



BRIEFING PAPER

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Apprenticeship Statistics: England (1996-2015)

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Summary

This Commons Library Briefing Paper presents and analyses recent statistics on apprenticeship starts, participation and achievement in England.

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on and off the job training. A successful apprentice will qualify with a nationally recognised qualification on completion ('achievement') of their contract.

Revised data for the full 2014/15 year were released in December 2015. The key points and changes to previous trends are summarised below. Data from 2011/12 onwards is not directly comparable to earlier years. All numbers are rounded up to the nearest hundred or ten.

Constituency data on apprenticeship starts are available in the spreadsheet accompanying this Briefing Paper.

Apprenticeship starts in 2014/15

In 2014/15, there were 499,900 apprenticeship starts in England, 59,500 (14%) more than the previous year. It was the first year since 2011/12 in which apprenticeship numbers increased.

Participation

The number of people who were on an apprenticeship in a given year ('participation') increased between 2013/14 and 2014/15 by 2% (20,300) to 871,800 apprentices.

Achievements

Achievements increased by 1% (2,900) over the same period to 255,800 achievements.

Starts by age

After a fall in 2013/14, the number of apprenticeship starts by people aged 25 and over remained higher than any other age category with 214,000 starts in 2014/15.

Overall, between 2013/14 and 2014/15, the number of apprenticeship starts increased across all age groups except for people aged under 16. Their number fell by 20% with 40 fewer starts in 2014/15 compared to the previous year. The biggest increase (38%) was among those aged 60 and over.

Sector and framework

As in previous years, the majority of apprenticeships were in the service sectors. Almost three quarters (73%) of all starts were concentrated in three sectors: Business, Administration & Law; Health, Public Services & Care and Retail & Commercial Enterprise.

The most popular sector was Business, Administration and Law, accounting for 29% of all apprenticeship starts in England, closely followed by Health, Public Services & Care (26%).

Level

The highest number of apprenticeship starts was for Intermediate apprenticeships (Level 2) with 298,300 starts, followed by 181,800 Advanced (Level 3) and 19,800 Higher (Level 4 and above) apprenticeships. Higher apprenticeships represented only 4% of all starts, as opposed to 60% for Intermediate apprenticeships.

Gender

In 2014/15, 53% of apprenticeships starts were by women (264,800) and 47% by men (235,100).

Constituencies

The constituency of Richmond (Yorks) had the highest number of apprenticeship starts in 2014/15 (6,660), while Chelsea and Fulham had the lowest (190).

1. Overview of apprenticeships in England

Skills and training are devolved policy areas and this Briefing Paper deals only with apprenticeship statistics for England.¹

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on and off the job training. A successful apprentice will qualify with a nationally recognised qualification on completion of their contract.

New apprenticeships are referred to as 'starts' and the completion of an apprenticeship is referred to as an 'achievement'. Participation refers to the number of people who were on an apprenticeship in a given year.

Over 2.4 million apprenticeships were created between 2010/11 and 2014/15. In the 2015 Queen's Speech, the Government set a target of 3 million new apprenticeships over the course of this Parliament.² The [Welfare Reform and Work Bill](#) will create a duty for the Secretary of State to report on progress towards meeting this target. The [Enterprise Bill](#) will provide the Secretary of State with powers to set targets for public bodies regarding the number of apprentices who work for them.

Constituency data on apprenticeship starts are available in the spreadsheet accompanying this Commons Briefing Paper. This note is aimed at presenting key statistics. Another House of Commons Library standard [note](#) covers the policies relating to apprenticeships which are not explained here.

¹ Data in this paper is taken from the [FE Data Library](#).

