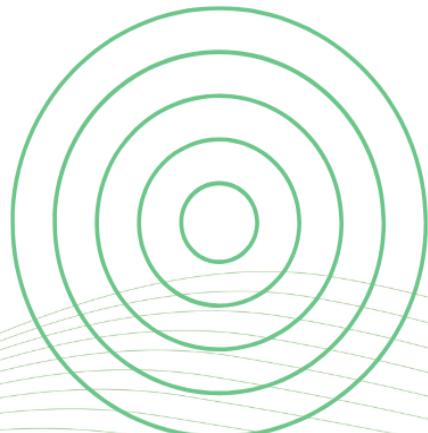


Dundee and Angus  
ESOL Partnership

# ADULT LEARNER SURVEY

2025



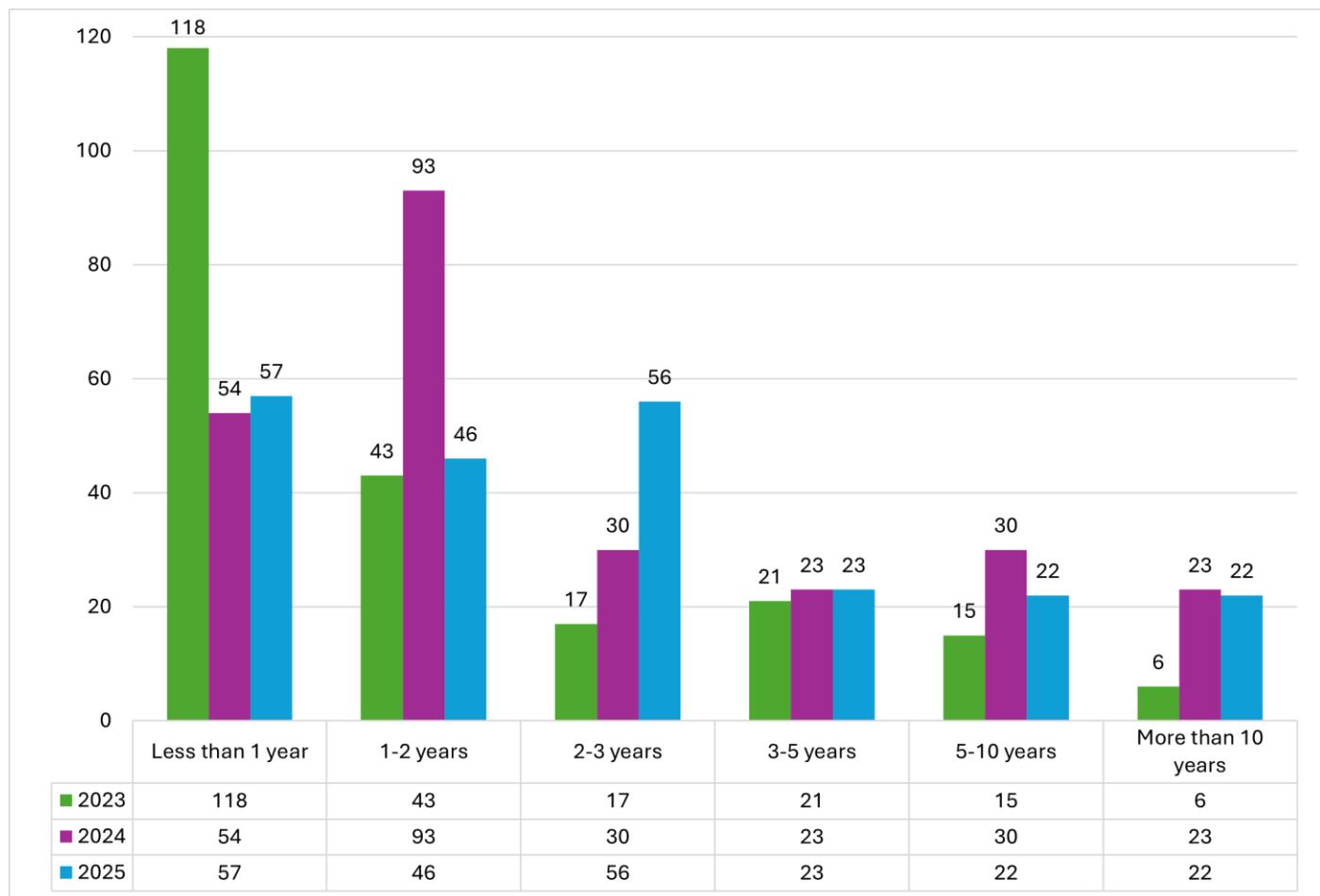


The Dundee ESOL Partnership is a progressive and empowering partnership between Dundee City Council, Angus Council, Dundee and Angus College and Dundee International Women's Centre and its function is to ensure the delivery of quality, well-coordinated, and data-driven community-based English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision across the area. We believe that by working together we can deliver on the aspirations of The Scottish Government's Adult Learning Strategy 2022 - 2027 to:

- *Improve life chances for adult learners across Scotland.*
- *Create the conditions for connected adult learning opportunities that link Scotland's communities, local authorities, third sector organisations, colleges and universities around an offer of learning for adults, particularly those furthest from inclusion and experiencing disadvantage.*
- *Ensure that there are accessible opportunities for adults to learn throughout their lives.*

This was the seventh year that providers had worked together to collectively evaluate provision with learners. The survey was distributed electronically during May and June 2025 via Microsoft Forms. 226 adult learners from across the partnership took part in 2025 compared with 253 in 2024. Dundee City Council had 94 responses, D&A College 48, DIWC 45, and Angus Council 39. Most questions were optional, seven were compulsory. Answers given in learners' own languages were translated into English.

