



Settlement
Council
of Australia

Submission: Migrant and refugee perspectives on a new voluntary service for parents

Settlement Council of Australia

October 2023

The Settlement Council of Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate, the Ngunnawal people. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which migrants and refugees settle across Australia, and on which our sector operates.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to our lands and waters.

About the Settlement Council of Australia

The Settlement Council of Australia is the peak body representing the vast majority of settlement agencies across Australia providing direct services and support to people migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Our members include organisations large and small, who are committed to the successful settlement of migrants and refugees across the country. Their services range from greeting new arrivals at the airport, through to assisting them to secure housing, learn English, make social connections, access services and find their first job. Australia's settlement services are recognised as being among the best in the world.

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Introduction

The Australian Government is designing a new voluntary pre-employment service for parents.¹ The new pre-employment program will replace the ParentsNext program, which will be abolished from 1 July 2024. Through consultations with parents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and settlement practitioners, the Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) identified the needs of disadvantaged migrants and refugees who plan to return to work or education while raising children. The consultations were conducted to understand how best to support disadvantaged parents with primary caring responsibilities for young children in their education and employment goals.

In August 2023, SCOA, with support from member organisations, organised six consultations across Australia with migrant and refugee parents to understand their needs, eligibility, the features of the new service and communication strategy. In September 2023, SCOA organised a meeting with settlement practitioners to present preliminary findings from parents' consultation and facilitated a consultation to gather further feedback from the practitioners. This submission presents the key findings from the consultations.

Methodology

SCOA, with support from member organisations, facilitated six consultations in five states. Most consultations received a high level of interest from CALD parents, bringing in more participants than initially planned. The consultations were run by qualified facilitators with considerable experience working with CALD communities. While many parents had sufficient English language proficiency to engage in English, the sessions were also interpreted in Persian (Dari), Karen, Arabic and Chin to accommodate all participants. Most parents attended with their children, and the member organisations provided creche services for children. There were, **in total, 116 participants** of various national and ethnic origins. The participants reflect a higher number of individuals from refugee background, who are more likely than other migrants to be unemployed and experience barriers to employment.

SCOA organised a Network meeting of settlement practitioners on 28 September and invited all member organisations to join the meeting. The meeting was attended by 35 participants, representing settlement service providers nationwide.

The submission provides a high-level summary and analysis of the findings following a qualitative data analysis method. The quotes from the participants are italicised and highlighted. Based on the recurrent findings, SCOA has focused on three critical needs and obstacles: childcare, language and digital barriers, and transportation. In addition, we have synthesised insights on the specific design elements of the service and how to promote the service. At the end of the submission, an appendix is provided with the raw findings from the consultations categorised under the themes and headings used in the consultation template.

¹ Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (2023), *A new voluntary service for parents*, <https://consultations.dewr.gov.au/voluntary-service-for-parents>

Key Focus Areas

While the parents have diverse needs and concerns, three issues were identified as critical to ensure their participation in any pre-employment service and deciding on whether they return to work or study. In the following sections, these critical areas are analysed with inputs from SCOA's broader understanding of the issues affecting migrants and refugees.

1. Childcare

The consultations revealed a consistent emphasis on the importance of childcare support as a critical factor in enabling parents to participate in the program and pursue their education or work goals. Childcare needs were highlighted as a key consideration for parents with young children. Many participants indicated they could better engage in the program's activities if they had reliable and cost-effective childcare options.

The consistent mention of childcare needs across different groups highlights that addressing childcare challenges is fundamental to the success of the program. Providing accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare options can significantly enhance parents' ability to engage in education and work opportunities, ultimately benefiting both the parents and their children.

We would like to note that most, if not all, **CALD parents were raised at home** by their parents and extended family members. Sending children to commercial childcare facilities is something new for most. The excessively high costs for something they had imagined to be free and trusting strangers to look after their children are practical and emotional barriers. Another important issue to consider is that many CALD parents with lower levels of English find employment in sectors (such as retail, aged care, and cleaning) that require in-person work; they do not have the option to work from home, which would have provided some flexibility to take care of children while working.

Many participants have partners who are working (they do not work), and paying for **childcare fees is very expensive** under a single earner's income. The hidden costs of childcare (still having to pay for childcare when the child does not attend) are also a barrier. For many of them, they choose to stay home and look after their children rather than work or study.

