



Department
for Education

Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England

Technical document

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Introduction

This document provides background information on the Statistical First Release (SFR) 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England'. It explains the concepts and methods used to calculate the participation estimates and provides an overview of the data sources and other relevant information.

Coverage

The data in this publication covers young people who reside in England, and is based on their academic age, that is their age at the start of the academic year, 31st August. The publication includes data on individual ages between 16 and 18 as well as for combined age groups, 16-17 and 16-18. The data is at national level only and cannot be disaggregated to sub-national levels, or by characteristics other than gender.

Participation estimates are broken down by (academic) age, gender, institution type, whether full-time (FT) or part-time (PT), and by highest study aim. The SFR provides the official annual estimates of participation and NEET (not in education, employment or training) in England.

The publication also provides a robust estimate of the number and proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education and training (NET) and looks at the labour market status for both those young people identified as NET and those participating in education or training. Those identified as NET and not in employment are classified as NEET.

Local authority (LA) estimates of participation in education and work-based learning by 16- to 17-year-olds are no longer published as part of this statistical first release. The Department for Education now publishes alternative, timelier, figures for local participation based on local authority data, here: [Participation in education and training by local authority](#).

Confidentiality

The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires we take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred therefore totals in text and in tables may not always equal the sum of their component parts. Similarly, differences quoted in text may not always be the same as differences shown in tables. Where any number is shown as zero the original figure was zero. Where a number rounds to zero, the figure has been replaced by a '-'. This suppression and rounding is consistent with the [Departmental statistical policy](#).

Overview of methodology

The estimates of participation in education, training and employment combine data from a number of sources:

- The population at each age is based on Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimates, adjusted so that they relate to academic age and the end of the calendar year.
- Participation data from administrative sources is then subtracted from this total. Participation estimates are made by combining administrative data from schools, further education, work-based learning and higher education. Procedures are included to identify young people in more than one form of provision, to give a view of the cohort as a whole.
- The labour market status is then estimated for each of the major groups:
 - Full time education (FTE)

- Work based learning (WBL)
- Employer funded training (EFT)
- Other education or training (OET)
- Not in education or training (NET)