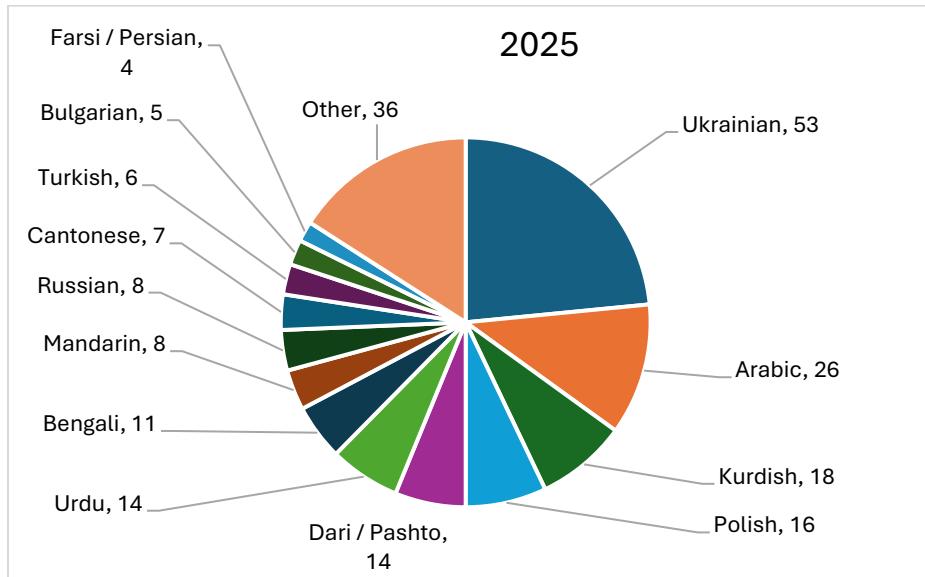
## How long have you lived in Scotland?



Across Dundee and Angus, 2023 saw high numbers of displaced persons arriving from Ukraine. Since then, the number of new arrivals has dropped significantly, and this is reflected in the marked drop in the number of learners who have lived here for less than 1 year in 2024 and 2025.



# What is your first language?



The majority of respondents were still Ukrainian speakers; however, this number has declined as many Ukrainian learners transition to employment or full-time study. This trend is also reflected in the overall decrease in Russian speakers.

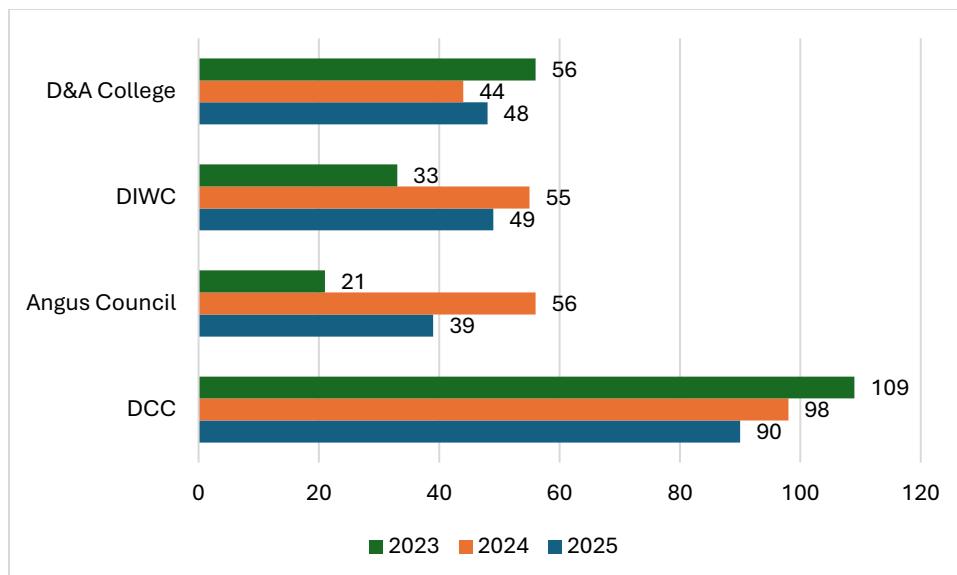
In 2025, there was a notable increase in Kurdish and Dari/Pashto speakers attending ESOL classes, likely linked to the arrival of more asylum seekers in Dundee.

Numbers of Mandarin and Cantonese speakers have shown a steady upward trend, although their overall representation remains relatively small.

Speakers of other languages (including Arabic, Polish, Urdu, Bengali, Turkish, Bulgarian, and Farsi) have exhibited fluctuating patterns over the three-year period.