“If I could get childcare, I would start [a pre-employment service] now”

Childcare waiting lists are long; if they find a job that requires joining immediately or within short notice, they might not get a spot at childcare within that timeframe. That means they might have to decline the job as it is less likely for CALD parents to have extended family members to look after their children for a short period until they find a childcare facility.

Participants stressed the importance of continuing childcare subsidies even after parents find work or start studying. The absence of such subsidies could disrupt parents' ability to maintain their employment or education commitments.

Parents identified that the availability of childcare support could alleviate the sense of isolation and stress that often accompanies trying to balance parenting responsibilities with personal and professional growth. Parents also recognised that quality childcare not only enabled them to engage in the program but also had positive developmental impacts on their children. Attending

childcare allowed children to develop social, emotional, and cognitive skills in a structured environment.

Participants pointed out that having **flexible childcare arrangements** aligned with program hours was essential. Shorter hours or drop-in options would facilitate parents' active participation in the program.

“[I would participate in the program] if childcare could be available at the work or study place. Running between workplace/university and childcare is a barrier.”

“Childcare should only charge for hours attended”

Recommendation 1

We recommend improving the availability, accessibility and flexibility of childcare for disadvantaged CALD parents.

Recommendation 2

Pre-employment service centres should have creche services where parents can leave their children while attending appointments.

2. Language and digital barriers

Language barriers emerged as a significant concern during the discussion, with participants highlighting how language limitations affected their ability to access education, employment, and various support services.

Language and employment pathways

Many participants expressed that their limited English language proficiency acted as a barrier to finding employment. They mentioned that their difficulty understanding and speaking English hindered them from effectively communicating in job interviews, interacting with colleagues, and carrying out job-related tasks. Several participants noted that their language limitations affected their pursuit of other education in addition to employment activities, and some also shared that language barriers were creating challenges to pursuing self-employment or starting their own business. Effective communication with clients, customers, and suppliers was crucial for business success, and their limited language proficiency hindered their ability to engage in these interactions confidently.

“I would like to work, but the English language has been a barrier.”

A considerable number of migrants, especially recent arrivals, live in areas where there is a heavy concentration of similar ethnic, linguistic and religious populations. While this facilitates their easier access to basic facilities such as bilingual grocery shopping, doctors, and strong social connections, ultimately, they get fewer opportunities to practice and develop their English. There is, therefore, a role for pre-employment services in facilitating opportunities to both learn and practice English. Opportunities to practice English could include exposure to English-speaking work, internships, and volunteering.

“My goal is to understand English and then be able to understand rules/policies and processes for employment, safety in the workplace instructions, etc.”

Language barriers were perceived as a significant obstacle to taking other steps to pursuing meaningful employment opportunities, and addressing this barrier needed to be a priority. This could mean spending more time focused on learning English rather than engaging in other employment related activities.

At the same time, there are shortcomings in the current English language learning options available. Some participants expressed frustration with English language classes offered by institutions like TAFE through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). They indicated that these classes often did not align with their needs, focusing on grammar and vocabulary rather than practical conversational skills that could help them integrate into the workforce or further their education. As highlighted above, there are several different types of English language learning participants are seeking – some for employment purposes, others for education, and others for self-employment. The vocabulary and type of English required for each of these differs significantly. For example, for many jobs, conversational English will be a priority. For education, written English may be more important. Moreover, the specific vocabulary individuals need to learn will vary considerably depending on their chosen field.

“I am interested in aged care, but I am not confident in my English”

For this reason, SCOA recommends supporting targeted English language learning programs either within the existing AMEP, or as a supplement supported by resourcing through the new pre-employment service. Two examples of a targeted English language learning program along with TAFE/Vocational courses leading to employment are highlighted below.

Case study 1: Bilingual Certificate II in Engineering Studies Pilot Program by Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) in Bendigo TAFE

LCMS, together with key partners, coordinated a Certificate II in Engineering Studies Pilot, taught with bilingual support in the Karen language in 2020-21. Through their work with the multicultural community in Bendigo, LCMS has seen that many students from migrant and refugee backgrounds, even those with higher levels of English proficiency, often struggle to undertake further education to support their employment outcomes.

