



SFR 53/2017, 12 October 2017

This SFR contains provisional figures for the full 2016/17 academic year based on data reported to date. Final figures for 2016/17 will be published in November 2017.

All age government funded apprenticeship participation reported so far for the full 2016/17 academic year is slightly greater than that reported at the same point in 2015/16.

Participation in government funded adult (19+) further education reported so far for the full 2016/17 academic year is less than that reported at this time in 2015/16, and has continued to fall in final year figures from its 2011/12 peak.

All age apprenticeship participation

912,200 participated on an apprenticeship by the end of 2016/17 academic year, based on provisional full-year data, compared to 904,800 reported at this time in 2015/16, **an increase of 0.8 per cent.**

Participation **increased in higher level apprenticeships (37.4 per cent) and advanced level apprenticeships (5.3 per cent)** whereas participation **decreased in intermediate level apprenticeships (5.4 per cent)** compared to the same point in 2015/16.

Adult (19+) further education participation

2,233,200 learners had participated in adult further education by the end of 2016/17, compared to 2,318,700 reported at this time in 2015/16, **a decrease of 3.7 per cent.**

Participation in both English and maths and Level 2 courses decreased, whereas participation on Level 3 has increased. Participation in **Level 4 and above courses increased by 26.0 per cent** from 58,600 in 2015/16 to 73,800 in 2016/17.

Apprenticeship starts reported to date decreased in the 2016/17 academic year compared to the same point in 2015/16.

All age apprenticeship starts

There were **491,300** apprenticeship starts in the 2016/17 academic year based on provisional full-year data, compared to 503,700 reported at this time in 2015/16, a **decrease of 2.5 per cent.** Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017, there have been **18,500 levy-supported starts.**

Starts in higher and advanced apprenticeship levels increased by 35.1 and 3.9 per cent respectively, whereas starts at intermediate level decreased by 10.1 per cent in the 2016/17 academic year compared to the same point in 2015/16.

There were 1,116,000 apprenticeship starts reported to July 2017 since May 2015 and 3,493,500 starts reported to July 2017 since May 2010.

There were **23,700** apprenticeship starts reported on **standards** so far in 2016/17, compared to 3,800 reported at the same point in 2015/16.

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About this release

This statistical first release (SFR) presents information on:

- Adult (aged 19+) government-funded further education (excluding schools and higher education) comprising:
 - Education and training, including offender learning (18+)
 - Apprenticeships
 - English and maths
 - Community learning
 - Employer Ownership Pilots (EOP)
 - Advanced learner loans
 - Traineeships (16-24)
- All age (16+) apprenticeships in England.
- The highest level of qualification held by adults (aged 19 to 64) in England calculated from Labour Force Survey (LFS) data.

The SFR is presented in two main sections:

1. In-year data for 2016/17 (provisional full-year data as reported to date)
2. Final year data for 2015/16 (full-year)

Final data are presented for further education and apprenticeships between 2010/11 and 2015/16.

Highest levels of qualification data are presented from 2006 to 2015, although 2015 figures are provisional and subject to revisions.

- Tables 1.1, 1.2: Adult (19+) FE and skills participation/achievement by Level
- Table 2: All age apprenticeship participation by level and age
- Tables 4: Adult (19+) FE and skills – English and maths participation and achievement by level
- Table 5: Adult (19+) demographic summary of FE and skills participation
- Table 6: All age demographic summary of apprenticeship participation
- Tables 7.1, 7.2: All age apprenticeship programme starts/achievements by level and age
- Tables 8.1, 8.2: Workplace learning starts/achievements by level
- Table 12.1 – 12.3: Traineeship starts, completions and progressions by age
- Table 13: Employer Ownership Pilot starts (2012/13 to 2015/16)

Note: there are no EOP starts in 2016/17.

Changes included in this SFR

This SFR includes provisional figures for the full academic year 2016/17 based on information that has been reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by further education colleges and providers in September 2017. The data will change as further data returns relating to the period are received later in the year.

We have also included data reported so far on the apprenticeship levy supported starts since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017.

Ofqual vocational qualification data shown in Table 17 of this release have also been updated following a new methodology being used by Ofqual. Please see the Quality and Methodology for more details.

Changes in the next SFR

The next SFR will be in November 2017 and will include final full year data for the 2016/17 academic year (August 2016 to July 2017).

In this publication

The following tables are included in the SFR:

- National tables (Excel .xls):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>
- Supplementary tables and data tools (Excel .xls):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>

The accompanying technical document provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, and further information on methodology changes impacting on the Full Level 2 and Full Level 3 data, and changes to the calculation of qualification achievement rates.

Experimental statistics

On 5 October 2017, the latest experimental statistics were released using data from the apprenticeship service. This includes the number of apprenticeship service accounts registered (ASAs) and apprenticeship commitments on the new system, and provides information on the use of the apprenticeship service.

These statistics are available here: [Apprenticeship service registrations and commitments: August 2017 - GOV.UK](#).

We will publish these statistics on a monthly basis but may adjust content and timing as feedback is assessed. We will take into account what data is reported in this new system and how this is happening.

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document, please contact: Dave.Bartholomew@education.gov.uk.

1. In-Year Further Education Statistics for England, 2016/17

Figures for the 2016/17 academic year (August 2016 to July 2017) are based on information that has been reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in September 2017 by further education colleges and providers. The data provide an early view of performance and will change as further data returns are received. Since providers report some of their data for this period later in the year, the data are subject to change (in either direction) until final data is received. At this point in the year, 2016/17 figures are referred to as *reported so far* or *reported to date* to reflect this. This SFR reports on the provisional full-year for the 2016/17 academic year.

It is not possible to determine how complete or incomplete the information returned so far is, therefore care should be taken when comparing data reported so far in 2016/17 to the equivalent reporting period in 2015/16. This is particularly the case as provider reporting behaviour may change year to year¹. More accurate comparisons can be made once final returns for the academic year are made (data returned in October 2017, due to be published in November 2017).

Summary and key headlines – 2016/17 (data reported so far)

Adult (19+) further education and skills	Provisional data reported so far for the full 2016/17 academic year show there were 2,233,200 learners aged 19 and over participating in government-funded adult further education, compared to 2,318,700 reported this time last year for 2015/16, a decrease of 3.7 per cent.
Apprenticeship participation	912,200 participants on an apprenticeship have been reported so far in 2016/17, compared to 904,800 at this time in 2015/16, an increase of 0.8 per cent.
Apprenticeship starts	491,300 apprenticeship starts have been reported so far in 2016/17, compared to 503,700 at this time in 2015/16, a decrease of 2.5 per cent. Since the introduction of the Apprenticeship levy in April 2017, there have been 18,500 levy-supported starts. There have now been 1,116,000 apprenticeship starts reported to July 2017 since May 2015 and 3,493,500 starts reported to July 2017 since May 2010.
English and maths	760,600 adult learners have been reported as participating on English and maths courses so far in 2016/17, compared to 809,400 at this time in 2015/16, a decrease of 6.0 per cent.
Advanced learner loans	118,200 learners have been reported with a 19+ advanced learner loan so far in 2016/17 ² .
Traineeships	20,400 traineeship starts have been reported so far in 2016/17, compared to 23,900 at this time in 2015/16, a decrease of 14.6 per cent.
Community learning	531,800 adult learners have been reported as participating on a community learning course so far in 2016/17, compared to 563,200 at this time in 2015/16, a decrease of 5.6 per cent.
Offender learning	88,800 offenders aged 18 or over in the prison system have been reported as participating in learning so far in 2016/17, compared to 94,700 at this time in 2015/16, a decrease of 6.2 per cent.

¹ See the accompanying Quality and Methodology document for this SFR for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>.

² A comparison to 2015/16 has not been made due to a policy change in 2016/17 (please refer to the Quality and Methodology document).

In order to understand the impact of policy and methodology changes on any data published in this release, details are provided in the quality and methodology document that accompanies this SFR. As with many policy areas, further education is a broad and changing topic.

More information, please see the latest version in the most recent SFR release here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

Adult (19+) further education and skills participation³ (Table 18)

Data reported so far for the 2016/17 academic year show there were **2,233,200 learners aged 19 and over participating** in government-funded further education, a decrease of 3.7 per cent from 2,318,700 reported at this time last year for 2015/16.

