



14 June 2018

Contents

1.	Apprenticeship service account (ASA) registrations and commitments (Tables 1a and 1b)	2
2.	Monthly apprenticeship starts (Table 2).....	3
3.	The apprenticeship funding system.....	5
4.	Definitions	6
5.	Accompanying tables	7
6.	Further information is available	7
7.	Official Statistics.....	7
8.	Get in touch.....	8

About this release

This statistics publication is produced in order to provide transparency with regards to the apprenticeship service, an online service implemented in May 2017 that allows employers to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily. This publication contains statistics (reported to date) relevant to this new system, its usage, and the apprenticeship programme as a whole in England.

This publication will continue to evolve over time as more data are collected and their relationships to other further education measures becomes more established.

Caution should be taken interpreting what apprenticeship service data may mean for the overall apprenticeship programme given this is a new system, intended to grow over coming years. It has the potential to be affected by other factors, for example, users typically take time to adjust to recording data on a new system.

Future publications

The next release of these statistics will be 12 July 2018. 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 and how this is happening.

In this publication

The following tables are included in this publication:

National tables (.xls and .ods)

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

Feedback

We are changing how our releases look and welcome feedback on any aspect of this document at:

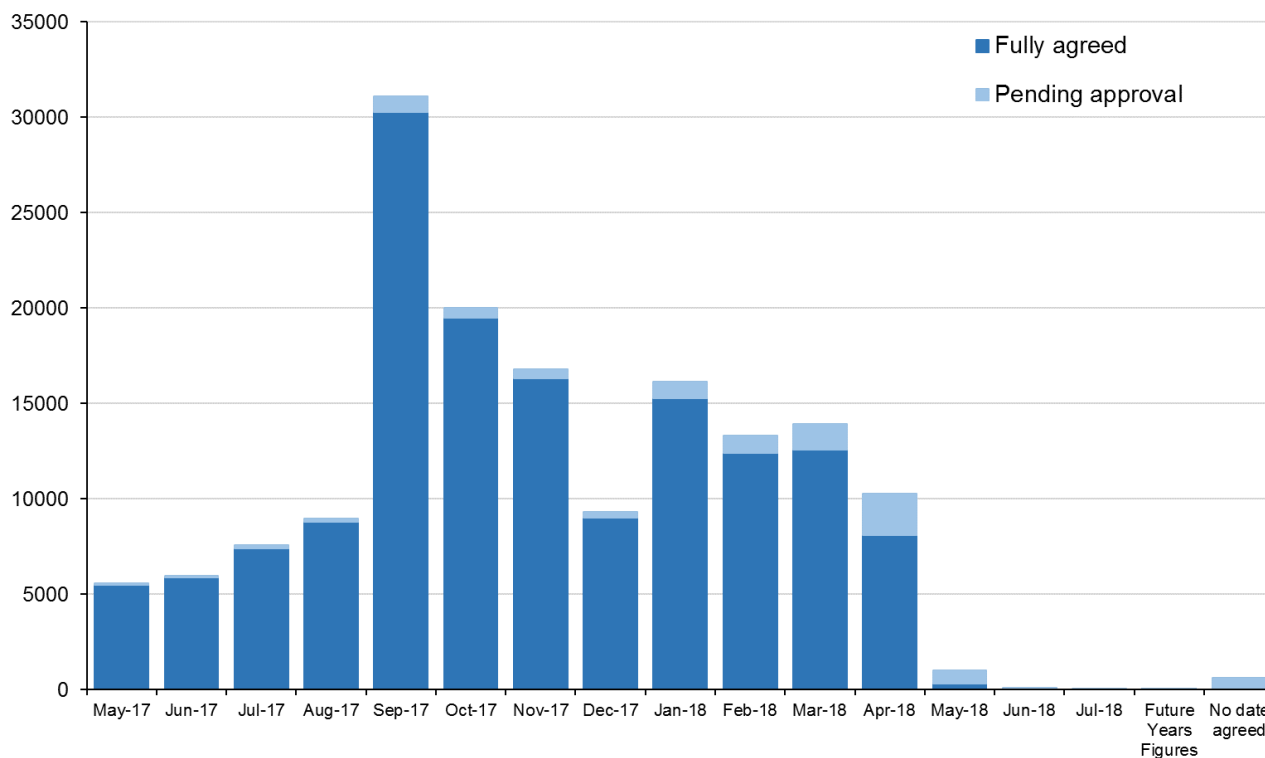
FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk.

