections with those vulnerable to isolation and exclusion, supporting those experiencing domestic abuse or homelessness, asylum seekers, and many other areas of vulnerability. Creative English has allowed the organisation to expand this reach to other potentially isolated and excluded people:

'Isolation and poverty are big issues here. Creative English has helped us reach people that are suffering with loneliness because of their English. We are deeply rooted in the community so we are able to reach people but, before Creative English, we didn't have enough in ESOL to offer to some. It's allowed us to speak to people we wouldn't have seen before.' (Gladca Representative)

Many of the learner stories and anecdotes presented in earlier sections have clear links to structural issues such as cultural restrictions, poverty and isolation. These issues have day-to-day practical affects that comprise barriers to taking part in programmes of all kinds, including English language courses. Creative English at Gladca cannot alone change the structural conditions but it is helping a good proportion of people to overcome the barriers imposed by those structures.

During the delivery of Creative English, the Gladca team note a number of lessons they have learned about the lives of learners: the need for flexibility and sensitivity in their delivery, the need to go the extra mile in communication, including through visits and regular phone calls, etc. They have found that the flexibility and ethos of the programme has allowed the inclusion of people who would not normally be able to attend their courses.

'A lady in the class today who has been through a lot of trauma in her life. Had to leave family behind. Social worker put her in contact. We suggested the Creative English. We had 3 sessions where the lady wouldn't talk or engage. It was a real challenge. Now that same lady has volunteered and has enrolled on other programmes. She's really come out of her shell – she'll have a chat with me. She doesn't miss any lessons.' (Gladca Representative)

'There is one man. He wants to go for a security guard job but English is holding him back. He works nights. Finishes at 7am, comes in for 9. Sleeps at 1 and goes back to work. It's so important to him.' (Gladca Representative)

These two examples demonstrate how Gladca is using Creative English to reach those previously isolated in a way that wholly supports the logic of the Theory of Change.

Operations Evidence and Development

Theory of Change prediction:

- 1) CE curriculum and operations continue to improve with more and better evidence collected;
- 2) more and more coherent data and evidence is available and shared on impact, leading to;
- 3) the impact and reach of Creative English increases over time.

The Gladca team were very complimentary about the design of the programme, the niche it fills and the work of FaithAction to support its delivery. The volunteers made a number of suggestions on how the curriculum could be refined in small ways, including in ensuring that topics such as hairdressing and shopping are optional as they are not always relevant to certain groups. Overall, however, the curriculum was flexible enough to be adapted to those in the room.

Gladca also commented on some of the administration and reporting challenges that come with the programme: the need to start delivering very quickly after inception and send reports on progress throughout, perhaps more than is expected from other programmes. This is a requirement of the programme, partly led by the conditions of the government funding: whilst it adds pressure to hub managers and administrators, it provides a rigorous evidence based for monitoring and evaluating the programme across the country.

Overall, though, the Gladca team felt that FaithAction were a great partner to work with and that they have good relationship with the team. The Gladca team have been able to collect strong evidence on their success which has shown the efficacy of working in this way, and they were open about their intention to buy the Creative English licence and continue delivering the programme as a valuable part of their portfolio. They were in the process of fundraising to meet this goal during the site visits.

Case Study Conclusion

This case study shows how each element of the Creative English Theory of Change can be seen in the local delivery of the programme. It demonstrates clearly how increases in confidence and proficiency for individual learners are linked to and supported by the dynamics of the groups in which they learn. It shows that the ability of volunteers to bring learners together can create a commonality between people from many different parts of the world, ultimately leading to social mixing and social capital between individuals.

The Gladca case also shows how Creative English fits neatly into the portfolio of a locally-connected organisation, already tackling inequality in many different forms, adding significant value to a long-standing community hub. It highlights the distinctiveness of Creative English in ethos, audience and practical application.

As well as validating many of the assumptions of the Theory of Change, the Gladca example also demonstrates how each activity supports other activities: how the structure and flexibility of the curriculum supports the recruitment of those previously excluded and how the focus on learners' strengths and ambitions can be used as a teaching tool. In statistical terms, Gladca's learner progress performance sits close to or above the mean for hubs across the country. A closer look shows that the organisation's values, recruitment, volunteers and teaching – supported by FaithAction – have created a highly successful programme, enabling more opportunities for people to contribute and find a greater sense of belonging. Thanks go, again, to Gladca for the access the team allowed in the development of this case study.

Creative English 2019/20: Success, Learning and Experience

This section looks at the performance and experience of delivery over the 2019/20 commissioning period. Performance is split into the 5 themes, presented in turn below.

FaithAction Programme Management

The FaithAction team managing the Creative English programme have significant experience in programme delivery with core staff having been involved with the programme since 2013. This enabled the programme to make a quick start to delivery with processes and procedures already in place and, crucially too, established networks in place with hubs and individuals who can act as gateways to the grassroots level in local area.

FaithAction are regarded by both the funder and the hubs with which they work as a trusted and reliable partner and are seen as being able to effectively bridge gaps that exist between policy makers and practitioners who operate at grassroots levels. In part, interviewees external to FaithAction attributed this to the experience of those leading the team and their familiarity with the sector in which they work, but also that the FaithAction team were seen as being proactive in engaging with programme stakeholders and in getting out to hubs regularly.

'It helps that you know who you are calling. Like, you've met them and have their phone number. You aren't just phoning or emailing an office with a question or a problem'
(Hub representative)

'FaithAction are good to work with. They know what they are doing and do it'
(MHCLG representative)

The programme is managed across the board in an organised, professional and logical way which all members of the team involved were able to articulate and demonstrate a strong understanding of their role in. An example of this is that hubs were recruited and bought online in such a way that allowed the programme to be “frontloaded” and delivered so that it was not punctuated by breaks for school holidays and major religious events. This requires both an in-depth knowledge of the environment in which the programme operates but also a firm management.

This well-developed capacity within the FaithAction team is a strength and impacts positively on programme management and delivery. Significant time and resource has been spent on developing the skills, networks and knowledge of the team and these sunk costs will be lost if the team move onto new roles within FaithAction and beyond.

The importance of robust and comprehensive data collection is clear within the programme team and the data shared with the research team in the compiling of this report has been forthcoming and of good quality.

Where problems in data collection and programme management have occurred have been around the use of Yeti software in recording hub outcomes and learner questionnaires. In part this was late running because of issues with the funder at the start of the programme, but this has had knock on effect in data collection that has led to fears that some outcomes may be under-reported. There has also been a significant duplication of effort on the part of FaithAction and the hubs in recording data in spreadsheet formats only for them to need to be

re-entered at a later date into the Yeti system. This was, to a large degree, not the fault of the FaithAction team but was a recurring issue in interviews with hubs and contract managers at hubs.

'There is too much paperwork and form-filling. It takes an age to get people registered and then you've got to get them on the system.' (Hub representative)

Quotes such as the above were, however, more common in interviews and conversation with hubs which were based at community, voluntary and faith sector venues than at established training centres. There is therefore a distinct, and tacitly recognised, possibility that administrative work is an unwelcome necessity of volunteering.

Overall the programme management of Creative English has been found to be good and an asset to effective management and delivery. Where problems have existed around hub capacity, training needs and, especially, around completing monitoring data, the FaithAction team have worked with hubs to resolve these. The tacit knowledge held within the team is a valuable asset and helped the programme to deliver quickly and effectively. If a new team or organisation were to attempt to deliver the same programme to the same targets, then one would expect to see a significantly lower return.

Creative English Hub Recruitment and Training

The 45 hubs in the 2019/20 Creative English cohort have been largely recruited through contact with hubs from previous iterations of the programme and a collaboration with local and regional networks. Hubs with previous experience of delivering the programme have also been part of the programme and, in many cases, have been able to recruit learners and deliver quickly and effectively on the back of their previous experience and contacts. Using both the reach of existing networks to recruit and the existing skills and capacities of experienced hubs has proven an effective and efficient model, particularly in relation to the need to get the programme set up quickly.

Hubs can also apply to the programme through the Creative English website. Typically, such applications are made as a result of the word-of-mouth recommendation of other existing hubs. This prevalence of this form of recruitment is indicative of a successful programme in which partners have a positive experience.

The different forms of recruitment hubs has led to a great deal of variance in the size, experience and nature of hubs delivering the 2019/20 cohort of Creative English. These range from large training centres with a background in education and skills training to small faith centres with little or no previous experience of delivering courses or training. The support required from FaithAction and the experience of hubs therefore differs significantly from venue to venue.

The syllabus, materials and course content for all hubs is uniform and is expected to be delivered in a consistent manner (as discussed later in this report): one of the main variables in successful delivery is the efficacy and experience of hubs themselves. This is an important area of research for the programme and so particular focus was placed on findings and trends which appeared in delivery here.

'Which hub model works best? That's the million dollar question'

(FaithAction representative)

A previous evaluation of the Creative English programme (Coventry University, 2015) found that the use of faith centres in delivery was crucial to the programme reaching many individuals who otherwise would not access English language (or indeed many other forms of) provision. As well as the practical support provided by faith centres (e.g. physical venues, access to volunteers), they also bring the values, ethos and mutual levels of trust that give individuals the confidence to engage. Previous research indicates that many learners who feel excluded by or less confident in accessing statutory services – for a range of reasons, from norms within particular communities, perceptions of discrimination or intolerance, fear of the unknown or residual distrust from negative experiences of state-led services in other countries – were more comfortable attending courses in faith-based institutions. This was often linked to the transferable values and recognisable identity of faith-based institutions. There are many examples from this iteration of the programme and previous ones in which learners of one faith group (e.g. a Muslim) felt more comfortable attending a courses at a venue linked to a different religion (e.g. a Church community centre) than a statutory or secular venue. For some, including those of no faith, the association with religion was linked to trust, familiarity, safety and comfort.