Of these:

- 760,600 participated on an **English and maths** course, a decrease of 6.0 per cent from 809,400 in 2015/16
- 819,300 participated on a **Level 2** course, a decrease of 5.1 per cent from 863,700 in 2015/16
- 436,300 participated on a **Full level 2** course, a decrease of 34.2 per cent from 663,200 in 2015/16
- 475,700 participated on a **Level 3** course, an increase of 3.1 per cent from 461,400 in 2015/16
- 460,600 participated on a **Full level 3** course, an increase of 4.1 per cent from 442,500 in 2015/16
- 73,800 participated on a **Level 4+** course, an increase of 26.0 per cent from 58,600 in 2015/16
- 297,300 benefited from **support for the unemployed**, a decrease of 6.3 per cent from 317,300 in 2015/16

Apprenticeship participation (Table 21)

Apprenticeship participation data reported so far for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were:

- **912,200 participants** on an apprenticeship, an increase of 0.8 per cent from 904,800 reported at this time in 2015/16.

Of which:

489,600 at intermediate level, a decrease of 5.4 per cent from 517,700 in 2015/16

388,700 at advanced level, an increase of 5.3 per cent from 369,100 in 2015/16

61,000 at higher level, an increase of 37.4 per cent from 44,400 in 2015/16

194,200 were aged under 19, a decrease of 4.0 per cent from 202,200 in 2015/16

718,000 aged 19 and over, an increase of 2.2 per cent from 702,600 in 2015/16

³ The 2016/17 Full level 2 and Full level 3 figures have been calculated using a new methodology, please refer to the Quality and Methodology document for further information.

Apprenticeship starts (Table 22.1)

Apprenticeship starts data reported so far for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were:

- **491,300 apprenticeship starts**, a decrease of 2.5 per cent from 503,700 reported at this time for 2015/16.

Of which:

259,400 at intermediate level, a decrease of 10.1 per cent from 288,600 in 2015/16

195,800 at advanced level, an increase of 3.9 per cent from 188,400 in 2015/16

36,100 at higher level, an increase of 35.1 per cent from 26,800 in 2015/16

121,300 were aged under 19, a decrease of 7.0 per cent from 130,400 in 2015/16

370,100 aged 19 and over, a decrease of 0.9 per cent from 373,300 in 2015/16

- Between February and April 2017, there was an increase in apprenticeship starts compared to the same point a year earlier (174,100 and 118,800 respectively), an increase of 47%. Between May and July 2017 (quarter 4 of the 2016/17 academic year), apprenticeship starts have decreased to 43,600 from 113,000 over the same period in the year before (quarter 4 of the 2015/16 academic year), a decrease of 61%.
- The UK wide apprenticeship levy came into force on 6 April 2017 requiring all UK public and private sector employers with an annual bill of £3 million or more to invest in apprenticeship training. Since May 2017, funding arrangements for apprenticeships changed to give employers greater control over funding for apprenticeship training. It may take time for organisations to adjust to the new funding system, and so it is too early to draw conclusions based on the number of apprenticeship starts recorded since May 2017.
- **18,500 levy supported starts** were recorded since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017. More than half of the levy supported starts (10,000) were at intermediate level, with 6,800 at advanced level and 1,700 at higher level apprenticeships.

In order to be counted as a **levy supported start**, the apprenticeship must have been supported through levy funds.

- **23,700 apprenticeship starts** were reported on the new apprenticeship **standards**, compared to 3,800 reported at this time last year for 2015/16.

Of which:

8,200 were levy supported starts

6,400 were aged under 19, compared to 1,000 in 2015/16

17,300 aged 19 and over, compared to 2,800 in 2015/16

There have now been **28,400 starts on apprenticeship standards since their introduction** in September 2014.

- 252,500 starts for which a payment was made through the **apprenticeship Grant for Employers** (AGE 16 to 24) scheme between February 2012 and July 2017. A further 1,900 were in the pipeline (started but not yet paid).

There have been **1,116,000 apprenticeship starts reported to July 2017 since May 2015** and 3,493,500 starts reported to July 2017 since May 2010.

Apprenticeship achievements (Table 22.2)

Apprenticeship achievements data reported so far for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were:

- **259,100 apprenticeship achievements**, an increase of 1.1 per cent from 256,200 reported at this time last year for 2015/16.

Of which:

151,200 at intermediate level, a decrease of 2.5 per cent from 155,000 in 2015/16

98,000 at advanced level, an increase of 3.2 per cent from 94,900 in 2015/16

9,900 at higher level, an increase of 58.5 per cent from 6,300 in 2015/16

71,000 were aged under 19, an increase of 2.6 per cent from 69,200 in 2015/16

188,000 aged 19 and over, an increase of 0.6 per cent from 187,000 in 2015/16

Additional breakdowns of provisional apprenticeship statistics are published online at the FE Data Library⁴.

Adult (19+) English and maths (Table 19)

Provisional data for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were 760,600 learners aged 19 and over participated on an English and maths course, a decrease of 6.0 per cent from 809,400 reported at this time last year for 2015/16.

Of the 760,600 in 2016/17:

- 536,700 participated on an **English** course, a decrease of 8.9 per cent from 589,100 in 2015/16
- 529,300 participated on a **maths** course, a decrease of 6.0 per cent from 563,000 in 2015/16
- 114,400 participated on an **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)** course, an increase of 3.5 per cent from 110,500 in 2015/16

Adult (19+) education and training⁵ (Table 20)

Provisional data for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were 1,077,100 learners aged 19 and over participating in classroom-based education and training, a decrease of 1.6 per cent from 1,094,500 at this time in 2015/16.

Of the 1,077,100 in 2016/17:

- 464,200 participated on a **Level 2** course, an increase of 3.0 per cent from 450,900 reported in 2015/16
- 78,100 participated on a **Full level 2** course, a decrease of 69.2 per cent from 253,300 reported in 2015/16
- 158,100 participated on a **Level 3** course, an increase of 3.6 per cent from 152,600 reported in 2015/16
- 140,700 participated on a **Full level 3** course, an increase of 0.9 per cent from 139,400 reported in 2015/16

⁴ The FE Data Library can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>.

⁵ The 2016/17 Full level 2 and Full level 3 figures have been calculated using a new methodology, please refer to the Quality and Methodology document for further information.

15,900 participated on a **Level 4+** course, an increase of 36.7 per cent from 11,600 reported in 2015/16

Community learning (Table 24)

Provisional data for the 2016/17 academic year show that 531,800 learners participated on a community learning course, a decrease of 5.6 per cent from 563,200 in 2015/16.

Of the 531,800 in 2016/17:

- 414,400 took a **Personal and Community Development Learning** course, a decrease of 3.3 per cent from 428,400 reported in 2015/16
- 48,600 took a **Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities** course, a decrease of 13.1 per cent from 55,900 in 2015/16
- 32,700 took a **Family English, Maths and Language** course, a decrease of 17.7 per cent from 39,700 in 2015/16
- 52,600 took a **Wider Family Learning** course, a decrease of 10.3 per cent from 58,700 in 2015/16

Adult (18+) offender learners (Table 25)

Provisional data for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were 88,800 **offenders aged 18 or over** in the prison system participating in learning, a decrease of 6.2 per cent compared to 94,700 in 2015/16.

This number does not include 15,800 learners who sat an English and/or maths assessment but had not yet participated in any further learning.

Advanced learner loans⁶ (Table 26)

In the 2016/17 academic year, provisional data show that 118,200 learners took out a **19+ advanced learner loan**, of which:

- 109,600 were participating at **Level 3**
- 8,900 participated at **Level 4+**

Traineeships (Table 27.1, 27.2 & 27.3)

Data reported so far for the 2016/17 academic year show that there were:

20,400 **traineeship starts**, a decrease of 14.6 per cent from 23,900 in 2015/16, of which:

13,900 were under 19, a decrease of 5.2 per cent from 14,600 in 2015/16

6,500 were aged 19 to 24, a decrease of 29.5 per cent from 9,300 in 2015/16

15,900 **traineeship completions**, an increase of 4.0 per cent from 15,300 in 2015/16, of which:

10,200 were under 19, an increase of 9.2 per cent from 9,300 in 2015/16

5,700 were aged 19 to 24, a decrease of 4.1 per cent from 5,900 in 2015/16

8,300 **traineeship progressions** to a job, apprenticeship, further full time education or other training, a decrease of 2.2 per cent from 8,500 in 2015/16, of which:

⁶ See the Quality and Methodology document for the change in Advanced Learner Loans in 2016/17.

