



Further Education for Benefit Claimants England 2016/17 Academic Year: Quality and methodology information



28 June 2018

Experimental Statistics

About this document

This document provides a range of information on the quality of the further education for benefit claimants data, and the methodology used to produce it. It is based on the Office for National Statistics' guidelines for measuring statistical quality.

It provides an overview of the data used in the production of the statistics along with information on data issues, data definitions, the publication cycle and supplementary data produced.

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
2.	Scope	2
3.	Measures.....	4
4.	Data Sources.....	5
5.	Matching Process	7
6.	Match Rates	9
7.	Abbreviations.....	9
8.	Users of these Statistics	10
9.	Supplementary Tables	10
10.	Experimental Statistics	10
11.	Related Statistical Publications	10
12.	Get in touch	11

1. Introduction

This quality and methodology document provides an overview of the data used in the production of the further education for benefit claimants statistics. It provides information on the methodology used to calculate the measures, as well as information on the data sources, data issues and data definitions.

This document is based on the Office for National Statistics' [guidelines for measuring statistical quality](#).

2. Scope

This publication presents information on further education activity funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency for adult benefit claimants in England. Further education includes provision delivered in further education organisations, sixth form colleges, independent training organisations, local authorities and other providers including training undertaken as part of apprenticeship and traineeship programmes, but excludes Community Learning and learning delivered through the Employer Ownership Pilot (EOP). It contains data for the 2011/12– 2016/17 academic years, where the academic year runs from 1 August to 31 July.

The publication does not include information regarding:

- Learning delivered in school sixth forms, including state-funded and independent schools.
- Higher education learning in higher education institutions.
- Privately-funded training at FE organisations and independent training organisations.

Most tables relate to learners on benefit aged 19 to 64, with the exception of the apprenticeships and traineeships tables which include starts by claimants aged under 19.

The publication provides statistics on learners who were on benefits at the start of further education training, highest level of qualification studied, benefit spells with training by type of benefit, and apprenticeship starts by individuals claiming benefits before the start of training, and traineeships on benefits. The headline measures reported represent a summary of a complex set of data.

The benefits included in this publication are:

- Jobseeker's Allowance including Training Allowance.
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit (from 2015/16 onwards)
 1. Searching for Work
 2. Working with Requirements
 3. Planning for Work
 4. Preparing for Work
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Passported Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Pension Credit

Universal Credit claimants who are classed as out-of-work are included in these statistics. Those in the following Universal Credit conditionality groups; “Searching for Work”, “Working with Requirements”, “Planning for Work” and “Preparing for Work” are classed as out-of-work. In 2015/16, the data include only Universal Credit live service claimants; in 2016/17, Universal Credit full and live service claimants are included.

It is important to note that training by claimants who are on Universal Credit and do not have any work related requirements during the claim (those in “No Work Requirements” and “Working – no Requirements” conditionality groups) and Personal Independence Payment claimants are not included in this publication. Universal Credit conditionality was not available prior to April 2015. Hence Universal Credit claimants are only included for the 2015/16 academic year onwards.

Conditionality regime for Universal Credit claimants can take the following values

Searching for work	Not working, or working with very low earning. Claimant is required to take action to secure work – or more/better paid work. The work coach supports them to plan their work search and preparation activity.
Working with requirements	In work but could earn more, or not working but has a partner with low earnings.
Planning for work	Expected to work in the future. Lone parent/lead carer of a child aged 1 (aged 1-2 prior to April 2017). Claimant is required to attend periodic interviews to plan their return to work.
Preparing for work	Expected to start preparing for the future even with limited capability for work at the present time or a child aged 2 (aged 3-4 prior to April 2017). The claimant is expected to take reasonable steps to prepare for working including Work Focussed Interview.
No work requirements	Not expected to work at present. Health or caring responsibility prevents claimant from working or preparing for work.
Working – no requirements	Individual or household earnings over the level at which conditionality applies. Required to inform DWP of changes to circumstances, particularly if at risk of decreasing earnings or losing job.