Interviews and observations in this research reinforce these findings. In every hub visit and in all interviews with hubs based in faith centres, there were examples of learners accessing the provision because they felt safe and welcome in faith environments. Smaller, longstanding faith-based hubs are regarded as being perhaps the most effective route to engaging with isolated and 'hard-to-reach' prospective learners. There are many accounts of prospective learners who rarely interact with people outside of the family home or their place of worship, and so engagement at their place of worship is arguably the only viable route to reach them. The Integrated Communities Strategy suggests that women from minority ethnic and faith backgrounds are disproportionately disadvantaged in access to services; the Creative English programme has shown significant strength in mitigating this, partly as a result of its partnering with key hubs. This is a clear and distinctive strength which demonstrates well a key difference between Creative English and traditional English language learning provision.

The performance of Creative English in outcomes related to English language proficiency, integration, confidence and social inclusion is demonstrated well in the data presented in this and previous reports. Additionally, however, the programme is able to demonstrate an important ability to work in a mutually beneficial way that has supported small faith and community-focused organisations to reach and better serve, beyond Creative English, some of the most isolated and excluded people in local areas. The Gladca case study is a prime example of this.

Delivery of the programme through faith centres, especially those with no prior experience of running such work, is, however, not without cost. Though course content and delivery is standardised and generally consistent in the way in which it is delivered, it is an issue that volunteers who deliver through smaller organisations and groups, typically including faith centres may not be experienced in managing the required programme administration and behind-the-scenes paperwork of a national, government-funded intervention. This has been

particularly prevalent in this iteration of the programme, with the number of additional hubs recruited, especially with regards to volunteers' ICT skills and access to suitable equipment: intensive training and support has been necessary for many hubs, requiring more input than anticipated from FaithAction.

'There was more mopping up around basic training and reporting with some of the new hubs than we had expected'- FaithAction interviewee

Similarly, though all hubs and contracted individuals receive training at the beginning of delivery, there is often turnover of staff members delivering or administering at hubs which is not always reported (as there is no contractual obligation to do so). Though this has potential for issues across all hubs, this has been less problematic in hubs delivered in a professional services environment, such as training centres, as these have trained, employed staff and established systems, technology and procedures in place.

From interviews with hubs and FaithAction, established training centres could be said to represent the opposite end of the hub spectrum to small faith and community centres in relation to bureaucratic capabilities and staffing capacity. From FaithAction's experience, on the whole, training centres are able to draw upon a track-record of professional delivery and provide their own venues, staff and equipment. These hubs generally require less support to be able to run effectively whilst being able to recruit large numbers of learners and get up and running quicker. Whilst this may present opportunities for efficiency in delivery, however, there are doubts as to how far these centres can reach out to the most isolated individuals in society who have never successfully accessed English language learning provision before.

'They [training centres] work well. Very well, some of them. But do they have that community heart?'- Hub volunteer

Creative English does, however, serve as an effective gateway, or introductory, course for learners who are keen to go into formal ESOL provision provided by training centres – making opportunities for signposting to further courses easier within training centres. Overall, though, FaithAction have needed to balance the desire for recruiting a high volume of learners with the need to ensure that the programme can reach those who are most isolated – the mix of hub types is largely supportive of this balance.

There is a strong emphasis placed on the programme by the FaithAction team for it to be used as a vehicle for building and developing capacity in the hubs and bringing about lasting positive change:

'Delivering Creative English for hubs means that they are getting a very real investment in terms of money and training. We need to make sure that that is lasting. It's the whole teaching a man to fish story.'-FaithAction interviewee

Some larger hubs have mirrored this approach and used Creative English as a means to work towards their wider aims of community engagement and development.

'It allowed us to reach new people from different communities. It widened our reach and had a multiplier effect on getting people through the door and into other services. People come for the English lessons and then come back for health services and the creche. Then they bring their friends. Before we know it, we've a whole new cohort of people to be working with and are looking at increasing our provision.' - Hub manager

This ethos of upskilling hubs and ensuring that the investment has potential to last beyond the hub delivery and run of the Creative English programme is embedded in the way that the FaithAction team trains and works with new and returning hubs. Interview data from across the FaithAction team and the hubs themselves corroborates that significant time is spent working with new hubs to upskill them. All hubs regardless of size or previous association with the programme have been visited by FaithAction at least once, with many receiving multiple visits and contacts. Every hub interviewed could name individuals on the FaithAction team who they would or have contacted with issues or questions, showing a good level of familiarity and indicating a good level of access to the central Creative English team.

An additional benefit for many smaller and less well-established hubs is the positive effects of their association with the programme in other areas of their work. Delivering Creative English has given hubs access to professionally produced promotion material and guidance from the FaithAction team around how to make use of this. Importantly too, delivering on a national project which was in receipt of UK Government funding gave many smaller and less-established hubs a credibility in applying for other sources of funding which they may otherwise have not had the ability or confidence to access. One good example of this is Gladca in Peterborough, a smaller hub, whose team is currently using the case study from this report to bid for funding in other areas.

All hubs are required to attend training upon being accepted onto the programme, this is regardless as to whether or not they have delivered Creative English before, and regular refresher courses are held. Training for hubs appeared to be valued by interviewees from hubs but interviewees at FaithAction felt that there was often a struggle to get hubs to take part in training, even when they were contractually obliged to do so.

Regional "hub huddles" which bring together hubs on a regular basis were seen as a valuable tool by hubs though as they allowed for the development of a network of contacts amongst practitioners and an environment to both share and learn best practice.

Creative English Course Delivery

The delivery of the Creative English programme is clearly articulated and set out in a course syllabus and plan. This material is well produced, clear and easy to use and leads learners through a logical and unfolding soap-opera style storyline which covers key topics and themes relevant to programme outcomes and the likely lives and experiences of learners.

In theory, hubs should be able to deliver consistent content from this without deviating too far from it or overly improvising. In practice however some of the content is, generally with the best of intentions, either changed, adapted or skipped to varying degrees in sessions. The latter often occurs if sessions are large and/or over-running and was observed to happen when

learner enthusiasm for the topic at hand spilled over into wider discussion. This organic conversation, though not part of course content, is both an enjoyable and valuable part of the experience for learners and the ability and confidence to have freeform conversations in English should not be overly discouraged.

It is an acknowledged issue though that content is often adapted and changed. Here ESOL and former ESOL teachers are regarded, anecdotally, as being *'the worst culprits'* in introducing different linguistic content and in focusing more on the correct usage of English words and structure than on confidence and willingness to speak out loud in English.

Overall though, learners and interviewees at hubs have regarded the content of the course to be of a high level and, to the best of their knowledge, consistent:

'I can't speak for everywhere but I know that it was hammered home to us in training that we don't alter the lessons plans' (Creative English volunteer)

A recurring issue with course delivery amongst hubs interviewed and observed was that course registration and administration was a time consuming and often disruptive process and one that was felt to impinge on the experience for learners. Particularly if a hub was operating with one volunteer, it was an issue that that person was expected (or felt expected) to be welcoming the group, delivering content, ensuring the learners were signed in and registering new learners:

'It's the worst bit. You're just getting started and someone new comes in then you're signing them up while the rest of the group are sitting there waiting for you. How does that make the new person feel?' (Creative English volunteer)

Many of these problems could be mitigated with clear guidance and training for hubs and volunteers. Whilst the majority of hubs deliver with more than one volunteer, it should be recommended that volunteers do not, wherever possible, deliver on their own in order to avoid these issues of capacity.

The content delivered in the programme was, by and large, felt to be culturally appropriate by interviewees at hubs. Interviewees reported that learners respond positively when their culture or background is referenced, even if it is just in passing, and that they often point this out to other learners. Small things like the example below are felt to make a big difference to learners in promoting belonging and a sense of active participation in the programme.

'I read out one of the names of the characters and the lady was just beaming. It was her sister's name. Her sister is still in Pakistan and she has never heard anyone in the UK say that name before.' (Creative English volunteer)

The content that was queried by volunteers and hub representatives was around the 'family centric' nature of the storylines. Some interviewees felt that there was a danger that this could alienate learners who have suffered bereavement or loss of family but did acknowledge that this had not happened as far as they were aware.

Overall, course delivery has remained consistent with an effective degree of flexibility to tailor content to individual groups. Those delivering the course were complimentary about the material, content and style of course content and its relevance to learners.

Language Proficiency Learner Outcomes

The Integrated Communities Strategy highlights poor English language proficiency as a key limiting factor on the ability of an individual to engage with the labour market, civil life and social life and found that low English language proficiency was closely linked to low outcomes around confidence, independence and self-determination. Over 777,000 adults in England self-identify as not being able to speak English well, with women from minority ethnic and religious background significantly over-represented.

The focus of the Creative English programme on English language proficiency outcomes in relation to *spoken* English and not on written outputs is a clear part of the programme's distinctiveness. At the time of joining the programme, many learners do not need or aspire to increased standards of written English. Moreover, the Integrated Communities Strategy does not highlight poor written English proficiency as a driver of poor integration.

Many of the learners on the programme want to be able to speak enough English to boost their confidence and improve their day-to-day lives and opportunities. Creative English learners do not always aspire to enter the labour market and may be illiterate or semi-literate in their own native language. In these instances, an insistence on learning written English, in a formal setting, is unsuited to their needs and a barrier to access. By focussing on spoken English proficiency and confidence in using English, the Creative English programme overcomes that barrier.