Definitions

Academic Age	Age of a learner at the beginning of the academic year, 31 August.
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Employer Funded Training (EFT)	Figures for EFT cover employees who have received training in the past 4 weeks; these figures are restricted to training other than WBL and exclude those who have previously received training in their current job, though not in the last 4 weeks. They cover only young people who are in employment.
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Full time education	<p>The full-time education definition varies according to institution type.</p> <p>In schools, full-time learners study 10 sessions a week (1 session is half a day).</p> <p>In Further Education Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) From 2013 a full-time learner is defined as someone enrolled on a programme of learning totalling 540+ planned hours per year, from either qualification guided learning hours (GLH) or employability, enrichment and pastoral (EEP) planned hours; b) Prior to 2013 full-time learners are defined as those enrolled on programme of learning of 450+ qualification guided learning hours per year, or at least 150 GLH per tri-annual period, or more than 16 GLH per week for shorter courses. <p>In Higher Education Institutions, full-time learners study 21 hours a week for 24 weeks a year.</p>
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Labour Force Survey (LFS)	<p>The LFS covers all residential households and nursing accommodation. Householders are asked to reply on behalf of students living away in halls of residence. The LFS excludes people outside such accommodation - chiefly hospital residents, people in prison, people in army barracks and the homeless.</p> <p>The LFS is a sample survey so all estimates of labour market participation are subject to sampling error, as are the estimates for the non-HEI (higher education institutions) based components of employer funded training (EFT) and other education and training (OET).</p>
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Labour market status	<p>The definitions of labour market status used in this publication are the same as those in the Labour Force Survey (LFS), and follow the conventions promoted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO):</p> <p>in employment: an employee, self-employed, on a WBL programme or an unpaid family worker. This includes young people in full-time education who also have part-time jobs.</p> <p>ILO unemployed: anyone (including full-time learners) who is out of work, available to start work in the next two weeks, and has either looked for work in the last four weeks or is waiting to start a job they have already obtained.</p> <p>economically inactive: neither in employment nor ILO unemployed i.e. not active in the labour market. This includes those not looking for work because they are students and those who are looking after dependants at home.</p>
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Not in education, employment or training (NEET)	<p>Anybody who is not in any of the form of education or training and who is not in employment is considered to be NEET.</p> <p>As a result, a person identified as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.</p> <p>NEET is estimated in the SFR:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) By taking the number of young people not in education or training (NET), calculated by subtracting the number of young people known to be in education and training from the total population; b) estimating the proportion NEET from this NET group using the LFS.
Other Education and Training (OET)	<p>Refers to young people who are studying, but are not included in other categories. The majority of these young people will be studying part-time in a further education college or sixth-form college or other institution types described under the heading 'part-time education' in SFR Table 2.</p> <p>Wholly privately funded training not picked in the administrative data collections is included under other education and training (OET) which is estimated using the labour force survey. The relative contribution of private training and part-time education to OET can be estimated from the more detailed data in Additional Tables A1-A15, published as 'additional information' to this SFR.</p>
Provisional data	<p>The figures for end 2015 are provisional while the figures for end 2014 have been updated and are now final.</p>
Qualification levels	<p>If a young person is studying qualifications at different levels they are reported against their highest level of study.</p> <p>All qualifications studied are classified as one of the following seven categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education (Level 4 and above) • GCE and VCE A/AS levels • Level 3 equivalent • GCSE • Level 2 equivalent • Level 1 • Other courses <p>Qualification levels are defined by the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) - for further information and examples see Compare different qualifications</p> <p>Young people in full-time education studying more than one course are attributed to the course appearing first in the list. Young people in special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), for whom there is no qualification breakdown, are included under 'Other courses' in SFR Table 4.</p>
Work-based learning (WBL)	<p>From 2013 work based learning has comprised solely of Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Prior to 2013 the work based learning category included other work related provision including basic skills, individually tailored provision and learning as part of Train to Gain (NVQ only prior to 2008).</p> <p>Pre 2010, work based learning included the Entry to Employment learning programme.</p>

Data sources

School census	<p>The school census is a statutory pupil level data collection for all maintained schools, including local authority maintained special and non-maintained special schools, academies including free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges and city technology colleges in England.</p> <p>The School Census is collected on a termly basis with 3 collections per calendar year. This SFR uses Spring School Census data collected in January and for provisional data on post 16 learning aims the Autumn School Census collected in October. The School Census was first collected in 2006 for secondary schools only and then for all schools from 2007 onwards. Prior to the School Census this information was collected on an annual basis in January via the Pupil Level Annual School Census.</p> <p>Independent schools submit school-level data via the annual school census (SLASC).</p>
Further Education (FE) Institutions	<p>The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Individualised Learner Record (ILR) provides data on learners in FE sector colleges. The 'FE college' sector is mainly General FE, tertiary and specialist college provision, but also includes some publicly funded provision delivered through commercial, charitable and local authority providers.</p> <p>Snapshot data as at 1 November is used. The data used for provisional estimates is the annual SN06 freeze and for final estimates the SN14 freeze. The ILR data for the latest year is provisional and is scheduled to be revised in the following years publication (usually in June). Figures for previous years are final but can be updated following revisions to LFS or population estimates.</p>
Work Based Learning (WBL)	<p>The SFA ILR provides monthly data on young people on WBL programmes. Snapshot data as at 1 January has been used, for end 2001 onwards.</p>
Traineeships	<p>Due to relatively small numbers traineeship numbers are included in the FE figures in the SFR tables.</p>
Higher Education Institutions (HEI)	<p>Students in institutions of higher education on 1 December are included from data supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).</p>
Labour Force Survey (LFS)	<p>Figures on labour market status come from the average of Quarter 4 (October to December) and Quarter 1 (January to March) LFS data for each year. The LFS also supplies the non-HEI based data for Employer Funded Training (EFT) and for Other Education and Training (OET).</p> <p>The LFS is a quarterly survey of approximately 50,000 households in England. If an individual is not available for interview, another member of the household may respond on their behalf. ONS employment and labour market statistics</p>
Population estimates	<p>The population estimates for academic year ages in January of each year are derived by DfE from mid-year estimates and projections provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).</p> <p>ONS mid-year estimates are based on the 2011 Census and are subject to statistical uncertainties arising from sampling error and imputation effects in the 2011 Census, as well as from estimation of the components that age the population forward from the 2011 Census date. ONS population estimates</p>