1. Apprenticeship service account (ASA) registrations and commitments (Tables 1a and 1b)

As at 30 April 2018, there have been a total of 13,900 ASAs registered. Please note that the date of registration is the date the apprenticeship service account first registered their Pay As You Earn (PAYE) account number and a legal entity in the digital apprenticeship service system.

As at 30 April 2018, there have been a total of 160,800 commitments entered into the apprenticeship service. Of these, 151,400 were fully agreed.

Figure 1: Commitments by training start date, as reported at 30 April 2018



76,000 commitments were for apprentices aged 25 and over. 63,700 commitments were intermediate apprenticeships, and 69,800 were advanced apprenticeships. Of the 160,800 commitments in the apprenticeship service as at 30 April 2018, 19,100 were for the 2016 to 2017 academic year, and 140,900 were for the 2017 to 2018 academic year¹.

Please note, a commitment may be recorded on the apprenticeship system after the date has passed, and therefore all data should be treated as provisional. Details of the age of the apprentice and the level of the apprenticeship of the commitment does not have to be completed at the pending approval stage. The data is fully captured when providers confirm details in the individualised learner record (ILR) collection. In the interests of transparency, what is known at this point of reporting has been included where possible.

¹ Figures are calculated from unrounded data.

2. Monthly apprenticeship starts (Table 2)

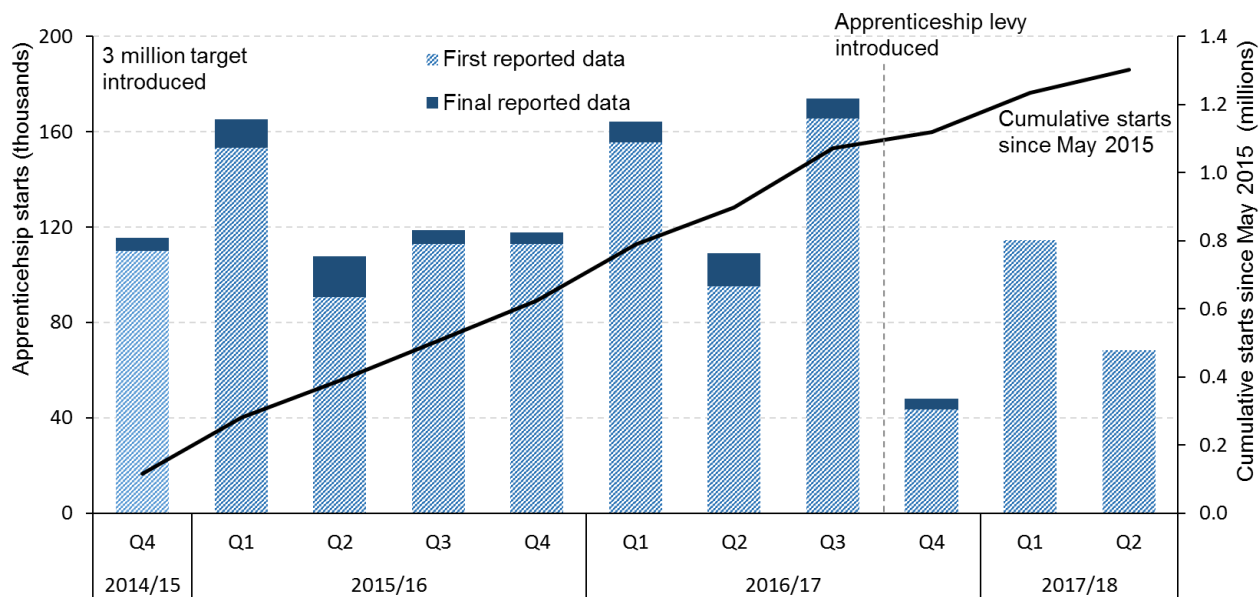
There have been 261,200 apprenticeship starts reported to date between August 2017 and March 2018 for the 2017/18 academic year. This compares to 362,400 and 346,300 starts reported in the equivalent period in 2016/17 and 2015/16 respectively.