Together with partners, LCMS coordinated a Certificate II in Engineering Studies, taught entirely with bilingual support in the Karen language. Key partners in delivering the project included Bendigo TAFE, local job service providers, Bendigo Senior Secondary School and the Victorian Government. The program simultaneously addresses employment barriers and the need for manufacturing workers in the Bendigo region.

At the beginning of the course, many students had low literacy and numeracy skills. It would not have been possible for students to undertake this course without bilingual and other support. The program simultaneously addressed language barriers to employment and the need for manufacturing workers in the Bendigo region. The bilingual support component was unique to this pilot, with 100% bilingual support provided to the students every step of the way as they navigated English as a second language and the complexities of engineering terminology.

Out of the twelve students, all are either working or undertaking further study after graduating from the course. This is truly a testament to the success of this program. This course demonstrated just what is possible with collaboration and with adequate support. There is a lot more demand for tailored further education opportunities for CALD community members.²

Case Study 2: Women's Employment into Action project in South Australia

The Women's Employment into Action (WEIA) project was funded by the Australian Government through its Try, Test and Learn Fund (TTL), managed by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and administered by the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC). Under this project, migrant and refugee women were trained to prepare them to work in the aged-care and the disability-care sectors. The training is delivered at no cost to participants.

The participants have a range of work experience, qualifications, skills and levels of proficiency in English. The training and support was tailored to the needs of the participants, including assisting people with overseas qualifications to have them recognised; arranging for recognition of prior learning; delivering pre-vocational training for people who need support to study; and delivering Certificate II and Certificate III courses for people who are ready to study. Participants were supported with study assistance from bi-cultural classroom assistants, free child care if needed, and mentoring support. Participants were supported to find employment and/or were

² Settlement Council of Australia (2021) *Certificate II in Engineering Studies Pilot Program – Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services* <https://scoa.org.au/certificate-ii-in-engineering-studies-pilot-program-loddon-campaspe-multicultural-services/>

linked with an aged-care or disability-care service provider to undertake work experience or undergo further training. All host workplaces were offered cultural awareness training.³ The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. As per DSS' estimates, If around 12 per cent (14) of participants move off income support because of this project, the savings to the welfare system are likely to outweigh the costs of the project.⁴

The WEIA project started in March 2019 and as of July 2020, the project demonstrated considerable success. Out of 118 participants, 44 participants engaged in employment and volunteering in the first year of the project (despite the employment outcome and/or work experience being also highly affected by COVID-19 restrictions over the past eight months), 52 participants engaged in formal education or training and 101 participants completed the pre-vocational training. Further, the participants had greater confidence, reduced isolation, improved mental health outcomes, built social and professional networks, and were able to embrace professional development while supporting their families. Participants were able to engage in other activities because of the project. For example, some women went on to study other courses such as understanding dementia, child safe environments, DV alert and other further professional training such as nursing, Food processing, Community services, Social Work, etc.⁵

Language and access to a pre-employment service

Language barriers extended beyond employment and education, affecting participants' access to a pre-employment service. Participants expressed a preference for receiving information in their native language, emphasising that language played a pivotal role in their understanding of program details, requirements, and benefits. They highlighted the importance of clear communication to facilitate informed decision-making.

Participants conveyed that they were more likely to engage with services if language support was available. This included being able to communicate with service providers in their preferred language through phone calls or face-to-face conversations. Participants suggested that phone conversations might be suitable for those with better English skills, while others preferred face-to-face interactions, especially when language support was required.

Digital barriers to accessing pre-employment service

Participants, especially the settlement practitioners, identified digital barriers as a key obstacle to accessing pre-employment, employment and many other services.

These barriers include limited access to technology and the internet, as many newcomers may not have the necessary devices or reliable connectivity. Additionally, language and digital literacy pose substantial challenges, making it difficult to navigate online job portals, government websites, and other digital platforms crucial for job searching and accessing social services. Cultural factors and unfamiliarity with Australian digital systems can exacerbate these

³ Department of Social Services (2021) *Initiative: Women's Employment into Action*, https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/04_2021/women-s-employment-action-australian-migrant-resource-centre-try-test-and-learn-fund.pdf

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Settlement Council of Australia (2020) *Case Study, Australian Migrant Resource Centre*, http://www.scoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/AMRC_template_final.pdf

issues. Migrant and refugee entrepreneurs face challenges to navigate digital ecosystem of doing business in Australia. A settlement practitioner shared her experience of working with such entrepreneurs:

“When they start a business, people get their friends or children to work for them initially, but they can’t continue with this service.”