Reference dates

The estimates relate to a snapshot of activities at the end of the calendar year. The reference dates of the various post-16 sources are taken as close to the end of the calendar year as possible:

Source	Reference date
Population	January
Schools	January
Further Education Institutions (FEI)	November
Work Based Learning (WBL)	January
Higher Education Institution (HEI)	December
Labour Force Survey	October to March (average of two quarters)

SFR participation methodology

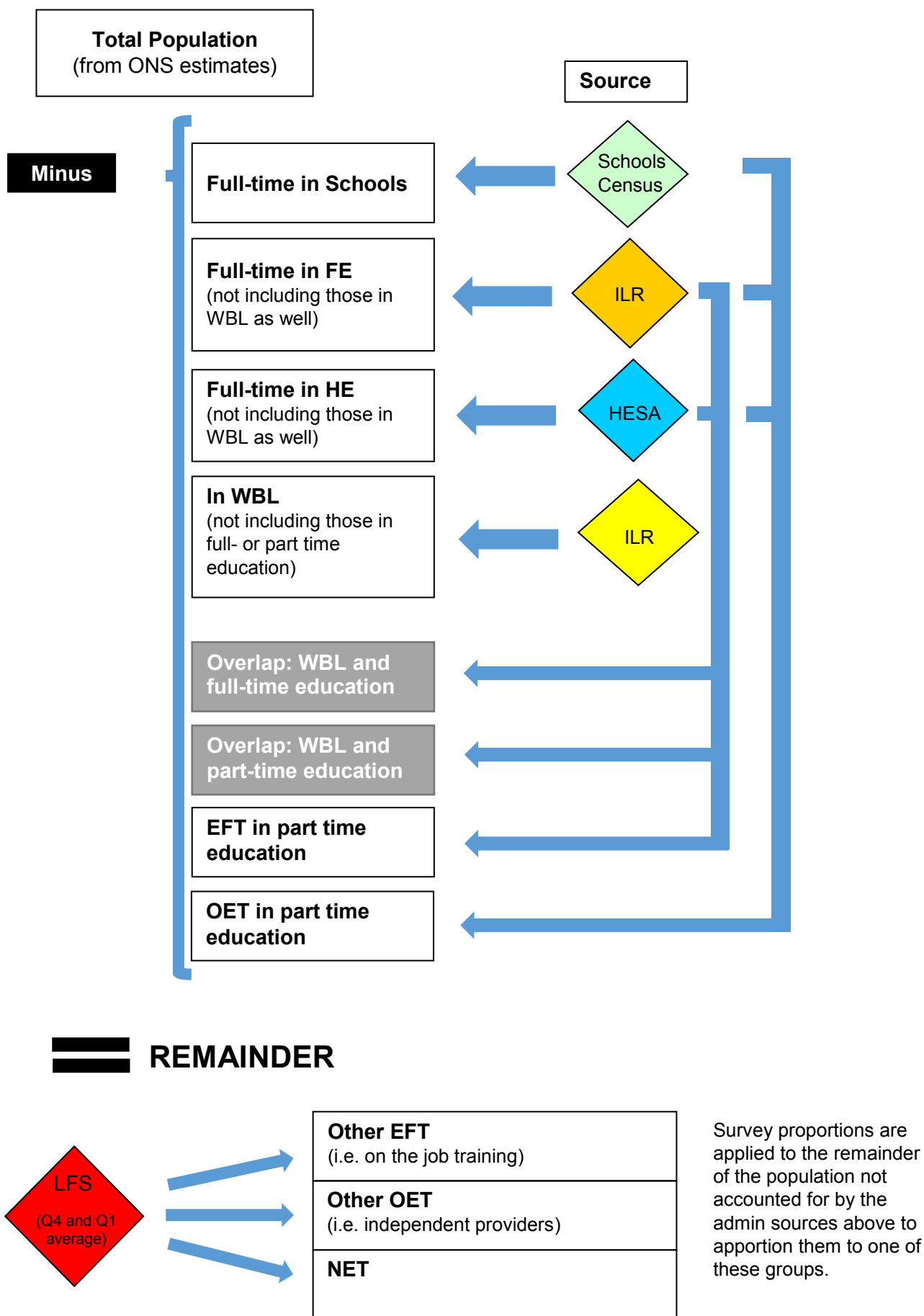
Explanation of Figure 1.

