



27 August 2020

This release includes summary statistics on key apprenticeship learning data in England for the latest month reported. DfE intends to continue to publish short updates on monthly apprenticeship starts as timely as possible, and content in these repurposed releases will seek to include other analysis on the impact of COVID-19 once available.

We also plan to publish the end-of-year Further Education and Skills and Apprenticeships and Traineeships releases normally published in November, which will include data for the full academic year¹ 2019/20. This will include underlying data normally provided but, the commentary and tables will be subject to change so as to focus on more relevant measures or analysis to the current situation.

In the May, June and July updates to this release we noted the potential impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeship data and reporting. We also provided more transparency on continuing activity in the apprenticeship programme during the pandemic by releasing the latest data, reported to date, for the very latest month available in separate tables accompanying the release, which is not normally provided due to level of underreporting at this point in the year and during the pandemic period is likely to be at further risk of misreporting as providers and employers try and ascertain an accurate picture of activity. We have repeated this in the August update by providing data for July.

Please see the [Apprenticeships and traineeships: July 2020](#) statistics publication for more information and caveats on interpreting the data.

We continue to seek your feedback on the type of breakdowns of most use during this period, such as national apprenticeship starts by age, level and individual standard, so we can consider going forward and in light of data quality assessments.

1. Summary statistics

Apprenticeships

<p>Headline statistics</p> <p>(Main table pack, Table 3)</p>	<p>Latest figures for the first 11 months of the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to June 2020) show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship starts reported to date are 299,700 • Proportion of starts on standards was 75.3 per cent (225,700) • Proportion of starts supported by ASA levy funds² was 68.2 per cent (204,500) • The proportion of starts by level was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intermediate level: 31.1 per cent (93,300) ○ Advanced level: 43.6 per cent (130,600)³ ○ Higher level: 25.3 per cent (75,900) • The proportion of starts by age group was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 16-18: 24.4 per cent (73,100) ○ 19-24: 29.6 per cent (88,700) ○ 25 and over: 46.0 per cent (137,900)
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¹ Previous quarterly releases can be found in the [further education and skills statistics collection](#).

² During this reporting period a small number of apprentices employed by organisations that do not pay the levy were funded using the apprenticeship service system. The service was extended to all employers that do not pay the levy to register and reserve funds on 9 January 2020.

³ The proportion of starts at intermediate or advanced level was 74.7 per cent (223,800).

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- The number of apprenticeship starts reported to date for June was 12,400; in June 2019, the number reported at the same point was 20,900.
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Note: In March 2020 we published data⁴ for the first six months of the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to January 2020), prior to the introduction of any restrictions due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which showed the total number of apprenticeship starts at that point had decreased to 198,600 from 214,200 in the first two quarters of 2018/19, a decrease of 7.3 per cent.

Individualised Learner Record (ILR) administrative data

We publish a high volume of FE statistics using provisional, in year data and use latest data as soon as available despite not being 'final'. This enables us to provide the earliest picture of FE performance and allows users to assess the impact of government-funded provision and hold the 'system' to account.

However, it should be noted that the ILR is an administrative data collection system designed primarily for operational use in order to fund training providers for learners in FE and on apprenticeship programmes. Therefore, there are important limitations for users to be aware of and consider when producing analysis and making in year comparisons, such as:

- in year data returns being subject to later revisions
- different proportions being observed during the year for e.g. learner characteristics such as ethnicity
- some in year returns being more robust/reliable than others due to completeness of information at the time of the return, particularly for returns earlier in the year
- provider reporting behaviour changing from one year to the next, e.g. in how timely they make the returns

The fact that providers can submit data for earlier periods in later data returns can lead to 'data lag'. This highlights that the ILR does not provide 'real time' data, i.e. data returns provide information about the most recent month, but providers may not necessarily include latest information on their learners straight away, which delays finalising information until final, end of year data is returned each autumn.

The examples above can lead to differences between real world events and what can be understood from the ILR. This includes the need to make accurate data returns to support financial claims which may not provide the insight needed to fully understand what is happening on the ground such as learners being subject to short periods of suspended training and/or providers and employers continuing training programmes through the use of distance learning, as may be happening currently in some instances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there could also be different levels of intensity of training currently, e.g. some learners might be continuing but in a reduced capacity which might not be being captured, pending a return to 'normal' circumstances.