To address these barriers, efforts must focus on providing digital inclusion initiatives, digital literacy programs, and culturally sensitive online resources. We specifically recommend pre-employment services facilitate digital training, and consider providing digital devices to support education and training.

Recommendation 3

Expand targeted and industry-focused English language learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4

Fund specialist providers for migrant and refugee parents to ensure the accessibility of services.

Recommendation 5

Acknowledging that not all parents will be able to engage with a specialist service, ensure all services engage more bilingual staff and interpreters in service delivery.

Recommendation 6

Facilitate digital training, and consider providing digital devices to support education and training.

3. Transport

Transport challenges and concerns were discussed extensively during the sessions, with participants sharing their experiences and thoughts on how transportation issues affected their ability to engage in programs and activities.

Many migrants and refugees come from countries where owning a car and driving is not a norm. This is more evident for women and people coming from rural backgrounds. In some cases, women also rarely went out of home independently and navigated the public transport system. When they arrive in Australia, it is a culture shock to see the critical need for driver's licenses, cars and public transport.

“I have no confidence driving outside of my local area.”

In addition to the point regarding CALD neighbourhoods above, recent arrivals in those areas live close to shops and other services where they can walk. Many women and mothers with children walk to shops and GP clinics without being required to drive or take public transport. Any pre-employment service design needs to consider these contexts to ensure that parents from CALD backgrounds can attend the appointments. At a broader level, the inability to drive a vehicle while raising children might hinder the confidence of women who might also be dependent on a partner for transport, on top of lacking proficiency in English.

“When I learn to drive I will be able to think about employment and further study. I lack confidence due to a prior incident when I got my licence.”

Many participants expressed that transportation costs were a significant barrier to their participation in programs, appointments, and activities. They cited difficulties in affording public transportation fares or maintaining a personal vehicle. High transport costs were particularly concerning for participants who were not working, as they faced financial constraints that limited their ability to travel to appointments or education centres. Participants discussed how limited access to transportation negatively impacted their attendance at appointments and program sessions. They shared instances where they had missed appointments or classes due to the lack of affordable and convenient transportation options. This affected their progress in education and work-related activities.

Participants suggested several measures that could alleviate transportation challenges. Some mentioned the idea of providing assistance with transport costs, including options such as Go Cards (for public transportation) or petrol vouchers (for private vehicles). These forms of assistance were seen as helpful in enabling participants to overcome financial constraints related to transportation.

Participants emphasised the importance of convenient transportation options that would allow them to access services and activities. They stressed that service providers willing to meet them in the community, especially in locations close to their homes, would make a significant difference. This approach would not only reduce travel time but also make it easier for parents to attend meetings or appointments without the stress of long commutes.

Some participants mentioned that driving lessons and support could give them a sense of independence and a solution to transportation challenges. They discussed the value of being able to drive to work, education, and appointments on their own terms, which would reduce their reliance on public transportation or others for rides.

Recommendation 7

We recommend providing free driving lessons as a long-term investment for pre-employment, employment and overall well-being of refugee and migrant parents.

Recommendation 8

Provide short training on navigating the public transport system for recent arrivals, particularly those who have *not* arrived as refugees and do not typically receive this type of orientation support on arrival.

Recommendation 9

We recommend offering petrol vouchers and public transport cards for attending appointments.

Recommendation 10

Pre-employment service providers should be located in neighbourhoods with a high proportion of CALD clients in easy-to-walk locations. Co-location with settlement services would be ideal for accessibility purposes.

4. Design of the service

Participants emphasised the need for a **flexible program** that caters to individual needs rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. They advocated for inclusivity, suggesting that the program should be available to all parents, not just specific target groups. Additionally, participants suggested innovative ideas, such as allowing both parents to attend parenting support programs simultaneously and providing paid time off for such sessions. The potential impact of shifting from mandatory to voluntary attendance was also discussed, as was the desire to extend eligibility to temporary visa holders, including students, foster carers, and kinship carers.