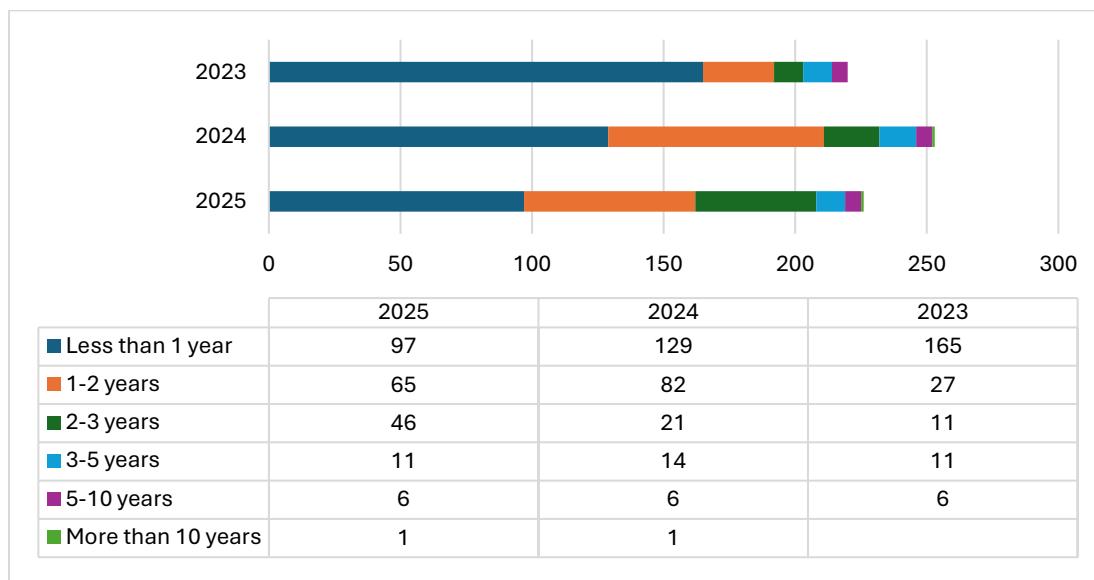


## Main Learning Provider



As in previous years, most survey participants were taught by Dundee City Council staff or by Dundee and Angus College staff in community outreach centres (at Hilltown Community Centre, DIWC, or Shore Terrace offices). In addition to their main venue, respondents reported learning at other venues such as community cafes. They also learned at work and with the use of apps outside of class.

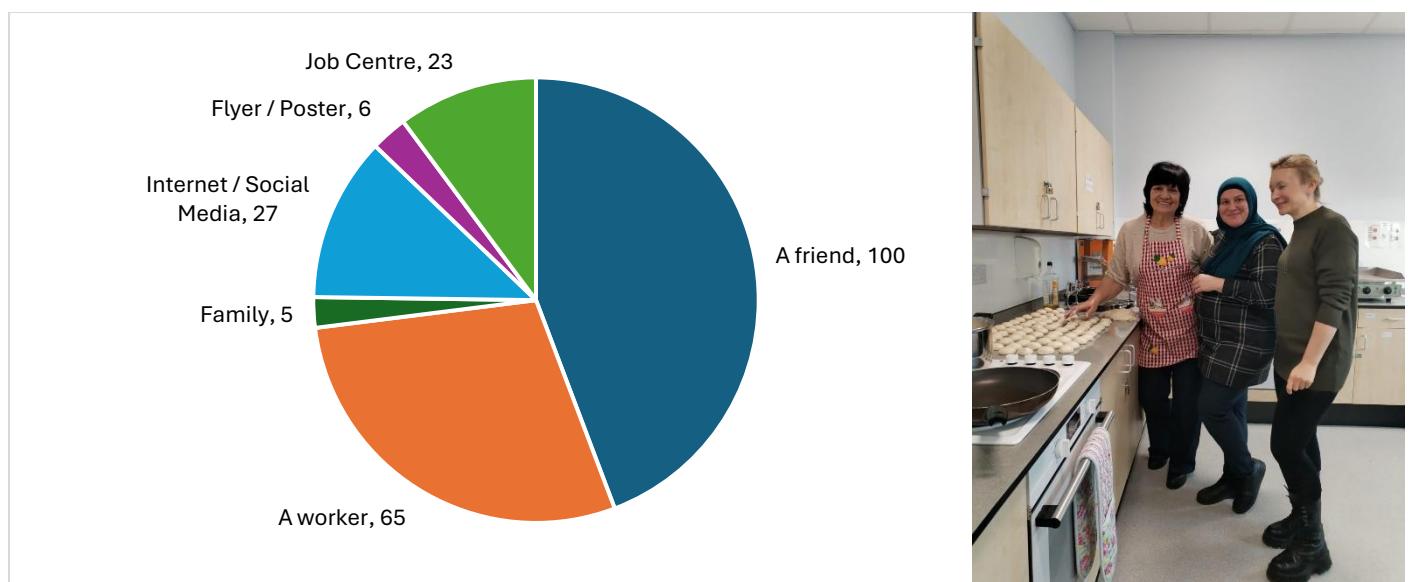
## How long have you been learning English with us?



The majority of learners in Dundee (DCC, DIWC and D&A College) have been in provision for less than 1 year, with an increase in the 2-3 years group.

The majority of respondents from Angus Council (19) have been in provision for 1-2 years.

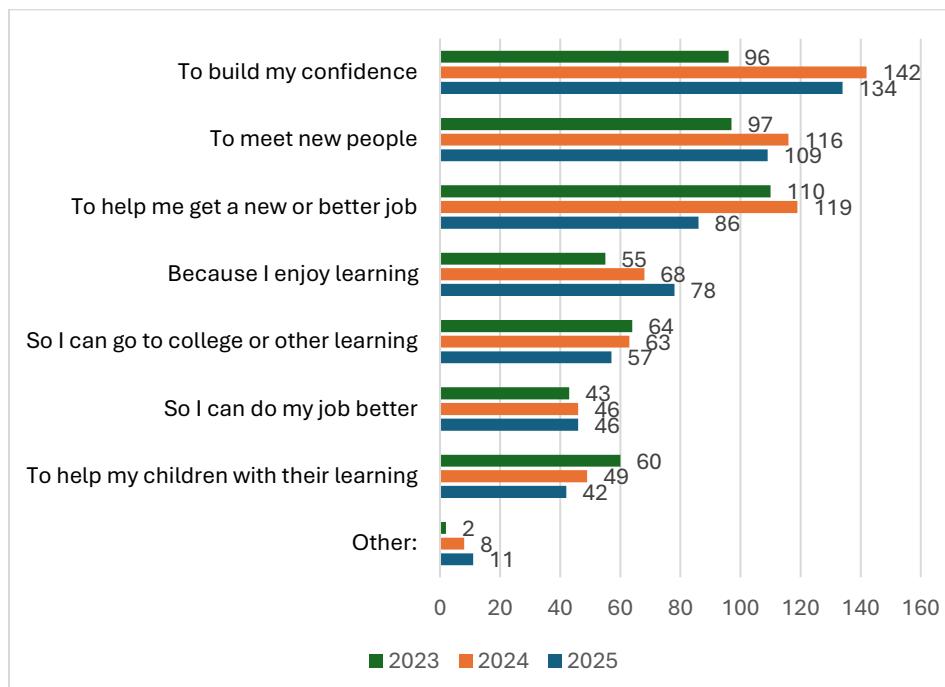
## How did you find out about English classes?



