

Impact Report 2021

Creating opportunity, changing lives
and overcoming disadvantage through
language education



About The Bell Foundation

The Bell Foundation is a charity which aims to overcome disadvantage through language education by working with partners on innovation, research, training, and practical interventions. Through generating and applying evidence, the Foundation aims to improve practice, policy and systems for children, young people, adults, and communities who use English as an Additional Language in the UK.

Abbreviations

EAL: English as an Additional Language. This refers to pupils in compulsory education who speak English as an Additional Language.

EDI: Equity, diversity and inclusion.

ESL: English as a second or additional language. This refers to individuals who have had exposure to a language or languages other than English from birth and have developed or are developing ability in English later in life.

ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages. ESOL is used as the name of qualifications or provision for people who study English as a second or additional language beyond compulsory education.

ITT: Initial Teacher Training.

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The Bell Foundation
Red Cross Lane
Cambridge
CB2 0QU

www.bell-foundation.org.uk

In 2021, the Foundation began or continued partnerships with:

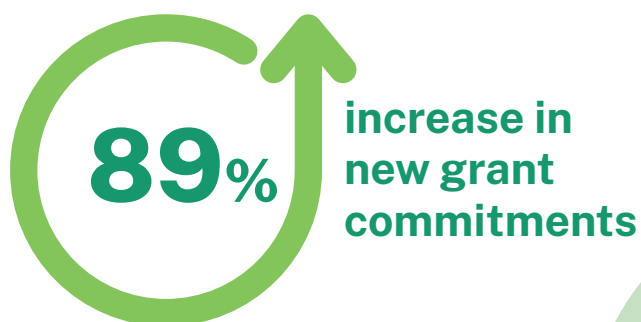


The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers



Transforming lives through
Restorative Justice

Highlights from 2021



"The EAL programme has remained an active and vocal advocate for EAL"
Cloud Chamber Independent Evaluation 2021

"The Bell Foundation's webinars have never failed to deepen, extend or increase my professional learning"
EAL Coordinator

1,200+

learners and mentors reached through the prison reading programme

4

new ESOL grant partnerships launched supporting refugees

10,649
new registered users accessing resources on the website.

A 50% increase on 2020

2021 – A Year in Context

“We have observed a significant and tangible loss in learning in the majority of our pupils where English is an Additional Language.”

Senior leader, primary school, South East

2021 was a year shaped by global events. The on-going challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside the arrival of refugees from Afghanistan and Hong Kong, saw an unprecedented need for language support.

Across the UK, children, young people, adults, victims, and people with convictions who speak English as a second or additional language (ESL) continued to face a wide range of language barriers:

- Teaching and learning were disrupted by the closure of schools for a further three months. A survey conducted in 2021, featuring questions funded by the Foundation¹, found that 74% of primary school teachers and 59% of secondary school teachers observed a language loss in one or more language skill area (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) amongst their pupils who use English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- Schools required solutions to support both their existing EAL learners and newly arrived refugees.
- The arrival of new refugee communities into the UK also reinforced the urgent need for appropriate language support for highly vulnerable people.
- Prisons remained in lockdown for much of the year. This meant that the delivery of many in-prison, face-to-face services and activities ceased, with prisoners being locked in their cells in some cases for 23 out of 24 hours a day, without a resumption of education or work activities.

The Foundation responded immediately to these challenges, by ensuring that the communities and groups with which the Foundation works had access to the support needed, and continuing to work to influence policy and practice, alongside partners and stakeholders.

In 2021, investment in the Foundation’s charitable objects totalled £1,754,000, including new grant commitments of £497,000.

“I just wanted to say I find The Bell Foundation a great inspiration. I have worked with deaf children who have EAL and used your resources and guidelines in my work. Thanks.”

UK local authority

“The use of [translanguage] teaching and learning is a really good way to ensure an inclusive learning environment with high expectations. Thank you for showing us how easy this can be.”

Inclusion manager and SENCO

¹ The Foundation commissioned questions in the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Omnibus Spring 2021 Survey.

In 2021, the Foundation ensured a continued and greater focus on EDI. The Foundation's work has been guided by, and is aligned with, the Association of Charitable Foundation's 'Pillars' of good practice on EDI.