'Creative English just gets people in who otherwise wouldn't do learning'
(Hub representative)

'I'm concerned that there is always this drive towards measuring qualifications, levels etc. etc. The more formal stuff. That isn't what this [Creative English] is about. This is a CLG programme and not a Department of Education one. Most of the learners don't want the formal offer. If they did, they'd do ESOL.' (FaithAction representative)

Despite Creative English being different in a number of key ways to traditional ESOL, it is important to note that it is a clear priority for the programme to increase English language proficiency, and to rigorously evidence its performance against this outcome. When learners are registered to the programme, their English language proficiency is assessed. This assessment is undertaken at hub level and is consistently applied across all hubs with data being fed back to the Creative English team at FaithAction.

Average Learner Score Change

Learners are given a Learner Score between 0 and 7 based on their English language proficiency, with higher scores corresponding to higher proficiency. A Learner Score of 0-3 places the learner in the category of Pre-Entry Level and this is where 88.4% of Creative English learners were assessed to be at registration. Within this data, a Learner Score of 1 is by far the most common. This emphasises that the Creative English learner audience is mostly well below the level required to succeed in more mainstream ESOL courses. Although, it is worth recognising that both technical proficiency and confidence have a part to play in motivations for taking Creative English over traditional ESOL – many learners choose or are referred to Creative English because of concerns related to the suitability of delivery method (e.g. traditional, classroom based approaches) regardless of proficiency level.

The average (mean) Learner Score on registration was 1.7 and on completion this had risen to 3.1, a rise of 1.4. This is a clear positive outcome which represents definite increases in English language proficiency for the learner cohort and has moved the group overall from Pre-Entry Level to Entry Level. The clear upwards shift in Learner Score is shown in Figure 6.

The high concentration of learners registering for the programme with very low levels of English language proficiency further cements the programme’s niche. The low level of English language proficiency at entry point speaks to the ethos of the programme in not only reaching those who would struggle in other forms of provision but also those prospective learners who are some of the most isolated and marginalised in society because of their lack of English.

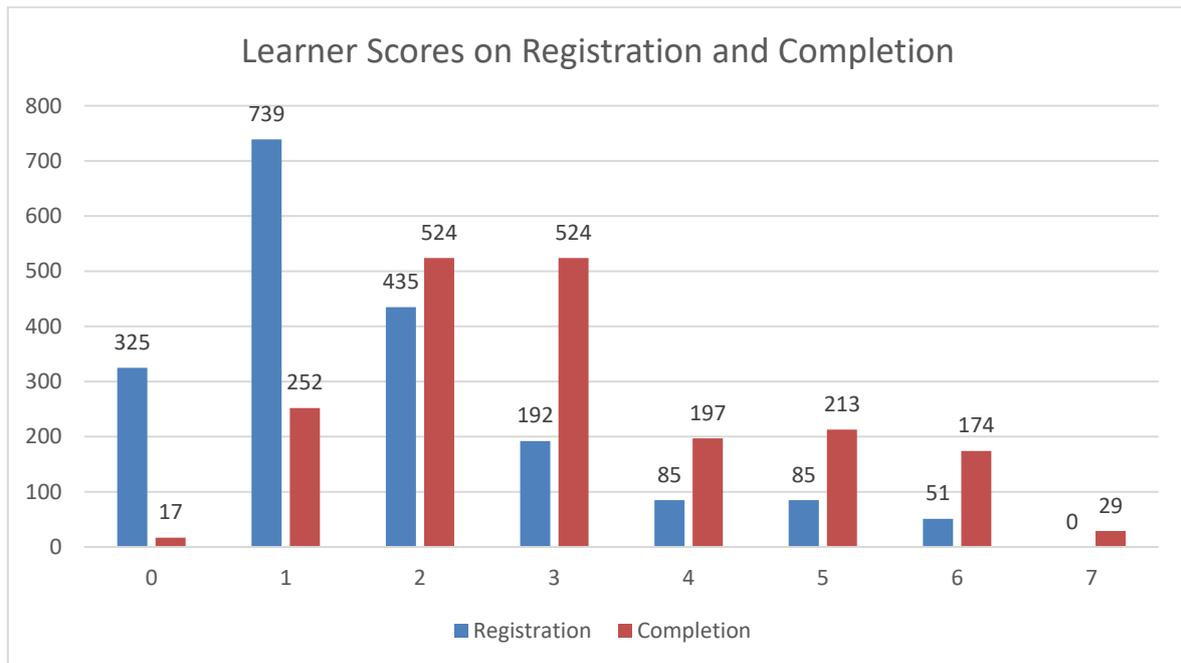


Figure 6: Learner Scores on Registration and Completion

Change Relative to Starting Learner Score

Further analysis of the data also shows that Creative English has had the most impact in terms of English language proficiency outcomes for those with the lowest proficiency on registration. When the learner cohort is split based on their Learner Score at registration, the data shows that those in the Pre-Entry Level (Learner Scores of 0-3) saw an average increase of 1.47 whereas those in the higher levels of Learner Score saw an average increase of 0.76 (Figure 7).

Learner Cohort	Learner Score on Registration	Learner Score on Completion	Change
0 to 3 (Pre-Entry Level)	1.3	2.77	+1.47
4 to 7 (Entry Level and above)	4.85	5.61	+0.76
Programme Average	1.7	3.1	+1.4

Figure 7: Change in proficiency split by learner level

Further analysis allows the demonstration the role of each starting learner score in change. Figure 8 shows the opportunity for change for each starting learner score group, demonstrating that the lower an individual's proficiency at the start of the course, the greater the increase in proficiency scores afterwards.

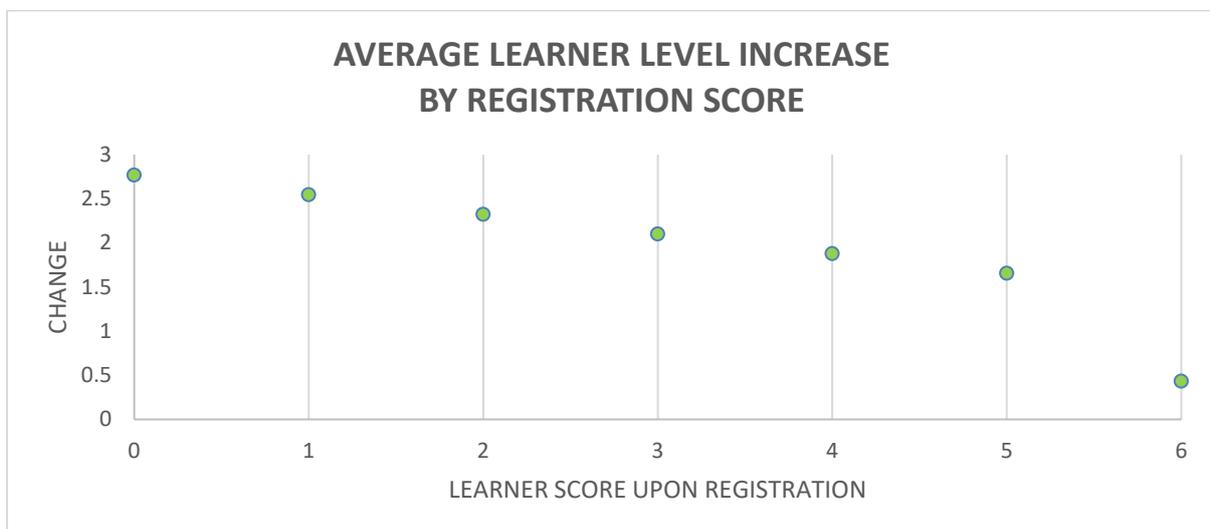


Figure 8: Average Learner Level Increase by Registration Score

Whilst there is a degree of variance in the amount of change according to starting proficiency, the 'across the board' increase in English language proficiency for all cohorts of learners demonstrates that the level of the course is pitched appropriately. It also indicates a good degree of differentiation of material within sessions, providing opportunities for more advanced learners to take on more advanced tasks. As learners with low learner scores have more room to move upwards, and because increases in proficiency are not measured in a linear manner

(the data collected is ordinal rather than interval¹), it is to be expected that learners with low Learner Scores see the greatest increase in their proficiency.

Whilst increases in English language proficiency were lower, relative to the group overall, for learners who came to the programme with higher levels, it is worth emphasising that both groups benefited significantly from participation and that there were other positive externalities that came from their participation. A recurring theme in interviews with hubs has been that the flexibility of the delivery of the programme and the relatable nature of it allows for a diversity of roles within the lessons, dependent on learner ability and confidence.

'It can be hard if you've got a big session and some learners either know or are picking up the content quicker than others. But you can get them to help one another'
(Creative English Volunteer)

There is strong evidence from observations and interviews that learners with higher levels of proficiency and confidence often organically take formal or informal volunteering/mentoring roles within their hubs and groups.

From observations, there were many examples of more advanced learners working with those who were less proficient to translate course material and content into their native language, particularly when the volunteers did not speak that language. This enabled the less proficient learners to more readily grasp the content and, in many cases, helped to situate it within a clearer cultural context. Similarly, as the detailed case study of the Gladca Hub illustrates, more proficient learners are often asked to act out scenarios or speak first. This helps to guide less proficient learners and to build confidence. Through these examples, we see that those learners who come into the programme with higher levels of English language proficiency are able to both improve their own skills and enhance the learning of others.

