



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

BIS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of government-funded
learners participating in Further
Education

MARCH 2015

Number of government-funded learners participating in Further Education

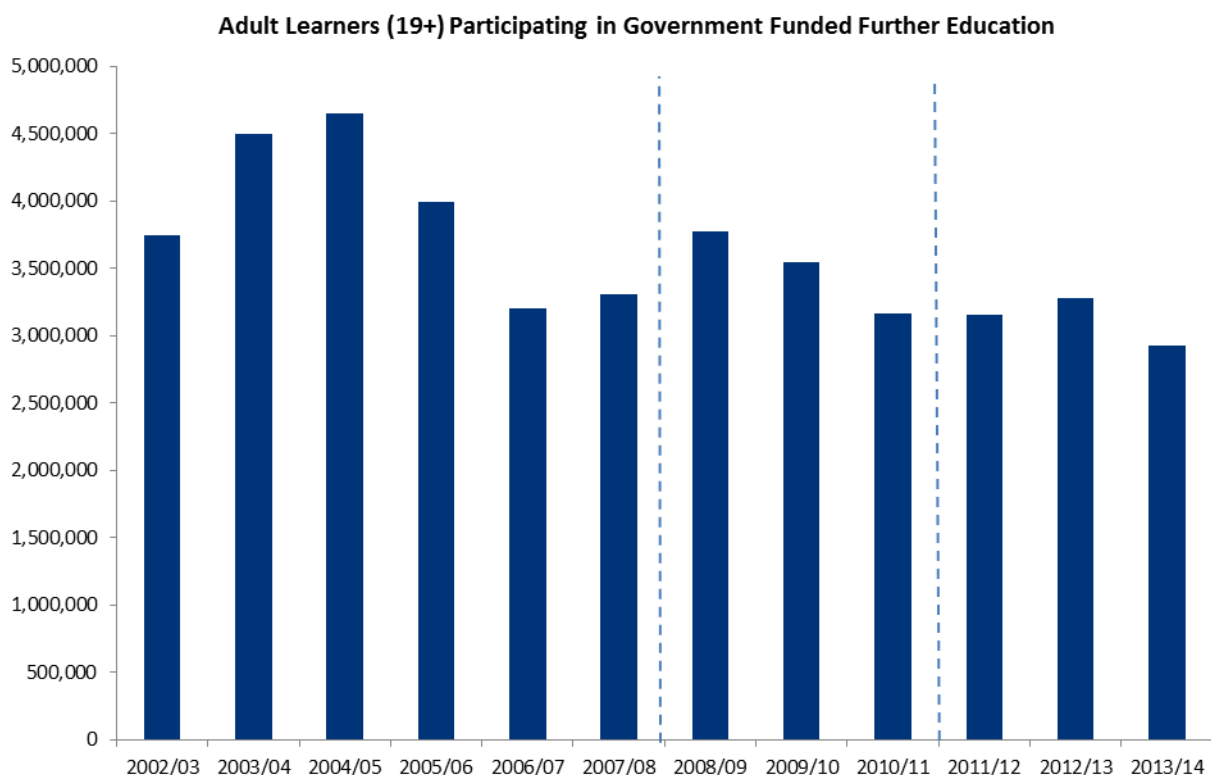
Why is this indicator important?

Having a skilled workforce is vital to our future economic prospects as a country, enabling businesses to be more productive, and helping 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 introduced a new [skills funding system](#), to focus funding where it will make the greatest difference. We have prioritised funding support for learners with very low levels of skills or the disadvantaged, while some 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?