A [new EDI page](#) was added to the website to provide greater visibility on the diversity of the communities with which the Foundation works, and the impact that this work is having. Working with 360Giving², the website also provides information on the Foundation's grant making, ensuring greater transparency by publishing open, standardised grants data.

In 2021, the Foundation enhanced the accessibility of its information and resources. This included broadening the range of material available in other languages, particularly Dari, Pashto and Traditional Chinese, in response to the languages spoken by newly arriving refugees.

The Foundation worked in partnership with Speech and Language UK, formerly I CAN, the children's communication charity. This work, which included the webinar '[Is it English as an Additional Language, a language disorder, or both?](#)', aims to raise awareness of how to identify learners who use EAL and have a speech, language and communication need, and how to support those learners and their families.



² 360Giving is a charity which helps organisations to openly publish grants data.

Influencing Policy and Thought Leadership

“Self-perceptions of proficiency are unreliable. The Bell Foundation told us that the LFS [Labour Force Survey] is not a good measure for the need for provision for people whose first language is not English (ESOL) because it is based on self-perception of proficiency.”

House of Lords, Youth Unemployment Committee, Report of Session 2021–22, ‘Skills for every young person’, following the [Foundation’s inquiry submission](#).

Impact and reach



In 2021, the Foundation continued to influence policy and provide thought leadership through:

- **Evidence and recommendations** – submitted to relevant Government consultations and Select Committee inquiries:
 - The Foundation submitted eight responses to Government consultations.
 - A notable outcome in 2021, following an earlier consultation response submitted by the Foundation, was the update to the Victims’ Code so that a translator is offered to victims without having to first be requested.
- **Research** – with leading universities:
 - The Foundation published the [final report from Professor Strand, University of Oxford](#), completing a five-year research programme examining the relationships between ‘English as an Additional Language, proficiency in English and the educational achievement of EAL learners at school’.

The Foundation published a study exploring [the impact of Covid-19 on pupils speaking EAL](#) in England, the first of its kind and the only such study to use a nationally representative data sample through the use of the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Omnibus Survey.

The research was featured on BBC Newsround:

“Learning new English was pretty hard and I didn’t know what to do at first, the words were getting even harder but then when I had some help at school it got much easier.”

Interview with an EAL learner, BBC Newsround (‘[EAL: Pupils who speak English as an additional language need more support after Covid](#)’).

- As part of the ESOL Programme, [two academic research reports from UCL Institute of Education](#) were published. The reports provide key insights into the experiences of young people who use ESL. This includes the finding that young people who speak languages other than English are more likely to stay in education and go to university post-16, but they are also more likely to be not in education, employment, or training at the age of 25.
- **Partnerships and collaboration** - with statutory bodies, professional organisations, key sector stakeholders, ESOL practitioners, researchers, and policy professionals, to influence national policy and practice the Foundation:
 - Worked with Ofqual on guidance on the allocation of exam grades through teacher assessments and how to appeal them. To enable schools, learners, and parents to understand and use the guidance, an easy-to-understand guide, translated into 17 languages, and two guidance papers for schools, were created by the Foundation.

In 2021, Ofqual opened a consultation on its ‘Guidance on designing and developing accessible assessments’. The Foundation contributed to the draft and as a result, the guidance contains recommendations and good practice on ensuring exam questions use accessible language.

- Continued to convene experts in policy, practice, Government, and academia to share learning and best practice, including the creation of a new Criminal Justice Partners Network, and meetings of the ESOL Expert Group.