At an individual level, 83% of learners showed a positive increase in their Learner Score between registration and completion. This is an extremely positive outcome and one which re-emphasises that the programme is having a positive impact on English language proficiency.

¹ Ordinal data is collected on a scale which orders the points (learner scores from 1 to 7) but for which is no standard difference between the points. Interval data is collected on a scale in which the distance between two points is standardised and equal.

Of those who saw an improvement in the Learner Score between registration and completion, the majority of these saw an increase of up to 1 level with the size of increase diminishing thereafter. This is seen in Figure 9 below:

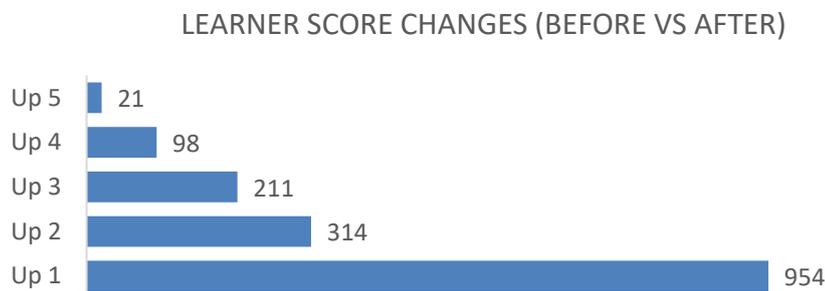


Figure 9: Changes in Learner Score (Before and After)

The Role of Chance and Repeatability

The large dataset and consistent data recording and collection methods enabled a detailed statistical analysis of the data in a way that has not been done before with the Creative English programme, or indeed the many other similar interventions. This is important as a robust and credible dataset set provides reliable and objective results by which to evaluate the programme and assess its impact. This data can be further extrapolated and predictions can be made regarding the impact of programme attendance on future learners.

The outcomes around Learner Score improvement were evenly distributed (as shown below in Figure 10) – an important assessment in the ability to extrapolate data and make meaningful forecasts. This means that the degree of Learner Score changes were normally spread across the group, with the largest sub-group in the middle of the dataset and change levels then tapering down either side of this towards outliers. This is a typical ‘bell-curve’ pattern that one would expect to see in a normal distribution of outcomes.

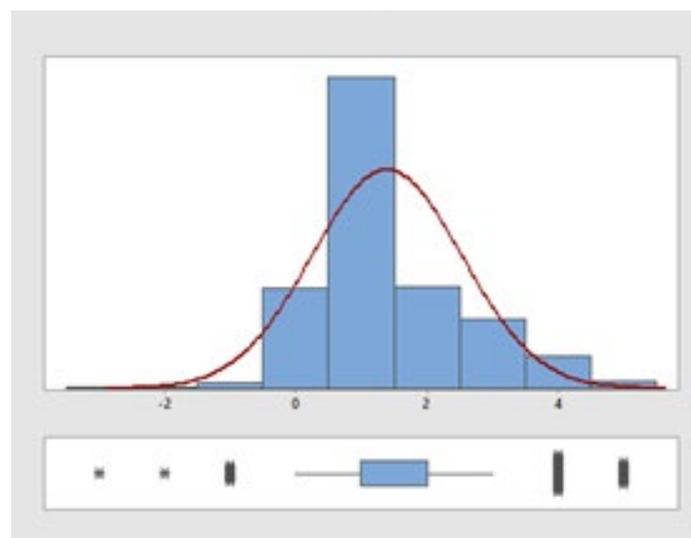


Figure 10: An even distribution of change data

Often in the analysis of interventions, it is difficult to know the role of chance in the attainment of outcomes. The size and quality of the data collected allows a series of tests which demonstrate 1) the extent to which the increase in learner proficiency happened by chance and 2) the likelihood that similar results would be repeated by the programme. The results of this further interrogation can be seen in Figure 11 below, showing the specific calculations of the spread, including:

1. the exact mean;
2. the standard deviation – a measure of spread between the group members and the group mean which tells us what percentage of individuals fall within a certain range of the mean.
3. the normal distribution - shown to be highly significant ($p < 0.005$) and
4. the level of 'skewness' – less than 1, an statistically acceptable result.

These tests meet the standards required for peer-reviewed academic analysis. They ultimately mean that the outcomes around Learner Score improvement are very highly unlikely to be attributed to chance – and are therefore directly attributable to the programme to a 95% degree of certainty. Equally as importantly, the tests show that these outcomes would be expected to be repeated if the Creative English course were delivered again, in a similar fashion to a similar cohort in the future.

Anderson-Darling Normality Test	
A-Squared	119.88
P-Value	<0.005
Mean	1.3886
Standard Deviation	1.1467
Skewness	0.853385

Figure 11: Results of an Anderson-Darling Normality Test

Using this data we can apply statistical forecasting tools to further test these findings and to forecast likely outcomes for future learners based on their Learner Score upon registration. This will allow Creative English to focus efforts in the future on learners who are most likely to be positively impacted and to seek funding and partners appropriate to this.

Statistical Forecasting and Predicting Future Learner Performance

Figure 12 below forecasts the likely improvement for individuals based on their starting Learner Scores, wherein the data points indicate likely average improvement and the attached lines represent 1 standard deviation above and below that mean.

This forecast shows that, for example, out of a group of individuals with a starting Learner Score of 0, 68% of completers will improve by between 0.62 and 2.92 levels and the mean change will be 1.8 levels. For an individual starting with a learner score of 0 this will likely result in an end Learner Score of either 0,1,2 and an average new Learner Score rating of 1. This forecasting alongside the previous analysis of outcome distribution allows Creative English to say with confidence that learners completing the programme will improve their English language proficiency and move them from Pre-Entry Level towards or into Entry Level

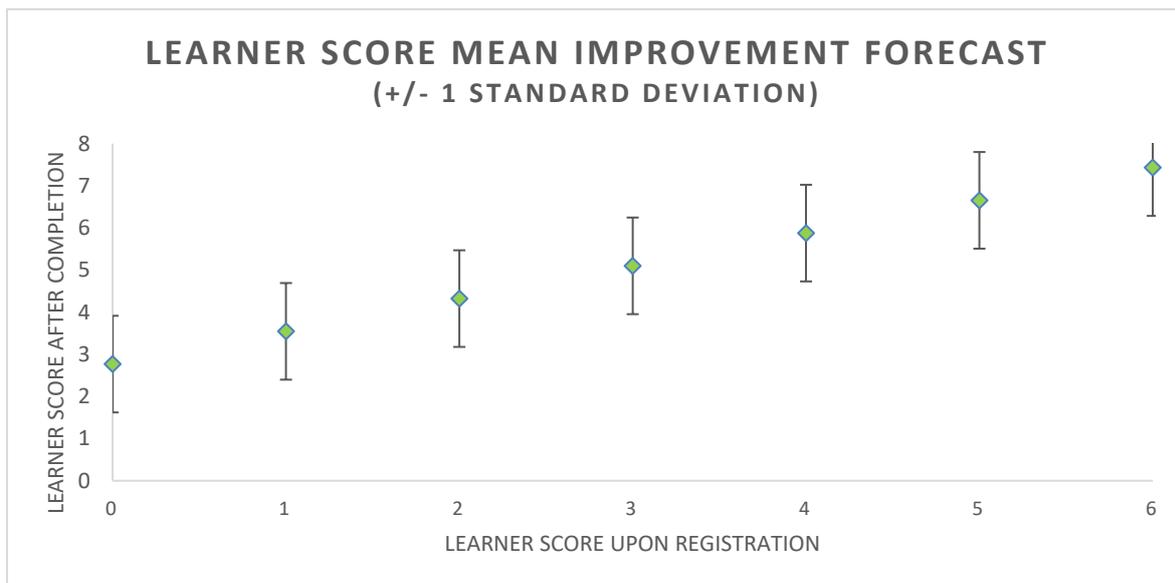


Figure 12: Learner Score Mean Improvement Forecast

Demographics and Change

Further to this, the large, standardised dataset enabled a detailed analysis of English language proficiency outcomes in relation to demographic groups. Analysing and presenting the data in this way builds the evidence base of success around English language proficiency outcomes and helps to inform future areas of delivery and focus. With the exception of outcomes related to ethnicity, all of the data below relating to demographics and learner outcomes fall within one standard deviation.

Though the majority of learners on the programme were female, women on average entered the programme with slightly higher levels of English language proficiency than men and left it with larger increases in ability. Though outcomes for both male and female learners are positive, it does go against the typical trend seen in the programme that the group with the lowest proficiency at entry see the smallest returns.

The Creative English team may wish to reflect on why this is the case and, potentially, adapt delivery in the future. Observations during sessions recorded that men made up the minority of participants and, at times, showed signs of social embarrassment or awkwardness when acting out scenarios or speaking publicly. Though the content of the Creative English programme is not gender specific, it is also possible that male participants are likely to find some of the activities and scenarios less engaging or culturally unsuitable. This would include elements around childcare, cooking and, in one observation, getting dressed up to attend a wedding.

Sex	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Change
Female	1.75	1.44
Male	1.53	1.17

Figure 13: Learner Scores by Sex

With regards to improvements in English language proficiency by age group, the programme follows a pattern of those groups with the lowest Learner Score upon registration seeing the largest improvements in their Learner Score upon completion. Typically, the younger the participant at the time of their registration, the lower their learner score was and the difference between the extreme groups of 18-24 and 65+ is pronounced.

That all age groups saw increases in their English language proficiency is a positive outcome and one that speaks well of the appeal and nature of the programme and the way in which it is delivered.