5,800 were under 19, a decrease of 1.4 per cent on 2015/16⁷

2,600 were aged 19 to 24, a decrease of 3.8 per cent from 2,700 in 2015/16⁸

Further education supplementary tables

Additional breakdowns of further education statistics are published online, please see here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>. These additional breakdowns include breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, region, local authority, parliamentary constituency, sector subject area and funding stream.

⁷ Note: the figure for both 2015/16 and 2016/17 is 5,800 after rounding to the nearest 100.

⁸ Percentages are calculated on unrounded data.

2. Further Education Statistics for England 2015/16

The statistics in this section show the final, full-year figures for the latest academic year for which full-year data are available, and were first published in the November 2016 SFR.

Summary and key headlines – 2015/16 final data as reported November 2016

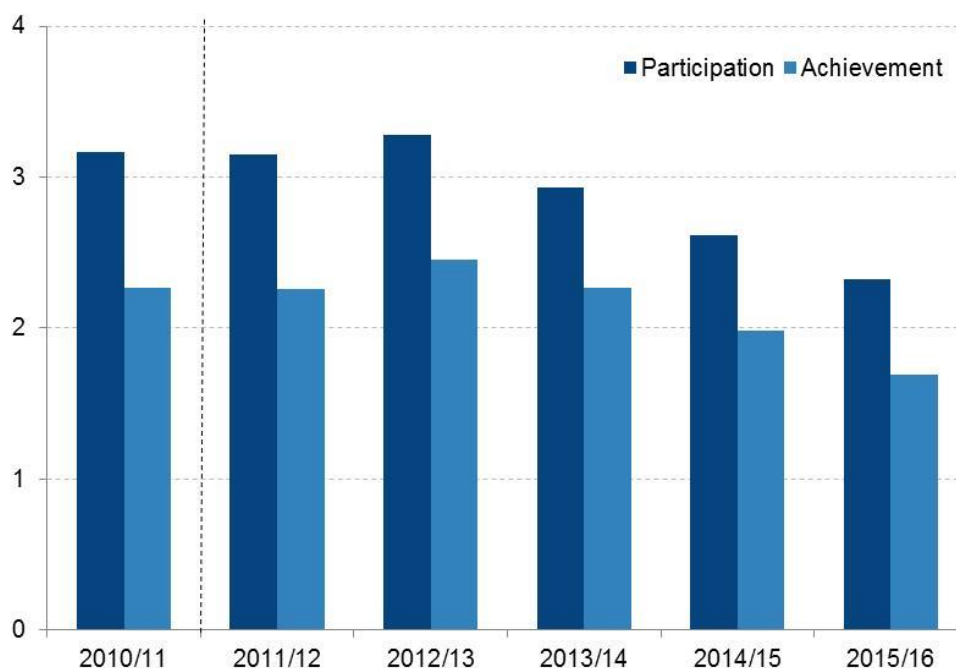
Adult (19+) further education and skills	Participation in government-funded adult further education fell to 2,324,700 in 2015/16. The number of learners participating on Full Level 2 courses declined to 659,300 and the number on Full Level 3 courses increased to 446,000.
Apprenticeship participation	In 2015/16, apprenticeship participation increased to 899,400, the highest number on record.
Apprenticeship starts	There were 509,400 apprenticeship starts in the 2015/16 academic year, an increase of 1.9 per cent on 2014/15. There have been 624,700 apprenticeship starts since May 2015 and 3,002,200 starts since May 2010.
English and maths	803,800 adult learners participated on English and maths courses in 2015/16, a decrease of 11.2 per cent on 2014/15.
24+ Advanced learning loans	There were 95,000 learners with a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan in 2015/16, an increase of 26.1 per cent on 2014/15.
Traineeships	There were 24,100 Traineeship starts in 2015/16, an increase of 24.1 per cent on 2014/15.
Community learning	In 2015/16, there were 570,600 adult learners participating on a Community Learning course, a decrease of 6.4 per cent on 2014/15.
Offender learning	There were 94,700 offenders aged 18 and over in the prison system participating in learning in 2015/16, a decrease of 6.8 per cent on 2014/15.

Adult (19+) learner participation and achievement (Tables 1.1, 1.2 & 3)

Figure 1 shows that the total number of adult learners participating in government-funded further education in 2015/16 was 2,324,700, a decrease of 11.1 per cent on 2014/15. The total number of adult learners achieving a government-funded further education qualification was 1,694,500 in 2015/16, a decrease of 14.6 per cent on 2014/15.

Figure 1: Adult (19+) learner participation and achievement in government-funded further education⁹
England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Millions



Source: Individualised Learner Record

Figure 2 shows the number of adult learners participating on government-funded further education Level 2 courses decreased between 2010/11 and 2015/16 with a 15.4 per cent decrease seen in the most recent year. The number participating in Full Level 2 courses fell by 12.5 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

The number of adult learners participating in Level 3 courses increased by 3.0 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16. participation in Full level 3 courses increased by 6.2 per cent in the same period. This is in contrast to decreases observed in participation at Level 3 and Full level 3 between 2013/14 and 2014/15, and between 2012/13 and 2013/14:

	2013/14	% change 12/13 to 13/14	2014/15	% change 13/14 to 14/15	2015/16	% change 14/15 to 15/16
Full Level 3	439,300	-11.3%	419,900	-4.4%	446,000	6.2%
Level 3	488,100	-17.9%	451,800	-7.4%	465,300	3.0%

The number of adult learners participating in Below Level 2 courses (excluding English and maths) declined sharply in 2015/16 to 465,500 (a decrease of 22.1 per cent from 2014/15), while the number participating in English and maths fell by 11.2 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16 to 803,800. There was an increase in the number of learners participating on Level 4+ courses, from 43,500 in 2014/15 to 58,300 in 2015/16.

See also table 1 for percentage change between 2014/15 and 2015/16 for adult (19+) further education, apprenticeship participation and apprenticeship starts by level and age.

⁹ Learner numbers for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years.

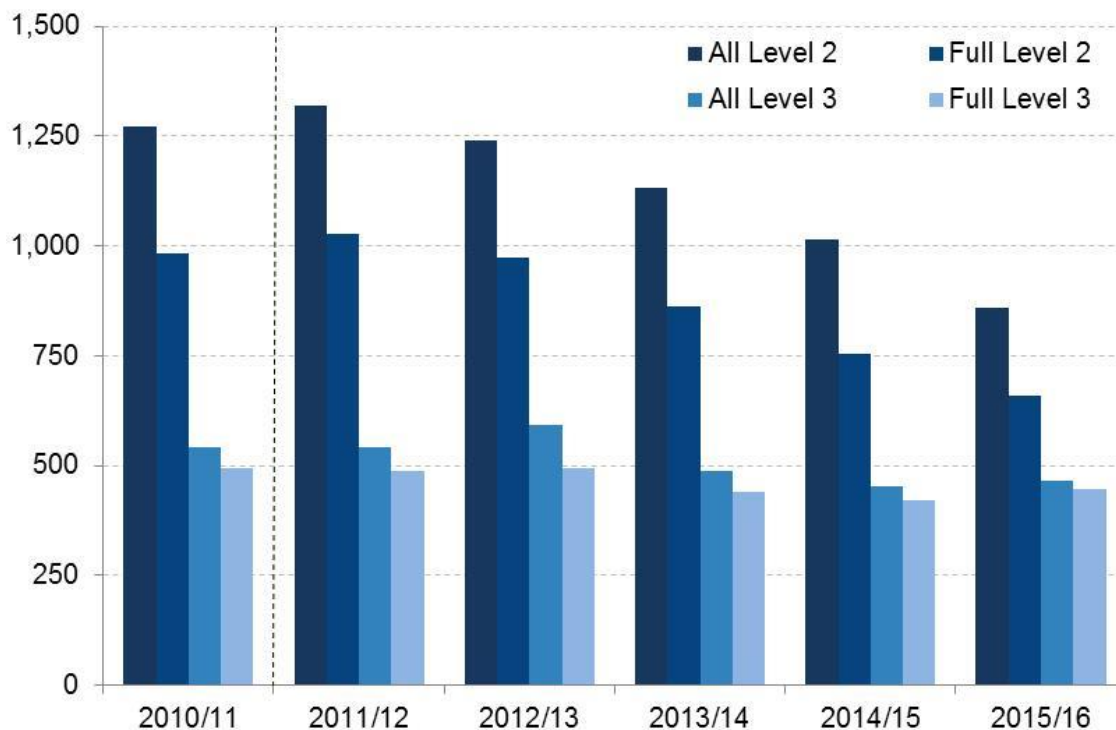
Table 1: Rates of change (2014/15 to 2015/16) - Adult (19+) further education, apprenticeship participation and apprenticeship starts by selected level and age
 England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Participation	Full Level 2	Full Level 3	Level 4+	Total
Adult (19+) FE & Skills	-12.5%	6.2%	33.9%	-11.1%
All age Apprenticeships	-0.7%	5.6%	47.7%	3.2%
Adult (19+) Apprenticeships	-1.6%	5.0%	46.7%	2.9%
Under 19 Apprenticeships	1.6%	8.3%	65.8%	4.1%
Starts				
All age Apprenticeships	-2.3%	5.0%	37.4%	1.9%
Adult (19+) Apprenticeships	-3.9%	3.8%	36.4%	1.0%
Under 19 Apprenticeships	1.6%	9.3%	53.9%	4.4%