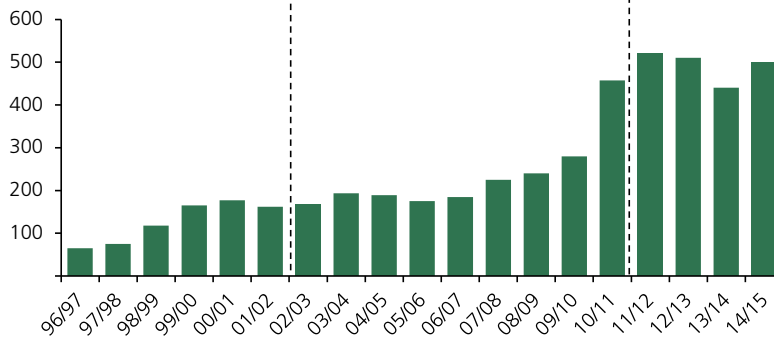
² Cabinet Office, [Queen's Speech 2015: background briefing notes](#), 27 May 2015

2. Apprenticeship starts

2.1 Starts since 1997

There were 499,900 apprenticeship starts in the 2014/15 academic year, 59,500 (14%) more than the previous year.

Apprenticeship starts in England since 1996/97, thousands



Notes

Data prior to 2002/03 are not directly comparable to later years as substantial changes were made: the Modern Apprenticeship system was abandoned and the upper 25 age limit was removed.

Data from 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years. Small technical changes have been made leading to a reduction in overall learner numbers of approximately 2%.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Figures prior to 2002/03 are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

Source: BIS *FE data library: apprenticeships* and HC Deb 14 Feb 2011 c560-1W (PQ38062)

Between 2009/10 and 2010/11 there was a large jump in the number of apprenticeship starts, increasing by 63% from 279,700 to 457,200. Between 2011/12 and 2013/14, the trend reversed and the number of apprenticeship starts fell from 520,600 to 440,400. The decline in figures in 2011/12 can largely be attributed to the introduction of the Single Individualised Learner Record (ILR).³ 2014/15 was the first increase in apprenticeship starts recorded since 2011/12.

Overall, between 2010/11 and 2014/15, 2.4 million apprenticeship starts were made.

Apprenticeship starts in England since 2009/10, thousands

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Starts	280	457	521	510	440	500

Data from 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years. Small technical changes have been made leading to a reduction in overall learner numbers of approximately 2%.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.

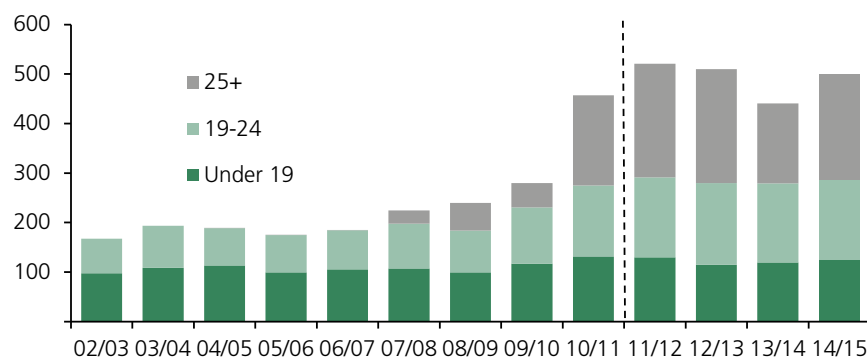
Source: BIS *FE data library: apprenticeships*

³ It should be born in mind that figures prior to 2011/12 may be an overestimate of actual apprenticeship numbers because of a change in 2011 in the data collection system. Before 2011/12, learner data were collected via multiple Individualised Learner Record collections, thus allowing for duplication of some data and overestimating apprenticeship figures by approximately 2%. The introduction of the ILR in 2011/12 aimed at correcting this issue. As a result, figures in 2011/12 exhibited a slight decrease in apprenticeship numbers due to the elimination of duplicated data. This caveat applies to all data prior to 2011/12 presented in this paper.

2.2 By age

The chart below shows apprenticeship starts for academic years since 2002/03 by age. It should be noted that before 2004/05, apprenticeships were not available for people over the age of 24.

Apprenticeship starts in England by age since 2002/03, thousands



Notes

Academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: BIS *FE data library: apprenticeships*

The growth in the number of apprenticeships since 2009/10 has been largely driven by an increase in the number of apprenticeship starts by people aged 25 and over. In 2014/15, they made up 43% of all apprenticeship starts and were the largest group of starters for the fifth year in a row.