Age	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Change
Unknown	1.36	1.82
25-44	1.6	1.43
18-24	1.2	1.41
45-64	1.8	1.32
64+	1.91	1.06

Figure 14: Learner Scores by Age

There was some variance between outcomes for participants when sorted by religion but these are not overly pronounced and all show positive change. Buddhist learners are an outlier here in that they show the lowest average increase in learner score by some distance, but a sample size of 4 here is very small and so the data is less robust. Faith groups which have larger numerical representation follow the patterns seen elsewhere within the programme and show average improvement from Pre-Entry Level English language proficiency to either Entry Level or just short.

From named faith backgrounds Muslim learners see the highest overall Learner Score at completion (3.18).

Religion	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Change
Unknown	1	2
Other	1.6	1.57
No religion	1.64	1.4
Muslim	1.79	1.39
Christian	1.52	1.37
Sikh	0.98	1.3
Hindu	1.57	1.27
Buddhist	1.5	1

Figure 15: Learner Scores by Religion

Progress in English language proficiency between registration and completion by ethnic group of the learner shows a great deal of variance in the Learner Score at the time of registration and this impacts on the rates of change seen for each group. These trends do generally hold true to the pattern typical to the programme though with groups with the lowest levels of English language proficiency at registration seeing the greatest positive change.

Learners who identified as Black, on average, came into the programme with the lowest Learner Score on registration but completed with a learner score of 3.65. This is the highest of all ethnic groups involved in the programme and represents a very dramatic positive swing. The dataset for English language proficiency outcomes by ethnicity are less statistically reliable than those for other demographic categorisations and do not fit within one standard deviation, but these results may be worthy of further research by the FaithAction team.

Ethnicity	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Change
Black	1.17	2.48
Asian	1.62	1.41
White	1.78	1.29
Other	2.06	1.17
Arab	2.25	1.09
Mixed	2.04	0.83

Figure 16: Learner Scores by Ethnicity

Overall, whichever way the English language proficiency outcomes by demographic group, they show positive outcomes, on average, for all learners. These are statistically robust outcomes which complement the findings that 83% of learners who complete the course improve their English language proficiency. That all demographic groups regardless of age, gender, ethnic or faith background are able to positively engage with, and benefit from, the programme is testament to the holistic and well-rounded nature of it. This is a wide-reaching programme which does not exclude sections of society in a drive to include others. The focus of the lesson plans and curriculum on commonalities and situations which are relatable, to some degree, by most people promotes inclusion. Further impacts of this are discussed in the “Wider Community and Integration Outcomes” section of this report.

Hubs and Change

Finally, the dataset also allowed for a detailed and statistically robust and reliable analysis of English language proficiency outcomes by hub. Here the Learner Score change of learners who completed the programme varied widely by hub with the top performing hub achieving an average upwards shift of 3.2 Learner Scores and the lowest performer recording an average decline of -1.2. One third of the 45 hubs achieved average Learner Score improvements above the whole group mean of 1.4 despite average before score similarities. This is suggestive of there being factors at play within hubs which make achieving positive learner outcomes more likely.

There is, however, a risk of the outcome of a ‘league table’ of hubs being damaging to the confidence of hubs which are seen to perform poorly or less well in it. This could lead to disenchantment or disengagement with the programme in the future. Whilst it is clear that hubs which do not deliver Creative English to a standard which benefits learners and meets the core aims of the programme should not be allowed to continue unchecked, it is clear that there are a large number of variables outside of the control of FaithAction, the hubs and volunteers which impact on learner outcomes.

Learner level outcomes have shown that, because measures in English language proficiency are not linear, those individuals and groups who start at the lowest level tend to benefit most from the intervention of the programme and that those who register with the programme with higher proficiency tend to benefit the least (in regards to English language proficiency). Therefore, hubs which recruit learners with lower levels of proficiency are inherently more likely to 'outperform' those who recruit learners with higher levels. This would render comparisons unfair and would obscure other potential areas of interest or learning. As such, hubs in the following analysis have been grouped by the average Learner Score of their learners upon registration. As far as is practically and logically possible, these represent fair 'peer groups' of hubs that can be compared to another.

Hub Name	Learners	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Learner Score on Completion	Average Change
Inspirational Training	147	0.3	2.6	2.3
Nishkam Birmingham	71	0.7	1.9	1.2
SVS Birmingham	40	0.8	1.8	1
Activities R Us OL8	33	0.9	1.8	0.9
Activitiea R Us OL1	49	0.9	1.8	0.9
Empowering Activities	32	0.9	1.7	0.8
W2_Somali advice and Forum (SAAFI)	36	0.2	0.8	0.6

Figure 17: Hubs with a Learner Score of <1 at the time of registration

Hub Name	Learners	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Learner Score on Completion	Average Change
Excel Women, Barking	74	1.6	5.2	3.6
Account3	33	1.2	4.4	3.2
W2_Smethwick CAN	30	1.8	4.5	2.7
W2_FRF Tower Hamlets 2	33	1.6	4.3	2.7
FaithRG Newham	33	1.3	3.7	2.4
W2_FRF Newham2	33	1.4	3.1	1.7
Easa	69	1.3	2.7	1.4
FaithRG Tower Hamlets	34	1.6	3	1.4
W2_Russbridge Academy, Dagenham	33	1.8	3	1.2
Fatima Women, Oldham	56	1.6	2.8	1.2
W2_Good Response	37	1.9	3.1	1.2
W2_Open Doors Baptist	15	1.9	3	1.1
W2_AI –Saddique	33	1.1	2.1	1
Anjumane	34	1.4	2.4	1
W2_Migrant Training	68	1.3	2.2	0.9
Activities R Us OL9	37	1	1.9	0.9
W2_National Start up	34	1.2	2.1	0.9
W2_FaithRG Waltham Forest	32	1.7	2.6	0.9
Empowering Education	98	1	1.7	0.7
W2_Boston English	51	1.1	1.8	0.7
W2_Positive Echo	35	1.4	1.9	0.5

Figure 18: Hubs with a Learner Score of >1 but <2 at the time of registration

Hub Name	Learners	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Learner Score on Completion	Average Change
St. Paul's Crossover	85	2.9	4.9	2
W2_Bethany Church Boston	24	2.8	4.5	1.7
W2_Kingsgate Community church	10	2.6	4.2	1.6
Re:Source Blackburn	56	2.2	3.8	1.6
W2_Express Tuition Haringey	35	2.4	3.8	1.4
W2_GLADCA, Peterborough	35	2.1	3.3	1.2
W2_Russbridge Academy, Redbridge	32	2	3	1
W2 ACDA Ealing 2	35	2.5	3.4	0.9
Highfield Hall	35	2.2	3	0.8
Saathi House	34	2.4	2.7	0.3

Figure 19 Hubs with a Learner Score of >2 but <3 at the time of registration

Hub Name	Learners	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Learner Score on Completion	Average Change
W2_Express Tuition Hackney	42	3.1	4.6	1.5
W2_ACDA Hounslow	36	3.3	4.6	1.3
W2_ACDA Ealing	39	3.4	4.4	1
Oasis Luton	33	3.9	4.8	0.9
Iraqi Welfare	33	3.8	4.3	0.5

Figure 20: Hubs with a Learner Score of >3 but <4 at the time of registration

Hub Name	Learners	Average Learner Score on Registration	Average Learner Score on Completion	Average Change
W2_Skills Enterprise, Newham	41	4.8	5.6	0.8
W2_All Saints	7	5.6	4.4	-1.2

Figure 21: Hubs with a Learner Score of >4 at the time of registration

The data on English language proficiency outcomes by hub provides good comparison between hubs which have taken on learners of similar aptitude but more research is needed to investigate the extent to which other factors, internal and external, may have influenced outcomes.

One potential issue is that, though the registration and completion forms are standardised and all hubs are trained in completing them, there is an element of subjectivity to completion of both and it is possible that these subconscious biases influence reported outcomes.

‘Over-humility is a problem, particularly in the faith sector. Some volunteers feel that doing good is enough and downplay outplay their own successes’ (FaithAction Representative)

‘People don’t like to boast. Getting good news stories is like getting blood from a stone’ (Hub representative)

It is also possibly the case in some hubs that the person working with the learner to complete registration is different to the person who completes the end assessment. This gives scope for two different subjective interpretations to influence outcomes. The environment in hubs on

the day of registration and completion, as well as the personal situation and confidence of the learner will also impact, positively or negatively, on outcomes.

'With some women, you know that they can speak more than you do to you. It is about coaxing that out' (Hub representative)

There are some significant outliers in the hub dataset which should be investigated by FaithAction as they are likely to be as a result of either faulty data collection or faulty data management. In particular the data for W2_All Saints hub which recorded negative English language proficiency outcomes (learners' English language scores decreased during the course) despite learners being assessed as registering for the programme with high levels of proficiency appears to be erroneous.

Wider Community and Integration Outcomes

In addition to English language proficiency as a driver of integration, the UK Government's Integration Strategy recognises that meaningful social mixing between individuals and groups who are different to one another is vitally important. Meaningful contact and mixing between individuals and groups who are different is widely accepted as promoting trust and working to tackling negative stereotypes and prejudices.

Creative English aspires to be, and in many cases is, a vehicle for bringing people who are different together and so links closely with the outcomes deemed vital for promoting integration in the Strategy. The programme was repeatedly referred to by interviewees, both internal and external to FaithAction, as being an integration programme first and an English language programme second. This comes through very strongly in the Theory of Change document. Here, English language proficiency is not the aim. It is, rather, a vehicle for reaching the aim of a 'happier society in which people have more opportunity to belong and contribute'.