The apprenticeship starts data in this release are based on the twelfth ILR data return from FE and apprenticeship providers for the 2019/20 academic year, with a return date of 6 August 2020.

Provider reporting during the period affected by COVID-19

The latest data in this publication includes data relating to the period affected by COVID-19 and the nationwide lockdown, i.e. from March 2020 onwards (note: the UK lockdown was announced on 23 March so is likely to have impacted on, for example, apprenticeships starts from the last week of March). Therefore, extra care should be taken in comparing and interpreting data presented in this release.

It is likely that the pandemic has affected provider behaviour in terms of the reporting of FE and apprenticeship learning during the affected period, and this could vary by provider. For example, some providers may have been unable to make returns due to the lockdown, or if they have made returns, these could be of variable completeness. Some providers may even return more timely and accurate returns than usual at this point in the year for funding purposes.

The furlough scheme may also have impacted on how aspects of ILR data are currently being recorded, such as how the 'learning status' of a learner has been captured, e.g. whether a learner is currently recorded as a continuing learner or whether they are being recorded as being on a break in learning while still being with an employer. Such information may not be finalised until the final end-of-year ILR data return in autumn 2020.

Caveats on making in year comparisons

Comparisons of learner characteristics using in-year data are less reliable than using full-year final data. In-year data when first reported is provisional and subject to revisions as providers continue to record data for earlier periods in later collections of the ILR. The difference between provisional and final figures can also vary throughout the year and

⁴ [Apprenticeships and traineeships: March 2020](#)

between years, as can the proportion of learner characteristics as noted in the [Apprenticeships and traineeships: March 2020 commentary](#). Such variation can be caused by changes to the mix of provision between years.

Impact of the apprenticeship levy

As of May 2017, reforms have been made to how apprenticeship funding works, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship service. The profile of apprenticeship starts changed significantly since the introduction of the levy which, along with the introduction of apprenticeship standards (that are replacing frameworks), has impacted on the number and nature of apprenticeship starts and participation.

Starts during the period affected by the COVID-19 lockdown

The data in this section is provided to give transparency on continuing activity in the apprenticeship programme during the pandemic. It includes data from 23 March when the lockdown was announced and includes those reported to date for July based on returns from training providers returned on 6 August. Starts for the period as reported at this point in 2018/19 are also provided. The data covering this period will be provisional until final data becomes available in November but will improve with later monthly returns given that providers can return data after the period it relates to.

As noted, we would not normally include data for the very latest month in this release due to completeness. For example, at this point in 2018/19, data reported to date for July starts was only 75.9 per cent of the final figure based on end of year data. Reporting of data by providers over the pandemic period is more provisional than normal and could lead to over and underreporting as providers and employers try and ascertain the latest position with learners and or have issues with reporting. Therefore, extra care should be taken in comparing and interpreting the data presented here.

Please note also: the timing of the provision mix over the year and between years changes significantly, therefore care should be taken interpreting the change in Table 1 below from 2018/19 to 2019/20. Additionally, the 2018/19 data would also include more frameworks potentially supporting different sectors than the standards in 2019/20, so is included just for reference. Tables published alongside this release provide apprenticeship starts for the month of June in isolation.

There have been 53,530 apprenticeship starts reported to date between 23 March and 31 July 2020, fewer than the 101,300 reported for this period at this point last year, a decrease of 47.2 per cent (see Table 1 below)⁵. As noted, final data will not become available until later in the year, therefore at this point it is unclear what the true number of starts in the affected period was or if the level of reporting at this point in the year has been affected by the lockdown.

To note also, as reported in the Apprenticeship and traineeships: April 2020 publication, which included data prior to the lockdown, latest reported to date starts for 2019/20 were down on the same point in the previous year, with starts in all months (except September) in 2019/20 reported to date also being lower than those reported at the same point in 2018/19.

Of the starts reported during this period in 2019/20:

- Learners aged 25 and over make up 62.5 per cent of starts; this was 55.1 per cent in the previous year.
- Intermediate apprenticeships accounted for 25.6 per cent of starts; this was 36.8 per cent in 2018/19.
- Higher apprenticeships accounted for 31.5 per cent of starts; this was 17.4 per cent in 2018/19.
- Business, Administration and Law, and Health, Public Services and Care were the dominant sector subject areas comprising 69.3 per cent of starts in 2019/20. These were also the main sector subject areas the previous year, but they represented a smaller proportion of starts (62.4 per cent).