EAL Programme

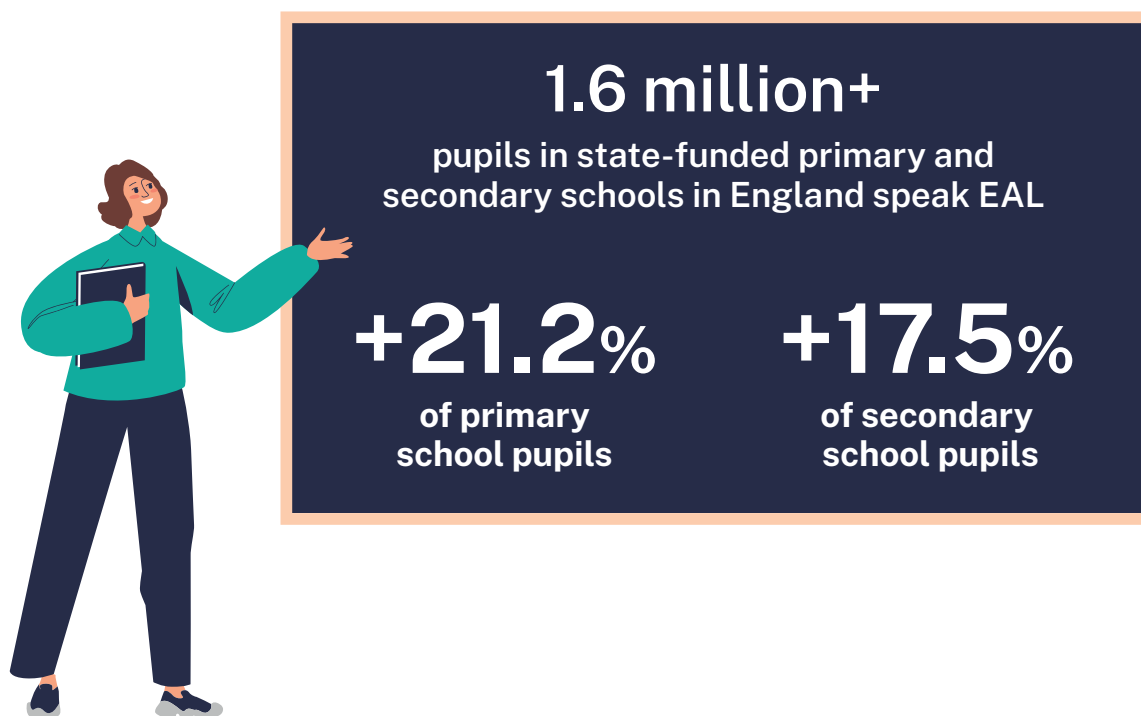
“The evidence of individual-level impact in 2021 is strong, as it has been in recent years. Short term learning outcomes – as judged by changes in self-reported outcome performance immediately after training courses – are very positive. Courses would appear consistently to give educational professionals a boost to their knowledge, skills and understanding of EAL. Their intentions to change their – and their peers’ – practice to the benefit of EAL pupils are also evident.”

Cloud Chamber Independent Evaluation 2021

Impact and reach of the EAL Programme

23,695	10,518	67	16,976	12
education professionals trained	live or recorded webinar views	ITT providers accessed modules in 2021 with the potential to reach 11,333 trainee teachers	Since the launch in late 2020, 111 ITT providers have accessed resources with the potential to reach 16,976 trainee teachers	new learning resources published
24,359	6,349	8,458	26,781	5,950
classroom resources downloaded	guidance documents read in home languages	registered to access the EAL resources - a 30% increase on 2020	downloads of the EAL Assessment Framework and accompanying resources - an increase of 20% on 2020	downloads of the digital Tracker

The EAL Programme aims to improve the educational outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people in the UK who speak EAL, for the benefit of the individual child or young person, their families, communities, and society as a whole.



Language for Results

Language for Results is a quality assured training programme, encompassing courses, webinars, resources, and guidance, which seeks to develop the knowledge and skills of all school staff. Delivered online and in partnership with three regional Centres of Expertise, in Birmingham, London and Luton, the programme continued to expand its reach in 2021.

Webinars held during this period focused on key topics for schools and teaching staff, including methods of supporting EAL pupils during school closures, and ways to support EAL learners to catch up following the disruption caused by Covid-19.

Impact of the Foundation's training three-months on ...

"The English Department are now involved in the measuring of proficiency in English through their classroom teaching and curriculum assessments."

"I will be leading a training session for teaching staff in my setting so that they can contribute to the formative assessment of the pupils they teach."

"All EAL students are now assessed termly by me (even if I don't teach them directly) ... This progress indicator will now appear alongside curriculum progress data on reports."

Initial Teacher Training

"I want to thank you for producing such excellent ITT materials...The materials you produced made a challenging job so much easier. They are so comprehensive and easy to use."

ITT module user

The OECD Teaching and Learning Survey found that, of the teachers surveyed, 57% reported not feeling prepared to teach in multilingual settings when they finished their training³. Responding to this challenge, the Foundation developed free, evidence-informed teaching materials for providers of Initial Teacher Training (ITT), focused on preparing student teachers to work in diverse, multilingual classrooms.