Apprenticeship starts in England by age since 2009/10, thousands

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Level						
Under 19	117	132	130	115	120	126
19-24	114	143	161	165	159	160
25+	49	182	229	230	162	214
Proportion						
Under 19	42%	29%	25%	22%	27%	25%
19-24	41%	31%	31%	32%	36%	32%
25+	18%	40%	44%	45%	37%	43%

Notes

Data from 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years. Small technical changes have been made leading to a reduction in overall learner numbers of approximately 2%.

Proportion is the percentage of all apprenticeship starts made by an age group.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

Source: BIS *FE data library: apprenticeships*

After a substantial decrease in 2013/14, in 2014/15 the number of apprenticeship starters aged 25 and over was back to levels similar to 2012/13. This fall was partly caused by the introduction in 2013 of Advanced Learning loans for apprentices aged 24 and over, studying at Level 3 and above.

Advanced Learning loans were a new funding mechanism which required from learners aged 24 and over to take up loans to fund half of their apprenticeships. They were the first example of apprentices

being expected to contribute to the cost of their own learning and were ended in January 2014 after low take up.

The number of starters aged under 19 as a proportion of all starters almost halved between 2009/10 and 2014/15 (going from 42% to 25% of all starts). More generally, those aged under 25 went from representing 82% of all starts in 2009/10 to 57% of them in 2014/15.

More detailed age breakdowns are available below.

Apprenticeship starts in England by age since 2009/10, thousands

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	Change 2009/10 to 2014/15	
							Level	%
Level								
Under 16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-60%
16	29	30	30	25	26	28	-1	-5%
17	41	45	43	36	39	42	1	3%
18	46	56	57	53	55	56	9	20%
19-24	114	143	161	165	159	160	46	41%
25-34	25	73	97	101	74	98	72	287%
35-44	14	54	66	65	43	57	43	317%
45-59	10	50	62	61	42	56	46	468%
60+	0	4	4	3	2	3	3	753%
Proportion								
Under 16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	11%	7%	6%	5%	6%	6%	-	-
17	15%	10%	8%	7%	9%	8%	-	-
18	17%	12%	11%	11%	13%	11%	-	-
19-24	41%	31%	31%	32%	36%	32%	-	-
25-34	9%	16%	19%	20%	17%	20%	-	-
35-44	5%	12%	13%	13%	10%	11%	-	-
45-59	4%	11%	12%	12%	10%	11%	-	-
60+	-	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	-	-

Data from 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years. Small technical changes have been made leading to a reduction in overall learner numbers if approximately 2%.

Proportion is the percentage of all apprenticeship starts made by an age group.

Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

Under 500 people aged under 16 started an apprenticeship in every academic year since 2009/10.

Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

2.3 Starts by qualification level

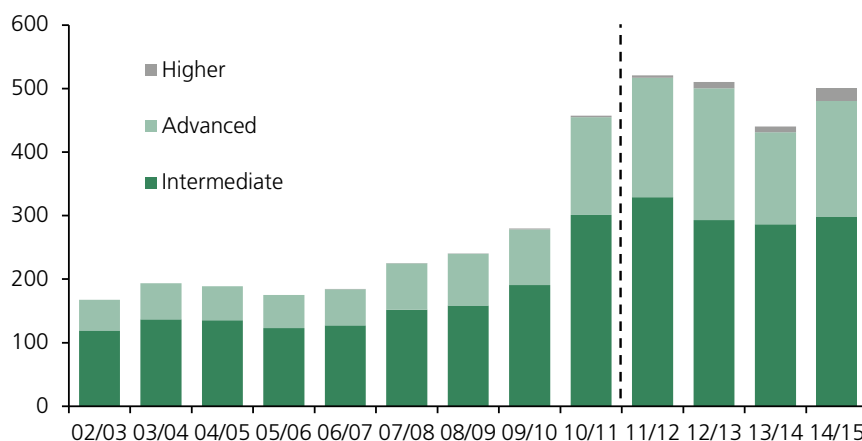
Apprenticeships can be studied at different qualification levels:

- Intermediate Apprenticeships are Level 2 qualifications, equivalent to 5 GCSE passes;
- Advanced Apprenticeships are Level 3 qualifications equivalent to 2 A-Level passes;
- Higher Apprenticeships lead to Level 4 qualifications and above.