Source: Individualised Learner Record

Figure 2: Adult (19+) learner participation in government-funded further education by level¹⁰
 England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Thousands

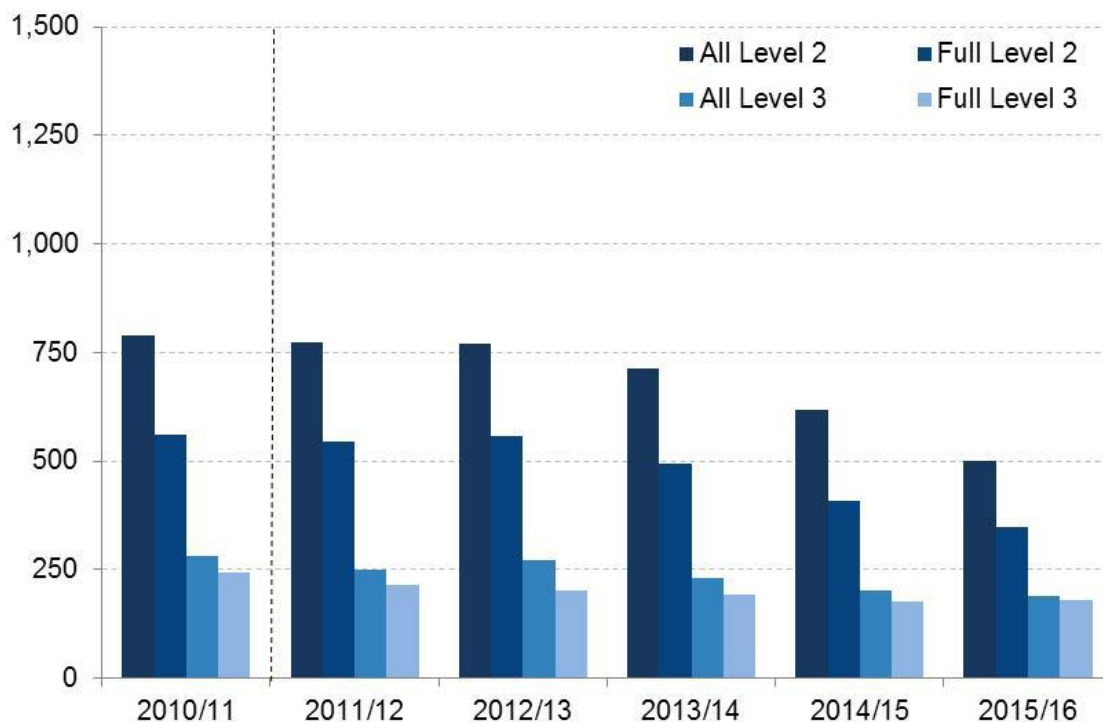


Source: Individualised Learner Record

¹⁰ Learner numbers for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years.

Figure 3: Adult (19+) learner achievements in government-funded further education by level⁴
 England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Thousands



Source: Individualised Learner Record

Adult (19+) demographic summary of FE and skills participation (2015/16)

Of the 2,324,700 adult learners participating in further education in 2015/16:

- 57.9 per cent were female and 42.1 per cent were male
- 16.0 per cent declared a learning difficulty and/or disability
- 20.2 per cent were from a Black or Minority Ethnic background (including Mixed, Asian, Black and Other Ethnic Group learners)
- 317,800 learners aged 19+ benefited from support for the unemployed in 2015/16. These are defined as those learners reporting that they were in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance - Work Related Activity Group (ESA WRAG), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (if unemployed and looking for work).

Apprenticeships (Tables 2, 6 & 7)

Measures of apprenticeships

Two measures of Apprenticeships are presented to give a clearer view of the changes and trends in Apprenticeships in England:

- Participation refers to the number of people who are undertaking an apprenticeship in a given time period. This measure is helpful for quantifying the number of people on an apprenticeship programme throughout the academic year. An apprentice studying towards more than one apprenticeship at the same level is counted once.
- Starts refer to the number of programmes that begin in a given time period. This measure is helpful in determining the take-up of programmes. An apprentice is counted for each apprenticeship they start.

The apprenticeship programme has expanded since 2010/11 as a result of increased government investment in adult apprenticeships. More recently apprenticeship policy has focused on raising standards, improving the quality and introducing minimum durations of apprenticeships. This means some learners find it more difficult or take longer to complete their apprenticeship.

24+ Advanced learning loans were introduced in August 2013, and withdrawn for apprenticeships in March 2014. This appears to have affected learner numbers on Level 3 and above courses and apprenticeships for ages 24 and over in 2013/14. This should be noted when comparing the 2014/15 volumes with 2013/14.

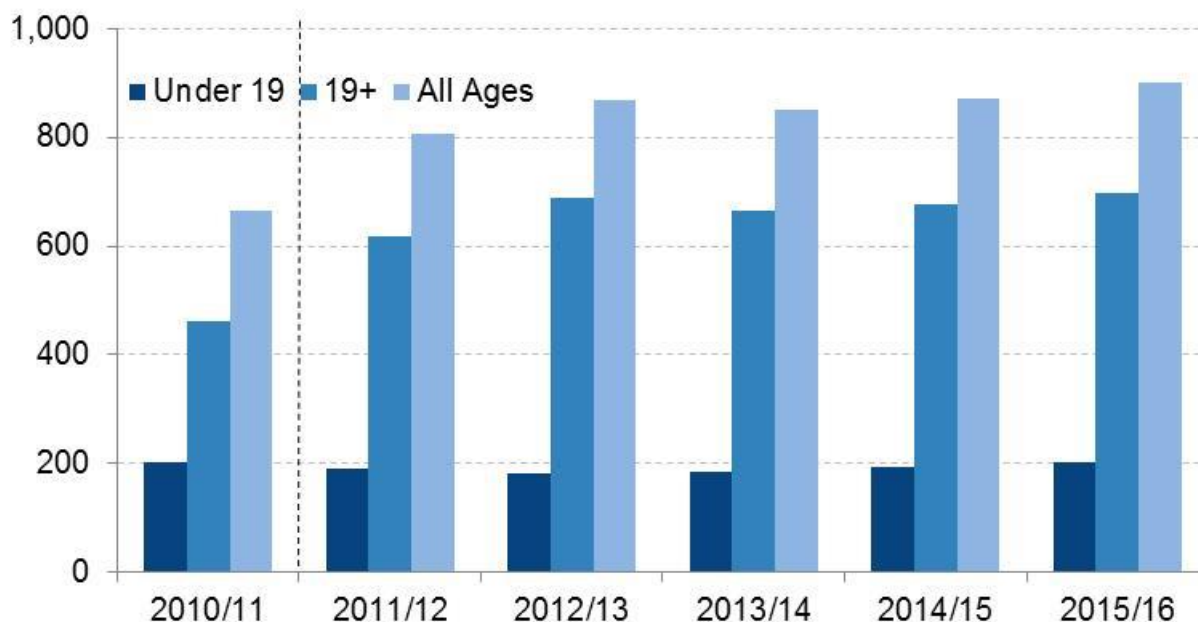
Participation

Figure 5 shows that all age apprenticeship participation has increased since 2010/11 to 899,400 Apprenticeships in 2015/16, the highest number since records began.