Word of mouth remains the most common discovery method for respondents with the majority hearing about the provision from a friend, followed by a worker, which includes social worker, health visitor, child's teacher, community worker, etc.

208 (92%) of respondents said it was **easy to find** out about English classes, 17 said it was not and 1 did not respond. 97% of respondents said that it was **easy to join** their English class.

## Why are you learning English (choose 3)?



Respondents were asked to choose up to 3 reasons they are learning English. Similarly to the previous years, building confidence, meeting new people and employability were the main factors. Other reasons given included:  
*“BECAUSE I LIKE YOUR VERY FRIENDLY COUNTRY AND PEOPLE. I WANT GO TO WORK.”*  
*“To stop using translator”*  
*“To organize my life in new country”*

## What do you like about your English class?

Students overwhelmingly value their English classes, particularly because of the teachers' support and teaching style, the opportunity to learn and gain confidence, and the social connections made with classmates. The feedback shows highly positive learning environment that motivates learners both academically and personally.



Overall, students expressed very high satisfaction with their English classes. Only one respondent stated they did not enjoy attending their English class, one did not respond, while the remaining 224 respondents stated they did enjoy attending. The feedback highlights several recurring themes:

## Teachers and Teaching Style

The most frequently mentioned positive aspect is the teacher. Students appreciate their friendliness, patience, professionalism, and clear explanations. Many noted that teachers create a supportive and stress-free environment where mistakes are corrected kindly. Teaching methods such as interactive activities, grammar explanations, and varied exercises were praised.

## Learning and Progress

Students enjoy improving their English, particularly speaking, listening, and vocabulary. Many mentioned that they feel more confident using English in real life. Several emphasized that they “learn something new every time.”

## Social Aspects

A strong theme is the value of meeting new people and making friends. Students appreciate the chance to communicate with classmates and learn about different cultures.

## Atmosphere and Environment

Students described the classes as friendly, relaxed, and enjoyable. They feel comfortable, motivated, and supported. Several comments mentioned the positive group atmosphere.

*"My teacher is very patient and explains until everyone understands."*

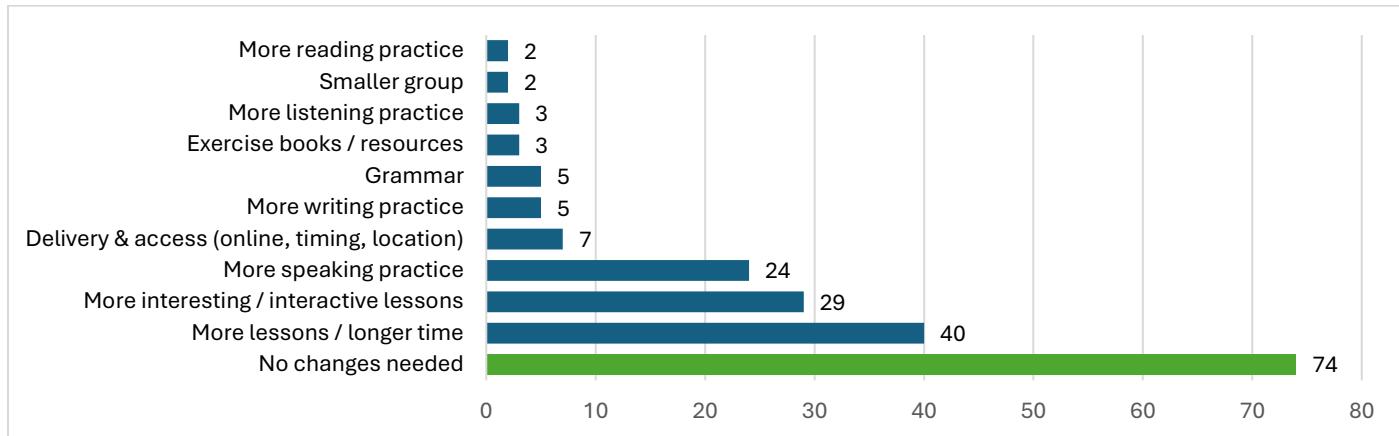
*"I like the way teachers teach their lessons with goodwill. They are friendly and explain very well."*

*"I like the idea of meeting new people and knowing different cultures and practicing my English skills with them."*

*"I like socialising, being with other people and learning together."*

*“I like the atmosphere in class – interesting lessons, a friendly group, and support from the teacher.”*  
*“There’s no pressure, and the teacher is very friendly.”*

# How could we improve our English classes?



## More Lessons / Longer Time

*"I would like to be evening classes but not online."*

*"It is possible to sometimes conduct lesson in interesting places."*

*"Creative assignments. For example, learn a song or a poem in English."*

Many asked for more classes per week, e.g. from 2 to 3 days, or even every day, or requested longer class hours, e.g. 2 hours, "non-stop intensive class". There were a few requests for times that don't interfere with other commitments, e.g. school. One learner wanted weekend classes, another evening classes (but not online).



## More Focus on Skills

Speaking practice was the single most common request — more conversations, small talk, daily English, pair work, role play, real-life situations.

Listening and videos: listening texts, watching clips, music, etc.

Reading and writing: more reading activities, creative assignments (poems, songs, stories).

Grammar and vocabulary: several asked for structured practice, connectors, useful phrases.

Preparation for college/work: more "practical English" for real life.

## Teaching Style & Materials

Make lessons more interesting / fun — games, creative/artistic activities, interactive apps.

Incorporate varied activities: role plays, trips, projects, cultural visits.

More books and materials for speaking/writing.

### Group & Environment

Some said groups were too big/crowded – they wanted smaller classes.  
A few suggested learning in different/interesting places or adding equipment.