- The total population of 16-18 year olds in England is taken from ONS estimates and projections.
- From the information provided in the administrative data sources, the total number of students in full- or part-time education and in WBL is then subtracted from the population total.
 - a) Historically there have been very small overlaps of students studying in FE/HE and WBL at the same time. Historic proportions from the ILR and HESA data are used to estimate the size of these overlaps.
 - b) Part time education is split by whether or not it is funded by an employer – this is captured on the ILR and HESA data (it is assumed that the very small number of individuals studying part time in schools are not funded by employers). If it is funded by employers it is 'Employer Funded Training (EFT)', otherwise it is 'Other Education and Training (OET)'.
- The remainder from the calculations above is apportioned between three groups for which there is no administrative data, using a weighted average of Q4 (Oct-Dec) and Q1 (Jan-Mar) of the LFS proportions.

The three groups are:

 - a) non-college based EFT (and not part time education that would be captured by the admin sources) i.e. on the job training ('Other EFT' in diagram);
 - b) non-college based OET (and not part time education that would be captured by the admin sources) i.e. independent training providers ('Other OET' in diagram) and;
 - c) Not in Education or Training (NET).
- Overlaps are accounted for:
 - a) Learners studying an FE course as well as participating in WBL (in the same FEI) are included in the full-time figure as well as the WBL figure, but also reported in the overlap group and counted once in the totals.
 - b) Learners participating only in WBL in an FEI are reported as WBL only.
 - c) Learners in Employer Funded training (EFT) as well as publicly funded full-time education are only included in the full-time figure and not the EFT figure.

Figure 1- SFR participation methodology



Explanation of Figure 2.