'The programme is about relationship building, cohesion and integration. It helps people become more independent and resilient'- MHCLG interviewee

'English is a bonus, but getting them out of the house and making friends is why we do it. It's all about confidence and belonging'- Hub leader

'How do we hammer home that this isn't just an English language home programme?'- FaithAction interviewee

In addition to core results around language proficiency, a number of questions were asked within the Learner Survey around integration related outcomes. These can be split into two sub-categories of 'Community Interactions' which relate to measurable learner behaviours and 'Perceptions' relating to concepts such as confidence and community membership.

Here with the indicators around friendships and community interactions there is clear evidence that completing the Creative English programme brings about positive behavioural changes for learners with regards to integration focused outcomes.

Learners who have completed 10 or more Creative English sessions see their number of friends in their local area who are of a different national or religious background to them rise from an average of 2.5 per person to 3.32. Some of the change in the number of friends which

a learner has from different national or religious backgrounds can be ascribed to the connections which they make in the Creative English sessions. Site visits to hubs, for instance, observed a good proportion of learners of different nationalities who had developed and maintained friendships beyond the classroom.

The focus on commonalities in the syllabus enhances this potential for friendships by encouraging learners to share individuating detail with each other and share experiences and memories. For instance, some hubs where a large proportion of learners have young children encourage attendance by laying on creche facilities and reading children’s stories at the end of sessions. Researchers have seen first-hand that this has encouraged discussion around local play facilities and child friendly activities. Similarly, where the course scenario involved attending a wedding, learners diverted from course content to discuss their own weddings amongst themselves.

That the rise in the number of people identified as ‘friends’ has risen is important as this goes beyond merely speaking English to another individual and suggests that the meaningful interactions and social mixing ascribed by the Integrated Communities Strategy is taking place.

However, when asked about experiences and behaviours outside of Creative English, there was also an increase in the number of people which the learners had spoken to in English over the previous week. This was up to 3.7 per learner from an initial baseline of 2.53. This suggests a sustainability and a transferability in outcomes here: Learners are taking what they are learning in sessions and using it in their local areas and communities. Not all of this will be relational interactions, such as making new friends, but an increase in the number of transactional outcomes such as shopping and using local amenities, points to a combination of increased confidence, willingness and knowledge: all precursors to social integration.

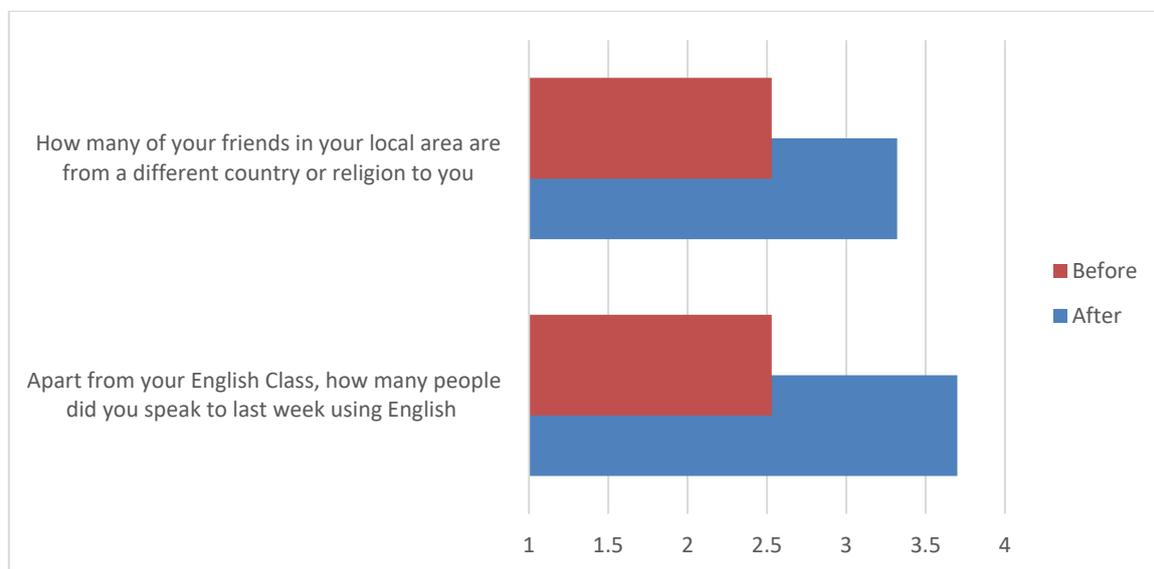


Figure 22: Friendships and Interactions

There is significant evidence that Creative English has given new arrivals and socially isolated people a pathway into existing community structures, facilities and services. This was a

recurrent theme in interviews with hubs and observations of sessions and was also felt to be part of the distinctiveness of Creative English in relation to traditional ESOL:

'By coming here, learners get access to the centre and all the people in it. From there they can see what else is happening in their community and that they can do, often with people that they've met on Creative English. You don't get that in colleges and training centres.' (Hub representative)

In this respect the English language provision was seen as being *'the hook that we get people in with'* and a vehicle for getting traditionally hard to reach individuals through the door and accessing provision for the first time. Around three-quarters of learners who complete the Creative English programme are from Muslim backgrounds, and the majority of these learners are females of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. These are individuals from groups clearly identified by the Integrated Communities Strategy as priorities for engagement and inclusion in integration work.

Many of the Creative English hubs also offer unique environments for people of different nationalities and faith backgrounds to come together and interact. This tends to be a reflection of diversity in the areas in which the hubs operate; interview data suggests that diversity within sessions is highest in London and the East of England hubs. Hubs which operate from community facilities or Christian faith buildings also tend to be more multicultural than those which operate from faith buildings which tend to cater for a specific ethnic or national group.

These findings again link back to contemporary policy outcomes around promoting meaningful social mixing between individuals and groups who are different.

'We've 8 different nationalities here in a session most weeks. They've different needs but help one another and get on. Seeing them come together is the important thing.' (Hub representative)

'Where else in the world on a midweek evening are 3 Angolan women, a Pakistani man and 3 Lithuanian women all sitting together and talking?' (Hub representative)

By default, English becomes the lingua franca in Creative English sessions where there are high levels of diversity and many language groups, such as in the above quote. This encourages learners to speak informally, beyond the programme's activities and syllabus. In all sessions observed, learners mixed and spoke to one another before and after sessions. These informal interactions with other people of similar English language proficiency and confidence and who are on the same shared journey is important in helping learners to take what are often their first steps in 'natural' conversations in English.

There were a number of points made in interviews as to how long-term and sustainable friendships made by learners during the programme are and about how these could possibly be measured. Similarly, it was questioned as to how much scope the programme gives for interactions with British people, or the 'host community'. Whilst these appear to be legitimate points, they are somewhat beyond the scope and control of the programme in its current format. Working with wider host community groups or organisations, beyond them delivering the programme as hubs, to create more opportunities for interactions may be an area for the programme to explore in future iterations.

Additionally, the data in Figure 233 below shows that learners are more comfortable in talking to people from other backgrounds after they have completed the Creative English programme. Whether or not the programme provides opportunities for direct interaction with host communities or scope for lasting friendships, the increased level of comfort and efficacy in talking to someone different to oneself is an outcome that is likely to be easier to maintain and more generalisable.

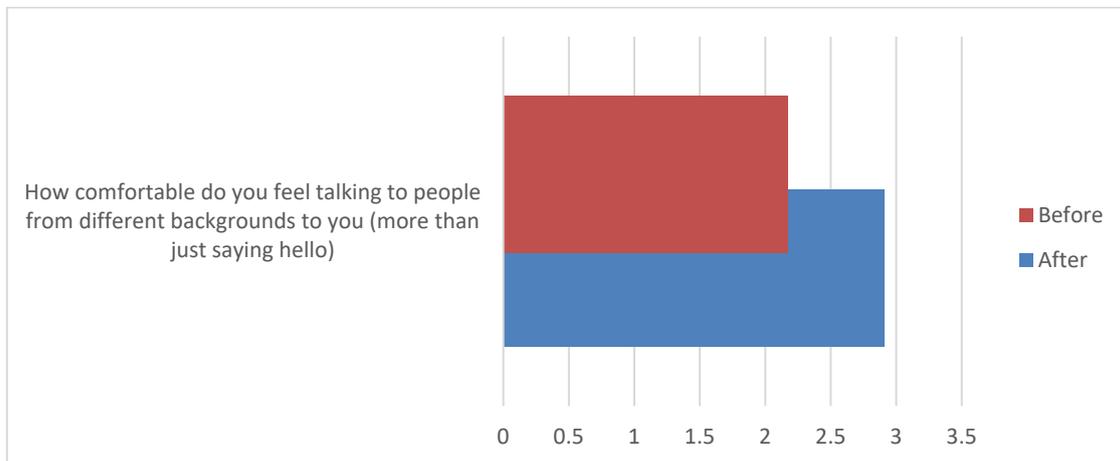


Figure 23: Comfort talking to people from different backgrounds to you

The data below in Figure 24 demonstrates very well the increased independence, and opportunity that comes along with this. Learners who complete the programme see clear and consistent increases in the frequency with which they use public amenities, such as parks and playgrounds, public transport and shops. This is linked closely to the outcome in Figure 23 and is clear evidence of positive attitudinal and behavioural changes for learners, resulting from the programme.