Apprenticeship participation increased between 2014/15 and 2015/16 for both under 19s and those aged 25 and over, but decreased for the 19-24 age group.

Figure 5: Apprenticeship participation by age¹¹
England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Thousands



Source: Individualised Learner Record

¹¹ Learner numbers for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years.

513,600 apprentices were participating on an intermediate level apprenticeship in 2015/16, a decrease on 2014/15 figures. An increase was seen for higher level apprenticeships to 43,800 in 2015/16 and there was an increase in advanced level apprenticeships to 368,600.

Of 899,400 apprenticeships participating in 2015/16:

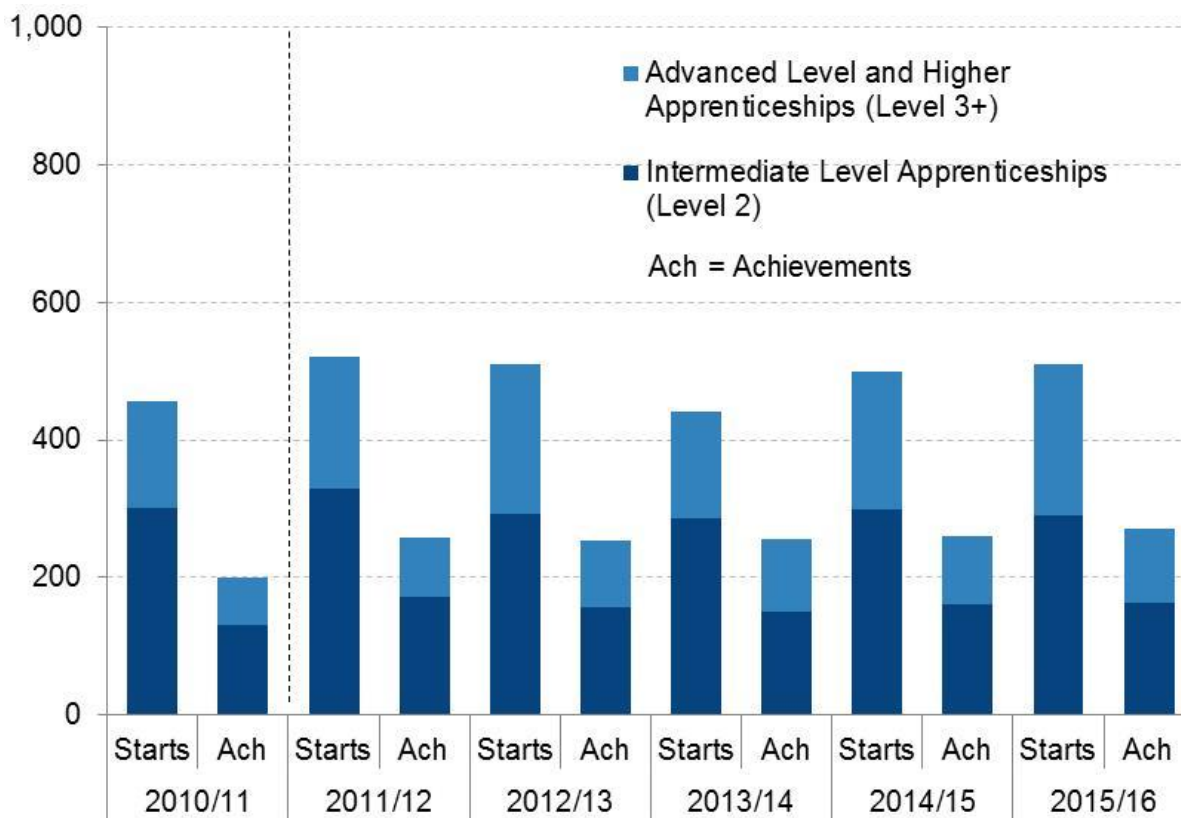
- 51.1 per cent were female and 48.9 per cent were male
- 9.3 per cent declared a learning difficulty and/or disability
- 10.6 per cent were from a Black or Minority Ethnic background (including Mixed, Asian, Black and Other Ethnic Group learners)

Starts and achievements

Figure 6 shows that following a decline in apprenticeship starts between 2011/12 and 2013/14, mostly due to a fall at advanced level, there was an increase of 13.5 per cent in 2014/15, and then an increase of 1.9 per cent in 2015/16. Achievements have remained strong, with an increase seen in 2015/16.

Figure 6: Apprenticeship starts and achievements by level¹²
 England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Thousands



Source: Individualised Learner Record

¹² Starts and achievements for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years.

The length of an apprenticeship is typically more than a year and apprenticeship achievement is recorded against the year it was achieved, not the year it was started.

There were 509,400 apprenticeship starts in the 2015/16 academic year, an increase of 1.9 per cent on 2014/15, with increases across all levels. An increase was seen overall in apprenticeship achievements, to 271,700 in 2015/16. Apprenticeship achievements rose for those aged under 19 and those aged 25 and over, but fell slightly for those aged 19 to 24.

In 2015/16, there were 4,300 starts on apprenticeship standards (previously referred to as trailblazers - see the glossary for more information) – up from 400 in 2014/15.

The first starts on the new apprenticeship standards were in September 2014. The volume of starts on apprenticeship standards by Level can be found in a supplementary table.

Final data show that there were 212,900 apprenticeship starts for which a payment was made through the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE 16 to 24) scheme between February 2012 and July 2016. A further 7,200 were in the pipeline (started but not yet paid).

Starts since May 2010 and May 2015

The government has committed to reaching 3 million apprenticeships by 2020¹³ from May 2015. With 115,300 apprenticeship starts in quarter 4 in 2014/15, there have been 780,300 starts reported to July 2016 since May 2015, and 3,157,800 starts reported to July 2016 since May 2010 (including 64,500 starts in quarter 4 2009/10).

Planned length of stay

Minimum durations have been in place for framework-based apprenticeships since August 2012. For learners aged 16 to 18, apprenticeships must last at least 12 months, but for learners aged 19 and over there is more flexibility, as some adults have prior learning / attainment and can complete more quickly (for example if the training provider can evidence prior learning the minimum duration is reduced to 6 months). For new apprenticeship standards the minimum duration is 12 months, with no exceptions.

Based on the planned end date, the number of apprenticeship starts with a planned length of stay of less than 12 months decreased sharply by 83.2 per cent between 2011/12 and 2012/13 to 34,300 and remained low in 2015/16 at 40,300.

Apprenticeship starts by age and planned length of stay can be found in supplementary tables:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-kick-starts-plans-to-reach-3-million-apprenticeships>

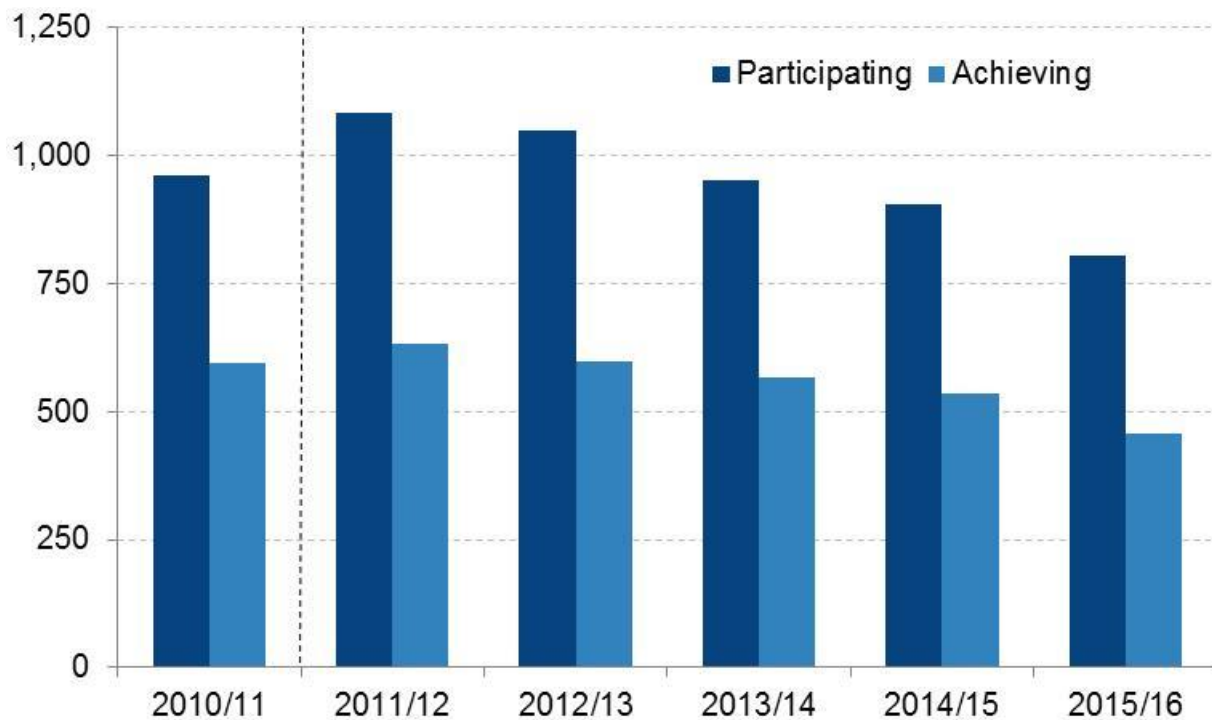
Adult (19+) English and maths (Table 4)