9 Apprenticeship Statistics: England (1996-2015)

Apprenticeship starts by qualification level are shown in the chart below. The majority of apprenticeship starts are for Intermediate Level apprenticeships.

Apprenticeship starts in England by level since 2002/03 (thousands)



Notes

Academic years (August 31st to July 31st)

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

The number of Intermediate Level apprenticeship starts has more than doubled since 2002/03, while the number of Advanced Level apprenticeship starts has almost tripled. There were large increases in the number of starts between 2009/10 and 2010/11 for both Intermediate and Advanced Level apprenticeships.

Higher Level apprenticeships did not exist before 2006/07. Their number is slowly rising. There were 19,800 Higher Level apprenticeship starts in 2014/15, 4% of all starts as opposed to 2% the year before.

Apprenticeship starts in England by level since 2009/10, thousands

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Level						
Intermediate	191	301	329	293	287	298
Advanced	88	154	188	208	145	182
Higher	2	2	4	10	9	20
Proportion						
Intermediate	68%	66%	63%	57%	65%	60%
Advanced	31%	34%	36%	41%	33%	36%
Higher	1%	0%	1%	2%	2%	4%

Notes

Data from 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years. Small technical changes have been made leading to a reduction in overall learner numbers of approximately 2%.

Proportion is the percentage of all apprenticeship starts made at each level.

Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

Intermediate level apprenticeship starts represented 60% of all starts in 2014/15, which is less than in 2009/10. This decline coincides with the increase in the proportion of Advanced and Higher apprenticeship starts over the same period.

2.4 Starts by sector

Apprenticeship starts in England by sector subject area since 2009/10, thousands

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal...	6	7	8	7	7	7
Arts, Media & Publishing	0	1	1	1	1	1
Business, Administration & Law	77	134	165	160	126	143
Construction, Planning & Built...	21	22	14	14	16	18
Education & Training	1	4	8	8	5	7
Engineering & Manufacturing	43	55	70	66	65	74
Health, Public Services & Care	44	90	109	123	109	130
ICT	13	20	19	14	13	16
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	15	22	20	14	11	13
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	62	103	108	101	87	90
Science & Mathematics	-	0	0	0	0	0

Notes

Data from 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable to earlier years. Small technical changes have been made leading to a reduction in overall learner numbers if approximately 2%.

Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

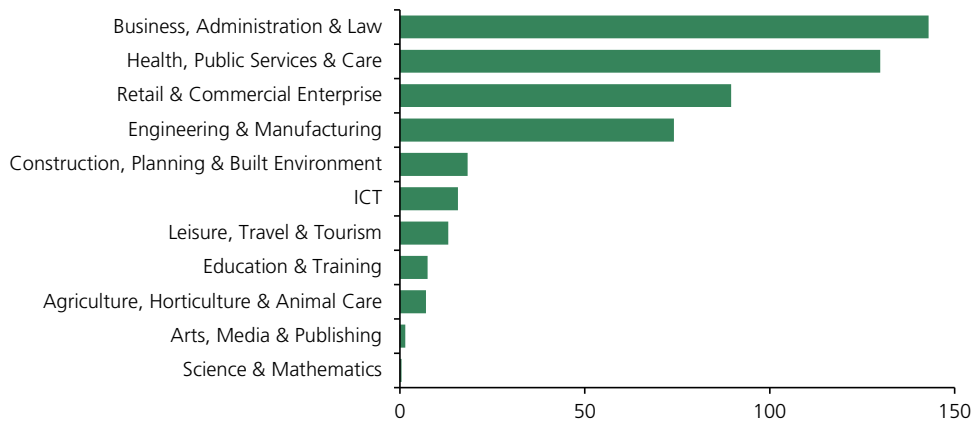
Under 500 people started an apprenticeship in Science and Mathematics for every academic year since 2009/10.