⁵ In the Apprenticeships and traineeships: July 2020 publication, the equivalent starts between 23 March and 30 June were 34,690 in 2020 and 72,800 in 2019, a decrease of 52.3 per cent.

Table 1: Apprenticeship starts from 23 March to 31 July, reported to date(The return date for 2019/20 was 6 August 2020; the equivalent date for 2018/19 was 6 August 2019⁶)

	2018/19 (at this point last year)		2019/20 (reported to date)	
	Apprenticeship starts	Proportion of total	Apprenticeship starts	Proportion of total
Total starts	101,300		53,530	
Age				
Under 19	16,390	16.2%	5,230	9.8%
19-24	29,110	28.7%	14,860	27.8%
25+	55,790	55.1%	33,440	62.5%
Level				
Intermediate Apprenticeship	37,300	36.8%	13,690	25.6%
Advanced Apprenticeship	46,330	45.7%	22,990	42.9%
Higher Apprenticeship	17,660	17.4%	16,850	31.5%
Sector subject area				
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,160	1.1%	630	1.2%
Arts, Media and Publishing	200	*	220	*
Business, Administration and Law	31,070	30.7%	17,520	32.7%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	2,120	2.1%	1,000	1.9%
Education and Training	1,450	1.4%	1,290	2.4%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	9,910	9.8%	5,360	10.0%
Health, Public Services and Care	32,170	31.8%	19,560	36.5%
Information and Communication Technology	5,720	5.6%	3,430	6.4%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	1,810	1.8%	690	1.3%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	15,680	15.5%	3,810	7.1%
Science and Mathematics	10	*	20	*

Note: The proportion of starts by sector subject area (and age/level) can vary by month to month. The number and proportion of starts by sector subject area in the latest full final year data is shown in Table 2 for context.

⁶ Returns from providers are submitted on the 4th working day of the month. Further information on return dates can be found in documents on the [ILR standard file specifications and reference data](#) page.

Table 2: Apprenticeship starts for the full 2018/19 academic year

Sector Subject Area	Total	Proportion
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	6,650	1.7%
Arts, Media and Publishing	1,000	*
Business, Administration and Law	118,650	30.2%
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	22,530	5.7%
Education and Training	7,110	1.8%
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	59,970	15.2%
Health, Public Services and Care	97,720	24.8%
Information and Communication Technology	21,110	5.4%
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	7,220	1.8%
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	51,300	13.0%
Science and Mathematics	130	*
Total	393,400	

2. Apprenticeship service data as at 31 July 2020

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 are able to add the details of an apprentice. Commitments may be either fully agreed or pending approval. 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.

A commitment may be recorded on the apprenticeship service after the training start date has passed, therefore all data should be treated as provisional. Additionally, commitments pending approval do not require the recording of age or level. Data are fully captured when providers confirm details in the ILR.

Commitments include those with training start dates from March 2020 onwards, which may be affected by the impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeship training activity and may not potentially translate in to an apprenticeship start in a high proportion of cases during the period affected by the pandemic.

Organisations and providers do have the opportunity to amend/delete a commitment they have entered in the apprenticeship service system, prior to the data being fully captured when providers confirm details in the ILR. However, it is not possible to quantify how timely this is happening during lockdown, so commitments for future periods may overstate the true level or timing of future starts.

The commitments data now also include a small number associated with the apprenticeship service accounts of non-levy-paying organisations⁷. Care should be taken when comparisons are made of these latest figures to those published previously.

⁷ In the April release we noted that between 09 January and 31 March, accounts associated with non-levy-paying organisations had resulted in 2,480 commitments recorded.

As at 31 July, the number⁸ of:

- Commitments recorded for the 2019/20 academic year so far was 196,300 (190,500 fully agreed).
- Commitments recorded for the 2018/19 academic year was 191,300 (of which 189,200 were fully agreed⁹).

Table 3 below shows monthly commitments reported to date for 2019/20 so far, along with the equivalent figures at this point in 2019.