Figure 7 shows that adult learner participation on English and maths courses rose between 2010/11 and 2011/12, but has since fallen from 1,083,000 in 2011/12 to 803,800 in 2015/16.

The number of learners participating on an English course fell by 12.7 per cent between 2014/15 and 2015/16 to 583,600; the number of learners participating on a maths course fell by 10.7 per cent to 557,400 and numbers participating on an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course fell by 15.6 per cent to 110,600.

Figure 7: Adult (19+) learner participation and achievement on English and maths courses¹⁴
England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Thousands



Source: Individualised Learner Record

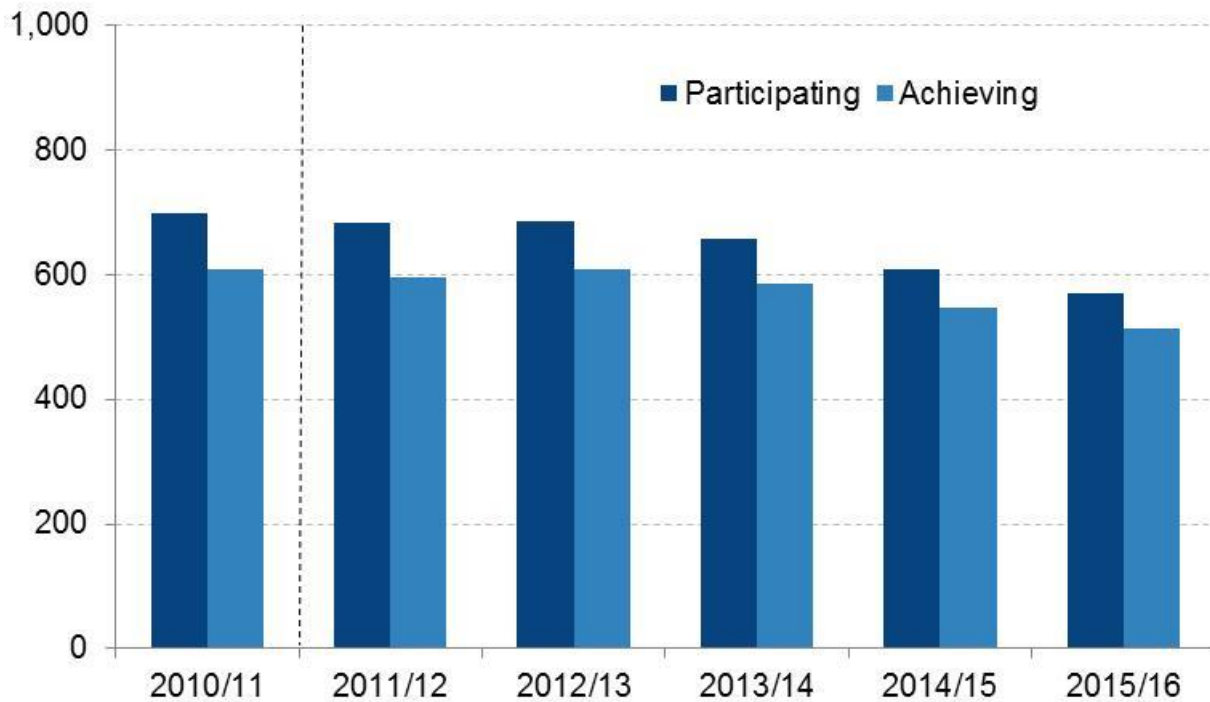
¹⁴ Learner numbers for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years.

Community learning (Table 9)

Figure 8 shows that the number of learners participating on community learning courses in 2015/16 decreased by 6.4 per cent on 2014/15 to 570,600. Achievements fell by 6.4 per cent over the same period to 512,900.

Figure 8: Community learning participation and achievement¹⁵
England, 2010/11 to 2015/16

Thousands



Source: Individualised Learner Record

Adult (18+) offender learning (Table 10.1 & 10.2)

In 2015/16 there were 94,700 offenders aged 18 and over in the prison system participating in learning, a decrease of 6.8 per cent on 2014/15. 82,700 achieved a learning outcome, an decrease of 2.6 per cent on 2014/15. These offenders were funded via the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) budget.

¹⁵ Learner numbers for 2011/12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years.

24+ Advanced learning loans (Table 11)

The number of learners with an advanced learning loan reported through the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) differ from data showing loan applications (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education>) and loans paid (<http://www.slc.co.uk/official-statistics/financial-support-awarded/england-further-education.aspx>).

24+ advanced learning loans application information is released monthly. This data relates to applications received for FE provision in the 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years funded through 24+ advanced learning loans. The data used to produce the publication are sourced from the Student Loans Company (SLC) application database. The data refer to received applications, including those not yet processed, and will therefore be different than actual number of learners participating on a course with a 24+ advanced learning loan.

The SLC advanced learner loans paid in England data were released on 23 June 2016. These data refer to all payments made to FE providers on behalf of learners, and numbers of learners will be lower than the ILR numbers. Only payments made between August 2013 and April 2016 are captured, whilst the ILR captures learners on a course with an advanced learning loan that started during this period, including some where the first scheduled payment date is beyond the end of April 2016.

Final data for the 2015/16 academic year show there were 95,000 learners with a 24+ advanced learning loan, an increase of 26.1 per cent on 2014/15. Of these there were:

- 89,000 learners with a 24+ advanced learning loan participating at Level 3
- 6,300 learners with a 24+ advanced learning loan participating at Level 4+

Traineeships (Tables 12.1, 12.2 & 12.3)

In the 2015/16 academic year show there were 24,100 traineeship starts, an increase of 24.1 per cent on the previous year. Of these there were:

- 14,700 traineeship starts aged under 19
- 9,400 traineeship starts aged 19 to 24

There were 17,400 traineeship completions in 2015/16, of which 10,500 were aged under 19 and 6,900 were aged 19 to 24.

There were 10,500 traineeship progressions in 2015/16. Of these, 7,000 were progressions to a job, apprenticeship, further full time education or other training for those aged under 19, and 3,400 were progressions to a job or apprenticeship for those aged 19-24.

Qualification Achievement Rates (QARs) (Tables 14.1 & 14.2)

Qualification Achievement Rates (QARs), previously referred to as success rates, are calculated for individual qualifications. They show how many learners that started a qualification went on to successfully complete it. Achievement rates are typically calculated at a qualification level, but can be aggregated across different types of course, or for particular colleges or providers.

Prior to 2013/14 QARs were calculated using different methodologies for each of the different strands of further education provision. Employer-based provision (apprenticeships and workplace learning (WPL)) used a primary *Overall* achievement rate measure (based on the later of the actual and planned end dates) and a secondary *Timely* measure (based on the planned end date). However, Education and Training (E & T) provision had a different measure that was based upon the learning planned end date.