As of May 2017 there were significant structural changes to the apprenticeship funding system including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and Apprenticeship Service. As shown in the January 2018 release of this publication, 91.7 per cent of those who had PAYE schemes with apprenticeship levy declarations in England of over £150,000 had registered on the Apprenticeship Service. These firms have two years to spend their funds and as the new system becomes more established, such changes are likely to significantly impact on apprenticeship starts being reported.

Quarterly apprenticeship starts data, as shown in Figure 2 provide a more robust basis than monthly starts for interpreting how figures relate to historical trends. Figure 2 shows quarterly apprenticeship starts from the fourth quarter of the 2014/15 academic year onwards, along with cumulative starts, as published in the Further education and skills: March 2018 statistics publication. Also shown are the first reported starts in each quarter (i.e. the figures that were initially published and then were subsequently finalised) showing how much first reported figures are subsequently revised. The next update to these quarterly figures covering August 2017 to April 2018 will be published on 12 July 2018.

Figure 2 highlights that apprenticeship starts in quarter three of 2016/17 (just before the introduction of the apprenticeship levy) were much larger than in 2015/16 (173,800 vs 118,800). Additionally, starts in quarter four of 2016/17 after the introduction of the apprenticeship levy decreased to 48,000 compared to the same period in 2015/16 (117,800) and 2014/15 (115,300).

Figure 2: Quarterly apprenticeship starts from May 2015



The profile of apprenticeship starts changed significantly in the run up to the introduction of the levy and beyond, therefore care should be taken when comparing individual months with previous years as they are unlikely to provide a meaningful year on year trend.

This is especially the case when trying to compare starts in March 2018 to starts in March 2017, as there was an unusually large increase in starts in March (and April) 2017 ahead of the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, and then an unusually large decrease in starts in May 2017 when compared to previous years.