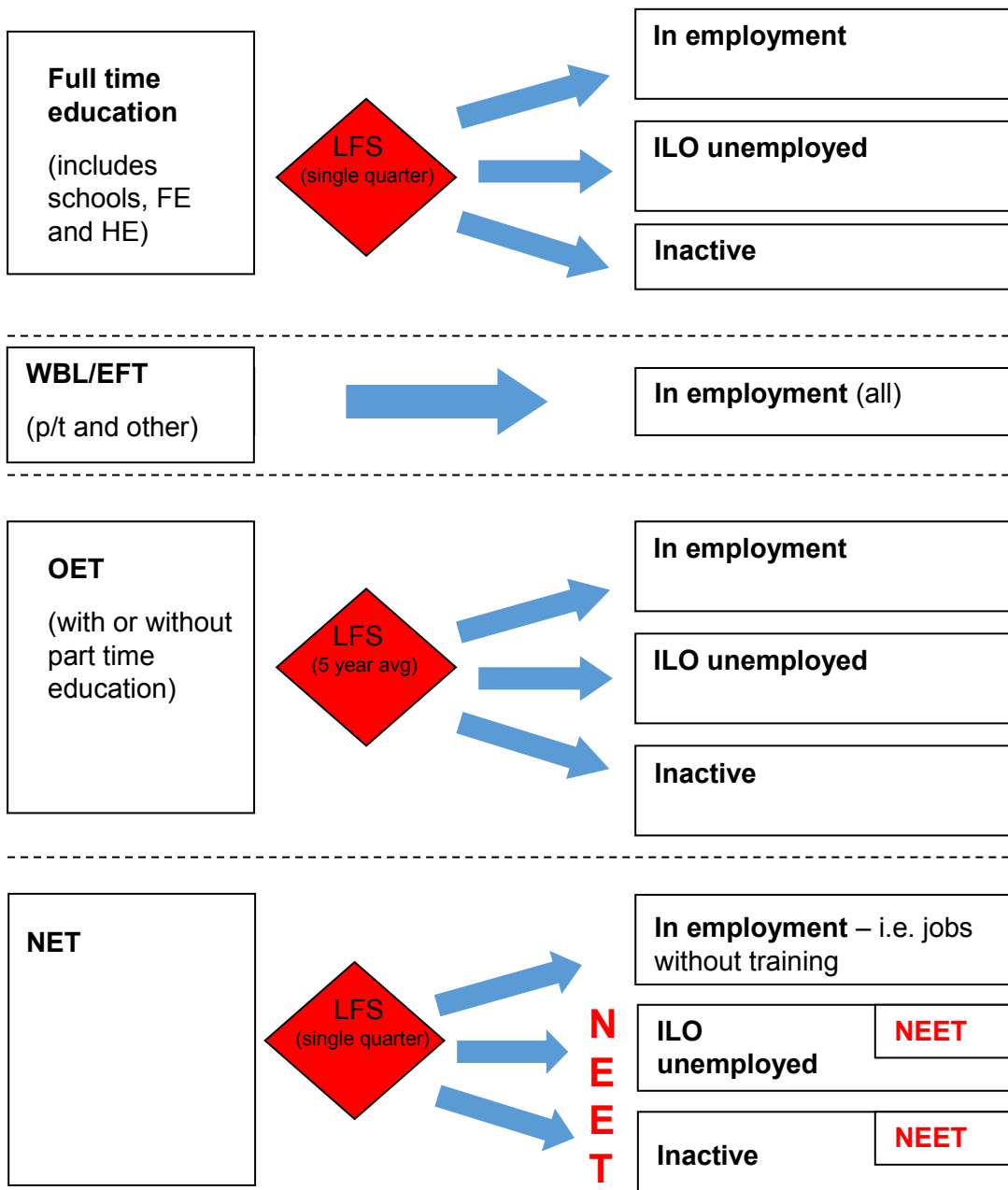
The labour market status is then estimated for each of the major groups identified above (full time education, WBL, EFT, OET, NET):

- Those in full time education are apportioned to (a) employment; (b) ILO unemployed or; (c) inactive, using an average of quarter 1 and quarter 4 estimates from the LFS.
- All those in WBL or EFT are assumed to be in employment.
- Those in OET are apportioned to (a) employment; (b) ILO unemployed or; (c) inactive, using a five year weighted average from the LFS, because the LFS sample size for this group is so small.
- Those who are **NET** are apportioned to (a) employment; (b) **ILO unemployed** or; (c) **inactive**, using Quarter 1 estimates from the LFS. **Those in (b) and (c) are NEET.**

NB. A person is defined as in employment if they are an employee, self-employed, on a WBL programme or an unpaid family worker. This is the ILO (International Labour Organisation) definition and includes young people in full-time education who also have part-time jobs.

Figure 2 – SFR Labour market status methodology

(Proportions estimated from the LFS applied to Annex A totals)



Overseas pupils

This publication excludes learners studying overseas. Overseas students studying in English FE and English HE are included in the national figures. Learners from Wales, Scotland and N Ireland are included in the national figures for schools (maintained & CTCs& Academies) and FE, but not included in HE national figures.