A new teaching module was launched by the Foundation in 2021, building on module one introduced in 2020. The modules are freely available to all ITT providers in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

In 2021, the Foundation also extended the partnership with the Education Development Trust to update training materials for the national rollout of the [Early Career Framework](#) in September 2021.

EAL resources

"The resources on the site are amazing. All evidence based and current and makes my job so much easier."

The Foundation's [EAL resources](#) provide school staff with free, evidence-informed, tried and tested, curriculum-based classroom resources and teaching strategies to help plan and deliver lessons that ensure the curriculum is accessible to, and supportive of, learners who speak EAL.

In 2021, the Foundation responded rapidly to global events to provide schools with the resources they needed to effectively support newly arrived EAL learners, including refugees from Afghanistan. This included a dedicated teaching pack providing a single point of access to relevant tools, resources, and training opportunities for schools. Two parental flyers were translated into additional languages to help parents engage with the education system and support their children to learn. The Foundation's guidance documents were also included in the welcome packs distributed by Refugee Education UK to newly arrived families.

To expand the reach of the Foundation's resources, the Foundation developed new partnerships in 2021, including with STEM Learning, who host the Foundation's science, technology, engineering, and maths resources on their website.

³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 'TALIS – The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey' - https://www.oecd.org/education/talis/TALIS2018_CN_ENG.pdf

