

## The Norwegian report from study visit in London

### Different from Norway

#### 1. **Westminster Adult Education Services (WAES)**

what surprised us was the size and scope of the organization. WAES offers a wide range of courses, from training in basic skills and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at different levels to childcare, art etc. Currently there are 4300 students, more than half of them in ESOL training. 75 % of the students are women, but this seems to be the case in adult education in most countries, also in Norway. The courses in basic skills and ESOL are free up to a certain level. It seems that the distinction between Skills for Life courses and ESOL courses is getting smaller, and consequently there is also little distinction between the participants in the two areas.

In Norway the distinction between basic skills courses and Norwegian as a Second Language has been quite distinct up till now, but there is a tendency that basic skills courses are offered to all target groups. In Norway we do not have a similar organization that comprises such diversity in courses as WAES does.

#### 2. **Train to Gain**

Train to Gain is a major UK national government flagship programme designed to help employers equip staff with the skills they need in order for their businesses to prosper. They cover areas like childcare, information technology, customer services, retail etc. Among immigrants, only persons with indefinite leave to remain in the UK or married to a Briton are eligible. The duration of the course depends on the need of the employer. The criteria for taking part in Train to Gain training is level one or two of ESOL. All Level 2 training is provided free, at no direct cost for employers or employees. For training beyond level 2, the programme is subsidized: organizations with less than 50 employees may be entitled to wage subsidies.

We do not have a similar programme in Norway. In Norway, there is a system of wage subsidies which is not linked to training, but the use of it has been limited the last years. In this system employers in both private companies and the public sector are offered wage subsidies if they employ persons who have difficulties to get into the job market otherwise. The wage subsidy is offered for a limited period of time, normally up to one year. As far as we have understood, Train to Gain offers short, intensive courses on demand from employers and adult learners can combine training with work. A sales team from WAES makes contact with employers and training is organised at the work place.

#### 3. **Further Education (FE) and Adult Learning**

In the UK there is a distinction between Further Education and Adult Learning. Further Education is for former drop-outs between 16 and 21, recently adjusted to 14-21 years old. We don't have the educational offer in Norway although many learners drop out,

especially in vocational education without getting a diploma, and this is a major problem. Many of them appear in adult education later.

In the UK, 75% of the learners in adult learning are females. Until the last couple of years men and women were doing equally well but now women are pulling ahead. We can see the same tendency in Norway, although we do not think the numbers of female learners is as high as in the UK.