Source: BIS *FE data library: apprenticeships*

There was an increase in the number of people starting apprenticeships in nearly all broad sectors in 2014/15.

More than half (55%) of all apprenticeship starts in 2014/15 were in two sectors: Business, Administration & Law and Health, Public service & Care. Including Retail & Commercial Enterprises, the top three sectors made up almost three-quarters (73%) of apprenticeship starts in 2014/15.

Apprenticeship starts in England by sector subject in 2014/15, thousands



Source: BIS *FE data library: apprenticeships*

2.5 Starts by framework

Under the current system, there are over 200 different types of apprenticeships (known as ‘frameworks’).⁴

The table below breaks down apprenticeship starts further, showing the 20 most popular apprenticeship frameworks in 2014/15. Generally, the most popular frameworks were the same as for 2013/14 with Health & Social Care, Business Administration and Management in the top three.

⁴ Apprenticeship Frameworks Online, [Frameworks Library](#)

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Some of the most notable changes since 2009/10 were for Health and Social Care (whose number was multiplied by more than four) and Management (whose number also quadrupled). Apprenticeship starts in Industrial Applications have been multiplied by 11 since 2009/10.

Apprenticeship starts in England by framework since 2009/10, thousands
20 most popular frameworks in 2014/15

	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
1 Health and Social Care	18	54	71	81	70	85
2 Business Administration	27	39	45	49	44	49
3 Management	10	30	45	48	33	43
4 Hospitality and Catering	21	30	36	36	32	32
5 Customer Service	29	54	59	45	31	31
6 Children's Care Learning & Devel.	20	27	26	26	24	22
7 Retail	17	41	31	25	17	18
8 Engineering	15	18	13	14	16	18
9 Construction Skills	14	16	14	14	16	17
10 Industrial Applications	1	4	19	15	15	14
11 Hairdressing	16	16	17	16	15	14
12 IT and Telecoms Professionals	8	12	12	9	10	11
13 Active Leisure and Learning	11	18	16	12	9	9
14 Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	10	9	8	8	9	9
15 Warehousing and Storage	3	6	7	7	7	9
16 Accountancy	5	7	8	8	7	8
17 Electrotechnical	5	6	5	5	5	8
18 MES Plumbing	5	5	4	5	5	7
19 Public Services	2	1	3	4	4	7
20 Sales and Telesales	2	2	4	4	4	6

Notes

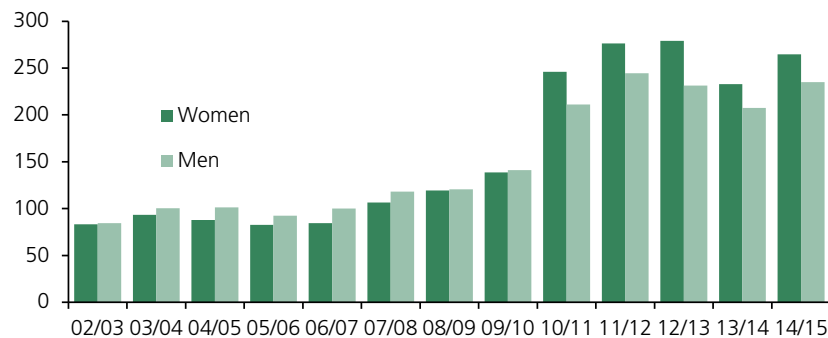
Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st).

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

2.6 Starts by gender

Since 2010/11 more apprenticeships starts have been by women than men. 53% (264,800) of starts in 2014/15 were by women, as in the previous year, as opposed to 47% of starts (235,100) done by men.