### Delivery & Access

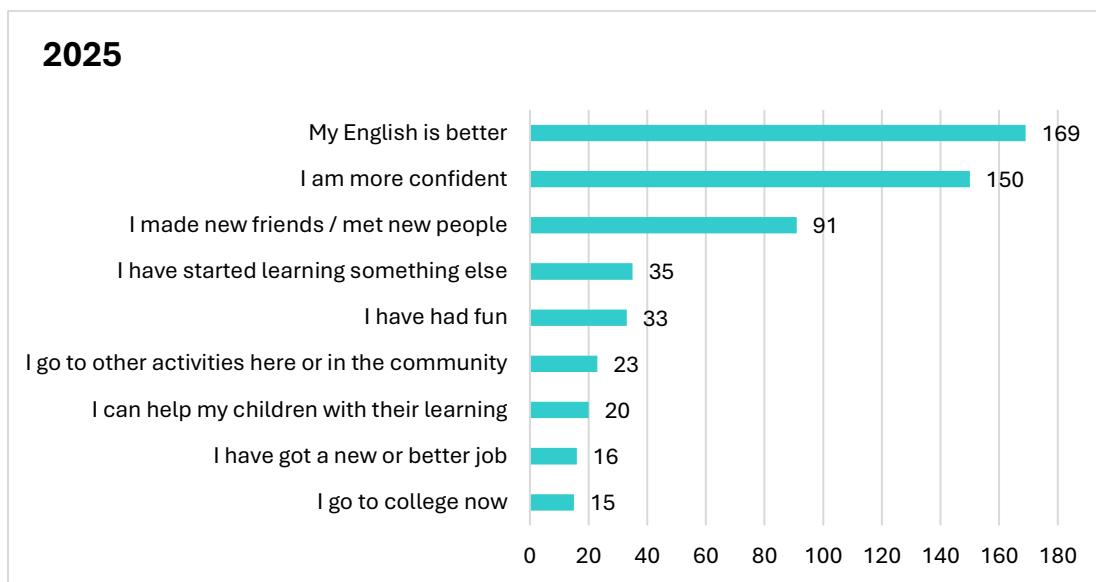
Several suggested adding online lessons.  
There were also requests for classes nearer to home.

### Positive Feedback

A large number of learners said “Nothing, I’m happy”, “Everything is good,” or praised the teachers.  
Many felt the classes were already effective and enjoyable.

## How have your English classes helped you?

Responses to this question follow the pattern of responses from 2024 and 2023.



“I am happy and not afraid anymore.”

“I passed my B1 and Life in the U.K.”

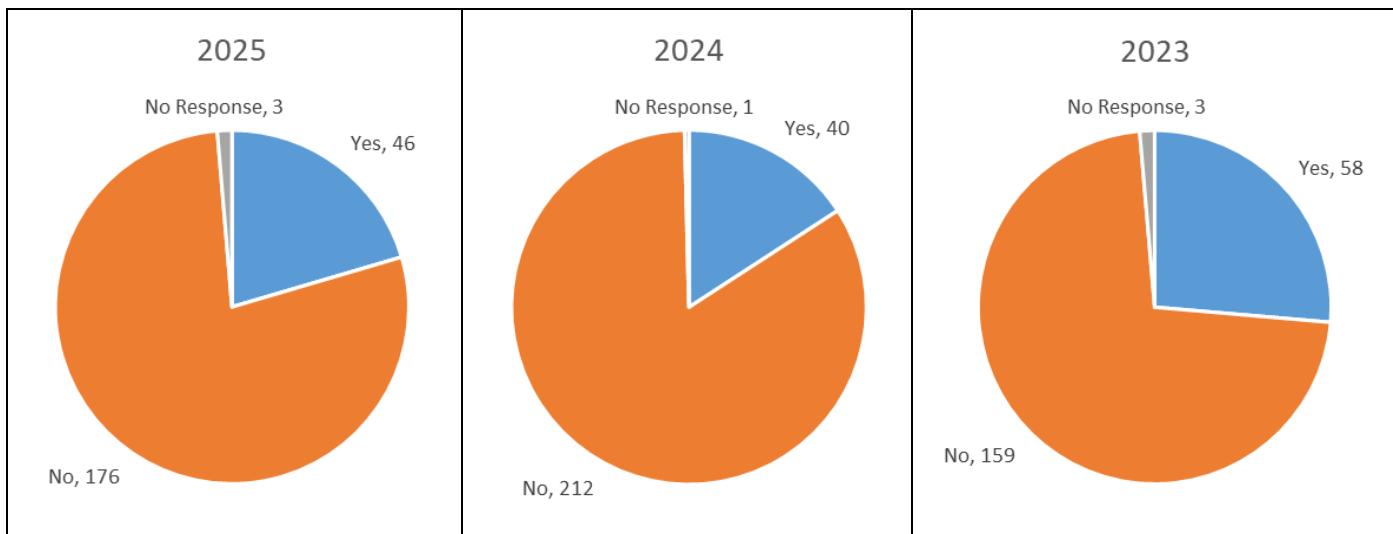
“I’m going to college in August.”

“I learned a lot about culture, traditions and subtleties of the language.”