Currently, **many recent migrants are not eligible** to join the ParentsNext program. Many recently arrived migrants are subject to the Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period which restricts their access to both income support and the related employment services. The waiting period starts from the date a migrant gets a permanent visa. However, many migrants spend years in Australia on temporary visas before becoming permanent residents. Therefore, when they need the pre-employment service, they might not be eligible to join. When they become eligible, the migrants may not need to access the service.

Participants found it challenging to engage in services when their children were at home, indicating that school-aged children offered a more feasible window for participation. They advocated for flexible service durations, recognising that different parents may require support for varying periods. Parents also highlighted the importance of flexibility in work arrangements, especially for those with sick children. Furthermore, scheduling future appointments to accommodate parents' availabilities, including school holidays and cultural or religious celebrations, was recommended.

Preferred **communication methods** included phone, email, face-to-face interactions, and receiving text messages in their native language. Face-to-face information sessions and engagement in their preferred language were highly valued. While face-to-face interactions were preferred, phone calls were deemed acceptable, especially for those with better English skills. Settlement practitioners stressed that many migrants and refugees are not aware of government services, implying the crucial role of accessible and culturally appropriate promotion of the service. It has been suggested that once the new pre-employment service is launched, it will benefit from further engagement with settlement practitioners for promotion and outreach to the clients.

Participants emphasised the need for clear and early promotion of services. They suggested providing information through settlement service providers and in places of community gathering such as places of worship. Additionally, participants wanted clarity on eligibility criteria and **referral pathways**, whether through self-referral or government agencies like Centrelink.

Participants favoured consistent access to the same caseworker for ongoing support. **Incentives for participation** were seen as beneficial, tailored to individual needs such as financial assistance, IT access, transport support, and childcare. In-home support was viewed positively as a way to address language barriers effectively, making interactions more meaningful and productive. If parents had to attend appointments while looking after children, creche service at the service centre was highly desired.

Settlement practitioners highly emphasised the importance of co-location of pre-employment services with existing services that migrants and refugees often access, most importantly settlement services.

“One of the things that brings parents and clients to us is they are familiar with who we are, and we are very well-connected to local services around us. I think its also the accessibility and proximity of certain services. We are located near Centrelink, Dept of Housing and public transport, very central to where a lot of our clients live. A lot of them access us by walking as well as using the public transport.”

Recommendation 11

Prioritise flexible program designs that cater to individual needs and ensure accessibility for all parents, irrespective of background or visa status, to maximise participation and effectiveness.

Recommendation 12

Communication about and promotion of the service should include both online (e.g. social media) and offline (e.g. posters/flyers at places of community gathering) pathways.

List of recommendations

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Appendix I: Summary of input from the Consultations

The following key findings are derived directly from the statements of the consultation participants. Some recurrent issues are presented in a generalised way, and many other issues are unique and presented here as expressed by the participants.

Parental Needs

- All participants expressed interest in a program to support their education and employment while raising children.
- Participants highlighted the need for help in finding employment and improving their education, particularly in English language skills.
- Many participants faced language barriers in accessing employment and further education, and they expressed frustration with the current TAFE AMEP English classes.
- Childcare costs were identified as a major barrier, often leading participants to choose staying home over work or study. Some parents also expressed mistrust of childcare and home care centres as they believe or have observed children are not treated well there.
- Access to free childcare was suggested as the main way to facilitate participation in services. A parent said that they are ready to pay up to \$10 a day for childcare.
- Assistance with visa processing and fees to bring parents from overseas to look after children. Many CALD parents come from a background where grandparents and extended family take part in raising children.
- In-home support and flexible service delivery outside the office were also desired.
- Transport support as most mothers do not drive/have a car/live far away from public transport facilities.
- A barrier to achieving their goals is accessibility – they travel on foot to many appointments, so they would love the service/program to be accessible on foot.
- Onsite Interpreters and have more bilingual workers to meet parent's language and cultural needs.
- Any program should work around the issue of confidence building.

