



Innovative practice case studies

ESOL - Maximus's
dedicated ESOL
advisor

Abi Clark

November 2025

Maximus and the dedicated ESOL advisor

Maximus have introduced a dedicated ESOL advisor to better support participants with ESOL needs. The advisers speaks multiple languages and can support individuals on either a one-to-one and group basis. This support has been effective in helping participants develop their language skills and confidence communicating in English by enabling them to practice. The advisor highlighted a tailored approach as fundamental to this success.

Maximus deliver Restart in West Yorkshire where they found many participants joined Restart with limited or no understanding of English. Maximus tried inviting English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers from a local college and other providers to run weekly participant sessions. However, the diversity of participants with different native languages, backgrounds, and level of spoken and written English, meant the sessions did not support participants to engage and progress as well as had been hoped. Maximus therefore innovated and introduced a dedicated ESOL employment advisor' who spoke multiple languages to offer support on both a one-to-one and group basis to ESOL participants. The adviser does not have a wider caseload.

Participants were positive about interacting with the multi-lingual adviser, who is over-subscribed. Referred participants must have a minimum level of reading and writing, with some understanding of basic technology. These skills underpin the English language support and wider job search. Participants without these skills are referred to other support, including to various community groups to build language and other skills. The ESOL advisor also refers participants to college courses to improve their English and gain qualifications as appropriate.

One-to-one sessions with the ESOL adviser have clear goals. They are used to understand a participant's background and provide holistic support, as well as to build English skills and language development. In some cases, the advisor uses online translation to communicate. Initially using the language most comfortable to the participant maintains engagement and helps to build a good working relationship with the ESOL adviser. This also provides the opportunity for participants to build their confidence in using technology, including as a tool for job searching. However, overall, the ESOL advisor has had to provide more support to develop participant's digital skills than expected.

ESOL participants interact with each other during group sessions which involve CV building, and mental strength training to help prepare individuals for their next steps into work. Working with the ESOL advisor and in group settings with peers improves participants English language ability, and confidence. This creates a positive cycle and encourages participants to use and practice English in other settings. Success in the implementation of the dedicated ESOL adviser has resulted in participants improving their understanding and application of English, their confidence in interacting with others and being able to move into work or further college courses.