Apprenticeship starts by gender in England since 2002/03, thousands



Notes

Academic years (1st August - 31 July)

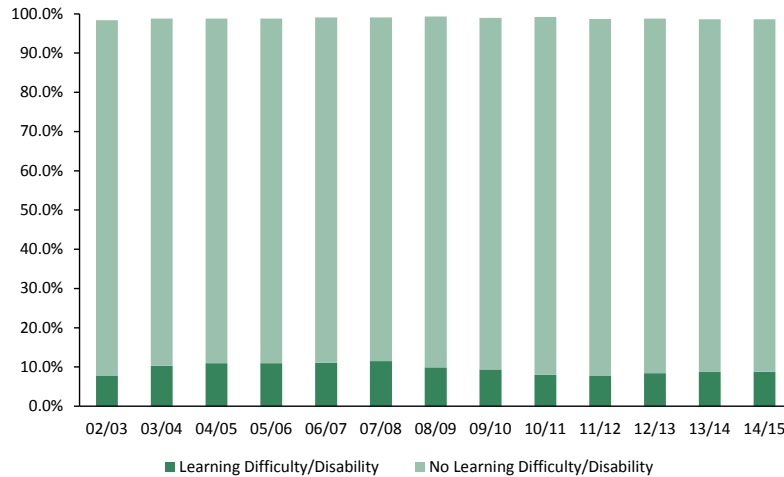
Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

2.7 Diversity

Disability

In 2014/15, 90% (449,100) of all apprenticeship starts were made by learners without any learning difficulty or disability. In contrast, 44,000 (9%) apprenticeship starters that year were learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, up by 16% since 2013/14.

Apprenticeship starts in England since 2002/03 by learning difficulty or disability



Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

Apprenticeship starts in England since 2009/10 by learning difficulty or disability, thousands

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Learning Difficulty/Disability	26	37	40	43	38	44
No Learning Difficulty/Disability	251	417	474	461	396	449
Not Known	3	4	7	6	6	7
Total	280	457	521	510	440	500

Data are for academic years (August 1st to July 31st).

Age, gender, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ethnicity is based upon self-declaration by the learner.

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

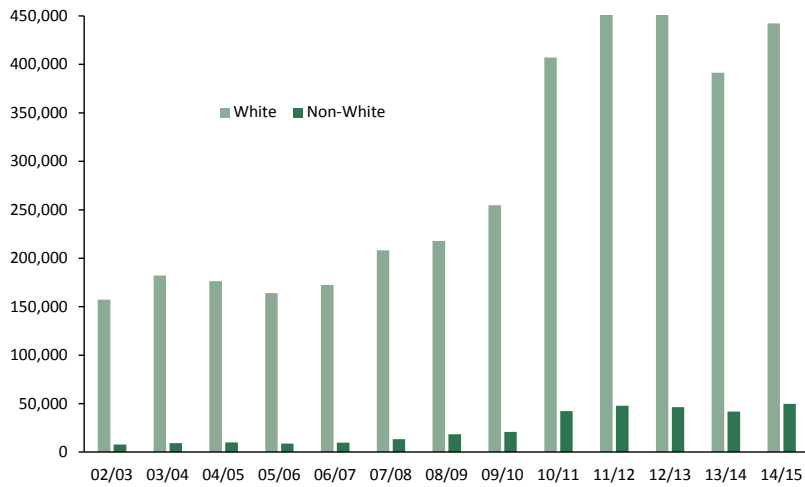
Diversity

The overwhelming majority (89% or 442,300 people) of all apprenticeship starters was White in 2014/15. This trend is coherent with statistics from previous years as detailed in the chart below.

Overall, the number of non-White apprenticeship starters has increased by 17% between 2013/14 and 2014/15, which compares to a 12% increase in the overall number of apprentices of any background.