In the 2013/14 academic year the methodologies were aligned to give a consistent method of calculation across all provision areas, following changes to government-funded learning provision. E & T provision has adopted the Overall and Timely measures as used in apprenticeships and WPL. The Overall measure will be the principal measure and the one reported in this SFR, and will be used to assess the quality of provision against the minimum standards that are expected for funded training. The Timely measure will also be produced as a supporting measure.

The change in E & T methodology causes a break in the time series for these statistics and means that the qualification achievement rates for 2013/14 onwards cannot be directly compared with those from the previous years. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-qualification-success-rates-rationale-for-2013-to-2014> for more details of the changes. In 2014/15 the E & T and WPL achievement rates were combined into a single measure for E & T.

In 2014/15 there was a problem with the Qualification Management Application (QMA) of an awarding organisation that meant further education providers may have been unable to record results or obtain certificates during the period April to July 2015. In the majority of cases certificates were issued in time, although there is a risk that some results were missing or recorded in error.

Apprenticeship providers responded to this issue in different ways depending on their delivery models and the individual needs of learners and it may have resulted in a higher or lower QAR for different frameworks. For this reason there is the potential for some variation in the achievement rates between providers for specific frameworks but the data indicate that the impact on the overall rates presented here will be negligible.

There is no evidence of an impact on overall education and training achievement rates. The affected cohort for the duration of the QMA issues represents less than 4% of the total aims in scope for the 2014/15 E&T achievement rate calculations, and only a small fraction of these will have experienced problems.

The QAR methodology was changed in 2015/16, please see the Quality and Methodology document for details and for an impact assessment.

15 June QAR update

The 2015/16 QAR figures in Tables 14.1 and 14.2 originally published in 16 February 2017 SFR have been refreshed in this revision to the March 2017 SFR.

This coincides with the publication of the National Achievement Rates Tables (NARTs) 2015 to 2016 on 15 June 2017 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-national-success-rates-tables>), and aligns with a corrected methodology used to calculate provider achievement rates.

The analysis and charts in this section show QARs figures for 2013/14 to 2015/16 are **based on the new 2015/16 methodology**.

Figure 9 shows that adult (19+) Education and Training achievement rates, from which the following can be seen when comparing 2013/14 to 2015/16:

- English and maths achievement rates have decreased by 1.3 percentage points (from 80.3 per cent to 79.0 per cent)
- Full level 2 achievement rates have increased by just over 1 percentage point (from 86.7 per cent to 87.8 per cent)
- Full level 3 achievement rates have decreased slightly by 0.2 percentage points (from 80.0 per cent to 79.8 per cent)

Figure 9: Adult (19+) education and training achievement rates 2013/14 to 2015/16
England, 2013/14 to 2015/16

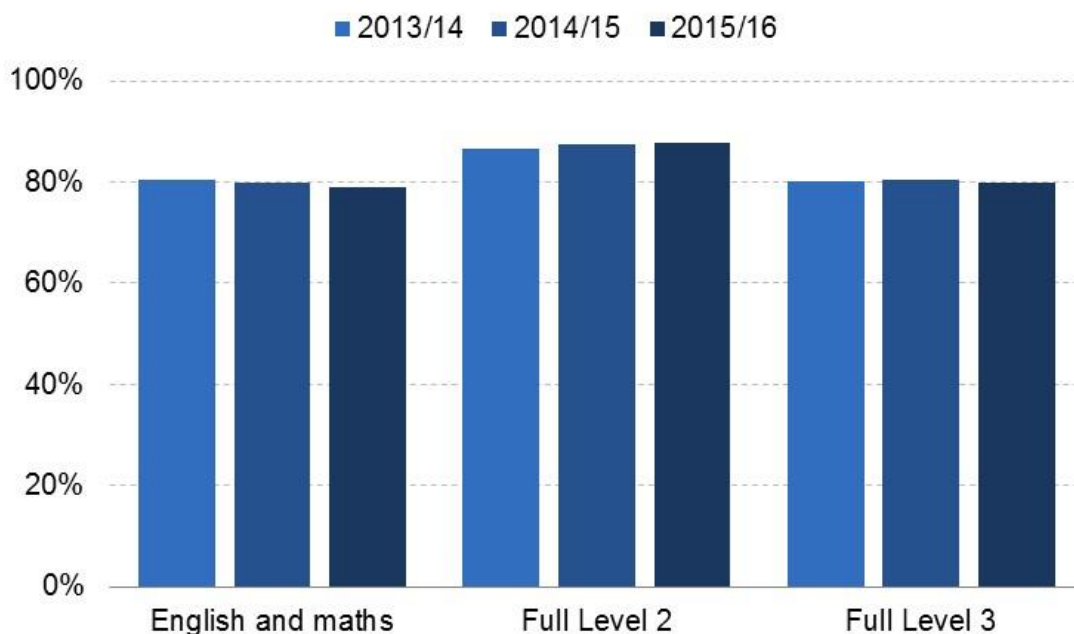


Figure 10 shows that achievement rates for all age apprenticeships have decreased between 2013/14 and 2015/16 by 0.9 percentage points (from 67.9 per cent to 67.0 per cent).

Figure 10: All age apprenticeship achievement rates 2013/14 to 2015/16
 England, 2013/14 to 2015/16



In 2015/16, adult (19+) education and training QARs were:

- 85.9 per cent for all education and training, a decrease of 0.5 percentage points compared with 2014/15 and 79.0 per cent for English and maths qualifications, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points compared with 2014/15
- 83.6 per cent for Level 2 qualifications, a decrease of 1.8 percentage points compared with 2014/15 (87.8 per cent for Full level 2, an increase of 0.3 percentage points)
- 80.5 per cent for Level 3 qualifications, a decrease of 1.1 percentage points compared with 2014/15 (79.8 per cent for Full level 3, a decrease of 0.6 percentage points)

In 2015/16, apprenticeship QARs were:

- 67.0 per cent for all apprenticeships, a decrease of 0.5 percentage points compared with 2014/15
- 66.5 per cent for intermediate level apprenticeships, a decrease of 0.7 percentage points compared with 2014/15
- 68.5 per cent for advanced level apprenticeships, an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared with 2014/15
- 58.3 per cent for higher level apprenticeships, a decrease of 0.5 percentage points compared to 2014/15
- 66.2 per cent for apprenticeships by those aged 19 and over, an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared with 2014/15
- 69.3 per cent for apprenticeships by those aged under 19, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points compared with 2014/15

A more detailed breakdown of QARs can be found in the 'National Achievement Rates Tables', which are a set of supplementary tables to this SFR which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-national-success-rates-tables>

Adult attainment in the population (Tables 15.1, 15.2, 16.1 and 16.2)

Having a skilled population is vital to maintaining the international competitiveness of our economy and creating high quality jobs. Improving our skills does not just improve our economy; it also has the potential to make the UK a fairer place by creating more social mobility and enabling people to play their part in society.

Labour Force Survey (LFS) data are used to measure the highest qualification levels of the working age population in England, where Level 2 equates to achievement of 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent qualifications, Level 3 equates to achievement of 2 or more A-levels or equivalent qualifications, and Level 4 and above to higher education and degree level qualifications. See <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/compare-different-qualification-levels> for more information.