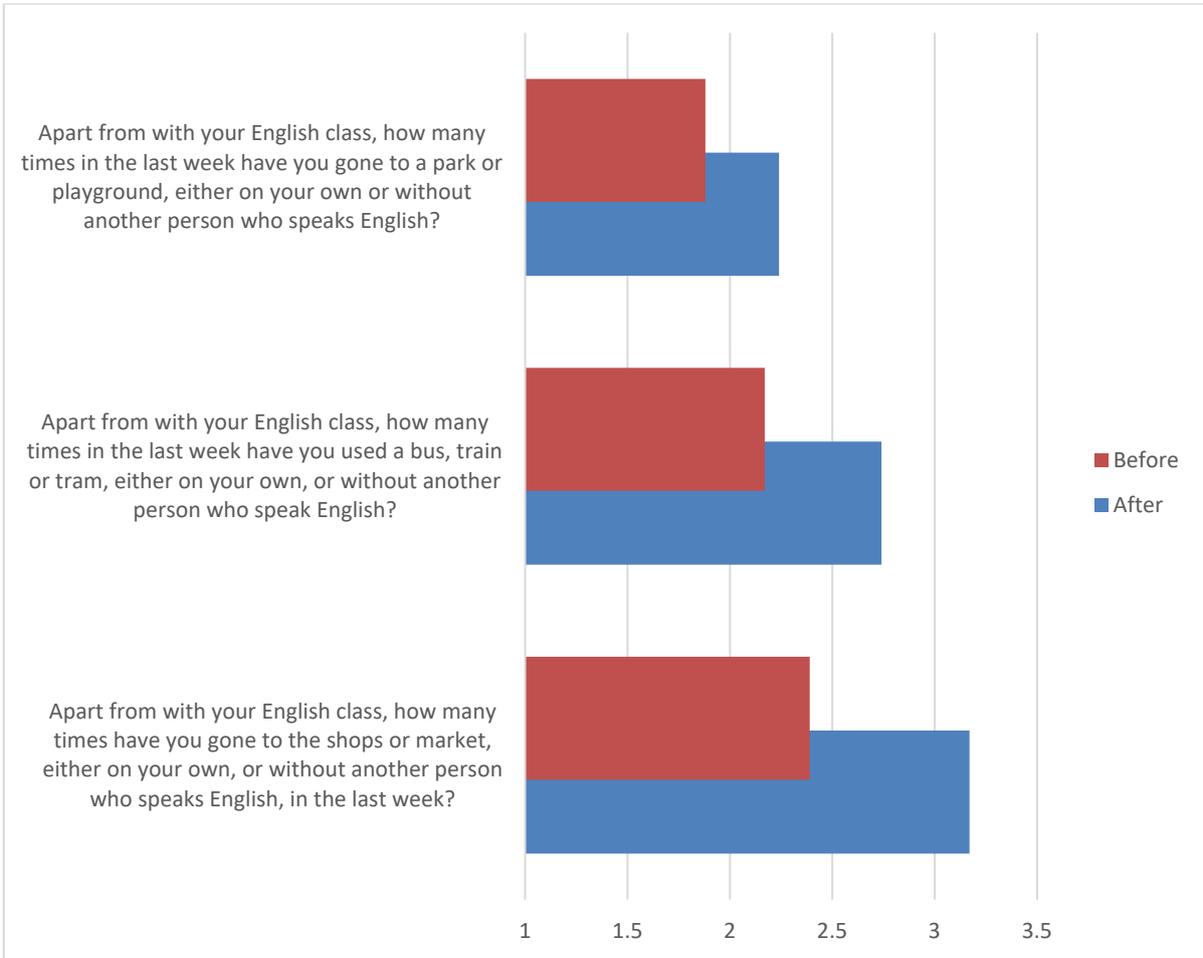


Figure 24: Use of public services, transport and local amenities

Interviews with hub representatives also suggest that increased propensity to use local parks has led to increased health outcomes for their learners:

‘Not only is illiteracy and obesity linked, and we know that obesity and heart disease are linked, but confidence, mental health, heart disease and blood pressure are all linked too. Creative English gets people eating better and more confident to get up and do things.’ (Hub representative)

Improved health outcomes are also a likely result of learners being more willing and confident to book medical appointments with a doctor or nurse (see Figure 25). This has particularly beneficial outcomes for women who may have previously been reticent to book appointments if they felt that they needed a male chaperone to accompany them to translate and were concerned about embarrassment as a result.

That learners with children of school age are more confident in speaking English at their child’s school is a beneficial outcome that is linked to pupil attainment and educational outcomes.

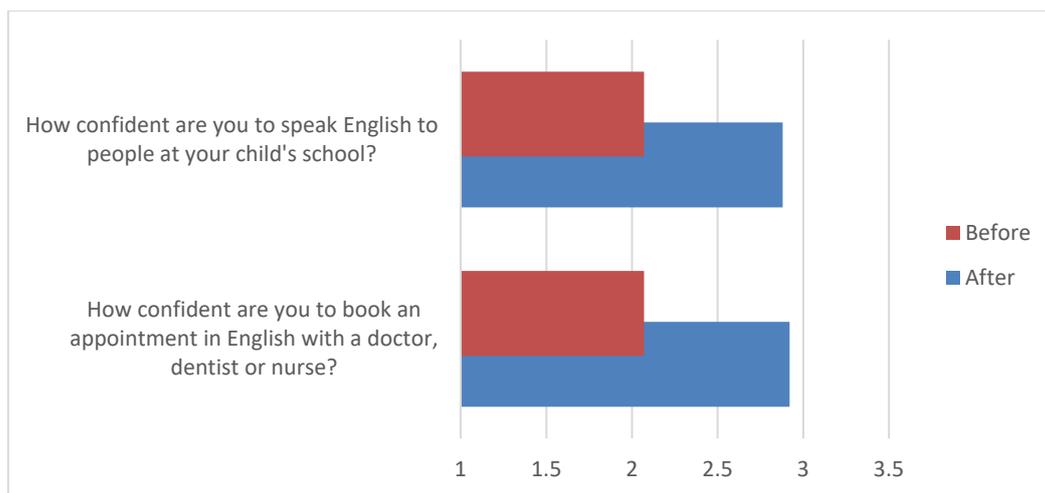


Figure 25: English language confidence in social and structured settings

People feeling an increased sense of belonging to their local area is central to the programme's work and ultimately to the overarching aim of the programme, as seen in the Theory of Change. Sense of belonging underpins positive outcomes related to community cohesion and social integration with individuals who report a low sense of belonging being more predisposed to social isolation, residential segregation and a lack of life opportunities. Overall, learners who complete the Creative English programme show higher levels of belonging to their local area at the end of the programme than they do at the beginning.

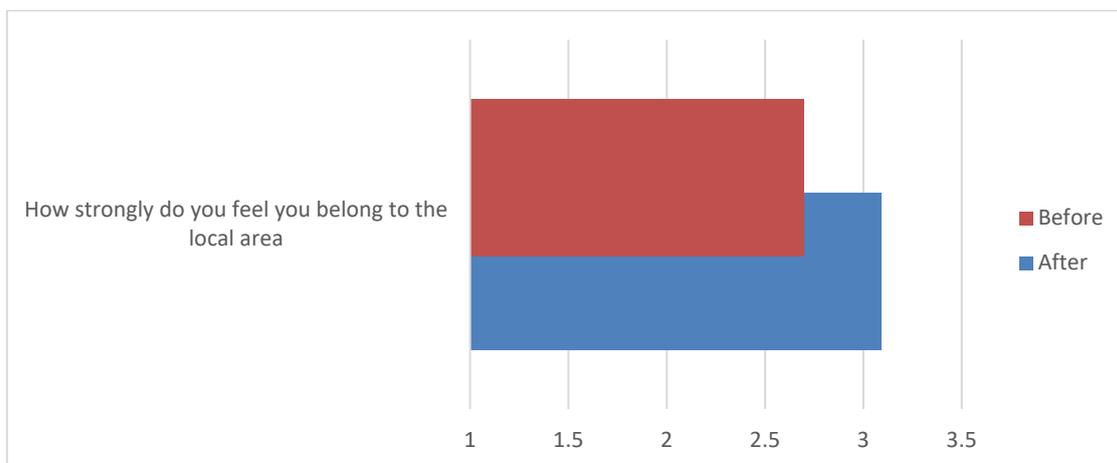


Figure 26: Sense of belonging

Finally, for many of the interviews, increased language proficiency and confidence in speaking to others and speaking out, as well specific course content which introduces rights and responsibilities, are seen as being related to action tackling forms of exploitation. Recognising the isolation and vulnerability of many learners, some saw the programme as a *'bulwark against human trafficking and exploitation'*. There has been no specific data collection on the link between the programme and these issues but this view was raised and emphasised by hubs in rural and semi-rural areas in which there have been historical concerns around the abuse and exploitation of seasonal and transient migrant workers. This can be seen as an unanticipated, positive externality of the programme for those whom it relates to. That Creative English is seen as being a programme which engages with learners *'outside of the*

mainstream' gives a natural overlap to those who have high risk factors towards being victims of human trafficking and exploitation. This is another potential direction or avenue that the programme may wish to consider going forward.

Creative English sustainability and potential new areas of delivery and impact

Creative English has over-achieved against targets around numbers of learners engaged and many hubs have reported in interviews with the research team that they have waiting lists for learners in the eventuality that the programme operates again. This excess demand for provision was seen throughout the programme delivery and every session observed had learners attending who had been recruited to the programme through a friend or family member. This all points positively towards a programme that is sustainable with funding. There is very little chance that Creative English would run and not see learner uptake.

