



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of government-funded
learners participating in Further
Education

MAY 2013

Number of government-funded learners participating in Further Education

Why is this indicator important?

Having a skilled workforce is vital to our future economic prospects as a country, enabling businesses to be more productive, and helps individuals to get on. However, there are still too many people who do not have the basic skills they need or do not have the opportunity to improve their skills in work. This contributes to the UK being less competitive than many of our major competitors.

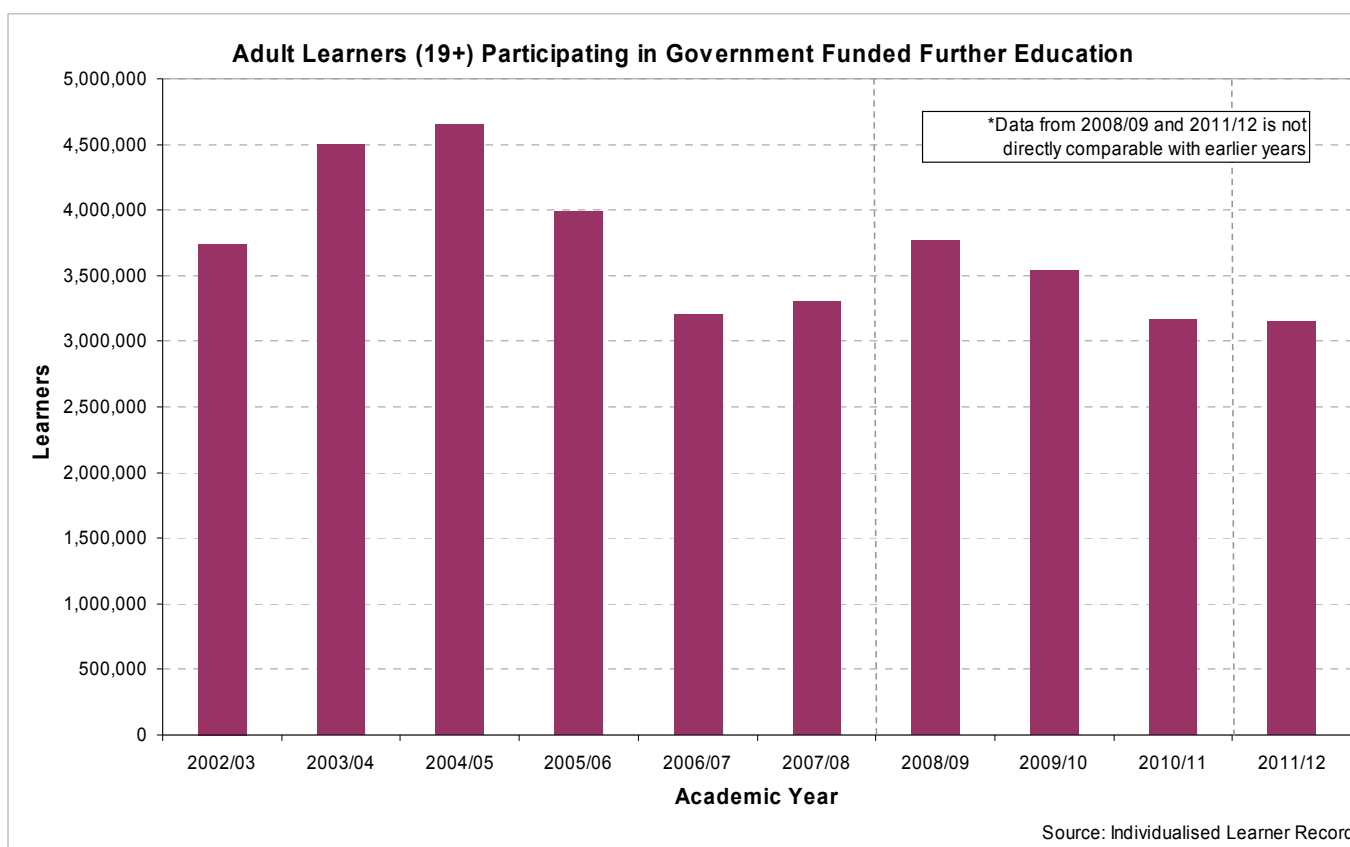
To address this problem we are introducing a new [skills funding system](#)¹, which will focus funding where it will make the greatest difference. We will prioritise funding support for learners with very low levels of skills or the disadvantaged, while there will be an expectation that learners and employers will co-invest alongside Government in meeting the costs of intermediate and higher level training courses from which they will derive private benefits.

How are we performing?

Published information shows that 3,149,700 learners aged 19 or older participated in some form of government-funded Further Education in the 2011/12 academic year (the latest year for which final data are available) as reported in the [January 2013 Further Education & Skills Statistical First Release](#)².