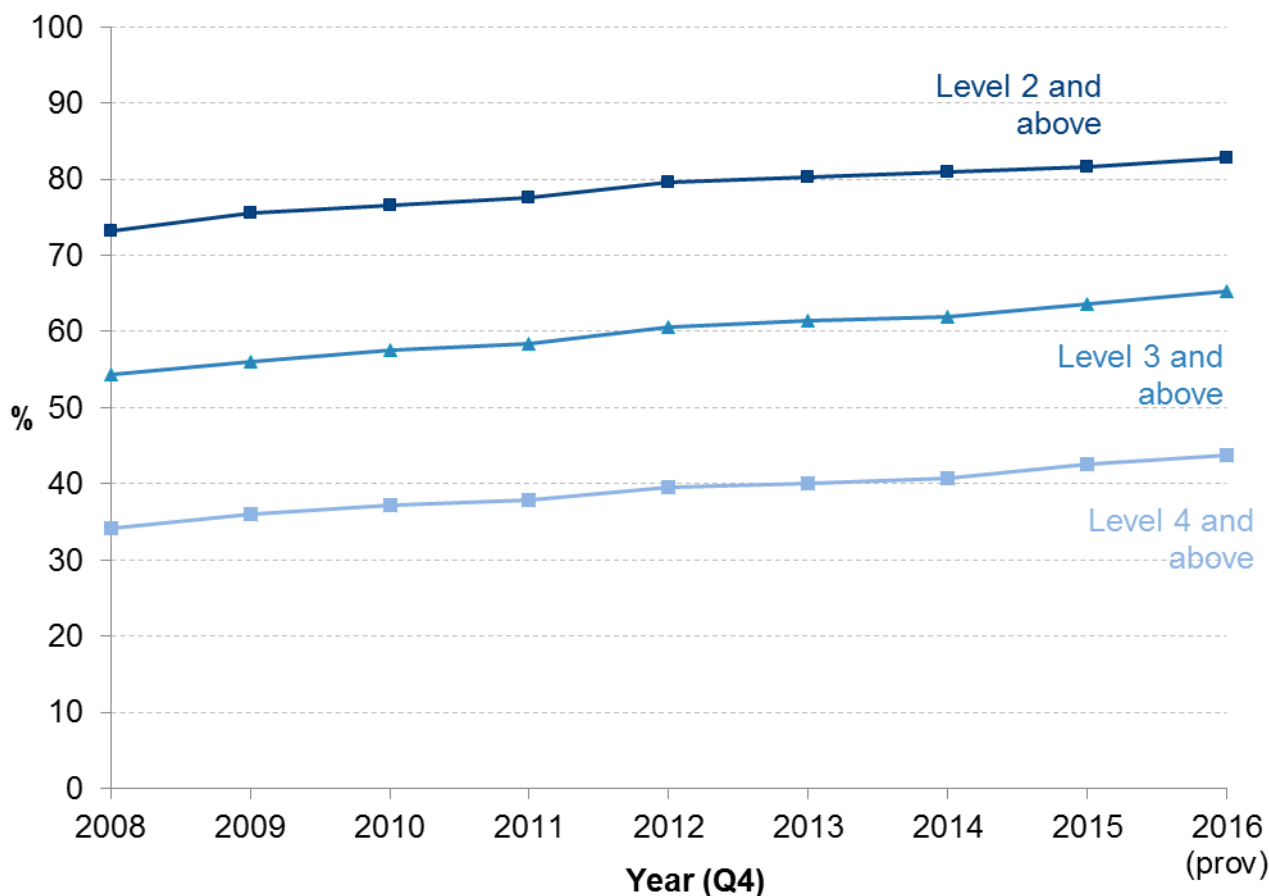
Data on the highest level of qualification was revised in late 2015 following a reweighting of the LFS that affects figures from 2001 onwards.

This section has updated in this SFR. Estimates previously published for 2012 and 2013 have been revised following a reweighting of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) covering 2012 to 2015 (the 2014 data was revised in the November 2016 SFR). This SFR also now includes final 2015 data, along with provisional 2016 data.

Figure 4 shows that the proportion of men and women qualified to each of Level 2, 3 and 4 have risen each year between 2008 and 2016¹⁶:

- from 73.2 per cent in 2008 to 82.8 per cent in 2016 qualified to at least Level 2
- from 54.3 per cent in 2008 to 65.3 per cent in 2016 qualified to at least Level 3
- from 34.2 per cent in 2008 to 43.8 per cent in 2016 qualified to at least Level 4

Figure 4: Highest level of qualification held by adults of working age
England, 2008 to 2016 (provisional)



¹⁶ Data in 2016 is provisional, all other years are final

3. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel format here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>.

Final 2015/16 Tables

- 1.1 Adult (19+) FE and Skills Participation by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 1.2 Adult (19+) FE and Skills Achievement by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 2 All Age Apprenticeship Participation by Level and Age (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 3.1 Adult (19+) Education and Training Participation by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 3.2 Adult (19+) Education and Training Achievement by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 4 Adult (19+) FE and Skills: English and Maths Participation and Achievement by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 5 All Age Demographic Summary of of FE and Skills Participation (2015/16)
- 6 All Age Demographic Summary of Apprenticeship Participation (2015/16)
- 7.1 All Age Apprenticeship Programme Starts by Level and Age (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 7.2 All Age Apprenticeship Programme Achievements by Level and Age (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 8.1 Workplace Learning Starts by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 8.2 Workplace Learning Achievements by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 9 Community Learning Participation and Achievement by Type (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 10.1 Adult (18+) FE and Skills - Offender Learning Participation by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 10.2 Adult (18+) FE and Skills - Offender Learning Achievements by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 11 24+ FE and Skills: Participation with 24+ Advanced Learning Loans (Level 3+) (2013/14 to 2015/16)
- 12.1 Traineeship Starts by Age (2013/14 to 2015/16)
- 12.2 Traineeship Completions by Age (2013/14 to 2015/16)
- 12.3 Traineeship Progressions by Age (2013/14 to 2015/16)
- 13 Employer Ownership Pilot Starts (2012/13 to 2015/16)
- 14.1 Adult (19+) Education and Training Achievement Rates by Level (2010/11 to 2015/16) [revised June 2017]
- 14.2 Apprenticeship Achievement Rates by Level and Age (2010/11 to 2015/16)
- 15.1 Level of Highest Qualification Held by People aged 19-64 in England (Quarter 4) – percentages
- 15.2 Level of Highest Qualification Held by People aged 19-64 in England (Quarter 4) – volumes (thousands)
- 16.1 Level Of Highest Qualification Held By Economically Active Adults In England (Quarter 4) – Percentages
- 16.2 Level Of Highest Qualification Held By Economically Active Adults In England (Quarter 4) – volumes (thousands)
- 17.1 Vocational Qualification Achievements in the UK by Qualification Type, 2006 (October) to 2012 (March)
- 17.2 Vocational Qualification Achievements in England by Qualification Type, 2012 (April) to 2017 (June)

Year to Date Tables

- 18 Adult (19+) FE and Skills Participation by Level (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 19 Adult (19+) FE and Skills – English and Maths Participation by Level (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 20 Adult (19+) Education and Training Participation by Level (2016/17– Reported to Date)
- 21 All Age Apprenticeship Participation by Level and Age (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 22.1 All Age Apprenticeship Programme Starts by Level and Age (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 22.2 All Age Apprenticeship Programme Starts/Achievements by Level and Age (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 23 Starts on the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers Scheme (AGE 16 to 24) - Pipeline Starts Payments Made (February 2012 to April 2017)
- 24 Community Learning Participation by Type (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 25 Adult (18+) FE and Skills - Offender Learning Participation by Level (2016/17– Reported to Date)
- 26 24+ FE and Skills – Participation with 24+ Advanced Learner Loans (Level 3+) (2016/17 – Reported to Date)
- 27.1 Traineeship Starts by Age (2016/17 – Reported to Date)

27.2 Traineeship Completions by Age (2016/17 – Reported to Date)

27.3 Traineeship Progression by Age (2016/17 – Reported to Date)

When reviewing the tables, please note that:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics (https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/) requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
We suppress some figures	In the SFR main tables, headline volumes below 50 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). In the supplementary tables volumes below 5 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). A percentage of less than 0.5% is suppressed.
We adopt symbols to help identify suppression	Symbols are used in the tables as follows: ‘-’ indicates a headline volume with below 50 in the SFR main tables and below 5 in the supplementary tables. ‘*’ indicates a percentage of less than 0.5%.
We round figures	In the SFR main tables, headline volumes are reported rounded to the nearest 100. In the supplementary tables volumes are rounded to the nearest 10. The exception to this is any figure that is an exact duplicate of a value in the headline figures (e.g. Grand Totals), which are rounded to the nearest 100 and avoid contradictory figures. Percentages reported are calculated on pre-rounded data and given to one decimal place.
Coverage of the data	This SFR includes finalised data for the full 2015/16 academic year (August 2015 to July 2016) reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in October 2016 by further education providers. This SFR also includes provisional full-year data for 2016/17 academic year (August 2016 to July 2017).

4. Further information is available

Additional breakdowns of further education statistics are published online as supplementary tables. These include breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, region, local authority, parliamentary constituency, sector subject area and funding stream.

Please see the FE Data Library here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>

5. Technical information

A quality and methodology information document accompanies this SFR. This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

More technical information, please see the latest SFR release here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

6. National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

7. Get in touch

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Department
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