Feliks came to London from Poland in 2006. At the beginning of his journey, Feliks is doing two jobs – one as a cleaner and one in a coffee shop kitchen. He knows that his English isn’t good enough to get a better job – he has a few ‘everyday’ phrases and some that he must know for his jobs. He relies on his housemates and other Polish speaking people that he knows, so hasn’t needed to learn much English. At school in Poland, he wasn’t regarded as ‘academic’ and left school with poor grades. He had a few low skilled temporary jobs in Poland, but hasn’t done any raining since. He came to London because a couple of friends seemed to be doing well and making money. Feliks always wanted to become a chef. He sends money home to his family – his mother is a lone parent looking after school age children. Feliks knows about English classes from his housemates. They tell him he’ll have to pay unless he makes out that he doesn’t have a job.

The journey sketched out below touches on only some of the complexities involved for many people. It hints at the ‘stop-start’ pattern that for many is the route to learning, skills and employment. It is meant to illustrate some of the challenges for people – in their personal and family lives, and in accessing the kind of provision and other support that is needed to help them reach their goals.

Feliks decides to try and find out if he qualifies because he’s on a low income. He can only read a few words of English. He goes to the local priest for help. He works out that Feliks is eligible and helps him to put together the proof he needs.

After 4 months, the shifts for Feliks’ cleaning job get changed and he can’t go to the evening classes. The college can’t offer him anything else.

In the time that Feliks has been doing his ESOL course, he has had 2 job changes. He’s fed up with being in and out of work. He really wants to train to be a chef.

Feliks sees the adverts for Train to Gain. He phones the broker helpline, but can’t seem to get anyone to understand what he’s trying to do. He tries Lift Training (they put adverts in the Polish newspaper). They come to see Feliks and his boss (with a lot of persuasion from Feliks). But Feliks is assessed and will need to start at Level 1 in Catering which is not funded through Train to Gain. He is very disappointed, but starts on Entry 3 ESOL for Work which is funded on Train to Gain. He is not sure what will happen next.

Feliks decides to get a job in a restaurant and ‘work his way up’. He eventually gets a washing up job. He works really hard and his employer agrees to give him a few jobs preparing vegetables. After about 6 months, Feliks asks him if he can do some proper training. His employer isn’t keen. Feliks is determined to try and persuade him. He asks one of the teachers at his old college about it. They aren’t sure what he could do and suggest another evening course.