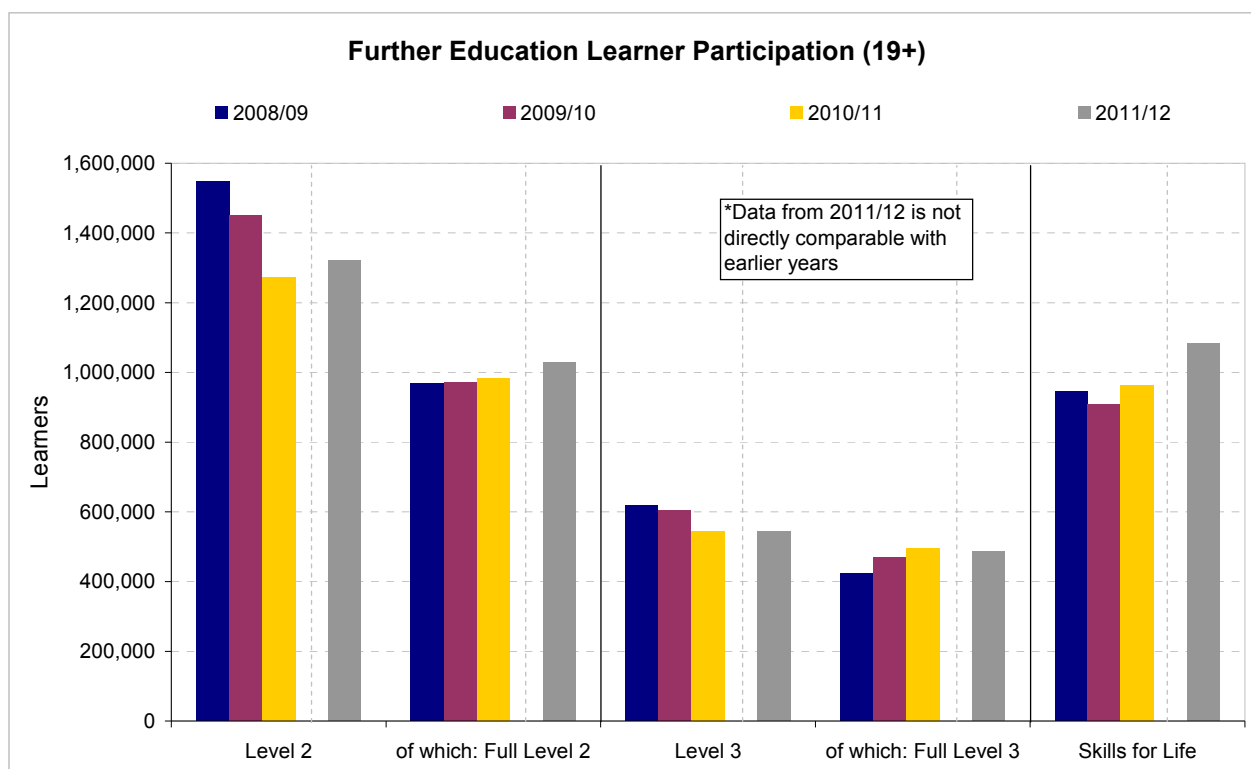
¹ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf>

² <http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/>



The following chart gives an indication of changes in the mix of government-funded further education courses that learners participate in over time. Some learners may participate in courses across two qualification levels in a given year and so can be counted twice in this comparison. The chart shows:

- An increase of 3.7% in Level 2 qualifications, up from 1,273,300 in 2010/11 to 1,320,000 in 2011/12;
- An increase of 4.6% in full Level 2 qualifications, up from 982,600 in 2010/11 to 1,028,100 in 2011/12;
- A similar number of learners participating in Level 3 qualifications, 542,600 in 2011/12;
- A decrease of 1.5% in full Level 3 qualifications, down from 494,000 in 2010/11 to 486,800 in 2011/12;
- An increase of 54.9% in below level 2 qualifications (excluding Skills for Life), up from 370,900 in 2010/11 to 574,700 in 2011/12



Amongst the 3,149,700 adult (19+) learners supported in 2011/12 were 616.900 learners participating in an Apprenticeship.

What will influence this indicator?

Performance on this indicator will not only be influenced by the budget available to fund-learners, but also by demand from individuals and employers to take this up.

Creating a funding system that is demand led may mean that longer, more costly courses better reflect the demand for skills in certain sectors. This could lead to a decline in overall numbers, but would mean that the needs of individuals and employers would be better met.

What is BIS's role?

BIS provides funding, through the Skills Funding Agency and the National Apprenticeship Service, for learners in further education and sets the policy framework for the further education system.

Indicator definition

Number of government-funded learners aged 19 or over who participated in Further Education at some point in the academic year (1st August to 31st July). Age is calculated as learner's age as at 31st August in the relevant academic year, for example, for the 2011/12 academic year, age is calculated as at the 31st August 2011..

Figures for 2008/09 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years as the introduction of demand led funding has changed how data is collected and how funded learners are

defined. [More information on demand led funding](#)³ is available on the Data Service website.

Figures for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years as a Single Individualised Learning (ILR) data collection system has been introduced. More information on the Single ILR is available on the Data Service website.

Further information

More detail is available in the [Post-16 Further Education & Skills Statistical First Release](#)⁴

Related indicators

[Average funding per course in government-funded adult further education](#)⁵

[International comparison of the qualification levels of the working age population in the UK](#)⁶

[Total achievements in full Level 2 or 3 Further Education of people academic age 19 years and over](#)⁷

³<http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/datadictionary/businessdefinitions/Demand+Led+Funding.htm>

⁴http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/statistics/statisticalfirstrelease/sfr_current/

⁵https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82957/Average_funding_per_course_in_government-adult_further_education.pdf

⁶https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82959/International_comparison_of_the_qualification_levels_of_the_working_age_population.pdf

⁷https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82961/Total_achievements_in_full_Level_2_or_3_Further_Education_of_people_academic_age_19_years_and_over.pdf

Status

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