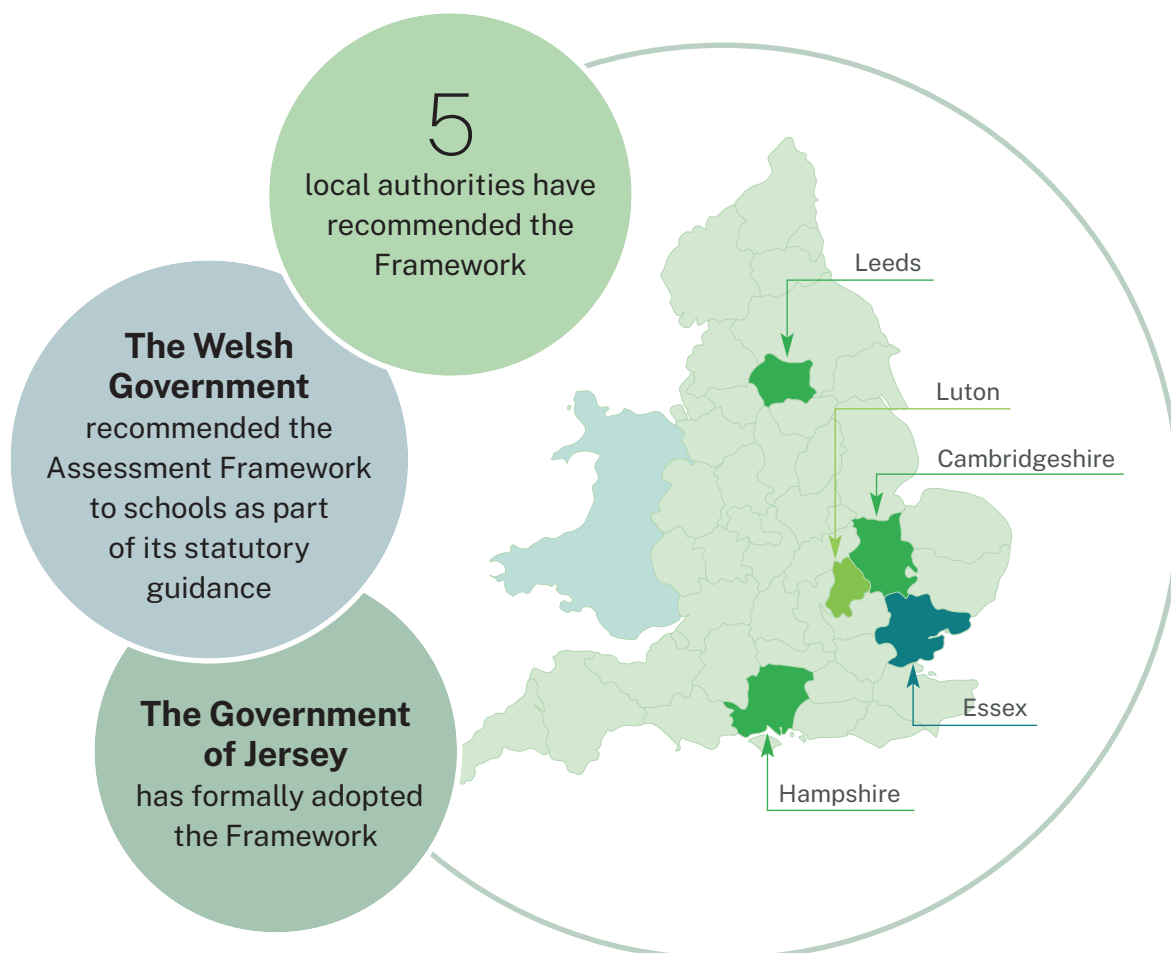
EAL Assessment Framework

"Check out the @BellFoundation website and their English language acquisition assessment tool. It's brilliant for assessing the level of English that a child speaks, reads etc. and gives targets to help them progress. Also lots of resources!"

Teacher

The Foundation's award-winning [EAL Assessment Framework and digital Tracker](#) are provided free-of-charge to schools to ensure that teachers are able to assess the English language proficiency of each EAL learner, set individual targets and tailor support to guide learners' progress.

The EAL Assessment Framework, which is underpinned by robust academic research and expertise from King's College London and the University of Cambridge, has had significant national and international reach and impact. Since its launch in 2017, the Framework has been recommended by the Welsh Government and five local authorities, and formally adopted by the Government of Jersey.



Criminal Justice Programme

“The programme is able to articulate the barriers facing people with ESL in the criminal justice system drawing from an increasingly thorough evidence base. The programme has also created a network of partners who are committed to the issue of language barriers – a subject area that lacks any other evident lead organisation.”

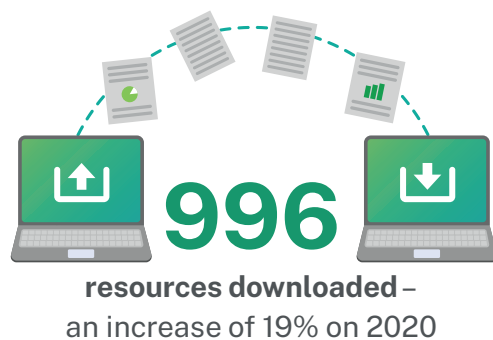
Cloud Chamber Independent Evaluation 2021

Impact and reach of the Criminal Justice Programme

5 grant partnerships continued

1 new partnership started

1 partners network launched



In-cell worksheets created
to support independent
learning in prisons

The Criminal Justice Programme seeks to break down the language and cultural barriers faced by individuals who speak ESL in contact with the English and Welsh criminal justice system, enabling them to access and achieve justice and rehabilitation.

Partnerships

The [programme strategy for 2022–26](#), introduced in 2021, outlines how the Foundation will continue to be led by the evidence in breaking down language barriers, and improving the outcomes and wellbeing of victims of crime and people with convictions who speak ESL.

To achieve this, a key focus of the programme is working through partnerships and the evaluation and development of projects and support services.

Research

2021 saw the completion of the research by the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research at Birkbeck, University of London, the Centre for Justice Innovation and Victim Support, funded by the Foundation and [published in March 2022](#).

Organisations providing support and services

The Foundation also continued to provide grant funding to partner organisations delivering important victim support services and facilitating access to justice for victims who speak ESL.

Shannon Trust – in 2021, the Foundation continued to fund Shannon Trust’s peer-mentor reading programme in prisons, which works with 123 prisons across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. In 2021, volunteers were provided with additional online training, including on working with learners who speak ESL.

“I have told my mum and grandparents who are back home in Africa and who cannot read or write in English either and they are extremely proud of what I have achieved and feel that this is vital for my future. They have been giving me a lot of praise and encouragement.”

Shannon Trust ESOL learner

Harrow Law Centre – in partnership with the Law Centres Network, Harrow Law Centre continued to support victims of crime who speak ESL, through case work, outreach and policy work, focusing on areas of significant concern - hate crime, trafficking, modern slavery and domestic violence.