Table 3: Total number of commitments by training start date as reported at 31 July 2020 and at 31 July 2019¹⁰

Commitment training start date	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	No date agreed	Total
Commitments from Jan 2020 as at 31 July 2020	20,900	16,800	15,900	8,200	7,100	8,900	10,300	2,100	1,400	100	1,500	93,300
Commitments from Jan 2019 as at 31 July 2019	19,900	16,700	17,800	16,000	15,800	14,000	12,700	600	900	100	1,600	116,000

Table 3 shows that the commitments with start dates in April, May, June and July 2020 (8,200, 7,100, 8,900 and 10,300) are lower than those in April, May, June and July 2019 as reported at the same point last year (16,000, 15,800, 14,000 and 12,700 respectively). Care must be taken in interpreting these figures and intentions regarding commitments with future training start dates. Please see the notes at the start of this section on recording commitments on the apprenticeship service and caveats relating to COVID-19.

3. Apprenticeship adverts and vacancies to July 2020

The apprenticeship adverts and vacancies in this section are as published on the [Find An Apprenticeship](#) (FAA) website. They represent only a subset of the total number of vacancies available across the marketplace as a whole, as many apprenticeships are not advertised through this website.

Adverts are vacancy notices and include at least one apprenticeship vacancy with an employer (one advert could potentially include a large number of individual vacancies). A vacancy is a unique opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship with an employer, and the number of vacancies provides a count of apprenticeship vacancies published on FAA in a particular period.

Monthly vacancies published on the Find An Apprenticeship website are generally lower in the 2019/20 academic year compared to 2018/19. In the months prior to the introduction of coronavirus restrictions (August 2019 to February 2020), monthly vacancies, with the exception of February 2020, were between 19 and 33 per cent below the equivalent figures in 2018/19.

Vacancies in the months after coronavirus restrictions were implemented (on 23 March) saw a large fall compared to the previous year - down by over 80 per cent in April and May and by two-thirds in June. July 2020 vacancies were more in line with the rest of the year, 22 per cent lower than in July 2019.

Table 4 below shows monthly breakdowns of the number of apprenticeship vacancies published on the FAA website in the 2019/20 academic year, along with the corresponding figures in the 2018/19 academic year.

⁸ Commitments now include those associated with the apprenticeship service accounts of non-levy-paying organisations. Care should be taken when comparisons are made of these latest figures to those published previously.

⁹ At this point last year (2018/19 SN12) it was 217,800 (210,400 fully agreed).

¹⁰ Combining the figures for January to October will not add to the total shown, as the total shows commitments from January in each year, which includes commitments beyond October and commitments where a date has not yet been agreed. Please see tables 1 and 2 in the monthly table pack released alongside this commentary document.

Table 4: Apprenticeship vacancies reported on the FAA website in 2019/20, and the corresponding 2018/19 figures, by month.

Academic year	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July
2019/20	10,490	9,760	9,900	8,470	5,600	8,840	13,660	7,940	2,120	1,850	4,030	9,570
2018/19	14,060	12,050	14,260	12,650	7,110	12,190	13,030	13,100	10,900	13,030	12,100	12,240

Apprenticeship adverts were all lower in the first four full months for which data are available since the coronavirus restrictions were implemented on 23 March, compared to the same months in 2019. In April, there were 890 adverts (compared to 8,400 in 2019), in May there were 1,160 (compared to 9,830) followed by 2,380 in June and 4,780 in July (compared to 9,180 and 9,920 respectively).

4. Skills Tool Kit (Experimental Statistics)

Course registrations

In the July update to this publication we stated that on 28 April 2020, [The Skills Toolkit](#) was launched to help people build their skills during the coronavirus outbreak and beyond. We provided an initial estimate of at least 136,000 registrations were recorded on the courses that featured on The Skills Toolkit in the first month of operation. Course providers submit returns to the Department for Education regularly on those registrations through The Skills Toolkit, and an estimate is derived through aggregating those returns. There may be providers who are unable to identify if their course registrations were a result of The Skills Toolkit campaign or through other means, and so this data may be missing from the estimate. Additionally, there may be inconsistencies in how various providers submit the data, and so the department has been working with the providers to harmonise reporting. This is a provisional estimate as there may be a data lag in reporting.