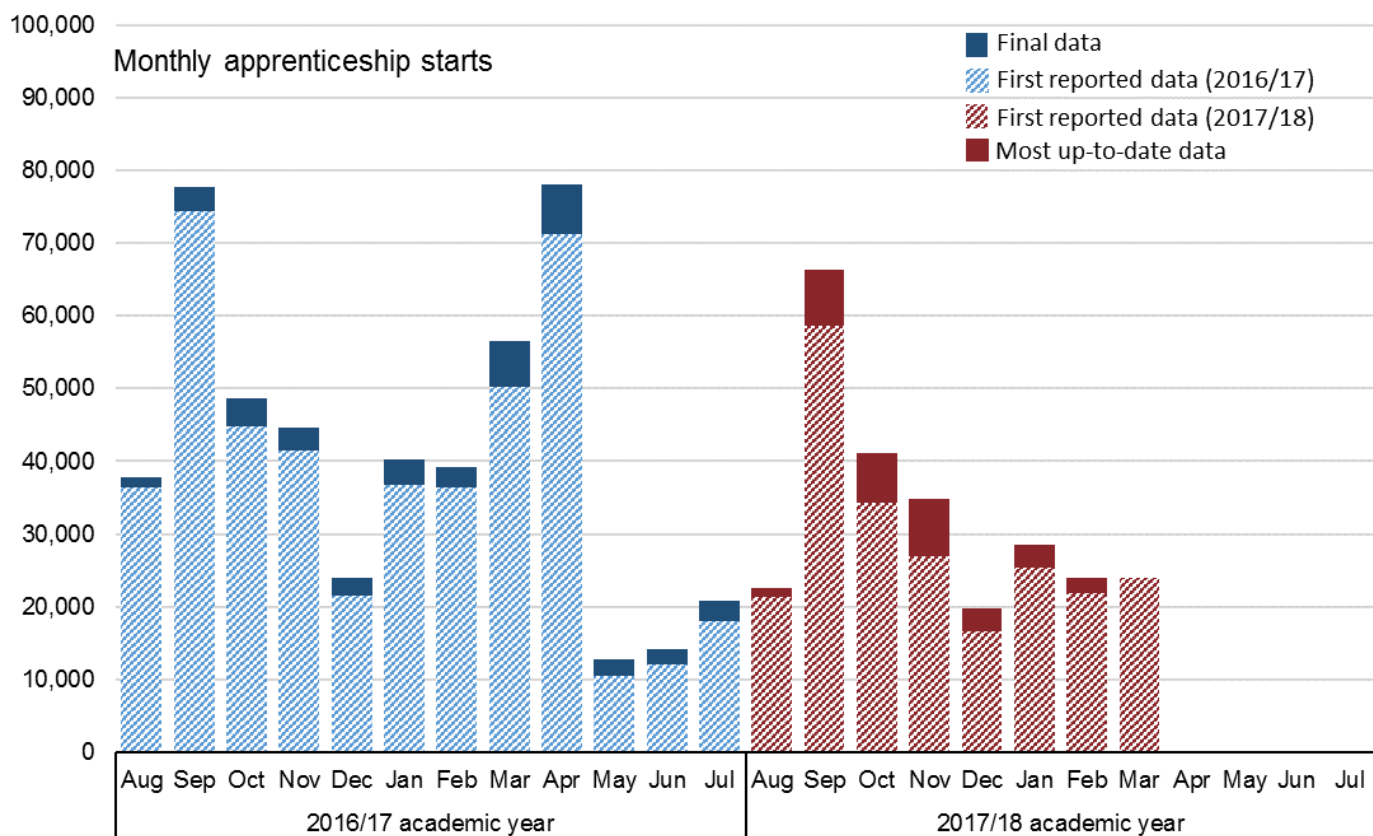
Figure 3 provides monthly apprenticeship starts from August 2016 onwards. The March 2018 starts are based on returns up until the end of April 2018 and are presented for transparency purposes. Finalised figures for all months will be available in November 2018.

Figure 3 displays the first reported monthly apprenticeship starts for 2017/18 along with the corresponding 2016/17 figures. For the first three months of each academic year (August to October) these 'first reported data' correspond to the fourth ILR data return made by providers to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and is known as 'R04' data, for November it corresponds to the fifth ILR data return known as 'R05', whereas for December it corresponds to the sixth ILR return (R06) and so on.

Also shown for comparison are the finalised figures for the 2016/17 academic year; this shows how figures can change as further data are returned to the ESFA. The most up-to-date figures for the current 2017/18 academic year (based on the R09 return) are also presented.

Subsequent monthly starts will be first reported using the next ILR return, e.g. April starts will be first reported using the R10 return, May starts will use the R11 return and so on. Finalised data for each month will be published in November 2018 (these will be based on the R14 ILR return).

Figure 3: Apprenticeship starts by month between August 2016 and March 2018



3. The apprenticeship funding system

Changes in the way apprenticeship funding works were introduced and implemented from May 2017. A key aspect of these changes was the introduction of the apprenticeship service, an online service to allow employers to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily. Levy-payers are able to register on the apprenticeship service so that they can:

- receive levy funds to spend on apprenticeships
- manage their apprentices
- pay their training provider

Guidance about these changes and paying the apprenticeship levy can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work>.

Apprenticeship data

This statistics publication is produced in order to provide transparency with regards to this new system, its usage, and the apprenticeship programme as whole. This publication will continue to evolve over time as more data are collected and their relationships to other further education measures becomes more established.

Caution should be taken interpreting what apprenticeship service data may mean for the overall apprenticeship programme given this is a new system, intended to grow over coming years. It has the potential to be affected by other factors, for example, users typically take time to adjust to recording data on a new system.