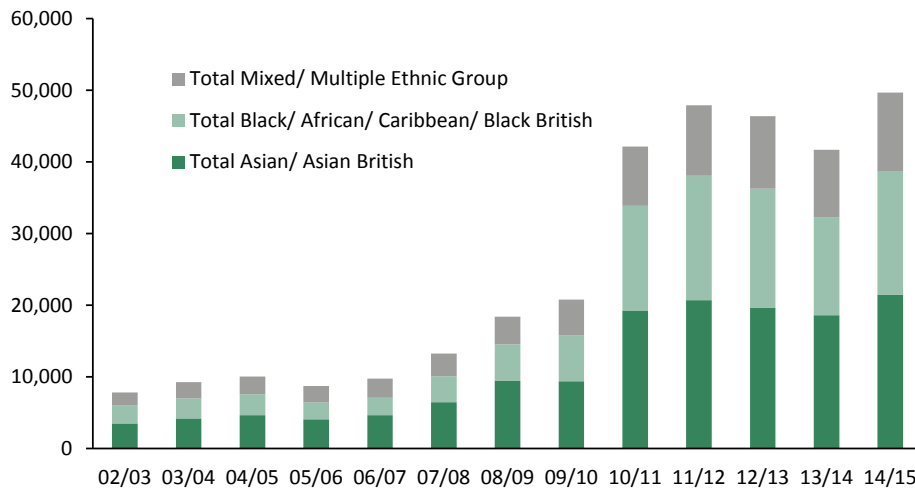
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Apprenticeships starts in England, White and non-White since 2002/03



In 2014/15, 21,500 (4.3% of all starters) apprenticeship starters were Asian/Asian British; 17,200 (3.5%) were Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; and 10,900 (2.2%) were of mixed/multiple ethnic background.

Apprenticeship starts in England by ethnic background since 2002/03



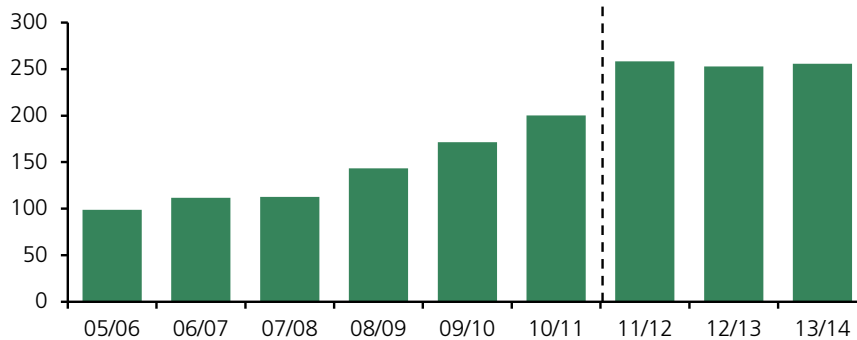
3. Apprenticeship achievements and participation

As well as statistics on apprenticeship starts, data are also available on the number of people who complete an apprenticeship (achievements) and the total number of people who were on an apprenticeship in a given year (participation).

3.1 Achievements

Apprenticeship achievements followed a similar trend to starts, increasing up to 2011/12 and then decreasing slightly. There were 255,800 achievements in 2013/14, up 2,900 on the previous year.

Apprenticeship achievements in England since 2005/06, thousands



Notes

Academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

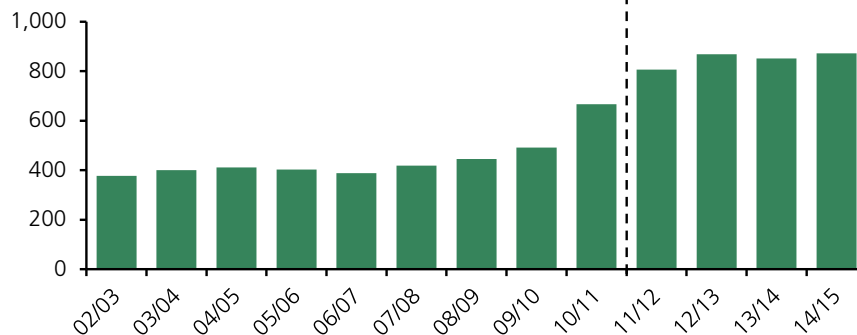
Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

3.2 Participation

Apprenticeship participation has also increased since 2009/10. There were 871,800 people on an apprenticeship in 2014/15, compared to 851,500 a year earlier.

Apprenticeship participation in England since 2002/03, thousands



Notes

Academic years (August 1st to July 31st)

Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: BIS FE data library: apprenticeships

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