It should be noted that the number of registrations was experimental in nature and relies on website analytics, it is also subject to changes in provider reporting. We are currently reviewing the original method to count registrations as some technical changes by providers means we cannot repeat the number for later periods, but we are seeking a new collection method. We are aiming to provide an update to the existing figure for assurance on the initial approach, and also provide more recent data once that work is complete.

The Skills Toolkit users and page views

Since [The Skills Toolkit](#) was launched on 28 April, 723,370 users have viewed the [course page](#) on the National Careers Service website (to 19 August 2020). This has resulted in 844,660 user sessions and 979,170 page views.

Notes:

1. This data is reported as a part of systems monitoring.
2. Not all user sessions will result in a course registration.
3. Some users might access the page from more than one device and if so will be counted more than once in the figures.

About this release

This statistical release presents information on all age (16+) apprenticeships in England reported to date for the 2019/20 academic year, covering August 2019 to July 2020.

This release also contains latest data on commitments from the apprenticeship service. These official statistics are produced to provide transparency with regards to the apprenticeship service, an online service implemented in May 2017 that allows organisations to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily, and its usage.

These statistics 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 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.

The next release

The next monthly release of data will be in early October rather than September due to timing of the next ILR return to be used (snapshot 13). The October monthly release will provide provisional data for full 2019/20 academic year ahead of final data becoming available in October, which we plan to publish in November as usual.

Note that the first in-year data for the 2020/21 academic year will not be published until January 2020 and will cover August to October 2020. This follows our normal practice and timing for releasing the first in-year data for the latest academic year, and will be based on the fourth ILR data return for the new year. Earlier returns from providers are not sufficiently complete to allow reasonable year to date estimates of activity and comparison with previous years.

Note also that data for individual months are also less robust than quarterly data, particularly during the early part of an academic year as providers can report data for earlier periods at later points during the year. Additionally, data returns early in the academic year are typically less complete as providers tend to be busy with activities associated with the start of the academic year, and this may be more the case this year due to the return to learning following the COVID-19 lockdown and new procedures colleges and providers will be putting in place to make sure environments are 'COVID safe' for both learners and staff.

Monthly commitments on the apprenticeship service have training start dates in the 2020/21 academic year, which give an early sight of future starts.

Replacement of further in year releases during 2020

As the demand increases for statistics and data to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Education has had to change its data gathering and release practices, focussing efforts on priority analysis and statistics. Our statement of 26 March 2020 on the [Statistics at the Department for Education](#) web page explains this further, and, in line with [COVID-19 and the regulation of statistics](#) guidance from the Office for Statistics Regulation, the decision has been made to replace all in-year statistical releases relating to further education and apprenticeships for the 2019/20 academic year.

The current releases and measures we previously published may now provide very little value and/or may be misleading given how the pandemic will have impacted on both apprenticeship training and provider reporting from March. While collections remain open, we have no way to quantify how robust any reporting by providers will be during the period affected by the pandemic. Where there are updates, they may well be small corrections to pre lockdown periods. Therefore, given the expected large drop in starts from March, comparing a participation measure in say the third quarter of 2019/20 to this point in 2018/19 would offer no meaningful insight to activity in the third quarter.

We will publish the end-of-year releases normally published in November but, the replacement of the remaining in-year dates will enable us to provide release(s) with more relevant information to cover the period affected by the pandemic. Headline data would still be central to releases but we wish to seek to refocus releases on the most relevant material that offers comparison of fresh insight where available.

This means headline statistics such as apprenticeship starts will still be available, and to similar timescales to those currently but, we intend to repurpose our releases to focus on the most relevant information available.

We are consulting users on this and seeking feedback on key data needs, which can be provided via FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk. In particular, we are seeking user feedback on key data needs in terms of the regularity of data needed and also the type of breakdowns users would find most useful, e.g. similar to those we currently publish such national apprenticeship starts by age, level and individual framework/standard etc, so we can consider going forward and in light of continued data quality assessments. We will keep users updated of further changes via the [Statistics at the Department for Education](#) website.