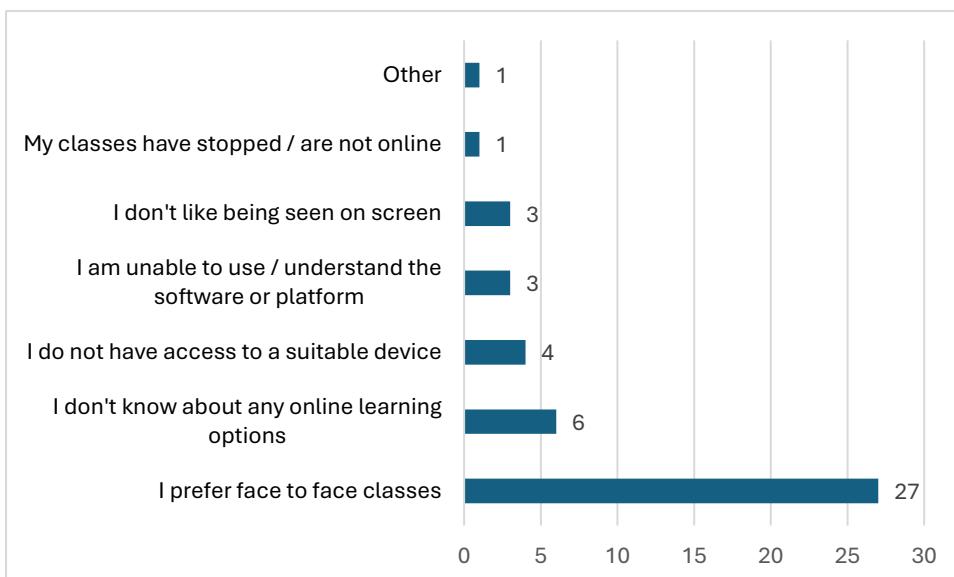
## Have you joined any of our online classes?

This year 46 people responded that they have joined online ESOL sessions: 5 from Angus Council, 9 who attended the college's community outreach classes, and 32 learners from DCC and DIWC.



## If you haven't joined an online class, please tell us why?

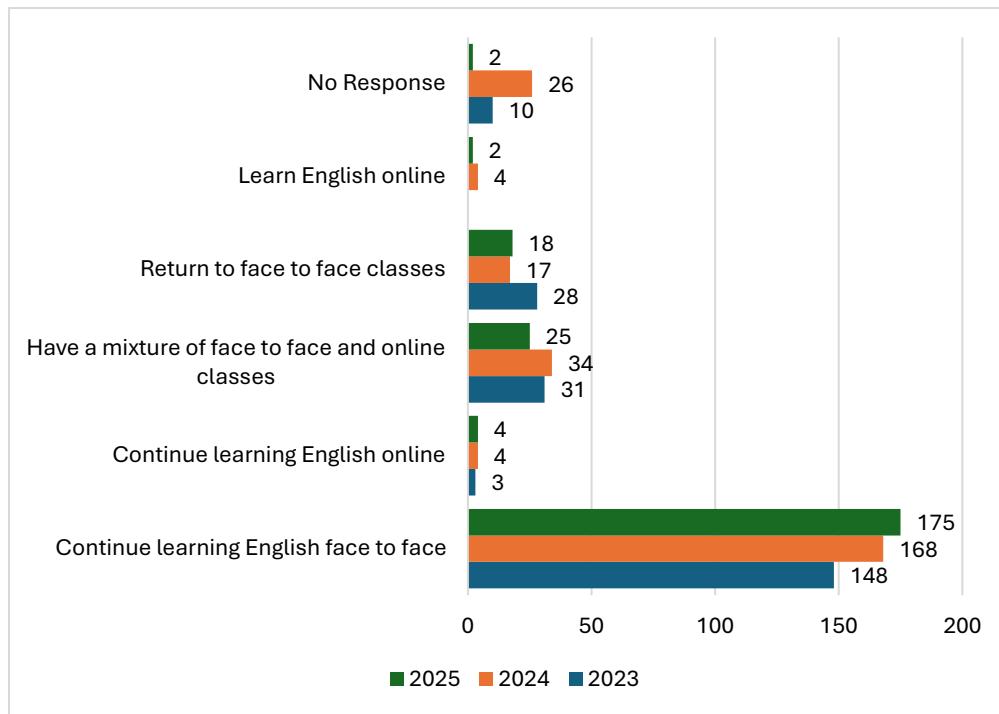
34 learners from Angus gave reasons for not joining an online class.



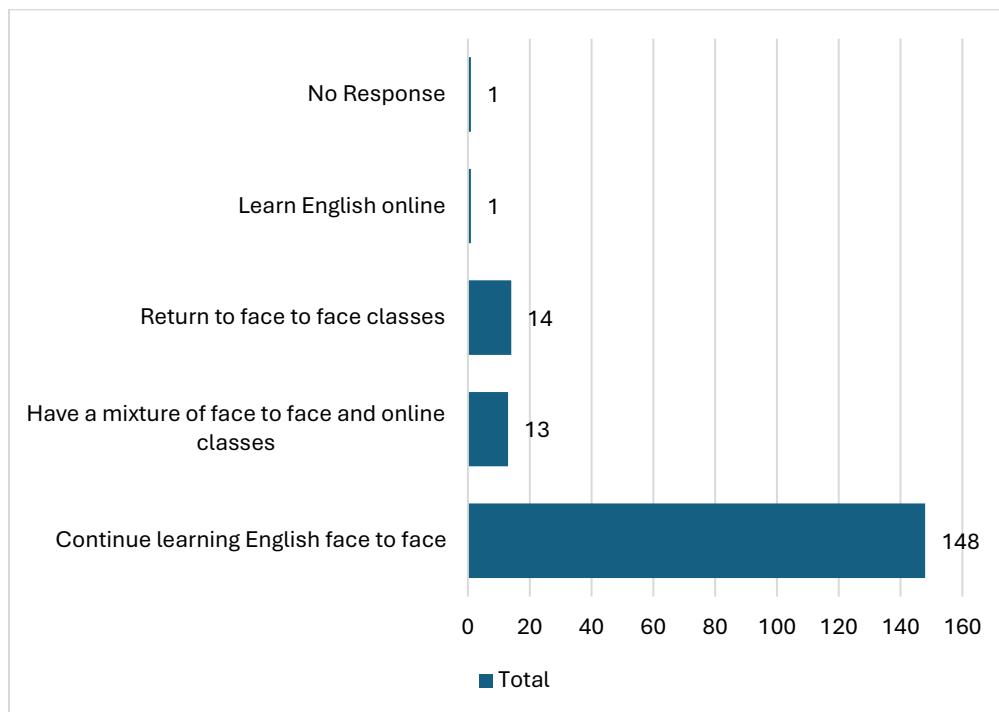
*"I didn't have time for online learning but I would like to join online lessons next year."*