National FEI figures include all 16 to 18 year olds participating in education and training in England, whether resident in England or not.

Time series compatibility

The data in this SFR has a time series going back to 1985. However due to changes in the source of further and higher education data the consistent time-series only goes back to 1994.

Uses of data

The main use of these statistics is to provide Ministers, government departments and the wider public a comprehensive picture of the latest trends in participation and NEET.

Related policy

There are differences between activity that complies with the duty to participate under RPA and what is captured in this SFR

Activity that satisfies the duty to participate under RPA legislation is described in detail in the [statutory guidance to Local Authorities](#). In summary, young people in full-time education or apprenticeships automatically meet the duty to participate, but in order to comply with RPA, part-time education for academic age 16 year olds:

- (i) must include planned qualification guided learning hours of a minimum 280hrs per year;
- (ii) should usually be combined with full-time employment or voluntary work (either 20hrs per week or 40hrs over 2 weeks for those with less regular hours).

In this SFR participation that is not full-time is automatically counted as part-time, irrespective of planned hours or whether it is combined with employment. This will mean that RPA-compliance will be significantly lower than the proportion of 16 year olds reported as being in education and work-based learning.

However, this will be partially offset as 16 year olds engaged in LA approved re-engagement activities will satisfy the duty to participate but the activity might not be recorded in this SFR.

16 to 19 funding: maths and English condition of funding

From August 2014 students who have not achieved a good pass in English and/or maths GCSE by age 16 must continue to work towards achieving these qualifications or an approved interim qualification as a 'stepping stone' towards GCSE as a condition of student places being funded. The full ministerial statement on [improving post-16 numeracy and literacy](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

Weaknesses of the data

1. The provisional annual figures are published in June, 6 months after the period to which they relate. There is therefore a lag of up to 18 months between when the data is published and when it is next updated with final figures.
2. The data uses ONS population figures which are published in 5-year age groupings. The accuracy of the results decrease further from the date of the census and when looking at single age groups. The 2011 population estimate was revised using Census 2011 which led to the population estimate of 16 to 18 year olds to increase by 4 percentage points which caused the NEET figure to increase by 1.8 percentage points.
3. Currently the SFR has no measure which captures the numbers of young people who comply with the requirements of the RPA.

Revisions to population estimates

All numbers published as a proportion of the population cohort will be revised when population estimates are revised by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). For example, if the population estimate is revised upwards then all things being equal (that is no change in the administrative-based estimate of learner numbers) the statistics for the proportion of the population studying will be revised downwards proportionately. In addition, there will be a more direct impact on the estimate of the numbers of young people not in education and training. This is calculated, for the most part, as a residual from the size of the population and the number of young people recorded as participating on administrative datasets, so an increase in the population will result in an increase in the estimate of young people not in education and training (NET) and correspondingly in the estimate of NEET. The ONS population statistics are re-based every two years, but revisions can extend further back. If the size of the revision is significant we would retrospectively revise the SFR statistics, as happened in February 2013 (when the June 2012 SFR statistics were updated earlier than normal given large revisions to the population).

Following ONS's release of the mid-2014 population estimates we have updated population estimates for end 2012 to end 2014 in the June 2016 SFR. The changes are minimal for 2012 and 2013 but there have been notable revisions to the provisional end 2014 population estimates. Table D in the main text of SFR 22/2016 details these changes.

Revisions to Labour Force Survey data

Labour Force Survey (LFS) datasets are routinely reweighted in line with population estimates. The most recent update introduced a new weighting variable, PWT16, to LFS datasets revising data from July-September 2012 onwards. More information as to its impact of the revision on the NEET and NET rates was published as part of [SFR 16/2016 NEET Quarterly Brief – January to March 2016](#). Trends of the NEET and NET estimates are largely unaffected by the reweighting.

Prior to this latest reweighting, data back to July - September 2001 was reweighted in 2014 using PWT14. More information as to the impact of this revision on the NEET and NET rates was published as part of [SFR 47/2014 NEET Quarterly Brief – July to September 2014](#). Again trends of the NEET and NET estimates were largely unaffected by the reweighting.