Eligibility

- The program should be flexible to be able to meet the individual's needs and not be one size fits all.
- It should not be targeted but flexible to meet the needs of all and be available to all.
- It would be very beneficial if parenting support programs were allowed for both parents to attend at the same time and parents were permitted to take a paid time off work to attend a parenting program. This would involve providing extra 'special leave' for a parent.
- Question was raised about whether there would be an impact on their childcare hours if their attendance was made voluntary instead of mandatory.
- Several participants desired to expand eligibility for temporary visa holders such as for student, bridging, foster carers and kinship carers.
- Recent migrant and refugees should be allowed to access the service.

Timing

Participants found it challenging to access services when their children were at home, indicating that school-aged children were a more feasible time for participation.

- Clients should be able to use the service for as long as they need to.
- Maybe six weeks, six months or a couple of years, etc.
- Some participants feel when their child is six months to 1 year of age is the best time for them to pursue studies and start to think about their plans for work.
- Some parents feel when the children are at school, this offers time for work; however, work needs to be flexible to parents who may have a sick child.
- Future appointment should always be consulted with parents and be scheduled according to their availabilities especially school holidays and cultural and religious celebrations.
- Support should be provided to a parent until the youngest child turns 10
- Support should be provided to a single parent until the youngest child turns 16
- Support should continue, even if parents are working on casual or part-time employment.

Features of the Service

- Participants expressed interest in a wide range of supports, including affordable childcare, secure housing, financial management, relationship support, parenting support, work-related assistance, training, education, and healthcare access.
- Language barriers were noted as a hindrance to self-employment, which many participants were interested in pursuing. The complexity of the Australian tax system and compliance system were also identified as barriers to starting a business.
- Participants desired access to physical and mental health activities, such as yoga and women's gyms.
- The program should recognise the skills migrants and refugees bring from their country of origin, and connect them with local industries that might require the skills despite low level of English.
- Needs to provide connections to employers, have an employment or education pathway: receiving support from the provider to connect with an employer that is already linked up to the provider – so introductions can be made, and the pathway is forged ahead for the client who has the skills for the job.

For example, in a consultation with 23 CALD parents from Southeast Asian backgrounds living in Queensland, the following numbers came up. Participants were asked, "As a parent, what

type of support would you be interested in?” and they responded to each of the dot points under this question:

Accessing affordable and quality childcare	10 participants
Finding secure housing	6 participants
Managing your money, including budgeting	0 participant
Relationship support, including for those experiencing family and domestic violence	0 participant
Parenting support, including support for kids' physical and mental health	9 participants
Finding work, including developing resumes, help applying for jobs or coaching for interviews	14 participants
Organising work experience	14 participants
Undertaking training and education	English language proficiency should come first
Accessing healthcare support	16 participants

Communication Strategy

- Preferred methods for accessing information were phone, email, face-to-face interactions, and receiving text messages in their language.
- Face-to-face information sessions were valued, as were interactions in their preferred language.
- Clear promotion and engagement in their language were essential.
- Running the program and providing information through organisations that provide settlement services (e.g. organisers of the consultations) was suggested.
- Participants were happy to walk/go with the pram to access the service if it's in their area; if outside of their area, they would love assistance with transport to get to/from these appointments.
- Provide much more information early on; most clients have 'stumbled across' information and services that could have helped them much earlier on their journey.
- It needs to be made clear about the eligibility and pathways for support, e.g. do they self-refer now or still go through Centrelink?
- Effective promotion, community-based service providers, initial face-to-face interactions, and assistance with transport costs were identified as crucial for encouraging participation.

Service Delivery Method and Engagement Strategy

- Consistent access to the same caseworker for ongoing support was favoured.
- While face-to-face interactions were preferred, some phone calls were acceptable, particularly for those with better English skills.

- Extend eligibility period for English courses. Give more time to practice English and accent and pronunciation. This takes time to develop, and it would be helpful for the course provision to continue in some shape to support this.
- Participants indicated that incentives should align with their individual needs, such as financial assistance for training, IT access, transport, and childcare.
- Face-to-face engagement was generally preferred, with some phone support.
- Participants were more likely to engage in services that were not mandatory.
- In-home support was suggested by participants as a valuable approach to addressing language barriers. They believed that having support workers who could communicate effectively in their language would enhance their comfort level and engagement. This support could extend beyond formal settings like offices and classrooms, making interactions more meaningful and productive.