## In the future would you prefer to...

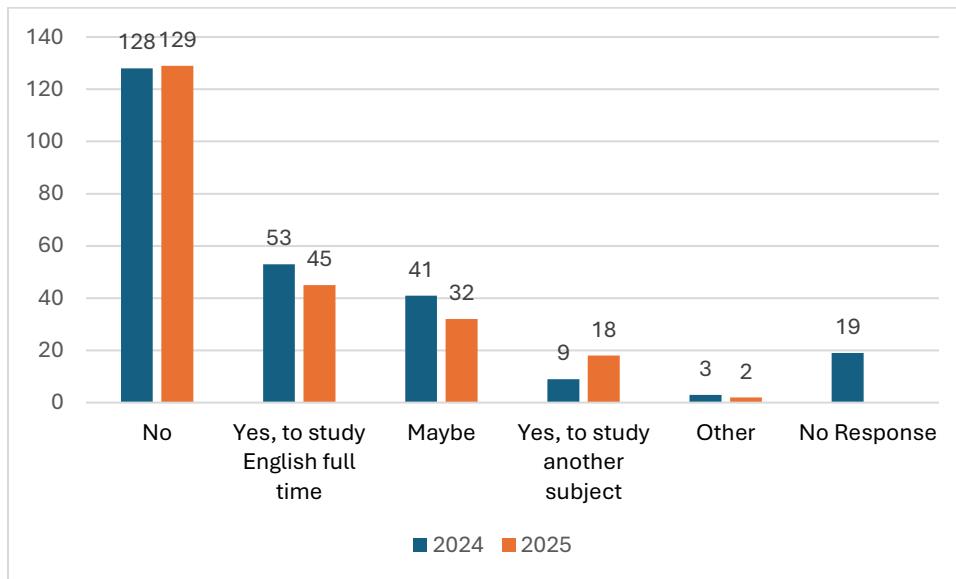
All respondents were asked how they'd like to learn in the future.



The chart below is a breakdown of how the 46 that attended online classes in 2025 would like to continue:



## Are you applying for college this year?



*"Not yet, I will apply when I have been here for 3 years"*

Adding together all those planning to study English or another subject, 63 respondents in 2025 were planning on attending college this year, with 32 considering it (maybe). However, more than half of the ESOL learners we surveyed were not planning to apply for college.



## Do you attend any other classes? (cooking classes, parent & child, women's group, walking group, etc)

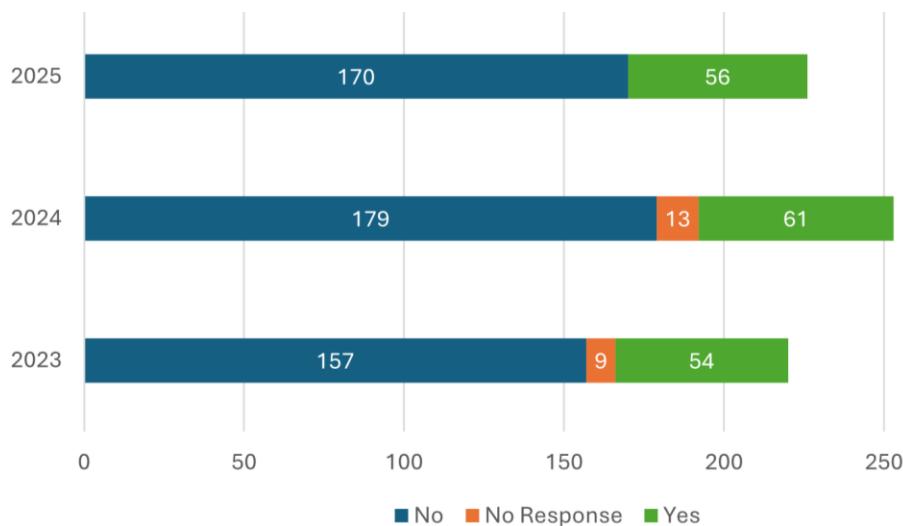


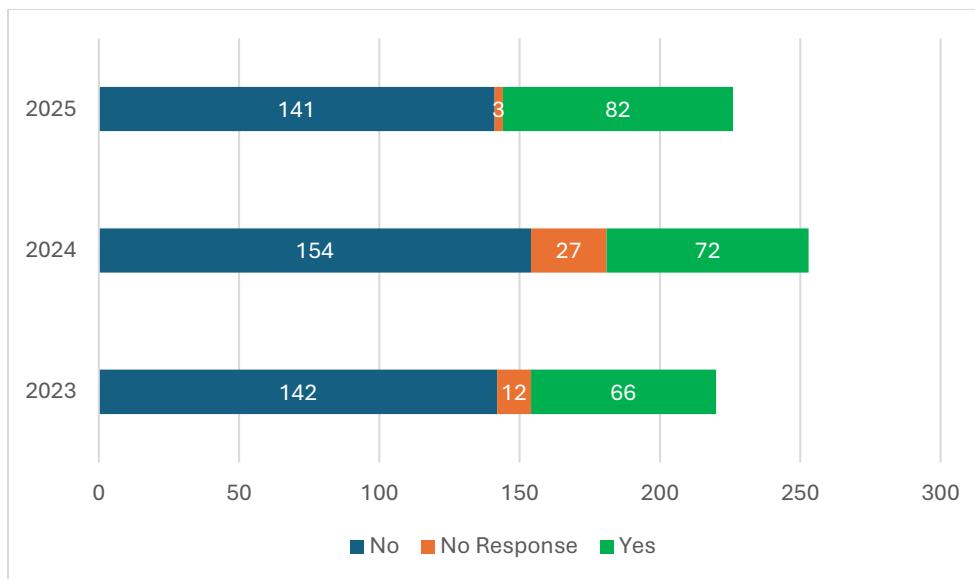
photo by Angela Catlin

Of the 56 respondents who attend other classes or groups in the community, many mentioned other ESOL groups e.g. conversation cafes and additional English classes.