Future releases and the new Explore Education Statistics platform

The DfE is changing how we release our statistics to further modernise our approach to dissemination. This will be through a new DfE statistics dissemination platform known as 'Explore Education Statistics' (EES) to make our data

and statistics easier to find, access, navigate and understand. Please see the [Statistics at the Department for Education](#) website for more information on the new EES platform, which we are hoping to move to as soon as possible in 2020 but cannot confirm as yet.

The EES system offers a step change for users in making data and releases easier to find and through use of a new table tool, giving more interactive access to our data. We are also adopting a more concise and user-friendly presentation of commentary and headline data. In addition, the move to EES will, over time, make production and dissemination of statistical releases more efficient and flexible.

We will also seek to improve navigation to our data by consolidating releases and providing more seamless links to all supporting tables. In EES we hope to have two releases: a Further education and skills release, and an Apprenticeships and traineeships release. The latter will bring all apprenticeship data together in one place and update relevant sections on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. For example, the next update of progress towards the public sector apprenticeships target is planned to be in November 2020.

We are looking to run webinars on the new EES release via sector bodies before launch.

There will be on-going developments to the platform over time as well as how we use it to release our statistics, therefore we would welcome feedback on what users find helpful or not.

Methodology and technical information

As with many policy areas, further education is a broad and changing topic. In order to understand the impact of policy and methodology changes on any data published in this release, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication.

Feedback

For any queries relating to changes we are planning to make to how we publish our data and statistics, please contact: FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk.

5. Accompanying tables

1. Total number of commitments by training start date and age as reported at 31 July 2020
2. Total number of commitments by training start date and level as reported at 31 July 2020
3. All age apprenticeship programme starts by start month, level and age (August 2019 to June 2020 – reported to date)
4. All age apprenticeship programme starts by level and age in July 2020 reported to date
5. Apprenticeship vacancies and adverts published on the Find an apprenticeship website, by month, to July 2020

Underlying data CSV monthly apprenticeship starts data covering breakdowns by sector subject area, framework/standard, age group, level, degree apprenticeship flag and funding type (2014/15 to 2019/20 - reported to date) (to June 2020)

Underlying data CSV monthly apprenticeship starts data covering breakdowns by sector subject area, framework/standard, age group, level, degree apprenticeship flag and funding type (in July 2020, reported to date)

Please see the [table finder tool](#) published in the [FE data library](#) for data tools and tables with additional breakdowns for annual full year 2018/19 academic year data and previous years.

When reviewing the FE and Skills tables, please note that:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
We round figures	Rounding is our primary approach to preserving confidentiality in our main tables, where headline volumes are reported rounded to the nearest 100. In the supplementary tables, volumes are rounded to the nearest 10. There may be exceptions to this in instances where 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.
We suppress some figures	In the main tables, headline volumes below 50 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). In reality, very few figures in our main tables are small enough to be suppressed in this way. In the supplementary tables volumes below 5 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). A percentage of less than 0.5 per cent 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 main tables and below 5 in the supplementary tables. ** indicates a percentage of less than 0.5 per cent.
Coverage of the data	This release includes provisional data for the first 11 months (August 2019 to June 2020) of the 2019/20 academic year reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in August 2020 by further education providers. Separate data for July 2020 is also provided based on the same data returns.

6. Further information is available

Additional breakdowns of further education statistics are published online in the [further education data library](#) 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.

For further information on the monthly Apprenticeship Service data, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) document that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication.

Statistics on further education in Wales can be found at the StatsWales [Further education and work-based learning](#) website. Statistics on further education in Northern Ireland can be found in the Northern Ireland Department for the Economy's [Further education statistics and research](#) website. Statistics on learners in further education in Scotland can be found at the Scottish Funding council's [Infact Database](#).

7. The apprenticeship funding system

Changes in the way apprenticeship funding works were introduced and implemented from May 2017. For the latest information about how apprenticeship funding works see the [how to register and use the apprenticeship service as an employer](#) guidance.

A key aspect of these changes was the introduction of the apprenticeship service, an online service to allow organisations to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily. Levy-payers are able to register on the apprenticeship service so that they can:

1. receive levy funds to spend on apprenticeships
2. manage their apprentices
3. pay their training provider

For further information, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication.

8. Technical information

For further information, please see the [User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics](#) document that accompanies the [Further education and skills: March 2020](#) statistics publication. 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.

9. 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.

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

10. Get in touch

Media enquiries

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