Without external funding and investment the programme though cannot be expected to run at anything like the level in which it has during this report. Even where hubs pay to licence the course, these are often not the smaller hubs that reach the very isolated individuals that the programme brings the most benefit to. Creative English delivers on many of the core indicators of promoting successful integration, including English language proficiency, meaningful social mixing and enhancing belonging and so integration related funding should be explored.

Other funding areas to be considered could include the health sector. Here English language proficiency can be seen to have quick and practical outcomes and reach groups with health outcomes that are below those of national average. Similarly, in bringing people together, the Creative English programme creates positive opportunities to tackle mental health provision and could easily be adapted to fit models of social prescribing. Work has also been undertaken in the UK to provide English language skills to vulnerable people as part of preventing violent extremism and/or safeguarding programmes. This would be a natural fit for a programme that has been described as providing a 'bulwark' against exploitation.

Where English language provision is used as the hook, and there is demand for this provision, there is great potential for FaithAction to be creative in the deployment of Creative English. The aim of a *'happier society in which people have more opportunity to belong and contribute'* is a broad aim and the approach to securing funding to deliver can be suitably broad too.

Continued delivery of Creative English through different funding vehicles should, however, not undermine the core principles and ethos of the programme and nor should it diminish the distinctive nature of it. Creative English is different from ESOL in large part because it does not target the same learners or strive towards the same, restricted outcomes. It is therefore a risk that if the programme were to move towards more formalised assessment-based outcomes that it would neglect its target audience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Creative English is a well-run programme that has made positive differences to the lives of those it works with and the communities within which it operates whilst significantly over-achieving against engagement and recruitment targets.

The data presented here provides conclusive evidence that the programme is effective in creating statistically significant changes in the English language proficiency of learners. As articulated throughout this report and most prominently in the Theory of Change, though, the programme is much more than an English language learning course. The over-arching aim of Creative English as articulated in the Theory of Change document is *“A happier society in which people have more opportunity to belong and contribute”*: a bold aim that demonstrates the sheer potential of an English language learning programme delivering in this community-focused, locally-driven manner to positive impact on multiple community issues.

Creative English works towards this aim by focussing on building the confidence and self-efficacy of learners to speak English and to meet, work and live alongside people who are different to them. This is underpinned by the consistent delivery of an English language course that is tailored to the needs and abilities of its learners and which, importantly, engages them and gives them a space in which to belong and be included. For many learners, Creative English is their first such space in the UK and a crucial first step to feeling a belonging to their local area and wider society. Importantly, for some this first step happens after being in the UK for many years, even decades.

The average Creative English learner is, at the beginning of the programme, not proficient or confidence in speaking English and would, for reasons related to educational ability, culture or confidence, not access or succeed within mainstream further education or traditional ESOL courses. By delivering in collaboration with trusted local hubs and the faith sector, Creative English is able to reach people who otherwise would not engage with this and many other types of services and support. This report demonstrates the impact of the distinctiveness of the programme. It is an important offering and a part of the English language learning and integration scene which should not be overlooked in favour of formal outputs such as English language qualifications.

This report finds that:

- The programme registered 3,904 learners up to the end of March 2020. This is against a target of 3,300.
- 83% of learners who completed the Creative English programme saw their English language proficiency levels increase.
- Creative English engaged widely and with people deemed at high risk of social isolation or low levels of integration. Muslim women, a group identified as a priority by government in relation to integration outcomes, comprised the single largest demographic group of learners.
- Learners who complete Creative English experience positive attitudinal changes. Learners feel a stronger level of belonging to the area in which they live and are more confident in engaging with people who are different to themselves.

- Additionally, learners who complete the programme also see positive behavioural changes. They are more likely to speak English to others, have friends and contacts outside of their own national or faith background and more likely to engage with public services.
- Faith underpins much of the delivery of Creative English. This is not a religious or a proselytizing programme but rather one which harnesses an existing pool of physical facilities, volunteers in local communities and trusted ethos to create a space in which learners feel comfortable.

All of these core findings emphasise that Creative English is about more than learning a language. Feeling a sense of belonging, meaningful social mixing and access to opportunity underpin the approach to integration in the UK and are also vital in fighting social isolation and mental and physical health issues. This is an impactful programme which should use the robust statistical evidence presented in this report to grow and to work across all of these areas.

With funding, the model of delivery is successful and sustainable and the demand for the programme is overwhelmingly evident. The programme's demonstrative ability to recruit through the word of mouth between participants, including through families, is a strong commendation. Working through local hubs gives access to those seen as 'hard-to-reach' in a way that other models cannot. It also grows the capacity and capabilities of those hubs, their staff and the Creative English volunteers.

This is not to say that the Creative English programme is perfect. The completion rate for learners is around 50% and, though impacted by mitigating circumstances such as learners entering employment before the course finishes, this is an area for improvement. Similarly, though content is standardised and the approach to delivery is generally good and effective, improvements could be made to the learner experience around registration and the thematic content of sessions.

Finally, it is a concern that the high levels of tacit knowledge and experience of running and delivering the Creative English programme in FaithAction and in the hubs themselves will be lost if there is a significant gap in funding and programme delivery. There has been excellent momentum build within the programme which has undoubtedly contributed to success: it will take considerable re-investment and time to rebuild this momentum if lost.

With these findings in mind, this report recommends that:

1. FaithAction proactively seek out funding opportunities for the programme related to integration, social isolation, social prescribing and mental and physical health.
2. The programme continue with its current offering and makes emphasis of it being a distinctive offer to traditional ESOL. English language proficiency, integration outcomes and learner self-efficacy are all linked and should be promoted equally.
3. FaithAction should resist gaining formal accreditation of the programme as an English language course as it runs a strong risk of undermining this distinctiveness and ethos.
4. The existing recruitment model for hubs is maintained through existing networks, memberships and other current national and regional contacts.

5. Outcomes be considered for partial completions of the programme by learners. This would best be achieved by the hub evidencing that the learner has failed to complete 10 sessions because they have already achieved a successful outcome, such as employment.
6. FaithAction work with hubs to produce a short piece of research which captures and maps community development outcomes that have occurred in hubs as a result of their involvement in Creative English, showcasing the positive local impact which is described within the Gladca case study.
7. FaithAction to investigate the differences in Learner Score outcomes between hubs. In particular for hubs which were outliers with regards to both overall scores and change.
8. The Theory of Change document be updated annually and used as a framework for future monitoring and evaluation of the programme, with the addition of 'ambitions' into outcomes around learners and volunteers.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Change by Hub: Complete List of Hubs Split By Mean and Standard Deviation

Hub Name	Learners	Avg Before	Avg After	Avg Change
Excel Women, Barking	74	1.6	6.2	3.6
Account3	33	1.2	5.4	3.2
W2_Smethwick CAN	30	1.8	5.5	2.7
W2_FRF Tower Hamlets 2	33	1.6	5.3	2.7
Point at which Mean Improvement plus 1 Standard Deviation is surpassed				
FaithRG Newham	33	1.3	3.7	2.4
Inspirational Training	147	0.3	2.6	2.3
St. Paul's Crossover	85	2.9	4.9	2
W2_Bethany Church Boston	24	2.8	4.5	1.7
W2_FRF Newham2	33	1.4	3.1	1.7
W2_Kingsgate Community church	10	2.6	4.2	1.6
Re:Source Blackburn	56	2.2	3.8	1.6
W2_Express Tuition Hackney	42	3.1	4.6	1.5
Easa	69	1.3	2.7	1.4
FaithRG Tower Hamlets	34	1.6	3	1.4
W2_Express Tuition Haringey	35	2.4	3.8	1.4
Point at which Mean Improvement is surpassed				
W2_ACDA Hounslow	36	3.3	4.6	1.3
W2_Russbridge Academy, Dagenham	33	1.8	3	1.2
Nishkam Birmingham	71	0.7	1.9	1.2
Fatima Women, Oldham	56	1.6	2.8	1.2

W2_Good Response	37	1.9	3.1	1.2
W2_GLADCA, Peterborough	35	2.1	3.3	1.2
W2_Open Doors Baptist	15	1.9	3	1.1
W2_AI -Saddique	33	1.1	2.1	1
Anjumane	34	1.4	2.4	1
W2_Russbridge Academy, Redbridge	32	2	3	1
W2_ACDA Ealing	39	3.4	4.4	1
SVS Birmingham	40	0.8	1.8	1
W2_Migrant Training	68	1.3	2.2	0.9
W2 ACDA Ealing 2	35	2.5	3.4	0.9
Activities R Us OL8	33	0.9	1.8	0.9
Activitiea R Us OL1	49	0.9	1.8	0.9
Activities R Us OL9	37	1	1.9	0.9
W2_National Start up	34	1.2	2.1	0.9
W2_FaithRG Waltham Forest	32	1.7	2.6	0.9
Oasis Luton	33	3.9	4.8	0.9
Empowering Activities	32	0.9	1.7	0.8
Highfield Hall	35	2.2	3	0.8
W2_Skills Enterprise, Newham	41	4.8	5.6	0.8
Empowering Education	98	1	1.7	0.7
W2_Boston English	51	1.1	1.8	0.7
W2_Somali advice and Forum (SAAFI)	36	0.2	0.8	0.6
W2_Positive Echo	35	1.4	1.9	0.5
Iraqi Welfare	33	3.8	4.3	0.5
Saathi House	34	2.4	2.7	0.3

Point at which Mean Improvement minus 1 Standard Deviation is surpassed

W2_All Saints	7	5.6	4.4	-1.2
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