A few attend courses and classes other than English, such as “Beauty for Beginners” and “computing class.” Others take part in fitness groups and cooking (either through ESOL provision or elsewhere in the community).



## Do you go to your local community centre?



## Apart from English, what else would you like to learn?

There were many undecided responses, either focusing only on English now, or unsure what else to pursue. Other common themes were:

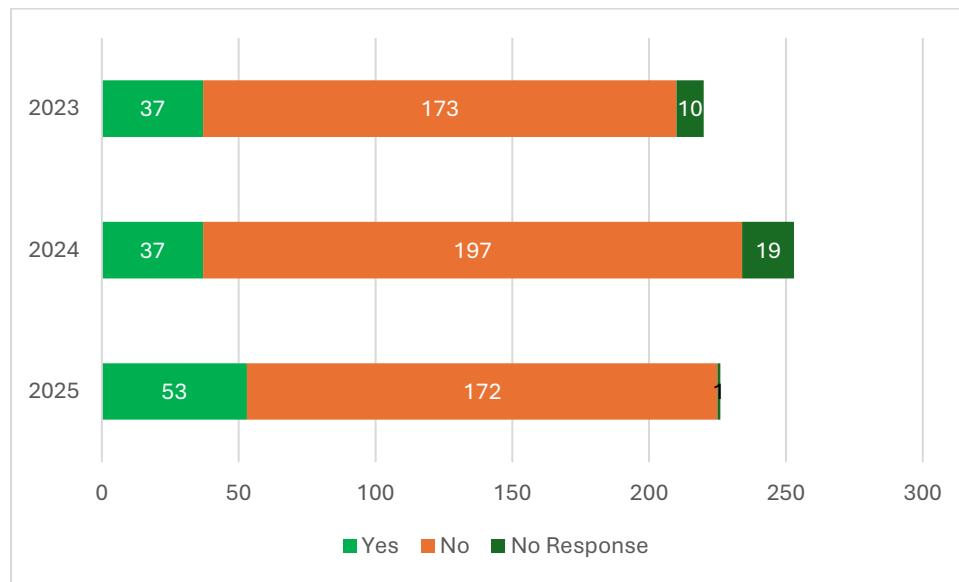
- **employability / personal development** including driving theory and various college course such as hairdressing / beauty, computing, business and accounting
- **history/culture** of Dundee and further afield
- **sports/fitness** including yoga, swimming and tennis
- **learning additional languages** including French and German
- **hobbies** such as arts and crafts, dancing and photography

*"English is very important firstly"*

*"Cooking, sewing, anything that might be helpful to get a job."*

# Volunteering

## Do you volunteer in the community?



In 2025, 53 respondents stated they volunteer, a marked increase compared to previous years. ESOL learners volunteer in:

- Food & Hospitality (cafés, cooking, kitchen, serving, restaurants) - 14
- Gardening & Environmental (community gardens, environmental work) - 5
- Food Banks & Redistribution (FareShare, food bank, community fridge) - 4
- Charity Shops & Community (charity shops, international café) - 3
- Church & Faith (church activities, helping members) - 3
- Children & Education (English classes, childcare, kids' groups) - 2
- Health / NHS - 1
- Arts & Creative (art classes) - 1
- Other / General (helping people, TASH, Ukraine, general volunteering) – 13
- Unclear / Other – 10



photo by Angela Catlin

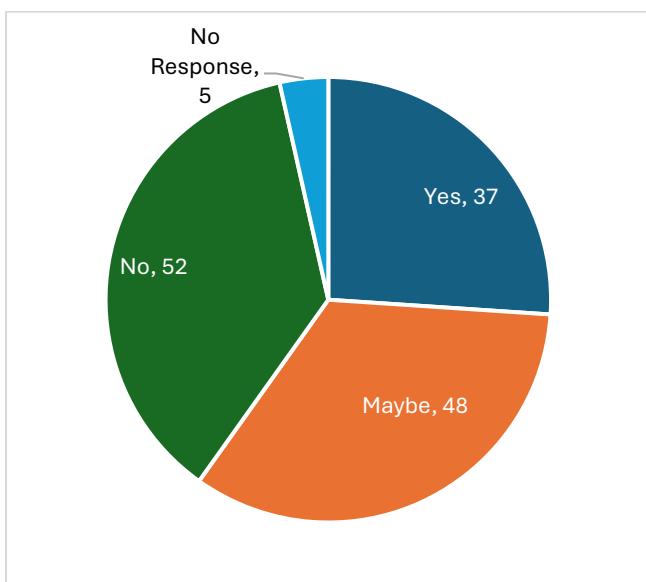


*"[I am] involved in different groups through my children."*

*"I am volunteering in English classes and solihull childcare."*

*"I work in a charity shop and go to the International Cafe sometimes."*

## Would you like to volunteer?



*"I would like to attend all kinds of volunteer spots to practice my English conversation ability."*

*"Whatever I can do, anything can happen."*

*"I need to speak better English first"*



Of those not currently volunteering, 26% were interested in doing so, with a further 34% "maybe" interested. The majority of respondents were either open to help with whatever was needed or were unsure what they wanted to do, but some expressed an interest in supporting other New Scots and working in care (for children and elderly). Some wanted to share practical skills e.g. football coaching, arts and crafts, "Car mechanics" "Anything about clothing and cooking" "Football coaching."

Barriers to volunteering include English language skills, other commitments, and uncertainty about what's available.



Report compiled by Angie Wilson and Aneta McNally (Senior CLD Worker – ESOL)

Dundee City Council

**29 December 2025**

For more information, please contact [aneta.mcnally@dundee.city.gov.uk](mailto:aneta.mcnally@dundee.city.gov.uk)