



Further Education for Benefit Claimants England 2015/16 Academic Year: Quality and methodology information



30 August 2017

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 further education for benefit claimants, along with information on data issues, data definitions, publication cycle and supplementary data produced.

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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 learners on benefits, 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 final data for the 2011/12– 2015/16 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) - live service only
 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

Only Universal Credit live service claimants are included within this publication who are classed as out of work. Claimants on Universal Credit full service are not captured in the data presented here due to

Universal Credit full service being in the early stages of national rollout and some data quality issues. Therefore, these statistics will have a small undercount in areas where Universal Credit full service has been introduced. Work is underway to capture information on these claimants.

It is important to note that training by claimants who are on Universal Credit live service and do not have any work related requirements (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 live service claimants are only included for the 2015/16 academic year.

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

All figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and figures below 50 are suppressed (represented by “-”) for confidentiality purposes. 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. 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 administrative datasets used in the production of these statistics are snapshots obtained in December 2016.

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 Live Service reference datasets have been used to allow those claiming Universal Credit during live service in the 2015/16 academic year to be included in this publication.

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

Universal Credit full service claimants are not included due to full service being in the early stages of national rollout and there are some data quality issues. We will look to include further Universal Credit data in future publications.

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 2016 was released at the end of December 2016.

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 2015/16.

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.

4. Matching Process

The education records 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.

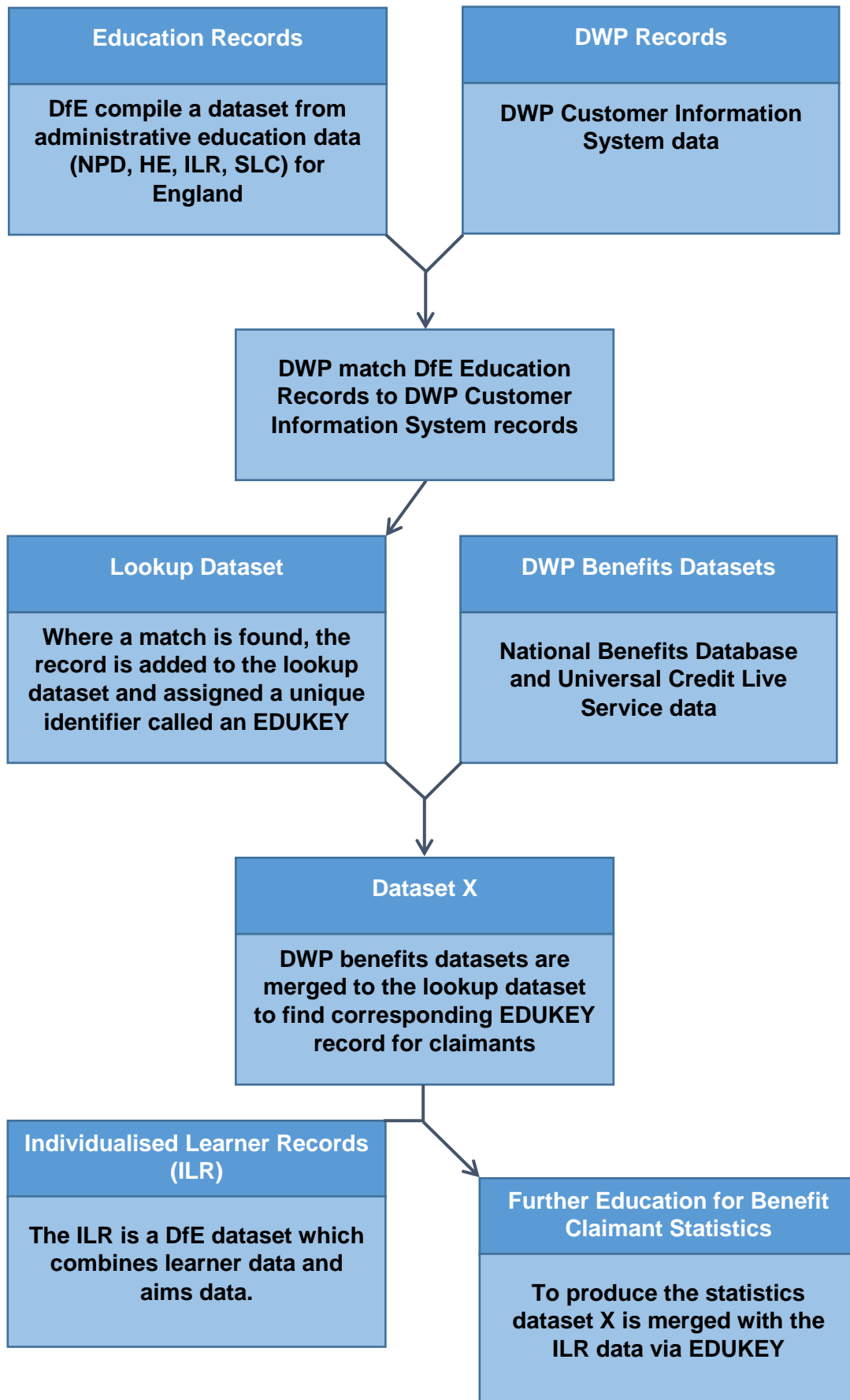
CIS Match Type Criteria and Quality

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_educati_on_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.

5. 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 2015/16, 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 2015/16

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%

6. Changes in Methodology

The publication is now based on the data matched as part of the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) study. The underlying further education and benefits datasets are the same, but the methodology used to match them together has changed compared to previous years. In addition, the methodology used to produce the estimates is different compared to previous academic years, and we have:

- Revised the back-series for years 2011/12 and 2014/15 to use data produced by the new matching methodology.
- Improved the measure for learners on benefit at the start of learning, which is based on a new unique person identifier created in the LEO matching process and replaces the two measures for learners and claimants included in previous publications.
- Improved the methodology to fully remove all unfunded further education learning aims.

This publication of the further education for benefit claimants statistics includes Universal Credit claimants for the first time. This is limited to those on live service only and does not include claimants on full service.

Conditionality for those on Universal Credit is reliable for academic year 2015/16 onwards so no Universal Credit claimants are included for previous years.

7. 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.

8. 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>

9. 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>

10. 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>
- 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>

11. Get in touch

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