“One of our substantive cases concerned a rape allegation made by an individual (“AB” for anonymity reasons). As a result of the police’s attitude towards them, they decided they did not want to continue working with them in order to pursue a prosecution. AB was referred to the Victims of Crime (VOC) Project. VOC explained their rights under the Victims’ Code, what the police ought to be providing them with and advised them on the criminal law procedure. As a result of this conversation, AB felt able to pursue a charge and hold police to account to investigate their case effectively. This case is currently on-going. VOC also applied for Criminal Injuries Compensation (CICA Scheme) and received a maximum award of £11,000 for AB.”

Harrow Law Centre

Greater Manchester Law Centre – launched in July 2021, the partnership with Greater Manchester Law Centre offers legal advice and support to victims of domestic abuse who speak ESL, many of whom have related, complex immigration issues.

“S is a domestic abuse survivor who also experienced physical and economic abuse and controlling and coercive behaviour. S speaks very little English. When she was referred to us, she was extremely distressed due to her recent experiences and the situation she now found herself in i.e. in unsuitable accommodation and without sufficient support. We explained, and supported, S to complete the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC) application to provide access to benefits and mainstream accommodation and challenged the local authority to provide appropriate housing. As a result, the DDVC was granted, S is now living in suitable accommodation and has applied for indefinite leave to remain. S told us that she now feels as though life has opened up for her.”

Greater Manchester Law Centre

Hibiscus Initiatives – following a two-year research and pilot phase (the report from which was published in 2021, funded by the Foundation), the Foundation made a grant to Hibiscus for the development of a model of cultural mediation for victims of crime. In 2021, a dedicated project worker continued to use cultural mediation to work with victims of gender-based violence. Hibiscus also began developing and piloting training for practitioners, including aspiring practitioners with personal experience, to raise awareness of cultural mediation and how to use such techniques.

“Previously I was missing this kind of support and finally I got it from you, and I will never forget that.”

Hibiscus Initiatives – refugee and survivor of abuse and trafficking

Why me? – in 2021, as part of Project Articulate, a project which aims to widen access to restorative justice for victims of crime who speak ESL, Why me? worked with Bedfordshire Signpost, a police-run restorative justice service, and Bedfordshire Youth Offending Team to identify knowledge and skills gaps in restorative justice. This allowed them to develop and deliver training to these organisations, as well as Luton Youth Offending Service and Bedfordshire Police.

“We worked with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to encourage sign up to our Restorative Justice Pledge. 44 candidates signed the pledge, of whom six were elected, following which five have approached us to advise on the inclusion of restorative justice (RJ) in their new Police and Crime Plans and their tenders for RJ. The Why me? team are giving advice on this, including emphasising the needs of marginalised people when accessing (restorative) justice.”

Why me?

ESOL Programme

Impact and reach of the ESOL Programme



The Foundation's ESOL Programme was launched in 2020 to improve the educational, social and employment outcomes for adults and young people who use ESL.

Partnerships

The ESOL Programme works through partnerships at the national and regional levels to test approaches, conduct research, and influence both policy and practice. The Foundation launched four new partnerships in 2021, focused on enabling refugees to achieve their education and employment aspirations:

- **Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN)** – the Foundation and KRAN are working in partnership to evaluate and develop the content, curriculum and delivery of resources and classes as part of the Learning for Life education programme.
- **East of England Local Government Association's Strategic Migration Partnership (EELGA SMP)** – the Wellbeing and Work for Refugee Integration project, led by EELGA SMP, provides employment, ESOL and skills, and wellbeing support to refugees across the East of England. The findings from the [final evaluation of the project](#), funded by the Foundation, will inform the development of a comprehensive framework for refugee resettlement and integration.
- **Refugee Education UK (REUK)** – working with the Foundation, REUK is developing and integrating new ESOL components into their educational mentoring programme (including specific ESOL objectives, new monitoring and evaluation processes and training for volunteer mentors), to improve young refugees' ESOL outcomes and build the evidence in this area.
- **Refugee Action** – with funding from the Foundation, the Pathways to Employment project, led by Refugee Action, seeks to enable the integration of refugees by supporting the journey of participants into employment.

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The 2021 Annual Report is available at **www.bell-foundation.org.uk**

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