



Department  
for Education

# **Annex: Proposed changes to further education, skills and apprenticeship statistics**

**November 2017**

# Introduction

The further education (FE) statistical dissemination team in DfE produces a wide range of official statistics. They are used internally to inform policy making and operational delivery, and are shared externally to enable others to use the information. We wish to ensure the statistics remain relevant, up to date, and fulfil a broad range of user needs.

Over the past year, the team have worked to improve the flexibility of their statistics by creating more data tools with the view to improving the richness of data, increasing efficiencies, and enabling re-use of those statistics. The specific proposals in this document have been informed by user feedback, an internal review of further education official statistics, and departmental priorities, with a view to improving consistency across statistical publications after the Machinery of Government changes implemented in July 2016. The changes also reflect the increasing focus on apprenticeships. We intend to implement these changes in time for reporting the 2017 to 2018 academic year. The first changes would affect publications from January 2018.

Feedback on these proposed changes is welcome. Please contact the further education statistical dissemination team at: [Dave.Bartholomew@education.gov.uk](mailto:Dave.Bartholomew@education.gov.uk)

## Proposed changes to further education national and official statistics

The Department for Education currently publish a main statistical first release (SFR) supported by main tables, supplementary tables, and other contextual information. Our proposals mainly involve changing the periodicity of what we produce. They also aim to provide more clarity to more clearly distinguish between tables which directly support our headline FE statistics, and those which provide more contextual information about the FE system. We also have a small number of other publications we are looking to integrate. Please see table 1 for a summary of the proposed release schedule.

We are proposing to make the following changes to our publications:

### 1. Further education and skills statistical first release (SFR):

- Produce one annual publication from the final reported academic year data (Individualised Learner Record [ILR] return 14) in November including the associated data cascade, held within the further education data library.
  - Data included would be the same as is currently within the November further education and skills main publication.
  - Headline advanced learner loans applications figures will be included as FE data library tables, as per templates that will be released alongside the loans applications publication on 30 November 2017.
- Produce one mid-year update publication using the ILR return 6 in March.

- In October 2016, departmental responsibility for offender learners moved to the Ministry of Justice. While the total numbers will continue to be included in the release, we are reviewing their positioning and these may become supplementary tables going forward.
- We are also reviewing other tables, which are more historical in nature, for example Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE), Employer Ownership Pilots (EOP), and workplace learning; or contextual data around FE generally, such as, level of highest qualification held by economically active adults, and vocational qualification achievements in the UK. We are considering their timing and integration for the next final year (November) release.

## **2. Quarterly apprenticeships and traineeships data release:**

- This will continue to include the main tables on apprenticeships and traineeships. It will stand alone for two publications (January and June each year), and will be subsumed and combined into the main FE and skills SFR each March and November.
- Data on apprenticeships participation (currently table 21), starts and achievements (currently tables 22.1 and 22.2), and traineeships (currently tables 23.1, 23.2, and 23.3), and apprenticeship supplementary data reported to date will continue to be released in January and June (based on ILR returns 4 and 10 respectively). This will continue to cover the academic year reported to date at these periods, and we will provide brief commentary alongside the tables.

## **3. Apprenticeship monthly transparency data:**

- Due to interest in the development of the apprenticeships levy and to provide transparency on the system as a whole, we will continue to produce monthly data on the apprenticeship service. We will adjust the tables provided according to user feedback and departmental priorities.
- We will only report on the cumulative total of apprenticeship service accounts registered to date, as we do not feel the monthly breakdown adds additional insight on the system.
- We will include headline monthly data on apprenticeship starts within this publication from the January 2018 release. These data will be broken down by age and level, as per tables 7.1 and 22.1 from the current SFR main tables.
- These monthly data will provide timely insight into the headline activity and will be published while the levy system is bedding in. The highly provisional nature of this release does not provide a sensible point at which to comment on performance, nor to provide further breakdowns. These will not be provided outside of the quarterly publication points.

## **4. Qualification achievement rates statistical first release:**

- Produce a new statistical first release on an annual basis in the spring that covers the whole of further education achievement rates. This would allow for the joint release of headline tables for qualification achievement rates (currently

tables 15.1 and 15.2 from the main further education and skills SFR) with the national achievement rates tables (NARTs).

- This would mean a slight delay in release of headline data compared to previous years, but a significantly earlier release of provider level data from the NARTs. Users have found providing headline data in isolation misleading as they do not allow for true comparisons without the more detailed tables being available.

#### **5. Advanced learner loans applications data:**

- The current publication would cease production. Headline data on total number of applications and applications approved would be incorporated into the data cascade of the main further education and skills SFR.





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