Monthly Starts

This statistics publication includes headline monthly apprenticeship starts data, recorded on the Individualised Learner Record. Historical data, for comparison, were published alongside the November 2017 Further Education and Skills publication. This provided a 36-month back series available at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-november-2017>

This release contains apprenticeship starts reported to date for the first eight months of the 2017/18 academic year (August 2017 to March 2018) and is based on information returned to the ESFA in May 2018. These are the first published (reported) data for these months, providing an early view of performance, and are released for transparency purposes only.

Since providers report some of their data for this period later in the year, the data are subject to change (in either direction and so these figures are referred to as 'reported so far' or 'reported to date' to reflect this. The last returns of the academic year are submitted in October 2018 and the finalised figures published in November 2018.

It is not possible to determine how complete or incomplete the information returned so far is as the proportion of the actual apprenticeship starts returned each month varies greatly from year to year and from provider to provider. In 2016/17, the first reported monthly starts were as much as 18% below the final end-of-year figure and took up to 3 months to reach 95% of the finalised figure. This is particularly the case as provider reporting behaviour may change year to year; in addition, provider reporting behaviour may have particularly been affected since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in April 2017. As a result, caution should be taken when using and interpreting these data, especially when comparing data reported so far in 2017/18 to the equivalent reporting period in 2016/17, as they will be subject to change. Comparisons that are more accurate can be made once finalised data are published in November 2018.

4. Definitions

Apprenticeship service accounts:

In order for an apprenticeship service account to be created and registered, the user must have completed three necessary steps:

Registration (creating a user login)

Adding an organisation (legal entity)

Adding a valid PAYE scheme

Completing these three steps creates a unique identifier for the registered ASA, which is our principle measure of the number of accounts. The apprenticeship service went live for registrations from 23 January 2017. All employers can use the apprenticeship service to search for apprenticeships and a training provider.

Legal entities

An organisation (legal entity) in the apprenticeship service is defined as a body that can legally employ apprentices and makes agreements with training providers; for example a company as defined under their company number.

PAYE schemes

PAYE schemes are defined by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as the system to collect Income Tax and National Insurance from employment as part of their payroll. Employers may operate multiple PAYE schemes and more than one PAYE scheme can be linked to one Apprenticeship Service Account.

Commitments

A commitment is where a potential apprentice, who is expected to go on to start an apprenticeship, has been recorded in the system. The apprenticeship service provides a self-managed service on which organisations and providers can add the details of an apprentice. These commitments may be either fully agreed or pending approval. These were able to be entered from March 2017.

A fully agreed commitment has agreement on the apprenticeship service from both the organisation and the training provider.

A pending approval commitment means that details of an apprentice have been added but neither the provider and/or the organisation have finalised the commitment in the service. These commitments show an intent for an apprentice to start, however may not materialise into a fully agreed commitment in the future.

Apprenticeship start:

A start refers to the number of apprenticeship 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 individual apprenticeship they start; for example, if one individual started one intermediate level apprenticeship and one advanced level apprenticeship, they would be counted as two starts.

Apprenticeship levy:

The UK wide apprenticeship levy came into force on 6 April 2017 requiring all UK public and private sector employers with an annual pay 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.

More information on paying the apprenticeship levy can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-apprenticeship-levy>

Levy supported:

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

5. Accompanying tables

The following tables are available in Excel and OpenDocument Spreadsheet (ODS) format here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr#2018-releases>

Year to date tables

- 1a Total number of commitments by training start date and age as reported at 30 April 2018
- 1b Total number of commitments by training start date and level as reported at 30 April 2018
- 2 All Age Apprenticeship Programme Starts by Level and Age (2017/18 – Reported to Date)

6. Further information is available

For the most recent apprenticeship statistics and further breakdowns, please see the Further education and skills statistics publication, the Apprenticeships and traineeships release, and the Apprenticeships FE data library:

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

7. Official Statistics

These are Official Statistics and have been produced in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

This 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 Official 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.

8. Get in touch

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Department for Education

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

Reference: Apprenticeship and levy statistics: June 2018



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