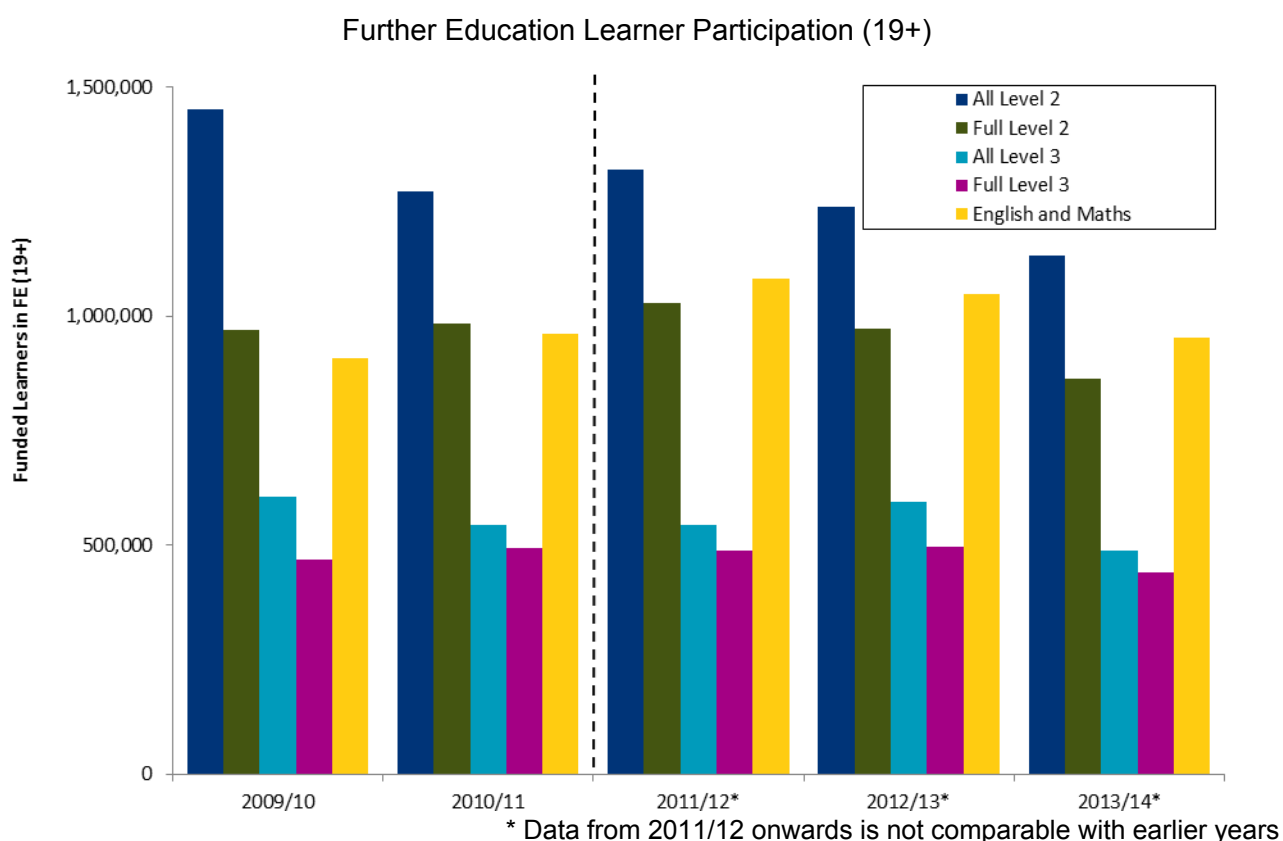
Published information shows that 2,929,600 learners aged 19 or older participated in some form of government-funded Further Education in the 2013/14 academic year (the latest year for which final data are available) as reported in the [November 2014 Further Education & Skills Statistical First Release](#). This was a decrease of 10.7 per cent on 2012/13.



Dotted lines indicate break in series; data is not directly comparable

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 (or more) qualification levels in a given year and so can be counted more than once in this comparison. The chart shows:

- A decrease of 8.7% in Level 2 qualifications, down from 1,239,200 in 2012/13 to 1,131,100 in 2013/14;
- A decrease of 11.2% in full Level 2 qualifications, down from 972,500 in 2012/13 to 863,300 in 2013/14;
- A decrease of 17.9% in Level 3 qualifications, down from 594,300 in 2012/13 to 488,100 in 2013/14;
- A decrease of 11.3% in full Level 3 qualifications, down from 495,300 in 2012/13 to 439,300 in 2013/14;
- A decrease of 9.3% in English and maths, down from 1,049,600 in 2012/13 to 951,800 in 2013/14.



Amongst the 2,929,600 adult (19+) learners supported in 2013/14 were 851,500 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 2013/14 academic year, age is calculated as at the 31st August 2013.

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.

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 at

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140107201041/http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/C05DCDD5-67EE-4AD0-88B9-BEBC8F7F3300/0/SILR_Effects_SFR_Learners_June12.pdf

Further information

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

Related indicators

[Average funding per course in government-funded adult further education](#)¹

[International comparison of the qualification levels of the working age population in the UK](#)²

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

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82957/Average_funding_per_course_in_government-adult_further_education.pdf

²https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/82959/International_comparison_of_the_qualification_levels_of_the_working_age_population.pdf

³https://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

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