The publication only includes further education records that have been matched to the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) study. See sections 4 and 5 for more information.

The types of further education learning funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency included in this publication are:

- Adult (19-64) classroom based education and training.
- Adult (19-64) workplace learning (excluding the employer ownership pilot) up to 2015/16.
- All age (16-64) apprenticeship programmes.
- All age (16-24) traineeships.

Community learning and all unfunded training are not included in this report. Note that only matched data is included in this publication, i.e. where a match has been found between the ILR and DWP/HMRC administrative data in LEO. Figures will differ from the DfE [Further Education and Skills](#) statistics release as not all learners have been matched to LEO and this release excludes training under 'community learning' and the Employer Ownership Pilot.

All figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and figures below 50 are suppressed (represented by “-“). Percentages based on suppressed values are also suppressed, and percentages less than 0.05 per cent

are represented by “*”. Totals in tables may not sum due to rounding and percentages are calculated using pre-rounded data.

3. Measures

Learners	When an individual starts a programme of learning with a further education provider, they are allocated a learner record. A learner is counted as being ‘on benefit at the start of learning’ where they have a benefit claim which overlaps the learning start date. A learner will be counted in each year they started a learning aim.
Learning aims	An aim is the term used for a course a learner is studying and is counted in the year the learning started. Examples of aims include BTECs, NVQs and individual GCSEs and A levels. Many learners will be studying for several aims at once or in sequence, as part of a programme of study.
Benefit spell	A benefit spell is defined as a continuous period of time receiving the same benefit type. There can be multiple benefit spells per claimant, either of the same benefit type or different ones.
Academic year	Runs from 1 st August to 31 st July. The learning period covered in the publication runs from 1 st August 2011 to 31 st July 2017.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships are paid jobs, lasting at least 12 months, that include an off-the-job programme of learning (minimum 20%) and lead to the apprentice becoming fully competent in their chosen occupation. As an employee, apprentices earn as they learn and gain practical skills in the workplace. For further information, please see: http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/ .
Full level 2	Equivalent to a NVQ at level 2 or 5 GCSEs. The widths of all of a learner’s level 2 aims are summed to establish whether a learner is taking a full level 2 programme.
Full level 3	Equivalent to a NVQ at level 3 or 2 A-levels. The widths of all of a learner’s level 3 aims are summed to establish whether a learner is taking a full level 3 programme.
English and maths	Qualifications designed to give people the reading, writing, maths, and communication skills they need in everyday life, to operate effectively in work, and to help them succeed on other training courses.
Traineeship	Traineeships were introduced in the 2013/14 academic year to provide young people with essential work preparation, English, maths and work experience to secure an apprenticeship or other work. For further information, please see: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/traineeships-programme .

4. Data Sources

The statistics in the publication are produced using the Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) study, replacing the Individualised Learner Record-Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study dataset which was used to produce these statistics in previous releases.

The LEO study has been brought together by different government departments and is being used to improve the information available on a range of topics across different policy areas.

The LEO study links information about individuals, including:

- Personal characteristics such as gender, ethnic group and age.
- Education, including schools, colleges and higher education institution attended, courses taken, and qualifications achieved.
- Employment and income.
- Benefits claimed.

It is created by combining data from the following sources:

- The National Pupil Database (NPD) held by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on students at UK publicly funded higher education institutions and some Alternative Providers held by DfE.
- Individualised Learner Record Data (ILR) on students at further education institutions held by DfE.
- Employment data (P45 and P14) held by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).
- The National Benefit Database, Labour Market System and Juvos data held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

By combining these sources together using unique identifiers, we can look at the further education undertaken by benefit claimants.

The methodology is still under development and we will continue to review our approach, making further refinements and increasing alignment across different products over time where appropriate.

All LEO study datasets used in the production of these statistics are snapshots obtained in December 2017.

Benefit data

Benefit data are taken from the underlying DWP payments systems and are supplemented by the information entered by Jobcentre advisers. As such non-compulsory fields in either the labour market system or the payment system may be incomplete. Due to the size and technical complexity, these systems are not accessed directly, but at regular intervals scans are taken that build up a longitudinal picture from repeated snapshots of the data.