Revisions to Higher Education Statistics Agency data

From 2013, the higher education data (HESA) no longer included a part-time classification for FE students within higher education. Historically these FE records were split into full-time and part-time components. To account for the change, the part-time/full-time split for students in HE institutions studying for an FE qualification in the 2013 final and 2014 provisional data has been apportioned using 2012 data. The impact of this change is minimal; of the 3,500 FE students in the 2014 HESA data, just over 2% of records have been reapportioned to be part-time. This methodology will be reviewed to identify whether the mode of

study collection in the HESA data can be reinstated for FE learners in England or another source identified in order to provide estimates for future years.

Scheduled revisions to previously published statistics

Further Education Institution, Higher Education Institutions and work-based learning are revised

The numbers participating in further education institutions (FE colleges and sixth-form colleges), work-based learning and higher education institutions are revised as the source data are finalised. These planned revisions only occur for the latest year for which statistics are published. For example, data described in this SFR “as end 2015 (provisional)” will be finalised as “end 2015” in the June 2017 update to this SFR. Such changes can affect both the numbers studying and the proportion of the age cohort studying.

- **The impact of revisions to numbers in Further Education Institutions**

The revisions to the data on further education institutions historically has had an impact on the estimates for full-time education versus part-time education, as the designation of a young person as either full or part-time in colleges could change retrospectively. The table below shows the difference between the provisional and final end 2012, 2013 and 2014 estimates for full-time and part-time education in further education institutions. The table also shows the downward revision from the provisional and final estimates of the number of learners in FE at the end of 2014.

		Provisional		Final		Change (final - provisional)	
		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
End 2012	Age 16	268,041	32,847	272,289	28,685	4,248	-4,162
	Age 17	249,537	37,450	253,658	33,615	4,121	-3,835
	Age 18	120,356	38,023	122,735	37,173	2,379	-850
End 2013	Age 16	277,640	31,166	278,034	30,199	394	-967
	Age 17	246,837	36,700	248,378	35,247	1,541	-1453
	Age 18	117,216	38,731	117,262	38,457	46	-274
End 2014	Age 16	280,436	20,369	279,897	19,948	-539	-421
	Age 17	259,191	25,695	258,663	24,720	-528	-975
	Age 18	114,270	33,693	113,522	33,632	-748	-61

Includes General FE, tertiary, specialist and sixth form colleges

- **The impact of revisions to numbers participating in work-based learning**

The changes in work-based learning numbers from provisional to final for the last three years are shown below.

		Provisional	Final	Change (final- provisional)
End 2012	Age 16	20,574	20,667	93
	Age 17	38,934	39,004	70
	Age 18	50,898	51,631	733
End 2013	Age 16	20,845	21,313	468
	Age 17	40,337	39,911	-426
	Age 18	55,087	53,755	-1,332
End 2014	Age 16	22,497	22,441	-56
	Age 17	44,806	43,479	-1,327
	Age 18	58,022	55,909	-2,113

- **The impact of revisions to Higher Education data**

The changes in the Higher Education institution data from provisional to final for the last three years are shown below.

		Provisional	Final	Change (final - provisional)
All HE (end 2012)	Age 16	1,639	1,114	-525
	Age 17	5,922	6,221	299
	Age 18	158,705	170,231	11,526
All HE (end 2013)	Age 16	1,112	858	-254
	Age 17	6,377	5,286	-1,091
	Age 18	181,963	178,475	-3,488
All HE (end 2014)	Age 16	857	720	-137
	Age 17	5,387	5,637	250
	Age 18	184,023	182,535	-1,488

Publication timetable

Published annually in June each year. The next publication will be June 2017

Feedback and user engagement

Feedback on methodology and presentation is welcomed and encouraged. If you have any comments on the information collected, the timing or format of our outputs or whether these statistics are meeting your requirements, please email: post16.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk



Department
for Education



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