Start dates are entered on to the system and are accurate dates of benefit payment, thus provide certain timing and duration of benefit claim. However, while JSA dates have very few discrepancies, due to the way the data is scanned the end dates recorded for other benefits may diverge to some extent from the events they are recording. The potential discrepancy varies from up to two weeks for ESA to up to six weeks for IB.

Universal Credit claimants

The National Benefits Database (NBD) does not currently include any information relating to claims to Universal Credit. However, the Universal Credit Official Statistics dataset has been used to allow those claiming Universal Credit during live service and full service in 2016/17 to be included in this publication.

In the 2015/16 publication, we used the Universal Credit live service reference datasets to allow learners claiming Universal Credit during live service to be included in the publication. Universal Credit full service claimants are not included for this year due to full service being in the early stages of national rollout and there being some data quality issues at that time.

Since April 2016, Universal Credit has been operating in every Jobcentre office in Great Britain for single jobseekers.

For more information on the number of starts to Universal Credit, and the current caseload, please see the latest official statistics publication: www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics

Learner data

The Education and Skills Funding Agency requirements for personal data, including National Insurance numbers, vary by the type of provision provided.

Other personal details fields have high completion rates although there is some use of defaults where information is not known and particular groups such as offender learners have information withheld.

The dates of learning can be assumed accurate to within a week. Key data fields are tied to funding therefore there is a strong incentive for providers to ensure the information returned is accurate.

As the data sharing only covers Skills Funding Agency funded learning it does not include learning done outside of England and it also excludes learning funded through the Higher Education route.

Personal Independence Payment claimants

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health. From 8th April 2013 DWP started to replace Disability Living Allowance for working age people with Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The National Benefits Database (NBD) does not currently include any information relating to claims to Personal Independence Payment claims. These claimants are not included in the LEO study, and this statistics publication does not include any learning aims started by individuals whilst on Personal Independence Payments in the 'Other Benefits' category in the tables.

For more information on the number of registrations, clearances and awards made to Personal Independence Payments, and the current caseload, please see the latest official statistics publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/personal-independence-payment-statistics>

Time lags

All data used in this process is drawn from administrative sources, which take time to process and collate. There are therefore lags between the reference period and availability of the dataset for analysis.

The National Benefits Database has lags in completeness. At least 3 months is allowed for receipt of backdated claims and data is lagged by around 4 months. For example, data complete to the end of August 2017 was released at the end of December 2017.

The Universal Credit live service data also has lags in completeness. Universal Credit claims are only included in these datasets if they have received at least one UC award payment (even if there was a nil payment) and so new claims will often only appear in these datasets around 2 months after the claim was first made.

The benefits data included in the publication are complete for each of the academic years from 2011/12 to 2016/17 with the exception of learners claiming Universal Credit at the start of learning in 2016/17. New Universal Credit claims that started after June 2017 were not included in the LEO Study at the time these statistics were produced. We will monitor the impact of this when statistics for the 2017/18 academic year are published in summer of 2019. Figures for Universal Credit benefit spells are complete for 2016/17.

Learner data is collated from returns by colleges with the provisional data collected to date generally published on a quarterly basis. Returns are not generally complete until up to four months after the end of the academic year, which runs from 1 August to 31 July. The statistics in this publication are based on the final datasets for each academic year.

5. Matching Process

The LEO study includes education records that have been matched to the DWP Customer Information System (CIS) using National Insurance number (NINO) and five personal details fields: Initial of Forename, Soundex of Surname, Date of birth, Postcode Sector and Gender.

There are five match processes carried out, ranging from the highest quality and most likely to be accurate (Green) to the lowest quality and most likely to be a false match (Red-Amber). The table below shows the criteria for each match type.

The matching algorithm, based on established processes, was developed through an iterative process and has been fully tested for accuracy.

If a record does not have at least a Red-Amber match it is not included in the dataset.

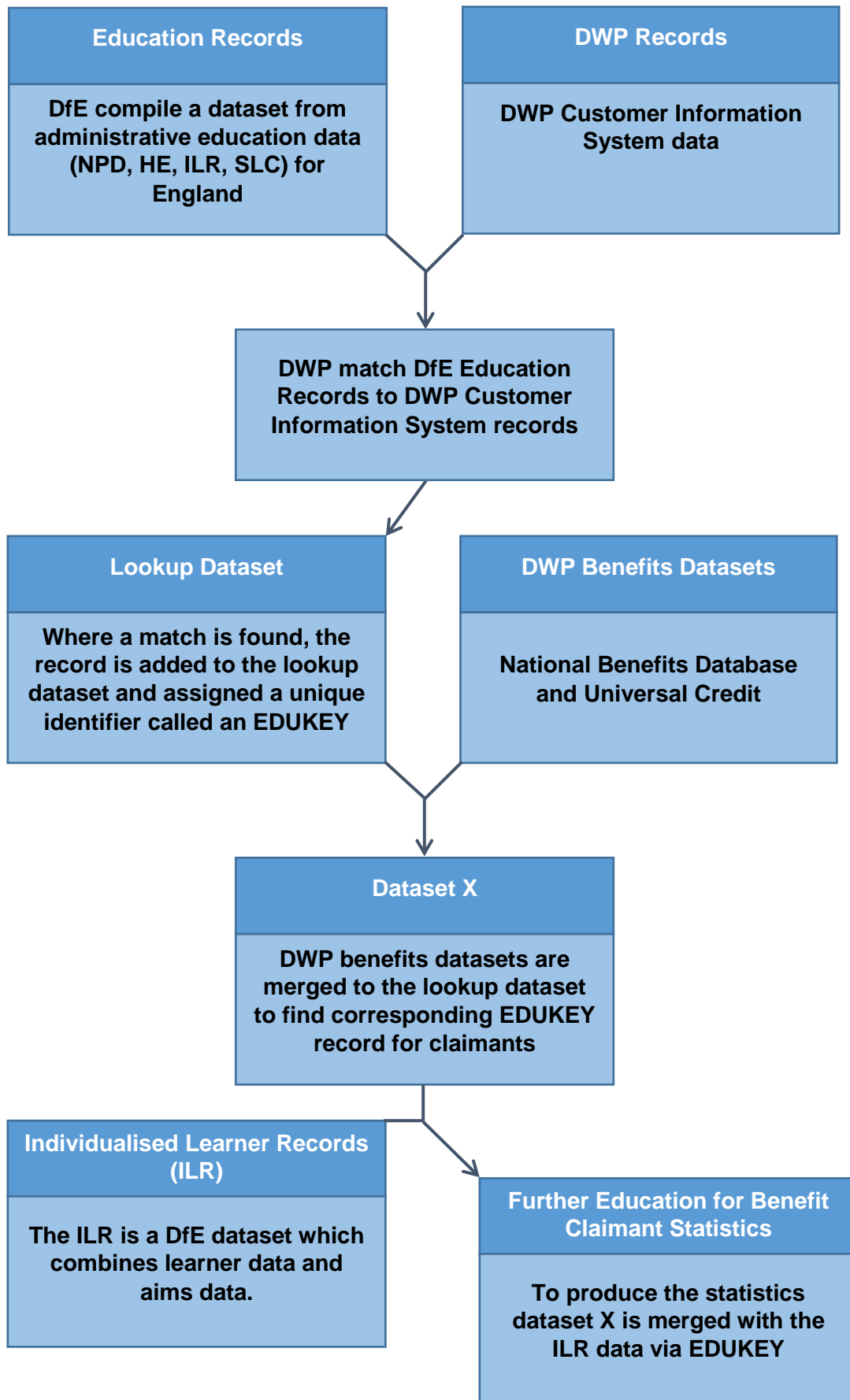
CIS Match Type Criteria and Quality

Match Quality	NINO (National Insurance number)	Forename (initial)	Surname (soundex)	Date of birth	Gender	Postcode (sector)
1. Green	✓	4 or 5 ✓✓✓✓✓				
2. Amber	✓	3 ✓✓✓				
3. Green-amber	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Amber-red	✗	✓	✓	✓	1 ✓	
5. Red-amber	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓ (Full Postcode)

Further details on data sharing as part of the LEO project are published here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/529138/Longitudinal_education_outcomes_study_how_we_share_and_use_personal_data.pdf

The flow diagram below illustrates the steps taken in the overall matching process and the production of these statistics:



All records accessed for analysis are anonymous so that individuals cannot be identified. The personally identifying records used in the actual matching process are accessed under strict security controls.

6. Match Rates

The match rate of individuals on the ILR to the DWP CIS and HMRC records is over 95 per cent for each of the academic years covered in this publication. For 2016/17, 97 per cent of individuals aged 16 plus on the ILR were matched. The match rate is an improvement on previous iterations of these statistics, which were based on the match between the ILR and the WPLS. The ILR-WPLS match rate was consistently around 90 per cent.

Although the match rates are very high, they will rarely reach 100% due to data quality issues and data mismatches. Not all learners who have a national insurance number or a benefit and/or employment record will be picked up by the data matching process.

The quality of learning aim matches to the CIS has remained stable for the period covered in the publication.

Quality of CIS matches for learning aims started, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Academic year	Number of learning aims started	CIS match quality					No match
		Green	Green amber	Amber	Amber red	Red amber	
2011/12	11,034,700	48%	31%	2%	13%	2%	4%
2012/13	11,141,300	51%	31%	1%	11%	2%	3%
2013/14	9,627,400	52%	32%	1%	10%	3%	3%
2014/15	9,388,700	51%	34%	1%	8%	2%	4%
2015/16	7,914,200	50%	35%	1%	9%	2%	3%
2016/17	7,743,700	52%	34%	1%	8%	2%	3%

7. Abbreviations

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
DfE	Department for Education
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
ESA (WRAG)	Employment and Support Allowance (Work-Related Activity Group)
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
IB	Incapacity Benefit
ILR	Individualised Learner Record
IS	Income Support
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance

LEO	Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset
PC	Pension Credit
PIB	Passported Incapacity Benefit
PIP	Personal Independence Payment
SDA	Severe Disablement Allowance
TA	Training Allowance
UC	Universal Credit

8. Users of these Statistics

This publication attracts a wide variety of users who use the statistics in various ways including:

- Department for Education (DfE) who use the statistics to report on ambitions; develop and monitor policies; and answer parliamentary questions.
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who use the statistics to respond to requests for participation, and answer parliamentary questions.

9. Supplementary Tables

A list of supplementary tables relating to this statistical publication can be found on the GOV.UK website with the most recent publication at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-for-benefit-claimants>

10. Experimental Statistics

Experimental statistics are new official statistics that are undergoing evaluation. These statistics are being published as experimental statistics in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to further improve the use of the data in the future.

The Department has a set of statistical policies in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-official-statistics-published-by-the-department-for-education>

11. Related Statistical Publications

There are a number of other statistical publications and research reports available that can be used to provide contextual information to this SFR. Some of those most relevant to this release are provided below:

- Statistics about learner participation and outcomes in further education can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>
- Statistics showing the destination outcomes of learners completing further education training using longitudinal education outcomes data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-outcome-based-success-measures>

- The Quarterly statistical summaries which provide the breakdown on DWP benefits can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summaries-2017>

- The Universal Credit statistics which shows the caseload of those on Universal Credit can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics>

- Employment Schemes Statistics provides information on Skills Conditionality and sector-based work academy (pre-employment training) starts can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/employment-schemes-work-experience-sector-based-work-academy-and-skills-conditionality-starts-to-november-2016>

- An econometric evaluation of the impact of training on the unemployed using the same matched administrative data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-impact-of-skills-and-training-on-the-unemployed>

12. Get in touch

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